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Reflexive Criminality: Race, Migration, and Violence in Francophone Literature and Cinema

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Reflexive Criminality: Race, Migration, and Violence in Francophone Literature and Film

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Abstract

Reflexive Criminality: Race, Migration, and Violence in Francophone Literature and Film

By Julianna Blair Watson

This dissertation examines late 20th and early 21st century literary and cinematic responses to the image of the immigrant in French political and mediatic discourse as well as in the popular imaginary. In this image, the immigrant is, often unwittingly, conflated with the criminal. The relationship between these two categories is best seen through its manifestation in, by, and through violence. I trace contemporary forms of violence – in its physical, psychological, linguistic, and metaphorical iterations – through time and space to colonial Africa to underscore the colonial roots in neo- and post-colonial performances of violence in both contemporary France and in contemporary Francophone African societies. My contention is that the colonial structures and systems of oppression, dehumanization, and violence never really ceased and are perpetuated both in contemporary Africa and metropolitan France. In chapter one, I analyze Kamel Daoud's *Meursault contre-enquête* and Alain Mabanckou's *Tais-Toi et Meurs* to examine language as violence. I argue that the designation of criminal, the people and acts labeled as such, is just that, an act of linguistic labeling. Through linguistic turns, a guilty person can be exculpated or an innocent one criminalized; language acts therefore violently upon its subjects. Chapter two looks, inversely, at the violence of language. I explore two African novels– Yasmina Khadra's *A quoi rêvent les loups* and Bolya's *La Polayndre* – which contain an overabundance of extremely graphic passages of violence in striking detail. I claim these passages open a floodgate of post- and neo-colonial forms of violence which expose the colonial traces within. In chapter three I present an in-depth analysis of Michael Haneke's film *Caché* in order to reveal a "regard caché" on the Algerian population in France and detail the ways in which this population is placed in inescapable circuits of psychological violence. Lastly, in chapter four I examine Jacques Audiard's film *Dheepan* and its representation of structures of oppression on those relegated to France's margins. I argue that, through a compounded oppression, the film suggests that violence can be migrant and transnational in nature.

Reflexive Criminality: Race, Migration, and Violence in Francophone Literature and Film

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Julianna Blair Watson

Master of Arts

Advisor: Subha Xavier, Ph.D.

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Introduction

The "Foreign" Criminal

This project was inspired by Jacques Audiard's 2009 film *Un Prophète* and the representation of its protagonist who evolves from a meek underling, coded as of North African origins, to powerful gangster; this dissertation first intended to look at power relations in French and Francophone literature and film when the burden of criminality is shifted from members of the majority, that is white French gangsters played by famous actors like Jean Gabin and Alain Delon, to immigrant or minority figures played by the likes of Tahar Rahim and Maurice Bénichou. Not long after I began this research project, however, the Charlie Hebdo attacks happened in Paris. This event was, unfortunately, the first of three terrorist attacks which France endured in the following 18 months: in November 2015, there were the Bataclan shootings, also in Paris, followed in June 2016 by the truck attack in Nice. Following the attacks in 2015, the French government reignited the question of "déchéance de la nationalité," in which it was debated whether or not individuals convicted of terrorism, and who also had dual citizenship, should be stripped of their French nationality. It was proposed that individuals with only French citizenship, though, should not lose their citizenship so as not to render them stateless, a distinction which then Minister of Justice Christiane Taubira argued reinforced differences as it created two classes of citizens. A state of emergency was also re-instituted in France in 2015, one which permitted police to put certain individuals, frequently of North African descent, under house arrest, with no proof of any ties to the attacks or the perpetrators (See Ensemble!; Ligue des Droits de L'Homme; Pascual; Vantighem and Jeudy).

As discursive and policy responses to the above-mentioned terrorist events unfolded, they tended to conflate, perhaps unwittingly, immigrants and French citizens of immigrant descent with criminals. Achille Mbembe (2007), Didier Fassin (2013) and Gilles Kepel (2015) have each noted ways in which public discourse, legislations, and/or the media have "commingled immigration and crime" (Fassin 55). Take, for example, both the 2005 riots and 2015 terrorist attacks, whose perpetrators, although they were mostly men born in France, were discriminated against in both political and mediatic discourses as having "foreign origins". Following the 2005 riots, Mbembe (2007) declared,

> Nombreux sont ceux des Français qui refusent de reconnaître que la majorité des émeutiers sont…de nationalité française. Nombreux également sont ceux qui estiment que ces 'fils d'immigrés' n'apportent rien à la nation… ils ne sont pas, véritablement, des 'citoyen français' au même titre que nous…..Ce qui compte, ce sont les origines, la race et la religion…
>
> Numerous are the French who refuse to recognize that the majority of rioters are…of French nationality. Equally numerous are those who estimate that these 'sons of immigrants' bring nothing to the nation… they are not, truly, 'French citizens' in the same way as us… What counts are the origins, race, and religion" (np).

Similarly, in his study of the police and the banlieue, Didier Fassin notes that, in spite of a lower police presence (per number of residents), the banlieue youth – targeted because of their various ethnicities – undergo more frequent arrests, searches, and general police harassment; they are watched more because of their skin color. In other words, in the French State, media, and popular imagination, criminality is, more often than not, tied to notions of race, notions which are themselves, in the popular French imagination and society, inextricable from immigration. I speak therefore in my project of the "foreign criminal" to reference the image that has been constructed in contemporary France as that of immigrants as a priori criminals. These societal constructs of migrant and criminal also encompass what France calls its "visible minorities," (see Bronner) that

is, those who are born in France, but who nevertheless have an emphasis placed on their "foreign origins."

In the wake of these discursive and policy changes and my subsequent examination of the construction of the "foreign criminal," I began to look at literary and cinematic responses to this construct. Francophone literature and film has taken up this image of the "foreign criminal" many times over the past twenty years, tackling head-on this representation of immigrants and minorities as criminals. This project thus took shape around a concept I term "reflexive criminality," that is the ways in which literary and cinematic representations of immigrants – branded a priori as criminals – seemingly espouse criminality, appropriating and thus reflecting back the image that was imposed upon them by the French State to begin with. In literature and film, I interpret this trend as a subversive move by French and Francophone authors and filmmakers seeking to draw attention to discursive and political injustices that leave little room for negotiation or maneuvering on the part of migrants to the French State today.

As I began writing my chapters, furthermore, a recurring motif swept across my literary and filmic analyses, and the dissertation became about the particular ways in which migrant criminality manifests itself through the trope of violence. Every chapter thus engages in readings of violence as the thorny expression of migrant reflexive criminality. In chapter one, I argue that criminality and those labeled as "criminals" are always overdetermined by language. If criminality can be imposed or removed by language, then language can literally and figuratively enact violence. Questions of innocence and guilt are then subjugated by linguistic markers and language use, and legality itself becomes a function of language. Of course, violence and its various literary and cinematic iterations are difficult to pin down under one umbrella term and my analyses include considerations of violence as physical (beating, assault, kidnapping, rape, and killing), linguistic

(language used in descriptions of violence and regulation of speech), psychological (emotional suffering and regulation of bodies and actions), and, finally, transnational (when violence in one national context is used to justify its use in another).

In the different iterations of violence that this dissertation studies, it is often immigrants to France from former colonized countries who become both perpetrators and victims of acts of violence, or, in the case of novels by Kamel Daoud and Yasmina Khadra, the violence occurs in a former colonized country and is enacted by postcolonial subjects. In Jacques Audiard's film *Dheepan*, nonetheless, the migrants are from Sri Lanka – and therefore not part of France's colonial past. However, as my final chapter shows, the film's representation of the banlieue in which these Tamil characters are placed makes connections to France's colonial past and its postcolonial struggles to deal with its migrant populations. Although in Daoud and Khadra, there is no migration per se, I have included these texts in a project centered primarily on immigrants to France in order to establish a crucial link between postcolonial North African literature's reckoning with violence as the inevitable legacy of colonialism, much as my readings of works about immigration also suggest. In the French political imaginary, France's immigrant populations are portrayed much like its former colonial subjects and the literature and film I discuss in this dissertation goes to great lengths to divulge the inner workings of this underlying reality. As I will show in more detail, in the first half of the 20th century, Africans were assumed to be criminal, whether they migrated to France or not (see Césaire, Fanon (1961), Stora). So while what France calls its "visible minorities" and migrants are not the same as one another nor the same as those postcolonial subjects who remain in Africa, this project also seeks to highlight that in the French discursive and political imaginary, they are conflated with one another and accordingly treated in much the same way.

Furthermore, in the process and wake of decolonization, as I will show, a connection was formed, or perhaps one remained, between the iterations of violence that took place and still do in metropolitan France and those that technically never leave the African continent. In other words, the violence and criminalization that occur still today in Francophone African countries are post-colonial and neo-colonial re-productions of those that took place during colonialism. This project argues therefore for a cross-temporal and cross-spatial conceptualization of violence, one that has both its historical roots in the time of colonization, but migrates through time and space, from colonial Africa and 20th century Sri Lanka to contemporary Africa and France. In this conceptualization, violence and any criminalization thereof become transnational. In other words, in the colonial and postcolonial contexts of this project, a criminalized (or in some cases, de-criminalized) violence crosses, and thereby undoes, the political boundaries that unsuccessfully seek to quarantine it. This dissertation project therefore situates its research questions at the intersection of criminality and violence, looking to unearth in its interpretation of contemporary Francophone literature and film the crucial connections between colonialism and migration, postcolonialism and transnationalism. Criminality and violence are therefore lenses through which I analyze and develop the ways in which literary and cinematic production thwarts France's discursive and political oppression of those it insists on calling its "outsiders."

"Ceci n'est pas un criminel"

While the works in this project certainly speak to historical and contemporary realities – take, for instance, the 1990's Algerian civil war in Khadra or Alain Mabanckou's protagonist who is more readily assumed in the press to be criminal *because* he is an immigrant – they remain, nevertheless, representations of these past and current realities. Like Magritte's pipe to which the subtitle of this section refers, the characters in these texts are not criminals, but representations of

criminals, just as the rapes, assaults, killings, etc are not actual violence, but depictions of such acts. The study of fictional reproductions of mirrored realities invites a reading into the conceptualization of the "foreign criminal" as societal construct. In other words, the categories of who qualifies as immigrant, who as criminal, and who as "foreign" criminal do not exist in and of themselves, but are constructions produced by the State, the media, and the popular imagination.

Similarly, the study of representations of violence serves to underscore the fact that various post-colonial and/or neo-colonial conceptualizations of violence are not mere productions or creations of the contemporary period, but *re*-productions, *re*-creations, of colonial structures of violence. In 2016, author Edouard Louis and sociologist Geoffroy de Lagasnerie published a letter to then Prime Minister Manuel Valls in the French newspaper *Libération*, in which they accuse Valls of ignoring or not searching for the causes of terrorism in contemporary France. They declare that these instances of horrific violence have causes and a history, notably in the poverty, unemployment, social and educational exclusion, and relegation of certain populations to the more "urban" and therefore stigmatized spaces. Less than a year earlier, at the end of 2015, Gilles Kepel published a book-length study on the origins of jihadism in contemporary France that seeks to show the origins of these forms of violence in order to avoid "politically myopia." Kepel, who claims France has become a society which he calls "retro-colonial," traces the origins back to 1990's Algeria and from there back to colonization. The history, causes, and origins of which these authors speak is a history which I in turn retrace to the period of colonialism through readings of various representations of violence. The aim of this current project is obviously not to condone any of these criminal and/or violent acts, but to illuminate the originary ideology behind the constructions of the foreign criminal and highlight the fact that these forms of violence are not acts which emanate from "outside" the hexagone, but remain intricately linked to its past, present, and

future *within* its very construction of itself. The purpose of this dissertation is thus to examine criminality and violence as they open up discussions around notions of language, power and national sovereignty. The question of who it is that is criminal, and what constitutes criminal violence, shift depending on how it is spoken, written or defined, on the time, place, and identity of those who are in power, and the boundaries that are enforced around the nation-state. This in turn destabilizes categorizations such as perpetrator or victim, criminal or non-criminal, warrior or terrorist, colonial, neo-colonial, or post-colonial violence, demonstrating the various ways in which these categories are simply a function of an imaginary that is construed within certain national and temporal boundaries.

Transnationalism, Migration, and Criminalized Violence

In exploring the intersection between criminality, violence, and migration in immigrants and characters of immigrant descent of several generations, from various minority groups, and multiple diasporas, this project develops a transnational approach to the structures which criminalize violence. Drawing on analyses by Michel Foucault and Didier Fassin, I will consider the differences between concepts such criminality versus illegality or immorality, although the literary and filmic analyses that constitute this study put into question and even transgress the line between what is criminal and what is illegal or immoral. As such, questions of legality and criminality become more deeply entrenched in one another, highlighting the arbitrary nature of the social and legal constructions that lead to a convergence in labels between criminal and migrant in contemporary French society.

The filmic and literary texts in my corpus highlight the ways in which French society and law devise a prejudicial label for immigrants whereby they are criminalized from the outset (see Fanon 1961, Noiriel, Fassin), and are thus doubly marginalized, becoming what French historian

Benjamin Stora calls "sous-citoyens" [sub-citizens] (22). As for the criminal, Michel Foucault claims that a person who violates the law remains "outside the law…[and] social pact" (1979, 92, 256) and in breaking "the social contract, [s/he] thereby becomes a foreigner in his own land" (2009, 44). Hence both the immigrant and criminal are excluded from social life. Extending these social constructions, my analyses point to the ways in which immigrants are subsumed as criminals, while criminals in turn are ousted as foreigners to the socius. In the eyes of the law and the socius, criminals and foreigners are thus one and the same.

The exclusion and marginalization to which both migrants and criminals are subjected raises subsequent questions around the meaning of borders. As such, an additional parameter for framing this project will be Ato Quayson and Girish Daswani's notion of transnationalism. Noting a close relationship with the concept of diaspora – defined by Avtar Brah as a dispersion from a center with a "settling down elsewhere" (Brah, 181) – Quayson and Daswani articulate the distinctions between transnationalism and diaspora:

> Transnationalism encompasses not only the movement of people, but also of notions of citizenship, technology, forms of multinational governance, and the mechanisms of global markets. While diasporas are often understood to be a subset of transnational communities, the latter are taken to be an expansion of the overall conceptual scale of the former. As an analytical category transnational communities are understood to transcend diasporas (Quayson and Daswani 4).

Beyond transcending diasporas, Quayson and Daswani further highlight that transnationalism also exceeds or renders borders "irrelevant." Quayson and Daswani locate questions of citizenship and globalization within a notion of transnationalism that emphasizes border and diaspora transcendence. As such, their notion of transnationalism permits a rethinking of the criminal migrant and of criminalized violence as concepts that do not just transcend, but transgress, national, cultural, temporal, ethical, and juridical borders. The transgression of borders opens up a place for a conceptualization of transnational criminality and violence, one which troubles the

social and juridical borders that have traditionally shaped what I am naming the "foreign criminal." In transcending and transgressing national, ethnic, legal, and other borders, criminal migrants can rethink the society-imposed label and create their own path for maneuvering the nations, cultures, and societies which impose these labels in the first place.

This dissertation project thus aims to show that criminality and violence in a transnational context destabilize efforts by society to categorize and label acts and people within the confines of the law. The texts that constitute my corpus for analysis either take place in former colonies – namely Algeria and the two Congos – or in France, but with character interactions that highlight themes and tropes from the legacies of colonialism and decolonization, such as racism, subjugation, dehumanization, and, especially violence. The most significant legacy as regards this project is the criminal label that, as I will discuss later, was ascribed to the colonized subject during and by colonialism and extends into postcolonial contexts (Fanon 1961, Stora, Fassin). Yet, the authors and filmmakers whose work I discuss in this project consistently choose to make the minority, diasporic subject, or immigrant figure a criminal. As such, I maintain that this deliberately construed *reflexive criminality* challenges the various power dynamics to which the migrant and/or postcolonial subject falls prey. Ultimately, this dissertation makes an intervention within existing literary and film scholarship on migration and postcolonial violence, by using the analytical lens of *reflexive criminality* as an interpretive tool to uncover and expose French ideological constructions of postcolonial subjects and migrants as innately foreign.

All the chapters of this dissertation take on a recent and burgeoning genre in African Francophone fiction, the crime narrative. While some scholars refer to an African appropriation of a largely Western genre (see Cazenave and Célérier; Compard; Fulton; Higginson), others are increasingly describing it as "global genre" (Jaji 2015). Scholarly work on crime narratives in

Francophone literature and film has restrained its object of analysis to a particular author, text or genre (thriller, noir, detective fiction, etc.), each positing a theory of what is at stake for this rendition of African or immigrant crime narratives in French. Pim Higginson argues that authors of detective fiction such as Mongo Beti, Bolya, Abasse Ndione, Achille Ngoye disrupt the center/margin dichotomy. Odile M. Cazenave and Patricia Célérier likewise study Ngoye, Bolya, and Beti, but include other crime fiction authors such as Simon Njami, Jean-Roger Essomba, Calixthe Beyala, and Alain Mabanckou, again mainly in the detective or noir genres. Cazenave and Célérier assert that these authors fashion new African identities through treatments of immigration as a site of violence, while critiquing both contemporary Africa and France. In a 2009 volume edited by Marieke Krajenbrink and Kate M. Quinn, various articles deal with questions of diaspora and crime in both France and Algeria and the ways in which crime fiction undermines identity along national, ethnic, gender, and genre parameters.

In contrast, my approach to this exciting genre in Francophone Literature and film is a cross-cultural one, which includes texts authored by and about French European, North African, and Sub-Saharan subjects. Building on the aforementioned work delineating crime narrative's African turn, I now take a global approach to examine race-inflected power dynamics, arguing for the advent of a transnational genre crime fiction. My work seeks to underscore the transnational and migrant nature of violence, the ways in which this phenomenon itself crosses and thereby undoes borders, so that different categories of who and what is or is not criminal, what is or is not criminalized violence, flow into each other, making any distinctions between them difficult to perceive. I am arguing therefore, in a world saturated with crime where a) spatially, economically, and racially divided groups entail exclusion from certain political and social rights b) the former colonized subjects have criminality imposed on them from without, and c) the "foreign criminals"

engage in various forms of violence as both perpetrator and violence, these groups take the criminal violence imposed upon them and turn it back on to those who maintain structures of violent oppression in contemporary France and Francophone societies. This dissertation will hence place theorists and historians of France and Africa – Michel Foucault, Gérard Noiriel, Ato Quayson and Girish Daswani, Didier Fassin, Frantz Fanon, Achille Mbembe, among others – into conversation with one another in order to illuminate my readings of literary and cinematic texts as fundamentally transnational in scope.

Literature Review: Criminality, Migration, and Violence

Postcolonial scholarship has been investigating crime narratives since at least the late 1980s with Steven R. Carter's article in 1987, "Decolonization and Detective Fiction: Ngùgì wa Thiongo'o's *Petals of Blood*'." Almost 15 years later, in 2001, Ed Christian edited a volume on the "marginalized" detective in *The Postcolonial Detective*. Similarly, in 2006 Christine Matzke and Susan Müehleisen edited a volume containing analyses of the "ethnic sleuth" among other themes in postcolonial crime fiction across a wide variety of cultures. For the most part though, this earlier scholarship did not explore much from French and or Francophone cultures.

Scholarship focusing on any French-language crime fiction tended for over 30 years to fall into one of two camps: defending the noir/detective genres as worthy of academic study (Dubois 1992, Collovald et Neveu 2004, Gorrara 2009) or presenting evolutions in these genres' protocols (Dupuy 1974, Vanoncini 1997). Both camps focused only on the European French context. It has only been within the last decade or so that scholars have begun to move past these questions and investigate crime narratives beyond the nationally-conceived French literary and cinematic tradition. Scholarship on crime as authored by Francophone writers, typically from the African

diaspora, was more or less unexplored until the mid-2000s, as the first big wave of Francophone African crime fictions date back only to the late 1990s and early 2000s.

In studies of migration, scholarly work in the past decade has treated its specificity in the Francophone literary context. Alec Hargreaves has written for over 20 years on Beur fiction, immigration, race, and postcolonialism in France (1992, -and Heffernan 1993, 1995, 1997, -and McKinney 1997, 2005, 2007). Other significant contributions to the field treat language and Francophonie (Gauvin 1997, 2007), female Francophone writers and identity (Green 1996, 2002; Kalisa 2009), and translation and cultural identity in postcolonialism (Simon 1996, Simon and St-Pierre 2000, 2012). The tropes of alterity and otherness are key points of analysis in work on identity by scholars of migrant and "minority" – particularly Quebecois – literature (Harel 1999, 2005, 2006; Ouellet 2002, 2003; Durante 2004; Paterson 2004; Harel and St-Amand 2012). Mireille Rosello's 1998 and 2001 book-length analyses paved the way for work such as in this dissertation through her examination of the politics of immigrant in France through literature and film. Christiane Albert's 2005 work provides useful insights into the difference between exile and (im)migration and presents the problems of labeling texts as "littérature des immigrations" relying upon the "ethnic origins of the author," rather than on thematic explorations within the texts themselves. Rebecca Walkowitz's 2006 work performed a crucial move when she proposed an analysis of immigration literature across multiple texts and multiple nation-states. Scholars such as Carmen Husti-Laboye (2009) have chosen to adopt the term diaspora in lieu of immigration or migrant while Joël des Rosiers (2013) proposes *métaspora*. Equally important, Christophe Désiré Atangana Kouna's 2010 study on the figure of the immigré argues for the immigrant's capacity to reinvent new, imaginary borders by challenging the conceptualization of the immigrant as "other." In 2012, Yolaine Parisot and Nadia Ouabdelmoumen broach the issue of transgression in their

analysis of gender and migration. In 2013, Dominic Thomas examines the long-standing relationship between Africa and Europe, and particularly France, noting how changes aiming for greater control over immigration have led to changes in different media production, from literature, theater, and film to museums as well. In film studies, Yosefa Loshitzky also devotes one chapter in her 2010 work to a reading of power and Jewishness in *La Haine* where, at times, she posits France as the criminal. Others, discussing ways of screening "difference", have chosen to concentrate specifically on Beur films and filmmaking in France (Tarr 2005, Swamy and Durmelat 2011, Higbee 2013) or more generally on all minorities and those on the "margins" (Johnston 2010, Ervine 2013). More recently, Subha Xavier has argued in favor of a singular denomination for works about immigration as "migrant texts," arguing for linguistic, cultural and economic markers of migration that completely recede from author identity (2016). Subsequent scholarship has also taken up the term (Sabo 2018).

Scholarship on criminality's transgressive ability typically remain limited to one or two specific contexts. In Marieke Krajenbrink and Kate M. Quinn's 2009 edited volume, specific themes and frameworks of diaspora crime fiction treat topics as diverse as eugenics, sociological debates, and generic evolutions. One of the first works to explicitly treat both crime and immigration in a French-language context is Nadège Compard's 2010 comprehensive historical study *Immigrés et romans noirs*. However, this useful work adopts more of a general descriptive and statistically-based approach. Significantly, scholarship on the Francophone crime novel did not receive greater interest until approximately the last ten years. In addition to Pim Higginson (2011) as well as Odile M. Cazenave and Patricia Célérier (2011), Dawn Fulton (2014) has written an article on *noir*'s ability to "foreground" ethics and the mistreatment of immigrants in an urban environment.

Finally, although scholarship on violence in French and Francophone literary and film studies is currently not as robust as the fields I have discussed, there has been some treatment of the topic. One such example is a 2008 edited volume by James T. Day entitled *Violence in French and Francophone Literature and Film*, which broadly examines the uses and forms of violence in literature and film. This volume features a wide scope of time periods and places, with analyses ranging from the writings of Marguerite de Navarre, Flaubert, and Chamoiseau to the films of Laurent Cantet and Ousmane Sembène in which many of the scholars highlight the paradox of the victim/perpetrator cycle. In their study of contemporary African Francophone authors, Cazenave and Célérier devote one chapter to violence in crime fiction, in which they note a rising trend of what they refer to as more "extreme" violence in this literary field. Lindiwe Dovey's work *African film and literature: adapting violence to the screen* (2009) argues that African filmmakers have created a style distinct from those of Europe and America as she discusses the critical eye with which the former represent physical and psychological violence. Lastly, *Violence in Francophone African and Caribbean Women's Literature* (2009) by Marie-Chantal Kalisa performs similar gestures to those of this project through her analyses across time and space and engagement with violence in its "colonial, familial, linguistic…[and] war-related" forms. Her crucial intervention comes through her gendered focus on female-driven narratives, both through female authors and texts with female protagonists. All of the fields outlined herein are, however, still fairly nascent ones, and further cross-cultural and trans-mediatic studies are very much needed.

Methodology: Defining Criminality and Violence

Criminal and Migrant Constructions

In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault declares, "society […] defines, in terms of its own interests, what must be regarded as a crime: it is not therefore natural" (104). Moreover Foucault breaks down of what constitutes criminality and the means by which it is enforced: "But it is not on the fringes of society and through successive exiles that criminality is born, but by means of ever more closely placed insertions, under ever more insistent surveillance, by an accumulation of disciplinary coercion" (301). It is therefore society, and more specifically the state in its various permutations, that not only imagines criminality into being but further creates the mechanisms by which it will be maintained, propagated and ensured. Although he does not use the term "sous-citoyen" himself, Foucault provides insights into the difference between illegality and criminality, and the ways in which the latter applies only to the lowest economic, and later racial, classes. Criminality in turn places those defined by it outside of nature, but this "outside-ness" is given shape by the law.

If Foucault assumes a prominent position here, it is simply because the vast majority of other theories of criminology/criminality fall outside the philosophical realm and the French-language context. Rather, most theories belong primarily to the juridical domain, questioning the practice of criminality in relation to the legal rule of law (Haskell 1974, Scarpitti and Nielsen 1999, Lynch, Stretesky, and Long 2015). Many of these theorists note that when crime is linked to the state, there are political, economic, and other forces at work. However, one commonality across both philosophical and juridical theories of crime is the question of power. Mechanisms of power interact with the law so as to mobilize the law either in the service of politics (Lynch, Stretesky, and Long) or as a process of normalization (Foucault 1978).

Although their discussions on criminality and power can be useful, these theorists, Foucault included, do not provide much insight into criminality and power's relations to race and immigration (see Stoler). While he does not consider criminality per se, Gérard Noiriel's *État, nation, immigration: vers une histoire du pouvoir* (2001) offers a Foucauldian framework for his socio-historical study of the immigrant's relationship to French law and the French state. Like Foucault, Noiriel highlights the productive nature of power, linking it to the social and political structures. Ultimately, just as Foucault demonstrated with the criminal, Noiriel shows that the immigrant is a social entity whose subjectivity is juridically imposed by the state. Moreover, Noiriel provides examples of the ways in which immigrants are disadvantaged and do not have the same access to rights as French citizens; they too, are sub-citizens.

The above-mentioned theories and writing can plausibly guide a discussion of criminality in postcolonial and transnational literature and film through a rethinking of where criminality stems from, how it is defined (and by whom), and by providing continuity with mid-twentieth and early twenty-first century studies on the law and its disproportionate relationship to different subjectivities. These theories continue to question who the criminal is, as well as what is and should be criminal. In so doing, they are helpful in disrupting dichotomies and blurring categorizations of criminal/perpetrator/victim/non-criminal in societies that continue to perpetuate the figure of the migrant as criminal.

Postcolonial Theories of Crime and Violence: Blurring Categories

Notably, one of the major works that treats both the law/criminality and its relationship to immigrants and minorities in France, is a sociological study of the police force in Paris. Didier Fassin (2013) shows how the state and one of its apparatuses, the police force, *a priori* criminalize

disenfranchised populations through the use of rhetoric. Fassin presents a reconfiguration of violence, as it relates to police brutality, which incorporates an ethical component. Fassin then claims that one cannot distinguish easily between violence that is physical, psychological, and thirdly, moral. What Fassin refers to as moral violence is essentially an immoral act performed against both the body and the spirit. Fassin discusses instances of racism, criminality, and race-related police violence coded as criminal, while not exculpating the crimes that occur in Parisian banlieues.

These traditional Western theories on criminality, the law, and its relation to the foreigner are explored in different, albeit related, ways in postcolonial theory. Both Frantz Fanon (1961) and Aimé Césaire (1955) have placed colonialism's criminality on trial, even if Fanon's earlier work did so somewhat peripherally. The link between colonialism and crime can be found again in Achille Mbembe's *On the Postcolony* (2001), wherein he provides insights into several key issues associated with contemplating criminality and the diaspora in postcolonialism. Not only does he emphasize language's ability to deny the colonized subjectivity (see also Fanon 1952), he highlights the ways in which the postcolony reappropriated structures, mechanisms, and rationalities learned during colonialism. In this way, Mbembe's work on postcolonialism allows a rethinking of positionalities, ones that either perpetuate or recognize colonial structures while paradoxically challenging these existing structures through subversion, appropriation, and embracing differences.

Beyond colonialism as crime, Fanon demonstrates in his chapter entitled "De l'impulsivité criminelle du Nord-Africain à la guerre de Libération nationale" how criminality was institutionally ascribed to North African subjects, which served to further legitimate a colonial presence (1961). This criminal labelling, specifically by French journalists for Algerian

immigrants during the revolution, is briefly taken up by Benjamin Stora (1991) when he cites a 1954 article in *Esprit* which speaks on "la criminalité nord-africaine dans la région parisienne" (21), concluding that the theme of the North African "invasion" to France becomes "vulgar" when it refers to these migrants as "sub-citizens."

In addition to Frantz Fanon's take on criminalization, my analysis draws its theoretical framework from postcolonial theories on violence. Fanon's *Les damnés de la terre* underscores various forms of violence enacted by colonizers on the colonized. In his famous chapter entitled "De la violence" Fanon notes that killings, bodily assaults, and other forms of physical violence in which the FLN engaged were all acts which they learned from the colonizers; the very same violence that the colonizers condemned at the time as terrorism was nothing more than the violence that the colonizers had themselves performed. Fanon's words here provide insight into the colonial roots of anti-colonial violence, less in the sense that colonial violence provoked a violent response and more so in the sense that anti-colonial killings and assaults were imitations reproducing those realized under colonialism. Even in trying to escape colonization, traces of colonialism's practices and effects take root and remain, especially in the wake of decolonization. In other words, once colonization began, it trapped the colonized bodies in inescapable cycles of violence, so that the postcolonial era always contains some elements of its antecedent, the colonial. Crucial to my argument is therefore Achille Mbembe's claims that time in the postcolony is made up of an entanglement of different ages, of discontinuities and reversals, in which past, present and future "interlock," and are therefore crucial to highlighting the complicity between post-colonial and neo-colonial iterations of violence and their colonial beginnings.

In his work on the different, yet overlapping, regimes of violence in colonial and postcolonial relationships, Mbembe engages the question of language. His metaphor that colonial

language performed its work as a guillotine, dissecting the subjectivity of the colonized, provides key insights into the figurative ways in which language itself can enact a form of violence on its subjects. In the postcolony, Mbembe's discussion on language evokes more precisely the concepts of the "the grotesque and the obscene" and their relationship to domination (103). Here, Mbembe argues that these two concepts undermine those in power by ridiculing them, which ultimately shows a relationship of conviviality between the powerful and powerless. While Mbembe speaks more of convivial relationships, I will argue later that the "aesthetics of vulgarity" which he describes, also point to postcolonial relationships of complicity. I draw therefore on his claims regarding obscene language and images, that the "flow of shit from the physique [of the obesity of men in power]… make[s] it possible to follow the trail of violence and domination intrinsic to the *commandement*" (107), in order to extend the relationship between language and violence and to trace the power dynamics between post-, neo-, and colonial violence.[1]

In his discussion on the cycles of violence/counter-violence, Fanon does not highlight its physical iterations. When he describes the manners in which the colonized internalized their so-called inferiority, dehumanization, and the negation of any form of subjectivity – questions also considered by Mbembe 40 years later–, Fanon offers insights into various forms of psychological violence. When Fanon tells us that the first thing the "indigène" learned was to stay in place, he concludes that there is a latent aggressiveness in the muscles of the "native," which is manifested first against other colonized beings (53-4). Here, Fanon underscores a social and structural violence which did not necessarily touch the colonized body directly, but managed nonetheless to shape and maneuver it within colonized spaces.

[1] Mbembe's "commandement" is roughly equivalent to state power.

In her book-length study on representations of gendered violence in Caribbean and African literature, Marie-Chantal Kalisa similarly evokes Fanon's *Les damnés de la terre*, but relies more on *Peau noire, masques blancs* to discuss what she defines as psychological violence that is the "combination of physical, structural, and cultural violence" (8-9). Structural violence in Fanon, Kalisa writes, is that of the forms of social injustice, while cultural violence comes from the negation of the colonized culture (ibid). Building upon her engagement with Fanon, I draw on the writing of sociologist Loïc Wacquant and his comparative work between American ghettos and French banlieues. Like Fanon, Wacquant defines structural violence as that which marginalizes bodies and relegates them to certain (impoverished and stigmatized) spaces. Kalisa details several predominant theories of violence as she methodically describes her approach, including Walter Benjamin's distinctions between natural law and positive law, René Girard's evocation of the sacred, and Gayatri Spivak's concept of epistemic violence. Through her detailing of the various definitions of violence, Kalisa notes the difficulty in finding just one definition that can encompass all of its possible iterations. Just as she asserts that "[r]ather than focus on the problematic search for a satisfying definition of the term, I will elaborate on specific forms of violence in Caribbean and African history" (7), each of my chapters details distinct, yet overlapping, iterations of physical, psychological, and structural violence in French and Francophone fiction and film, drawing upon theories elaborated by Fanon, Fassin, Mbembe, and Wacquant.

Organization

Chapter One: The Criminal Code: Language, Naming, and Citizenship in Kamel Daoud's *Meursault contre-enquête* and Alain Mabanckou's *Tais-Toi et Meurs*

This chapter examines language as violence and looks at the various manners in which language can enact violence upon a subject. I demonstrate that criminality can be a matter of coding; that is, the designation of criminal, the people and acts labeled as such, is just that, an act of linguistic labeling. Through changes in these labels, I discuss instances of discursive productivity, that is, the possibility for language to *produce* new discursive regimes in which a guilty person can be exculpated or an innocent one criminalized. It is in these moments of discursive productivity that I argue that language acts most violently upon its subjects.

I begin this chapter with a reading of Kamel Daoud's 2014 contrapuntal novel *Meursault contre-enquête*. Daoud's novel is narrated in French by an Algerian in post-Independence Algeria. The narrator learns French only to be able to read the story of his brother's murder in *L'Étranger*. Daoud's linguistic engagement simultaneously exemplifies, subverts, and complicates postcolonial linguistic appropriation in order to problematize notions of language and foreignness. Daoud's protagonist kills a Frenchman one day after Algerian Independence. The police inform him however that killing a day earlier would have been less problematic. As such, I argue that the character's criminality or lack thereof (he is never officially punished by the law), and its relationship to his designation as an Algerian citizen who murdered a "foreigner," comes down to both semantic twists, legal perversions and a question of timing.

From there, I move on to Alain Mabanckou's 2012 noir fiction, *Tais-Toi et Meurs*. The novel's narrator, Julien Makambo is asked by his fellow immigrant community to take the fall for a murder committed by a Congolese compatriot, by assuming the latter's name and going to jail in his place. Julien refuses and ends up in prison nonetheless, but in refusing, he knows that upon his

release, he will be excommunicated by his immigrant community, a community comprised of members of various African diasporas. In this sub-section I examine the ways in which refusing to take on a new semantic label foreordains Julien into a position that spirals towards his downfall. Julien's refusal to metaphorically "shut up and die" and be "reborn" into new linguistic markers of identity temporarily produces a false illusion of strength that he quickly comes to regret. Thereby Julien is ultimately excluded from the multinational criminal community which subsists by transgressing legal and national borders. His refusal of guilt to protect his own notion of innocence reveals the character's quixotic understanding of legality in its relationship to language and his inability to partake in the power dynamics made possible by migrant reflexive criminality.

Chapter Two: Towards a Literary Aesthetics of Violence: Yasmina Khadra's *A quoi rêvent les loups* and Bolya Baenga's *La Polyandre*

This chapter looks, inversely, at the violence of language. I explore two African novels from the end of the 20th century which contain an overabundance of extremely graphic passages of violence. The novels' numerous scenes which reference body fluids – from blood and vomit to urine and semen – in striking detail, open a floodgate of post- and neo-colonial forms of violence which expose the colonial traces within. Further, through an examination of their vivid, precise, and ultimately excessive linguistic choices, I argue that these two novels seek to counter the belief that violence in Africa has become banal and inherent to life on the continent.

I first look at Yasmina Khadra's *A quoi rêvent les loups* (1999), a novel about the civil war in 1990's Algeria. The novel follows its protagonist, Nafa Walid, who evolves from not being able to withstand the sight of a dead body to engaging in the most brutal acts of murder, infanticide, and massacre. With numerous graphic depictions of violence, this text serves to investigate the legacy of violence that remains 30 years after Algerian liberation. Khadra inscribes the Islamists fighting in Algeria's civil war in the 1990's in the same logic used by the FLN during the war of

independence, a logic which used colonial tactics against the colonizers. Khadra's repeated references to "les damnés" recalls Frantz Fanon's prophetic warning that a cycle of violence/counter-violence can only ever lead to the destruction of the Algerian people. Through the novel's portrayal of Algeria's inability to sever its ties to a historical legacy of violence, I discuss the paradoxical ways in which Khadra represents an Algeria that is both reproducing its past and destroying its own future.

I then transition to Bolya's 1998 detective novel *La Polyandre* in which the ostensible crime to solve is the serial castration and murder in Paris of African males. The crime serves as the backdrop to the novel's main plot, which is the practice of polyandry (women who have multiple husbands) by African immigrants to France, a practice which Bolya reveals both repels and fascinates the various white French characters of the novel. The killer is revealed in the end to be a white Frenchman who was threatened by his partner's – the protagonist, Oulématou – polyandry. In Oulématou's practice of polyandry, any male who transgresses the rules faces various corporeal punishments, from the threat of castration to whipping or placing needles in the transgressor's testicles. Through my analysis of this novel, I argue that Bolya's use of sexually vulgar and crude language to describe women who perform violence against men is an inversion of gender roles in sexual violence in order to highlight the forms of sexual violence to which African women have been subjected. Violence described in excessive forms throughout the two novels, thus serves to usurp the tools of the master so that the text can reflexively criminalize the postcolonial or migrant subject in a bid for power against its former oppressors.

Chapter Three: What about Majid?: Circuits of Violence and Hyper-Visibility in Michael Haneke's *Caché*

This chapter presents an in-depth study of Michael Haneke's 2005 film *Caché* in which the director reverses a racialized gaze and turns it back upon the white French bourgeoisie so that the

white characters are made more visible. Many *Caché* scholars criticize Haneke for his privileging of the white French perspective in the film although Haneke, an Austrian national, already possesses a level of outsider-ness and foreignness not to be dismissed here. They further accuse Haneke of sacrificing its principal character of Algerian descent, Majid, especially as Haneke does not offer many possible insights into Majid's psychology. In this chapter, I engage with and build upon the work of these Haneke scholars to argue that, at the same time as the white French characters are made visible, the characters of Algerian descent are made even more so, I show how they are in fact made hyper-visible.

Questions of visibility are relayed into the question of violence, which falls largely onto a psychological plane in *Caché*. The French feel "terrorized" from having to look at themselves, based on their knowledge that an unknown someone is watching them. Yet I trace terror back to the war of independence, when psychological warfare sought to "terrorize" Algerians and Algerian immigrants to France. As such, when Majid is made hyper-visible, he too suffers psychologically. As Georges accuses Majid, with no definitive proof, of being his watcher-oppressor, I once again call on the work of Fanon to discuss cycles of psychological violence in the film. I argue that, regardless of whether Majid is behind the unknown gaze, he has been placed in this inescapable cycle of psychological violence from which his only option, as he sees it, is suicide.

Chapter Four: Violence Without Borders: Migration, Incarceration, and the Banlieue in Jacques Audiard's *Dheepan*

Jacques Audiard has gained a reputation as an auteur of crime films, all of which contain physical violence, particularly bodily assaults and murder. Although critics have come to expect spectacular violence from Audiard, in his most recent film, *Dheepan* (2015), critics largely accuse the film of undoing itself in the end due to the disproportionate nature of the unexpected violence in the film's pen-ultimate sequence. Like *Caché,* in which scholars criticize the lack of

representation for Majid but stop short of analyzing what little we do have access to, critics of *Dheepan* denounce its ending but critically disengage with it at the same time. I therefore analyze the film's end to argue for what I claim is the film's representation of violence as migrant and transnational.

Dheepan starts in Sri Lanka, at the end of its civil war (1983-2009) and shows three Tamil characters, strangers at first, adopt the identities of three people who died in the conflict in order to flee and seek asylum in France. There, the Tamil characters (portrayed by two Sri Lankans and one Indian, a casting which could further complicate categorization of "foreignness") are placed into one of France's many banlieues, one where drug dealers have virtual free reign and exert control over the residents through surveillance and displays of brute force. The film, however, refuses to directly represent the Sri Lankan conflict, which creates troublesome parallels between the foreign war-zone and the violence of the banlieue drug trade. Through these parallels, I argue that the film suggests that the violence of the Sri Lankan war migrates along with its Tamil characters through a trauma which crosses national lines. The migrants believe they witness in the French banlieue a similar oppression, isolation, and exclusion to that of war-torn Sri Lanka. When Dheepan erupts in a killing spree in the end to save Yalini from the drug dealer holding her hostage, I argue that, through a compounded oppression, Dheepan returns to his former warrior mentality. I conclude that the films presents war violence as transnational, in the sense that its use in national context provokes, but also justifies, its use in a different one.

The literature and films in this project speak to and address a reality of historical and contemporary oppression, racialized violence, marginalization and hostility towards France's former colonial subjects and immigrants to the Hexagon. These works highlight instances of racial

profiling, police brutality, and the harsh environment immigrants encounter in France and the conditions which lead them to commit criminal acts. The tropes of criminality and violence deployed in these works become a prism through which one confronts the colonial structures, systems of dehumanization, and social and racial prejudices which remain in contemporary France and in former colonies on the African continent.

