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Violent Legacies: Family and Nation in post 1990s Algerian Literature

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An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Emory University
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Abstract

Violent Legacies: Family and Nation in post 1990s Algerian Literature

By Lucienne Knight

Until recently, historical or theoretical perspectives have dominated discussions of violence in the Algerian context. The aim of this analysis is to build on previously completed studies to offer a new perspective. Specifically, this examination demonstrates how literary texts, written in both French and Arabic, give unique insight into both the process of torture and the physical and psychological traces it leaves behind. This study focuses predominantly on contemporary texts of the 1990s to explore how authors understand and represent the violence associated with the War of Independence (1954-1962) retrospectively through the lens of the later civil war violence.

It is within the framework of relationships, historical, familial and national, that this analysis operates. For example, discussions of the War of Independence in Assia Djebar's *La Femme sans sépulture* and Ahlam Mostaghanemi's ذاكرة الجسد or *Memory in the Flesh*, represent sexual torture associated with this earlier war period as a cause of both masculine and feminine sterility which impeded the birth of the Algerian nation. In addition to examining issues associated with national generation, this analysis studies one particular group, harkis or Algerians associated with the French during the war, who have traditionally been excluded from the Algerian 'family'. Narratives such as Leïla Sebbar's *La Seine était rouge* and Yasmina Khadra's *La Part du mort* demonstrate not only how this community has been denied a national identity but also how literary representations of this group are strongly associated with particular political ideologies. In conjunction to examining issues related to the War of Independence, this study also focuses on representations of the more recent civil war such as Yasmina Salah's وطن من زجاج or *Glass Nation.* More specifically this study analyzes how narratives represent how violence has shaped familial and national structures, causing distorted familial bonds and political chaos in contemporary Algerian society. As this analysis argues, in light of the deformation of genealogical or social structures, violence unites the contemporary Algerian nation and offers the population a way to understand its past and present.

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Introduction

> "But what if this violence is no more than a smokescreen concealing another kind of violence, one that is rotting the country to the bone?" (Selim Zaoui, cited by Humphrey 12)

In his examination *Formations of Violence,* the political and medical anthropologist Allen Feldman considers the relationship between the state and the prisoner's body within the confines of the torture chamber. As he notes, many theorists and historians have previously investigated torture as a manifestation of political authority. For example, in *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault argues that until the nineteenth century, public execution and torture served an important function as a visible manifestation of the sovereign's power that 'triumphed' over the criminal's body. The public's participation in the punishment spectacle also reaffirmed their allegiance to the supreme leader.[1] In his analysis of the link between the tortured body and political authority, Feldman underlines the generative aspect of this relationship: "*the state (m)others bodies in order to engender itself. The production of bodies - political subjects - is the self-production of the state.* The rooms of torture are like Ceausescu's endless maze of underground tunnels, a uterine space where the state considers and ensures its reproduction" (115). Feldman characterizes the torture session as a reproductive act. The nation or 'motherland' produces images of itself on the body of the prisoner and thereby regenerates its own power. Similar to Feldman, this analysis also focuses on the relationship between torture, reproduction and the state. However, rather

than considering torture as a generative act, this study explores how the torture that occurred during the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) not only led to physical and psychological infertility, but marred the birth and development of the Algerian nation. Additionally, this analysis concentrates on the contribution of literature to our understanding of this particular form of violence and builds on previously completed historical, theoretical, and political examinations of torture in the Algerian context. This study, similar to other analyses of torture, relies on a variety of different sources of information including specialists in history, political science, sociology, anthropology and human rights in order to construct a comprehensive and accurate argument.

As the political analyst Selim Zaoui indicates in his statement cited above, contemporary Algerian society is very much preoccupied with the repetition or reproduction of violence. More specifically, he raises an important question concerning the effect of violence on the destruction of the nation's body. Zaoui describes how Algeria's layers or periods of brutality have led to a slow process of decomposition or 'rotting'. Rather than marking the body with a symbol of power, Algeria's violence is causing the national body to disintegrate. One of the most important periods of violence in Algerian history was the struggle for independence. In her analysis of this period entitled *Torture and the Twilight of Empire,* the sociologist Marnia Lazreg claims that torture was an integral part of the war: "torture was not, as was often claimed by military officers, an epiphenomenon of the war. It was central to the army's defense of a colonial empire in its waning years" (3). The French government's fight to hold on to its most

prized colony took place in the torture chamber just as much as it did in the urban and rural 'battlefield'. Torture was legitimized as a method of obtaining information concerning Algerian 'insurgents' or 'terrorists' and became somewhat organized. The government even provided the military with instructions of methods involving 'la gégène' or electricity and water.[2] As the prominent Algerian historian Benjamin Stora notes in his groundbreaking analysis *La Gangrène et l'oubli,* the government put in place a strict system of censorship during the war so that its use of torture would remain secret and so that it could continue to argue that France was not at war with Algeria but conducting 'entreprises de pacification'. Admitting the truth about the 'événements' in Algeria, Stora argues, would also mean admitting that France's colonial empire was disintegrating (*La Gangrène et l'oubli* 18).

Despite the government's official policy of silence concerning the war, a number of texts were published (and sometimes subsequently confiscated) concerning the widespread use of torture, including Henri Alleg's account of his own experience *La Question* (1961) and the collection of testimonies *La Gangrène* (1959). The importance of these documents which will be discussed in Chapter One, is that they provide invaluable information not only about how torture sessions were conducted by French forces but also prove the predominance of sexual torture during the war. Unfortunately, since these texts were written during the war period it was impossible for the authors to discuss the long-term physical and psychological consequences of sexual torture that they would face later in life. The injuries associated with sexual torture are normally not seen

and, unfortunately, due to social stigmas are not traditionally discussed. As a Rwandan woman who was subjected to mass rape during the 1994 genocide explains: "my suffering isn't visible, like it is with people who have very noticeable scars or who have had limbs chopped off. But my wound is there, inside" (Roth 119). Within the Algerian context, as will be discussed in Chapter One, sexual torture took a number of different forms, including the attachment of electrodes to sexual organs and rape. According to the political scientist R. Charli Carpenter, rape has become increasingly more prevalent in armed conflicts over the last century. However, it was only recently recognized as torture when occurring in such conflicts.[3] During the struggle for independence, female victims were often told to accept rape as their revolutionary 'duty'. Male victims, it appears, have been reticent to discuss their own experiences of sexual torture as it may negatively affect perceptions of their masculinity, which plays such a fundamental role in Arabo-Muslim society. The government has reinforced victims' silence through an official narrative that portrays the war as a united, mythical movement in Algerian history.[4] Admitting not only that sexual torture occurred but more importantly that the government encouraged sexual aggression against its own citizens, namely harkis at the end of the war, would undermine the official image of the war as the founding moment of the Algerian nation.

According to the psychiatrist Stevan Weine, testimony represents an important step for victims of torture: "testimony also healed by being a narrative. Testimony enabled the survivor to build connections of meaning between their trauma story and the

other parts of their life story, especially those that were not directly concerned with trauma" (11). For victims of torture, such as Louisette Ighilahriz, writing about or narrating their experience thereby leads to greater cohesion in the perception of their own lives. As this study demonstrates, fictional texts also play a constructive role concerning public awareness of sexual torture during the Algerian war of Independence. More importantly, it appears that fictional texts such as Assia Djebar's *La Femme sans sépulture* and Ahlam Mostaghanemi's ذاكرة الجسد provide insight into the consequences of torture in a manner that is sympathetic to victims. One of the implications is that Algerian society may become more sympathetic towards the victims of sexual torture and encourage a more open discussion of its physical and psychological consequences.

In conjunction with the informational and therapeutic role played by literature in coming to terms with wartime violence within the Algerian context, literature has also played a very important political role. As Reda Bensmaia notes in *Experimental Nations*, Algerian literature of the 1950s played a fundamental role in defining the shape of the postcolonial nation to come: "to write (the fiction) of Algeria was to write Algeria, it was to yield up an Algeria that, although mythical, was no less real, no less authentic […] This, then, was the relatively fortuitous period in which decolonized writers had a real sense of participating in an effort of nation building" (23). The link between literature and nation in Algeria may be described as more than observational or even inspirational, it was creative. Writers truly believed in the old adage "if you build it, they will come" and they wrote a nation into existence. However, as Bensmaia notes, in the years

following independence, literature has become less concerned with the construction of a particular national image and more involved in criticizing the one that exists, as the government has increasingly been charged with corruption and a betrayal of the principles of the revolution. Literature is now associated with what Bensmaia refers to as the 'demythification' of Algeria, or as Rachid Boudjedra writes, Algerian literature is a "littérature politique dans le sens subversif du terme; c'est-à-dire une littérature de subvertissement, du renversement" (Soukehal 389). Rather than writing a narrative of the national ideal, contemporary writers strive to create a narrative of the real, one that reveals the fictitious nature of official discourse and policy.

For Elisabeth Arend, a specialist in North African literature, the appropriation and incorporation of history into literary texts constitutes one of the most important ways in which postcolonial literature subverts official discourse. She writes: "l'histoire, en dernière conséquence, est une invention ou bien une construction. Tandis que des historiens et des romanciers avaient longtemps tendance à camoufler cela, le cadre théorique poststructuraliste et postcolonial permet justement de maintenir cette idée" (20). Within the Algerian context, writers such as Assia Djebar, Leïla Sebbar, Ahlam Mostaghanemi, and Yasmina Khadra consciously use history as a tool of subversion in their texts. For example, in Khadra's novel *La Part du mort,* events subjected to an official policy of silence, namely the harki massacres in 1962, form the historical context of the narrative.

Benedict Anderson argues that "all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (6). Contemporary authors such as Yasmina Salah, Arezki Mellal, Rachid Boudjedra, and Mustapha Benfodil 'imagine' the reality of the postcolonial Algerian nation allegorically through discussions of the family. In this way, narratives referring to a child's absent father may indicate how the traditional Arabo-Muslim familial structure, based on the power of the patriarch, is slowly disintegrating. At the same time these narratives, taking place during the civil war, may be read as condemnations of the political structure that failed to protect its citizens and was largely 'absent' during the war. This analysis focuses on the literary image of Algeria in the 1990s and investigates the role played by violence in the development of the imagined nation at a time when Algerians were living a civil war.

Chapter One, entitled "Tortured Traces: explorations of the Algerian body", focuses on testimonial and fictional descriptions of sexual torture associated with the struggle for independence. As sociologist Marnia Lazreg argues, torture takes place within a social, political, and historical context. This study thereby first returns to the colonial period in order to analyze the role of sexuality within the relationship between the French colonizer and the indigenous Algerian population. As both literary and theoretical texts such as Eugène Fromentin's *Une Année Dans le Sahel* and Arthur Gobineau's *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* demonstrate, the colonizer's

relationship to the Algerian man differed greatly from his perceptions of the Algerian woman. More specifically, whereas the indigenous male was both hated and feared by the colonizer due to his imagined sexual prowess, the 'Oriental' woman became the object of the colonizer's sexual fascination.