Chapter One

The Criminal Code: Language, Naming, and Citizenship in Kamel Douad's *Meursault contre-enquête* and Alain Mabanckou's *Tais-Toi et Meurs*

Though the Algerian War for Independence and the November 2015 terrorist attacks on France occurred more than 50 years apart, they expose a common public discourse in France that has not changed over time. The French State engages in rhetoric and discourse that treats its (former) colonized subjects, minorities, and immigrants simultaneously as lesser citizens than those deemed to be of "pure" French origin and *a priori* as criminals either due to the color of their skin or their ethnic origin. Criminality is hence inscribed on their bodies as Frantz Fanon, Benjamin Stora and Didier Fassin have each argued over time.[2] Two novels from 2012-2013, Alain Mabanckou's *Tais-Toi et Meurs* and Kamel Daoud's *Meursault contre-enquête,* tackle this unchanged historical trend, through their protagonists who are paradoxically both former colonized subjects or immigrants *and* criminals.[3] Mabanckou's "whodunit" novel eerily anticipates French public discourse in the wake of the November 2015 attacks perpetrated by Daesh (some of whom were French citizens, though of immigrant backgrounds[4]) and Daoud's novel, a counterpoint to Albert Camus's *L'Étranger*, occurs both during and in the aftermath of the Algerian War.

Although these two novels appear quite different on the surface—one novel is about Congolese immigrants in contemporary France and the other is about 1960s and contemporary

[2] See Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*; Fassin, *Enforcing Order: An Ethnography of Urban Policing*; and Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli : la mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie*

[3] The criminality found in these two novels has yet to be thoroughly studied. Most criticism of Daoud's novel comes in the form of reviews and tends to focus on his counterpoint and homage to Camus. Further, although analyses exist on the vast majority of Mabanckou's oeuvre, including novels more recent than *Tais-Toi et Meurs*, virtually little has been written on *Tais-Toi et Meurs*, apart from online bookstores classifying it as noir. Perhaps this novel's status as noir is what has kept it out of academic criticism to date.

[4] See Kepel.

Algeria—both betray telling connections to the noir genre.[5] One of the trends in *noir* as a genre is that it offers a critique on society; it is through their ties with this genre that these two novels expose the discursive trend that has endured since colonial times.[6] Furthermore, these novels establish strong ties between criminality or criminal rings and the notion of brotherhood.[7] In Daoud's novel, the protagonist Haroun seeks revenge for the murder of his biological brother, the unnamed "Arab" killed by Camus' protagonist. Haroun seems to have a personal moral imperative to avenge his brother and his family that supersedes the universal moral imperative that forbids killing. In Mabanckou on the other hand, the Congolese community in France creates its own brotherhood that, similarly, puts this so-called "family" before the law and larger society. Yet this moral imperative, which explicitly asks individuals to put the needs of the brotherhood above one's own, is so strong that it threatens to destroy all those who do not abide by it. Whereas brotherhood generally offers a sense of belonging,[8] the criminality associated with the "brothers" in these novels has a perverse and perverting effect on the identity of the protagonists.

In this study of literary criminality, Daoud's and Mabanckou's novels open up possibilities for criminality to profit from "discursive productivity." The concept of "productivity" is adapted from Foucault's discussion on power in *Discipline and Punish*:

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[5] Camus stated that the protagonist and story of *L'Étranger* were most heavily influenced by noir fiction (see Hare; Hiney and MacShane); in his contrapuntal homage to this novel, Daoud can certainly not escape ties to this particular genre. As for Mabanckou, his novel was part of a limited collection explicitly designed for noir and detective fiction (See Le Parisien). For more scholarship on noir and detective fiction from authors from the African diaspora, see Pim Higginson's book, *Le Noir Atlantic*.

[6] Noir fiction is distinct from detective fiction, the latter being merely the ahistorical solving of a crime. Many critics claim therefore that noir is the genre closest to "social realism," offering timely sociological, political, and historical "reflections" of society. See Compard; Gelly; Manotti; Menegaldo and Petit

[7] The notions of brothers and brotherhood generated by these novels are, as the very word "brotherhood" indicates, entirely male-centered. Ironically though, whereas brotherhood is created for a group belonging, it has the result of excluding any real female presence.

[8] The concept of brotherhood is present in used in some forms of Islam to create a sense of belonging and of exclusivity for those who are a part of the group (see Kepel). Further, brotherhood is one of France's principles that emerged post-revolution, the "fraternité" that aims to have a unifying effect.

> We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes,' it 'represses, it 'censors,' it 'abstracts,' it 'masks,' it 'conceals.' In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth (1979 194).

Foucault refers here to disciplinary power that comes from institutions such as prisons, schools, hospitals, and the military, as well as from surveillance and normalization rather than through force (193). Power, he maintains, does not exclude, repress, or conceal, but rather actually includes, releases, and reveals. Foucault's form of power means that these institutions can create what is true and false and can construct a form of reality. He maintains that people act the way they do because they are under surveillance and that they would operate in a different reality were the opposite to be the case. Power, then, does not destroy realities or truths through censorship, masks, or concealment. Instead, power can *create* or to use Foucault's word, *produce*, fabricate, new realities and new truths.

For my analyses, I apply Foucault's discussion of power to criminality, but with an important caveat: criminality, like power, produces reality and truth, but criminality can only be construed in negative terms since it is by definition a form of deviance. Unlike in Foucault, my use of the word "produce" does not inscribe positivity into the qualified term, but suggests production, creation, and generation. This literary adaptation of Foucault's theory suggests the possibility for criminal behavior to *produce* spaces, personalities and relationships that allow immigrants and minorities to negotiate a society that *a priori* treats them as *other*. The criminality in which these characters engage produces new discursive regimes in which the codification of the law in their micro-communities take discursive turns which set apart from the macro society within which they are located, produces new ways of thinking/inhabiting immigrant criminality vis à vis "native" criminality. "Native" criminality describes crimes committed by those perceived to have no (recent) ties to immigration, to those who are, in contrast to Benjamin Stora's term "sub-

citizens," "full" citizens.[9] Yet, "native" criminality is coded differently in public discourse than crimes committed by immigrants, a phenomenon which the literature highlights.

In Daoud, as we shall see, semantic twists generate new discourses of truth and new perceptions of foreignness, citizenship, and criminality. In Mabanckou though, rather than producing different truths, it is *parallel spaces* and societies that are created, ones that are both within and outside the macro spaces and society from which they differentiate themselves. The crimes these characters commit are then a way to seize power that is otherwise denied them. The protagonist's power in *Meursault contre-enquête* comes from semantic subversions through which he will exculpate himself of murder, while the Congolese community in *Tais-toi et Meurs* accrues power by creating a parallel economy that allows for its survival in the harsh conditions of "the Parisian jungle" (38), a jungle which implies, semantically, a wild, animalistic space.[10]

Immigrant criminality twists what is considered legal or moral, perverting a law that is already perverse in that it maintains immigrants and minorities as "sub-citizens" by treating them *a priori* as criminals. As such, criminality is caught in a discursive play between illegality and immorality: sometimes what is criminal is not necessarily illegal, though perhaps immoral, and sometimes what is illegal is not considered criminal. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault argues that the distinction between illegality and criminality is one of social class: "This necessary illegality, of which every social strata bore within itself specific forms, was caught up in a series of paradoxes. In its lower regions, it was identified with criminality, from which it was difficult to

[9] Benjamin Stora applies the term "sub-citizen" to Algerian immigrants to France prior to Independence (22). The term "full" citizen here is intended to contrast with the "sub" status attached to the immigrant and of immigrant descent populations.

[10] The semantic implication here is taken from *Le Grand Robert (LGR)*. Interestingly enough, "jungle" also became a term for migrant camps or slums, particularly those constructed in the northern French town of Calais (*LGR*). The term "Parisian jungle" goes back to Balzac, in particular his work *Le Père Goriot*. Mabanckou is perhaps winking here at Balzac, but regardless, it brings into question who is the savage and the animal in this "jungle."

distinguish it juridically, if not morally" (82-83). Building on this, French ethnographer Didier Fassin also points to the differences between that which is illegal and that which is either immoral, illegitimate, or unjust drawing on the "legal" acts of humiliation, racial profiling, disproportionate violence, etc. committed by the police force against their immigrant victims (92-99, 294-301). Another example of this is evident in the ways that the law plays with semantics, when for instance "torture" can turn into "enhanced interrogation techniques" in order to eradicate the criminal, unlawful aspects of the act.[11] In Daoud's novel, the protagonist plays with the language of legality as he takes his criminal, unlawful act of murder and makes it lawful through a semantic transformation. Through my discursive analysis, this chapter seeks to present alternative ways of thinking three areas that pertain to criminality as it intersects with the migrant: language, naming and citizenship. Each of these concepts can be used to question the labels of the law that are only attached to certain acts and people.

Meursault contre-enquête

"Il semble donc que le contexte colonial soit suffisamment original pour autoriser une réinterprétation de la criminalité"[12]

From July 5 to July 7 1962, in the days immediately after Algerian Independence, hundreds of European "pieds-noirs" were abducted and murdered in Oran, Algeria by Algerian military and civilians.[13] This "forgotten" moment from the Algerian War of Independence, commonly referred to as a massacre, recalls at first glance Frantz Fanon's argument in *Les Damnés de la terre* that, in

[11] Many sources exist on the United States' use of the "euphemism" enhanced interrogation techniques to refer to acts that are seen almost universally as torture. See, for instance, McGreal; Siems.

[12] (Fanon 1961, 294); It seems that the colonial context is original enough to authorize a reinterpretation of criminality.

[13] Different sources cite different numbers, but all estimate in the hundreds at least ; See Stora 1992, Thiolay 2006, Zeller 2012, Pervillé 2014. At the same time as the violence in Oran, Algerian military and civilians also murdered "harkis," or Algerians who fought for France in the War of Independence.

the face of colonial violence, violence against the colonials was the only solution.[14] Yet the Oran massacre occurred *just after* Independence, so does Fanonian logic still hold? Can these acts of violence still be justified in the context of Algerian decolonization? Although there is only an oblique reference to this event in Kamel Daoud's 2013 contrapuntal novel, *Meursault contre-enquête*, these are but some of the underlying questions framing Daoud's narrative. In its guise as a response to Albert Camus's *L'Étranger,* the novel interrogates both where the line falls between criminal and war-time killings and the difference between the French killing Algerians and the Algerians killing Frenchmen. Through these investigations, I argue that the novel ultimately concludes that these lines and differences come down to a political question of semantic labeling and of timing. Criminality then is productive insofar as it generates new discursive regimes, that is, new ways of talking, and thus thinking, about acts and people that had previously been labeled as (un)lawful. Consequently, the novel's engagement with semantics, politics, and timing problematizes notions of language, foreignness, and criminality.

Linguistic Appropriations

Daoud presents the story of Haroun, the brother of the murdered "Arab" from *L'Étranger*. Haroun is recounting the story of his brother's murder and its aftermath to an unknown in a bar. One of the first things he admits is that he learned the French language in order to be able to speak for his brother: "C'est d'ailleurs pour cette raison que j'ai appris à parler cette langue et à l'écrire; pour parler à la place d'un mort [By the way, that is why I learned to speak and write this language; to speak in the place of a deadman]" (Daoud 11-12). Yet, his brother's language was, like Haroun's, Arabic. Why then did he feel the need to speak for his brother in a language that was never his? Haroun continues that Meursault, whom he identifies as the protagonist and author of

[14] Thiolay; Zeller; Pervillé each write respectively on the Oran massacre.

the diegesis in *L'Étranger*, wrote so well he could never imitate it: "C'était sa langue à lui. C'est pourquoi je vais faire ce qu'on a fait dans ce pays après son indépendance: prendre une à une les pierres des anciens maisons des colons et en faire une maison à moi. Les mots du meurtrier et ses expressions sont mon *bien vacant* [It was *his* language. That's why I'm going to do what we did in this country after its independence: take, one by one, the stones of former colonialists' houses and make a house for myself. The murderer's words and expressions are my *vacant property*.]" (12, emphasis in the original). Haroun's declaration exemplifies a type of post-colonial writing that abrogates and appropriates to "destabilize and decentralize power…using language to signify difference while employing a sameness which allows it to be understood" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 38, 51). Yet, Haroun's appropriation is more complex than that: it is both his own and Moussa's, his brother's, story. It is less to make himself understood, than to make understood a different version of events; it is an appropriation by proxy and therefore more layered.

More than a form of post-colonial writing, Haroun's linguistic appropriation transforms into something different when he later declares that the French language became "l'instrument d'une enquête pointilleuse et maniaque. Ensemble, nous la promenions comme une loupe sur la scène du crime [The instrument of a meticulous and obsessive investigation. Together, we used it like a magnifying glass on the crime scene.]" (100), an investigation into his brother's murder. Language hence is used as an investigative tool, which implicates it in both the murder and its aftermath; language is both an accomplice to the original crime and an intermediary to unraveling its investigation. Haroun's linguistic appropriation becomes one of assuming the power not to be understood, but to understand. Yet, this power is troubled by the fact that Haroun only needed and decided to usurp the French language due to his brother's murder by a Frenchman. Haroun appropriates the French language from a position that is at once both powerful and vulnerable.

Here then, this linguistic usurpation not only distorts Haroun's earlier postcolonial appropriation, but also contorts in on itself, becoming a paradox.

However, immigrants and foreigners must sometimes engage with a new (foreign) language out of necessity rather than via appropriation. Here, we might be tempted to invoke Jacques Derrida's claims that the "étranger" must ask for hospitality in a language "qui par définition n'est pas la sienne, celle que lui impose le maître de maison, l'hôte, le roi, le seigneur, le pouvoir, la nation, l'État, le père, etc. Celui-ci lui impose la traduction dans sa propre langue, et c'est la première violence [Which by definition is not his, a language that is imposed on him by the master of the house, the host, the king, the sovereign, the power, the nation, the State, the father, etc. The latter imposes on him the translation into his own language, and that is the first violence.]" (21). Yet, Haroun is not a foreigner nor is he seeking hospitality. Haroun decides to learn a language that he himself claims to belong to someone else, in what could be seen as an act of self-alienation.[15] Second, the presence of the French in pre-Independence Algeria blurred the line between "indigenous" and "foreigner."[16] Recalling the *négritude* movement, Haroun states:[17]

> *Arabe*, je ne suis jamais senti arabe, tu sais. C'est comme la négritude qui n'existe que par le regard du Blanc. Dans le quartier, dans notre monde, on était musulman, on avait un prénom, un visage et des habitudes. Eux étaient 'les étrangers'… mais il suffisait de faire quelques mètres dans la ville des Français, il suffisait du seul regard de l'un d'entre eux pour tout perdre, à commencer par son prénom.
>
> *Arab*, I never felt Arab, you know. It's like *Negritude* that only exists through the gaze of the "white" man. In the neighborhood, in our world, we were Muslim, we had a first name, a face, and habits. They were the "foreigners"… but you just needed to go a few meters into the city of the Frenchmen, all that was needed was the gaze of one of them in

[15] There is a tension in this reading with Derrida's *Monolingualism of the Other*, in which Derrida declares that one never speak's one's own language: "I only have one language, yet it is not mine," clarifying that this does not mean the language is foreign to its speaker (2-5). While Haroun's relationship to his native language could be problematized through invoking this Derrida, it is Haroun's decision to learn a *foreign* language which is put into question here.

[16] See Stora 1992, Fanon 1961

[17] It is perhaps worth noting that Haroun's words here on.. negritude and the idea that it can exist only in the eyes of the white man is essentially the opposite of what the Negritude movement argued for, which was an essential blackness.

order to lose everything, starting with one's first name (Daoud 70-72).[18]

The French colonial, "foreign" presence imposed its language as it simultaneously rendered the Algerian Muslims *other*. Without ever having left "home," Haroun still feels like a foreigner.

Echoing Derrida's claims about language as violence, Achille Mbembe links colonial violence to language: "The guillotine that language has become. […] It can…proceed by dissection, mutilation, and decapitation. Only in this way can the colonizer, at the end of language, deny the existence of the colonized and the colonized's subjectivity" (Mbembe 181). Mbembe's words here offer clear insights into the violence of language, or language as violence. Even when colonial forces were not physically performing violence, they were still violating colonized minds and bodies: it is as if colonial language dismembers ("guillotine", "dissection", "decapitation") the colonized, leaving nothing behind but the unrecognizable remains of the colonized former self. The power dynamic in Haroun's linguistic situation is complex as it is still based upon an initial violence committed by a colonizer; language continues its violence on Haroun as he decides to learn French after Moussa's death. Yet, Haroun learns French not out of any requirement or imposition by the French, but by choice. Does the violence of translation still have as firm a grasp in that case? Is Haroun's subjectivity still denied? Or rather, does Haroun's choice, appropriation, and transformation of language into a criminal investigative tool undo this violence? This is not to say that the colonial language is deprived of all of its violent influence, but that through his unique relationship with the French language, Haroun challenges this linguistic violence, turns it back on itself, and robs it of some of its power.

Naming, Hospitality, and Criminality

[18] It is perhaps worth nothing Daoud's use of the word "Arab" here and not the more precise ethnic terms in North Africa of "Berber" or "Kabyle." A deeper analysis of this effacement in Daoud of the "Berber" and "Kabyle" populations is certainly possible, but for the purposes of this study, I interpret Daoud's use of "Arab" as adopting the same language as Camus used in *L'Étranger*.

During the first night after Algeria gains its independence, in July 1962, Haroun murders a Frenchman. Daoud presents here a reversal from Camus's *L'Étranger*, wherein in the summer of 1942, a Frenchman named Meursault murders an Arab man, the murder victim only ever referred to as "l'Arabe." For Haroun, the (lack of) naming matters: "As-tu bien noté? Mon frère s'appelait Moussa. Il avait un nom. Mais il restera l'Arabe, et pour toujours. …Moussa, Moussa, Moussa… J'insiste sur ça et je veux que tu l'écrives en gros [Have you really noted it ? My brother's name was Moussa. He had a name. But he'll remain the "Arab" and forever…. Moussa, Moussa, Moussa…I insist on that and want you to write it in large letters.]" (22-23). Haroun wants his brother's name to be known, so that Moussa may regain, even in death, some of his individuality and humanity. In his review of Daoud's novel Jeffrey C. Isaac notes, however, that the name Moussa is not so simple for Haroun: "[it]'is the name I give everyone,' raising questions about who exactly is being named" (Isaac 146). In that case, does it not seem that, whether the name is real or not, what matters is that there is a name? Further, Haroun claims that it is just as important to name a dead man as to name a newborn because killing a man with a name is much harder on the conscience (Daoud 32, 62), as if, in his refusal to name, Meursault does not acknowledge killing a human being, but a vague generalization of a certain population. Unlike in Camus' novel, Haroun names his victim: we learn that Haroun's victim is named Joseph Larquais. Haroun, then, kills willfully, knowing that he will have a man's death on his conscience, a conscience which he is not seeking to assuage of guilt (97). As a result, Haroun's act of killing a named man becomes a subversive and reversed imitation of Meursault's lack of naming his murder victim. Moreover, as the name he pronounces is French, it is as if this extends the violence of speaking a language not his own; as he performs a physical violence against a man, naming that man performs a violence upon him.

The act of naming is not, however, just a linguistic subversion. Arguably, in spite of both men being murderers, through the sheer act of naming his victim, Haroun is, willfully and paradoxically, already more hospitable than Meursault in *L'Étranger*. Through the connection he raises between hospitality and the name, Jacques Derrida highlights the complex nature of "l'étranger" being named. Derrida notes that for an "étranger," a name simultaneously gives access to hospitality and limits and prohibits hospitality (27). Derrida continues: "Car on n'offre pas l'hospitalité…à un arrivant anonyme et à quelqu'un qui n'a ni nom ni patronyme, ni famille, ni statut social, et qui dès lors est traité non pas comme un étranger mais comme un autre barbare [Since one does not offer hospitality…to an anonymous newcomer and to someone who has neither name nor surname, nor family, nor social status, and who is consequently treated not as a foreigner but as a savage other.]" (27, 29). Rather than an "autre barbare," Derrida proposes an "autre absolu," who does not have to be named in order to receive a hospitality that would then itself be absolute (119, 121).

Derrida notes that the origin of the word "étranger" in French can be interpreted in two different ways: "…l'étranger (*hostis)* accueilli comme hôte ou comme ennemi. Hospitalité, hostilité, *hostipitalité* [The foreigner (*hostis)* welcomed as host or as enemy. Hospitality, hostility, *hostipitality*] (45, emphasis in the original)." Haroun's French victim, by sheer fact of Algeria's official status as independent, is now both a foreigner and a (former) enemy. However, just a day earlier he was the "hôte," in both senses of the term: the colonial presence that is a guest who forced itself into the position of host, whose "regard" makes the Algerian Muslims feel *Arab.*[19] The day of Joseph Larquais's murder, though, Haroun is the stranger become "hôte." This role reversal demonstrates the fluidity of the positions occupied by both French and Algerians around

[19] *Le Grand Robert* defines « hôte » as « celui qui donne *ou* reçoit l'hospitalité [he who gives *or* receives hospitality» (emphasis added) .

the time of Independence, where both felt at once host and guest, both were foreigner and simultaneously at home.[20] As to the question of naming, Haroun points out that in *L'Étranger* the designation "Arabe" appears 25 times, yet the victim's name never does (Daoud 140). The fact that Haroun allows Joseph's name to be known gives Joseph the right to a post-mortem hospitality Moussa could never have: the "anonymity" in *L'Étranger* only served to compound the lack of humanity with which the colonizers referred to their colonized.[21] Although he murdered like Meursault, the fact that Haroun names his victim grants at minimum an acknowledgment of the fact that he killed a human being. Haroun's positionality here exemplifies therefore the closeness between hospitality and hostility that Derrida highlights: Haroun murders a foreigner, an enemy to whom he grants a modicum of hospitality by naming him.

As for the Algerian forces, Haroun intimates they did not distinguish their enemy as individuals; their goal was to "libérer le pays et en chasser tous les Meursault [liberate the country and chase out all the Meursaults]" (92). Haroun essentializes all Frenchmen as Meursault – interestingly not as Larquais, suggesting Larquais was merely a placeholder for Meursault – and thereby removes any individuality amongst these Frenchmen, or rather imbues them all with the exact same identity, simultaneously rendering them anonymous and nameable. Yet any hospitality that could be perceived is quickly undone when one realizes Haroun has collapsed all Frenchmen into *this particular one*. It is not just that the French enemy is perceived as indistinguishable and represented by one of its former compatriots. *This* compatriot is one convicted of murder, which adds an element of criminality to all Frenchmen of the time. After all, Haroun notes that Meursault was just one of many of his time who was killing "Arabs" (74), a statement that echoes the

[20] See Stora 1992
[21] ibid

acknowledgment that colonialism was built on violence towards the colonized.[22] Thus, even as the name affords a type of hospitality to these Frenchmen, it simultaneously subverts itself, by recalling the lack of hospitality afforded by these same Frenchmen.

Semantics and Timing[23]

Haroun's killing of a Frenchman stems from his desire "que justice soit faite….J'entends par là, non la justice des tribunaux, mais celle *des équilibres* [that justice be done…by that I mean, not the justice of the courts, but that of *balances*]" (Daoud 16, emphasis in the original). Although Meursault was condemned to death, it was for his indifference and his inability to cry for his mother, not for the murder of an "Arab" (65). But, as Alice Kaplan claims, Haroun is far from a "postcolonial avenger" (n.p.). Rather, in committing his own act of murder, which Kaplan notes is Daoud's oblique reference to the Oran massacre in July 1962, "Haroun and Meursault become brothers too—brothers in the violence of history." (ibid.). Haroun comes to the same realization, that committing murder brings him closer to Meursault: "j'y trouvais mon reflet, me découvrant presque sosie du meurtrier… Un miroir tendu à mon âme…[I found in him my reflection, finding myself almost the doppelganger of the murderer…a mirror held up to my soul…]" (Daoud 141). Haroun presents himself here as though he has doubled Meursault, like a body double who has merely inversed the racialized aspects of the crime. Thus, Haroun balances the scales, not just for the victims, but also for the murderers; in his eyes, there is not much of a difference between himself and Meursault. Instead, as Isaac remarks, "[Haroun's] identity and his story become confused with that of Meursault" (Isaac 147). For Haroun, the murder of an Algerian by a "Frenchman" is equally criminal to the murder of a Frenchman by an "Algerian." Through these

[22] For examples, see Aimé Césaire; Frantz Fanon; Achille Mbembe

[23] Semantics here comes from the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*'s "chiefly *depreciative*" definition: "The use of words with particular meanings, esp. for euphemistic or tendentious purposes.".

two mirrored/doubled and "brothered" accounts of murder, the criminal act of killing here transgresses temporal, national, and ethnic boundaries and shows that murder, in this novel, is transnational without ever having really left the country.

Similarly, Daoud mirrors and even directly borrows from Camus in places, so that the authors too become "brothered" and their texts confused with each other. As Daoud himself has said, he did not write this novel as a "settling of accounts" with Camus and Meursault (Isaac 146). Daoud therefore does not posit himself, a postcolonial Algerian, as an adversary to the pied-noir Camus. Rather, Daoud positions himself and Haroun as brothers to Camus and Meursault, a brothering that blurs identities. Daoud has also stated that "Camus was aware of colonial injustices" (Isaac 146) so his brothering could be Daoud's way of highlighting that postcolonial injustices exist as well. Daoud certainly questions and comments on the pervasive violence that was committed by *both* sides during and in the immediate wake of the war.

On the one hand, Haroun's shooting of a Frenchman as a sort of restitution for his brother's murder by a Frenchman recalls Fanon's declaration that violence was the only solution to the violence the colonialists had carried out against the colonized: "le colonialisme…. est la violence à l'état de nature et ne peut s'incliner que devant une plus grande violence [colonialism… is violence against the state of nature and can only give way before an even greater violence]" (Fanon 61). On the other hand, Daoud's narrative complicates Fanonian arguments. As Isaac remarks, "…the novel is at once a reappropriation of Camus and a commentary on many of the themes raised by Fanon…" (148). Daoud's narrative does not discount Fanon, but rather shows ways in which Fanonian arguments can twist in on themselves on the threshold of independence. Fanon demonstrates in his chapter entitled "De l'impulsivité criminelle du Nord-Africain à la guerre de la Libération nationale [On the criminal impulsivity of the North-African during the National

Liberation War]" that the colonial powers imposed criminality onto the North African population, making it part of their ontology, in order to further justify colonial presence (285-292).[24] As Fanon states in an earlier chapter, "Face au monde arrangé par le colonialiste, le colonisé est toujours présumé coupable. La culpabilité du colonisé n'est pas une culpabilité assumée… [Faced with the world arranged by the colonialist, the colonized is always presumed guilty. The guilt of the colonized is not an assumed guilt…]" (54). War-time violence and killings perpetuated by the FLN and Algerian forces then constitute a refusal to accept such culpability and its implied association with criminality that were imposed by the colonialists.[25] Yet, in Haroun's case, he not only accepts his guilt, he *wants* to be sentenced; he *dreams* of a trial (Daoud 97, 121). In this light, Haroun's "restitution" complicates Fanon in that Haroun recognizes that his restitutive act is a criminal one, even as he seeks to assuage his guilt and absolve his criminality through his semantic distortions.

To recall part of Fanon's logic, in the face of colonial violence, the colonized had no choice but to respond in kind, to turn their violence back on to the colonizers. In discursive perversions that I believe both affirm and problematize Fanonian logic, Haroun uses various semantic turns both to absolve himself of his crime and to remove any difference between murder and war-time killings, regardless of who commits them. In Haroun's own words, "L'atrocité de mon crime s'y dissoudrait aussi, en quelque sorte. Ce n'était pas un assassinat mais une *restitution* [The atrocity of my crime dissolved as well, in a way. It was not an assassination but a *restitution*]" (Daoud 85-86, emphasis in the original). By merely exchanging one word for another, Haroun dissolves the criminal denotation of his act. His linguistic turn, stemming from his criminal act, is an example

[24] See also Stora 1991.
[25] The OED defines culpability as "Guilty, criminal; deserving of punishment or condemnation." So while, culpability and criminality are not entirely interchangeable, there is a strong connection between the two ideas.

of both discursive productivity and negativity: it erases criminality as it creates a new position of innocence.

Shortly thereafter, Haroun repeats this semantic turn, yet with a different twist: “Personne ne tue une personne précise durant une guerre. Il ne s’agit pas d’assassinat mais de bataille, de combat [No one kills a specific person during a war. It is not a question of assassination but of battle, of combat]” (87). Haroun’s act of killing is now not only a restitution, but a killing related to the context of war. What is the ultimate difference between what is viewed as a justified wartime killing and murder? One answer is that the former is a lawful killing while the latter is unlawful. Yet what or who determines what is classified as lawful? In *Les damnés de la terre*, Frantz Fanon highlights the inequality in punishment for actions committed by the French and the Algerians during the Algerian War. Fanon demonstrates that the Algerians who called for the people to fight were put to death or pursued by the French police, yet, as to the nearly seven years of crime in Algeria (as Fanon refers to the war for independence), not one Frenchman was brought to court for the murder of an Algerian (82, 89). These same Algerians sought or executed by the French were viewed by the Algerian people as “heroes,” no matter what they had done, as long as it was done against colonial people and property (68). Benjamin Stora further highlights the fact that the question of criminality relies on perspective when he notes the differences between the French army’s “naming” of Algerian fighters and the way these fighters conceived of themselves. The French army considered Algerian fighters to be “terrorists,” as well as “suspect, hors-la-loi, rebelle [suspect, outlaw, rebel]” (Stora 17) whereas the Algerians said they were fighting a “revolution” as “Liberators” (Stora 8, Daoud 119). What is viewed as a crime therefore depends largely upon

political perspective, point of view, context, and who is doing the talking.[26] What is subsequently punished as a crime thus falls to whomever is in power.

Haroun therefore uses the recent events of the Algerian War of Independence to mitigate his guilt and criminality: "…il y avait une guerre précisément, la guerre de Libération, qui étouffait la rumeur de tous les autres crimes…Cela me suffirait comme alibi […there was a war precisely, the war of Liberation, which smothered the rumor of all the other crimes…This was enough for me for an alibi]" (Daoud 87). If war can serve as the alibi or the cover for additional crimes (such as murders that resemble wartime killings), does it just absorb these crimes under its appellation and remove any "criminality" associated with these acts? When it comes to criminal or non-criminal acts committed during and around the time of the Algerian War of Independence, Haroun indicates that criminal killing can be reduced to a question of semantic choice: "Durant cette période étrange, on pouvait tuer sans inquiétude; la guerre était finie mais la mort se travestissait en accidents et en histoires de vengeance [During this strange period, one could kill without worry; the war was over but death was dressed as accidents or stories of vengeance]" (89). In other words, with war as a cover, people who killed simply needed to label their act of killing as something else and yet, this new label is then necessarily a *distortion, perversion*.[27] Killing in post-Independence Algeria resembles then French killing during Meursault's time, though an exculpation of any criminality attached to this killing occurred through a simple semantic turn by the Algerians newly come to power. It is the *timing* of independence, though, that affords the opportunity to rephrase and reframe things, in this case, criminality.

[26] The argument that crime is a social construction has been made in the fields of law and criminology (see for example Radzinowicz; Rosenfeld). This argument, however, is less commonly found in literary studies.
[27] *Le Grand Robert* lists synonyms of "travestir" as "déformer, fausser," giving as its definition : « Transformer en revêtant d'un aspect *mensonger* qui *défigure*, qui *dénature*. »

In spite of Haroun's semantic turns, the man he killed did not die on the battlefield or even technically during wartime. Haroun is therefore brought in to be questioned for his actions by an officer from the Liberation Army. His interlocutor informs him that no one is asking him for the truth, for if the truth is that he killed Joseph, he will be punished (118). Haroun deduces that he was there "pour ne pas l'avoir fait au bon moment…pour l'avoir tué tout seul, et pas pour les bonnes raisons [for not having done it at the right moment…for having killed him alone, and not for the right reasons]" (117-118), a deduction that is soon confirmed by the Liberation officer "questioning" him:

> 'Le Français, il fallait le tuer avec nous, pendant la guerre, pas cette semaine !' J'ai répondu que cela ne changeait pas grand-chose…'Cela change tout !'…Il se mit à bégayer qu'il y avait une différence entre tuer et faire la guerre, qu'on n'était pas assassins mais des libérateurs, que personne ne m'avait donné l'ordre de tuer ce Français et qu'il aurait fallu le faire *avant*. 'Avant quoi ?', ai-je demandé. 'Avant le 5 juillet ! Oui, avant, pas après, bon sang !' (119, emphasis in the original).
>
> 'The Frenchman, you should have killed him with us, during the war, not this week!' I responded that that would not change much… 'It changes everything!'… He began stammering that there was a difference between killing and waging war, that we were not assassins but liberators, that no one gave me the order to kill this Frenchman and that it should have been done *before.* 'Before what?' I asked. 'Before July 5! Yes, before, not after, good God!'

The interrogating officer's emphasis is on the *before*, during the war, before Independence; the officer has no problem with killing Frenchmen, only with *its timing*. Further, everything in this brief exchange indicates the *semantic* differences to which the officer appeals in order to justify Algeria's war for independence: killing versus waging war, "liberators" versus "murderers", wartime versus independence. It is just the timing that is problematic to the political powers that be, as timing establishes the difference between lawful and unlawful acts: if Haroun had killed one day earlier, before Independence was official, his act would have been considered part of the war effort. With time and the official implementation of independence, the conceptual framework and

the sociopolitical and legal statuses of the killing changes, so that the concept of time offers a malleability to certain criminal acts. His criminal, unlawful act thereby becomes one of nothing *but* timing.

Citizenship

Semantic timing applies similarly to questions of citizenship. Through the novel's naming mechanisms, the very categories of "Arab" and "French" become even more problematic. Discussing how one referred to the "indigenous" population of Algeria during the time of and around the Algerian War, Benjamin Stora highlights what he calls "semantic ambiguity" (22). The "indigenous" Algerians were alternatively called French Muslims, Algerians, Algerian Muslims, or just Muslims (21-22). An additional complication results from the status of Algerian immigrants in France: "distinctement, [ils] n'apparaissent pas dans les statistiques officielles de l'immigration. C'est normal, puisque 'l'Algérie, c'est la France [distinctly, {they} do not appear in official immigration statistics. That is normal, since 'Algeria is France']" (21). Being neither full citizen nor having a status that was uniquely theirs, Benjamin Stora refers to Algerian immigrants as "sous-citoyens [sub-citizens]" (22). The status of "sub-citizen" applies equally to the "indigenous" Algerians who never left Algeria since as Stora points out yet again, citizenship in colonial Algeria was, at least officially, based upon religious, that is, Christian, belonging (22).

As to these Algerians in Algeria during the time of the war, Stora calls them "hommes sans noms [qui] tenteront de récupérer, par la guerre, une nationalité qui leur appartienne en propre [men without names {who} will attempt to recuperate, through war, a nationality that belongs to them in their own right]" (23). When Haroun kills Joseph a few hours after Independence is declared, he is now an Algerian citizen murdering a foreigner, a Frenchman. Had Haroun killed a few days or even hours earlier, he would have been another sub-citizen, another "nameless" man,

killing a "full" citizen. His actions could have been justified or overlooked in the name of legitimating their nascent nation. But what changed in those few hours between a French Algeria and an Independent Algeria? The semantic ambiguity dissolved: the Algerians are now Algerians and the French are French. With this clarity and political change in power come new semantics surrounding questions of citizenship and criminal behavior. The political status of Haroun, an Algerian citizen, who murders a foreign French citizen, is likewise one of arbitrary timing related to semantics.

> Nonetheless, Haroun is not punished, not in the sense of the "tribunaux" like Meursault:
>
> On allait me libérer sans explication, alors que je voulais être condamné…Il y avait même quelque chose d'injuste à me relâcher ainsi, sans m'expliquer si j'étais un criminel, un assassin, un mort, une victime, ou simplement un idiot indiscipliné. Je trouvais presque insultante la légèreté avec laquelle on considérait mon crime" (121).
>
> They were going to free me without explanation, while I wanted to be condemned…There was even something unjust in letting me go like this, without explaining if I was a criminal, an assassin, a dead man, a victim, or simply an undisciplined idiot. I found the casualness with which they considered my crime almost insulting.

In this case, the "nouveaux chefs" are themselves criminal in letting a murderer go free and yet, it is thanks to the fact that they are now in charge that no criminality, be it theirs or Haroun's, is recorded. As such, unlike Meursault in *L'Étranger*, Haroun benefits from an instance of discursive productivity: Haroun's act was not challenged, declared illegal or even punished although Haroun still perceived himself as equally criminal to Meursault. Instead, Haroun and the "nouveaux chefs" generate their own truth and version of the events. In the context of a newly independent Algeria and Algerians becoming officially in charge, Haroun's criminality is merely not labeled as such: the "official" stance is that Haroun is not guilty of murder. Even if the truth is never officially recorded, Haroun knows his own truth about his "crime". As such, he both is and is not a criminal, depending on politics, semantics, and timing.

Tais-Toi et Meurs

"Pourquoi l'immigré devrait-il mériter la nationalité française pendant qu'on n'exigerait rien de la part des Français auxquels vous pensez?"[28]

The years 2015-2016 witnessed France falling victim to three major terrorist attacks. These horrific events sparked more intense political debates in France on the subject of immigration and French citizenship.[29] Whereas the epigraph above could very easily have been used in one of the contentious French debates in the wake of the events of 2015-2016, it comes from a fake television show Alain Mabanckou invented for his 2012 novel, *Tais-Toi et Meurs*.[30] The television show, "*Enquête exceptionnelle*…: Immigration et criminalité, l'affaire de la rue du Canada [*Special Investigation*…Immigration and criminality, the case of the rue du Canada]" (126), discusses the murder of a white French woman by a Congolese immigrant, José Montfort. A speaker for the extreme right political party argues that José Montfort committed the crime *because* he is an immigrant, while a speaker for the left counters with the exact opposite: "La criminalité n'est pas du tout liée au statut de l'individu sur un territoire, sinon les Français que votre parti qualifie dangereusement comme 'de souche' ne commettraient aucune infraction dans ce pays [Criminality is not at all linked to the status of the individual in a territory, otherwise the French people that your party qualifies dangerously as 'more pure' would never commit any infractions in this country]" (127). Just like Haroun's semantic turns in *Meursault contre-enquête*, Mabanckou's novel shows that what is labeled as a crime, or rather who is labeled as a criminal, is a matter of political discourse. Similar acts committed by the "native-born" French and by immigrants are treated differently in public discourse, which I would argue is one form of state criminality. In the

[28] *Tais-Toi et Meurs*, 127. Why should the immigrant have to merit French nationality while we demand nothing on behalf of the French you are thinking of.
[29] See AFP; Chapuis and Jacquin; Equy and Alemagna ; Forcari et al ; Gohin ; Mouillard ; Pascual ; Taubira.
[30] See Mabanckou 2015

face of this imposed criminality by the state, many immigrants resort to a different sort of criminality themselves, one that ensures survival above all else.

State criminality

In his comprehensive analysis of the history of immigration in France, Gérard Noiriel shows that the immigrant as subject was created and shaped by the French state (261-262), which subsequently created terms of exclusion (9). These exclusionary tactics contributed to a public discourse that differentiates between criminal acts on the part of "native-born" French citizens and the country's immigrant population, establishing an *a priori* link between immigrants and/or minorities and crime (Fassin 42-43, 55).[31] Mabanckou's work represents ways in which the French government's discourse permeates French society so that the immigrant or person of color is made to feel inferior.[32] Further, his work illustrates how immigrants from multiple generations and different diasporas (not just the Algerians noted by Benjamin Stora) continue to be thought of and treated as "sub-citizens," with the "de souche" French in a privileged, "supra" position.[33]

Perhaps this illustration explains why Mabanckou's 2012 fabrication eerily predicted 2015-2016 French political discourse towards the immigrant? Mabanckou's far-right political speaker

[31] Didier Fassin, in his study of early 21st century urban policing in Paris, highlights how these exclusionary tactics have been compounded in contemporary political rhetoric by the state.

[32] A depiction of "sub-citizenship" as relates to the immigrant population is far from unfamiliar in Mabanckou's work. As Éloïse Brezault notes regarding his novel *Black Bazaar*, Mabanckou treats characters "qui combinent tant bien que mal 'leur apparence noire et leur citoyenneté française,' (Ndiaye 40) [qui] montrent, chacun à sa manière, que les fondements d'une diversité à la française sont problématiques [who combine as well as badly their black appearance and their French citizenship (Ndiaye 40) [who] show, each in his own way, that the foundations of a French-style diversity are problematic]" (Brezault 144). Brezault further highlights that Mabanckou's novels describe French society in an unflattering light : "l'immigré ou le Français d'origine africaine n'est que rarement l'égal du citoyen français [the immigrant or the Frenchman of African origins is only rarely the equal to the French citizen]" (ibid).

[33] According to Marc Décimo, the expression « Français de souche » (de souche meaning root) applies to certain parts of French population, « une qualité 'ethnique', celle d'avoir constaté que ses parents et aïeux sont nés sur le sol français depuis plusieurs générations [an 'ethnic' quality, that of having declared that his parents and ancestors were born on French soil for several generations back] » (164). This controversial term, which means French from French descent rather than from immigration, implies that certain parts of the population have more "pure" and "deeply rooted" Frenchness; it is often strongly coded as "white." It carries therefore a heavy socioeconomic connotation with complex ties to race and sociocultural roots.

promises, once in power, "nous retirerons la citoyenneté à tous les naturalisés coupables de crimes [we will take away citizenship to all the naturalized {citizens} guilty of crimes]" (127). The debate on "la déchéance de la nationalité [loss of nationality]," or stripping criminals with dual citizenship of their French nationality, reached such a boiling point in the winter of 2015-2016 that the French Minister of Justice, Christiane Taubira, resigned from office at the end of January 2016.[34] This polemical situation recalls Didier Fassin's demonstration of the ways in which public discourse sets up clear differences between immigrants and the French "de souche" population. These discursive mechanisms therefore represent one form of state criminality as they serve to marginalize immigrants further and maintain their "sub-citizen" status in both the eyes of the State and society at large.