As this study illustrates, torture sessions occurring during the war regularly degenerated into an attack on the sexuality of the victim, regardless of gender. As testimonial documents such as *La Question, La Gangrène*, and Louisette Ighilahriz's *Algérienne* show, victims were systematically sexually assaulted and raped. Fictional narratives such as Assia Djebar's *La Femme sans sépulture,* Ahlam Mostaghanemi's ذاكرة الجسد or *Memories in the flesh*, and Ighilahriz's text show that the physical and psychological sterility caused by this sexual aggression have hindered the birth and development of the Algerian nation.

Continuing with the theme of national generation, Chapter Two "La part du tort: Harkis and the non-birth of a nation" analyses literary representations of a group that was denied participation in the Algerian national family. Algerians who participated in the war alongside the French forces were the victims of both the massacres that occurred under the newly established Algerian government in 1962 and a French administration that failed to offer them protection or asylum. This community has traditionally suffered from geographical, administrative and social exclusion in both Algeria and France and has also, until recently, been absent from literature. This examination focuses on literary

texts such as Abdelhamid Benhadouga's غداً يوم جديد or *Tomorrow is a new day,* Leïla Sebbar's *La Seine était rouge*, and Yasmina Khadra's *La Part du mort* in order to explore how this group's political and social rejection is represented as a non-identity.

Using Homi Bhabha's theory of colonial mimicry which he discusses in *The Location of Culture*, this study analyzes how harkis have been used as political tools. More specifically, literary representations of this community betray the author's acceptance or rejection of a particular political ideology. For example, Benhadouga's novel portrays the 'local' officer in a negative manner, highlighting the positive actions of other Algerians participating in the independence struggle. This narrative thereby confirms the official Algerian image of the war as a mythic moment in the new nation's history. In contrast to this, Yasmina Khadra's sympathetic representation of this population in *La Part du mort* undermines traditional stereotypes of this group and also aids in challenging the contemporary political system. In this way, the harkis' fate as a group is linked to that of both France and Algeria in that by denying this group an identity, both nations maintain their respective national images.

Chapter Three, "Une généalogie du sang", concentrates on two contemporary novels, Yasmina Salah's وطن من زجاج or *Glass Nation* and Azreki Mellal's *Maintenant ils peuvent venir* in order to explore contemporary literary representations of the post-colonial Algerian family. At the narrative level, these texts relate the stories of orphans and father-less Algerians searching for the ideal mother. For example, in Mellal's novel

the narrator choses to construct his own family as an antidote to his own dysfunctional childhood with his mother. Salah's narrator considers himself an orphan; having lost his mother at birth and been abandoned by his father, he searches in his adult life for an adoptive family. The narrator also recounts the stories of acquaintances who, similar to himself, grew up without parents within a society that places an inestimable value upon genealogy. In addition to representing dysfunctional families, these novels also focus on the relationship between civil war violence and the destruction of the family. For example, the narrator of Salah's text is forced to come to terms with his unalterable orphan status when his adoptive family is destroyed by civil war brutality. As this analysis demonstrates, within the context of a civil violence, the broken household may be interpreted as an allegory of a shattered national unity.

Finally, this chapter explores the association developed in these texts between the War of Independence and the later civil war. For example, recalling Mohamed Dib's earlier novel *Qui se souvient de la mer*, Mellal's text creates a parallel between 'mère' and 'mer'. Such parallels create a stylistic relationship between these two periods. These texts also focus on the similarity of the violence. Thus, Salah's novel links a contemporary assassination with the actions of Am Mohammed, who assassinated 'traitors' during the struggle for independence. As this analysis argues, in the absence of a stable genealogical structure, violence becomes a replacement family tree, offering the disjointed Algerian national family a prism through which it may understand both its past and its future.

Notes

[1] Concerning the importance of the public spectacle to the sovereign, Foucault writes: "the sovereign was present at the execution not only as the power exacting the vengeance of the law, but as the power that could suspend both law and vengeance. He alone must remain master, he alone could wash away the offenses committed on his person; although it is true that he delegated to the courts the task of exercising his power to dispense justice, he had not transferred it; he retained it in its entirety and he could suspend the sentence or increase it at will" (53). In addition to acting as a manifestation of authority, Foucault argues that public execution and torture also made an obscure judicial system clearer for the general public: "his (the prisoner's) body, displayed, exhibited in procession, tortured, served as the public support of a procedure that had hitherto remained in the shade; in him, on him, the sentence had to be legible for all" (43).

[2] As will be discussed in more depth in Chapter One, Robert Wuillaume conducted an investigation concerning the use of torture within the French police force in 1955. In his report, Wuillaume argued that torture should become governmentally controlled and specified how torture using both water and electricity should be conducted (Vidal Naquet 26).

[3] Carpenter notes in her analysis that the reason for this change is also a modification in the perception of rape. As an example, she cites the rapes committed during both of the World Wars which were not addressed directly by the international community but were considered by the tribunals as examples of "ill treatment of the civilian population" (433). In her opinion, the lack of importance attributed to rape as a crime was due to the fact that "rape was generally proscribed on the basis of men's property rights; it was a crime against 'honor, dignity or family rights' and the rape of women was associated with carrying off men's property" (433). This perception of rape, she argues, neglects to consider rape as violence, and violence normally committed against women. Due to the actions of feminist scholars, this perception has now changed and rape is evaluated in terms of its effects on the female victims and is now understood as a form of torture.

[4] According to Stora, the war was portrayed as: "la transformation des individus isolés en un être collectif, le peuple seul héros pour la nation nouvelle, qui est érigé en même temps en légitimité suprême et en acteur unique" (*La Gangrène et l'oubli* 162).

Chapter One
Tortured Traces: Explorations of the Algerian body

This chapter concentrates on literary representations of torture related to the Algerian War of Independence and their relationship to the Algerian national narrative. Specifically, this analysis focuses on testimonial representations of torture such as Henri Alleg's *La Question* that appeared during the war, as well as more recent representations of wartime torture, such as Ahlam Mostaghanemi's ذاكرة الجسد or *Memory in the Flesh* (1993) and Louisette Ighilahriz's testimonial text *Algérienne* (2001), in order to explore the effect of sexual torture on the Algerian national body and its development.[1]

In 'post-9/11' U.S. society, torture has become a constant subject of public and political debate. For example, in a recent radio interview given on May 7, 2009 the former U.S. Vice-President Dick Cheney discussed his controversial defense of the use of interrogation techniques, such as waterboarding, on suspected terrorists.[2] Waterboarding, recently banned by the U.S. government, consists of simulating the sensation of drowning by pouring water over the victim's face while covering his/her breathing passages.[3] Responding to President Barack Obama's recent suggestion that information acquired through waterboarding could have been obtained otherwise, Cheney stated: "we resorted, for example, to waterboarding, which is the source of much of the controversy, with only three individuals. In those cases it was only after we'd gone through all the other steps of the process. The way the program was set up was very careful, to use other methods and only to resort to the enhanced techniques in those special circumstances" (Wolf Blitzer). In order to justify the use of torture, Cheney underlines the organization involved in the

use of waterboarding, referring to 'steps of the process' and the set-up of the 'program'. Additionally, he cites the caution the government exercised while using this method, stressing that the procedure was both 'careful' and limited to a small number of people in 'special circumstances'.

If we compare Cheney's statement to that of Roger Wuillaume, a general inspector responsible for investigating the use of torture by French police against Algerian suspects in 1955, we note a number of similarities.[4] Given the preponderance of torture within the law enforcement structure, Wuillaume argued for its organized and regulated use: "les procédés du tuyau d'eau et de l'électricité, lorsqu'ils sont utilisés avec précaution, produiraient un choc […] dans des conditions à déterminer, par exemple seulement en présence d'un officier de police judiciaire ou d'un commissaire" (Vidal-Naquet 28).[5] Similar to Cheney's justification, Wuillaume argued that torture was to be used with 'précaution' or care, under specific and defined conditions and in the presence of more senior officials.[6] In addition to using similar arguments about the controlled and exceptional nature of its use, Cheney and Wuillaume are also discussing the same torture technique: 'water torture'.[7] In the case of U.S. prisoners, the use of waterboarding appears to have been anything but restrained or rare. Recently published Justice Department memos dating from 2005 document show this technique was used against Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, a suspected terrorist involved in the 9/11 attacks, 183 times during one month (Shane). Similarly, this form of torture was used by French forces during the Algerian War of Independence, unrepentantly and uncontrollably throughout

the duration of the war.

According to historian Benjamin Stora in *La Gangrène et l'oubli*, if the Algerian war is known as 'la guerre ne voulant pas dire son nom' it is not only due to the French government's refusal to actually declare war but also because of the pervasive use of torture by French forces. He writes: "ce que nous enseigne la guerre d'Algérie, c'est que la torture […] ne représente ni l'exotisme ni l'exception. Elle est institution, d'abord policière, puis militaire" (30). Officially accepted as a viable tool in the battle against Algerian 'insurrection', torture became the symbol for the Algerian struggle for independence. Wuillaume's report investigated and authorized the use of torture within the police. A year later, in February of 1956, the newly elected government headed by Guy Mollet voted to give the army 'pouvoirs spéciaux' that, according to Stora, signaled the beginning of the army's intervention in the war.[8] In a series of related decrees passed during the following months, the government in Algeria, headed by governor general Robert Lacoste, was given the authority to "prendre toutes les mesures exceptionnelles en vue du rétablissement de l'ordre, de la protection des personnes et des biens, et de la sauvegarde du territoire" (*La Gangrène et l'oubli* 75). With its newly established authority, the local government proposed the division of Algeria into "zones" which were to be targeted by the army for the destruction of rebel networks ("zones d'opération"), for the protection of the local population ("zones de pacification") or declared prohibited and evacuated ("zones interdites"). According to Stora, the power attributed to the army under the auspices of these "pouvoirs spéciaux" effectively took away any rights that had

been granted to Algerians (*La Gangrène et l'oubli* 75).[9] For sociologist Marnia Lazreg, these powers also meant that the army literally took control of Algeria and had a direct influence on how the war was conducted: "it was effectively in control. The democratic state allowed and facilitated the militarization of politics […] obedience to command for the sake of operational efficiency trumped due process; esprit de corps overshadowed fairness of prisoners' treatment. Violations of individual rights appeared as correctives of the shortcomings of a democratic system deemed incapable of defending itself" (38).[10] With the army in control, the main objective became to win the war at all costs. For those in charge of the military, the methods used to obtain this goal were of no concern. Torture thereby became a widespread and regular practice in France's struggle to retain Algeria. According to the historian Raphaëlle Branche, who published the most important analysis of the role of torture in the war, a policy of self-protection dominated within the army: "les enquêtes menées à propos d'exactions particulièrement graves révèlent souvent une hiérarchie qui protège ses hommes […] les officiers sont plutôt peu coopératifs et couvrent leurs hommes, qu'ils aient ou non guidé ou approuvé explicitement leurs actes" (101). Institutional clarity and accountability were sacrificed for the good of the French nation. Consequently, the number of human rights violations only increased during the war. Interrogations frequently led to death, searches systematically involved rape, and anyone could be considered a suspect and thereby imprisoned.