Shortly after her resignation, Taubira published a small treatise on the 2015 terrorist attacks in France and on the government's response. Although she never declares it as such, her words offer keen insight into this form of state criminality. Echoing Mabanckou's left-wing speaker, Taubira points out that stripping only those with dual citizenship of their French nationality sends a message to these dual citizens that 1) they are different, less pure, from French citizens with only one nationality and 2) they are the same as the criminals who are at risk of losing their French nationality (37); it creates two different populations, two different classes of French citizenship.[35] Recalling Foucault's and Fassin's respective distinctions between criminality and illegality or

[34] See AFP; Chapuis; Chapuis and Jacquin; Faure and Faunstein

[35] Taubira declares, « Puisque pour les déchoir sans en faire des apatrides, il faut qu'ils soient binationaux, cette déchéance contiendrait une inégalité, les mêmes actes perpétrés par des Français n'ayant pas une nationalité de substitution ne produisant pas les mêmes effets [Since, to remove their nationality without creating stateless citizens, it is necessary that they have dual citizenship, this removal would contain an inequality, the same acts perpetrated by Frenchmen having no substitution nationality would not produce the same effects] » (34).

immorality,[36] although the French government's recent actions may not be illegal, they are morally questionable.[37]

In his work on rogue states following 9/11, *Voyous*, Jacques Derrida concludes that "L'abus du pouvoir est constitutif de la souveraineté même…[donc] a priori… L'État est voyou [The abuse of power is constitutive of sovereignty itself…[thus] a priori…The State is rogue] (145-146)." As Derrida notes, the designation "voyou [thug or rogue]" always appears in relation to the law, but on the wrong side of the law (95). That is, *voyou* always implies a criminal element. Derrida therefore highlights the reality that the State itself can be criminal. Although Derrida's focus is mainly on the United States, both Fassin's and Taubira's claims show how France is a "voyou" as well: it applies the law unequally and creates additional inequalities through its public discourse. This damaging rhetoric thus could be classified as a form of legal criminality.

Group Criminality, Citizenship, and Codes

In *Tais-Toi et Meurs*, the Congolese immigrant collective, which calls itself the *milieu*, engages in criminal behavior that helps its Congolese compatriots who have come to France to seek a better life. They create and sell fake identities and paperwork, such as birth certificates and employee records, and use fake checks to buy goods and services and steal real names of Frenchmen (2012 39, 49-50, 147). These immigrants use their clandestinity to their advantage, as Mabanckou suggests in his first novel, *Bleu blanc rouge*: "Là, ils régnaient sans partage. En marge de la société [There they reigned supreme. On the margins of society]" (1998 144). These criminal

[36] See Foucault pages 82-83; Fassin pages 193-205

[37] On an international level, France has also acted on the borderline of legality, and in morally dubious ways. In 1962, France signed an international treaty stating it would not create "apatrides [stateless people]", but did not ratify it, so nothing prevents France from rendering some of its citizens stateless (Taubira 37-8). Additionally, in the spring of 2016, I witnessed more than one protest in France against the questionability of the state of emergency declared in France after the November 2015 attacks. People are protesting the additional power afforded the police as well as the fact that some French citizens were put on house arrest without proof that they were related to the attacks (See Ensemble!; Ligue des Droits de L'Homme; Pascual; Vantighem and Jeudy).

immigrants use marginality to commit additional crimes that allow their immigrant community to survive, to "subsist" as they say in the "Parisian jungle" (38).

For the *milieu*, it is through group criminality that immigrants are able to *produce* parallel spaces and structures to those that are otherwise closed off to them by the French State. This productive group criminality thus paradoxically offers paths to negating the damage that has been produced by the state treating them *a priori* as criminals. In its guise as helping compatriots, the *milieu* thus represents a sort of clandestine counter-power similar to the *voyoucratie* Derrida describes: "Ce fut une façon de désigner…de suspecter et de dénoncer, devant la loi, une force organisée, non pas encore le quasi-État d'une mafia, mais une sorte de pouvoir occulte et marginal…d'une confrérie clandestine…, elle institue même une sorte de contre-pouvoir ou de contre-citoyenneté [This was a way of designating…of suspecting and denouncing, before the law, an organized force, not yet the quasi-State or a mafia, but a sort of occult and marginal power… a clandestine brotherhood…which institutes even a sort of counter-power or counter-citizenship]" (97-98). The Congolese immigrants, through their criminal activity, create a parallel society to the spaces the French State would deny them through its exclusionary practices. As José, whose real name is Julien, describes it, this parallel society stemming from their criminality provides a source of viability: "celle que la France ne voyait pas, celle qui nous faisait vivre [that which France did not see, that which ensured our livelihood]" (145-146).[38] Their group activities produce then a space and new positions for the immigrants to occupy in this society that treats them as distinctly *other*. As their illegal acts are committed mainly for survival, they arguably represent a different kind of criminality from that of the immoral acts on the part of the French government. Hence,

[38] The full context of this sentence involves Julien saying that France stopped sending checks through the mail so the milieu is having a harder time running their parallel economy. However, I would argue that this sentence is still relevant as it points out that, before this obstacle, this parallel society offered a path to survivability.

these criminal migrants cross both legal and national borders through their engagement with this parallel society that transgresses the macro society criminalizing them from the outset.

The *milieu*, in creating its own *voyoucratie*, has also produced its own parallel citizenship, one that is simultaneously apart from and yet located within the French legal and sociopolitical system that classifies them as "sub." Both Achille Mbembe and Étienne Balibar have highlighted alternative manners of thinking citizenship. Mbembe shows that in 19th century Africa, where criminality was rampant, "citizenship could be linked with how much protection one enjoyed against the possibility of capture and sale" (Mbembe 70), a case which bears resemblances to the *milieu* in Mabanckou. Notably though, Balibar locates citizenship in the concept of reciprocity between rights and duties (Balibar 15, 35). Balibar further claims that it is through this reciprocity that citizens can exist outside of a community on the national level, be it "territorial or not, imagined or not" (35). The *milieu* in *Tais-Toi et Meurs* creates a sort of paradoxical criminal citizenship, where each member must contribute to in some fashion. When Julien first arrives in Paris, he receives the same treatment as the rest. He is given a brief period where he does not have to pay rent or have a "job," but once that period is over, he too must begin committing petty crimes that bring money and other goods or services to the group.

Reciprocity is therefore expected in this alternative citizenry. Besides labor and money though, the *milieu* also expects a duty of silence. When Pedro and Julien are fleeing from the scene of the crime, Pedro tells him that if Julien is caught, he is not to say one word about Pedro and that he would do the same for Julien (32). As for the rest of the *milieu*, Julien knows that "ils ne vendront jamais leurs frères [they will never sell out their brothers]" (131). At first, this recalls the language of silence, a code or protocol found in virtually all gangster/thug/prison/general crime narratives where one is expected to never sell out or "snitch" on one's "brother." Beyond this

linguistic protocol, though, what does it mean that this alternative citizenry and parallel society demands the titular "shutting up" on the part of its members? The act of not talking is one way of belonging to the "brotherhood," which is itself a way to put the makeshift, micro family above outsiders and to circumvent the law, as in Haroun's purported justification for murdering a Frenchman. Haroun perverts language and the language of the law to exculpate his criminal act. In Julien's case, though, it is the code itself and punishment of transgressors that result from these perversions.

In *Peau noire, masques blancs*, Fanon highlights a relationship between language and collectivity, that speaking a language, "c'est assumer une culture [is to assume a culture]" (33). More precisely, Fanon declares, " Nous attachons une importance fondamentale au phénomène du langage… Étant entendu que parler, c'est exister absolument pour l'autre [We attach a fundamental importance to the phenomenon of language…{It} being understood that speaking, is existing absolutely for the other]" (33). In a perverse twist on Fanon's claims, by asking their compatriots to not speak, the *milieu* is opening a path to exist, not for the *other*, but for oneself, while also restricting the possibilities and space of that existence. So, whereas group criminality is productive both materially and in the imaginary of their alternative citizenship, the code of silence simultaneously limits and restricts the positions in which these immigrants are located. The code of silence thus recalls both Fanon's and Mbembe's reflections on the ways in which colonial language affects subjectivity and ontology, abasing and denying the colonized; the *milieu*'s linguistic engagement appears at first to be just one more example of the many colonial forms and rationalities reappropriated by Africans (Mbembe 40). However, I would argue that the *milieu*'s linguistic structures complicate matters. The *milieu* is a complex subversive force as it

reappropriates and reproduces colonial structures even as it challenges the status quo in France with its parallel society and citizenry.

Names and Identities

Upon his arrival in France the narrator, Julien Makambo, is henceforth known as José Montfort. At first, Julien is quite content with his new name since his name Makambo means "ennuis [troubles]": "Je préférais de loin ce nouveau nom à celui de Julien Makambo [I preferred by far this new name to that of Julien Makambo]" (15, 51); he is literally content to leave his troubles behind. Interestingly enough, both Julien's name change to José and his mentor's name Pedro suggest a linguistic shift from a traditional French name to perhaps two stereotypically Spanish names, as if the *milieu* refuses to use French linguistic choices, even in fake names. Julien's mentor Pedro suggests to him to "de bien me mettre dans la tête mon nouveau nom et qu'il fallait, selon ses propres termes, que j''enterre' définitivement le vrai [to really put my new name in my head that I needed, in his own terms, to definitively 'bury' the real one]" (50). Adopting a new name requires therefore, according to the *milieu*, a symbolic death and burial of the old name. Ostensibly, this symbolic burial is to ensure that the immigrant does not betray the fact that his new name is false. However, this "burial" also carries a connotation of burying one's ties with Africa and one's past identity in spite of the suggestion from Pedro's "terms" that changing a name does not inherently change the identity of the name-holder.

In spite of what the *milieu* says, it appears that changing the name does change the name-holder. For Julien, his identity becomes confused and confusing from the first chapter: entitled "Appelez-moi 'José Montfort' [Call me 'José Montfort']" Julien begins his narration by informing the reader, "Je m'appelle Julien Makambo [My name is Julien Makambo]" (15). The novel's diegesis is Julien writing his tale down in prison. When his tale is almost complete though, Julien's

identity becomes blurred and confused: " je ne sais plus qui, de Julien ou de José, est en train d'écrire ces lignes. Je serais tenté de dire que c'est José. D'un autre côté José ne peut pas exister sans Julien – et vice versa. Au fond, cela montre que j'ignore désormais qui je suis, et plus encore qui je serai demain [I no longer know who, Julien or José, is writing these lines. I would be tempted to say it is José. On the other hand José cannot exist without Julien –and vice versa. Deep down, this shows that I am hereafter unaware who I am, and even more so whom I will be tomorrow]" (120). Neither name nor identity is kept distinct from the other, but as they bleed into each other, it is almost as if they begin to cancel each other out: Julien remains unsure who he is or will be.

In Mabanckou's first novel *Bleu blanc rouge* (1998), the protagonist, Massala-Massala, must also change his name when he immigrates to France without documents. Changing his name vexes him at first, but he realizes in the end that the name is worthless: "Oui, je pensais que le nom était sacré…Mais qu'est-ce que le nom dans notre petit monde à nous, ici, loin du pays natal ? Le nom, une étiquette sur la marchandise, un passeport qui ouvre les frontières, un laissez-passer permanent. *Le nom ne valait rien* [Yes, I thought the name was sacred…But what is a name in our little world, here, far from the native country? The name, a label on merchandise, a passport that opens borders, a permanent pass. *The name was worthless*]" (Mabanckou 1998 127, emphasis added). In her analysis of Mabanckou's *Black Bazaar*, Éloïse Brezault quotes an interview with Mabanckou wherein he states, "L'immigré ne doit pas attendre qu'on lui définisse son identité. C'est à lui de la définir lui-même [The immigrant must not wait that his identity be defined for him. It is up to him to define it himself]" (155, cited in Brezault 223). If the name means nothing, it should not matter who calls him what and it is too late when Julien comes to this realization. Julien's problem is paradoxical: he allows the *milieu* to define his identity up to a point but when he protests and tries to define himself, he creates the terms of his downfall. Mabanckou challenges

his own words then in *Tais-Toi et Meurs*, wherein the protagonist's attempt to "choose himself" is blocked: he is "allowed" to define his own identity but only in a way that negates his existence.

Towards the end of the novel, Julien is asked to adopt a third name and this time, he is unwilling. Julien is on the run because he was waiting outside while Pedro killed the white French woman everyone thinks he killed. As Julien is already hunted by the police and in the media, he is asked to assume Pedro's identity, including his guilt in the murder of this woman. In the penultimate chapter, entitled "Mourir pour renaître, [To die to be reborn]" Shaft, the *milieu* leader who creates the fake I.D.s, informs Julien that he has to go to prison as Pedro. Shaft continues that Julien's death and murder will be symbolic in order to "remettre les compteurs de la communauté à zéro…Aujourd'hui, c'est toi qui es chargé de porter nos péchés [to reset the community meters…Today it is you who is charged with the task to carry our sins]" (189). It is now Julien's turn to participate in the reciprocity expected of his immigrant citizenry, which would "wipe the slate clean" vis-à-vis his duties. Julien refuses and, in so doing, becomes doubly excluded.

Whereas Julien did not mind escaping from his birth name, he does not want to change names yet again. His hesitation this time comes from the fact that his new name would carry with it the guilt of having committed murder, an act which he knows he did not do. When Shaft tells José, "C'est toi, rien que toi le vrai coupable, Pedro n'existe plus, c'est toi le nouveau Pedro, [It is you, no one but you who is the truly guilty one, Pedro no longer exists, you are the new Pedro]" José protests : "Mais c'est pas du tout ce qui s'est passé ! La réalité est… -- [Shaft] : Quelle réalité, hein ? Tu crois que toi tu es réel ? [But that is not at all what happened! The reality is… {Shaft}: What reality, huh? You think you're real?]" (190- 191). In the *milieu*, reality and one's existence are dictated and determined by those that facilitate the possibility of life in France; as Shaft says, he created José and without Shaft, José and thus Julien in France would not exist. No one, not even

Shaft, whose chosen fake name recalls the blaxploitation films of the 1970s, nor Pedro has an existence or reality of their own. Mabanckou's choice of these different linguistic shifts– one a reference to Hollywood and another to the Hispanophone world – indicates that *milieu* itself does not have its own true image, there is nothing from before that remains, just references to other, non-French cultures. According to the logic of the *milieu,* then, Julien is not real and exists only because Shaft made him so; that is, Julien exists *if and when* the *milieu* allows it. The *milieu*'s perverse logic thus recalls Mbembe's insights into postcolonial reappropriation: "And so reality becomes enclosed within a pre-ordained madness. How could it be otherwise, since the actual is no longer perceived except through the mirror of a perversity…?" (178). The *milieu* thus distorts Julien's reality into a perverted version wherein he has trouble recognizing himself.

Destructive Criminality

On an individual level though, when Julien refuses to reciprocate by sacrificing himself, the productive group criminality that had created parallel spaces of survival becomes a destructive force when Julien's interests are no longer aligned with those of the group. Group criminality is therefore productive as long as one abides by the rules, by the duties one is expected to fulfill in this particular citizenship. When Julien continues to refuse, Shaft then threatens him, informing him that if he refuses he will be exiled no matter where he goes, be it Paris or back to Congo: "tu as intérêt à chercher un exil sur la lune... Tu vas mourir deux fois: d'abord comme José Montfort, ensuite comme Julien Makambo. Ce qui veut dire que de symbolique, ta mort sera désormais réelle [You better search for an exile on the moon…You are going to die twice : first as José Montfort, next as Julien Makambo. That is, from the symbolic, your death will be henceforth real]" (199). The *milieu* exercises power over Julien with this threat; they deprive him of any potential current or future power for himself which simultaneously reinforces their hold on their own power.

Ironically though, this particular power play ultimately serves the law and public order the group is fighting. In order to maintain the brotherhood, the *milieu* sacrifices an individual so that the French legal system has *someone* to punish. In this way, *the milieu* transgresses and distorts its own code.

According to Derrida, a *voyoucratie* is "une contre-souveraineté criminelle et transgressive [a criminal and transgressive counter-sovereignty]" against the State (100) but based on the threats levied against Julien, the *milieu*'s *voyoucratie* can act both criminally and immorally on its constituents. Derrida further clarifies, "La voyoucratie est aussi un pouvoir corrompu et corrupteur de la rue, pouvoir illégal et hors la loi regroupant…contre l'ordre public… [The *voyoucratie* is also a corrupt and corrupting power of the street, an illegal and outside-the-law power regrouping…against the public order]" (98). The corruption inherent in a "regime" of voyous is productive for the group as long as it remains against the public order. However, the group does not just corrupt the public order, but is itself corrupted to the extent that the group breaks apart on an individual level. In the way the *milieu* treats its detractors it is also then transgressive against its individuals.

Wandia Njoya argues that in *Bleu blanc rouge*, "Because the name…links the protagonist linguistically, biologically, historically, geographically, and spiritually to his community, its irrelevance within France's borders artificially detaches the young man from his cultural roots" (352). Njoya continues that this detachment leads to an imprisonment in the "here and now" that further "denies Africans agency and makes them more malleable to exploitation and oppression" (ibid). *Tais-Toi et Meurs*, however, complicates matters in this regard. Although changing from Julien to José detaches Julien from his Congolese roots, Julien has no problem becoming José. Moreover, Julien's refusal to metaphorically "shut up and die" and be "reborn" into a new name

may afford him a path towards finding a sense of agency and control over his identity. Yet, it is an agency that leads to an over-determination of that identity as he knows his refusal to become Pedro will likely result in a permanent isolation.

In *Peau noire, masques blancs*, Fanon asserts that making the *Noir* speak *petit-nègre* is to confine the *Noir* (1952, 48). Julien is not being forced to talk in *petit-nègre*, but he is refusing to accept a new linguistic label. Recalling that the *milieu* has reappropriated colonial linguistic structures, their attempt to force Julien into a new name is a perverse twist on Fanon's *petit-nègre* assertion. Due to Fanon's link between speaking, language, and existing for the other, it might seem at first glance that Julien's refusal to take on a new name creates a space for him to exist for himself and not for an *other*. Ironically though, in Julien's case, he ends up sealing himself into names and identities from which he cannot escape when he attempts to, to use Shaft's words, "reintegrate" into any society post-prison. By asking Julien to adopt a new name then threatening him when he refuses, it is as if the *milieu* is forcing Julien to think of his identity in linguistic terms that are similar to being forced to speak *petit-nègre*. Beyond his assertion that speaking *petit-nègre* is confining, Fanon further declares, "Le faire parler petit-nègre …c'est l'attacher à son image, l'engluer, l'emprisonner, victime éternelle d'une essence d'un *apparaître* dont il n'est pas le responsable… c'est perpétuer une situation conflictuelle où le Blanc infeste le Noir de corps étrangers extrêmement toxiques [To make him speak '*petit nègre*'…it is to attach him to his image, to glue it onto him, imprison him, an eternal victim of an essence of *appearance* of which he is not responsible]" (47-48, emphasis in the original). Julien will forever be sealed into an *apparaître* that is not his own choosing, one that risks literal death. Linguistically, the *milieu* acted like "le Blanc" when they glued him to an image that they themselves rendered toxic through their threats.

The names and identities Julien was previously fine calling his own have now become permanent, destructive, twisted versions of themselves.

Julien ultimately regrets his decision to not "shut up" about his name and identity and temporarily adopt a new one:

> Quand j'y pense, je me dis que c'est peut-être mieux que je reste dans ce trou. Il arrive même que je regrette de ne pas avoir accepté ce que me proposait Shaft…À ces moments-là, je me dis que si j'avais écouté Shaft je serais un homme libre. Pas libre de ma peine, mais de mon futur, car si un jour je suis libéré de ce trou, je sais ce qui m'attend ; je ne pourrai pas échapper à la colère de la communauté parce que je n'ai pas su me taire et mourir…. (211).
>
> When I think about it, I tell myself that it is perhaps better that I remain in this hole. It even happens that I regret not having accepted what Shaft proposed to me. In those moments, I tell myself that if I had listened to Shaft I would be a free man. Not free of my punishment, but of my future, for if one day I am liberated from this hole, I know what awaits me; I will not be able to escape from the community's anger because I did not know how to shut up and die…

It is as if Julien comes to a similar conclusion as Massala-Massala in *Bleu blanc rouge*, that the name is worthless but by holding onto his two original names, he is prevented from belonging to any future group. Julien's excommunication means he can no longer partake in a group criminal identity. When the group criminality, where belonging comes through a transgression of legal and national borders, is not reciprocal, citizenship is denied. The *milieu*'s counter-citizenship then paradoxically takes on the immoral characteristics of the public order they had been working against. By refusing one label, Julien unfortunately falls into the label of all those who are excluded: "Those who are excluded from citizenship…are represented and so to speak 'produced' by all sorts of disciplinary or institutional mechanisms, as imperfect human beings, as 'abnormal' or monsters on the margins of humanity" (Balibar 16). Through a simple semantic denial, Julien winds up exponentially marginalized: first from society on the macro level, which led to his

marginalization on the micro, parallel level.[39] If a lesson can be taken from *Tais-Toi et Meurs*, it would be a perverse one: refusing a criminality aimed at undoing or subverting the public order becomes at a certain point, ironically, the self-destructive choice.

Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter demonstrates the paradoxes that underlay the criminality of the formerly colonized subjects and immigrants to France in this body of literature. I have argued that the authors' choice to make their protagonists criminal conversely creates new discourses of truth and parallel societies that challenge the perception of French society that views them always already as criminal. In the following chapter, the question of an imposed criminalization is treated through the trope of physical violence. In Mabanckou, these new domains offer paths to negating the effects of the original criminality imposed by the State and society at large. For Daoud, Haroun's criminality results in less of a negation and more of a neutralization as Haroun balances the scales. Complicit in these criminalities was first and foremost language, whose power freed Haroun (through his clever linguistic exculpation) and imprisoned Julien (through his permanent newly toxic identity). As to language's connection with the name and act of naming, although there appear to be contradictory standpoints taken by the two authors, they ultimately reach the same conclusion. Daoud's Haroun would argue that the name is essential and Mabanckou's characters seem to conclude that the "name is worthless"; taken together both novels show that the name itself is unimportant and what matters is what is at stake in the name and the naming, be it real or fake. Through Haroun's criminality, Daoud's novel highlights the fluidity of citizenships, showing that who is called a citizen where and when can be almost arbitrarily produced. Similarly

[39] Julien's refusal to participate in the rules of the group criminality ironically results in a different, negative kind of production. Or rather, it is an *over*-production for Julien as the group criminality produces both the parallel society as well as his exclusionary identity from said society.

for Julien, his citizenship proved to be both fluid and fragile as the *milieu* just as easily offered and revoked a different, criminal, path to citizenship.

Both novels highlight societies that continue to treat their citizens criminally, both in the sense that only certain classes of citizens are treated as criminals and in the sense that in doing so, the treatment itself is criminal. Alice Kaplan's words on Haroun recall that the criminality in which these characters, including Julien and the *milieu,* engage is not a simple act of postcolonial vengeance. Rather, their criminalities show that these characters work both within and against the criminal and sub-citizen image they are given. In so doing, they usurp the power of image creation and seek to create their own.

Chapter Two
Towards a Literary Aesthetics of Violence: Yasmina Khadra's *À quoi rêvent les loups* and Bolya Baenga's *La Polyandre*

Introduction

By the turn of the 21st century there emerged an intensification of violence in African Francophone novels wherein this violence became more extreme and graphic with explicit portrayals of bodies in abjection, horror, and abasement.[40] Novels such as Diop's *Murambi: le livre des ossements* (2000), Monénembo's *L'aîné des orphelins* (2000), Mabanckou's *Les petits-fils nègres de Vercingétorix* (2002), Dongala's *Johnny chien méchant* (2002), and Kourouma's *Allah n'est pas obligé* (2000) are best representative of this trend, novels which present new categorical archetypes of violence, "notably the child soldier, rape, ethnic polarization" (Cazenave and Célérier 103).[41] Building on those categories, two other African Francophone novels from the same period – one from Sub-Saharan Africa and the other from North Africa – Baenga Bolya's *La Polyandre* (1998) and Yasmina Khadra's *À quoi rêvent les loups* (1999), extend this treatment of violence to infanticide, massacres, castration, and male victims of violent female revenge.[42] Violence in these two novels is thus defined loosely as a physical, corporeal violation which results in pain, agony, or torment and marks or modifies the body in some way.[43] More than an extension

[40] In their chapter on literary violence, scholars Odile Cazenave and Patricia Célérier note that violence is a "foundational notion in African literature" (100).

[41] Cazenave and Célérier chapter on violence in African Francophone literature cites these five novels, all about the Rwandan genocide in some fashion, as representative of a violence they claim is "taken to the extreme" (101). It is worth noting that both the novels in their chapter, as well as the two in this study, are all written by men. Perhaps the level of violence is something found more commonly in literature by male authors, although female authors such as Assia Djebar and Calixthe Beyala are also known for their occasional use of graphic violence. This study limits itself to the Bolya and Khadra novels, however, for what I argue is an overabundance of graphic scenes "taken to the extreme," an unrelenting and shocking excess not reflected in as vivid or as many details in similar works.

[42] Yasmina Khadra, whose real name is Mohammed Moulessehoul, began using his pen name in order to avoid censorship while he was an officer in the Algerian army. He did not reveal his true identity until around the same time as the publication of *A quoi rêvent les loups*, once he had left the army.

[43] Scholarship on the violence in these two novels is relatively scarce. One exception for Khadra is Michèle Chossat's article in the edited volume *Violence in French and Francophone Literature and Film*, in which she treats the question of the animal versus human in À *quoi rêvent les loups*.

of violence, though, Bolya and Khadra push the very notions of "extreme and graphic" right up to, if not past, their limits, in ways that question what many scholars have described as a sort of a banalization of violence in Africa and African literature.[44] Khadra's and Bolya's novels, the first an account of Algeria's civil war in the 1990s and the second a detective story surrounding the serial murder of African male immigrants in France, contain graphic, explicit, gory, obscene, and vulgar depictions of mutilations and mutations on the human body, that is, extreme violence. While Achille Mbembe has stated that African sacramental politics are "entrenched in the belief in the redemptive function of violence…violence could be expiatory or substitutive" (2002, 251), Khadra and Bolya's extreme forms of violence run counter to this belief, showing instead that violence is paradoxically both auto-destructive and auto-reproductive.

Khadra's and Bolya's novels stand apart through, as I argue, their excess of violence: a focus on extreme forms of aggression, a proliferation of images of the violated body in which nothing is left to the imagination and the flow of bodily fluids is especially central to narrative descriptions.[45] While the other novels taken as examples for this trend contain some detailed, explicit descriptions, they are brief, in passing, and are more allusive in nature than not.[46] Furthermore, Cazenave and Célérier have concluded that these other novels, more specifically those written by Mabanckou and Diop, present more of a "reflection on the ultimately

[44] See Das; Khadra (2006, 2012); Mbembe (1990); Pieterse; Sontag.

[45] A proliferation of vulgarity and extreme, graphic language has a tradition in metropolitan French literature as well, going as least as far back as the Marquis de Sade's writing and continuing through Bataille.

[46] See for example Mabanckou's *Les Petits-Fils nègres de Vercingétorix* in which he writes *around* a rape: "il libéra un râle bestial de jouissance, se releva…le pantalon kaki au niveau des chevilles. Il donna l'ordre à un autre homme, puis à un autre encore de répéter la même besogne…" (55) or Diop's *Murambi le livre des ossements* where he talks about what happens after a rape: "Quand ils ont fini, ils te versant de l'acide dans le vagin ou t'enfoncent dedans des tessons de bouteille ou des morceaux de fer" (121). This passage, while grotesque and gruesome, and a few others like it, is an isolated event (unlike Khadra and Bolya where they proliferate), with the majority of other violent passages resting in generalities such as "kill, rape, torture." The worst in terms of explicitness is Dongala's *Johnny chien méchant* which repeatedly describes a teenage soldier raping women through "pumping" into them and how he knows the women like it through the "cold look" that comes across their eyes. However, these scenes are repetitive of one another and do not build towards an excess or flood of violence which ruptures time or space.

inexpressible experience of violation" (108).[47] Khadra and Bolya, however, are writing as I will here argue against this notion of inexpressibility. Rather, these novels engage in a "surplus of speakability" insisting that the horror to which Africans have been subjected is and must be representable. But does the literary trend and enduring relationship between violence and African literature serve to (further) pathologize Africa, as scholars such as Veena Das have pointed out, or does it (simultaneously) reify, in First-world imaginations at least, that these types of brutal and savage acts only happen in Africa, that is, that violence in Africa is inherent, ordinary, and banal as thinkers like Susan Sontag have argued?[48] Through Khadra's and Bolya's insistence on the profuse representability of violence, they also seek to de-normalize, de-banalize, and simultaneously de-pathologize the violence that has become a daily occurrence in Africa and disabuse readers of the notion that this violence is in any way natural to Africa.[49]

Speaking on violence, the social and the everyday in India, Veena Das argues that "the traumatic collective violence…creates boundaries between nations and between ethnic and

[47] Veena Das notes in her research on recent scholarship on violence that she is "struck by the sense voiced by many scholars that, faced with violence, we reach some kind of limit in relation to the capacity to represent… these descriptions serve to reaffirm the boundaries between civilized and savage…In contrast to this plenitude of speech, I would like to offer a picture of poverty, especially poverty of words, and to reflect on this very poverty as a virtue" (79). While Das' work is important in acknowledging that there is not a limit in representation of violence, these two novels suggest rather Mbembe's claims on the postcolony: "in this specific historical context of domination and subjection, the postcolony neither minces nor spares its words. Indeed, the purest expression of *commandement* is conveyed by a total lack of restraint, a great delight too in getting really dirty" (108). While Khadra and Bolya do not take great delight in these novels, they engage nevertheless in a gluttony of violent representations, in part, to destroy any boundary between civilized and savage, between past and present, between the West and Africa.

[48] Susan Sontag notes in her work on war photography that, unlike victims in World War II, in postcolonial Africa, there were ubiquitous "full frontal" images of the victims, which serves to confirm "that this is the sort of thing which happens in this place…[this] cannot help but nourish belief in the inevitability of tragedy in…the poor parts of the world" (70-1). Veena Das points to the difference in cultural production of violence between Western and non-Western countries, arguing that "violence for consumption" in Western countries is seen as pathological, while in African countries it is seen as "a sign of the normal development of a cultural repertoire" (211). Yasmina Khadra has spoken on separate occasions as to how the media is indifferent to the horrors it shows happening in Africa, while also treating these atrocities as something endemic to Africa (2006, 2012). In Africa it seems paradoxically that violence creates a pathology related to the continent while simultaneously making it something normal, everyday, ordinary, as if the pathology leads to a normalization or is itself normalized over time.

[49] Veena Das notes that Achille Mbembe is one of the few scholars to not write under a framework in which structures of violence are deemed inherent to Africa.

religious groups" (16) and underlines the tendency to work within binary categories vis-à-vis violence. Breaking with this trend, Khadra and Bolya show rather that, similar to Achille Mbembe's argument that "the spread of terror fragments inhabited spaces, blows apart temporal frames of reference" (1990 267), the extreme violence in their novels ruptures boundaries, both between nations and between temporal delineations. Khadra's unrelenting carnage highlights the ways in which the body politic of 1990s Algeria reproduces and distorts the anti/colonial violence from the war of independence. Through a gender reversal in the victim/perpetrator equation of violence, Bolya's portrayal of sexual female-on-male violence not only puts the black female body on display in a virtually unprecedented manner in Francophone African literature, but in so doing, emphasizes both the particular forms of violations black women were and remain subject to in post/colonial times and the ways in which these women regenerate similar violations on the body.[50] The slash that I insert in this chapter – as opposed to the hyphen in traditional spellings – in both anti/ and post/colonial represents a distinction from, yet proximity to and overlap with the colonial and the after or counter to it. Consequently, these two works, reminiscent of Mbembe's claims in *On the Postcolony*, unmask a complicity between colonial powers, anti-colonial struggles, and postcolonial African societies and the perpetuation of inescapable cycles of violence.[51] The surplus of brutality in Khadra's and Bolya's works creates then a rupture in time and space, in which the

[50] Calixthe Beyala is the only major other Francophone African author to depict African female sexuality. Consequently, there is a paucity of scholarship on the subject. Two notable exceptions are Nicki Hitchcott's text *Calixthe Beyala: Performances of Migration* and Subha Xavier's article "Entre féminisme et voyeurisme: l'éros migrant chez Calixthe Beyala" as well as Xavier's chapter on "Migrant Feminisms" in *The Migrant Text*.

[51] See also Mbembe 2002 in which he argues against the notion that, "Africa is said not to be responsible for the catastrophes that are befalling it. The present destiny of the continent is supposed to proceed not from free and autonomous choices but from the legacy of a history imposed upon Africans – burned into their flesh by rape, brutality, and all sorts of economic conditionalities…..This construction of history leads to a naïve and uncritical attitude with regard to so-called struggles for national liberation and to social movements (243-244); an emphasis on violence as the privileged avenue for self-determinaton; the fetishization of state power" which he concludes leads to a "postcolonial paradigm of victimization….. We are told that African history is essentially governed by forces beyond the Africans' control" (243-251).

roots of violence can be found in colonial times and spaces but also reproduce and pervert themselves in contemporary Francophone societies. Just as Mbembe speaks of time in Africa as an *entanglement* and "*interlocking* of presents, pasts, and futures" (2001, 14-16), this flood of violence breaks down the boundaries, the dams, between the lines of what qualifies as colonial, anti-colonial, post-colonial and neo-colonial violence(s), so that they flow into and contaminate each other; time is indeed on the move, it flows back and forth as if it were a tide. The excess of violent language suggests both a new aesthetics that challenges colonial and postcolonial categories but also throws the very possibility of criminality into flux since as we have seen in chapter one, criminality is a socially and politically constructed term.

Most scholarship on Bolya and Khadra does not study the language of gore, rape, or brutality as revelatory of, first, ties to colonial time and space, and, second, the complicity between the African states and peoples and the (former) colonial powers. *A quoi rêvent les loups* reveals that the Algerian Islamists of the 1990s inscribed themselves in the logic of the war of independence and thus contributed to and kept alive a legacy of anti/colonial violence. *La Polyandre* shows that a sexual colonization that began in colonial Congo, migrated to and therefore continues in contemporary France, revealing a timeless patriarchal body politic in which men (in power) perpetuate a subjugation of women through both sexual and violent means. Yet the polyandrous women commit violent acts themselves as punishments against men in their tradition. As a result, Bolya depicts a neo/colonial form of violence, where the Belgian colonials' legacy of violence transforms into and blends with contemporary legacies of violence performed by both metropolitan French and Congolese women. Neither do scholars mention that this excess, this flood of violence, simultaneously sweeps readers into its wake, transforming them into bystanders of the violence which they consume through their reading; in both novels, readers are invited to be

at once horrified and amused, disgusted, and entertained by an ongoing cycle of violence of which they realize they are also a part. Consequently, readers, much like the characters, cannot escape a violence that never ceases to disturb space and time, so that while Africa is pathologized as a continent of violence, the writing complicates the origins and continuations of this anti/post/neo/colonial violence, forcing readers to question whether an iteration of violence is a production or a re-production. The flood of gruesomeness and vulgarity provokes then a reconsideration of the anti/post/neo-colonial paradigms which continue to engender and make manifest the bodies which re/produce violence.[52]

Through a reading of Frantz Fanon's work on violence in *Les damnés de la terre* (1961), *À quoi rêvent les loups* represents a connection between the civil war and the war of independence. The Islamist activist groups of the 1990's Algerian civil war inscribe themselves in the legacy of the FLN (Front de Libération Nationale) who claimed, notes Fanon, that the only way to defeat French colonial violence was through violence. However, Fanon warns of the dangers of what he calls this totalizing violence, as something that will consume its perpetrators until they have destroyed themselves through their adherence to a cycle of violence/counter-violence. Khadra shows that through the Islamists' inscription in this logic, they unfortunately fail to heed Fanon's warnings and are therefore further along the path towards self-destruction. Similarly, Bolya's use of the trope of castration and male mutilation points to additional ways in which violence can jeopardize new, future generations even as this violence re-generates itself. Further bridging the

[52] At the same time as the violent phenomenon in African literature was becoming more extreme, there was a concurrent trend in French cinema known as "New Extremism" or "extreme art cinema," whose "new kind of viscerality" scholars argue "pose[s] some kind of challenge to the viewer...It put the body – more often than not in states of agony, ecstasy, or abjection..." (Grønstad 3). Although arthouse films have graphic depictions of violence and sexuality similar to horror and pornography, Grønstad (2012) as well as Horeck and Kendall (2011) note that "extreme" films differentiate themselves from these genres through the fact that they move beyond mere entertainment and deliberately seek to provoke, to portray anything and everything "that makes us want to avert our eyes, or that forces us to reconsider our investments, be they visual/aesthetic or political/moral" (idem 15).

gap between these two novels is Achille Mbembe's seminal work *On the Postcolony* in which the author not only unmasks the numerous ways in which African populations reproduce the colonial structures which were initially imposed upon them, but also provides a path to understanding the use of the obscene and the vulgar in contemporary African writings. Yet, Khadra's and Bolya's use of the grotesque, the obscene, the vulgar, and the gruesome are far from Mbembe's framework of laughter in which the "obscene and grotesque are parodies that undermine officialdom…turning it all into an object of ridicule…that the postcolonial relationship is not primarily a relationship of resistance or collaboration but can best be characterized as convivial" (103-4) which consequently "inscrib[es] the dominant and dominated within the same *episteme*" (110-111 emphasis in the original). While Mbembe speaks of conviviality, I speak of complicity, but his insights still point to a connection, a *rapprochement* between post/colonial and colonial bodies (politic). Lastly, in *La Polyandre*, the writings of black feminists such as Audre Lorde (1984) and Sharon Patricia Holland (2012) clarify the sexual colonization of the African female as well as the patriarchal bodies politic which the female violence subverts, while Fanon's *Peau noire, masques blancs* provides insights into the ways in which a gendered recasting of colonial violence maintains, in new forms, a (neo)colonial violence on both male and female victims. Although these two novels are quite different from each other, their forms of extreme violence become a prism through which former colonized subjects and/or immigrants – and the reader – are forced to confront the legacies of violence, the complicity between all parties involved and just from where it is that these bodies of neo/post/colonial violence continue to re-generate, to re-produce.

A quoi rêvent les loups

In 1990s Algeria, political Islamists waged civil war against the military. What began with a challenge to Algeria's Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) one-party system by the Front

Islamique du Salut (FIS) transitioned to war when the FIS was declared illegal. The FIS gradually fractured into different branches, the most brutal and therefore most cited being the GIA (Groupe Islamique Armé), who enacted "all-out war" against civilians and groups it deemed "ungodly," thus cementing the war's religious overtones.[53] Unlike the violence from the Algerian war of independence, which the FLN maintained at the time was a necessary means to put an end to colonial violence, this war's violence has been framed largely as "armed Islamism," which Jacob Mundy (2015) claims linked the violence discursively to terrorism.[54] Through its association with terrorism, this violence becomes thereby criminalized, de-legitimated. Although the FLN was also referred to as "terrorists" by the French government during the war of independence, the FLN and its supporters saw the organization as revolutionaries and, with time, the label "terrorist" ceased to be used by French forces as well. The violence of the "armed Islamists," although they inscribed themselves in the violent legacy of the FLN, has largely remained associated with terrorism, with criminality, suggesting once again that the (de)criminalization of violence is contextual, both in terms of space and time.

Yasmina Khadra's 1999 novel *À quoi rêvent les loups* – released the same year as the election of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who ran his campaign on the promise of amnesty for the Islamists and their violence – tells the story of Nafa Walid and his recruitment into Islamic activism. The novel depicts Nafa's transition from someone who cannot stand the sight of a dead body to a nonviolent member in the FIS, only to end up a leader in the GIA where he commits the most brutal acts of violence. Khadra's language of violence involves a surplus of carnage and is perhaps most often synonymous with gore in this novel. In a country where the government offered

[53] See Martinez 2007. The various branches of the FIS eventually began fighting each other in addition to fighting the military and the state.
[54] See also LeSueur; Martinez 2007; Stora 2008.

amnesty, effectively erasing the existence of terrorism and its concurrent violence, Khadra's linguistic profusion insists first and foremost upon the existence of this violence.[55] But more than just a "reminder" of the existence of massacres, kidnappings, and rape, Khadra shows that as more and more acts of brutality occur in the novel, both Nafa and the diegetic Algerian population are desensitized through the repetition of horrific acts. *À quoi rêvent les loups* offers subsequently a critique of the banalization of violence in 1990s Algeria.[56]

Within the last ten years, various scholars have stressed a war-oriented world-view particular to Algeria. Stora (2008) alternatively refers to a "culture of violence" and a "culture of war" in post-Independence Algeria (76, 116).[57] Martinez (2007) refers to the "war culture" as to one of the factors that led to armed Islamism, rather than the more traditionally associated martyrdom or sacrifice (122).[58] Mundy claims the civil war was "driven by a violent imagination unique to Algerian national identity" (66), such as when the Islamists challenged the FLN-led state, they ironically used the same rhetoric the FLN had used when it challenged the French colonial state. Furthermore, the Islamists also believed – just as the FLN believed during the war of independence – that violence was the only solution.[59] *A quoi rêvent les loups* invokes a

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[55] Although Stora (2008) advocated for amnesty and Mundy notes that the majority of the Algerian population voted for and was in support of the amnesty measures, James D. LeSueur highlights that some intellectuals problematized the issue of amnesty, citing novelist Malika Mokaddem: "The problem is that law came [in 2005] without any judgment….This method of erasing everything without ever putting into words the violence that the Algerians suffered and without the law passing judgment on people…. It was to put a cover on the violence without ever giving justice a chance" (200).

[56] See also Louiza Kadari's scholarship on Khadra, wherein she claims that the Khadra universe of violence shows that this violence has become intrinsic to Algeria (45).

[57] See also Lucy Brisley's analysis of the passage of a mother in labor, where she states that this metaphor problematizes the birth of "newly independent postcolonial nations...By figuring the recent panic in Algeria as the incestuous legacy of the FLN's failed ideals, Khadra's novel establishes a melancholic genealogy of violence that begins with the independence movement and continues into the 1990s" (88-89).

[58] In his earlier book-length text on the civil war, Martinez (2000) refers to a war "imaginaire" in Algeria. As the English translation indicates, there is no real equivalent in English for "imaginaire," but that the closest idea is "world-view."

[59] LeSueur also notes that, although the Islamists eventually fractured into different and often opposing groups, they all espoused the use of the violence, albeit with different goals in mind.

post/anti/colonial legacy of violence as a twisted body politic through which (human bodies in) Algeria creates the terms of its own irrevocable ruination, yet paradoxically, simultaneous continuation. The novel thus underscores Algeria's enduring connection to and inability to separate itself from a historical legacy of violence, one which is re-producing, and therefore destroying, itself.

Lastly, the question of complicity extends from the Islamists' post/colonial bodies to the Algerian post/colonial body politic, back to the anti/colonial FLN forces. Besides the 1988 riots in Algeria, in which the state killed some 500 civilians,[60] the FIS claimed that the Algerian state – led by the FLN – was still linked culturally and militarily to French colonial powers. The violent tactics deployed by the FIS were, in their minds, just like the violent strategies the FLN used to free themselves from colonialism, pointing to the role of the FIS as accomplices in the re-generation of the anti/colonial bodies of violence. However, Khadra's precise and aggressive prose – he uses words like "decapitated, quartered, burned alive"– produces disturbingly precise images of violence, unfolding horror in a progression that maximizes the text's shock value over time. This heightened effect implicates readers as well as consumers of the grisly post/colonial violence.[61] The reader becomes then connected to the carnage so that s/he must bear witness to the gore and disease which represent Algeria as unable to sever its historical cord with anti/colonial violence, an inability which, as Khadra paints it, sets it on the path to self-destruction.

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[60] Khadra makes several references to what his characters simply call "88'"; see also Martinez 2007.

[61] Susan Sontag argues that anyone who watches suffering becomes a spectator (42, 92) which necessarily entails implication in the event being watched. Similarly, as Veena Das declares that "Naming the violence does not reflect semantic struggles alone – it reflects the point at which the body of language becomes indistinguishable from that of the world; the act of naming constitutes a performative utterance" (206), Khadra's and Bolya's explicit and graphic prose simultaneously performs a type of (filtered, non-corporeal) violence upon the reader. See also Cazenave and Célérier who raise a parallel between writing on violence and writing violence: "Writing (on) violence is tantamount to constructing it semantically" (100).

Disease, Filth, and the (Damned) Specter of Colonialism

A quoi rêvent les loups is divided into three parts, le Grand-Alger, la Casbah, and l'Abîme. At the beginning of the second part, la Casbah, Khadra switches to third-person narration for the first (but not last) time in the novel's diegesis. Here, Khadra presents a brief, dystopic vision of Algiers through the metaphor of a raped, incestuous mother[62]:

> Alger était malade. Pataugeant dans ses crottes purulentes, elle dégueulait, déféquait sans arrêt. […] Alger s'agrippait à ses collines, la robe retroussée par-dessus son vagin éclaté…les yeux chavirés, la gueule baveuse tandis que le peuple retenait son souffle devant le monstre incestueux qu'elle était en train de mettre au monde. Alger accouchait. Dans la douleur et la nausée. Dans l'horreur, *naturellement*…. Et les hommes, à leur insu, s'identifient au carnaval des damnés. Alger brûlait de l'orgasme des illuminés qui l'avaient violée. Enceinte de leur haine, elle se donnait en spectacle…avec la rage d'une mère qui réalise trop tard que le père de son enfant est son propre rejeton.
>
> [Algiers was sick. Wallowing in purulent filth and defecated continuously...She clung to her hillsides, her skirts hitched up above her shattered vagina...her eyes rolled over, her mouth drooling while the people held their breath before the incestuous monster she was bringing into the world. Amid pain and nausea, Algiers was giving birth. Amid horror, *naturally*. And the men, unwittingly, join the carnival of the damned. Algiers was burning with the orgasm of the enlightened who had raped her. Pregnant from their hatred, she gave herself over to spectacle...with the rage of a mother who realizes too late that the father of her child is her own offspring] (91-2).[63]

Although Khadra writes allegorically in this passage, he nevertheless anchors the violence in the reality of the pervasive disease, rape, and slaughter of 1990s Algeria, heeding therefore Mbembe's declaration that the tropes of "'[m]outh,' 'belly,' and 'phallus' used in popular jokes and speech, must be located in the real world, in real time….They are active statements about the human condition, and contribute integrally to the making of the political culture in the postcolony" (108).

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[62] Khadra is of course not the first to deploy these tropes; Kateb Yacine presents a similar image of Algeria as a mother and incest-born lover in his 1956 novel, *Nedjma*. Yet Khadra takes up this legacy and amplifies the image to a much more graphic and gruesome degree, turning it inside out in the process. See also Réda Bensmaïa's scholarship on Maghrebi literature, in which he evokes the connection between nascent nation and metaphors related to family. The image of an incestuous mother in a French-language text necessarily recalls Racine's *Phèdre* and its legacy as well.

[63] The published English translation both considerably reorganizes and waters down the violent passage; this translation here is mainly my own, with some help from the published version. All other translations of French here, unless otherwise indicated, are mine.

In one of the novel's only footnotes in which Khadra explains an Arabic term, he discusses the *sabaya*, that is, women who were spoils of war, kidnapped, raped, and then, upon the first sign of pregnancy, murdered. So whereas the above passage depicts a figurative act of incestuous rape it is nevertheless mirrors the particular forms of violence to which women were subjected during the civil war.[64] While Khadra writes in yonic – rather than Mbembe's phallic – terms here, Khadra's metaphor declares the human condition of 1990's Algeria to be one of misery, horror, and self-destruction.

In this metaphor, Algiers finds itself surrounded by disease, filth, and infertility, all of which it generated itself through a transfusion of its legacy of anti/colonial violence. Reminiscent of Mbembe's claims that the "flow of shit from the physique [of the obesity of men in power]… make[s] it possible to follow the trail of violence and domination intrinsic to the *commandement*" (107), the metaphoric fecal matter from the raped woman permits readers to trace the violence to her body to the fighting between governmental and Islamist forces. In this city of vomit and defecation, Khadra makes it clear that the sickness, the disease, comes from *within*, from inside as the excrement is already infected. Likewise, the image of a monstrous child as the product of an incestuous relationship, implies an interiority, as if Algiers – and greater Algeria – is on a self-destructive path. Nothing about the passage indicates a healthy woman (city): her "child" is conceived out of rape and hate, and the birth is described in excruciating detail – especially in considering the "shattered vagina" here[65] – which suggests this "woman" will likely be unable to conceive and give birth again. The pulverized genitalia creates a ripple effect whereby time rips

[64] Any woman deemed "indelicate," that is who refused to wear the veil in public or defied sharia law in other ways, was an enemy in need of elimination. Khadra indicates this in a brief passage of a woman who is stabbed to death by her own brother because she does not wear the veil.

[65] The English translation is much less severe and brutal, with "swollen genitals," but the French 'éclaté' has more of a sense of destroyed, in pieces.

open so that the atrocities of 1990s Algeria become an unbroken, continuous flow of the FLN's anti/colonial use of violence to counter (mimic) the heinous acts of the colonialists.[66]

Khadra shows that the legacy of post/colonial violence in 1990's Algeria is leading to its own demise, as this violence is all the more so untenable because it distorts the revolutionary anti/colonial violence of 1950s-1960s Algeria which it also reproduces.[67] Although the Islamists inscribe themselves in this legacy of anti-colonial violence – or, actually, rather because of it – Khadra makes manifest what Frantz Fanon notes in *Les damnés de la terre*, that this cycle of violence/counter-violence is totalizing and ultimately not a long-term viable solution because it absorbs, consumes, the individuals into a greater body of violence from which there is no coming back.[68] In other words, Khadra's novel suggests that because the fighting in the 1990s continued to self-transfuse the colonial legacy and heritage of anti/colonial violence, Algeria is creating the terms of its own elimination. In the midst of his metaphor of the diseased, filthy, incestuous city Khadra inserts the identification of the men enacting the violence, unbeknownst to them, with the "damnés."[69] In the context of Algeria, particularly Algerian violence, this reference necessarily recalls Frantz Fanon's seminal work on violence during the Algerian war of independence. Fanon's analysis of the Algerian population's belief that the only way out of colonial violence was

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[66] See Stora 1991 wherein he notes how the FLN would kidnap and also slit the throats of their enemy and Rey who describes similar acts committed by the French army.

[67] Numerous scholars have highlighted the similarities and parallels between the Algerian war of independence and its civil war 30 years later, in particular the violence as well as the rhetoric used to fight the current state. See LeSueur; Martinez 2000, 2007; Mundy; Stora 2008. Khadra scholars Daoud and Brisley have respectively also noted parallels between 1950s/60s and 1990s Algeria. However, no one has claimed that the violence is a *distorted, perverted* reproduction of the violence in the 1950s-1960s.

[68] Fanon states, "Cette praxis violente est totalisante, puisque chacun se fait maillon violent de la grande chaîne, du grand organisme violent surgi comme réaction à la violence première du colonialiste. […] Illuminée par la violence, la conscience du peuple se rebelle contre toute pacification...L'entreprise de mystification devient, à long terme, pratiquement impossible. [This violent praxis is totalizing, since each one makes himself a violent link in the great chain, of the great violent organism which has emerged as a reaction to the first violence of the colonialist...Illuminated by the violence, the people's conscience rebels against all pacification...The enterprise of mystification becomes, in the long term, practically impossible]" (90-91).

[69] This is but one of several other references Khadra makes to "les damnés."

to respond with violence nevertheless led him to conclude that this "counter-violence" was not a tenable position. Writing before the end of the war for independence, Fanon claims that once the war is over and won, the violence will not cease, but that rather, in a foreshadowing of Achille Mbembe (2001), the decolonized will reproduce both the structures and colonizers' logic of Manicheism.[70] The Algerians are "les damnés" due as much to the violence they endured at the hands of the colonizers as to their engagement in a violence which will lead to their own destruction. Khadra's references to "les damnés" connect then these men through a grisly depiction of female genitalia and violations to the female body to the national Algerian body that fought against French colonial presence. Consequently, the continuity with the anti/colonial forces depicts a repetition of the past or rather perhaps an unbroken circle wherein Algeria does not move forward but merely turns around and around in time and space. Khadra inscribes therefore postcolonial Algeria and its violence into a body which can only ever damn itself.

Khadra's aggressive prose amplifies his own statement that "Rien n'est tout à fait endemique [à l'Afrique],[71] through a language of disease, in particular gangrene.[72] For the GIA, the group behind many of the massacres of 1997-1998, all of Algeria is sick: "Et ce pays gangrené qui est le nôtre, que la sécheresse terrasse à cause de nos péchés…[And this gangrened country which is ours, that the drought levels because of our sins]" (228). *À quoi rêvent les loups* suggests

[70] Fanon states "On voit donc que le manichéisme premier qui régissait la société coloniale est conservé intact dans la période de décolonisation. C'est que le colon ne cesse jamais d'être l'ennemi, l'antagoniste, très précisément l'homme à abattre. [We see therefore that the first Manichaeism while ruled the colonial society is preserved intact in the period of decolonization. There, the colonial never stops being the enemy, the antagonist, quite precisely the man to beat]" (52).

[71] See Khadra 2012

[72] Writing 30 years after the Algerian war of independence drew to a close, Benjamin Stora (1991) described how both sides – France and Algeria – deployed both lies and repressions as to the reality of the war, albeit in different ways. Stora further details how this "denial" led to both a forgetting and to a gangrene eating away at society. On Algeria's side, the FLN put forth the idea of "le peuple unanime [unanimous people]," denied that there was ever in-fighting nor that they committed violence against civilians. The inability or unwillingness to face or put forth the truth creates an infection, which slowly eats away at the fabric of society. See also Stora 2008.

then that the post/colonial body politic – through a belief in the gangrene, that is, moral corruption and decay, of its society, one which is merely a continuation of the gangrened colonial presence – has mutated into a new body, one who is also decaying, dying, one whose disease is likely beyond cure. Khadra links the human body to the political body where both are diseased through this use of violence and thereby makes manifest the grotesque complicity between post/colonial and anti/colonial bodies. Near the novel's end, after a scene of massacre which ends in brutal infanticide, one of Nafa's colleagues tells him they have gone too far and that "Même en enfer, les damnés et les démons vont manifester pour exiger du bon Dieu de nous transférer dans un enfer aux antipodes du leur. [Even in hell, the damned and the demons will protest and ask God to transfer us to another hell, far from theirs]" (267-268).[73] In this Dantesque reference, wherein these Islamists will go even deeper into Hell, this last massacre-related appeal to "les damnés" suggests that the Islamists have ruptured their present and interlocked with their past, creating a continuation, yet distortion of the revolutionary, anti/colonial violence.

Infanticide: Killing the Future

A quoi rêvent les loups opens in a sort of prologue in which Khadra flashes back and forward several times in the novel's chronological diegesis: it begins with a brutal act of infanticide committed by the novel's protagonist with no context, framework, or warning whatsoever. Nafa's first person narrative voice looks back on the savagery of his act with shock, perhaps regret : "Pourquoi l'archange Gabriel n'a-t-il pas retenu mon bras lorsque je m'apprêtais à trancher la gorge de ce bébé brûlant de fièvre? Pourtant, de toutes mes forces, j'ai cru que jamais ma lame n'oserait effleurer ce cou frêle, à peine plus gros qu'un poignet de mioche. [Why did the archangel Gabriel not hold my arm back as I prepared to slice the throat of that baby burning with fever?

[73] Published translation.

Yet, with all my strength, I never believed my blade would dare to grace that frail neck, barely larger than a kid's wrist]" (11).[74] The precision of the vocabulary and amplification of contact – slice throat, graze neck – create a troubling, explicit image of the spilled blood and resultant carnage – not mentioned yet nevertheless present – as the blade pierces the baby's tiny neck.[75] Whereas in the rest of the novel, Khadra uses the verb "égorger" here he describes the act more painstakingly through his use of "trancher" – which connotes decapitation unlike the former.[76] This not only draws out the violence, but makes the image of the savage act even more gruesome and gut-wrenching. Khadra depicts a heinous act in some of the most disturbing terms to take this archetypal murder of Biblical resonance and launch it into the reality of modern, turn of the century Algeria.

The opening passage, just two lines, is a preamble to a later scene – that is placed structurally near the novel's end – in which Khadra details the massacre which ends with Nafa's brutal infanticide. In this much longer, bloodier scene, the explicit, varied prose makes manifest the grisly horror of the massacre:

> Les premiers coups de hache leur fracassèrent le crâne…Le sabre cognait, la hache pulvérisait, le couteau tranchait…Les larmes giclaient plus haut que le sang…Les bourreaux massacraient sans peine et sans merci…Bientôt les cadavres s'entassèrent dans les patios, bientôt le sang rougit les flaques de pluie. Et Nafa frappait, frappait, frappait ; il n'entendait que sa rage battre à ses tempes ne voyait que l'épouvante des visages torturés. Pris dans un tourbillon de cris et de fureur, il avait totalement perdu la raison. / Lorsque je suis revenu à moi, c'était trop tard. Le miracle n'avait pas eu lieu. Aucun archange n'avait retenu ma main….J'étais là, soudain dégrisé, un bébé ensanglanté entre les mains. J'avais du sang jusque dans les yeux.

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[74] Interestingly enough, this graphic opening passage is moved several pages later in the English translation, as if the shock is too much for Anglophone readers.

[75] Through its Biblical overtones, this passage could be read as a scene of infant sacrifice. In that case, this baby is at once a representation of literal violence which took place in 1990's Algeria and an archetype of many religious texts of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. The recurrence of the motif is noteworthy here because, even in Biblical references, infanticide is always portrayed as the most horrific of events.

[76] See *Le Grand Robert*

> The first blows of the axe shattered their skulls...The saber struck, the axe crushed, the knife slashed…The tears spurted higher than the blood…The executioners massacred without sorrow or mercy...Soon the corpses piled up in the courtyards, soon the blood reddened the rain puddles. And Nafa struck, struck, struck; he could only hear his rage throbbing in his temples, could only see the horror of the tortured faces. Caught in a whirlwind of screams and fury, he had lost all reason. / Once I had come back to myself, it was too late. The miracle had not happened. No archangel had held me back...I was there, suddenly sobered, a bloody baby in my hands. I had blood up to my eyes (262-263).

This brutal passage is one of the novel's most terrifying and powerful scenes, due as much to its visual language (coups de hache, se ruèrent, l'épouvante, tourbillon, retenu ma main, ensanglanté) as to its use of sound and onomatopoeia (fracassèrent, cognait, pulvérisait, tranchait, cris). One can almost hear the body parts being cut, ripped, beaten, smashed to pieces so that readers cannot escape the horror of these massacres but must face it, confront it in all of its gruesome precision.[77] Here, Khadra takes the novel's first words to an over-saturation in the number and variety of nouns and verbs which describe the slaughter. Further, whereas the opening lines to which this passage alludes do not explicitly mention blood, Khadra opens the floodgates as it were to an overabundance of gore in this scene. In this surplus, the text confronts this particular brutality even more violently but also resonates with the anti/colonial violence of the 1950s-1960s – in which the FLN also slit the throats of enemies[78] – to merge with this distorted extreme (infanticidal) form of post(anti)colonial violence. Through this rupture in time, the novel evokes then a society that is literally killing itself off, murdering its offspring and therefore its own future, before it even has a chance to develop.

Irreversible Dehumanization in the Postcolony

In the only principal scene of violence unrelated to the civil war, Khadra manages

[77] Mundy and Martinez (2007) respectively detail events – such as infanticide – similar to the ones described by Khadra here.
[78] See Stora 1991

nevertheless to underscore a pervasive atmosphere of horror and casual treatment of life in this post/colonial society. Prior to his engagement in FIS, Nafa goes to work as a chauffeur for a rich family, the Rajas, whose son at one point is with a young prostitute who dies from a drug overdose. Hamid, a trusted employee, and Nafa are asked to take care of it and as Nafa drives Hamid and the cadaver to the woods outside of the city, he quickly realizes they are not there to bury her:

> [Hamid] farfouilla dans les buissons alentour, rapporta une grosse pierre, la souleva et l'écrasa sur le visage de la fille avec une violence telle qu'un éclat de chair m'atteignit la joue. Pris au dépourvu, je me pliai en deux pour dégueuler. Hamid frappa encore, et encore, m'éclaboussant de giclées de sang et de fragments d'os. Chacun de ses *han* me lardait l'esprit et me courbait un peu plus. […] Mon urine cascadait sur mes cuisses flageolantes. À bout, laminé, je tombai à quatre pattes, la face dans mes vomissures, et me mis à hurler, à hurler…
>
> (Hamid) rummaged in the surrounding bushes, brought back a large stone, raised it and brought it down on the girl's face with such violence that a lump of flesh hit my cheek. Caught unawares, I bent double and threw up. Hamid struck again, and again, splattering me with blood and splinters of bone. Each one of his *aarghs* felt like a knife being thrust into me and bent me further...My urine cascaded down my trembling thighs. Drained, exhausted, I fell onto all fours, my face in my vomit, and begin to howl and howl... (75).[79]

Khadra's use of "éclat," "giclée," "*han*," "hurler," "atteignit," and "éclaboussant" generate an overwhelming, overloading, of the senses where readers, too, can see, hear, and practically feel the gruesome flesh, bone, and blood being scattered and sprayed. Yet again, Khadra's language is one of profusion and exhibits here an overabundance of violence on an already dead woman, which causes Nafa to lose control of his body, as urine and vomit flow and mix with the dead woman's blood. This glut consumes the reader but is also that through which readers consume and become a part of the violence. Not only does this connect the reader's body to the bodies which perform and have violence performed upon them, but in so doing, the excess of language reflects the excess, the extra(ordinary), in the violence itself.

[79] Published translation.

Khadra's profusely savage prose also generates a new cleft through which Nafa is (re)inscribed into the colonial paradigm of imposed animality. Khadra engages an animalistic language wherein the use of "pattes" and its association here with "hurler" make Nafa's cries more like one of the howls we could imagine bursting forth from one of the titular wolves.[80] Reminiscent of Fanon's and Mbembe's respective discussions on how colonialism imposed an animality on the colonized, outside forces create Nafa's loss of control and abasement here.[81] Although Nafa's body is forced to reintegrate the colonial paradigm of bestiality in a postcolonial society, Khadra turns the question of humanity versus imposed animality inside out when Nafa becomes the one generating carnage.

As the prologue continues, Nafa tells us how he committed his first homicide, the assassination of a lawyer who poorly defended one of the Islamists. This was an act which was next to physically impossible for him, yet once completed, Nafa realizes something has irrevocably changed within him: "Pareil à une météorite, j'ai traversé le mur du son, pulvérisé le point de non-retour: je venais de basculer corps et âme dans un monde parallèle, d'où je ne reviendrai jamais plus. [Like a meteorite, I crossed the sound barrier, crushed the point of no return: I had just tumbled, body and soul, into a parallel from which I would never come back]" (16). Much like Mbembe's assertion that the powerless colonized body is propelled "out of the world" and "takes

[80] The novel's title, literally "What do Wolves Dream of ?" certainly invites a psychoanalytic reading, particularly of the dream: if a wolf can dream, is it still a wolf? In this reading, readers would certainly have to reckon with the possible interpretation that the novel is but a dream. However, the present study reads the title through a postcolonial lens, focusing on the wolf. If dreams typically belong to the human domain, then the possibility that the wolves in this novel can dream would suggest that even the novel's animals are more human than the humans represented therein.

[81] Fanon states regarding the colonial logic and language, "Parfois ce manichéisme va jusqu'au bout de sa logique et déshumanise le colonisé. À proprement parler, il l'animalise. Et, de fait, le langage du colon, quand il parle du colonisé, est un langage zoologique. [Sometimes this Manicheism goes to the end of its logic and dehumanizes the colonized. Strictly speaking, he animalizes (the colonized). And, in fact, the language of the colonist, when he speaks of the colonized, is a zoological language]" (45). Furthermore, Fanon underlines that, in addition to this language, the colonizers maintained the colonized in a position of submission through force and violence. See also Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*.

on himself or herself the act of his or her own destruction and prolongs his/her own crucifixion" (173-174), Nafa's post-colonized body creates the terms of his own ruin through this first homicide. The pulverization – one which Nafa feels and which scholar Mohammed Daoud notes provokes a "profonde mutation," creating a separation between the referent and the character (72) – equally provokes a fissure through which Nafa begins his path to dehumanization. Yet Nafa's dehumanization is one which, unlike in the case of colonial violence, is imposed from within rather from without.

While Nafa extends the colonial paradigm, he also twists it, fracturing it to the point where unlike Fanon's claims regarding decolonization, the possibility to re-humanize is made impossible.[82] After the massacre and infanticide occur, Nafa comes across his own image: "Il y avait une glace…J'étais choqué. Je ne me reconnus plus. Mon reflet n'avait rien d'humain. [There was a mirror...I was shocked. I no longer recognized myself. There was nothing human in my reflexion]" (269). The mirror similarly shows Nafa in an alternative universe, but one where he is now inhuman, where he no longer sees any *human*ity in his own image as the consequences of his savagery mark, mutate, are made visibly manifest, upon his body. Just as Frantz Fanon argues that the violence of (de)colonization "modifie fondalement l'être [fundamentally alters the being]" (40), *À quoi rêvent les loups* suggests that one cannot kill and be just human at the same time, that once one kills one has always already set in motion one's own annihilation.

Whereas the dehumanization here is a distorted iteration of the colonial paradigm, Khadra's prose indicates that Nafa's acts create a permanent rupture from which there is no healing. After

[82] While not condoning the violence of the war of independence, Fanon states nevertheless, "[La décolonisation] introduit dans l'être un rythme propre, apporté par les nouveaux hommes, un nouveau langage, une nouvelle humanité. La décolonisation est véritablement création d'hommes nouveaux. [(Decolonization introduces a proper rhythm into the being, brought by the new men, a new language, a new humanity. Decolonization is the veritable creation of new men)]" (40).

the massacre, Nafa's colleague tells him "Des bêtes immondes lâchées dans la nature, voilà ce que nous sommes devenus. [Vile beasts let loose nature, that is what we have become]" (268).[83] Fanon had underlined that, for the colonized Algerians, violence was viewed as the only solution to escape the inhuman, animal-like identity the colonialists imposed on them. But for Nafa, there is no coming back from the beast he has made himself into, as Khadra implies that Nafa dies shortly after hearing this. Rather than the colonial body imposing bestiality upon the colonized bodies, the perpetrators of post/colonial violence have shattered all remaining traces of *their own* humanity. Khadra's novel shows, though, that this legacy of violence has turned the world inside out, where post/colonial bodies perpetuate yet also fracture the paradigms of anti/colonial bodies. The post/colonial bodies have ruptured not just time, but their own bodies and turned themselves into animals, have become irreversibly more beast than man.

La Polyandre

In 1947, the Belgian colonial presence, in particular the missionaries, rendered the practice of polyandry – in which women have multiple husbands – illegal, arguing that it was "incompatible avec l'ordre public… désastreuse [incompatible with the public order...disastrous]" (Bolya 47-48).[84] Yet, it seems that only female polygamy was completely outlawed; Pitshandenge (1996) notes that, although both polyandry and polygamy were forbidden by the law, polygamy was more

[83] Kadari notes the dehumanizing role violence adopts in all of Khadra's works. She claims that, taken together, all of Khadra's oeuvre shows that only the dehumanizing type of violence is capable of subsisting in an apocalyptic universe created by this same violence. However, through its engagement with Fanon, *A quoi rêvent les loup*s is actually an exception to this rule as Khadra ultimately presents this violence as self-destructive.

[84] In her review of *La Polyandre*, Zabus states *"*Anthropologists assure us that only 0.5 percent of world societies practice polyandry, but Bolya insists that it is a current practice which survived the Belgian Congo's ban of 31 January 1947 and is thriving along with Parisian serial monogamy" (195). It should also be noted that at the time of Bolya's writing, polyandry was starting to disappear, largely due to the forces of modernization, forces which Pitshandenge link to the influences and presence of colonization and Christianity in the Congo. Nevertheless, the practice has not been completely eradicated, so that Bolya's gender reversal of patriarchal bodies remains rooted in a (perhaps outdated and rare) reality.

openly tolerated (18).[85] Likewise, in his 1998 novel *La Polyandre* Baenga Bolya shows female polygamy was outlawed while its male counterpart was allowed to continue as before (104-5); colonization thus doubly subjugated women. The extra subjugation became a form of sexual colonization in which black female sexuality became controlled by law while, on the other hand, the European white men fetishized the African woman.[86] This sexual colonialism becomes neo/colonial in contemporary France where, as Pim Higginson (2011) argues in his analysis of *La Polyandre*, the French characters display a fascination with Africa, particularly with polyandry, treating the women as erotic objects while French society condemns it at the same time.[87] Along the lines of what Sharon Patricia Holland notes in *The Erotic Life of Racism* the sexual neo/colonization of polyandry voids the erotic value for the black women as they become erotic value for the French: "Blackness…not only produces 'erotic value' for whiteness, but it holds the very impossibility of its own pleasure through becoming the sexualized surrogate of another" (46).[88] Colonization makes manifest the ties between the erotic and racism and renders African women triply subjugated.

La Polyandre is ostensibly a detective fiction about the serial murder and castration of male Congolese immigrants to France. However, its in-depth and detailed descriptions of the Lele polyandrist tradition[89] – wherein any male who violates the rules of the female-run institution is punished by flagellation, castration or other inflictions of pain on the genitalia – accentuate rather

[85] Malu, who mentions the Jesuits referred to polyandry as a form of prostitution, also notes that the law of 1947 specifically made polyandry illegal. See also Pitshandenge.
[86] See also Barbara Omolade who argues that "The European man…perceived the African's sensual ways according to his own cultural definitions of sex" and highlights that equally in the United States, the "white man [had] hate and desire for the black woman" (362).
[87] See also Kom, who states that Bolya's novel "proposait une vive satire d'une certaine catégorie de Blancs, amateurs de chair noire [proposed a lively satire of a certain category of Whites, lovers of black flesh]"(41).
[88] The term "erotic" is closely related to, and can sometimes be confused with, the term "sexual;" the distinction between the two is not always clear. However, as I draw upon Holland and Lorde in this study, I will keep with their language and principally use the term "erotic."
[89] The Lele are a people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

subversive representations of female sexuality and practices of violence.[90] Bolya describes the physical "sanctions" these men receive in graphic detail in a language of extreme corporeal violence, in a language of violence that is similar to that of Khadra both in terms of body fluids spilling and in the ways in which mutations and mutilations on the body engender a movement back and forth in time and space. Bolya's language is less gory, gruesome, or blood-spattered, but is more crude, lurid, and depraved. Through this surplus of vulgarity and obscenity, Bolya makes his words flow outside the text and wash over readers and, like in Khadra, implicate readers in the monstrosities they witness. Furthermore, while Khadra's *A quoi rêvent les loups* contains scenes of violence against women, Bolya amplifies the female experience through a reversal and subversion of the roles.[91] Bolya inverts the established Western norms of male dominance in sexuality and violence to emphasize *through language* an overabundance of monstrous acts committed on women at the hands of both white and black men, in order to de-banalize the sexual objectification and violent victimization to which women were and are subject.[92] While Bolya did not explicitly discuss writing *La Polyandre* as an inversion of gender roles in sexual violence in

[90] This necessarily recalls the controversial feminist scholar, Catherine MacKinnon who implies that all sexual acts implicate aggression (cited in Xavier 2016 on Beyala). In her analysis of Calixthe Beyala, Subha Xavier notes the echoes of MacKinnon in Beyala's writing: "feminist awareness passes through the recognition of violence as an integral part of sexual domination" (7, personal translation).

[91] Although *La Polyandre* might be thought to run counter to Audre Lorde's call for black women being able to define themselves – it is, after all, another example of a man writing about women – the theme of violence against women and denunciation thereof, is important to Bolya and common in his writing (*See La profanation des vagins*). See also Leila Wimmer (2011) who argues that Virginie Despentes's *Baise-moi* rape revenge novel, upon which the film of the same name is adapted, engages in a "role reversal that serve[s] to highlight the deeply entrenched understanding of the female body as a victim's body on which crime fiction has traditionally depended" (132). Wimmer further notes that noir and detective fiction are historically and traditionally male-focused genres, in which misogyny and violence against women figure heavily.

[92] Feminist scholars have long highlighted male domination in the domains of both sexuality and violence. Black feminist scholars have also claimed that black women in particular are in a position of "double jeopardy" or double oppression in terms of both gender and race. Rosemarie Putnam Tong notes how Patricia Hill Collins describes "the objectification of the black female body"and how bell hooks claims black women can be victims to both white men and black men (220-229). See Holland; Lorde; Omolade. Furthermore, besides Bolya's own work *La profanation des vagins* which denounces the use of rape as weapon of war, both Alain Mabanckou's *Les petits-fils nègres de Vercingétorix* and Sony Labou Tansi's *La vie et demie*, among others, reference the rape and sexual violence endured by African women at the hands of African men.

order to highlight violence against women, I make this argument based on his work *La profanation des vagins*, in which Bolya explicitly denounces rape against women in the Congo and elsewhere in the world. By writing female-on-male violence especially vis à vis sexuality, Bolya reverses gender roles to highlight male sexual dominance and violence, that is the conduct of (neo/colonial) patriarchal bodies politic, as norm, normal, normalized.[93]

Yet, Bolya's depiction of the female experience is also a sort of reversion in that the women re-produce nevertheless the patriarchal body politic – one gender still subjugates another in both sexuality and violence –so that they too become complicit in the continuation, extension, re-generation of these bodies. What I am arguing here is, just as in Khadra, time and space become simultaneously ruptured and continuous, where time flows equally forward and backward. As Bolya also shows, the Lele women under Belgian colonization continued to practice polyandry, albeit secretly, a clandestinity that also continues in France where bigamy is illegal.[94] The continued practice of polyandry – a tradition which entails body mutilations – therefore inscribes the Lele women in their own (subversive) legacy of violence, one which runs concomitant to colonial and post/colonial legacies. However, the Lele legacy of violence is legitimate within the rules of their own culture; it is not until the Congolese women migrate to France that their polyandrist tradition and its ensuing violence become criminalized. Once in France, their now criminalized violence shines a light on other forms of violence which immigrants in France

[93] In her analysis of the controversial film *Baise-moi* – a film of the new extremism and a tale of female revenge after one protagonist is raped – Leila Wimmer notes that the graphic depiction of female sexuality and violence against men is a subversion and transgression. Wimmer further declares that the film "foregrounds exclusion both at the level of race (both women are *beurs [Arabs])* and gender (both are women)" (133) so that Bolya's transgression on both a racialized and gendered plane is inscribed in this tradition. However, what is unique to Bolya is not just that he is putting *black, African* female bodies on display, but also that – unlike what Wimmer ultimately concludes in her analysis, that the film highlights "inter-ethnic female bonds" in order to posit Frenchness as something hybrid (idem) – Bolya seeks to separate the African female from a white, French paradigm through underscoring the disturbing nature of French appropriation of the Congolese tradition.

[94] Malu also notes that the women continued to practice polyandry secretly after the law of 1947.

routinely undergo. Nevertheless, through their subversive regeneration of patriarchal bodies politic the Lele become then accomplices to the legacies of violence from both Belgian colonials and contemporary French metropolitans. Bolya converges all of these legacies of violations on the African body – female and white contemporary French – through the character of Rosemonde. When Rosemonde attempts to appropriate the tradition of polyandry, she distorts the African tradition and it is at this point that Bolya's disturbingly base and cruel language reaches its peak, presenting the African body as a victim of a new legacy of neo/colonial (sexual) violence which joins together and blurs the Belgian, French, and Lele legacies. Bolya's excessively debased language not only ruptures time and space – where one is not sure if the violence being exercised is in colonial Congo or contemporary France – but in so doing reminds readers that the colonial bodies who practice violence are always already present.

Patriarchal Bodies of Mut(il)ation

In his analysis of the language in Bolya's first novel *Cannibale* (1986), as well as Sony Labou Tansi's *La Vie et demie* (1979), Pierre N'Da (2003) argues that the vulgarity of the language shows the truth of how depraved society and humans really are:

> La crudité des mots et la surenchère des expressions les plus dévergondées chez Bolya comme chez Labou Tansi inscrivent leur texte dans le vulgaire…il est à l'image de cette société dégénérée où il n'y a plus de valeur qui tienne…Si les valeurs humaines sont bafouées, il est tout à fait normal que cela s'en ressente dans le langage, un langage qui colle à la réalité et la restitue…pour dévoiler sans détour la superficialité de l'homme et l'avilissement dont il peut faire preuve. La transgression au plan de l'expression verbale…vise surtout à faire tomber le maquillage grotesque de la réalité sociale.
>
> The crudeness of the words and the outbidding of the most depraved expressions in Bolya as in Labou Tansi inscribe their text in the vulgar… it is in the image of this degenerate society where no values remain… If human values are tainted, it is completely normal that this is felt in the language, a language which sticks to reality and restores it...to unveil without detour the superficiality of man and the degradation which he can show. Transgression at the level of verbal expression...aims especially to remove the grotesque

makeup of social reality (57).[95]

The graphic reality depicted by Bolya's language of profuse obscenity and crudeness in *La Polyandre* is one in which African women find themselves in a paradigm of (European, white) male sexual dominance.[96] The sexual dominance represents one way in which post/colonial female bodies, victims to sexual violence, are inscribed in a patriarchal body politic. Emblematic of the sexual violence to which black females are victims at the hands of white men is Bolya's use of the uncommonly used verb "bistouriser." While its stem "bistouri [scalpel]" would indicate a surgical lexicon, Bolya's white male characters use it exclusively in sexual contexts, such as when lead inspector Nègre contemplates how he would like to "bistouriser" Oulématou, the principal Lele polyandrist (87).[97] This would not just be a matter of penile penetration, but in likening the phallus to a sharpened instrument with which to enter the vagina, the text locates the act in a world of violence wherein the black, sexually colonized female is (without consent) to be cut from within, recalling perhaps the female genital mutilations which continue to take place in many African countries. Nevertheless, this particular instance of neo/colonial mutilation remains in the realm of the male imagination in Bolya, so that females are never directly victims to violence within the diegesis. Rather, forms of torment are performed upon the male body by women in an overflow of degradation and pain.

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[95] With the exception of Pim Higginson's article in which he underlines Bolya's critique of the European ethnography of the "Other," scholarship is largely lacking on *La Polyandre*. Two exceptions are Kom's article on the polar africain, where she highlights Bolya's depictions of the quotidian life of the Congolese immigrant community in France and Moudileno's argument that the vulgarity in *La Polyandre* has to do with freedom. The vast majority of scholarship on Bolya focuses on either the abject in his novel on cannibalism, *Cannibale* or on giving voice to violence against women in *La profanation des vagins*. See Cazenave and Célérier; Chiwengo; Spleth.

[96] When the lead Parisian inspector in charge of the murder investigation, Robert Nègre, learns that polyandry implies women should have several husbands, he responds "Bon sang, c'est le monde à l'envers. [Good god, it's the world upside down]" (59).

[97] The naming of the white, red-headed lead inspector as "Negro" is certainly ironic and perhaps meant to further undermine Nègre's authority, particularly when he engages in racist behavior while espousing anti-racist rhetoric.

There is one exception, however, to the representation of women as perpetrators of violence: the murderer of African male immigrants, Bourru, a white male journalist who outwardly condemns racism. Bolya's language in scenes where Bourru performs or has performed violence is less severe, has less glut, but manages nonetheless to saturate the pages with blood and other bodily fluids. From the novel's beginning, blood and fluids loom present, threatening the existence of white, contemporary French characters. The novel opens on the description of three "ebony" bodies lying in a pool of blood whose penises have been "sawed off" (11). There are the white women who lose their Hermès scarves in the blood pools and question whether the victims are not rapists of one of their fellow white women. But the bigger threat is the AIDS virus as marked upon the victims' bodies with the sign, "Nègre=Sida [Negro=AIDS]" (idem). AIDS is in, fact, part of the motive behind the murders as Higginson notes: "African men are agents of a toxic sexuality (AIDS) that threatens the stability of the hermetically contained Western subject's authority and sexual ownership of the racial other" (124). Although Bourru founded an organization "Capote pour Tous [Condoms for All]" to help African men stop the AIDS epidemic, in Bourru's mind AIDS is a uniquely African phenomenon, indicating the latent racism behind his so-called charitable acts. Furthermore, building upon Higginson's notion of the "sexual owner of the racial other" AIDS is only part of Bourru's motives, as he also was merely jealous and could not stand his black, female polyandrists having other partners. Bourru epitomizes then this sexual colonization and patriarchal body politic wherein the black female is basically considered his property and should therefore not be shared with any other male, particularly not the "sexually dangerous" African male. Although in these brief references to blood pools and AIDS, Bolya's language remains relatively allusive –readers never directly witness Bourru kill anyone –the mutilation of these male victims remains present.

Nevertheless, Bolya writes one scene in which Bourru– with the help of an African male who films the entire scene – reenacts the torture of three African men right up to but not including their castration and murder. Oddly enough though, Bourru (perhaps to try and implicate a woman as the killer and throw the police off his trail) dresses up as a blond woman during the filmed reenactment. Despite the revelation at the passage's end that the three "victims" tied themselves up willingly, the scene of their "torture" begins as though it were real:

> Trois Africains au visage charnu, les yeux hagards, gisaient nus sur la moquette. Leurs jambes et leurs bras étaient entravés par des chaînes. Autour de leur cou un collier d'acier les empêchait de bouger la tête. De grosses boules… étaient enfouies dans leur bouche, interdisant toute parole. Ils suffoquaient… Des Polaroïds représentant les suppliciés étaient jetés pêle-mêle sur un futon…Une autre photo montrait les Africains rigolards se faire attacher avec des chaînes par la jeune femme (132-3)
>
> Three plump-faced Africans, eyes distraught, were lying naked on the carpet. Their legs and arms were shackled by chains. A necklace of steel around their necks prevented them from moving their heads. Large balls…were stuffed into their mouths, forbidding any speech. They were suffocating… Some Polaroids representing the tortured men were thrown here and there on a futon…Another photo showed the joking Africans let themselves be tied up with chains by the young woman.

Bolya concludes this passages with another reference to the three African men as "suppliciés" suggesting that, while the reenactment perhaps started as a fake recreation of events, it quickly turned into a real version and the men endured real torture, distress, and suffocation. Although the passage's beginning could be interpreted perhaps as erotic fiction, through his repeated reference to the "suppliciés" Bolya forces us to reevaluate the numerous details of the agony that these men undergo. Bolya dwells on violence here through a verbosity and a plethora of details in which he underscores the restraint and entrapment of these African men.

Any marking upon their bodies from the chains is imposed by what appears to be a white French woman in a semi-reversal of patriarchal violence. Bourru's cross-dressing partly inscribes him in the subversion of the patriarchy body politic as if now it is a woman who violates male

bodies. These African men appear to genuinely suffer, to be real victims to a "woman" where the female body enters to counteract, to take vengeance upon, the patriarchy. Nevertheless, any matriarchal element is a false addition, a temporary disguise, so that Bourru re-iterates the paradigm of colonial violence upon a (formerly) colonized body. Reminiscent of Fanon's remarks in *Peau noire, masques blancs*, Bourru is the "maître blanc [white master]" who literally through chains renders here "le nègre esclave [the negro a slave]." Bourru, though, repeats this gesture more than 40 years after Fanon published this work; his repetition, his iteration, then blurs the time of colonialism with the end of the 20th century, mimicking Mbembe's interlocking, entangled flow of time, but in a country which was never technically a colony itself, but a colonizer, equally blurring spaces of (post)colonization wherein perhaps France could be considered itself a postcolony.

Female Power in Re(de)generation

The polyandrous Lele women in Bolya's novel use men for their own desires, wherein, contrary to Western sexual practices highlighted by scholars of race and sexuality like Audre Lorde, they no longer define themselves in terms of male attention. The novel's Congolese women operate outside of the patriarchal body politic, all the while using male bodies for their own sexual and reproductive desires, exercising Lorde's power of the erotic.[98] Lorde clarifies that, unlike in pornography where the sexual act is merely one of "doing," in the erotic, women "acutely and fully feel" sensations during the "doing" (54), are free to feel and do as they wish. It is from this female place of erotic power that the women create what they call "sanctions" against what they label as "infractions" committed by men who violate their established social rules. The vast

[98] Lorde's liberating eroticism opens up the possibility for homoerotic love between women. While the Lele women in *La Polyandre* help and support each other, particularly in matters of sexuality and reproduction, we never see them actively engage in in any homosexual or openly homoerotic behavior in the text.

majority of these punishments are physical and inflict pain and agony upon the male, examples of which include "planter sauvagement des aiguilles dans les testicules [savagely thrust needles in the testicles]" (66) and a woman who "frappa un grand coup de machette sur la verge [struck a big machete blow on the rod]" (53). The specificity and gratuitousness of the language – not simply "place" but "thrust" needles which is then amplified by the adverb, nor merely just castration – puts male genitalia on display as objects of pain, even in these small excerpts. It is through this gender reversal's flow of torment that the text locates a reflection of male-on-female violence while equally inscribing Lele in its own legacy of violence. Yet at the same time, this iteration of female revenge for male actions reinscribes their bodily violations in a system in which one gender dominates its opposite through both sexuality and violence.