The army and police were further protected by a strict system of censorship put in

place by the French government.[11] According to Stora, during the war: "il est ainsi prohibé de parler de 'tortures' ou d''atrocités' commises par l'armée française en Algérie, de mettre en cause l'attitude du gouvernement dans sa conduite de la guerre" (*La Gangrène et l'oubli* 31). As a result of the instituted silence surrounding the war, films such as *Le Petit Soldat* (1959) and *Muriel* (1963) which attempted to discuss the subject of torture were censored (*La Gangrène et l'oubli* 39).[12] The only television station in existence at that time was effectively controlled by the government and showed only 'approved' images and political opinions.[13] Despite the government's attempts to control information about the events in Algeria, a number of newspapers published articles denouncing the government's use of torture such as the writer Francois Mauriac's article "La question" published in *L'Express* in January 1955. Testimonial and analytical documents that focused on the war were also published and later seized by the government during this period. Documents such as Henri Alleg's *La Question* (1958) and *La Gangrène* (1960) will form the subject of this analysis.[14] The authors of these texts were motivated to document their experiences by a desire to aid the independence struggle. As Alleg writes: "il fallait que je dise tout ce que je sais […] Je le dois […] à tous ceux qu'on humilie et qu'on torture, et qui continuent la lutte avec courage. Je le dois à tous ceux qui, chaque jour, meurent pour la liberté de leur pays" (112). Authors such as Alleg thought that providing the French public with information about the government's use of torture could change the course of the war. Testimonial documents therefore contain detailed accounts of torture sessions and, as this analysis demonstrates,

describe how torture regularly took the form of an attack on the victim's sexuality.

According to the United Nations' 1984 Convention Against Torture, an act may be defined as torture when it causes severe physical or mental pain, constitutes an attempt to obtain information or a confession, and is instigated or carried out by a public official or someone acting in an official capacity.[15] Sexual torture, according to Pauline Oosterhoff who is a specialist in sexual and reproductive healthcare, is defined as "an act of sexual violence, from forced nakedness to rape, which qualifies as torture" (69). In her analysis of sexual torture in Croatia, Oosterhoff notes that although both men and women have been targeted as victims of this kind of aggression, not much is truly known about its psychological consequences. Cherry Booth, a specialist in women's rights, explains in her discussion "Sexual Violence, Torture, and International Justice" that society actually appears permissive with regards to its occurrence during armed conflicts: "victims have been let down when it comes to prevention and prosecution of these offenses, largely because sexual violence has been regarded as an accepted concomitant of war, even if it was not explicitly condoned" (Roth 120). In addition to this cultural acceptance, victims are generally unwilling to discuss their experiences due to the social taboos associated with rape. For example, Oosterhoff has found that male victims in at least 70 countries were discouraged from discussing their experiences by homophobic legal practices that criminalize homosexuality (68).

Within this context, testimonial accounts of torture such as Alleg's *La Question*, *La Gangrène* and Louisette Ighilahriz's *Algérienne* prove of fundamental importance. As

written traces of the experience of sexual torture, they provide insight into the mechanics of the act. They relate, for example, how it is understood by both the victim and the torturer. In Ighilahriz's text the reader also learns about the psychological and hidden physical marks left by this aggression. She describes, for example, the difficulties that she experienced throughout her pregnancies caused by injuries associated with torture. Since the feminine experience of torture differs greatly from that of men, this analysis will consider each gender separately. In addition to analyzing the testimonial trace, this examination will also show how literary texts have begun to explore the consequences of sexual torture. Recent fictional narratives such as Assia Djebar's *La Femme sans sépulture* and Ahlam Mostaghanemi's ذاكرة الجسد or *Memory in the Flesh* describe how sexual torture marks both the victim and the nation. These texts explore the link between torture and reproduction, more specifically how the victim perceives him/herself to be infertile. As this analysis argues, a lack of reproduction is an allegory of the (non)development of Algeria as a nation.

Torturing the national body

On the individual nature of torture in her analysis, Lazreg conlcludes that: "the torture situation is not summed up by a torturer and his victim thrown together in a room with a few instruments. It is a structured environment with a texture of its own […] In the social situation of torture, memory, identity, and culture weave a network of ideas and

perceptions, experiences" (6). As Lazreg argues, torture takes place within a specific context which must be taken into consideration when interpreting the significance of the torture act. Torture associated with the Algerian struggle for independence should then be analyzed and understood within the unique historical, colonial, and cultural context of Algeria. The interaction between the torturer and victim during the war was the product of a colonial relationship lasting 130 years. In this way, the torture session may be interpreted as an expression of the French colonizer's perceptions of the Algerian population. More specifically, torture was a manifestation of the colonizer's fascination with and fear of 'native' sexuality. The fear implicit in colonial encounters was related to the perceived sexual prowess of the indigenous male. Torture sessions occurring during the war thereby represented an opportunity for the colonizer to act on this fear, allowing him to psychologically and physically destroy the Algerian male's capability to reproduce. Furthermore, the physical sterility that was a frequent consequence of torture then impeded Algeria's development as a nation.

Colonial society, as psychiatrist and author Frantz Fanon famously describes in *Les Damnés de la terre,* was based on a strict system of geographical and racial segregation: "la zone habitée par les colonisés n'est pas complémentaire de la zone habitée par les colons. Ces deux zones s'opposent […] La ville du colon est une ville repue, paresseuse, son ventre est plein […] une ville de blancs, d'étrangers […] La ville du colonisé est une ville affamée […] une ville de nègres, une ville de bicots" (42-43). As Fanon points out, colonial society consisted of populations who had little interaction

and even less in common.[16] Whereas the colonizer's life was characterized by economic stability and ease, the existence of the Algerian population was exemplified by constant deficiency. In his novel *Le Mont des Genets* (1962), Mourad Bourboune addresses the segregation within Algerian society in a scene which takes place in a bar. The main character Omar remarks that "les Européens occupaient le fond de la salle, groupe à part, de loin le plus bruyant. Aucun contact avec les autres, les Arabes. Omar se plut à imaginer une ligne qui constituerait entre les deux parties de la clientèle la frontière tacitement acceptée" (Soukehal 325-326). As this section of the novel illustrates, even in situations where interaction could occur between the two populations, they remain separated. The text attributes responsibility for this segregation to the colonizer. Rather than interpreting the space between the two groups as a mutual desire for separation, the Europeans are specifically described as having no contact with 'les autres' or the Algerians.[17]

Fanon describes the colonizer as being in constant fear of the colonized man's attempts to cross the racially imposed lines and take his place: "rêves de possession. Tous les modes de possession: s'asseoir à la table du colon, coucher dans le lit du colon, avec sa femme si c'est possible" (*Les Damnés de la terre* 43). It is important to note, for our analysis, that the colonizer's anxiety not only concerns the native man's appropriation of his property, social status and lifestyle, but also of his wife. Algerian sexuality was perceived by the colonizer as a serious threat not only to his own authority but to the hierarchical structure of colonial society in general. According to the historian

Emmanuel Sivan, the Algerian man was stereotypically portrayed as being sexually potent and unable to control his sexual instincts: "hypersexed (physiologically and mentally) […] [he was] constantly copulating in and out of marriage […] and possessing a powerful sex appeal" (36).[18] The colonizer's fear of the native, we may say, was in reality a fear of the Oriental male's capacity to reproduce and eventually outnumber the colonizer. More importantly, through his ability to attract European females, he symbolized a threat to the purity of the colonizer's (white) race.

The colonizer was thereby fearful not only of the native male as a danger to his authority but also imagined him as having the capability to eradicate the colonizer as a racial entity. For Arthur Gobineau, whose *Essai sur l'inégalité des races* dating from the 1830's influenced European racial theory for decades to come, the indigenous man threatened the European colonizer with degeneration or the dilution of the purity of his blood:

> le mot dégénéré, s'appliquant à un peuple, doit signifier et signifie que ce peuple n'a plus de valeur intrinsèque qu'autrefois il possédait, parce qu'il n'a plus dans ses veines le même sang, dont les alliages successifs ont graduellement modifié la valeur; autrement dit, qu'avec le même nom, il n'a pas conservé la même race que ses fondateurs (24).

In Gobineau's theory, racial groups were attributed a value which could change depending on their choices of sexual partners. If a group systematically produced offspring with members of a racial group of a lesser 'value', then the first group's value would decrease. The result, for Gobineau, was that over time racial groups would significantly change the composition of their blood and would negatively differentiate

themselves from their ancestors.[19] For Gobineau, the threat of degeneration came from sexual contact with the inferior 'other' which, according to Sivan, was a common theme in Algerian popular culture. In his examination, Sivan cites a *chansonnette* dating from the colonial period that describes: "'proud [Spanish] hidalgos, bantering Neopolitans, squinting Arabs and stinking Mozabites' licking ice-cream from the same cup, indulging in all kinds of promiscuity, with the result that, 'once the Arabs intermingle with the Europeans, all the inhabitants of Algeria will contract syphilis'" (42). The song contains a suggestion of homoerotic desire in its description of a group of men not only sharing the same ice-cream but erotically licking it together. This implies that the colonizer not only feared sexual interaction with the other but also viewed him as a threat to his own sexual identity. The song also demonstrates a common link made during this period between racial interaction, regression and infertility.[20]

According to Christelle Taraud, a specialist in North African colonial medical history, fear of disease and degeneration was a constant anxiety of colonial society. In *La Prostitution coloniale,* she describes how a strict structure of segregation was instituted in North Africa in order to alleviate the colonizer's threat of 'sexual contamination' from the native male. For example, in 'maisons de tolérance' or brothels, European prostitutes were forbidden from sleeping with 'indigenous' men since, according to one settler: "il est assez désagréable et humiliant pour un Blanc de songer qu'il a été précédé dans les bras d'une femme, même prostituée, par un *sidi* à la santé douteuse et à l'hygiène plus ou moins relative" (135-136). Having any link to the native male was less than acceptable to

the white settler, however it was even more distasteful when their association was of a sexual nature. As indicated by this statement, the native male was stereotypically determined to be dirty and a source of sexually transmitted diseases. Within colonial society, therefore, brothels operated either for a 'European' or 'Indigenous' clientele but never serviced both at the same time. In addition to trying to eradicate the threat of the colonizer's sexual contamination by the native male through these organizational means, Taraud also describes how 'European' establishments were geographically separated from their 'indigenous' equivalents.[21]