In one of the longer depictions of female violence on men, Bolya quickly shifts from a scene of subversive punishment to sadism, in which the male serves as object on whom pain is inflicted for female pleasure. In this scene, a man is punished by his wife for having looked at another woman. The man has no voice, but enters the room, having accepted that he is to be punished, at which point his wife, Fatoumata, goes to him: "Elle le gifla et commença à lui ôter sa ceinture, puis son pantalon et enfin son caleçon. Une femme tendit à sa consoeur un fil électrique. Elle commença à la flageller sur les fesses. Les coups partaient à un rythme effréné. A chaque coup, la dame hurlait : 'Tes yeux te perdront.' [She slapped him and began to remove his belt, then his pants and finally his underwear. A woman held an electric cable out to her 'sister.' She began to whip it against his buttocks. The blows were at a frenzied rate. At each blow, the lady screamed: 'Your eyes will be your demise.']" (180). The wife's violence appears almost cathartic for her, as if with each blow she expels both her anger and her husband's desire to look. Yet Oulématou soon takes over, where her actions exceed the question of this man's (reluctant) consent and transform

the act from catharsis into the commodification of violence for pleasure. Her appropriation deepens and twists the Lele legacy of violence into something more than revenge or sanction:

> Celle-ci lui arracha le fil électrique et se rua vers l'organe sexuel du mari prisonnier. Elle le saisit de la main et commença à fouetter sa verge avec le fil électrique. Le malheureux hurla. Ses cris et ses pleurs envahirent la pièce. Oulématou ne se priva de flageller les testicules qui pendaient à l'air libre. Les vociférations de l'époux infidèle excitaient davantage Oulématou. Elle redoubla donc d'énergie et affina ses frappes chirurgicales… Une fois la séance de flagellation terminée, Oulématou prit une bouteille d'Evian et la versa sur les organes génitaux du puni afin de les refroidir. Le fautif évanoui ne bougea pas. Il bavait comme un nourrisson.
>
> She pulled the electric cable away and rushed upon the prisoner husband's sexual organ. She seized it with her hand and began to whip his penis with the electric cable. The misfortunate man howled. His screams and cries invaded the room. Oulématou did not hold back and whipped the testicles hanging in open air. The unfaithful spouse's vociferations excited Oulématou further. She doubled thus her energy and refined her surgical blows...Once the whipping session was over, Oulématou took a bottle of Evian and poured it on the genital organs of the punished man in order to cool them back down. The fainted culprit did not move. He was drooling like an infant (180).

Bolya's language manifests an overflow, where he spares little detail as he describes the act of torture; the penis and the testicles that are whipped as well as the man's ensuing agony: "pendaient à l'air libre," "frappes chirurgicales," and "bavait," "hurla," "cris," and "vociférations." Moreover, this overflow results in a negation of the man (albeit a different form from when a man is castrated) in the form of an infantilization, so that the man-as-infant becomes utterly dependent on the female for its nutrition. Looking beyond the punishment itself to the disturbing and detailed imagery used to describe it, the text's manifestation of excessive language underscores a collective desensitization to violence against women. Bolya inverts the vulgarity of the paradigm of female-as-victim-of-violence in order to recall this paradigm to mind and to show us how we are too often unmoved by this very vulgarity because it has always been commonplace.[99]

[99] In *On the Postcolony*, Mbembe cites the forms of domination during colonialism as phallic and also refers to female subordination in the postcolony. Nzongala-Ntalaja also refers to the violence African females suffered at the hands of colonials, specifically mentioning rape.

Here, Bolya presents another subversion in which female (Oulématou's) sexuality stems from – and commodifies – the male-body-in-pain. Much like what film scholar Laura Mulvey terms a "poetics of negation" that takes the form of a "new language of desire," Bolya negates the female body as object for consumption, showing it instead as one that consumes.[100] Similar to Asbjørn Grønstad's discussion in his analysis of Catherine Breillat's extreme cinema, in which Breillat seeks to reclaim "the specificity and integrity of the individual body" (89) Bolya's subversive gesture comes through a reestablishment of the integrity of the black female body. Nevertheless, the black female body's renewed integrity occurs at the expense of a violation of the integrity of the black male body. Although the Lele practice subverts the (patriarchal) sexual colonization, the women reproduce violence so that their subversion of violence comes only at the expense of the male. When it is Oulématou's turn to inflict punishment, Bolya extends her action to a non-consensual, sadistic, and even more torturous proportions as Oulématou wounds her victim's genitalia, thereby jeopardizing his ability to procreate. However, just as Bolya's female characters threaten infertility and impotence on their male scapegoats through castration and testicular injuries, they nevertheless reproduce the patriarchal body politic where one gender controls, subjugates, the body of the other. Thus, while these women are not the same as their perpetrators, they nonetheless remain complicit in the continuation, reproduction, of these bodies (politic) and their ongoing patriarchal and colonial oppression. Bolya's text confronts the (sexual, racialized) (post)(neo)colonial forms of subjugation that women face by turning these representations inside out in graphic, vulgar fashion to remove, the "makeup" of patriarchal reality as Pierre N'Da claims in "L'écriture de la transgression." Bolya's surplus of vulgarity ruptures

[100] In his work on extreme cinema, Grønstad analyzes Catherine Breillat's film *Anatomie de l'enfer* that claims the "new language of desire" Mulvey calls for comes through the "visually illicit." He further claims that "the film enacts a decommodification of the body that in turn implies a liberating gesture" (88-89).

time and space so that the colonial legacy of (sexual) violence interlocks with the turn of the 21st century and brings the (legacies of violence from) Congo to France.

La Maîtresse Blanche: the female neo/colonialist

Near the end of the novel, the text reveals that Rosemonde – a French, white character who has studied polyandry and helped immigrants come to France – only pursues, in her quest to become a polyandrist herself, the "clandestins"; that is, she takes advantage of this population's already fragile and marginal position to coerce them into doing what she desires. While *La Polyandre*'s surplus of vulgarity seeks to expose and subvert, in lurid terms, Eurocentric post/neo/colonial patriarchy, Bolya's novel shows that the same polyandrous punishments in the hands of a French woman becomes a perverted neo/colonial obscenity. In so doing, the French appropriation, much like the Belgian colonialists in the Congo when they outlawed the practice, impose once again a (distorted) European paradigm from without. Whereas the women in polyandry have the power from the tradition itself, Rosemonde engages in a disturbed power dynamic where she has to usurp strength to take advantage of men already in a weakened, vulnerable position. She then makes these men victims of violence to which they are not subject in the rules of polyandry. Instead, she reinforces the power of Western structures of gendered domination and violence and commits a neo/colonial sexual colonization of these men's bodies.

Rosemonde's appropriation becomes another iteration of colonial structures yet nevertheless presents two ruptures therein. First, like Bourru, she exercises degrading, debasing, dehumanizing acts not in a (former) colony, but in a country which was in fact the colonizer, further muddying the spaces of (post)colonization. Second, through a gender reversal Rosemonde recasts Fanon's "maître blanc" – who rendered the "nègre esclave" – from a female place of power; she becomes "la maîtresse blanche," and although perhaps a victim herself to patriarchal

subjugation becomes a perpetrator of a neo/colonial violent subjugation of the African. Through this particular rupture flow neo/colonial, post/colonial, and patriarchal legacies of violence. In a five-page excruciatingly long passage, Rosemonde pays a Ghanaian prostitute to commit degrading acts on an unwilling, drugged, tied-up African male. These actions humiliate both the prostitute and her male victim. In a twisted re-inscription of Fanon's claim that "le nègre est un jouet entre les mains du Blanc…[the negro is a toy in the hands of the white man] (114)" it is now a white *woman* who treats this man as the "plaything" upon which to act out her appropriative fantasy:

> Va pisser sur ce monsieur, ordonna Rosemonde en lui montrant du doigt un Africain frêle, les yeux livides, le visage émacié par la peur, qui était prostré, nu sur le sol… 'Assieds-toi dessus, écrase son membre avec tes fesses. Elles ressemblent au Kilimandjaro… -- Fais ce que je te dis! [...] De temps à autre, il poussait des cris inaudibles. Ses cordes vocales ne fonctionnaient presque plus. – 'Enfonce-lui ton beau derrière sur la bouche. Assieds-toi dessus comme sur un W.-C. Pisse dans ce W.-C. Pisse… – My God, my god ! murmura la Ghanéenne.' 'Arrose-le maintenant avec ton urine. Une belle ejaculation'…Soudain, une pluie torrentielle d'urine jaillit entre les cuisses felliniennes de la Ghanéene.
>
> Go piss on that man, ordered Rosemonde in pointing to a frail African, with pale eyes and the face emaciated by fear, who was motionless, naked on the ground. 'Sit down on him, crush his member with her buttocks. They resemble Kilimanjaro… -- Do what I tell you!...' Now and again, he would utter some inaudible cries. His vocal cords were barely still functioning. - 'Sink your beautiful behind on his mouth. Sit down on him like on a toilet. Piss in this toilet. Piss…. - My God, my god! murmured the Ghanaian. Spray him now with your urine. A beautiful ejaculation…Suddently, a torrential rain of urine gushed out of the Ghanaian's Fellinian thighs (89-91).

While the savagery we witnessed in Khadra can more easily be located in the real-world, in acts which historically took place, Bolya introduces yet again a scene of fantasy, of role play. This fantasy perhaps allows Bolya to be free from any limits on his vulgarity, but it also could be used to underscore that African bodies can be appropriated not just in the real world, but in the imaginary of (former) colonizers as well. The passage ends with Rosemonde approaching the man with an electric saw in which it is implied she will castrate him, while he cries and the prostitute

trembles (94). Bolya describes urine that is "torrential" as it is forced into the victim's mouth from his reticent perpetrator, and the language once more overflows with references to genitalia and bodily excretions. Rosemonde amplifies and disturbingly exceeds the Lele tradition – even Oulématou's sadistic whipping – when, instead of, or rather in addition to the brutalization of his genitalia, the man's *mouth* is *forced* open to receive the urine of another woman. The literal excess of urine in the text becomes a materialized manifestation of the overabundance of violent language used to recall the colonial paradigm of subjugation of African bodies and thereby blends colonial and neo/colonial categorizations; Rosemonde's brutality can be traced both spatially and temporally from France back to the Congo and to colonial times.

In Rosemonde's attempt to appropriate polyandry, her distortion ruptures time and space in which her actions (re)create a now female-run neo/colonial paradigm of French and Belgians who degrade(d) and debase(d) the African body, both male and female, but also the pre/post/colonial Lele legacy of violence. The surplus of violence here also overflows beyond the page and breaks down the walls between the text and the reader so that the reader too could be in colonial Congo, contemporary France, or any other combination thereof, implicating the reader then in all of these legacies of violence. Here Rosemonde, like Bourru and the polyandrists, threatens or implies castration; female Africans as well as female and male white French all re-generate bodies of violence as they reduce the chances for African men to re-produce. In this passage, Bolya depicts this particular man as more than just object– his fear is made explicitly manifest unlike the men with the Congolese women whose only agency are the cries we hear. Yet ironically, Bolya depicts the violence this man receives as one of the most graphic and disturbing passages. Through the vivid description of the man's horror, his agony remains at the forefront of the text even as Rosemonde takes away his humanity. Through yet another split with post/colonial

structures, Rosemonde dehumanizes this man not through a framework of animality, but through a disturbing twist on this colonial paradigm in which she makes him a receptacle for waste, defiling him from the inside out. Rosemonde becomes then complicit with Belgian colonials and acts that her fellow contemporary Frenchmen condemn when she reifies Fanon's statement that one consequence of "parler petit-nègre [speaking petit-nègre]" is that "le Blanc infeste le Noir de corps étrangers extrêmement toxiques [the White infests the Black with extremely toxic foreign bodies]" (28). Rosemonde's outsider status serves then not just to reinforce a neo/colonial continuity between racism and the erotic but also the psychological and physical structures of racial violence to which these populations were subject to throughout and following colonization. *La Polyandre* evokes then a neo/colonization wherein white female bodies impose a contaminating violence upon *racialized* bodies.

Although Rosemonde's outsider status causes her to (re)victimize African immigrants through a neo/colonial violence, she nevertheless manages to problematize male sexual domination, that is, the patriarchal bodies politic. Through the equivalence Rosemonde establishes between female urine and male ejaculation Rosemonde flips gendered violence on its head and creates an ejaculatory schema of female violent penetration of the male.[101] Yet Rosemonde's rupture and reversal of patriarchy – like the Lele women – reproduces the same patriarchal structures of gendered violent domination. However, through the use of an African female surrogate or proxy for her violence, Rosemonde reinscribes her acts into a neo/colonial violence upon the African female as well. Rosemonde transforms the prostitute as "victimizer" into an instrument which pollutes, defiles, toxifies the man, so that the prostitute is but a vessel for the violence of the white (wo)man. Here, the man is made toilet and the prostitute a tool. Rosemonde

[101] In *History of Sexuality, vol.2* Michel Foucault speaks of the "ejaculatory schema" as an act which is always violent.

simultaneously subverts patriarchal bodies and reproduces neo/colonial figures of subjugation. Bolya's language here is vivid, almost palpable, in its depravity – with words such as 'écrase,' 'arrose,' 'éjaculation,' and 'torrentielle.' Not only does this cause the text to overflow on the page and sweep readers along in this flood of urine / "ejaculate," it does so in order to emphasize that the monstrous acts male and female colonized experienced continue under new and not so new guises in contemporary societies. The heightened degradation in this scene highlights however that, while there is complicity from male and female colonized and colonizer, the domination by Western society is still far from over.

Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter presented a violence – that is, bodily mutilation, mutation, modification – that ruptures time and space. This rupture in turn emphasizes not just the complex historical ties to colonization in contemporary French and Francophone societies but that the neo/post/anti/colonial violent iterations always contain the colonial within them. The connection between colonial and anti-colonial violence, and the Fanonian cycle which ensues, will be addressed in the next chapter. In positing an aesthetics of violence that defies time and space and the categories of colonial, post-colonial, and neo-colonial, this chapter thereby problematizes the ways in which violence is sanctioned – legitimized, justified – or criminalized. As we saw with *À quoi rêvent les loups*, the Islamists inscribed themselves in the legacy of the FLN, a group which was referred to by the French government as terrorists – and therefore criminals – but hailed by Algerians as revolutionaries – and therefore justified in their displays of force; the Islamists, however, were and remain largely referred to as terrorists themselves. Through the trope of violence and the narrative's voyage from DRC to France, Bolya's work brought to the fore the problem of criminalization of immigrant populations.

Khadra's aggressively grisly prose on massacres and infanticide, of saturation of blood and torn flesh, accentuates the exacerbated, auto-destructive legacy of post/anti/colonial violence in Algeria. Khadra's glut of gory writing further shows that the self-destruction stems, paradoxically, from this very legacy, wherein the blood-letting is an auto-reproduction of similar acts from 30 years prior, which are themselves reproductions of acts learned from the colonialists. On the other hand, Bolya's amplified, debased language on flagellation, castration, genitalia, and bodily excretions emphasizes the subjugations of African women in the neo/colonial patriarchy, yet ultimately shows the neo/colonial reinscription and reinforcement of the Western (patriarchal) legacy of violence. Yet Bolya's profuse vulgarity further highlights the legacy of violence of the Lele women which (inversely) re-generates and perpetuates these patriarchal bodies.

Recalling Sontag's claim that images of pain in postcolonial Africa "confirm [for Westerners] that this is the sort of thing which happens in this place" (71), Khadra and Bolya both employ a language of extreme violence to underscore in the most obscene, savage, and profane terms that, while this violence might be a recurrent, frequent phenomenon, it is *extra*ordinary; it is neither inherent or endemic to Africa, but stems from, interlocks with, the (former) colonial forces and flows forward in time and space. Violence opens thus the path to seeing through time and space, to seeing the origins and perpetuations of these violent practices. These authors' excess of abject and profane language demonstrates their choice to write an extreme violence, a flood of violence in which flows of blood, urine, semen, vomit, and shattered flesh, generate a tidal wave of temporal and spatial contamination; their novels serve to underscore the impossibility of strict divisions between the categorizations of colonial, neo-colonial, anti-colonial, and post-colonial where and when violence is construed. Like Khadra's massacres and infanticides, Bolya's trope of castration points to the shrinking chance for a viable future and to societies perpetually in the

past. In an interview about his novel “Equitation Africaine,” Khadra states that he wishes to “convoquer des problèmes afin de les vulgariser [invoke problems in order to vulgarize them]” (2012 n.p.). Through their aesthetics of violence, Khadra and Bolya make the horrors more visible so that perhaps the future can still be recuperated, so that perhaps their flood of violence can staunch the flow.

Chapter Three
What about Majid?: Circuits of Violence and Hyper-Visibility in Michael Haneke's *Caché*

Introduction

Michael Haneke's 2005 film *Caché* (*Hidden*) introduces a play between that which is visible and that which is obstructed from view. In this chapter, I argue that Michael Haneke's 2005 film *Caché* gives sight, restores some visibility, to violence against Algerians in 1960s France and the mechanisms which continue to oppress as well as to enact violence – physical and psychological – upon the Algerian diaspora in France.[102] As we saw in chapter two, colonial and anti-colonial violence moves through time and space, from Africa to contemporary France; building upon that argument, in this chapter, I treat the question of (inescapable) cycles of colonial/anti-colonial violence through the main trope of surveillance. While a gaze is introduced which watches the bourgeois French characters, what the title refers to, what I argue is ultimately hidden, is a gaze which also watches the Algerian diaspora in France and makes them even more visible than the French.

Caché begins with Georges (Daniel Auteuil) and Anne (Juliette Binoche) Laurent watching a videotape of the outside of their home which had previously occupied the entire diegetic screen. After awhile, more tapes arrive, now wrapped in paper with a child-like drawing of a boy with blood coming out of his mouth. These drawings, sometimes depicting instead a bloody, nearly-decapitated rooster, also show up at Georges's work, and at his son Pierrot's school. The Laurents go to the police, claiming they are being "terrorized" in their own home, but the police can do nothing until a physical act is taken against them. Who is "terrorizing" them and why? Finally,

[102] Algerian diaspora and Algerian diasporic characters are terms I have created and are using here to describe people living in France of Algerian descent. While Majid is never explicitly referred to as Algerian in the film, he is placed in a context of Algeria when Georges describes the Algerians who assembled in Paris for the protest on October 17. Majid's parents, who went to this protest, are then presumably Algerian or of Algerian descent.

after a videotape shows Georges his childhood home, he believes the tapes have to do with Majid (Maurice Bénichou), a little boy whose Algerian migrant parents worked for Georges' parents, and both of whom presumably died in the events of October 17, 1961. The film's audience learns all this through one quick, easy to miss moment in the dialogue when Georges finally reveals to Anne who he thinks is the culprit. It begins with Georges saying "October 17, 1961, enough said." Yet that it is not quite enough said, and Georges briefly continues, "Maurice Papon, the police massacre. They drowned about 200 Arabs in the Seine."[103] Georges then tells Anne that his parents wanted to adopt Majid in the wake of his parents' death. But 6-year old Georges was jealous that Majid had his own bed, so 6-year old Georges first tried telling his parents Majid had coughed up blood. When that does not work, Georges tricks Majid into decapitating the family rooster, then tells his parents Majid did it to scare him, so Majid would be forced out of the house and ultimately end up in an orphanage. Georges slowly reveals the truth to Anne, only telling the whole story at the end, at which point we learn that Georges had been lying, to Anne, to us, and to his parents as a boy. Prior to these final revelations, Georges repeatedly visits Majid's home and accuses him of being behind the videotapes, persisting in the face of denial after denial from Majid. Georges even goes so far as to have Majid and his son arrested at one point for what turns out to be a false alarm, when he believes his son is missing. After Georges' first visit to Majid, we see another videotape in which Majid is filmed as well and is seen crying; Majid thus appears to be "terrorized" as well. Near the end, Majid calls Georges to his apartment and then committs suicide in front of him. Georges continues to deny any responsibility but appears to be haunted by this act. The film ends ambiguously on a shot of the respective sons of Georges and Majid talking in what appears to be a friendly manner.

[103] All quotations in English from the film are the official subtitles.

During the events of October 17, 1961, which serve as the catalyst for the action of *Caché*, Algerians gathered in Paris for a peaceful demonstration.[104] They were protesting a police-imposed curfew on Algerians, one which came in response to the actions of the Algerian organization Front de libération nationale (FLN), which had killed nearly 50 French police officers in the preceding months.[105] That night, Parisian police killed an indeterminate number of unarmed Algerian protestors: witnesses report seeing the police throw protestors from bridges into the river Seine but no policeman was ever charged with a crime.[106] An exceptional aspect of this massacre was its location in Paris: historians Jim House and Neil Macmaster note that the violence raging in Algeria eventually migrated to the "metropolitan capital," in which this massacre represents the "culmination of a long cycle of colonial repression and the introduction of forms of state terror" (15). This massacre, which took place during the Algerian War of Independence, is a dark spot in French history, made all the more so by the government's silence on the matter until the end of the 20th century.[107] As House and Macmaster note, the events of October 17, although extremely violent, were "virtually erased from public visibility" (2).[108]

Most scholars of *Caché* claim that Haneke's manner of revealing the October 17 massacre is less about the specifics of the actual event or about punishing anyone involved, than it is about the "mechanisms" which were deployed in order to construct the silencing of the event. In this

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[104] Also released in 2005 were Alain Tasma's *Nuit Noire October 17, 1961* and Philippe Faucon's *Le Trahison*, both of which take place during the War of Independence. However, both only address the time of the war and while Tasma's also treats the events of October 61, it deals more with what led to the events and less with the aftermath, especially as it continues 40 years later.

[105] See Cole; House and Macmaster.

[106] See Cole; House and Macmaster; Thénault (2000).

[107] It was not until the late 1990s when Maurice Papon, the Police Prefect at the time of the massacre, was put on trial for crimes against humanity from World War II – never for the events of 1961 – that the government finally allowed access to police records. Moreover, in 1999, French historian Jean-Luc Einaudi was granted by French courts the "right to use the word *massacre* in writing about the police violence on 17 October 1961" (Cole 120). See also House and Macmaster; Thénault (2000).

[108] See also Cole; Thénault (2000).

view, Haneke is merely calling for an acknowledgment of the event's existence.[109] Haneke's revelatory mechanism comes through a reversal and inversion of the gaze – of watcher and watched – wherein the white French bourgeoisie are now, like the Algerian diaspora during the war, targets of surveillance. But at the same time as the French are made visible, *Caché* also makes the Algerian population visible again. Or perhaps instead, the Algerian diaspora is made more visible than they already were, underscoring the inequality of racialized perspectives and hierarchies of watching in this film. While Libby Saxton claims that "Haneke does not attempt to restore to visibility events that were effectively relegated to off-screen spaces of official history and memory…[but] uncovers the mechanisms of…denial" (2007 10), I seek to build upon her scholarship and show that the film does bring to light structures and systems of violence which remain in place in contemporary France.

Haneke never makes it clear whether or not it is in fact the Algerian diasporic characters behind the psychological "terrorism" the French feel, but he shows that in the end, it is not a question of innocent and guilty, as these two categories inevitably blend into each other. Rather, *Caché* can serve as a reflection akin to Césaire's comments on the crimes of colonization:

> Que nul ne colonise innocemment,..impunément ; qu'une nation qui colonise… est déjà une civilisation malade, une civilisation moralement atteinte, qui, irrésistiblement, de conséquence en conséquence, de reniement en reniement, appelle son Hitler, je veux dire son châtiment
>
> That no one colonizes innocently…with impunity ; that a nation which colonizes is already a sick civilization, a morally infected civilization, which, irresistibly, from consequence to consequence, from renunciation to renunciation, calls forth its Hitler, by which I mean its punishment (17).

Through his inability to own his responsibility, both in his past and present actions against Majid, Georges creates the conditions for his own punishment. Yet Georges' punishment, which comes

[109] See Saxton (2007) and Wheatley (2009)

about principally through Majid's suicide, is one which unfortunately sweeps the (former) colonized along with the colonizer.

In his writings on the totalizing chain of violence/counter-violence in which the colonized undo colonial violence with a likened form of violence, Frantz Fanon emphasizes that the colonized do not want so much to become colonizers as to substitute for them, to take over their role as persecutor, a chain which seemingly manifests itself in *Caché* with the presumption that the Algerians are now watching their former watchers.[110] Thomas Mathiesen (2013) notes that contemporary forms of surveillance systems are geared mainly towards preventing terrorism and stopping the flow of foreigners at borders. In *Caché,* though, the act of surveillance itself has become the form of terrorism in a Fanonian "ironique retour des choses" (81) precisely because the French, as Algerian migrants came to France, imported surveillance techniques from their colony to the metropole, techniques aimed at these very "foreigners" or "sub-citizens."[111] While I have discussed cycles of Franco-Algerian violence in chapter two, I will rely more in this chapter on the term "circuit" of violence. Although the two terms of "circuit" and "cycle" have but a nuance of difference, "circuit" implicates the question of flow as it also implicates the notion of space, a determined space in which cycles reproduce themselves. In *Caché*, it is the fixed post/colonial territories of Algeria and France which build a circuit of surveillance and psychological violence which flows back and forth.[112]

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[110] Fanon speaks on the anticolonial counter-violence as an "praxis absolue…[et] violente [qui] est totalisante, puisque chacun se fait maillon de la grande chaîne, du grand organisme violent surgi comme réaction à la violence première du colonialiste [a praxis (which is) absolute…(and) violent (which) is totalizing, since each person makes themselves a link in the greater chain, in the great, violent organism which emerged as reaction to the first violence of the colonialist]" (82, 90).

[111] See Fanon, p.81. Fanon describes how the colonized Algerians were undoing colonial violence with violence. Stora describes the manner in which Algerians in 1960s France were treated as "sous-citoyens [sub-citizens]."

[112] For definitions of the two terms, see *Le Grand Robert*. In his discussion on the psychological techniques France imported from Algeria, Blanchard also refers to a "circuit" for the "répression administrative et juridique" (327).

Violence in *Caché* – rarely visible in Haneke's overall oeuvre in its physical form – is present but largely displaced on to the psychological realm in the form of surveillance of the French. The displacement of violence onto the psychological realm represents an interesting relationship to the violence of the massacre of October 17, which is itself never represented in the film, as if this event is beyond representation and its tragic consequences must be displaced elsewhere. The predominantly psychological violence in this film is defined as a sense of intrusion, encroachment, or violation. This violation of the mind can alternatively, interchangeably, be thought of as a feeling of being terrorized or as an emotional suffering. Yet in these psychological iterations, no physical intrusion, violation, terror occurs, the body remains untouched. Even in the scene in which we see young Majid decapitate a rooster and blood spurt across his face, one could argue that the overall tone of the sequence is menacing, of a psychological threat, as no human blood is spilled. However, for the rare instance of a physical violation – Majid's suicide scene – violence is conceived in a corporeal transgression, where the body is concretely violated and blood is spilled. The representations of violence in this film present their own circuit in which they flow back and forth between the physical and psychological, ultimately blending the two in Majid's suicide.

The opening shot of *Caché* shows what looks like a photograph or a static image of a street and the outside of an apartment. A minute or so into this shot, a car drives across the screen; we now know it is a moving image and we are in the cinematic realm. As the street scene continues, we begin to hear disembodied voices discussing what we learn soon after is a videotape, where and who did it come from, and why. As the audience continues watching and listening, horizontal lines cross the screen, as if the scene we are watching is being rewound and then fast forwarded before our eyes. Next, there is a cut to inside the apartment, where we can now see Georges and

Anne Laurent watching the video. In their analysis of the film for a dossier in *Screen*, Ezra and Sillars describe "being made to look" as a form of terror: Georges' terror stems not from being looked at but from having to look at himself and face his callousness, both past and present.[113] As terror then, having to look weaponizes the gaze, in which watching and being watched provokes shock, trauma, and pain. Ezra and Sillars' also highlight "cinema's dominant model of representing terrorism [which] concentrates on its spectacular manifestations, leaving its causes marginalized" (219). Building on Ezra and Sillars' claims, my reading of *Caché* unveils the causes of "terrorism" and problematizes the definition, deployment, and origins of acts labeled as such in both colonial and postcolonial times. All of the film's racially-motivated conflicts will be traced back, rewound as it were, to 1960's France and a childhood act on Georges' part. While all previous scholarship refuses to lay any guilt at young Georges' feet, I will draw upon Albert Memmi's work on racism to show the origins of racist thought in a childhood moment for Georges.

In her chapter on film ethics and ethnic representations in *Film and Ethics: Foreclosed Encounters*, in which she also analyzes *Caché*, Libby Saxton argues that the 2005 film *The Constant Gardener* "reasserts the sovereignty of the European self" since the film is shown through the perspective of the white male character (55).[114] Saxton continues her analyses of ethical representations of minorities with a quote from Mauritanian filmmaker Abderrahmane Sissako: "African cinema is capable of reversing and deconstructing what is often called the 'colonial gaze': white people have had the privilege of seeing others without being seen for three thousand years" (57). Although Haneke is a white, European filmmaker, his films are, notes

[113] See also Elissa Marder's work on Abu Ghraib in *The Mother in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, in which she discusses whether photography and taking photographs can be a form of torture.

[114] In the introduction to their book on film ethics, Libby Saxton and Lisa Downing argue that "When women and members of ethnic and sexual minority groups occupy the role traditionally allotted to the [white] male hero…the narrative implicitly affirms this sensitivity to difference" (18).

Saxton, "explicitly critical of the ethnocentric modes of looking" (2010 73).[115] Haneke therefore problematizes the question of the white gaze as he highlights the contemporary preservations of racial hierarchies and ways of looking. Haneke does so nevertheless through a privileging of the white, bourgeois point of view, which reinforces bourgeois privilege even as it simultaneously underlines the depths of bourgeois ignorance of actions and consequences for a different *other*, one which the bourgeoisie helped to create.

Many scholars focus on the reversal of this gaze upon Georges, arguing that there is not enough screen time or psychological depth to Majid to write about him. However, my reading of *Caché* will reveal a "regard caché" on the Algerian population. Celik echoes the concerns of privileging of Georges' French bourgeois perspective in *Caché* in her analysis of the film: "It is the inaccessibility of Majid's subjectivity throughout the film that erases any possibility of recognition of the Other" (77).[116] Yet most scholars stop there and focus more on criticizing the unbalanced representations: there are few scenes with Majid, so they tend to criticize the lack rather than interpreting the brief interventions into the parts of Majid's world to which we are granted access.[117] But we can see that, as Georges and his family are made visible, Majid is made more visible than the French through the transgressions into his private space, the tapes making his suffering public, and his being watched by Georges. The world of *Caché* is one where Majid

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[115] Similarly, Brunette notes that Haneke never shies away from painting unflattering pictures of France, starting from his first French-language film *Code inconnu* (75). Alex Lykidis' article on the multiculturalism in Haneke's French-language films both affirms and challenges this when he discusses Haneke's confession of shooting the bourgeois: "[w]hat Haneke is admitting here is that his work manifests a consistent and pervasive class (and racial) particularism. His French-language films focus on the lives of white, affluent Western Europeans affected by the multiculturalism of their society more so than on the lives of immigrants or minorities" (455).

[116] See also Gilroy who talks about a lack of psychology for Majid.

[117] The relative paucity of Majid's psychology as compared to Georges could be interpreted as a more ethical turn made by a European filmmaker such as Haneke. While Haneke privileges the white, bourgeois French point of view in the film by making Georges the protagonist, I would argue this privileging is a more ethical move on his part than some of his critics have given him credit for. Haneke has stated that he shoots what he knows, that is, bourgeois society (see Lykidis), so it could be argued that it would be more unethical for him to try and penetrate the Algerian diasporic psychology he is accused of ignoring. This is also reminiscent of Edouard Glissant's practice of positive, ethical opacity in *Poétique de la relation*.

is subjected to a more intense terror than the Laurents, a terror from which there is no escape. Haneke's representation of Majid underscores – even as it also reproduces and remains therefore somewhat problematic – the structures that continue today to make the Majids of the world hyper-visible, oppressed, and as racialized *others*. Georges' feeling of being terrorized from looking at himself places him into circulation of a violation by the gaze. But as Majid finds himself already in circulation, the violence of the gaze will be felt more intensely by Majid, suggesting that, even if Majid or his son are in fact behind the tapes, the weaponized gaze becomes a weapon of terror which no one can control.

Criticisms

Caché is arguably Haneke's most written about film as it lends itself easily to a multitude of interpretations.[118] One of the most frequent analyses – one in which this study situates itself – presents the film as a critique of colonialism and its legacy in postcolonial times, be it unique to the French context or more about "the West as a whole."[119] Libby Saxton summarizes the two perspectives on Western imperialism: Georges' inability to take responsibility for his past actions or feel/admit guilt in the present could "be read as an allegory of France's uneasy relationship to its colonial history and especially the legacy of the Franco-Algerian war" or instead, Haneke's assertion that the film is not about Algeria at all makes *Caché* work on the level of a critique of Austria's crimes in World War II and of the war in Iraq (2007 11).[120] A unique analysis in the

[118] This multitude of interpretations includes – but is not limited to – the psychoanalytic return of the repressed (Celik; Penney; Silverman; Speck; Thomas) the representation of collective guilt (Brunette; Celik; Laine; Saxton (2007); Silverman), the dynamics of off-screen space (Flood; Laine; Saxton (2007); Wheatley (2006)), and Haneke's transgression against the image (Gibson; Grønstad; Wheatley (2011)). I will therefore limit my literature review to scholarship which pertains to this case study.

[119] Catherine Wheatley claims that "it seems that the West as a whole is implicated in Haneke's history of violence" (2011 72).

[120] See also Brunette; Celik; Gibson; Mecchia; Porton; Silverman; Speck; Wheatley (2009, 2011). It is perhaps worth noting that there is a tradition in French cinema of using Algeria as an allegory for World War II, such as Alain Resnais' *Muriel*.

postcolonial domain comes from Eva Jørholt, who posits that "the entire film can be read as the protagonist's paranoid vision that imagines white privilege to be menaced by some non-white conspiracy" (91). While I take Georges' "paranoia" to be a reaction to concrete events which unfold in the film, I build upon this question of racial privilege whereby Haneke evokes a post/colonial system which continues to violently racialize and to other the Algerian population in contemporary France, albeit ironically in a focus on white privilege. Like Rosalind Galt and Eva Jørholt, I choose to read this film, despite Haneke's claims to the contrary, in the context of Franco-Algerian relations of terror(ism), surveillance, infantilization, and psychological violence.[121]

Caché is not a self-contained cinematic world, however. The same cinematographic mechanisms which underline oppressive systems and turn the gaze into a weapon of terror, turn this same terrorizing gaze, as many scholars note, back upon the audience.[122] The terror of the gaze emerges to implicate the audience – along with the film's characters – in a paradigm which engenders racialized differences, hierarchies, and oppressive systems. Tarja Laine notes that Haneke achieves audience implication through a "flowing together of the diegesis and the non-diegesis" (Laine 248) in which every image we watch could just as easily be happening in the film's real time, be it a videotape, or a (false) memory / flashback. Adding to the suspicion of every image is the fact that Haneke shot all of the scenes, including the surveillance shots, in high definition digital video, rendering it impossible to distinguish the "videotapes" from the film's

[121] Rosalind Galt claims that "the weight of the Algerian massacre fights back against the film's attempt to abstract [the national specificity of the history]" (228) and Eva Jørholt states that "[g]iven that the film is in fact set in France and that it does address issues that are singularly French…, I will, however, take the liberty of reading *Caché* into a specific French context and focus on French colonial traumas, especially as they relate to Algeria" (92).

[122] As Saxton underlines in her analysis, the contents of every frame in *Caché* are subject to the look of another, including a look which watches the audience (2007 7). Many scholars have equally emphasized that Haneke's play between diegesis and extra-diegesis results in audience implication in the events deployed in the film. Saxton further argues, "from the very outset of the film, we find ourselves already implicated, as spectators, in an economy of voyeurism and [punitive] surveillance" (8, 14), in which Haneke makes us, the audience, not just victims of the surveillance but "also responsible for the events depicted in *Hidden*" (Laine 253). See also Brunette; Celik; Ezra and Sillars; Gibson; Laine; Penney; Saxton (2010); Wheatley (2006).

diegesis. The audience watches the tapes that torture Georges and Anne, so that we are at once in the position of the diegetic filmmaker and that of the victims who are also seeing these tapes. As such, "every image becomes suspect…and we, like the protagonists, begin to feel increasingly paranoid" (Saxton 2007 14), which only further implicates us in the film's machinations, to where it seems everyone inhabits the positions of both victim and perpetrator, innocent and guilty, at once.[123] In that case, *Caché* is not at all about assigning guilt or blame, but is a depiction of the structures which continue to implicate both French and Algerians in circuits of psychological violence, and through the audience implication, an examination of the audience's own role in the perpetuation of these circuits.[124] We are terrorizer and terrorized, we are powerful and powerless, watching through a voyeuristic gaze (unequal) manifestations of both French and Algerian psychological terror.

In her article on surveillance in *Caché* and *Code inconnu*, Andrea Gogröf-Voorhees (2010) notes the importance of watching to Haneke's oeuvre, but distinguishes between three trends in Haneke: surveillance, self-surveillance, and voyeurism.[125] She notes equally that in these two films, Haneke problematizes both "panoptic surveillance (the surveillance of the many by the few) and synoptic surveillance (the surveillance of the few by the many)" (264). Both Jennifer Burris (2011) and Gogröf-Voorhees argue that Haneke's camera and deployment of surveillance act as a

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[123] Scholars are also quick to point out that Haneke's deft camerawork shifts our perspective throughout the course of the film as to who is guilty and who is innocent, who the victim and who the perpetrator. See Flood; Kline; Lykidis; Saxton (2007); Wheatley (2009, 2011). Haneke himself has emphasized the inherent ambiguity this film manifests, stating, "I'm not sure if it's so black and white. We don't know if Georges is telling the truth, and we don't know if Majid is telling the truth…Life is far more complex, and as a filmmaker and an artist, I'm trying to explore the complexities and contradictions of life" (Porton 51). It is not therefore, a simple dichotomy between the "powerful" and the "powerless" (Brunette 125).

[124] Gibson similarly talks about cycles of violence and vengeance.

[125] Gogröf-Voorhees defines voyeurism without its sexual component: "the power of watching without being watched" (262) while Judith Mayne's work on the gendered gaze in cinema argues that "[m]etaphoric license allows us to use terms like 'voyeurism' in ways far more general than their clinical implications" (55). While Haneke's earlier French-language films *Code inconnu* (2000) and *Le Temps du loup* (2003) which Gogröf-Voorhees treats deal with issues of multiculturalism, these two deal less explicitly or less thoroughly with the historical legacies of racism as terror or cycles of (psychological) violence.

gaze that is "indifferent" and "without emotion" (157, 264). While I draw on Gogröf-Voorhees' work in order to extend the question of watching and visibility in *Caché*, I will trouble the question of an indifferent, emotionless gaze. After all, if Haneke's camera and gaze upon the audience are emotionless, they nevertheless take on emotion through the associated emotions or motivations of the watcher. As such, Albert Memmi's theory of racism will also highlight that it is the presumption on Georges' behalf – who presumes, without proof, a Fanonian reactionary (psychological) violence – which deploys a legacy of racism. Georges' presumption imposes then a criminality upon Majid, an imposed criminality which becomes another manifestation of racism, and this racism acts upon Majid as a form of terror.[126]

In T. Jefferson Kline's reading of the film, he references René Girard's *Violence and the Sacred,* specifically Girard's claims that in primitive societies "reciprocal violence had a way of spreading that no one seemed to be able to control… 'There is something infectious about the spread of violence'" (173-4). Leaving aside the problematics of reading reciprocal violence in the Franco-Algerian context through the lens of a white, metropolitan French intellectual who refers to "primitive" societies, Girard speaks more in the context of religion and not in the specific context of Franco-Algerian relations and violence, as does Frantz Fanon in *Les damnés de la terre*. Largely lacking in analyses of *Caché* then, are readings through Frantz Fanon's notion of reciprocal or reactionary violence, specifically in the displacement onto the psychological plane through surveillance in the specific post/colonial structures of power, subjugation, and imposition. A few exceptions do exist however. While not mentioning Fanon explicitly, Ranjana Khanna evokes the Fanonian idea of returning upon the colonizer that which had been enacted upon the colonized: "Here, the presence of postmodern surfaces and the thematization of surveillance, this

[126] See also Khanna, ?

time attributed to Algerians in spite of the surveillance mechanisms used against Algerians by the French, unfolds a narrative of revenge in which a camera gaze is returned in an oppositional structure" (243). In his analysis of the film, Max Silverman notes that *Caché* "operates, loosely, in a way similar to Fanon in that it reverses the gaze of the western colonizer and exposes the hidden (psychosexual) fears and fantasies still at play today in a postcolonial re-run of the colonial encounter" (245).[127] Although Silverman briefly notes the Fanonian reversal of the gaze, he and Paul Gilroy (whom Silverman cites) each claim that Fanon endorses the anticolonial binary and reproduces the colonial logic of Manichaeism, a logic which they believe is recreated in *Caché*. Yet Fanon's argument is more complex. He implicates the Algerian population in what he calls a totalizing chain of violence and subsequently blurs binaries: the Algerian engagement in violence places these Algerians in a never-ending victim/perpetrator spiral, which can only end in self-destruction. Building upon, but also challenging, this scholarship, I present an in-depth analysis of the problematics of the returned gaze, psychological violence, and the racist vision of the *other* in *Caché* and argue that Haneke, like Fanon, explodes these binaries through the circuits which implicate both perpetrator and victim. These circuits, also defined in *Le Grand Robert* as chains of actions and reactions, unfurl then what Haneke refers to as a "chain of victimhood," in which victims inevitably become perpetrators, who are then inevitably turned into victims, in a never-ending cycle.

Circuits of Psychological Terror(ism)

The Algerian War of Independence was categorized by the French government as a

[127] See also Ipek Celik who begins an analysis on guilt and violence in Cache with a quote from *The Wretched of the Earth* about the "colonial mother" and its offspring. Also see Faber whose brief reference to Fanon is a footnote about the trauma which affects both victims and perpetrator (297).

criminal conspiracy and the actions of the FLN readily labeled as "terrorism."[128] This label of "terrorist," ascribed to the actions of Algerian fighters by the French, problematizes – abstracts and removes– the context of war at the same time as it justifies extreme measures taken by the French military/police apparatuses.[129] Alyda Faber's analysis of *Caché* clarifies this point in her description of terrorism: *"*the language of terrorism implies a kind of evil that fails to observe the borders of territorial states, that blurs distinctions between crime and war…" (306).[130] Calling an act "terrorism" legitimates therefore police actions as war efforts and simultaneously tears down borders as to who qualifies as the recipient of the police actions: war is against the military, police monitor civilians. The terrorist act reinforces nevertheless a semblance of borders as it is "always already an act from the outside, an external aggression that must be avenged" (Kumar and Swiatek 311).[131] As Sylvie Thénault (2005) describes the "état d'urgence" instituted during the War of Independence, she states that this allowed the state to render the Algerian population "hors la loi."[132] Thénault clarifies that in this case "hors la loi" means not just that the "outlaw" broke the law, but that they also find themselves without protection from the law. The terrorist is consequently also outside, both outside the law and an outsider to the nation they are purported to attack, even if they are inside that same nation.

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[128] Of course, this war was not even referred to in France as a war until the end of the 20th century. See House and Macmaster; Stora.

[129] Historians House and Macmaster note the use of the term "terrorism" resulted in a blurring between France's police and military: there was as much of a militarization of the police as there was policing conducted by the military. See also Stora (1991) who notes that for many officers of the French army, there were only terrorists "venus et dirigés de l'extérieur…l'ennemi est donc invisible. Il prend succesivement les appellations de 'suspect' 'hors la loi,' 'rebelle [who came and were directed from the exterior… the enemy is therefore invisible. He adopts successively the labels of 'suspect,' 'outlaw,' 'rebel']," which further justified military action (17).

[130] Faber bases her description of terrorism on William E. Connolly's definition.

[131] For their argument here on *Caché*, the authors rely on Derrida's "'terrifying autoimmunitary logic,' a 'spontaneous suicide' of the defense mechanism that protects an organism from its attackers."

[132] This "état d'urgence," first invoked during the War of Independence, has since been invoked following the riots of 2005 and the terrorist attacks of 2015-2016, each time being used to limit the mobility and rights of particular minority ethnic groups. Thénault is speaking of the historical implementation by the State, although it is perhaps worth mentioning that the "state of exception" has a theoretical tradition as well in works from Carl Schmitt and Walter Benjamin, for example.

The imposed (criminal) label of "terrorist" resurfaces in contemporary France in *Caché* through Georges' suspicion of Majid – the child of Algerian immigrants who likely died during the events of October 1961 – as the "terrorist." Georges and his family repeatedly refer to themselves as victims of a campaign of terror, victims of, as Georges believes, Majid. As Derrida notes in his work on rogue states, the designation "voyou," "c'est toujours l'autre, il est toujours montré du doigt par le bourgeois bien-pensant, par le représentant de l'ordre moral ou juridique. C'est toujours une deuxième ou troisième personne [he is always the other, he is always pointed out by the well-intentioned finger of the bourgeois, by the representative of the moral or legal order. He is always a second or third person]" (96). Georges the bourgeois points to Majid as the source of his terror, so that Majid is always already posited as an outsider, an *other* excluded from the nation in which he lives. Majid as suspected terrorist is then further marginalized as he is excluded, outlawed, and outcast through the sudden unwilling acquisition of this label. The association Georges creates between Majid and terror(ism) subsequently multiplies Majid's categorization: Majid is at once criminal, enemy of the state, and radically *other*.

In terms of police protection, *Caché* turns the tables again: the French police who surveilled, terrorized, and, on October 17, 1961, killed Algerian immigrants have become the French police who cannot help the French family who claim to be "terrorized." When Georges and Anne go to the police, they are informed that until anything more physical than tapes happen, the police can do nothing for them. This time, no protection from the forces of law and order is to be had for the French.[133] So whether or not the Algerian diasporic characters are behind the tapes, the

[133] Interestingly enough, in 2007, two years after the release of *Caché*, Nicolas Sarkozy's government tried to install a wide coverage of security surveillance cameras across France. This effort was only moderately successful and met with a fair amount of resistance on the local government level. However, support for the initiative increased after a simple word change: once "video surveillance" became "video protection" people were more willing to accept the presence of these cameras (See Heilmann).

French, who had enacted campaigns of psychological terror seeking to render the Algerians totally visible, are now the protection-less victims of the oppressive mechanisms they themselves enacted 50 years earlier.[134] What is less important is not whether the Algerian diasporic characters are the culprits in a possible Fanonian twist of reactionary psychological violence in this case, but that the French, who have historically been the watchers, are being watched. They have transitioned from the subjects to the objects of a panoptic gaze; the French, who wanted to control the other through rendering the other more visible, must now come to terms with *their own visibility*.

Yet, not much later in the film, when the Laurents' son does not come home as expected, they automatically assume he has been kidnapped. Although it turns out that he was staying at a friend's house and did not call to let his parents know, the Laurents immediately suspect Majid and his son before the truth is revealed. They go to the police and in a scene that Wheatley (2011) and Brunette have respectively noted recreates and recalls colonial paradigms, Majid and his son find themselves in the back of a police van while Georges, the white Frenchman, sits in the front with the arresting officer.[135] The camera tracks across Majid and his son's faces as they sit peacefully, quietly, in the dark before we see Georges come home to Anne and tell her they kept both men in the police station overnight because the son began to yell, so they locked him up which made Majid angry so they locked him up too. Yet it is hard to believe that the two men whom we

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[134] This resonates with Max Silverman's analysis of the film, who underlines "a similar reversal in the fact that the surveillance techniques put to particularly effective use by the French army are today generalized to such an extent that they be turned against the very middle-class communities who use them to defend the gated communities in which they shelter from the outside world" (247, cited in Wheatley (2011) 80). Wheatley (2011) equally notes that the "filmmaker sets out to fight fire with fire, suggesting that while the image, in its everyday context, domesticates, normalizes and objectifies the world for easy consumption, the same technologies can be put to use to unsettle this audiovisual complacency" (80).

[135] Interestingly enough, this scene recalls and echoes two scenes from Haneke's first French-language film, *Code inconnu*. Early on in this film, a black man tries to make a young white man apologize to a Roma begger woman the white man had thrown trash at. As they begin to fight and the police arrive, the white man is allowed to leave while the black man is taken in by the police who refuse to hear the story. Secondly, towards the very end, the character Anne Laurent, also played by Juliette Binoche, is in the subway and a young Arabic man (played by the same actor who will play Majid's son) begins harassing her. She tries to distance herself but he follows her until an older Arabic man stands up for her. The man who comes to her defense is played by the actor who will become *Caché*'s Majid.

had just seen sitting calmly – looking perhaps defeated – could become angry without a reason, such as a false accusation of kidnapping. Haneke's reproduction of colonial structures is not so much here a reinforcement of the system, but a critique the system from within, as we soon find out that Majid and his son are innocent of this act and that no crime took place. As Majid and his son are arrested on nothing more than a Frenchman's word (Brunette 124), this sequence underlines thus another contemporary paradigm of racial bias which disproportionately affects the minority population. Since Haneke never makes it clear who is "terrorizing" Georges, Georges consequently manifests a paranoid vision. This paranoid vision stems from Georges' being placed into circulation of the French regime of surveillance, a regime which triggers fear and is based upon colonial ideologies.[136] But this circuit of surveillance which was already in place has yet to be ruptured; the Algerians will thereby find themselves under greater surveillance than they already were, which will render them more visible both than the Algerians of the past and the present-day French.

Algerians in the 1950s and 1960s were not just the presumed terrorists/criminals but also subjected to French State terror.[137] Although this terror frequently took the form of physical torture, Franco-Algerian relations of the first half of the 20th century were also characterized by psychological terror. The militarizing/policing state apparatuses within Algerian borders launched a campaign of psychological warfare in which the military/police sought total knowledge of Algerian whereabouts, to keep track of the de facto "criminals" as it were. This psychological warfare relied heavily on surveillance and information-gathering, with the goal of limiting Algerian mobility through constant forced visibility. This Foucauldian panoptic system – much like the physical torture and killings which migrated to France – was not limited to Algerian

[136] See also Césaire; Fanon (1961); Gallagher.
[137] For sources on the torture committed by the French army see Rey; Stora; Thénault (2005); Thénault et Branche.

borders.[138] Maurice Papon, the head of the Parisian police and the man who ordered the massacre on October 17, extended the circuit of these surveillance modes and psychological warfare techniques to the French capital, in order to limit Algerian mobility in France as well.[139] The French police not only attempted a total population census of Algerians in Paris, but in order to try and discover any FLN members or sympathizers in the city, they watched their every move, even going so far as to put *harkis*, or Algerians who had fought for France, in Algerian neighborhoods to surveil them even when they were outside of public space. Papon's (somewhat successful) attempt at a panoptic system in France led to "collective" and psychological terror: the Algerians there lived in constant fear of being taken by the police, a fear aggravated through their surveillance and forced visibility.[140]

Caché manifests an inverted (re)iteration of the extended circuit, where questions of visibility and surveillance have resurfaced but are, seemingly, reversed and inverted: it is now a white French family that claims to be psychologically "terrorized" through surveillance. The tapes and images are, however, relatively banal: they show just the outside of the Laurents' home or Georges' childhood estate, or they are childlike drawings which recall the stories young Georges told to get rid of Majid. This relative banality underlines the exaggerated nature of the Laurents' rhetoric when they begin to claim they are victims of a campaign of terror.[141] The "terror" stems

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[138] House and MacMaster refer to Papon's system as a "Panoptic vision."

[139] As historian Emmanuel Blanchard frames it, "Faute de contrôler l'émigration algérienne, la police a cherché à limiter ses possibilités de mobilité en métropole par…l'organisation de leur moindre visibilité dans l'espace public [For a lack of controlling Algerian emigration, the police sought to limit the possibilities of mobility in metropolitan (France)…sought the organization of their slightest movement in the public space]" (320). See also Macmaster.

[140] House and Macmaster highlight that "[t]his 'Papon System' which basically mirrored the FLN domination of the Algerian community and sought to counter it by exerting an even more 'efficient' pressure, involved a certain kind of psychological [collective] terror generated by constant insecurity and the daily fear of arrest, the threat of expulsion to Algeria, destruction of property" (70).

[141] Wheatley (2011) notes the use of "hyperbolic language" vis-à-vis the Laurents' insistence that they are terrorized, so that "it's not the tapes themselves that constitute a threat but their unspoken significance" (Wheatley 2006). See also Ezra and Sillars.

in this case from the "sense of violation that comes from being watched" (Brunette 115). In other words, the psychological sense of intrusion they claim to feel comes from a *perceived* threat, one which Georges assumes – as soon as he sees the drawings recalling his childhood tales – comes from an Algerian, an assumption which consequently imposes a racialized criminality onto this Algerian.[142] The Laurents' language of watching –they say they are "sous surveillance [under surveillance]," "matés [looked at]" and "espionnés [spied upon]" – and of terrorization both fall within a war lexicon, which further entrenches the label on Majid as their (foreign) enemy and thus reinforces his outsider status and further blurs the military/police borders.[143] It is therefore as if Georges' suspicion of Majid makes the latter a contemporary manifestation and reiteration of the events of 1961 in which the FLN protest of October 17, 1961 had as one of its key objectives "an 'invasion' of the city centre" (House and Macmaster 1). Yet the lack of proof that Majid or his son are definitively behind the tapes or the "invasion" of the French suggests that the Laurents' reaction here is – like that of Papon and the police (massacre) response to the Algerian peaceful protest – an over-reaction, one that will lead to more psychological violence against the Algerian diaspora.

The Laurents' repeated rhetoric of terror emphasizes, however, why several critics refer to this as a "home invasion" film, a genre which they further claim Haneke turns on its head.[144] After all, no physical invasion of the French bourgeois space actually happens; all of the videos of them and their spaces, including Georges' childhood home, are shot from *outside* their private domains.

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[142] See Albert Memmi, *Racism*, in which he declares that difference is not inherently important, it is the signification that we give to it that matters. See also Fanon 1961; Stora 1991. T. Jefferson Kline's work on the film speaks briefly to this issue as well.

[143] David Lyon notes that invasion is a language of militarization.

[144] Grønstad claims that "[t]he house and those who inhabit it have become the culprits in *Caché*…The intruders are…people who are themselves victims" (156). See also Lykidis who connects the "rhetoric of 'invasion'" with "recent anti-immigrant discourse" (459).

The cassettes themselves are left outside or placed by the door and it is Georges and Anne who bring the tapes inside, from public into private spaces. In his work on hospitality, Derrida argues that "[j]e commence à tenir pour un étranger indésirable, et virtuellement pour un ennemi, quiconque empiète sur mon 'chez-moi,' sur mon ipséité, sur mon pouvoir d'hospitalité, sur ma souveraineté d'hôte. Cet autre devient un sujet hostile dont je risque de devenir l'otage [I begin to think of a foreigner as undesirable, and virtually as an enemy, whomever encroaches upon my 'home,' upon my sense of being, upon my power of hospitality, upon my sovereignty of host. This other becomes a hostile subject whose hostage I risk becoming]" (53). Georges imagines, believes, his sovereignty as host and his home have been encroached upon but nothing ever crosses the threshold into his home except the tapes, tapes which he and Anne bring in themselves. Georges will, however, encroach upon Majid's sovereignty when he is invited into Majid's home and persistently threatens and accuses Majid.

There are, however, two exceptions to the outside shots: the tape that first shows the indoor hallway leading to Majid's apartment, followed by the tape of Georges' confrontation of Majid shot from inside *Majid's* home. In other words, the presumed – though never proven – invader of Georges' life is the only truly invaded subject. In this first exception, a cassette shows Anne and Georges street signs, the outside of an apartment building, then tracks the inside of an empty hallway before turning to show an apartment number. Derrida highlights in *De l'hospitalité* that questioning hospitality necessitates a discussion of thresholds and borders, principally between public/private spaces and rights (47). The first time Georges goes to Majid's apartment, the camera tracks the empty hallway as it did in the videotape of the same hallway, then Georges enters the frame and the camera tracks behind him as he walks up to the apartment door. Here, Georges occupies a space that just a few scenes earlier was unoccupied. The videotape was surely an

enticement to come to this apartment, but when Georges occupies that previously empty space, he has already crossed a border into a private space, filling that space with a perhaps unwanted transgression. But this first time, Majid invites Georges in when he appears at his doorstep, allowing Georges to cross the border into Majid's private space.

The second time Georges shows up at Majid's though, he is accompanied by the police, so now the camera follows three men, who occupy more and more of what the camera had previously shown to be the empty space of a private interior hallway leading to an even more private space. When they knock on the door and Majid's son answers, the police barge in uninvited as they push Majid's son out of the way, yelling "Where is the child?" Here, Georges and the French police forcefully transgress, rather than cross, this same border as they invade private space without permission. Prior to Georges' and Majid's first encounter though, we see another shot of the exterior of the apartment building previously seen in the videotape. Haneke cuts to Georges sipping a coffee as he gazes at the building where he will soon find Majid. After their first encounter, Georges is back across the street in the exact same position, watching, as he calls Anne to tell her no one was at home. Derrida clarifies that state surveillance represents a transgression of hospitality in that it violates the unviolate-able, all possible meanings of "chez moi," the unviolate-able being the condition of hospitality (51). In perhaps a symbolism of the French state surveillance of Algerian populations, Georges' two acts of watching are the only times we see any form of surveillance, of actual watching, in real time. Regardless, these acts of watching make Majid an object of a gaze so that by the time Georges and the police force their way in and arrest Majid and his son, Majid's "chez moi" has already been violated.

Hierarchies of Watching, Power, and the Problematic Panopticon

In his brief postscript on "societies of control," Gilles Deleuze notes that such societies

replace Foucault's disciplinary power, wherein enclosed spaces are no longer needed to exert said power.[145] But as editors of *The New Politics of Surveillance and Visibility*, Kevin D. Haggerty and Richard V. Ericsson, have emphasized, surveillance still plays a key role in these "societies of control" (4). Gogröf-Voorhees points out in her analysis of *Caché* that these newer societies engage "viewer societies," which, unlike Foucault's panopticon in which the few watch the many, "augment" panoptic surveillance into synopticism, in which the many are able to watch the few (265).[146] In these "viewer societies" some people actually seek out being watched, such as public personalities who put many aspects of their life in the media for consumption: "Many are, apparently, willing to be watched, both literally and figuratively, and some even actively seek the experience" (Lyon 47). Georges actively seeks to make *himself* visible with his television show on literature and culture. But that is Georges' public life, his audience is not allowed access into his private space. Similar to Lyon's claim that "within a 'viewer society' encouraged by the culture of TV and cinema… things once 'private' have become open to the 'public gaze' of many" (36), Georges blurs the line between his public and private life particularly through his show's *mise-en-scène*.[147] In more than one scene that takes place inside Georges and Anne's home, Haneke places Georges in front of rows and rows of full bookshelves, with somewhat legible titles. The TV show presents Georges in an almost identical position, in front of a background made of rows and rows of books. The only distinction between the two is that, in the show's set all of the books' spines

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[145] Deleuze states "Ce sont les sociétés de contrôle qui sont en train de remplacer les sociétés disciplinaires. 'Contrôle', c'est le nom que Burroughs propose pour désigner le nouveau monstre, et que Foucault reconnaît comme notre proche avenir [It is societies of control which are in the process of replacing disciplinary societies. 'Control,' it is the name which Burroughs proposes to designate the new monster, and which Foucault recognizes as our near future]" (241).

[146] In her analysis of *Caché* and *Code inconnu*, Gogröf-Voorhees suggests that "The progression from *Code Unknown* to *Caché* is thus marked by the transition…to the Deleuzian post-modern society of control, which, amongst, other things, marks the 'general breakdown of all sites of confinement, including that that of the family'" (265). See also Haggerty and Ericsson; Lyon.

[147] Gallagher notes that Haneke "collapses these distinctions [of private and public spaces] by highlighting colonialism's present violences through the multiple home spaces of Paris" (19).

are blank, without titles or any other identifying markers, yet the resemblance to his home is striking. Georges clearly enjoys being watched in an environment which is the virtual spitting image of his private space; it is as if here Georges allows, in a way, his intimate home setting to be screened by a 'public gaze.'

So why – beyond the perceived, never actualized, threat of an outsider – do the anonymous tapes whose contents never cross the threshold of his own private environment bother him so much? Foucault claims that the ideal object of panoptic surveillance "is seen but does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication" (200). Reminiscent of Burris' claim that "Georges…internalizes the disinterested and subject-less gaze of CCTV" (15), TV Georges chooses to make himself a subject of the audience gaze but the surveillance tapes turn him the unwilling object of a voyeuristic, unseen and unknown gaze. In both cases, Georges is seen but does not see, and in the case of the surveillance tapes, he has lost his subjectivity in communication, lost control of his own image, and which aspects of his life meet a (public) gaze. In a way, Georges also loses control of his own image with his TV show –he has no control over who watches it and who records it – a loss of control which opens up the possibility for the surveillance and anonymous gaze of the cassettes.

While Georges makes himself visible and erodes his own personal/private divide, does that negate the fact that "scopophilia can be seen (in one aspect at least) as a sort of voyeurism that reduces the rights of the watched…[that] objectifies the image under observation" (Lyon 40, 51)? Are Georges's rights reduced as the object of this gaze? Are his movements restricted like those of the Algerian population? Surveillance Studies scholar David Lyon echoes and simultaneously challenges some of Foucault's statements on power and surveillance when he notes that, while the

act of surveillance has the potential to level hierarchies, not all forms of watching are equal.[148] In *Peau noire, masques blancs*, Fanon describes how "le Noir n'a plus à être noir que, mais à l'être en face du Blanc [the Black man no longer has to be black except when facing a White man"] (108). In the famous train scene, the gaze of the white French boy who is "afraid" of the black man not only reinforces for Fanon that his difference and his objectification stem from this gaze, but also underscores for him the difference between his self-perception and how he is perceived – othered, alienated, inferiorized – by the white French population. Fanon's words emphasize the ways in which "le regard" can objectify, negate, and "dissect" those who are watched.[149] The "regard" creates a form of mental suffering upon the colonized subject, a "regard" which similarly fixes the Algerians in France under its already watchful gaze.[150]

But here, Foucault's Panopticon must be placed into conversation with the question of race, specifically his claim that "[t]he Panopticon is a marvelous machine which, whatever use you may wish to put it to, produces homogenous effects of power" (202). While *a* gaze is turned back upon the white French population in *Caché*, it is not the same gaze as that focused on the (former)

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[148] Haggerty and Ericsson claim that "[h]ierarchies of visibility are being levelled, as people from all social backgrounds are now under surveillance" (6).

[149] Fanon states, " Je me découvrais objet au milieu d'autres objets; Tant que le Noir sera chez lui, il n'aura pas…a éprouver son être pour autrui. …. Il y a bien le moment de ' l'être pour l'autre' dont parle Hegel, mais toute ontologie est rendue irréalisable dans une société colonisée et civilisée…D'affronter le regard blanc… Dans le monde blanc, l'homme de couleur rencontre des difficultés dans l'élaboration de son schéma corporel. La connaissance du corps est une activité uniquement négatrice…Déjà les regards blancs, les seuls vrais, me dissèquent [I discovered myself as an object in the middle of other objects ; As long as the Black man will be at home he will not have to… experience his being for others… there is of course the moment of 'being for the other' of which Hegel speaks, but all ontology is make unrealizable in a colonized and civilized society… To face the white gaze…In the white world, the man of color encounters difficulties in the elaboration of his bodily schema. The knowledge of the body is a uniquely negating activity…Already white gazes, the only true gazes, dissect me]" (107-113).

[150] While Fanon is speaking here on racism towards black populations, he questions nevertheless in *Peau noire* whether all racisms are not in fact the same (84) and notes that his work he is concerned with "tout homme colonisé [all colonized men]" (16). Further, Memmi notes that in France there has been "hostility towards immigrants [and] anti-Arab racism accompanied by violence and murder" (25) and Fanon highlights himself the particular inferiorizations and objectifications of the Algerian population in *Les Damnés de la terre*. See also Fassin; Stora 1991.

colonized subjects, nor does it have the same weight. Although the French feel "terrorized" and become the objects of a gaze, they are not made to feel *other*, to feel their race as a corporeal imposition from the outside, not made to feel what Fanon referred to as an "épidermisation de cette infériorite [epidermisation of this inferiority]" (11). Majid, already part of a history of subjugation, of being subjugated to the power of being watched, is not made equal or the same; rather, he is submitted to additional hierarchization and marginalization. The white Frenchman as the object of surveillance, whether or not Majid is behind it, (temporarily) disturbs, shakes up, the power dynamics but certainly does not level hierarchies of watching. Until we know for sure who was behind the videotapes—which is impossible—there is no way to know concretely or with any certainty the extent to which Franco-Algerian power dynamics have been disrupted.

Whether or not Majid or his son are behind the tapes, Majid becomes and remains an object of surveillance from the first encounter that we see between Georges and Majid. In this exchange, Georges goes to confront Majid about sending the videotapes. Majid denies it, but Georges persists and insists Majid stop "terrorizing" his family. In this scene, the dialogue is presented in shot reverse shot, although the camera privileges Georges' reaction by lingering more on his face throughout the sequence. While it might seem that, as Celik argues in her critique of the film, Haneke privileges the white point of view throughout *Caché*, the repetition of this scene with a reversed perspective offers a counter-balance. Not long after this first exchange between the two men, the film's audience is privy to a second viewing. Georges and Anne watch a taped version of this exchange but the audience is situated so as to watch the tape from Georges and Anne's perspective. In the second viewing, we see more: our point of view has switched so that we see Georges' back and so are able to watch Majid's reactions to the threatening words Georges iterated just moments before. Not only is Georges' perspective no longer privileged, but after Georges

leaves, we see Majid break down into what appear to be genuine tears, tears or emotional distress that apparently last, as Anne informs us, for over an hour. As we see Majid's face and reactions, Majid is literally watched twice – doubly visible – as we watch him cry while he is watched by Georges and Anne. At the same time, then, as Georges is made the object of an unwanted gaze, the Algerian – already visible to the French (state) – becomes again, or becomes more, visible, even hyper-visible.

These brief (and therefore troublesome) glimpses into Majid's psychology nevertheless lead us to understand the emotional suffering Majid endures in the wake of Georges' visit. Georges' threats not only recall to Majid's mind what Georges did to him as a child but, in so doing, also reinforce a circuit of psychological violence, through Majid's ongoing emotional suffering. But this interior scene – the other exception to uniquely exterior shots in the videotapes – also complicates the question of who could be sending the tapes. It seems more doubtful that Majid is the culprit but also begs the question of who had access to film him inside his own home: Majid is (perhaps) invaded again by a (potentially) unknown invader here, especially as his suffering is made more public to Anne and to Georges' boss as well through their individual watching of the tape's contents. In that case, even if Majid is the culprit, he inserts himself in the circuitous regime of surveillance and is thereby made more visible and more vulnerable than the French. *Caché* highlights then that for the Algerian diaspora there is no escape from circuits of violence: even if the Algerian diasporic characters are guilty, they cannot engage in acts of psychological violence and emerge unscathed. In other words, even if, as Fanon notes, the colonized subject desires to take the place of the colonizer, he must also implicate himself in the totalizing chain of violence which ultimately leads to his own destruction.[151]

[151] Fanon writes "Car si les derniers doivent être les premiers, ce ne peut être qu'à la suite d'un affrontement décisif et meurtrier des deux protagonistes…Illuminée par la violence, la conscience du peuple se rebelle contre toute

Infantilizations and (Un)Ethical Children

A heightened Algerian visibility by the police in France did not begin during the War of Independence, but goes at least as far back as the 1920s. Macmaster details how the French police of the interwar period created a special branch designed to keep track of every aspect of life for Algerian migrants in Paris.[152] This police force operated under the guise of "protection" for the Algerian people, but was in fact a thinly veiled disguise for a method to gain total knowledge of Algerian movements in France wherein "nobody must be able to escape the all-seeing eye of the official" (153). Macmaster further notes that this special police force in the 1920s and 30s

> underlines the dangerous criminality of immigrants as a reason for special police controls, [but] their public propaganda for the SAINA placed a much larger emphasis on its humane paternalist and civilizing role. For these purposes the Algerian migrant was presented not as a cunning robber or rapist armed with a knife, but as a naïve primitive, a 'big child,' who required protection from the evils of industrial and urban society…'Our surveillance is not for them a form of subjection, but a protection – better still, a state of happiness.' (160).

This infantilization used to justify extreme measures of "protection" becomes perverted in *Caché*: the Algerian immigrant as a literal child – an orphan even – who needed protection comes back to haunt the Frenchman who behaved questionably as a child.[153] The infantilization of the *other* is turned back against the powers which rendered this adult *other* a child in the first place. The crude drawings of a child with blood – a sick child from all appearances – which show up, transform the literal child who needed protection into the symbol of a breach of protected neo-bourgeois lives. The "sick child" – Georges seemingly invented Majid's sickness as well – returns to infect the

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pacification…. L'entreprise de mystification devient, à long terme, pratiquement impossible [For if the last must be first, it can only be so following a decisive and murderous confrontation…Illuminated by violence, the conscience of the people rebels against any pacification… The maintenance of mystification becomes, in the long run, practically impossible]" (41, 90-91). See also Memmi who notes, "la victime finit par être détruite…parce qu'elle se détruit elle-même [the victim ends up being destroyed…because they destroy themselves]" (72).

[152] This special branch was known as Services de Surveillance, Protection et Assistance des Indigènes Nord-Africains (SAINA) in Paris and 1928 all of France. (Macmaster 155).

[153] This is reminiscent of Valérie Loichot's *Orphan Narratives* in which she discusses violence, the separation of the family, and the manners in which this undoes or removes the traces of origins for the orphan child.

French and provoke their need of protection. The Algerian child is now the Algerian adult who may or may not be guilty of enacting vengeance but calls forth nonetheless Georges' childhood acts in such a way that it turns Georges' misdeeds against him. Regardless of who (re)produces the tapes, it is as if Georges here has, similar to Aimé Césaire's claims on colonization, called forth his own terror through his repeated self-centered attitude and unethical behavior.

The children in *Caché* serve to acknowledge the (French) legacy of racism and trace it backward to the child (of the 1960s). Young Georges' act deliberately manipulated the situation so as to negate the possibility of young Majid receiving protection and a home in the wake of his parents' death. Most critics of the film are quick to dismiss Georges' actions as outside the realm of guilt, blame, or responsibility precisely because he was a child at the time – they argue that children belong to a different ethical and moral world – stating that the real problem is the adult Georges' inability to take responsibility.[154] But as Haneke himself claims, not only is "a child…never innocent… as soon as it begins to reflect, it sees and understands everything," but children are capable of engaging in revenge fantasies (Andrew 16).[155] Moreover, as Lloyd claims that "[b]y invoking the myth of childhood innocence, writers and filmmakers may deny the child's agency by negating its potential to cause pain and suffering" (187); as such, the colonial legacy of France's psychological violence cannot be ignored in its appropriations by children. While I do not claim here that six-year old Georges is as guilty as the colonial French legacy, he represents nonetheless a microcosmic example of the ways in which systemic repression, exclusion, and

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[154] Mecchia's analysis of the film briefly flirts with the cruel behavior of children but ultimately concludes like most of other *Caché* scholars: "Perfectly aware of social prejudices, but not always of ethical imperatives, children will be merciless: nonetheless, the reason why Georges…is ultimately exposed as heinous and abject is not so much what he did as a child, but the way in which he allowed himself to forget it as an adult" (134). Saxton (2007) argues that "At stake here are not the falsehoods of a six-year-old but an adult's refusal to confront and acknowledge responsibility for the consequences of his past actions" (10). See also Ezra and Sillars; Wheatley 2009; 2011. And Faber; and Wheatley *Michael Haneke's Cinema: Ethic of the Image*.

[155] Lloyd continues that "Haneke rejects the idealized notion that children are innocent until corrupted, and considers 'childhood' as a myth created and perpetuated by adults" (187).

racism can take root. Young Georges symbolizes a repetition which underscores that, even at age six, a child can already be an agent of colonialism, already be inserted into the circuit through which the colonial language and ideology (continue to) flow as he grows up.

Both philosophers and developmental psychologists of childhood morality have concluded that, even at a very early age, children are moral agents; they are very much aware of what is right and wrong without needing reward or punishment, especially when it comes to truthfulness and lies, particularly to cover their own misdeeds.[156] Killen and Stangor have gone even further in their demonstration that children have morally motivated behaviors vis-à-vis exclusionary practices, especially based on race and gender. But Killen also claims in a separate study that, in order to reduce stereotypes and engage in non-exclusionary practices, children must have positive social experiences. Socialization is a key aspect for Albert Memmi, who highlights in a book-length study entitled *Racism* that this phenomenon is a lived and socialized experience and "has everyday or ordinary origins" (22). In his brief explanation to Anne about the events of October 17, 1961, Georges also mentions overhearing his father say that another Frenchmen thinks that he should consider himself lucky to "se débarasser des bougnoules [to get rid of those jigaboos]," a racist term to refer to people of North African descent. Georges obviously retained this memory into adulthood, which underlines its strength and enduring nature in George's mind, enough so that it could conceivably have influenced his decision to maneuver Majid out of his house. The proximity of this racist term coupled with Georges' actions suggests a racist undertone since, as Memmi claims, "[w]e conduct ourselves like racists when we try to reconstruct a state of parity that we believe has been or might soon be lost" (23). Despite the idea that children's moral worlds are still being built, Georges had a sense of what he was doing[157] Georges knew he was trying to kick

[156] See Bussey; Killen; Killen and Stangor; Komasinski; Matthews; Xu et al.
[157] See Xu et al

Majid out of the house and used multiple dishonest means to achieve his goal, and yet it would seem that those segments of society who thought it lucky to "se débarasser des bougnoules" would have sanctioned his efforts.

Even if one grants to Georges a lack of moral knowledge, as most scholars do, he carries with him into his adult life this discursive racism, transmits, and reiterates it in 2000s France when he blames the Algerian for what he assumes is an act of revenge, and persists in the accusation even in the face of denial after denial. It is as if Georges must continue to push back his own immorality through projecting onto or labeling the *other* as immoral: "If oppression exists, someone has to be blamed for it; if the oppressor will not own up to that himself, which would be intolerable, then the blame must fall to the oppressed. In short, *racism is a form of charging the oppressed for the crimes, whether actual or potential, of the oppressor*" (Memmi 139, emphasis in the original). Georges shows an inability to own up to his own oppressive tactics through his confused, ambiguous description of what exactly he did to Majid. Georges at first tells Anne, "je l'ai cafeté", a word whose denotation appeals to denouncement or snitching, implying some form of truth narrative.[158] But when she presses him what he snitched on Majid about, he says the normal things kids snitch about, "des trucs inventés [made up things]." This confession that he invented something to snitch about reveals that Georges did have some moral knowledge about his actions: Georges "denounced," "snitched on," acts that were not real.[159]

Georges' discursive inventions return through the "childlike" drawings – whose referents we learn little by little – drawings which provoke flashbacks or memories in Georges' mind, which

[158] See Le Grand Robert

[159] Interestingly enough, the DVD subtitles translate "cafeter" as "I told lies about him." The subtitle choice here is interesting in that it is basically a mistranslation to express the inner truth of Georges' words. What is lost in translation though is Georges' attempt to hide or refuse to recognize his own guilt, even as this makes it clearer that Georges had some awareness as to the immoral nature of his actions.

Haneke reveals to be falsified or fabricated in some way as Georges slowly reveals the truth to Anne. After Pierrot shows Georges the postcard he received at school with a boy with a bloodied mouth, Haneke cuts to a nighttime shot from Georges' bedroom window before a rapid cut to a boy coughing up blood before another rapid cut to morning outside Georges' home. Was this apparent dream meant to be a flashback or memory? Haneke never makes this clear, although some falsity will be revealed near the film's end. Similarly, at a later point in the film after the bloodied rooster drawings have shown up, there is a cut to a rooster's head being cut off: we hear a thwack as blood spurts across young Majid's face. The rooster decapitation sequence is one of the only other scenes in *Caché* in which we see a form of physical violence. At first glance, perhaps this physical blood-letting can be dismissed as different because of its animalistic nature. Yet, since the animal in question is the rooster, an emblem of France, this animalistic violence is also symbolic, of a transgression against, violation of, the (former) colonial power which had violated so many of its (former) colonized' bodies. And although Majid is the one doing the cutting, as we learn later, Georges tricked him into it. Georges, then, is really the one behind the symbolic decapitation of France, which, at a minimum, adds another layer to the film's questioning of post-colonial revenge, if not complicating it altogether. But as the sequence continues, the rooster flaps on the ground, dying, young Majid holds the axe upright in his hands, perhaps as if he is about to swing again. He begins to emerge from the shadows, still holding the axe in a menacing pose and then we hear, for the second time, a thwack as Haneke cuts to adult Georges waking up in a sweat. Haneke does not reveal the truth behind this nightmare until the film's last scenes, indicating these moments are part flashback, part fabricated memory as part of young Georges' lies.

Just as Giuseppina Mecchia argues that "[t]he deceiving ways of Georges Laurent are exposed by the children in his life even when they emerge, almost intact, from his past in carefully

framed images" (131), the Algerian child – now adult – nevertheless remains a child in the drawings, one who reveals Georges' pathological lies, both of childhood and adulthood. It is not until after Majid kills himself in front of Georges that Anne – and the audience – find out what exactly young Georges said and did when Georges confesses in his darkened bedroom. First, he tried telling his parents that young Majid was coughing up blood but that the family doctor found nothing, although Georges protests that the doctor was old and knew nothing. But this dialogue both explains the (fabricated) flashback/memory of the young boy coughing blood which reappears on the drawings as it simultaneously throws doubt over whether Majid was ever sick or if Georges was merely lying. Georges continues to tell Anne that in his second attempt to rid himself of Majid, Georges tricks Majid into cutting the head off a rooster and tells his parents that Majid did it to scare Georges, explaining the nightmare as past flashback, part false memory. The drawings are finally explained and the depth of Georges' deception as both a child and adult and the hostile nature of his acts finally come to light, ironically in a shot in which Georges asked Anne to turn off the light before this confession.[160] The fake blood Georges seemingly invented and real blood which he provoked flow from Georges' mind forward in time to the page to haunt him permanently. Georges' confession underscores the circuit in which children were/are already implicated, a circuit that Georges (re)conducts and maintains into adulthood.

After Georges has come home from a heated verbal encounter with Majid's son in which Georges once again refuses to take any responsibility, he goes to bed.[161] The camera then cuts to

[160] Silverman also notes that we are reminded of the childlike drawings later in the film with Majid's suicide.

[161] Haneke has stated in an interview that his protagonists are archetypes and therefore tend to be named identically across his films, such as Georges and Anne; Juliette Binoche's character in *Code inconnu* is the same as in *Caché*: Anne Laurent (see Gogröf-Voorhees 272). Derrida claims in *De L'hospitalité* that naming is what distinguishes between a foreigner and an "autre absolu," and highlights differences between conditional and unconditional hospitality, the latter of which would not require identification, including naming, to exist or be engaged (27-31, 77). Majid's son is the only unnamed character in the film, which is perhaps a Derridean act of hospitality on behalf of a director who often reuses the same names for his characters.

a wide outside shot of Pierrot's school. This shot is reminiscent of an earlier scene that begins the same way before the camera tracks to a car where Georges is waiting to pick up his son. However, in the shot at the end of the film, the camera remains stationary. As the audience perhaps scans the image searching for clues as to its importance, waits for the camera to track once again to the essential, one can notice Georges' son and Majid's son in a corner, talking, smiling at each other. As they separate, the end credits roll. At this point in the film, every image is indeed suspect, so we have no way of knowing where this fits chronologically or if it is perhaps being filmed for a videotape. Virtually every possible interpretation has been offered for the ending: the idealistic one where Majid's son and Pierrot are becoming friends and thus represent a rapprochement and healing of the divide between France and Algeria; or that Majid's son was there to take revenge on his father's suicide and make Pierrot a victim in (a continuation of?) the campaign of "terror;" or that Majid's son and Pierrot are complicit and Pierrot was also behind the videotapes that "terrorized" his parents. If Haneke is to be believed when he states, "I believe life is a chain of victimhood. All characters in my films are victims. And victims invariably turn into perpetrators" (Grabner 26), then all interpretations of this scene are valid or perhaps none are, since in some iteration, a chain or circuit of victimhood will continue to flow. But it is the latter suggestion of the two boys' complicity that represents the most interesting challenge to a manifestation of Fanonian cycles of violence. The possibility of this perverse rapprochement could mean that the violence/counter-violence circuit would merely continue to turn around and around. It could mean that these two young men blur (temporal) boundaries even more by enacting a revenge in a country that was never technically a colonial space or blur what defines the colonial and postcolonial legacies. Or perhaps now a shift has occurred where the circuits of violence are based on generational differences, rather than on the racialized differences generated by colonialism. The

question remains, however, whether Pierrot and Majid's son have the same status in Franco-Algerian dynamics of power, and if not, whether their possible complicity would equalize their status, or only further entrench them in the existing power dynamics.

But does the suggestion of some critics that Majid's son is the culprit change the legacy of the Algerian as child?[162] If it is Majid's son, as some argue, then the cost of revenge is high with his father's suicide. But this possibility would also implicate a child (adolescent) turning on the adults and removing their sense of protection, accomplished through what Giuseppina Mecchia calls the "framing gaze" of the child: "the second and third generation of decolonized subjects" seek to become visible and to become "an [powerful] oppositional Other…to make the adults in power aware that they are always 'being watched'" (131, 133). After his father's suicide, Majid's son confronts Georges at his workplace. In his only scene of dialogue, Majid's son remains calm and polite – while Georges once again comes across as the more aggressive person – as he informs Georges he just wanted to know what it was like to have a man's life on one's conscience. Georges' disproportionately aggressive behavior, along with Mecchia's suggestion, allow us to think that, whether Majid's son is guilty or not, Georges will remain visible, surveilled, if by no one other than Georges as he wrestles with his own feelings of guilt.

Circuits of Physical Violence: The Suicide

In his critique of *Caché*, Max Silverman criticizes Frantz Fanon for establishing or reinforcing what he calls a "reverse Manicheism" of self and other in *Les damnés de la terre*, a binary which Silverman views as reinforced in the dynamic between Georges and Majid in *Caché*.[163] This frequent interpretation of Fanon stems perhaps from his statement that "[c]ar si les

[162] Similarly, Wheatley questions "what legacy has Majid's son inherited? (2011 48-9)

[163] Silverman writes, "Fanon's response to what he defined as the 'manicheism delirium' self and other constructed by western colonialism was a reverse manicheism in which the other takes his bloody revenge. Paul Gilroy rightly points out that Fanon erects 'a binary code almost as pernicious as the manichean dualism that he sought to

derniers doivent être les premiers, ce ne peut être qu'à la suite d'un affrontement décisif et meurtrier des deux protagonistes…[il] ne peut triompher que si on jette dans la balance tous les moyens, y compris, bien sûr, la violence [for if the last must be first, it could only be following a decisive and murderous confrontation between the two protagonists]" (41). Yet Fanon criticizes this very binary, recognizing that this chain of violence and counter-violence is ultimately totalizing and will only lead to a reproduction of the same dualistic logic of the colonizers.[164] These scholars see in *Caché* a manifestation of the binary and dualistic logic through a Franco-Algerian circuit of violence/counter-violence. But like Fanon, Haneke disrupts these binaries first through the lack of resolution as to the culprit: everyone is at once victim and perpetrator, guilty and innocent, as they transition back and forth from one to the other. But all binaries are irrevocably destroyed in the one scene of corporeal violation we witness, Majid's suicide. His self-destructive act manifests and troubles the Fanonian legacy of reactionary, circuitous violence – anti-colonial acts of killing in response to colonial acts of killing – as it also constitutes a new postcolonial circuit of psychological violence.