Officially, the Algerian War of Independence was fought by the French government to hold on to Algeria and the hierarchical colonial society in which the colonizer lived a life characterized by power and affluence. Considering the importance of Algeria to French national identity at the beginning of the war in 1954, Lazreg notes: "Indochina was falling, negotiations had been under way to surrender sovereignty to Tunisia and Morocco […] that Algeria […] would also be contested by nationalists was an unimaginable prospect, as it was threatening to the political and cultural identity of the colonial state" (18). Algeria had been, as a completely integrated colonial entity, the most important example of colonial success.[22] The war was therefore fought to maintain the national image of France as a superior cultural and political force. At the same time, the war appears to have given the French colonizer the opportunity to exorcise some of his demons concerning his perceptions of the native population. For Fanon, these demons were of a sexual nature: "le Blanc qui déteste le Noir n'obéit-t-il pas à un

sentiment d'impuissance ou d'infériorité sexuelle? […] Nous savons que les sévices, les tortures, les coups comportent de sexuel" (*Peau noire, masques blancs* 129). Fanon interprets the sexual element of torture as being associated with the colonizer's fear of the native man's sexual potency. Within the context of the Algerian war, according to Branche, torture sessions consistently deteriorated into an attack on the victim's sexual organs:

> dans ces séances faites de peurs, de cris, d'odeurs et de douleurs, la dimension sexuelle est centrale, physiquement et symboliquement. Les coups et l'électricité visent avec prédilection les parties sexuelles : seins brûlés, électrodes dans le vagin, sur les testicules, sur la verge. Ces violences sont une manière symbolique de rejouer la guerre – et de la gagner sans risque (333).

In her opinion, torture permitted the French to play out the war on the bodies of their victims. In a position of domination, they could symbolically succeed even if, in reality, they were struggling to hold their own. Her use of the verb 'jouer' to describe their actions suggests that they obtained entertainment and enjoyment from this act. It also infers that they perceived the war to be a game, to be won or lost, a concept that will be discussed later in relation to Alleg's text.

The process by which prisoners were tortured clearly demonstrates the torturer's desire for power and domination. Undressing the victim constituted the first step in this process. According to Branche: "la nudité est l'expression pure de l'omnipotence des tortionnaires. Le corps exposé, parce que nu, devient, devant des gens habillés, une cible" (332). The torturer begins the process of subjugation by taking away the only

protection that the witness has: clothing. In the quasi official military context of this act, the victim feels him/herself to be even more naked due to the uniforms of those running the session. Within the Algerian context clothing was also an important symbol of a cultural identity that was literally taken away by the torturer, an act which mimicked the symbolic destruction that had begun with the French colonial campaign. Also, as Lazreg notes, this act constituted a direct attack on the prisoner's modesty: "the French torturer views it as 'the most terrible of humiliations for an Arab whose prudishness is well known'" (123). Within Arabo-Muslim society, men are traditionally required to hide their genitals in public, even in the presence of other men. The act of stripping in front of others therefore transgressed both religious belief and cultural practice. In addition to placing the victim in a psychologically submissive position, this initial act also became part of the total physical domination of the victim. Béchir Boumaza states in his testimony: "les autres m'ordonnèrent de me déshabiller, et, comme je ne le faisais pas assez vite à leur gré, ponctuèrent leur ordre de nouveaux coups de poing et de nouveaux coups de pieds" (*La Gangrène* 19). Even in an act where the victim is theoretically in control, undressing *himself*, the torturer established his authority over the victim through physical violence.

For Lazreg, the victim's nudity was not only part of his psychological and physical submission but also constituted the first step of sexual torture. She writes: "stripping is also sexually laden. It transposes sexual gestures, acts, and innuendo from a strip club to the torture chamber" (123). Stripping the victim was therefore an act of

arousal that elicits sexually charged comments from the torturer and his audience. As Boumaza confirms in his testimony "dès que je fus complètement nu […] Ils soulignèrent en propos orduriers l'indécence de ma position" (*La Gangrène* 19). According to Lazreg, the sexually charged nature of the torture act is heightened by the presence of male spectators, becoming what she refers to as a "world of penises" (127). Her term underlines not only how the torture act constituted a sexually arousing spectacle for both the torturer and spectator, but also the extent to which it was viewed by those involved as a battle of masculinity. With the presence of a group behind him, the sexual authority of the colonizer/torturer is finally able to overcome the sexual potency thought to be associated with the colonial victim.[23]

The victim, as the center of attention, is surrounded by an audience. In her analysis of torture *The Body in Pain*, literary critic and theorist Elaine Scarry references the theatrical aspect of this violence, referring to torture as the "production of a fantastic illusion of power [-] torture is a grotesque piece of compensatory drama" (28). Torture was openly perceived by some of the participants as a sport. In his testimony, Boumaza describes a group of inspectors kicking him with their feet, noting "je crois que c'est ce qu'ils appellent 'faire du football'" (*La Gangrène* 18). Watching these sessions constituted a form of entertainment. Alleg notes that his torturers brought along refreshments: "autour de moi, assis sur les paquetages, Charbonnier et ses amis vidaient des bouteilles de bière" (33). He records that he was even congratulated by them later for his excellent performance since he was able to withstand their numerous attempts to

extract information from him.[24] The competitive and entertaining aspect of torture is also addressed by Mouloud Mammeri in his novel *L'Opium et le baton* (1965).[25] The main character Bachir, a doctor who later joins the FLN, recalls being questioned by the police and meeting a lieutenant nicknamed Graine de Violence: "il n'était pas plus violent que les autres. Seulement, lui, ça lui faisait plaisir. Ce qu'il aimait rencontrer c'était de vrais fels qui résistaient. Ses chefs l'estimaient beaucoup et croyaient que s'il insistait tant avec ses clients c'était parce qu'il voulait des renseignements. Bien sur, mais là n'était pas l'essentiel; l'essentiel était dans le côté sportif de la chose, cette griserie qu'il y a à pousser l'autre" (Dugas 809). This section of the novel consciously undermines the government's official motivation for using torture as an effective information gathering tool. Torture, as presented by the text, is not really for information but for enjoyment. It is a pleasurable game played between the resistant fellaga and the enthusiastic torturer. Even when the torturer exhibits extreme cruelty, within the context of French army, it is understood as efficiency. Mammeri's characterization of torture as a game also also recalls Branche's description of this act as a 'replaying' of the war.

Once the victim was naked, the torturer proceeded to use various techniques against him/her. However, as Branche notes, only certain methods were used during the Algerian war: "si quelques cas révèlent la personnalité ou l'inventivité de certains tortionnaires, la réduction à quelques méthodes est frappante. Cinq sont appliquées graduellement, concomitant ou alternativement : les coups, les pendaisons, les supplices à base d'eau, ceux utilisant l'électricité et enfin les viols" (326). From accounts such as *La*

Gangrène and Alleg's description of his experience *La Question*, it appears that apart from rape, electricity or 'la gégène' (slang for génératrice) permitted the most direct attack on the sexuality of the victim.[26] This technique, which became so closely associated with the Algerian war, was originally used by French forces in Vietnam. In his examination of torture methods, the political scientist Darius Rejali notes how the journalist Andrée Viollis described the procedure in 1931: "first, attach an end of wire to the arm or leg and introduce the other end into the genitals; pass current through them" (146). From the beginning of its use, electric torture was specifically used in an attack on the victim's sexual organs. After its appearance in Asia, this technique resurfaced in metropolitan France among the Milice and the Gestapo during the Second World War to later reappear once again during the Algerian War, constituting a link between these two violent periods.[27] According to Rejali, it became the most widely used torture technique in Algeria: "the gégène was portable, painful, flexible, multi-functional, free (indeed government supplied), widely available, familiar to operate and maintain, and easily excusable. It generated far less amperage than the mains, reducing the risk of death. It left few marks" (162).[28] Rejali notes that victims had little physical evidence to validate their claims of having been tortured. The gégène thereby constituted an important aspect of the government's consistent denial of using torture during the war. Paradoxically, although electricity left little visible evidence immediately after the session, it caused permanent damage to the sexual organs of the victims and left them psychologically wounded.[29]

In Alleg's description, the sexual aspect of this form of torture becomes more evident as the session progresses. Electrodes are first attached to one of his ears and fingers. He writes:

> d'un seul coup, je bondis dans mes liens et hurlai de toute ma voix. Charbonnier venait de m'envoyer dans le corps la première décharge électrique. Près de mon oreille avait jailli une longue étincelle et je sentis dans ma poitrine mon coeur s'emballer. Je me tordais en hurlant et me raidissais à me blesser, tandis que les secousses commandées par Charbonnier, magnéto en mains, se succédaient sans arrêt. Sur le même rythme, Charbonnier scandait une seule question en martelant les syllabes: 'Où es-tu hébergé?' (32).

Alleg precisely describes his physical reaction to the electric shocks creating a clear picture of his pain in the mind of his reader. Verbs such as 'bondir', 's'emballer', and 'se tordre' indicate the visceral aspect of his response. At the same time, he appears to describe his body as something that is out of his control. For example, he indicates the unmanageable aspect of his physical reaction by writing 'je me raidissais à me blesser', giving the impression that, in the course of his torture session, his body was becoming something that could actually act against him and cause him harm.[30] At the same time as Alleg describes his automatic physical reaction, he also references his voice and repeats the verb 'hurler' in order to underline the importance of his verbal reaction. Alleg's description evokes Scarry's characterization of torture as a paradoxical relationship between the torturer and his victim whereby the torturer's presence becomes increasingly verbal and the victim's presence becomes physical. She writes: "although the torturer dominates the prisoner both in physical acts and verbal acts, ultimate domination requires

that the prisoner's ground become increasingly physical and the torturer's increasingly verbal, that the prisoner become a colossal body with no voice and the torturer a colossal voice (a voice composed of two voices) with no body" (57). In this dynamic, the torturer's goal is to make the victim feel pain to the extent that he is aware of nothing other than his pain and has reached a point of agony where he is unable to even verbally express it. At the same time, the torturer, through his insistence on his position as interrogator, becomes nothing more than a voice shouting questions and orders at the victim. This body/voice relationship is seen in Alleg's description of his body's movements, which are punctuated by his interrogator's question. His use of the word 'marteler' or hammering to describe the rhythmic aspect of Charbonnier's interrogation also underlines its association to his own pain.

Alleg's torture session continues but changes focus, becoming more sexual in nature: "Jacquet m'avait branché la pince au sexe. Les secousses qui m'ébranlaient étaient si fortes que les lanières qui me tenaient une cheville se détachèrent. On arrêta pour les rattacher et on continua […] J'étais tout entier ébranlé de secousses nerveuses de plus en plus violentes et la séance se prolongeait. On m'avait aspergé d'eau pour renforcer encore l'intensité du courant et, entre deux 'giclées', je tremblais aussi de froid" (33).[31] In this section of his description, Alleg appears more detached from his body. Rather than saying that he pulled the straps holding him loose, he uses the reflexive verb and thereby implies that they inadvertently came undone. Also, in his description of the pain associated with the shocks he repeatedly returns to the image of

spasms, focusing on the uncontainable nature of his body's reaction. In her analysis, Lazreg suggests that the effect of electric shocks on the torture victim actually resembled an orgasm:

> electrodes were applied on the right ear and left testicle before current coursed through the body jerking it, at times flipping it in the air, while the victim screams, in a forced simulation of the orgasm […] Reenactment of sex in the torture chamber also goes far beyond a simple, albeit real, gratification of sexual fantasy. It enables the torturer vicariously, through sight more than touch, to reassert his masculinity as he coerces another man's body to mimic sexual pleasure-agony (127).

Within the situation, as Lazreg notes, the victim's control over his (sexual) responses is taken away from him. The torturer determines his response, increasing or decreasing electrical currents in order to bring his victim to 'climax'. The victim's forced participation in this simulated sex act implies that electrical torture may be interpreted as a sexual violation of the prisoner.

For Branche, rape was indeed a principle element of torture sessions occurring during the war. Concerning the forms that this act took, she notes that in the majority of cases it occurred with bottles (331). Witness testimony confirms this, for example, Benaissa Souami writes: "en plus de la bassine et de la broche, on me fit asseoir de force sur une des bouteilles. Durant toute la nuit, je criai […] Au matin, il avait trouvé une nouvelle méthode : c'était de me frapper sur le sexe avec une règle de bois. Je fus ramené rue des Saussaies" (*La Gangrène* 49). In addition to confirming that rape occurred, Souami's testimony demonstrates the feelings of shame that it produced in the

victim. As Lazreg notes, a number of victims prefer to remain silent about their experiences as "the indignity of public exposure compound the painful memory of it and act as so many gags on the victim" (130). Souami's description of his experience, for example, resembles a list. Between his references to the various methods used, he does not leave any space of a description of his physical reaction to the pain or to his emotional state. The only indication of his feelings toward these acts is his short reference to his screams after the bottle was introduced into his anus.[32] With regards to the torturer, raping with a bottle indicates an attempt to subvert his victim's sexual identity by forcing him to accept a form of sexual intercourse associated with homosexuality. In Soumai's case, after this psychological attack, the torturer proceeded to physically harm him by beating his genitals.

Within the context of torture sessions in Algeria, the victim's sexual identity and gender were consistently challenged and attacked. According to Branche, verbal threats constituted an important part of torture sessions: "accompagnés de 'menaces d'émasculer' : les mots devenant dans ce cas instruments de torture" (331). For example, in *La Gangrène,* Abd el Kader Belhadj states that his torturer came towards him "me prit de ma gabardine et me dit 'con', d'une voix efféminée" (54); similarly Béchir Boumaza mentions that his torturer told him "on va te prendre ta tension avant de t'enculer" (19) and Moussa Khebaili records: "M. Wybot me dit alors ; 'tu aimes baiser ?'" (78). Within the context of torture, this vocalization renders the victim doubly subjugated, to both the physical and verbal attack of the torturer. Additionally, it confirms Scarry's analysis of

the torturer/victim relationship whereby the former becomes characterized by his verbal presence during the torture act. For Scarry, language plays an important role within the domination of the victim. She writes: "nowhere does language come so close to being the concrete agent of physical pain as here, where it not only occurs in such close proximity to the raising of the rod or the turning on of electricity, but also parallels and thereby doubles the display of distance" (46). In Algeria, language was a clear reaffirmation of the colonial power structure. French dominated over Arabic as the language of communication, and the victim was forced to both recognize and affirm this domination each time he replied to the colonizer/torturer in French. The torturer's aggressive, vulgar, and threatening references to sexual intercourse challenge the victim's heterosexual identity. More specifically, they re-affirm the torturer's dominant position and destabilize the victim's gender role by referencing his 'feminine' position of being sexually solicited.

In Lazreg's opinion, the sexual torture session not only constituted an attempt to psychologically subvert the victim's sexual identity through physical and verbal attacks but also signified the desexing of the victim. This took place on a symbolic level, for example, through the simulation of orgasm brought about by electric shocks that "represented a paroxysm of excess sex" (143). Due to the torturer's over-insistence on sex during the session, it actually lost its significance and the victim was transformed into a sexless object. For Lazreg, the victim not only risked being desexed symbolically but also physically, particularly in relation to the torturer's use of electricity: "the imagery of

sex and electricity wired men's minds with the fear of impotence. Native men expected to be rendered impotent; soldiers watched how or whether that might happen" (27). Within the colonial context, impotency was the ultimate revenge of the sexually inadequate white colonizer on the virile indigenous victim.

At the same time, the Algerian male's sterility had implications not only for his masculine identity but more importantly for his ability to reproduce. For example, Boumaza writes in *La Gangrène* about his own thoughts concerning the torture that he was about to endure: "j'avais entendu dire que la torture électrique rendait impuissant, et la pensée que j'avais déjà un enfant me réconfortait" (17). Rather than becoming anxious about his ability to have sexual intercourse or how this would damage his own masculine identity, he relates torture to reproduction. More specifically, torture cuts off bloodlines, destroys family trees and disrupts the transformation of men into fathers. Although the role and importance of the paternal figure in Arabo-Muslim society will be discussed in Chapter Three, it is important to note how impotency, in the Algerian context, is related to the family rather than the individual. In this way, torture has a direct influence not only on the immediate but also the national family, disrupting the development of the Algerian nation.

The relationship between male infertility and torture also appears in fictional texts such as Ahlam Mostaghanemi's ذاكرة الجسد or *Memory in the Flesh*. Published in 1993, this novel was the first to be published in Arabic by an Algerian woman. Growing up in

the post-independence period, Mostaghanemi is from the first generation educated entirely in Arabic. She originally began her career as a poet but moved to narrative due to the fact that she could no longer dedicate herself entirely to poetry.[33] Concerning her choice of language, she states that she has a positive relationship with both French and Arabic, noting: "ce qui importe, ce n'est pas la langue qu'on écrit mais la cause qu'on défend" (Kateb). However, it is evident that as a female author, she faces social and political constraints. Specifically, it was necessary for her to publish the novel in Lebanon and chose a male rather than a female narrator. In this way she is able to navigate traditional gender boundaries and address issues that would be inappropriate for a female voice to discuss, such as romantic relationships. The novel begins with the narrator Khaled's return to Constantine after a long absence and slowly retraces his unsuccessful relationship with Ahlam/Hayat, his life as an artist in Paris, and his experiences in the Algerian War of Independence.[34] It appears that with regard to this latter issue, Mostaghanemi's novel is rare in its discussion not only of the occurrence of sexual torture during the war but also its consequences for the male victim. As previously noted, due to the fear of social exclusion and blame, very few testimonial texts address this issue. Moreover, discussions of the psychological and physical consequences of this act appear to be even less available. In the years following the end of the war, the Algerian government attempted to portray the struggle for independence as a mythical period in which the Algerian people fought together against the French colonizer. Focusing on the war period's more painful or embarrassing aspects such as the

consequences of sexual torture would therefore deviate from the 'official' version of the war. In Mostaghanemi's case, transgressing the war 'story' has led to criticism. In her analysis of Mostaghanemi's novel, for example, the postcolonial critic Lindsay Moore describes how the writer was subjected to an audience's expression of disapproval at a public poetry reading when she neglected to mention 'the revolution' (82).

Within the novel, the issue of sexual torture appears as Khaled attempts to physically rediscover and reconnect with Constantine. Although the exact time period of the novel is not clear, it appears that he is returning to Algeria in the 1980s before the outbreak of civil violence. Walking through the streets, he begins to remember some of the personal stories associated with buildings, more specifically the prison where both he and his friends were incarcerated. He then describes the experience of Bilal Hussain who remained in the prison for two years, suffering torture sessions throughout this period. Khaled describes this institutionalized brutality in the following way:

ترك فيهما جلده على آلات التعذيب أذكر أنّه ظلّ لعدّة أيّام عاري الصدر عاجزاً حتّى أن يضع قميصاً على جلده حتّى لا يلتصق بجراحه المفتوحة (321).

He left his skin on the torture machines. There I remember that he remained for several days bare-chested, unable to even put a shirt on his skin so that it would not stick to his open wounds.[35]

Bilal's open and uncovered wounds leave him in a constant state of undress that goes beyond nudity as he has literally lost his skin. This image of raw flesh is reminiscent of Mâtho's torture in Gustave Flaubert's novel *Salammbô.* In the last scene, Mâtho is sacrificed for having taken the sacred Zaïmph, or veil that covers the statue of the

Goddess Tanit, from the city. In the novel, Mâtho walks through the city so that the entire population of Carthage may participate in his execution. By the end of this act, Mâtho has been transformed into an entity that is only distinguishable as human by his eyes. His flesh has been completely ripped off. His mouth which has remained open, reminds the reader in a similar way to Mostaghanemi's text of his cries that are unuttered by the text but that must accompany the pain inflicted by this cruelty. Within the context of Mostaghanemi's novel, Bilal's silence contrasts directly to the experience of Abdel Karim Ben Taf who Khaled remembers due to his voice. The narrator describes how Abdel Karim's screamed during torture sessions and insulted his torturers in French while his friends encouraged him.[36] Bilal's suffering, which remains unexpressed in the text, also foreshadows the loneliness and unspoken pain that characterizes his life as an old man. Torture continued to mark Bilal after he left the prison:

ثمّ خرج محكوماً عليه بالنفي والرقابة المشددة. وعاش بلال حسين مناضلا في المعارك المجهولة ملاحقاً مطرداً حتّى الاستقلال. ولم يمُت إلاّ مؤخراً في عامه الواحد والثمانين في ٢٨ ماي ١٩٨٨ في الشهر نفسه الذي مات فيه لأوّل مرّة (322).

He then left prison sentenced to exile and heavy surveillance. Bilal Hussain lived, fighting unknown battles, pursued and hunted until independence. And he did not die until the end of his eighty-first year, the twenty seventh of May 1988, in the same month in which he died the first time.