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supplant'" (249). Similarly, Paul Gilroy concludes his scathing critique of the film with a somewhat problematic reference to Fanon in which Gilroy states "Since Fanon, we have known that colonialism brings out the worst in everyone it touches" (235). Fanon's argument is more along the lines that implicates everyone in an impossible situation in which there is no way to throw colonial mechanisms back upon the colonizers with impunity, so that binary categorizations become futile, or as Memmi frames it, "the colonists are racist, but the colonized are too. No Manichaeism is possible here" (30).

[164] Fanon states, "On voit donc que le manichéisme premier qui régissait la société coloniale est conservé intact dans la période de décolonisation. C'est que le colon ne cesse jamais d'être l'ennemi, l'antagoniste, très précisément l'homme à abattre…Sur le plan de raisonnement, le manichéisme du colon produit un manichéisme du colonisé. A la théorie de 'l'indigène mal absolu' répond la théorie du 'colon mal absolu' [We see thus that the first Manichaeism which reigned in colonial society is preserved intact in the period of decolonization. The colonial never ceases to be the enemy, the antagonist, quite precisely the man to beat… Along the plan of reasoning, the Manichaeism of the colonial produces a Manichaeism of the colonized. To the theory of the 'absolutely evil indigene responds the theory of the 'absolutely evil colonial']" (52, 89). Furthermore, he would claim that the violence of the colonized is no different than that of the colonizer that there does not exist 'their' violence and 'our' violence, just violence : "La violence du régime colonial et la contre-violence de colonisé s'équilibrent et se répondent dans une homogénéité réciproque extraordinaire [The violence of the colonial regime and the counter-violence of the colonized balance each other out and respond to each other in an extraordinary reciprocal homogeneity]" (85).

Yet Haneke has been criticized by many scholars for the suicide scene. Scholars accuse Haneke of reproducing acts of violence on the colonially repressed, due largely to the "limited psychological depth" of Majid and his son.[165] Paul Gilroy claims that Haneke plays into the colonial fantasy that the "native can be made to disappear in an instant through the auto-combustive agency of their own violence" (234).[166] Celik echoes scholars' claims regarding audience complicity, but with a much more critical, accusatory tone in the suicide scene: "Haneke *sacrifices* Majid to imprecate the audience with guilt by staging a public self-prosecution with a mute accusation: '*You* are all my murderers.'…[a] passive-aggressive death whose only meaning is the imposition of affect/guilt, if not recognition of his innocence by the audience" (76). But in the scene in which we (via Georges and Anne) watch Majid sob as well as in the police van scene we do have some idea as to what could be Majid's motives, as to the emotional suffering Majid must endure which inevitability contributes to his tragic end.[167]

In Majid's suicide scene, we can clearly see the Fanonian implication of Algerians in the perpetuation of their own destruction as they seek to destroy the *other*: while Majid's fate ends tragically, he nevertheless transforms this end into a weapon. Near the film's end, Majid calls Georges back to his apartment and says "I just wanted you to be present" before he quickly takes out a switchblade, slits his own throat, and blood sprays across the walls and floor. The fake blood of Georges' lies, first recreated on paper, flood then from the page before George's eyes, and almost literally touches Georges here, turning his own bloody lies against him. But it is more

[165] See Celik (75). See also Gilroy.
[166] See also Patrick Crowley who writes that "[Majid] is reduced to being a screen onto which white European anxiety is projected" (274).
[167] Celik writes, "Thus, drawing a parallel between Fanon's description [of the colonial presence preventing the native from returning to a state of "bestiality"] and Majid's suicide, one could say that by killing Majid, Haneke implies the effects of postcolonialism are similar to the effects of colonialism; it is again the presence, not the absence, of colonial conditions, of a colonial gaze, that leads to violence" (80).

complicated than that. Majid's suicide is at once a brutal, sudden, and unexpected scene of excessive bloodiness, self-destruction as it is also, as Haneke states, an "an act of aggression directed towards Georges" (Porter 51). Majid's invitation to Georges to come inside his home in order to kill himself in front of Georges would represent what Derrida calls "hostipitalité" (45). Majid invites Georges in again, reminiscent of his first hospitable invitation, but Majid perverts this hospitality and turns it into hostility against Georges, as, before Georges' eyes, Majid quickly touches blade to his own throat so that his body is no longer violate-able.

In his attempt to define violence, Haneke stated "the answer I have found is that violence is the ultimate recourse of power against the will of others who must then be subjected to it" (Brunette 7). But here, Majid's act of violence comes from a lack of power, a lack of agency as imposed by the French, and he is seeking in his final moments to subject the powerful to a position of powerlessness even if only for a short while. Majid's suicide then manifests a twist on Fanon's claim that "[l]a violence assumée permet à la fois aux égarés et aux proscrits du groupe de revenir, de retrouver leur place, de réintégrer…la violence désintoxique. Elle débarasse le colonisé de son complexe d'infériorité… Elle le rend intrépide, le réhabilite à ses propres yeux [the assumed violence permits at once the lost and excluded from the group to come back, to find their place again, to reintegrate…violence disintoxicates. Violence rids the colonized of his inferiority complex…It makes him intrepid, rehabilitates him in his own eyes]" (83, 90). Majid has found a way out of this inferiority and otherness imposed upon him but, to do so, must paradoxically remove his own humanity permanently. Majid's brutal act might also recall Fanon's claim that Algerians will first enact violence against other Algerians, "[c]ette aggressivité sédimentée dans ses muscles, le colonisé va la manifester d'abord contre les siens [this sedimented aggressivity in

his muscles, the colonized is going to first manifest it against his own people]" (53).[168] Of course, Majid twists this "auto-Algerian" violence by directing it only against the self. But Majid's throat-slitting also easily recalls the "égorgeurs" who, during the war of independence, would slit the throats of their enemies.[169] Both sides participated in this act, French military and the FLN alike, so that the recollection of these acts blurs just who the enemy and who the ally would be in this case.[170] It as if the excess, flood, of Majid's blood here, suggests that, much like Khadra's and Bolya's use of literary violence, time is still flowing forward and backward and that violence can circulate, flow from a (former) colony to the spaces of the (former) colonizers. Unlike the *égorgeurs* from either side, Majid slits his own throat, so that Majid becomes perhaps his own enemy at the last moment. In what could be seen as the ultimate fulfillment of Fanon's prophecy, the totalizing circuit of violence has resulted in the literal auto-destruction of the Algerian subject who was, willingly or not, guilty or not, caught up in a circuit of psychological terror.

But if Georges is simultaneously an enemy as well in this scene, the self-destructive throat-slitting becomes displaced on Georges as an act of psychological trauma which becomes an act of metaphorical murder. In his work on rogue states, speaking about democracy in Algeria, Derrida states

> Pour s'immuniser, pour se protéger contre l'agresseur (du dedans ou de dehors), la démocratie secrétait donc ses ennemis des deux côtés du front et il ne lui restait de choix apparent qu'entre le meurtre et le suicide ; mais le meurtre se transformait déjà en suicide et le suicide se laissait, comme toujours, traduire en meurtre
>
> To immunize oneself, protect oneself against the aggressor (from within or from without) democracy secreted its enemies from both sides of the front and its only remaining apparent

[168] Fanon states just moments earlier, " La première chose que l'indigène apprend, c'est à rester à sa place, à ne pas dépasser les limites. C'est pourquoi les rêves de l'indigène sont des rêves musculaires, des rêves d'action, des rêves agressifs [The first thing which the native learns is to stay in his place, and not to go beyond certain limits. That is why the dreams of the native are about muscular prowess, his dreams are of action and of aggression… (1965, 40) You need to cite translations of Fanon if you are translating at all!]" (53).

[169] I am indebted to Flood for the initial connection between Majid's throat-slitting and Benoist Rey's work on the égorgeurs.

[170] See Rey; Stora (1991).

> choice was between murder and suicide ; but murder was already transforming itself into suicide and suicide was letting itself be, as always, translated into murder (2003 59).

If we take this to its metaphorical extreme, Majid, labeled by Georges as essentially a terrorist, is already an outsider to Georges' aggressor. Majid's choice to protect himself from this same aggressor is suicide, but one which simultaneously seeks to metaphorically murder Georges, to haunt Georges and, as Majid's son says, have a man's life on his conscience. But is it a suicide or merely the last act of a violent circuit built by young Georges some 40 years earlier? As a child, Georges built a circuit of psychological violence accompanied by a half-invented, half-animalistic blood-letting. The Algerian "child"-now-adult brings the blood-letting to an end with one last bloody sweep, where his suicide brings the circuit begun by Georges to completion, that is, to rupture. Derrida speaks just moments earlier about "Renvoi comme sursis et comme exclusion, meurtre et suicide à la fois [Expulsion as reprieve and as exclusion, murder and suicide at once]" (58-9). Extending this metaphor to Majid and Georges, Majid's expulsion from young Georges' life, from society, and finally his self-inflicted expulsion from living transforms his suicide into a metaphorical murder of Georges, one which perhaps builds a new circuit of mental terror towards the French subject. Majid's blood then points to Georges as the *voyou* as it simultaneously makes him a murder victim who must go on living and bear the invisible scars of his guilt.

Yet typically, Haneke kills his characters off-screen so that the audience does not technically consume the violence, at least visually. Haneke elaborates that in his representations of violence, "I try to give back to violence that what it truly is: pain, injury to another." (Wheatley 2011 80). Majid's final act makes him an object of his own physical pain as he also subjects Georges to an excruciating mental image which haunts Georges. For a director who usually withholds onscreen violence to remain on Majid in his own pool of blood, this emphasizes the extreme means to which the former colonized subject will resort in order to escape what he

perceives as the persistent, aggressive presence of the former colonizer. The pain Majid must have felt here is transfused through his bloody act into one which simultaneously haunts the audience, a deliberate gesture on Haneke's behalf: "violence is never depicted from the perspective of the perpetrators. It appears as what it really is: the suffering of victims…. I try to ruin the "consumption" of violence for [the viewer]…I turn the viewers into the accomplices of the perpetrators and then I accuse them of being just that." (Grabner 17-18).[171] But here, we not only witness this gruesome act of literal self-destruction, Haneke lingers on the image of the dead Majid, blood spilling farther and farther into the room, for over a minute. Haneke's decision to show the bloody suicide makes this scene an even more deliberate act of forced visibility of violence for the audience, to further implicate audience – whether they are part of the white French bourgeoisie or not – in the blood-letting, its causes, and its consequences.[172] The audience may or may not feel connected to the events in the film or to the French colonial legacy. But here, we are forced to consume this physical violation, of the *other* – one which is essentially a *self*-execution – so that we are now implicated, whether we like it or not, whether we are connected or not; we are all now part of the (re)production of violence.

The question of the gaze, of watcher and watched, is complicated in this scene, however, by Majid's request for Georges to be present; he wanted a witness, he wanted his death to be visible to the gaze of another.[173] The scene of Majid's suicide is never repeated, never viewed as one of

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[171] Frey highlights three strategies in representing violence which Haneke abhors: "According to Haneke, three major tactics serve to render violence acceptable [in cinema]…dissociation,….providing situations in which violence is the only logical choice,…[and] embedding violence in comedy or satire" (154-5).

[172] Wheatley similarly claims that "The spectator, horrified by the unexpected violence, is then forced to contemplate the image over an extended period, to stare the consequences of violence in the face" (2009 159) while Celik describes the scene thus: "The manner in which this suicide is performed and shot aims to violate both the protagonist's and the spectator's vision with an explosive accusation" (60). See also Gallager; Khanna; Kline; Saxton (2007); Wheatley (2011).

[173] Speck notes in his analysis of the film, that in order to grasp the purpose of violence and suicide in Haneke's films, "this spectacle has to appear under the implied gaze of others" (163).

the videotapes, yet it is filmed from nearly the same position and angle as the earlier videotape filmed inside his apartment. This parallel – augmented by the fact that Georges leaves the frame and, as he reenters, stops at almost the exact same angle from where the previous cassette had been filmed – renders Majid once again the object of an external gaze, regardless of whether it was videotaped within the diegesis. The film's audience is equally present, gazing upon Majid. The audience, positioned behind Georges, also witnesses the blood-letting, so that their presence implies an even larger gaze; Majid's death, like his life, is made hyper-visible. But through his sudden and bloody suicide, committed in the presence of both a representative and agent of oppression of the Algerians, Majid turns that very gaze into a weapon against the oppressors. Although the watchers are not necessarily being watched here or forced to look at themselves as objects of surveillance, Majid nonetheless reflects, deflects, the oppressive mechanism – the act of being watched. It is not the act of watching but the act of watching an *other* they created – one who has historically been watched – that becomes itself a violent, painful moment for the watchers. The terror no longer comes from looking at oneself but from looking, period. If Majid is hyper-visible, then he can end his visibility with an act that says, you can no longer watch me, and I want to ensure that my final act renders watching distressing for you, as being watched has been agonizing for me.

Conclusion

Regarding the film's polyvalent, ambiguous ending, Brian Gibson claims that

> It does not matter if we don't see Majid's son and Pierrot meet at the end, for it is precisely the desire to blame to compartmentalize, to demonize and displace, which must be delayed, even avoided. If Majid's son and Pierrot are the culprits, their collusion only suggests that any simple-minded, violent reprisal for past bourgeois violence against the Other is bound to repeat and feed into a violent cycle of empathy-led displacement, guilt, and judgment (37).

Questions of guilt are of little importance, other than it seems that we are all – including the audience – guilty. *Caché* presents then not a clear-cut critique of France's colonial legacy, where the guilt would be laid only upon the French. Instead, through an examination of the circuity of the oppressive and repressive structures and systems of colonialism which remain largely in place today – structures and systems which are possibly perpetrated by the former colonized – *Caché* underlines the inherent difficulties in clearly defining categories, be they ontological, cultural, national, psychological, or temporal. With Majid's suicide, Haneke's uncharacteristic scene of an on-screen bloody excess in Majid's suicide scene shows that, like Fanon's warning regarding totalizing violence, the destruction of the other sweeps automatically the self along with it. Ultimately, *Caché* highlights that as soon as the (French) colonial powers enact any form of violence against their (former) colonized subjects, the latter become forcefully and necessarily trapped, unwillingly foreclosed, in circuits of violence, from which the only escape is a self-destructive one.

Haneke has stated that he did not want the problems of *Caché* to be specific to France, that many nations are capable of acts of the dark colonial or imperialistic acts suggested in the film. Although the problematic structures and systems of a racially-inflected paradigms of oppression and power struggles discussed here may have been analyzed through the specificity of the French case, they can speak to global questions of imperialism and forms of race-based circuitous violence – be it physical or mental – which exist around the world. I will take up the question of a migrating violence, one which crosses national borders, and its implications for racialized oppression and power struggles in chapter four. *Caché*, though, shows that there are global circuits through which flow currents of violence which will inevitably return to the source. So if the circuits continue to flow, similar to Gibson's interpretation of the ending, the powerful must at least feel some of the

pain as the violence passes from one point to another, from one population to another, on loop, until perhaps the circuit can then short-circuit. Haneke turns then the gaze not just back upon the French colonizers, but upon us all. The cinematic mechanisms deployed in the film – when we watch the diegetic tapes via Georges and Anne – transform the audience into the objects of an unknown eye (the person filming these tapes is never revealed). As such, this presents a reversal of what Sontag highlights as the Western tendency to look at images of the non-Westerner in agony, we are both in pain and being watched in our pain.[174] While Haneke offers no concrete solutions, perhaps, in trying to force us to recognize our own role in the perpetuation of these circuits of violence, the film can make us realize that it must be stopped, so that possibly one day, we can open the last circuit and stop the flow, the current, of violence for good.

[174] Sontag argues that photographs of American casualties in World War II presented the victims faces turned away, in what she claims is a gesture of dignity, one which is not performed for the non-Western world. As she draws this claim to its conclusion, she writes: "Thus postcolonial Africa exists in the consciousness of the general public in the rich world…mainly as a succession of unforgettable photographs of large-eyed victims…. They confirm that this is the sort of thing which happens in this place. The ubiquity of those photographs, and those horrors, cannot help but nourish belief in the inevitability of tragedy in…the poor...parts of the world" (70-1).

Chapter Four
Violence Without Borders: Migration, Incarceration, and the Banlieue in Jacques Audiard's *Dheepan*

Introduction

In the discussions on the various literary and cinematic iterations of violence in previous chapters, my analyses have included considerations of violence as physical (beating, assault, kidnapping, rape, and killing), linguistic (language used in descriptions of violence and regulation of speech), and psychological (emotional suffering and regulation of bodies and actions). In this chapter, my analysis will consider violence as transnational, that is, when violence in one national context is used to justify its use in another. In these previous chapters, it has been immigrants to France from former colonized countries or subjects in France's former colonies in Africa who become both perpetrators and victims of acts of violence. In Jacques Audiard's film *Dheepan*, however, the migrants are from Sri Lanka – and therefore not part of France's colonial past. Nevertheless, as this chapter will show, the film's representation of the banlieue in which these Tamil characters are placed makes connections to France's colonial past and its postcolonial struggles to deal with its migrant populations.

Jacques Audiard's 2015 film *Dheepan* begins in Sri Lanka, at the official end of its civil war. The film opens on a funeral pyre, as Dheepan (Jesuthasan Antonythasan) places palm fronds on bodies of dead soldiers in Northern Sri Lanka. He then proceeds to light the leaves on fire. As Dheepan tosses some of his military clothing into the fire, the image of a human skull lingers on screen. In the next shot, a woman named Yalini (Kalieaswari Srinivasan) wanders around a Tamil refugee camp looking for a female child that has been orphaned by the war, so that she, Dheepan, and the girl Illayaal (Claudine Vinasithamby) can then pose as a family in order to seek political

asylum in France.[175] Once they find an appropriately aged little girl, they take on the false identities of a recently deceased family of three, victims of the deadly conflict, and join dozens of other nameless faces awaiting a boat to ultimately arrive in France. This is the only explicit reference to the conflict in Sri Lanka that is reenacted in Audiard's film, which suddenly transitions to France where the film's plot remains deeply entrenched in the aftermath of this war.

After the refugee "family's" arrival in France they are placed in a housing project in one of Paris's banlieues, where drug gangs have virtual free reign and operate an ersatz prison world in which the project's residents are seemingly trapped. The civil war lingers in the minds of the three migrant Sri Lankans, however. For example, after one sequence in which the drug dealers shoot at each other, Yalini likens the banlieue violence to that of the war back home. Through the characters' beliefs that they see the war they fled in the violence of a Parisian housing project, the film suggests that the war remains with its migrant subjects who are perhaps still suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. In particular, the film's warrior title character, who fought on the side of the Tamil Tigers, appears afflicted with the typical symptoms of PTSD in war veterans (nightmares, flashbacks, estrangement, alcoholism, etc.).[176] Beyond suggesting that the war lingers

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[175] Audiard has gained a reputation as a director of crime thrillers, but his crime films also frequently find themselves situated at the intersection of representations of immigrant or minority populations (See Austin; Carew). While there is no lack of film critics in France, the United States, and the United Kingdom who have written on Audiard's films, there remains a relative paucity of academic scholarship on questions of migration, diaspora, criminality, and violence in Audiard's work. Guy Austin (2008), however, makes a brief reference to what he calls the centrality of immigration in *De Battre mon coeur s'est arrêté*. In his article on *Un prophète,* Rajko Radovic (2010) references Malik's liminality and how it contributes to his unique intelligence and Megan MacDonald's article about *Un prophète*'s looks at the postcolonial nation and its inseparability from the prison. Will Higbee treats the "immigrant experience" in one of Audiard's films, *Rust and Bone*. However, the immigrant in question is from Belgium, another European country, and does not necessarily involve the same dynamics as immigrants from former French colonies or the non-Western world such as in *Un prophète* and *Dheepan*. Other scholars tend to focus either on Audiard's contributions to the crime/noir thriller genre in general or on topics such as spectatorship or auteurism; see, for example, Dobson (2007; 2016); Met; Vanderschelden; Vincendeau (2009, 2010). Current scholarship on *Dheepan* discusses the sense of perception and "matter and memory" through Henri Bergson (see Hastie), or the film's multilingualism amongst various migrant characters (see King).

[176] See Bisson.

in the minds of his characters, Audiard briefly inserts images of the Sri Lankan conflict through stock footage of a television news report. Dheepan is lying in bed when an English-language report appears on TV with the words "No Fire Zone," written across the bottom of the screen. The expression, unique to the Sri Lankan conflict, was an agreed upon space of safety for civilians and NGOs which the Sri Lankan military later proceeded to bomb systematically, invading and entrapping the last regiments of the Tamil Tiger rebel fighters. In *Dheepan*, Audiard cuts to the footage, showing bodies, carried on stretchers or lying on the ground. As the news clip continues, there is a quick shot of a soldier shooting a machine gun, and we are informed that the footage was taken on a soldier's cell phone before the images suddenly blur. This sequence is emblematic of Audiard's representation of the Sri Lankan war in *Dheepan,* in that he does not portray or recreate any action related to war as it unfolded. Instead, the audience is left only with its aftermath, the consequences of war, the casualties which result from the violence, rather than the original violence itself.

On the other hand, however, Audiard represents the Parisian banlieue as a space of violence, of drug dealing, gunshots, threats of force, and killing. Towards the film's end, as the gang violence escalates, Yalini is held hostage by the gang leader, who asks her to call Dheepan to come help. In order to rescue Yalini, Dheepan appears to take on his former warrior identity when he assaults and murders drug dealers, gang members, whom in Tamil he calls "thugs." In this penultimate sequence which has drawn most of the critical attention due this film, Dheepan is filmed largely in close-ups as the frame zooms in on his hands and feet; the camera rarely shows his face or head. Once Dheepan enters the building where Yalini is held hostage and begins ascending the stairs to find her, the camera trails Jesuthasan in a multiple shot-long sequence which is shot through an apparent filter in which the image is rendered hazy and hard to discern. While

each shot lasts on average five to ten seconds, there are three quick cuts in the middle of the sequence when he pulls the trigger several times in close succession of each other. Although we initially see Dheepan cut and stab some of the members of the gang, once the smoky filter takes over, it serves to mask the sight of the gunshots. Yet, as all other sound – except for the occasional dramatic swell of symphonic music – drops out in this sequence, the filter simultaneously serves to amplify the sounds of these gunshots as well as those of the bodies dropping.

The violence in this sequence appears gratuitous – because incongruent with Dheepan's character as presented throughout the film thus far – and is shown more explicitly than any of the Sri Lankan war scenes or even the drug-related shootings. This representation of violence has been critiqued as disproportionate and incoherent with the rest of the film, which caused many film critics and scholars to claim that the film fails, largely as a result of this unconvincing ending.[177] Slate[FR] critic Jean-Michel Frodon describes Audiard's stylization in the end as an "abuse" which undoes the work of the rest of the film: "Bazardant tout ce avec quoi il avait paru construire son film (ce jeu complexe de réglages successifs entre les protagonistes), Audiard se jette avec délectation dans le flingage à tout va…C'est le déni de tout ce que le film a prétendu être [Throwing out all that with which he had appeared to build his film (this complex game of successive control between the protagonists), Audiard flings himself with delight into a shoot 'em all up…It is the denial of everything the film claimed to be]" (np).[178] A major contribution to film criticism on Audiard's cinematic representations of violence comes from film scholar Julia Dobson (2016), who published a brief "A to Z" study on the director. Dobson writes,

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[177] See Bui ; Delorme ; Dobson (2016) ; Frodon ; Lacape ; Malausa ; Sotinel ; Tion ; Vincendeau (2016).

[178] *Libération* critic Guillaume Tion similarly argues that with the film's ending, Audiard "brise en une action commando tous les liens de conviction qu'il avait pu tisser avec son décor [breaks with a commando action all the ties of conviction he had been able to spin with his set]" (np).

> Violence lies at the heart of Audiard's cinema, yet it is not largely an explicitly choreographed affair, but rather a visceral, amateur, messy brutality…violence in Audiard's oeuvre does not provide transcendence or escape, but reminds us of the characters' embodied experience and struggle. The exception to this norm is the large-scale violence of the final banlieue sequences of *Dheepan* (2015), rendered spectacular through the use of an exhilaratingly mobile camera, rapid cuts and explosions. The disproportionate scale of the violence creates the awkward appendage of a war or vigilante film ending to a largely realist film (266).

In her synopsis of *Dheepan,* Dobson is just one of many critics who criticize Audiard for a sequence of spectacular, unexpected, and disproportionate violence in an otherwise relatively non-violent film; several even accuse Audiard of a display of machismo and testosterone.[179] One particularly outspoken critic of Audiardian violence and its representation in *Dheepan* is Vincent Malausa from *Le Nouvel Observateur* who castigates Audiard's cinematic tendencies: "le refoulé assez vulgaire et l'obsession pour la puissance et la virilité ont toujours empuanti les films de manière latente. Mais cette bêtise Alpha ne s'était jamais révélée de manière aussi grotesque et purulente que dans 'Dheepan' [(Audiard's) rather vulgar repression and obsession for power and virility have always stunk up his films in a purulent manner. But this Alpha stupidity has never revealed itself in such a grotesque and infected manner as in 'Dheepan']" (np). Whether or not the ending is in fact the "denial of all the film claimed to be," these negative reviews largely critically disengage with this ending, just as they do with the film's evident parallels between a war zone and the French banlieue, arguing that it is nothing short of preposterous, unfair and naive. While this sequence may be incongruous with the other allusive representations of violence, there is, as I will argue here, something telling in it, as a scene which confirms the transnational, migrant nature of violence in this film. Critics stop short of asking how these parallels can open a discussion on the migration of violence, that is, the ways in which violence can and frequently does cross

[179] See Bui ; Delorme ; Frodon ; Lacape ; Malausa ; Sotinel ; Tion ; Vincendeau (2016).

borders in migrant or diaspora subjects, as a form of war veteran PTSD that is carried across national lines for example, even when the subject has undergone other fundamental and life defining changes. Indeed the film questions the meaning of violence in different cultural and political contexts and forces its audience to reckon with its inconsistencies when read across national lines.

Violence plays a central role in *Dheepan*, and Audiard suggests that the violence of the civil war in Sri Lanka can somehow inform a reading of violence in the French banlieue. As I have argued in previous chapters, representations of violence challenge the strict categories that seek to define it, whether colonial, anti-colonial, post-colonial or neocolonial or labels such as criminal, perpetrator, innocent, and victim. This chapter builds upon those arguments and looks precisely at how violence can and does migrate: through the trauma that migrants carry with them and then replicate as violence in response to new forms of oppression in the host country.[180] Through the oppression in France which exacerbates their trauma and provokes more acts of killing, violence thus acquires a transnational reach. Against critical interpretations of the violence in *Dheepan* as gratuitous, unjustified and unrealistic, or simplistic analyses of the banlieue as a war zone, I read Audiard's use of violence as migrant, that is, intimately tied to the character's experience of war and oppression in Sri Lanka as they resurface in the carceral conditions of a drug-infested banlieue in Paris.

Many critics note that the film creates problematic parallels between a foreign war-zone and the drug trade in a French housing project. *Cahiers du Cinéma* critic Stephane Delorme writes,

[180] In her work *The Migrant Text* Subha Xavier evokes the migrant text as laden with "buried sites of shame, guilt and trauma" (16), which are revealed through varying linguistic compositions. Citing Cathy Caruth's concept of "wound" and Freud's definition of "trauma," Xavier underscores that the "trope of repetition is crucial for the traumatized subject to gain consciousness" (138). In her work on trauma and the migrant text, Xavier engages principally with narration and the domain of language. In this chapter, I engage with similar tropes but consider them in the phenomenon of violence.

"La banlieue est montrée en état de guerre civile comme le Sri Lanka [The banlieue is shown (to be) in a state of civil war like Sri Lanka]" (6) and Devecchio similarly frames his description: "Les gangs du Sri Lanka ont cédé la place aux dealers de banlieue, mais la France qu'il découvre n'est pas si éloignée du pays qu'il a fui [The Sri Lankan gangs have given way to the dealers of the banlieue, but the France that he (Dheepan) discovers is not so far off from the country he fled]" (np).[181] Frodon sees these parallels created both in the film script and through its stylization, a stylization which I contend relies largely upon a lack of visualization of the Sri Lankan war and a representation of the Parisian housing project as a saturated space of violence. Once the Sri Lankan war violence is brought over to France, it is depicted allusively – it is referenced but not directly shown. My contention here is that the way in which war violence is depicted as migrating across borders and its subsequent confusion with gang violence can be interpreted as yet another form of what Ato Quayson and Girish Daswani call transnational "flows and counterflows" across borders (4). Quayson and Daswani clarify that transnationalism includes not just the displacement of different peoples, but also "notions of citizenship" concluding that transnationalism permits group identification across ethnic and cultural lines, forming along "elective modes…involving class, sexuality, and even professional interest" (ibid). I extend their conceptualization one step further to include concepts of violence, and perceived injustice, positing that violence can become transnational when its use in one national context justifies its use in another – at least as it is understood in the mind of the migrant subject who enacts such violence. This is how I interpret the representation of violence in *Dheepan* and Audiard's provocation to read the violence of the film's penultimate scene as migrant in scope, not gratuitous, unrealistic or unjustified.

[181] See also *Le Monde* critic Thomas Sotinel who describes the equivalences the film establishes between two forms of violence which are "tearing the planet apart," between a civil war and the "autodestruction" of the banlieue community.

The violence of this war as rendered in the film is largely located in its significant civilian casualties, which resulted from both sides, the Tamil Tigers and the Sri Lankan government. And yet, it is mostly the Tigers who were widely condemned and labeled by many Western countries as terrorists. In its refusal to portray the war and the Tiger actions directly, the film invites a questioning of the differences between war violence and terrorism, when the former justifies killing while the latter does not, the former is decriminalized but the latter criminalized. We never see Dheepan or any Tamil Tiger for that matter harm other Sri Lankan bodies during the war. As such, the Tamil Tigers in *Dheepan* occupy a space of ambiguity as to whether they were indeed terrorists/criminals or warriors/rebel fighters. Once in France, though, Dheepan is represented as a non-violent man. In a scene which occurs both after Dheepan has watched the news report on the "No Fire Zone" and the gangs have shot at each in the open space of the banlieue, the eponymous character delineates a makeshift "No Fire Zone" himself that fails due to the drug dealer's refusal to abandon violence. When Dheepan breaks out into a killing spree at the end, then, critics such as *Le Monde's* Thomas Sotinel point to the protagonist's actions as an inability to escape his past: "Face à l'agression, il reprend peu à peu sa posture de combattant" (np).[182] Though I agree with Sotinel's analysis to some extent, the film suggests more than a simple retreat into the character's past life and role, since he makes every effort to both negotiate with the drug-dealers and protect himself and the residents around him. His violent response is a last resort effort to rid the housing complex of its oppressors. Dheepan takes matters into his own hands, he is ruthless and savage, because he cannot risk losing a family again. His violence is not a retreat so

[182] Stephane Delorme has a similar argument, albeit with a shift in tone: "Et cet 'homme qui n'aimait plus la guerre' (sous-titre du film à Cannes) va au contraire retrouver ses plus bas instincts. Il va leur montrer à tous ce qu'est un vrai guerrier [And this 'man who no longer loved war' (the film's subtitle at Cannes) is going to, on the contrary, rediscover his most base instincts. He is going to show them all what is a true warrior]" (6).

much as a compounding of oppression upon oppression, trauma upon trauma, violence upon violence.

In his 2009 film *Un Prophète,* Audiard was interested in treating prison as a metaphor for society.[183] While Audiard does not mention it explicitly with *Dheepan*, this film represents nonetheless the inverted evolution of this idea, in which the Parisian banlieue is configured as a carceral world for its residents.[184] In *Dheepan* we see this largely through the surveillance and control of the housing project's residents by the gang of criminals who operate out of it; the latter evoke Michel Foucault's panopticon as they act as prison guards for the "incarcerated" former. While Dheepan and his "family" – and most likely the other residents as well – can leave the space of the banlieue, it is upon their return that they are monitored, such as when we see Yalini searched when she comes back from the train station. *Le Figaro's* film critic, Alexandre Devecchio writes, "La cité n'est pas une zone de non-droit, mais un État policier tenu par des trafiquants [The project is not a zone of no-right, but a police State run by traffickers]" (np), to underscore that the confinement and limited movement in Audiard's banlieue is controlled by a criminal gang that

[183] See Vautrin. See also Megan C. MacDonald's article on *Un prophète*, in which she notes that the film blurs the lines between "…the citizen and the prisoner…As insides and outsides are governed both by surveillance…, it becomes increasingly clear that the nation itself is its own prison" (561-567).

[184] There is a significant thematic overlap between *Dheepan* and Audiard's 2009 film *Un prophète*: both feature, to different degrees, representations of carceral spaces, various diaspora populations, a criminal counter power to the State, and violence. Each film engages, however, with its themes in almost inverse manners from one another. *Un prophète*'s narrative follows a criminal protagonist from the beginning while *Dheepan* engages with the ambiguous spaces in between the labels of illegal and criminal. In its review of *Un prophète*, *Le Parisien* describes the protagonist's path to power as "Plus qu'une apologie de la voyoucratie, Jacques Audiard définit son parcours comme un réflexe de survie en milieu hostile [More than an apology of the voyoucratie, Jacques Audiard defines [Malik's] process as a reflex of survival in a hostile environment]" (np). In *Dheepan* though, the *voyoucratie* is no longer being defended but is the criminal counter power against which the protagonist fights. Lastly, when it comes to representations of murder and beatings, *Un prophète* largely disengages with questions of criminalization or justification as *Libération* critic Didier Péron argues: "En nous collant au point de vue du rusé Malik, le film suspend les critères de la violence légitime et illégitime [By attaching us to the cunning Malik's point of view, the film suspends the criteria of legitimate and illegitimate violence]" (np). *Dheepan*, though, permits a questioning of various forms of corporeal violence and whether they are labeled or represented as criminal, how, and by whom.

acts much like the French police in its manner of treating the residents, by what Jacques Derrida describes as a *voyoucratie*, as a criminal counter power to the State.[185] The criminal, and therefore illegitimate, nature of the banlieue's *voyoucratie* draws a necessary parallel with the terrorist – and therefore criminal and illegitimate – association with the Tamil Tigers. In his comparative study on American ghettos and French banlieues, Loïc Wacquant discusses what he calls "violence from above," as a "*structural violence*…[which] has produced a *dualization of the social and physical structures of the metropolis* that has consigned large sections of the unskilled labor force to economic redundancy and social marginality" (24, emphasis in the original); for Wacquant, marginalizing people and relegating them to certain spaces is one form of violence. Wacquant's structural violence appears in *Dheepan* in the control exerted upon bodies through limitation of movement, random body searches and enforced security checkpoints. This type of bodily control, limitation, and marginalization has frequently been used by the French State against inhabitants of the banlieue as Didier Fassin's work on the French police force shows, the police regularly engage in targeted identity checks of banlieue residents through racial, class, and spatial segregation (11-28).[186] Fassin maintains that these identity checks subjugate residents to humiliating procedures on the body and mind to remind residents of the "proper" social order (2-5, 141-182).[187] In

[185] Devecchio's review of the film describes in-depth the carceral framing of the banlieue: "[Audiard] filme celui-ci comme un système concentrationnaire, voire totalitaire. Les tours font office de miradors, les voyous de matons, les habitants de prisonniers. La cité n'est pas une zone de non-droit, mais un État policier tenu par des trafiquants. Ces derniers procèdent à des fouilles au corps pour contrôler chaque entrée et chaque sortie, la surveillance est permanente et l'uniforme obligatoire [(Audiard) films this one as a concentration-like system, even totalitarian. The towers serve as watchtowers, the thugs as guards, the residents as prisoners. The project is not a zone of no-right, but a police State run by the traffickers. The latter proceed with body searches to control each entry and exit, the surveillance is permanent and the uniform obligatory]" (np).

[186] See also Wacquant

[187] Fassin clarifies, stating that "le contrôle de l'identité est un pur rapport de force qui fonctionne comme un rappel à l'ordre – non pas à l'ordre public, qui n'est pas menacé, mais à l'ordre social. Cet ordre social est celui d'une inégalité (entre le policier et le jeune) et d'une injustice (au regard du droit et simplement de la dignité) qu'il faut apprendre dans son corps" (145).

Dheepan, it is this very role ordinarily assumed by the police force that, as Devecchio claimed, the drug dealers usurp, embodying a new State police to physically imprison, socially marginalize and violently control residents, much like the structures Wacquant and Achille Mbembe (2007) respectively describe as put in place by the State for the banlieue.[188]

In his recent work on camps, encampments, and ghettos in response to France's growing influx of asylum seekers, French anthropologist Michel Agier establishes a crucial linguistic and political connection between the French terms "hors-lieux" and "hors-la-loi," as he draws on the etymology of the banlieue as a "lieu banni" (83): "Les espaces du ban ou du banni (littéralement le *ban-lieu)*, maintenus à l'écart et à la limite de la ville comme de l'Etat, sont dans une distance et une marge décrétées par l'Etat lui-même [The spaces of the ban and of the banished (literally the *ban-place*), maintained apart and at the limits of the city like those of the State, are at a distance and a margin decreed by the State itself]" (83).[189] Agier thus connects those living on society's margins with those who live on the outskirts of the law; the preposition "hors" places them outside, in a space of what he calls "exteriority."[190] Agier further notes that the demarcation of the space of the banlieue, as an "écart politique territorialisé [political territorialized distance]," implies that this space is exterior to, rejected and away from the rest of society (84-5).[191] In other words, the

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[188] See also Bronner, Bücker; Fassin; Sedel.

[189] Agier mentions at the beginning of his work that he is referring to the French banlieues only "à titre comparative" in his analysis. However, he begins his analysis with the refuge which he defines as "un abri créé dans un contexte hostile, que celui-ci s'incarne dans la guerre, la violence, le rejet xénophone ou raciste [a shelter created in a hostile context, one which is embodied in war, violence, xenophobic or racist rejection]" (31-2). The banlieue which Dheepan encounters is certainly one of a hostile context. I therefore extend Agier's connection between "hors-la-loi" and "hors-lieu."

[190] *Le Grand Robert* explains that "hors" comes from "dehors," which means "à l'extérieur de, hors de [to the exterior of, outside of]."

[191] See also Luc Bronner who states regarding banlieue sentiment that "Au-delà de la frontière symbolique du périphérique, l'idée dominante est celle d'une mise à l'écart [Beyond the symbolic border of the peripheral, the dominant idea is that of a put aside]" (13). Bronner further claims the banlieue and its residents are "[à] nos portes mais toujours aussi étrangers à la République, à ses droits et à ses devoirs [(at) our doors but always strangers to the

"hors" nature of the banlieue and its people is a space of banishment, exclusion, and subsequent vulnerability.[192] The vulnerable and marginalized banlieue residents in *Dheepan* live in what Agier calls simultaneous confinement and *extraterritoriality* – and therefore outlawed – spaces of the banlieue. Here I refer to the space of the banlieue as an outlaw space – both in the sense that outlaws (drug dealers) run the space and in Agier's sense of extraterritoriality – in order to emphasize the "out," the outside, exteriority, and exclusion and to underscore the space of the banlieue on the margins of society and the law. All residents in *Dheepan*'s banlieue are therefore outlawed to some extent and if everyone is outside the law, then the term criminal falls apart: everyone is criminal or no one is. I draw the distinction, however, between the drug traffickers and residents, between those who exploit their outlaw status to their advantage, and those who do not. In these extraterritorial spaces of Audiard's banlieue, where brutal and lawless gangs reproduce the power dynamics between the French State and the banlieue, the film's eponymous character must, paradoxically, engage in his own brutal display of force in order to escape further banishment among the already banished.[193]

'Zones of Indiscernibility': War, Terror, and Ethics of Representation

Audiard blurs the lines between war and criminal brutality through Dheepan's ambiguous warrior/soldier past. Dheepan, after all, is a former Tamil Tiger, a group which had large support amongst the Tamil people at the time of the war in Sri Lanka. This might indeed mean that the Sri

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Republic, to its rights and its duties]" (249). See also Wacquant who refers to the French banlieues as having a "territorial stigmatization."

[192] See also scholars who have written on the marginalization and vulnerability of France's banlieues: Bronner, Bücker; Fassin; Mbembe (2007); Sedel; Wacquant.

[193] Agier states, "Premièrement, ces 'lieux hors de tous les lieux' sont des *hors-lieux* au sens où ils se constituent d'abord comme des *dehors*, placés sur les bords ou les limites de l'ordre normal des choses : ils sont ainsi charactérisés par le confinement et par une certaine *extraterritorialité* [First, these 'places outside of all places' are *outside-places* in the sense that they are first constituted as *outsides*, places on the edges or on the limits of the normal order of things : they are thus characterized by confinement and by a certain *extraterritoriality*]" (66, emphasis in the original). See also Mbembe (2007).

Lankan Tamil population would not impose a criminal label upon the Tigers but that instead, would view most Tiger actions as legitimate. As I argued earlier, the criminality of the Tigers itself is therefore brought into question, depending on whether or not it was considered a terrorist organization. However, the tactics and methods of the Tigers to gain an independent territory – such as the use of "child soldiers and suicide bombers against civilian as well as military targets" – caused many Western countries to denounce them as a terrorist organization.[194] In his work on pluralism, William E. Connolly defines "terrorism" as that which

> fills a zone of indiscernibility between crime within the orbit of a state and war between states. Terrorism is bonded to evil, because of the surprise it engenders, because its victims are not military agents, because its perpetrators are not recognized as state agents in a world of legitimate states, and because it points to the insufficiency of the categories of territorial state, international system, war, crime, and justice through which people seek to come to terms with contemporary life (12-13).

The categorization of terrorist, as Connolly shows, creates ambiguous spaces between crime and war and thereby automatically confuses categorizations of criminality. Much like we saw with Georges and Majid in the previous chapter – and by extension the French government and the FLN – the labeling of Dheepan as terrorist comes from without, from external forces. As a former Tamil Tiger, Dheepan's actions are interpreted as terrorist, at least by Western audiences, regardless of any direct representation within the film's diegesis. Similar to Majid, we do not see Dheepan commit any acts that would warrant such an appellation, although, unlike Majid, we do know Dheepan did *something*. Yet, as Audiard never directly shows Dheepan-as-Tamil-Tiger do harm to any Sri Lankan bodies – civilian or military – it is impossible to know with any certainty whether Dheepan committed any terrorist, that is, "criminal" acts. In the ambiguous spaces of – or lack of

[194] See Macrae, "Sri Lanka." See also Bandarage; Grant; "Sri Lanka Country Profile;" "Sri Lanka's civil war;" "Timeline."

– representation of the Sri Lankan civil war, the war's violence could then be both criminalized and not. Without any concrete representation of Dheepan's actions as a Tiger in the film, any criminal association with his warrior identity would come from an imposed label of terrorist from Western countries, so that he imports a criminality with him merely by setting foot in one of those Western countries.

The moral and criminal ambiguity of the Tamil Tigers stem from a lack of explicit representations of the Sri Lankan civil war in Audiard's film. For example, the film's opening sequence shows several men tossing palm fronds on dead bodies, which are briefly shown as the frame pans up to Dheepan's face. Audiard next cuts to a huge fire, before another cut to Dheepan putting on civilian clothes. Next, as Dheepan tosses some of his military clothing into the fire, the camera tracks over to and then briefly lingers on the image of a human skull. Audiard does not show these bodies as they are lit on fire, nor as they are engulfed in flames; rather, his camera focuses on the consequences of all that is left unshown, so that the audience understands what happened without witnessing the explicit gestures themselves. Nevertheless, with very little contextualized understanding of the war and what actions led to the aftereffects we do see, it is difficult to grasp the complexities of war violence versus terrorism and their relevance for the film.

In the news footage of the Sri Lankan war used by Audiard, as we saw earlier, Dheepan is lying in bed with the TV on and we begin to hear an English-language news report about the end of the civil war.[195] Audiard cuts to the television set that shows piles of bloodied bodies, as well as other bodies being carried away on stretchers, as the words "No Fire Zone" are displayed across a television screen. The cinematic gesture of the skull early on and the dead bodies in the television

[195] In her analysis of the films *Persona* and *Passenger*, Libby Saxton (2010) argues that, as "our gaze is held by the attention looking of an onscreen witness, an act we are invited to emulate" (74), so that we too are invited to witness the aftermath of the war in Sri Lanka.

newsreel depict death in utmost anonymity with no context whatsoever. The report remains therefore troubling and the words "No Fire Zone" that appear across the screen are not explained at all. In fact, "No Fire Zone" is a term unique to Sri Lanka and its civil war wherein, as I mentioned earlier, the government demarcated certain territories for civilians and NGOs to take refuge. However, the Sri Lankan government then proceeded to systematically fire shells upon this zone, ostensibly in the hopes of eliminating any Tamil Tigers amongst the civilian ranks.[196] Although Audiard never makes this clear and so is possibly unconcerned with the question, it is nevertheless perhaps worth noting that, as many humanitarian groups have shown, while the Tigers were declared to be a terrorist organization, due in part to their targeting civilians, the vast majority of civilian casualties came at the hands of the Sri Lankan army, thus further blurring the lines again between war violence and terrorism.[197]

The ambiguous spaces of the civil war render any questions of ethical representations more difficult as well. On the one hand, Audiard's integration of stock footage could be seen as exploitative of the dead Sri Lankans as anonymous bodies for Western consumption – an act which Susan Sontag (2003) would argue perpetuates images of destitute non-Western countries and the inevitably of disaster in these places. On the other hand though, film scholar Libby Saxton claims that sometimes the most ethical filmmaking comes through silences, gaps, and ellipses.[198] In her analysis of race and postcolonial ethics, Libby Saxton refers to Mauritanian filmmaker Abderrahmane Sissako and argues that his film *Bamako* engages in an ethical filmmaking because Sissako produces "disorienting, elliptical shifts in space, time, and point of view which violate the codes of Western narrative and solicit new modes of sense making" (57-58). Audiard's allusions

[196] See Grant; Human Rights Watch; Macrae ("No Fire Zone;" "Sri Lanka"); "Sri Lanka's civil war;" "Timeline."
[197] See Human Rights Watch; Macrae ("Sri Lanka"); "Sri Lanka's civil war"
[198] See also her work in *Haunted Images* in which she makes a similar argument regarding elliptical filmmaking.

to the war casualties could then be interpreted as affording the Sri Lankan subject a private space away from the Western gaze. While the images of the war's aftermath underscore the fact that these atrocities happened, the lack of explicit representation prevents simple visual consumption by Western audiences. Further, the lack of context does lend itself to a reading akin to those proposed by Susan Sontag or Achille Mbembe (2003) around interpretations of exploitation and problematic anonymity, but it also opens the possibility for Western audiences to discover the context for themselves without overtly rendering the Sri Lankan war and its casualties legibly consumable. After all, Audiard himself knew nothing of the Sri Lankan war before beginning work on this film, everything he learned came from the BBC, and he admits to being shocked by the lack of information in France on such recent events (Criterion Interview). Audiard had to research the facts and history surrounding the war, something that he refuses to do for us as spectators of his film. Additionally, in his interview for the Criterion release, the film's star, Jesuthasan Antonythasan, expressed that, for the first time in his life, he had seen a film in the West represent the Sri Lankan civil war.[199] The few images assessing the war's toll on Sri Lankan life creates an opportunity for awareness, inviting the film's audiences to uncover history for themselves. Perhaps, then, Audiard refrained from representing the violence of the Sri Lankan war because he recognized that this violence – and any criminalization thereof – is something beyond his own or a Western audience's judgment.[200]

On the Margins: Criminality and Incarceration in Paris

Critics have further accused Audiard of "unrealistic" representations of the Parisian

[199] See also Dobson (2016) who observes that "[t]he political act here wasn't liberal sentiment […] it was shooting in Tamil and making this character a hero' (Romney 2015)" (188)

[200] In her questioning of whether it is "possible to envisage an ethical system which avoids ethnocentrism and respects the value systems of different cultures while establishing grounds for engagement, intervention, and resistance," Libby Saxton answers that "What are needed are representations which take account of cultural context and point of view as ethical interrogation, not exposition, without imposing Western value judgements" (52).

banlieue in *Dheepan*, a critique which stems mainly from the film's lack of French law enforcement in a banlieue wherein criminals and crime reign free and control the rest of the population.[201] After all, in the popular imagination and media, the French banlieue is perceived as synonymous with urban violence and lawlessness.[202] One of the film's most vocal critics was *Cahiers du Cinéma*'s Stéphane Delorme who appeals to Jacques Rancière's notions of "police" and "politique" to launch the following accusations against Audiard: "Le mot d'ordre de la police c'est donc, 'circulez y a rien à voir'. Circulez, il n'y a rien à voir dans les banlieues, pas d'habitants, et rien à voir d'autre que les clichés que vous avez déjà vu ailleurs [The police watchword is thus 'move about, there is nothing to see.' Move about, there is nothing to see in the banlieues, no residents, and nothing to do with the other clichés you have already seen elsewhere]" (9). In other words, according to Delorme, *Dheepan* merely feeds into already problematic media representations of France's housing projects.[203] Yet, in the film's focus on a Sri Lankan hero proposes a somewhat different vision of the banlieues from that of stereotypical media representations; after all, it is quite rare that Sri Lankan characters appear in the French imaginary at all, let alone in the banlieue.[204] Moreover, much like Devecchio's claim that Audiard's banlieue is a police state run by criminals, Audiard's representation of the banlieue in *Dheepan* as a carceral

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[201] See Bui ; Delorme; Lacape; Malausa; Tion; Vincendeau (2016).

[202] Bücker notes, "Selon une partie de l'opinion, la banlieue est l'endroit 'dans lequel s'entassent les expulsés, trouvent refuse les hors-la-loi et où s'épanouissent naturellement les violences, les trafics et les délinquances' [According to a part of opinion, the banlieue is the place 'in which the expelled pile up, the outlaws find refuge and where violences, trafficking, and delinquencies bloom naturally]" (23). See also Wacquant who refers to banlieue in the popular imagination as "lawless zones."

[203] An additional concern voiced by Delorme was that France's right-wing anti-immigrant party, Le Front National, must have rejoiced at seeing a film with such representations be compensated with the 2015 Palme d'Or (6). Similarly, critics have questioned whether Audiard's portrayals of these criminals as ethnic repeat or feed into the stereotype, as highlighted in my introduction, of the foreign or minority criminal. See Delorme; Devecchio; Lacape; Vincendeau (2009).

[204] The lead actor of *Dheepan*, Jesuthasan Antonythasan, mentioned with pride that 80% of the film's dialogue is in Tamil as he also declared that this was the first time he was seeing a French film treat Sri Lankan immigrants (Criterion Interview).

space of lawlessness, crime, and violence could be interpreted as an iteration of the French State structure of policing, surveillance, and control over bodies in order to critique France and its treatment of the banlieues as marginalized spaces of exclusion and banishment, as spaces of 'hors lieu' and 'hors la loi.'[205]

Upon his arrival in France, Dheepan engages in illegal peddling in order to survive and through this need for survival, Audiard's title character begins to inhabit a space between illegality and criminality. In *Surveiller et Punir,* Michel Foucault highlights the existence of a socioeconomic split between illegality and criminality: all classes have their own illegalities, but criminality is only assigned to the lowest class (98-99). So while illegality relates to a violation of the legal code, to the act itself, criminality is a label, an ontological imposition inscribed upon the person that automatically posits them as outsider, criminal, and thereby marginalized.[206] Reminiscent of Haroun's act of killing in chapter one, in which he was exculpated of murder by merely labeling it as part of the war effort, Audiard's representation of Dheepan as a former Tamil Tiger remains in an ambiguous space between warrior and criminal because (and unlike Haroun) we never see the title character perform any violence during the war. However, Audiard makes it clear in the transition to France that Dheepan becomes a non-violent "criminal" in both Foucauldian senses as one who is outside the law and one to whom the label of criminal is attached due mostly to the class he occupies in French society. After the initial sequence in Sri Lanka, with refugees scrambling to board the boat, the screen fades to black. Next, lights slowly begin to appear and blink on screen as *Cum deredit (Andante)* by Vivaldi begins to play. As the first light comes

[205] Some film critics highlight a similar possibility of interpreting the film as critique, or mirror, of a contemporary French society which is on the verge of "disintegration," especially vis-à-vis its treatment of refugees. See Devecchio and L'Helgoualch.

[206] Foucault equally describes the criminal as the "enemy of all society…a traitor…monster…outside nature" (107-109) and the "delinquent" as "the person who violated the laws, breaks the social contract and thereby becomes a foreigner in his own land..." (2009 44).

into focus, we realize it is a light-up Minnie Mouse ears headband, worn by the film's eponymous character as he peddles trinkets on the streets of Paris. We see him approach restaurant patrons as he repeats only the price "deux Euros" over and over again, then is repeatedly turned away, and ultimately asked to leave by a maître d'. Dheepan clearly belongs to a different class here and is represented in this scene as a social pariah of sorts. Pariah or not, the absurd image of this man wearing a Minnie Mouse headband, a man whom we had seen only a few minutes earlier standing over dead bodies, suggests no longer a warrior/soldier but an infantilized, almost emasculated, man far from home with no power at all in this new place. This stark contrast, accompanied by the dramatic notes of the symphonic music, surely seeks to evoke audience empathy or pity for a man who must now resort to what amounts to a pariah lifestyle in order to survive.

The sequence that follows the restaurant scene is one which underscores the sociopolitical reality in which Dheepan's "criminality" and eventual "incarceration" in the banlieue are a function of his migrant status. In fact, Audiard places Dheepan literally and figuratively behind bars even as our hero roams the streets of Paris. The audience learns that Dheepan's peddling is illegal when his friends run up and tell him to flee because the cops are coming. As he runs away, the camera tracks his feet in close-up, as one of the trinkets Dheepan sells falls to the ground behind him. The cinematic rendering of the migrant's flight from the law simply because he is selling cheap children's toys underscores the precarity of his lifestyle in current day France. Moreover, the feet, moving in a frenzy, suggest not mobility, but the character's entrapment within French borders. As the sequence continues, Dheepan hops a fence, and the Sacré Coeur briefly appears in the background. Audiard's camera tracks the fence before he cuts to Dheepan, crouching behind the fence as he gazes through the slender bars that frame the shot as though the contemporary Parisian society in which he finds himself is no less a prison. Shot in what appears to be the natural

light of Paris at night, the darkness surrounding Dheepan as he tries to hide in the bushes makes him almost indiscernible for a moment that is, until a toy lights up and makes noise and he scrambles to silence it. The police sirens light up and we then see his face more clearly, in particular the fear that the light on his face will betray his presence to the police. The film thus transforms Paris into the carceral system it is for clandestine immigrants looking to survive in France.

In his essay following the 2005 riots in France, Achille Mbembe describes what he sees as a surveillance state of the banlieues, where there is a "limitation systématique des libertés — à commencer par la liberté de se déplacer, la multiplication des contrôles et des fouilles sur le corps, les entraves à la vie familiale, les artifices de confinement dans les tours… [systematic limitation of freedoms – starting with the freedom to move about, the multiplication of controls and searches of the body, the shackles to family life, the artifices of confinement in the towers]" (n.p.). Audiard represents these same limits on freedom and mechanisms of control in the banlieue, yet with one significant difference: those exerting control are not representatives of the state, but criminals themselves. This is expressed in the film through shots of gangsters as lookouts on rooftops, and enforced checkpoints as residents enter the housing project. We see Yalini being searched, for example, before entering a building or told she can only enter a room once the drug dealers give her permission to do so. Dheepan too is refused access to a room until the dealers have completed their business for the day. Even as residents are allowed to leave their homes, their mobility within the housing complex is surveyed and limited.

In his discussion on the panopticon and surveillance, Foucault focuses on the incarcerated criminal to show how the objects of disciplinary power behave as they do because they know they are being watched, that is, subjugated to the gaze of those in power. Yet, because the prison is an enclosed space, power and surveillance are concentrated so that, ideally, the prisoners watch over

and control each other.[207] The drug traffickers in *Dheepan* reproduce the Foucauldian panopticon where they control the space of the banlieue as a carceral one, a space which they also inhabit more broadly, as most of the dealers live in a different banlieue, but work or traffic in this one. As we saw in chapter three with Majid's hyper-visibility before both Georges (as representative of white bourgeoisie) and the French State, the banlieue's residents are watched. Yet, as they are watched not by police or other governmental forces but by drug traffickers, traffickers who are themselves unwatched (there is no law enforcement present), these residents are not so much hyper-visible before the State, but ignored. At the same time, these criminals seek to watch, control, and limit the movement of the residents' bodies, so that the criminals represent an iteration of the State's relationship to the prison and banlieue spaces. The criminals are thereby a manifestation of the *voyoucratie* described by Derrida and discussed in the last chapter as well, a gangster-led counter power to that of the State that ultimately serves as an enforcer of the State's volition:

> La voyoucratie est aussi un pouvoir corrompu et corrupteur de la rue, pouvoir illégal et hors la loi regroupant en régime voyoucratique… La voyoucratie est un principe du désordre, certes, la menace contre l'ordre public…C'est ce qu'on appelle un 'milieu'. Celui-ci groupe en réseau tous les hommes du 'milieu', les voyous singuliers, les individus de mœurs et de moralité douteuses que la bonne société voudrait combattre et exclure.
>
> The voyoucratie is also a a corrupt and corrupting power of the street, an illegal and outlaw power regrouping in a voyoucratique regime…The voyoucratie is a principle of disorder, certainly, the threat against public order…It's what one calls a 'milieu.' The latter groups into a network all the men of the 'milieu,' the singular thugs, the individuals of questionable morals and morality whom good society would like to combat and exclude (98).

The drug traffickers create their own system of outlaw power, their own *voyoucratie*, yet one which functions much as the carceral system, where the marginalized, excluded, and banished keep each

[207] Foucault claims the ideal surveillance system would be one in which "les détenus soient pris dans une situation de pouvoir dont ils sont eux-mêmes les porteurs [the detainees are in a situation of power of which they are themselves the enforcers]" (235).

other in check. The drug dealers limit therefore the movements of the residents within the space of the banlieue through the drug operation's counter power even as the gang members who run the space operate this self-regulating, Foucauldian closed-off system.

In the banlieue, the framing device of bars which incarcerated Dheepan in Paris continues even more frequently. When Dheepan helps an elderly resident carry her groceries up the stairs because the elevators are out of order, the railing stairs frame his face in profile, as if he is walking behind bars. Audiard further films Dheepan behind window frames, as he peers from the inside at the world outside. Audiard then cuts to a point of view shot where, as Dheepan watches the world behind glass, trees fill the frame at intervals blocking his and our view. In these brief glimpses of the darkened banlieue through Dheepan's eyes, the shot's mise en scène looks almost as if the trees were in fact bars. This framing device transforms the banlieue into an amplified version of the prison we experienced earlier in Paris where those that live there are all criminals needing incarceration. The recurrence of bars as a motif sets this world apart for all inhabitants – drug trafficker or no – but suggests the enclosure, imprisonment, and banishment that is Parisian society for its migrant subjects.

Parallel Violence: A Transnational Framework

Inspired in part by Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes*, *Dheepan* is, according to Audiard, France as viewed by immigrants-as-outsiders; most of what we see is what they see, their point of view.[208] In one perspectival sequence, what the immigrants see is a pervasively brutal atmosphere where the *voyoucratie* of this banlieue exerts its power through force and control. While Yalini and Illayaal are walking through the banlieue, we see them in a wide shot, but as gunfire rings out,

[208] See Arrighi da Casanova; Ciment. Audiard's inspiration here, though, is somewhat problematic, in that the main characters of *Les Lettres persanes*, Usbek and Rica, are not refugees, fleeing a war-torn country for their lives, but rather aristocrats on a journey, driven by curiosity to explore France.

we cut to a medium shot of Yalini forcing Illayaal into a crouched position, seeking safety against a building. Soon thereafter, Audiard cuts to the criminals chasing after the shooters. As these men fire shots of their own, there is another cut to a lone baseball bat, twirling through the air. The bat is shot from a low angle, suggesting it is from the perspective of the two female characters crouching, before we cut to a close up of Illayaal watching. This brief but isolated shot of a tool for brutality suggests the ever-looming threat of force as perceived through the immigrants' eyes. Next, we see men drag fire-filled barrels to the edges of the street, indicating that as Yalini and Ilayaal witness it, these men demarcate their own borders and territory with the constant threat of bodily violations.

After the scene in which shots ring out in the housing project, Yalini tries to flee, but Dheepan catches up with her at the train platform. She says "They are shooting each other, doesn't that remind you of anything?" While Dheepan protests that the situation in France is not the same as it was in Sri Lanka, Yalini counters with "Why not? Because you were the one doing the shooting?" at which point Dheepan slaps her. While the Parisian banlieue does not constitute a war-zone, the first sequence of on-screen shootings in the banlieue nevertheless recalls the Sri Lankan civil war to the mind of one of its survivors. And although the shootings that occur in the housing project are drug-related and not carried out over ethnic tensions as they were in Sri Lanka, civilians are caught in the cross-hairs of two warring sides. The migration of the violence could then be just in the imagination of the migrant characters. In his response to Yalini, though, Dheepan claims the two situations are different, calling the drug dealers "thugs," which only further distorts any clear distinction between the brutality of the war-zone and that of the banlieue. Their differing viewpoints evoke the drug dealers then both as (non-military) combatants and as performers of criminal violence that is, assaults, shootings, and murder. Although the equivalences Audiard

establishes between the war in Sri Lanka and the Parisian banlieue are certainly problematic, the ambiguous nature of what is war violence versus what is criminal(ized) violence presents its own flow and counterflow between war-torn Sri Lanka and a crime-ridden banlieue.

Whether or not Dheepan is right, that there are differences between the two situations, his protest to Yalini's remarks opens up an ambiguous space around the categorization of assaults, shootings, and killings. Subsequently, this ambiguous space undoes borders of the nation-state, which recalls transnational scholars Quayson and Daswani's claim that the "nation-state" is now only one factor among many: "Recent studies in transnationalism have taken the nation-state as merely one agent in a more complex variety of global actors" (5). Dheepan's association with the (possibly terrorist) Tamil Tigers – an association he must suppress in France in order to seek asylum – implies that this possibly terrorist behavior, as Connolly indicates, operates outside of the nation-state. The ambiguous question of terrorism and its association with corporeal violations then opens up the possibility for the phenomenon of violence to become another agent – albeit a troublesome one – in the growing "variety of global actors." But with Yalini's belief that the war's atrocities are somehow reproduced in a Parisian banlieue, the film suggests that, from the migrant perspective, both forms of violence are experienced similarly: she is trapped as a civilian amongst the shootings and killings. The contradictory perspectives of Dheepan and Yalini complicate then the question of borders, as if the phenomenon of violence and the confused, ambiguous parallels between war-zones and banlieue drug trades become another prism, another of Quayson and Daswani's "set of analytics" through which to examine boundaries and their undoing.

Criminal Violence and Territoriality

Roughly half an hour before the film's ending, Dheepan attempts to challenge the *voyoucratie* through non-violence. More precisely, he attempts to demarcate the borders of a non-

violent territory in which he and his family would be free from brutality. After Dheepan brings Yalini back to the banlieue from the train station, they are both stopped and she is searched, against his protests. In the next scene, Dheepan gets out a wheelbarrow, fills it with a white powder, and begins to draw lines on the ground in the project. He is delineating a "No Fire Zone," words which he yells in English and translates in French as "plus passer," while the criminals mock him and throw concrete blocks at him. Dheepan's attempt here to transpose a political literacy unique to Sri Lanka onto a French landscape further erases the line between war-time and drug-related activities. The attempt fails, however, due as much to the French criminals' contextual and transcultural illiteracy as to their unwillingness or inability to relinquish a territory where the threat of force is not omnipresent and they do not control the bodies of others. But as the sequence continues to unfold, Dheepan and the drug dealers engage in a sort of "tug-of-war" over control in this banlieue space until Brahim steps in and tells Yalini that if Dheepan does not stop, Brahim will kill him. Dheepan remains therefore powerless to change the situation and draw his own territory through non-violent means.

When Dheepan's family is physically threatened near the film's end, Dheepan hurries to help them because at this point, the family dynamic has developed from completely fake to real. Audiard describes that he wanted to show that Dheepan evolves from someone defending territory in Sri Lanka for the Tigers to someone who, at the end, defends personal territory, a territory of his own and his family (DP/30 Interview). Before the violent threats against Yalini's life, Dheepan can then only challenge the criminal control and force through, paradoxically, returning to his former warrior, potentially criminal identity. This is not to confirm Delorme's claim that Dheepan shows us his most base instincts but that instead, more in line with Devecchio's argument regarding the "No Fire Zone" scene, Dheepan will have no choice but to return to his warrior past: "Hélas,

toutes les frontières aussi bien physiques que morales ont été abolies. Il n'aura d'autre issue que de recourir à la violence [There will be no other way out but violence]" (np). Dheepan did try to escape the warrior/soldier (and possible criminal) identity. But in the wake of all borders being destroyed, or perhaps because of their destruction, Dheepan returns to the imposed, seemingly inescapable identity of violent criminal because the Parisian banlieue has compounded the feelings of oppression, violent control, and banishment from war-torn Sri Lanka which the Tamil warrior and his family fled. In other words, Dheepan had left behind the (outlaw) warrior in him, but the brutal, banished, and outlawed space of this banlieue – where criminals enforce the law through violence – provokes his return to violent warrior. Here, then, the criminal identity is not simply a function of language or timing as it was for Haroun in chapter one; rather, it is a function more of space and the laws that regulate or not certain spaces.

Unlike the lack of context for the Sri Lankan civil war – which looms nonetheless in the background of the characters' minds – Dheepan's actions to challenge the *voyoucratie* are contextualized: when his loved one's life is in danger, he needs to defend her, to defend what Audiard describes as a "personal territory." When shots ring out again later in the film, they come from inside Brahim's apartment while Yalini is there working. Once the gunfire ceases, Yalini tries to leave, but Brahim is injured and he holds a gun to her head to force her to call Dheepan for help. In this sequence, after Dheepan receives Yalini's call, in a medium shot we see Dheepan pull weapons from a bucket before Audiard cuts to a tracking shot of Dheepan jogging where we only see his hands holding a machete in one and a screwdriver in another. The camera quickly cuts to Dheepan's torso and head as we see him stab one gang member, then another rapid cut to him shooting another one in a car. Here, we see the blood spatter the window, but not the gunshot wound or bloodied body, so that this sequence seems paradoxically both explicit and elliptical. As

the sequence continues, Dheepan lights a Molotov cocktail in a car which he crashes against the building where Brahim and Yalini are. Smoke and haze fill the frame in the following shots and while the Molotov cocktail serves as the diegetic source for the smoke, the scenes in which it fills the frame provide a surreal, dreamlike quality to the sequence which follows. Dheepan enters the building and we watch his face as he pulls the trigger once. But next, Audiard cuts again to medium shots of his hands, each holding a gun, and his feet as they climb the stairs. We hear gunshots and bodies drop and see some muzzle flash, but the camera stays behind Dheepan the whole time. The framing of this sequence – the audience's positioning behind Dheepan – caused *Première* film critic Vanina Arrighi da Casanova to describe this sequence like a "first person shooter (FPS)" video game, a platform which scholar of geopolitics Jason Dittmer describes as performative, as a "video game in which the visual experience is of immersion in the body of a virtual combatant…[it] puts the player in the position…of a soldier in combat" (127). The audience is therefore not only (virtually) immersed in Dheepan's body for the length of the sequence, but then they are also put in the position of the shooter. Perhaps the film seeks to make it more difficult for the audience to condemn his actions through their own implication; it certainly makes Dheepan's gestures inescapable. Regardless, if FPS format implies combat and a combatant, then Audiard's framing of this killing spree in a non-combat zone further blurs the lines between different categories of violence.

It is this sequence with the most explicitly violent depictions of the entire film that caused many critics to negatively review the film and declare that this sequence is, as they believe, the film's undoing.[209] For example, *Libération's* critic Guillaume Tion describes the seen as follows: "Dheepan fonce alors tête baissée dans une parade amoureuse testiculée, grand guignol sanguinaire

[209] See Frodon; Lacape; Tion; Vincendeau (2016).

à gros bouillon [Dheepan charges forth, rushing into an infatuated testicled display, a bloodthirsty grand guignol all worked up]" (n.p.). Similarly, Christian Lacape, President of France's Association des Consultants en Aménagement et Développement (Urban Planning and Development Association) accused Audiard of using the housing projects as the background for his "soif de violence [thirst for violence]." However, the "eruption of the violence" in this sequence is, as Audiard declares, "plus suggérée que montrée…on ne voit que les conséquences de ses actions [more suggested than shown…we only see the consequences of his actions]."[210] The audience does witness some assault and killing as it unfolds, but we mainly *hear* bodies drop and our view is obstructed, for the most part, from seeing bullets or his machete pierce bodies.[211] This sequence's representation of killing and assault is thus more elliptical than not. Dheepan's acts of murder and assault are shown in more detail than the rest of the film's displays of force, yet here it is almost as if it is not Dheepan committing the actions in these scenes. Most of the sequence shows his mid-section or his feet climbing stairs, and as we see his face just a few times, this could almost be another man out for vengeance or vigilante justice. *Le Monde* critic Thomas Sotinel describes this sequence as "patchy" and "dreamlike" to such an extent that, "on pourrait presque se demander si elle n'est pas sortie des souvenirs et des regrets de l'ancien Tigre [we could almost wonder if did not come from the former Tiger's memories and regrets]." (np). Even if this final sequence is all, only, in Dheepan's head, it nevertheless underscores the perception that the Sri Lankan war violence has migrated along with him, has crossed borders and become a transnational reality to reckon with in a country of migrants.

At the end of this sequence, Yalini slaps Dheepan to bring him back to reality, to himself,

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[210] See Audiard's interview for the Criterion DVD release. See also Sotinel.

[211] This idea of implied violence and seeing only the consequences certainly is one of the contributing factors to the troublesome parallels between Audiard's portrayals of the Sri Lankan war and the banlieue drug trade.

a scene that recalls an earlier slap when Yalini first suggested that the violence they are experiencing in the banlieue is no different from that they experienced in their home country. Dheepan, we recall, denied the comparison with a slap, while Yalini now refuses the return of war-like violence and terrorism with a slap. This killing spree possibly remains in Dheepan's imagination, suggesting that this pen-ultimate sequence is actually an imaginary violence, in which he represents himself as performing hyperbolic acts of warrior heroism to rescue Yalini, perhaps to make up for the wife and children he could not save in Sri Lanka.[212] The use of the parallel between war and drug violence underscores then the evolution of the Tamil warrior: Dheepan had left behind his (possibly criminal) warrior self when they migrated to France and disengaged with violence until the brutal and oppressive banlieue space triggers a violent response and return to a warrior mentality, but this time it was not to protect a political territory, but to protect his new family. Yet with that final slap, Dheepan, like Yalini, is slapped out of his trauma-filled nightmare and thereby gains his consciousness and the family gains access to their happy ending through another act of migration, this time to England. Through their need or desire to migrate a second time and the film's creation of a third space – in addition to Sri Lanka and France – *Dheepan* underlines a France which is too hostile to its immigrants and can therefore only be a temporary stop on the migrants' journey to better lives.

Conclusion

In the film's final scenes, Audiard cuts to a sunlit street with black cabs to reveal that we are now in England and Dheepan and Yalini have a new baby. The lighting of this scene, much brighter than the rest of the film, lends a surreal nature to the image. The audience is left then to wonder if it is a dream, irony, a possible reality for the Tamil family (Yalini's ultimate goal was

[212] If this is a kind of fantasy of heroism, it plays both into the Tigers' ideals as well as into the new reality of the diaspora whose subjects are looking to restitute a lost homeland from afar.

England after all), or as Andrew Carew describes it, "a vision of heaven to serve as bookend to the opening vision of hell" (87).[213] One clear interpretation of this ending is thus impossible, made all the more so by Audiard's words who claims in one interview he wanted an "unrealistic" ending while in another that he merely wanted a 'happy ending' for once.[214] Be it dream, irony, heaven, or reality, *Dheepan*'s final scene suggests nonetheless that the "personal territory" Dheepan tried to reclaim for him and his family cannot be found within French borders.

As regards political filmmaking, *Cahiers du Cinéma* critic Stéphane Delorme argued one final point on what he believes Audiard does not do: "La politique commence quand on arrête de s'intéresser aux familles, aux communautés, aux minorités en tant que telles, mais qu'on s'intéresse à tous [Politics begin when we stop taking an interest in families, communities, minorities as such, but take an interest in everyone]" (13). Perhaps Delorme has a point. But leaving aside the potential problem that his argument could contribute to minority invisibility, to a whitewashing in French cinema, Audiard's films highlight the ways in which the French State and society continue to treat its minorities, its diasporic subjects, "en tant que telles," apart from other communities. Until France treats its banlieue and diasporic populations in ways where they do not feel marginalized, banished, and excluded, until Dheepan and his family could find their "personal territory" in France, the more political move is for cinema to insist upon highlighting those inequalities.

Recalling critics' concerns that the banlieue of *Dheepan* merely feeds into the stereotype

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[213] Carew continues to describe the final scene in terms of irony: "the ironic quality of this imagined 'happy ending' gaining added irony when you discover that this glittering picture of a fantasy London - all black cabs and blooming magnolias - was shot in India, so that the brightness of the sunlight would have a surreal, artificial quality" (87).

[214] For "dreamlike" see Dobson. For "unrealistic" see Carew, who also notes that Audiard "is fine to cop to this 'happy ending' as a highly artificial one" while in Croiset, Audiard states "j'aurais eu du mal à avoir sur un film comme ça une fin dramatique. Cette fin-là est un happy ending pour moi [I would have had difficulty in having on such a film a dramatic ending. That end is a happy ending for me.]"

of lawlessness and of urban violence, this chapter interprets Audiard's representation of the banlieue as a recasting of a stereotype in order to critique the forces and discourses which continue to treat the banlieue as such; the residents are treated by the criminals as the banlieue is treated by France. Consequently, the only way for the film's eponymous character to emerge from an outlawed space of brutality is to, paradoxically, perform acts of brutality himself. This film manifests therefore a transnational violence, in which the violence Dheepan saw, and likely committed, in Sri Lanka migrated along with him as he carried it across borders. The resurgence of this violence in the French banlieue is trauma-induced: when the oppression Dheepan witnesses in France recalls that of the war-torn country he fled, this compounded oppression triggers his return a (criminal) warrior stance. The transnational violence in *Dheepan* is thus the culmination of the violence we have seen in the previous chapters: a violence that crosses space and time and whose relations with criminality is a function of perspective, language, timing, and spatial positioning. This is a violence that, only when rendered in its forms in extremis, can somehow restitute another (an alternative) global, transnational order.

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have delved into the social construction of criminality as it is applied to foreigners and those who have historically been rejected by French conceptions of national identity, such as minorities, colonial subjects and, more recently, immigrants. As I explored this construct, the relationship between criminality, race and immigration manifested itself most clearly and most persistently through violence. Yet, these manifestations of violence are not always physical violations of the body, nor even the emotional and mental suffering of psychological violence. In perhaps subtler forms, violence is also performed on the "foreign criminal" through language: the state and mediatic discourses which conflate foreigners and France's historically oppressed populations with criminals reinforce notions of difference between these populations and the white, metropolitan French population. Similarly, the structural violence which maintains the banlieue as a space of banishment and the social violence which shapes the ways in which the "foreign criminal" can maneuver French society reproduce systems of oppression on a daily basis. In the cultural production which responds to the stigma and image of the "foreign criminal," these same structures of violence are tools for the "foreign criminal" to reflect and return criminalization back upon the state and society which impose it in the first place. However, these literary and cinematic responses underscore that, while these tools might appear at first to offer an escape for the "foreign criminal," they ultimately trap the historically oppressed and entrench these populations more deeply in the systems and structures of oppression.

I have taken an interdisciplinary approach to the theorization of crime, drawing on fields such as sociology, history, and political science in order to uncover the ways in which recent Francophone cultural production engages these concepts through fictional representations that develop the construct of the "foreign criminal," largely through the trope of violence. My research

has additionally aimed to contribute to migration studies and transnational studies through its examination of the ways in which migration destabilizes categories of who and what is foreign, who and what is criminal and criminalized as it also disrupts notions of where violence stems from and how and why it is perpetuated today. In working across different spatial geographies between France, Algeria, and the two Congos, my goal was also to engage temporal continuities in showing how certain forms and structures of colonialism – structures of oppression, marginalization, dehumanization, stigmatization, violence against both mind and body – never really ended after the colonial period but are still perpetrated, not just in former colonies, but in the Hexagon today. Achille Mbembe argues that time in Africa is on the move: many of the colonial structures and systems have been re-appropriated and are perpetuated in post-colonial Africa. I have been interested in how time indeed flows both backwards and forward, from colonial Africa to contemporary France. I have argued that colonial infrastructures have migrated to contemporary France, and therefore, there is nothing foreign to the people, criminality, and violence which occur within its borders; the originary violence can be traced back to France itself.

This study has centered around literary and cinematic fiction authored by male writers and directors, perhaps due to the fact that the crime genre has historically been a male dominated one. Most gangster films are about men, with women in supporting, secondary roles playing the part of sister, mother, wife, or love interest. Many works of detective or noir fiction depict men in the role of criminals, with women occasionally functioning as a femme fatale. The questions and arguments framed through my project may very well be gender-based, or more tellingly, gender-biased. Yet times are slowly changing and in a longer form of this dissertation, I will include two recent female-authored films, Céline Sciamma's *Bande de filles* (2014) and Houda Benyamina's *Divines* (2016). Both films are helmed by female directors and both center around teenage girls

living in the French banlieue, girls who engage in criminal activity and gang life; the former film's cast is almost exclusively young Black women while the latter represents both Black and Arab teenagers. These female driven works propose a different treatment of violence because they displace criminality onto traditionally victimized characters, challenging notions of gender-based oppression or at least subverting gender power dynamics in creative ways. These films bring to the fore a flurry of questions that this dissertation in a more in-depth form will need to explore, such as: Are women represented as engaging in crime for similar or different reasons than men, and why? When women are in the role of principal criminal characters, what role does violence play and how does it change? How is the blurred line between victim and perpetrator complicated by gender dynamics? Are representations of female-instigated violence more intersectional and how? In Francophone African literature, there is also a growing body of writing that addresses issues of violence as authored by women such as Fatou Diome's *Le ventre de l'Atlantique*, Ken Bugul's *La folie et la mort*, Marie-Louise Mumbu's *Samantha à Kinshasa*, Calixthe Beyala's *Femme nue, femme noire,* Myriam Warner-Vieyra's *Juletane*, Maryse Condé's *Histoire de la femme cannibale,* and Leila Sliman's *Chanson douce*. Rokhaya Diallo's documentary on online threats of rape and other violence, *Networks of Hate,* would be another important addition to this list.

Questions of intersectionality have remained at the heart of this project and yet it is only in including female-authored works depicting crime and migration, that my work can fully explore the conversation between the various types of oppression that overlap in French constructions of criminality. In a world in which growing migrant populations are increasingly targeted, labeled and punished as criminals, one would be remiss to ignore the intersecting forms of oppression that conspire to give us both a fetishization of the female immigrant and sexual violence. The inclusion

of female-driven narratives would not only underscore the extent to which colonial bodies – colonial bodies who criminalize and perform violence – are entrenched in 21st century France, but would also strengthen one point I briefly argue, that perhaps France itself has become a postcolonial space.

One of the principal challenges of this project was locating and defining different representations of violence as well as understanding what made each representation unique and yet connected to the others. The greatest problem I encountered was how to categorize what violence is and what counts as a performance of violence. What made this task particularly complex is not just that what constitutes violence can be quite subjective, but that many of the theories of violence I encountered remain fairly abstract and offer no clear, concrete definition of the term. With the exception of the claims from Achille Mbembe and Jacques Derrida in which they describe different ways in which language can be a form of violence or can act violently upon its subjects, recourse to theoretical definitions was difficult. Loïc Wacquant provided insights into the forms of structural violence which oppress immigrants and minorities in France, especially those placed in more stigmatized and impoverished neighborhoods. Yet, for the physical and psychological iterations of violence, no one, unequivocal definition ever felt sufficient. I therefore either threaded together various theories or reflected upon the proper language with which to describe the disparate phenomena from each chapter which I have grouped under the umbrella term "violence." An additional difficulty lay in the graphic nature of the representations themselves, from Khadra and Bolya's excessive language to the suicide scene in Haneke. It was in examining these scenes of graphic violence as manifestations of the relationship between migration, criminality, and the different types of violence which this project evokes that I began to be able to make sense of the brutality and its function in cultural production.

A tension I encountered within this specific problem revolved around the (lack of) representation of violence. I argued that Khadra and Bolya present an excess and surplus of representability. On the other hand, Audiard's *Dheepan* contains mostly allusive moments of physical violence although I argued that this film represents the violent controls and structural oppressions the French state performs upon its minorities, immigrants, and former colonized subjects. Similarly, Haneke's film *Caché* makes the briefest of dialogic references to the massacre of October 17, 1961 but the one scene of visualized violence, while arguably related to the massacre, occurs 45 years later in the story when Majid commits suicide. In chapter one, I briefly argued that the forms of public discourse and state rhetoric which conflate immigrants and criminals is another form of state criminality. Yet in other chapters, I did not directly evoke the question of state criminality, rather I emphasized the role colonization played, and still plays, in the relationship between immigration, criminality and violence. While I have analyzed these texts together in order to argue for the colonial roots in contemporary forms of neo-colonial and post-colonial violence, a more thorough investigation into allusive or explicit representations of violence would allow me to explore more fully and more explicitly the question of state criminality. In a longer form of this dissertation, additional questions would arise such as: Are forms of state criminality like the October 17 massacre or the structural violence of the banlieue represented or do they appear in the form of allusions? Are the immigrants, minorities, or former colonized subjects who engage in violent criminality represented in a similar fashion? What do any differences and similarities between state and migrant violence signify? How are we to understand an author or filmmaker's choice to either show or withhold violence from the audience and what does the form of the representation or of the allusion suggest?

In a more in-depth analysis of state criminality and violence, and on when state-supported violence is (if ever) labeled as criminal, one crucial addition would be Maïssa Bey's *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes…* which deals with her father's torture in the Algerian war of independence. Here, the question of language would once again play an essential role in my analysis. While Khadra's novel had a surplus of linguistic descriptions of violence, Bey seems to withhold all descriptions of violence that occurred during that war. The word torture does not really appear and the act itself is not described in great detail; in other words, the historical torture carried out by the French military is mainly alluded to, not explicitly depicted. Similarly, in Leila Sebbar's *La Seine était rouge* she writes about the October 17 massacre principally through the trope of memorials in France but uses it also as backdrop to reference, somewhat obliquely, the Algerian civil war of the 1990s. Further, Assia Djebar's *La femme sans sepulture,* in which she describes with as much historical accuracy and detail as possible the torture which was performed upon Zoulikha during the Algerian war of independence, would be essential to this examination. Philippe Faucon's film *La désintégration* would also be an interesting object in this study, in which he underscores the impoverished and stigmatized conditions which lead to the radicalization of several young Arab men in contemporary France. In chapters three and four, I argued that Haneke's and Audiard's allusive references to violence invite the audience to discover historical scenes of violence without making this violence visually consumable for the audience. In a longer version of this dissertation, I would have needed to explore additional questions such as: do allusive representations of state criminality, as expressed through the trope of violence, offer the victims of these forms of violence a space of privacy, where their pain is unconsumable? Or would this type of representation dismiss or overlook the state's role in the perpetuation of violence? On the other side of the spectrum, do direct representations of state violence recast victims in their

role as victims? When does state violence become state criminality? Do these representations negate the brutality and to what end? How does the form of representation problematize the victim/perpetrator dichotomy?

In this dissertation, I have studied cycles of physical violence, circuits of psychological violence, and the circulation of forms of colonial violence through time and space. In order to underscore the spatial and temporal migration of violence to contemporary France, the texts in this project span from Sub-Saharan Africa and Northern Africa to metropolitan France. Yet this breadth presented its own set of challenges, particularly in its socio-historical aspects. Algeria did not undergo the same colonization as the Republic of Congo, and the Democratic Republic of Congo is not part of France's colonial past, but Belgium's. I have discussed the need in a longer form of this dissertation to explore female-authored texts, and all of the texts I mentioned for future exploration are from the Sub-Saharan African diaspora. I have also discussed the need to examine representations of violence, but in this case the examples treat more the Maghrebi diaspora (although many of the examples were also female-driven narratives). I have argued for a common thread amongst all of these different contexts and histories, yet in order to examine the questions I have raised in this conclusion, what is truly needed is not more breadth but depth. I therefore need to explore female-driven texts about representations of violence in either the Northern or Sub-Saharan African context in order to fully address the problems with which I seek to engage.

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