The torturer's mark on Bilal did not end once his physical wounds had healed. As someone who had been imprisoned and tortured, he was caught in between the French colonizer's surveillance and Algerian society's distrust. In addition to this mutual rejection, the text underlines his isolation through references to his 'unknown battles' and

his symbolic death that occurred in the torture chamber. This death is emphasized through the repetition of the word and the use of the term "بالنفي" exile or negation. The use of this latter term is significant in that it creates the idea that Bilal was not only 'killed' by this act but his identity and his relationship with Algeria were destroyed. As Khaled reiterates, the source of Bilal's figurative death was his torture:

اعترف قبل موته ببعضة أشهر لصديقه الوحيد أنّهم عندما عذّبوه تعمّوه تشويه رجولته وقضواعليه إلى الأبد. وأنّه في الواقع مات منذ أربعين سنة (322).

He confessed a few months before his death to his only friend that when they tortured him they intentionally disfigured his manhood, and killed it forever. In reality he had died forty years ago.

Bilal perceived his infertility, caused by his torture sessions, as an end to his life. Unable to reproduce or contribute offspring to a growing society due to the damage inflicted on his genitals, he felt that he had been killed. As Khaled proceeds to describe, in a society which equates masculinity with reproduction, Bilal was forced to hide the truth for fear of social rejection:

لم يكن أحد يعرف سرّه الذي احتفظ به أربعين سنة كاملة بحياء رجل من جيله ومن طينته. فهل كان يستحق ذلك السرّ كل ذلك الكتمان؟ كان بلال حسين آخر الرجال في زمن الخصيان. (322).

There was no one who knew his secret that he had preserved for forty whole years, with the modesty of a man from his generation and his mold. Was that secret deserving of all that secrecy? Bilal Hussein was the last of men during the time of castration.

The narrative progresses from portraying Bilal's infertility in terms of a genital disfigurement to referring to it as castration. This gesture calls to mind the violent practice of actually removing male genitalia and strengthens the reader's understanding

of the effect of infertility on the torture victim. Khaled also infers that Bilal was not the only man to have suffered the fate of infertility at the hands of the former colonizer.

In fact, the novel continuously suggests that the sterility associated with the war and its torture sessions was not limited to the ability to produce offspring but took a variety of forms. Beginning with the dedication, the narrative consciously plays with the idea of (re)production. In the first page, Mostaghanemi discusses the fate of the writer Malek Haddad, to whom she devotes this novel:

> ابن قسنطينة الذي أقسم بعد استقلال الجزائر ألا يكتب بلغة ليست لغته ...فاغتالته الصفحة البيضاء ... ومات متأثراً بسلطان صمته ليصبح شهيد اللغة العربية. وأول كاتب قرر أن يموت صمتاً (5).

He was the son of Constantine who swore after Algeria's independence not to write in a language not his own, so the blank page assassinated him. He died as a result of the power of silence to become a martyr of Arabic. The first writer who decided to die out of silence.

It seems ironic, given the novel's numerous and varied references to impotency, that it begins with an allusion to a national genealogy as Mostaghanemi refers to Haddad as 'Constantine's son'. During the War of Independence, Haddad wrote texts in French supporting the revolutionary moment. However, once Algeria obtained its freedom, he decided to stop writing in order to put an end to the French colonizer's influence over Algerian culture, society and political system.[37] As Mostaghanemi states, he chose silence over continuing to express himself in a language that had been imposed upon him, a language associated with subjugation and domination. In the newly established independence of the Algerian nation, he was free to make this choice. However,

Haddad's decision sets up a link between creation and colonization whereby he has chosen not to contribute to the cultural production of his nation because it would be associated with the colonizer. Although his infertility is self-imposed and symbolic, being related to the cultural regeneration of Algeria, it sets the tone for the narrative.

Like Haddad, the main character Khaled fought in the independence movement. Losing a hand in battle, he was forced to spend the rest of the war in hospital, recuperating from his wounds. He then worked in a publishing house after independence but understood quickly that the new Algeria was not the ideal that had been promised by the revolutionary struggle:

> ذات يوم قررت ان أخرج من الرداءة، من تلك الكتب الساذجة التي كنت مضطراً الى قراءتها ونشرها باسم الادب والثقافة ليلتهمها شعب جائع الى العلم (149).

That day I decided to leave the bad, from those naïve books that I was forced to read and publish in the name of literature and culture for a people hungry for knowledge to gobble up.

Algerian culture, now freed from the domination of the French colonizer, is growing and symbolized by a new generation which is actively seeking knowledge. However, Algeria's public is indiscriminate and, as the narrative indicates, consumes or 'gobbles up' information without analysis. The liberty that was thought to be guaranteed by independence has been jeopardized as Khaled is forced to publish texts that he feels have no literary value. His reaction is to move to France and become an artist. In addition to his physical disability of only having one hand, there are indications throughout the narrative of his creative and reproductive incapacity. For example, the novel begins with

Khaled's return to Constantine and his attempt to write a novel about his relationship with Ahlam. However, throughout the narrative, descriptions of his creative process increasingly become references to his inability to write:

بعضها مسّودات قديمة وأخرى أوراق بيضاء تنتظر منذ أيّام بعض الكلمات فقط...كي تدبّ فيها الحياة، وتتحوّل من ورق إلى أيّام. كلمات فقط، أجتاز بها الصمت إلى الكلام، والذاكرة إلى النسيان (8).

Some of them old drafts and others blank pages waiting for days only for some words … so that they come to life and change from pages into days. Only words with which I can transform silence into words, and memories into amnesia.

For Khaled, writing or inscribing words onto a page holds a transformative power, for example it is able to change silence into speech and pages into days. Thus, writing within the narrative is directly related to time, more specifically, the past. In contrast to the traditional relationship between writing and the formation of a permanent memory, in this novel writing becomes a way for Khaled to forget the past. Inscribing memories on a page externalizes and objectifies them. Rather than remaining personal and private, writing transfers the past and memories onto an impersonal, distant page. As Khaled hopes, this externalization also allows him to distance himself from his own memories and forget them. This idea or relationship between the act of writing and memory is also explored at the beginning of the novel:

قبل اليوم، كنت أعتقد أنّنا لا يمكن أن نكتب عن حياتنا إلاّ عندما نشفى منها.
عندما يمكن أن نلمس جراحنا القديمة بقلم، دون أن نتألم مرّة أخرى.
عندما نقدر على النظر خلفنا دون حنين، دون جنون، دون حقداً يضاً.
أيمكن هذا حقاً؟
نحن لا نشفى من ذاكرتنا.

ولهذا نحن نكتب، ولهذا نحن نرسم، ولهذا يموت بعضنا أيضاً (8).

Before today, I believed that we could not write about our life until we have recovered from it. When we can touch our old wounds with a pen without feeling pain once more. When we can look behind us without longing or madness or malice. Can we really do this? We do not recover from our memories and for this reason we write, we draw and for this some of us also die.

In this section, the past is represented by Mostaghanemi as wounds that do not heal. The analogy evokes the discussion of Billal Hussein and the torture that left him with open wounds that were too painful even to cover. The relationship between writing and the body is taken further in the next sentence "when we may touch our old wounds with a pen". Through this image, the act of writing then becomes transformed into a simultaneous inscription on the page and the body and is strongly associated with pain: "we do not heal from our memories. For this reason we write". Inscribing words on a page is therefore not a cathartic experience that rids the victim of his pain, it is an act that lives with that pain.

It is perhaps for this reason that, as Khaled attempts repeatedly to write, he recalls his relationship with Ahlam. This failed affair, or Khaled's romantic sterility, also plays an important role in the novel. From Khaled's narration of their relationship the reader learns that while exhibiting some of his paintings in Paris, he reunited with Ahlam, the daughter of his friend Si Tahar whom he hadn't seen since she was a young child. They began to exchange platonic meetings in the French capital but eventually Ahlam returned to Algeria to marry another man, a representative of the new ruling class who chose wealth over revolutionary principles. Her upcoming wedding is actually the reason for

Khaled's return to his homeland. According to Kim Jensen, this unrequited and unproductive love story serves as an allegory for the new Algerian nation: "the unconsummated nature of their relationship becomes symbolic of the abortive experience of post-revolutionary Algeria, which gives birth to corruption, alienation, and violence, a terrifying progeny" (2). As Jensen and other critics such as Aida Bamia and Fariel Namzul note in their respective analyses of the novel, the character of Ahlam develops into a symbol for both the nation and mother within the narrative.[38] For example, when Khaled first meets Ahlam in the gallery, he notices the traditional bracelet that she is wearing which reminds him of his mother's, and is immediately attracted to her. From the beginning of the novel, it becomes apparent that Algeria and Ahlam are actually, for Khaled, one in the same:

أكتب اليك من مدينة مازالت تشبهك (10).

I am writing to you from a city that still resembles you.

According to Anne McClintock, whose work focuses on gender studies, national images are often constructed in terms of the family and are clearly gendered, for example, in terms such as the motherland or fatherland. Discussing this idea in general terms, McClintock proposes that the construction of a feminine national image actually reflects gender difference within that society: "all nations depend on powerful constructions of gender. Despite nationalism's ideological investment in the idea of popular *unity*, nations have historically amounted to the sanctioned institutionalization of gender difference" (61). Representing the nation as a submissive woman is part of this trend.

More specifically, when writers describe the nation in terms of a socially and sexually dominated and violated female, they are actually referencing colonial gender boundaries. For McClintock, this is particularly true of Algeria: "the dream of the 'total domestication of Algerian society' came to haunt colonial authority, and the domesticated, female body became the terrain over which the military contest was fought" (65). The battle for the nation therefore took place on an individual level over the role of women in society that, as Fanon points out, was symbolized by the Muslim practice of wearing a veil. Women who wore the veil were portrayed by the colonizer as being "humiliée, mis à l'écart, cloîtrée" (*L'An V de la révolution* 19) by the Algerian man. Lifting the veil thereby became a symbol for liberating them from their subjugated status. However, as Fanon notes, the eradication of their veils exposed them to another kind of suppression at the hands of the colonizer, as the unveiled Algerian woman was exposed to the sexually charged interest of the European colonizer: "chaque voile découvre aux colonialistes des horizons jusqu'alors interdits, et leur montre, morceau par morceau, la chair algérienne mise à nu" (*L'An V de la révolution* 24). As Fanon's description indicates, the violated body of the Algerian woman became a metaphor for the colonial campaign in Algeria.

Mostaghanemi increasingly plays on the association between a feminized Algeria and violence. In contrast to the traditional image of the victimized or subjugated Algerian woman who is powerless before male authority, both Ahlam and the Algerian nation are portrayed in the novel as strong and active figures. Also, within the context of the novel, Ahlam/Algeria is represented as being responsible for Khaled's symbolic

impotency. For example, Khaled discusses how Ahlam's/Algeria's allegiance to the new and corruptive system renders her almost unrecognizable to him:

هل تغيّرت عيناك ايضاً...هل غيّر الزواج حقّاً ملامحك وضحكتك الطفوليّة, هل غيّر ذاكرتك ايضاً، ومذاق شفاهك وسمرتك الغجريّة (18).

Have your eyes changed also and has your marriage truly changed your features and your laugh? Has it changed your memories and the taste of your lips and your gypsy-like brown skin?

Within this description, Khaled imagines Ahlam to have turned her back on her past, betraying her origins and even leading Khaled to question whether it hasn't changed her physical appearance. Given the platonic and non-physical nature of their relationship, it is telling that he focuses on her outward appearance such as her eyes and her lips. Her marriage is the last in a series of events that psychologically and geographically distances Ahlam from Khaled. The result is that he remains infertile in both a symbolic and literal sense, unable to write but also unable to sustain a relationship. Additionally, his lineage is troubled in another way. Incapable of maintaining a link to Ahlam, on a symbolic level, he is also distanced from both his mother and his homeland. The novel, as Jensen notes, therefore offers the reader an image of the postcolonial Algerian nation whose lineage and development is interrupted with regard to both previous and future generations.

Within the context of the platonic relationship between Khaled and Ahlam, it appears paradoxical that Mostaghanemi would choose a title that evokes the body and sexuality. The title must be read in reference to the tortured body of the Algerian nation,

represented in the novel by characters such as Khaled and Bilal Hussein. In this context, the novel's fictional description attempts to answer a number of questions raised by testimonial accounts of torture such as *La Question* and *La Gangrène*. The masculine experience of sexual torture transforms the victim's relationship to society and their own sexual identity. Castrated by the colonizer, the victim feels unable to contribute both creatively and physically to the new Algerian nation. Not only does the victim's relationship to the nation become distorted but the development of the nation is hindered.

Lifting the veil of colonial fantasy

Two texts written by Algerian women published in 2001 and 2002, one autobiographical, one semi-fictional, portray female experiences of torture. This constitutes a significant event since, until their appearance, this field had been dominated by a masculine perspective. Autobiographical texts of torture victims such as *La Question* by Henri Alleg or *La Gangrène* published during the war, as well as the more recent revelations of those directly involved in the act such as General Paul Aussaresses, have all been written by men.[39] The aim of this examination is to analyze how these texts, *La Femme sans sépulture* by Assia Djebar and *Algérienne* by Louisette Ighilahriz, represent sexual torture, including rape, within the context of Algerian society, which has preferred to remain silent concerning these acts. In contrast to his relationship with the Algerian male, the French colonizer was enchanted with the sexuality of the Algerian

female. Literary texts dating from the colonial period are filled with descriptions of veiled apparitions, that the colonial explorer dreams of meeting and seducing. However, as Fanon notes, the colonial fantasy of the Arab female always contained an element of violence. Ighilahriz's testimony and Djebar's novel demonstrate how torture represented the moment when colonial fascination with the Algerian woman became sexual aggression. For the torturer, dominating the feminine body, which had been the object of the strictest social, religious and physical protection humiliated Algerian society and represented a psychological victory. Both Djebar and Ighilahriz describe the rapes of women that occurred during torture sessions. However, rather than offering the torturer an opportunity to pervert the sexuality of the victim and impede future reproduction, the rape of female victims allowed the colonizer to remain both physically and psychologically in Algeria. Colonial lineage, for example, was secured through the production of offspring. Additionally, torture not only destabilized the victim's sexual identity and reproductive capabilities but had a negative impact on the development of the Algerian nation.

Before analyzing the relationship between the tortured woman and the Algerian nation, it is important to return to the colonial period in order to understand the colonizer's perception of the Algerian woman. French Orientalist literature and art of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries pays particular attention to the Oriental woman.[40] For example, Eugène Fromentin's narrative *Une Année dans le Sahel,* which describes his trip to Algeria, displays an acute interest in the Algerian woman. He writes:

> les femmes ne sortent que voilées, et leur rendez-vous le plus habituel est un lieu d'asile inviolable : ce sont les bains. Des rideaux de mousseline légère qui se soulèvent au vent de la rue, des fleurs soignées dans un pot de faïence de forme bizarre, voilà à peu près tout ce qu'on aperçoit de ces gynécées, qui nous font rêver. On entend sortir de ces retraites des bruits qui ne sont plus des bruits, ou des chuchotements qu'on prendrait pour des soupirs (204).

This description focuses on an ironic tradition within Arabo-Muslim society, namely that women only go out covered, but their main reason for venturing out of the home is actually to go to baths and undress. Fromentin's description of the baths mirrors that of the Algerian woman, focusing on curtains that, similar to the veil, risk giving the onlooker a glimpse of what is beneath or inside. His depiction of the hammam also contains a heavy note of homo-eroticism. As he imagines this place which is impenetrable to men, he focuses on the sounds that one hears. However, these noises are misleading and suggestive. For example, he mentions whispers that could be understood as sighs and noises that are not actually noises, suggesting that sexual acts are taking place between women. These homo-erotic images seem to only heighten the desire to discover the secret feminine world.

As mentioned, the Western male believed that the veil or hijab represented the key to discovering the oriental woman's mystery. As Fanon relates in "L'Algérie se dévoile", in conjunction to the veiled body's association with this "exotisme" lurked a political motivation. By unveiling the Algerian woman, the colonizer portrayed himself as saving her from humiliation, confinement and what Fanon calls the "survivances moyenâgeuses

et barbares" (*L'An V de la révolution* 19) of the Algerian male who forced the veil upon her. However, as he notes, the true goal of this humanitarian act was domination of the Algerian male: "convertir la femme, la gagner aux valeurs étrangères, c'est à la fois conquérir un pouvoir réel sur l'homme et posséder les moyens pratiques, efficaces, de déstructurer la culture algérienne" (*L'An V de la révolution* 20). For the colonial administration, the Algerian woman became an important tool not only in controlling but more importantly in destroying Algerian society. As Fanon explains, within the colonial relationship, the psychological aggression directed against the Algerian male was facilitated by physical violence against the Algerian female who, in the mind of the colonizer, resisted his advances:

> également il y a chez l'Européen cristallisation d'une agressivité, mise en tension d'une violence en face de la femme algérienne. Dévoiler cette femme c'est mettre en évidence la beauté, c'est mettre à nu son secret, briser sa résistance, la faire disponible pour l'aventure. Cacher le visage, c'est aussi dissimuler un secret, c'est faire exister un monde du mystère et du caché. Confusément, l'Européen vit à un niveau fort complexe sa relation avec la femme algérienne. Volonté de mettre cette femme à portée de soi, d'en faire un éventuel objet de possession (*L'An V de la révolution* 25).

From Fromentin's Orientalist voyeuristic fantasy of catching a glimpse of the world behind the curtains of the hammam developed a desire to truly penetrate this world. Unveiling was only a prelude to the complete subjugation of the oriental woman. For the European male, this domination appeared necessary as she systematically avoided and frustrated the masculine gaze. Fanon describes how the colonized male's phantasm of

unveiling was characterized by a lack of consent culminating in a rape fantasy: "le viol de la femme algérienne dans le rêve d'Européen est toujours précédé de la déchirure du voile" (*L'An V de la révolution* 28). The violence of the colonial relationship echoes that expressed by Gobineau's racial theory. Namely, in his opinion any relationship between the colonized male and the European female endangered the white race. Conversely, intercourse between the white male and the colonized female permitted the European male to maintain his superior status. Moreover, as the postcolonial critic Robert Young notes, this power was ensured at the expense of the physical/psychological domination of the 'other' female: "the white male's response to the allure of exotic black sexuality is identified with mastery and domination, no doubt fueled by the resistance of the black female. This sadistic imperative, increased by the repugnance felt by the black for the white, is inevitably accompanied by the requirement of a masochistic submission by the subordinated, objectified woman" (108). Young's remarks concerning the colonizer's sexual desire for the colonized woman and the violent, non-consensual nature of his fantasies lend important insight into the female experience of torture during the war described by both Djebar and Ighilahriz.

Djebar's novel *La Femme sans sépulture* focuses on Zoulikha, a heroine of Djebar's native village who fought alongside the FLN during the War of Independence and subsequently disappeared after being captured and tortured by French forces. As Djebar declares at the beginning of the novel, Zoulikha's experiences are elucidated "au centre même d'une large fresque féminine". Djebar inscribes Zoulikha's story and voice

within a collectivity of feminine voices, including that of Zoulikha's two daughters and her friends. This structure, referred to by Florence Martin as "a polyphony of remembering voices" (Hargreaves 160) is a device that Djebar has utilized in other novels such as *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement* and *L'Amour, la fantasia.*[41] Evoking a plurality of subjectivities and positions, the expression of a collective feminine voice has previously aided Djebar in liberating Algerian women from the silence that has been imposed upon them by both Islamic and colonial tradition. Within the context of this novel, however, with Zoulikha's voice at center of the 'fresque féminine', the voice of the victim is liberated from the silence forced upon her by the trauma of torture.

Within the narrative, Zoulikha's own voice is expressed in three monologues. In the second of these monologues Djebar describes her relationship with Costa, the French police commissioner who interviewed Zoulikha frequently after her husband's death, suspecting her involvement with the FLN. Sexual tension is always evident in their interactions combined with a continuous threat of violence:

> je me rendais, durcie, peu à peu m'habituant à cette excitation lente aux yeux de lynx, ivre surtout et me nourrissant insensiblement, tous ces jours, de cette inquiétude intense […] je me dis une fois, proche soudain de lui : Est-ce qu'il torture lui-même … et avec ces mains ? […] A cette pause, à ce sommet de la confrontation, au cœur de notre duel silencieux, moi debout (je me dressais instinctivement comme s'il allait me frapper et que j'étais prête à parer, à esquiver, à répliquer) (120).

In this description of the relationship between Costa and Zoulikha, it becomes apparent that it is a game that takes place between them. Torture has often been characterized as

entertainment, both mentally and physically challenging or even amusing the torturer. As a reaction to his attempts to capture her, Zoulikha becomes harder and stronger. Her transformation gives the impression that this competition is taking place between equals, she takes on a masculine role of aggressor: "j'étais prête à parer". At the same time, there is also a note of eroticism in this description, indicated by words such as "excitation" and "ivre" but also in the description of her moment of fear as a "sommet de la confrontation" that resembles a sexual climax. After having evoked the possibility of torture, Djebar expresses the possibility of sexually motivated violence later in her description:

> une fois, je me dis que, si quelqu'un, à cet instant, s'était introduit – maquisard ou policier -, il aurait imaginé aisément, entre nous deux, comme une approche du moment amoureux, moi debout sans avancer un pas, et Costa, pas seulement de la voix, mais du corps, prêt, à cette fois, à m'enlacer, me violenter, m'étreindre en croyant ainsi me briser … Oui la seconde du viol craint, désiré, renié, s'esquissant chaque fois, nous y pensions confusément, lui et moi. Mais lui ignorait jusqu'où ma haine, ma défense habile, sourcilleuse, pouvait s'exercer, et moi ne sachant plus si le défier, me garder me plaisait d'avantage parce que cela pouvait tanguer, verser d'un coup dans le viol (121).

The sexual character of the interrogation scene now becomes overt as Zoulikha and Costa's physical demeanor suggests an amorous encounter. At the same time, although Costa is attributed the role of aggressor, Zoulikha does not react traditionally by fleeing from his hostile advances. Rather, she remains stationary, waiting to fight his attack "moi debout sans avancer un pas" as if she is almost welcoming his attention. The ambiguity of her physical reaction is combined with emotional confusion felt by both characters. Although Costa is perplexed by his uncharacteristic desire to use physical violence,

Zoulikha's unease is due to her unconventional reaction to his aggression. She wonders if her resistance to his sexual attack doesn't actually give her pleasure since it constitutes a symbolic resistance to colonial oppression.[42]

Traditionally, women's bodies have played a particularly important role in warfare. Namely, as Booth notes, women have historically been the targets of sexual violence during war with rape representing the ultimate victory: "a sort of sexual coup de grace […] this function of sexual aggression against women often serves as a grotesque public display of domination where 'the rape of a woman's body symbolically represents the rape of the community itself'" (Roth 120). Again, it appears that the way to gain control over a society is through its women. This is, of course, particularly true of traditional Arabo-Muslim society where the honor of the family resides in the virginity/ fidelity of the women. Or, as the author Mouloud Feraoun observed in his wartime *Journal*: "la vie sociale, les moeurs, les coutumes ont eu pour objectif essentiel de sauvegarder jalousement le sexe des femmes. Ils considèrent cela comme inaliénable et leur honneur était enfoui en dedans du vagin tel un trésor plus précieux que la vie" (290). For the torturer, rape was a way of destroying the victim's honor and symbolically infiltrating and humiliating a very protective Arabo-Muslim society. As Branche notes, torture sessions during the Algerian war that involved female prisoners, systematically involved this kind of sexual aggression:

> les violences faites aux femmes présentent des caractéristiques sexuelles évidentes et le viol est une technique de torture répandue. Il s'agit surtout

> de pénétration réalisée au moyen d'objets, morceau de bois ou bouteille de verre (304).

Carried out with the aid of objects, rape was not for the torturer's sexual pleasure but rather facilitated a very physical attack on the woman. This assault takes the form of an invasion of her body, an aggressive exploration of the most heavily protected part of her world. As Lazreg notes, Algerian women with no sexual contact prior to being raped were not only traumatized by their experience but also confused about their own physical state. For example, Djamila Boupacha, who was accused of planting a bomb by the French authorities and subsequently tortured in 1960, asked her lawyer whether she was still a virgin since she had been penetrated by a beer bottle during her interrogation (163).[43] Within traditional Arabo-Muslim society, a woman's purity is often established by the existence of an intact hymen. For example, upon marriage, a bloodied sheet customarily served as proof of her virginity. For Boupacha, penetration by a bottle would have torn her hymen and compromised her virginity as it is understood by society.

Within Djebar's novel, the sexual nature of Zoulikha's torture is clearly evoked throughout her last monologue. From the beginning of the description of her experience, a parallel is slowly constructed between this violent act and sexual reproduction. This monologue is addressed by Zoulikha to her daughter Mina. The context of her speech thereby references the idea of reproduction and regeneration. She begins by questioning the effect of torture on her body:

> est-ce que, si cela continuait, la torture sur mon corps aurait le même effet que presque vingt ans de nuits d'amour avec trois époux successifs ? Ou cette confusion était-elle sacrilège ? Torture ou volupté, ainsi réduite

> soudain à rien, un corps – peau jetée en dépouille, à même le sol gras -, la mémoire des derniers instants malaxe tout monstrueusement : torture ou volupté, mon corps – peut-être parce que corps de femme ayant enfanté tant de fois – se met à ouvrir ses plaies, ses issues, à déverser son flux, en somme il s'exhale, s'émiette, se vide sans pour autant s'épuiser ! Du moins pas encore…Peut-être qu'il cherche dans le noir, et hors du temps, quelque métamorphose (198).

She creates here a relationship between torture and sexual intercourse. This association may be due to the fact that both acts penetrate the body and magnify the physicality of the individual. As Zoulikha's discussion of her own torture continues, her body undergoes a transformation and becomes associated with her surroundings. Zoulikha's skin is mentioned, invoking Mostaghanemi's description of Bilal Hussein's experience. However, rather than being involuntarily left on her torturers' machines, it is thrown on the ground and appears to constitute a liberating step in her transformation. There is a contrast established between the idea of the body becoming stripped or disintegrating while at the same time a generation is taking place. For example, the designation of the soil as 'gras' or fertile and also the use of the verb 'malaxer' or to mix indicate that a process is taking place between Zoulikha and her natural environment. This idea becomes clearer as she references childbirth and continues to describe the means by which her body empties itself. However, this activity is not associated with her death, the use of terms such as 'flux' or (menstrual) flow and 'exhaler' are associated with life. The idea of creation is also indicated by the final sentence that references her transformation.[44]

The attention Zoulikha pays to her body echoes some of the ideas found in Scarry's analysis of the dynamics of the torture act. As mentioned, Scarry discusses

torture in terms of a manifestation of power: "for the prisoner, the body and its pain are overwhelmingly present and voice, world, and self are absent ; for the torturer, voice, world and self are overwhelmingly present and the body and pain are absent" (46). Within the process of domination, the goal of the torturer is to destroy the prisoner's world, including his or her own sense of self, ability to communicate, and relationship to society. The torturer focuses intently on the body of the prisoner, resulting in his or her transformation into a manifestation only of pain. According to Scarry, "intense pain is also language destroying: as the content of one's world disintegrates, so the content of one's language disintegrates, so that which would express and project the self is robbed of its source and its subject" (35). During torture, the victim is therefore transformed into an agonizing body that has been robbed of language and the ability to defend itself against the torturer's verbal aggression.

Zoulikha's description of her own experience illustrates this dynamic of verbal versus physical experience:

> dès qu'ils m'ont interrogée, une première fois – une phrase inutile, inefficiente, j'ai su la nécessité du rite : ils posaient déjà les fils de la gégène, ils apportaient les bidons d'eau pour la baignoire, ils aiguisaient les couteaux dans le crissement convenu, tout cela, au fond, pour prendre les mesures de mon corps (200).

A direct contrast is established between her torturers, associated solely with the verbal act of interrogation, and herself as she is transformed from a person into a body. Both she and the reader are made all the more aware of this change by the torturer's attention to the tools that will facilitate his total domination. In fact, the torturer has become a

technological, mechanical presence in contrast to Zoulikha's organic, physical being. As the description of Zoulikha's torture proceeds, her body continues to be the focus of her torturers' attention:

> cette masse lourde, aux muscles vigoureux, à la peau maintenant brûlée par le soleil, ce sexe qui avait accouché quatre fois, cette statue en somme, enfin ils allaient le palper, tâcher d'en percer le ressort secret, vérifier sur elle pourquoi elle ne s'avérait pas simple mécanique, pourquoi les liens sur mes poignets et sur mes chevilles, mes seins dénudés et gonflés me faisaient mal, ma chevelure dénouée sur laquelle ils crachaient (200).

The adjectives used by Djebar to describe Zoulikha's body such as 'lourde', 'vigoureux', and 'statue' underline her physicality and strength. Towards the end of this description, the more traditionally feminine attributes of her body are emphasized as her breasts and hair become central to the torture act. The use of passive verbs such as 'dénudés' and 'dénouée' underlines the extent of her exposure and sheer defenselessness. Zoulikha later references the sexual nature of her torture more explicitly noting: "mon vagin électrifié vrillait entièrement comme un puits sans fond" (201). The reader understands that the wires of the 'gégène' mentioned earlier were attached to her vagina. This method, previously noted in relation to the torture of men, clearly indicates that although the focus of the torture act was to transform the victim into nothing more than a body, this body was overwhelmingly sexual.

The attention paid to sexuality endures after the session has ended as Zoulikha's body is left by her torturers after her death: "ce corps femelle abattu, un des genoux plié sur le côté si bien que le mouvement à demi ouvert de la jambe, du mollet ne pouvait

qu'évoquer une posture indécente" (202). The slightly opened position of her leg invokes to both the reader and those discovering her, how her body has been sexually manipulated by her torturers. More importantly, Dejbar's use of the term 'femelle' to describe Zoulikha's body underlines her torturers' contempt for and objectification of her as a woman. Her body is literally staged to show not only Zoulikha's defeat but to become a spectacle of fallen femininity. According to Branche, displaying the dead bodies of tortured prisoners was a common practice of the French army that aimed at emotionally destabilizing Algerian society, she states : "il porte atteinte à la dignité de l'Autre – cette fois au delà de la mort – et touche, par le spectacle imposé de cette dégradation, la population toute entière, humiliée ou apeurée" (285). Similar to rape, the exhibition of prisoners' corpses constituted an attempt to psychologically destabilize society by showing the colonizer's complete domination of the Algerian body even after death.

Within the context of Djebar's novel, although the display of Zoulikha's body does distress the local community, it also permits her to undergo a final transformation. Djebar establishes a link between this act and reproduction whereby her body begins to transform and empty itself. After her death, this process continues as her corpse is left outside in the forest. Zoulikha evokes its transformation: "mon corps, la deuxième journée, se met à ouvrir. Une sorte de rumeur, intérieure à sa chair, cherche comment se mêler aux odeurs du printemps déserté" (205). We see references to the process of childbirth in her description of how her body is opening to allow something within it to leave and become part of the earth. At the same time, the last scene of her monologue is

filled with images of motherhood. She is discovered by children and then buried by one of the numerous maquisards who regarded her as a second mother. It is when this maquisard carries her body away from the village to bury her in the forest that Zoulikha describes in more detail the effects of this transformation: "lourde je suis, et je l'étais davantage, non à cause de la douleur des sévices sous la tente, plutôt à la suite des heures ensoleillées qui m'avaient rendue bourdonnante et fertile, une plante grasse" (207). This last description contains a reference to fertility and growth as she has become heavier, incubated in the heat of the sun. However, for Zoulikha, this process of reproduction and metamorphosis ends when she is buried. According to the literary critic Rabat Soukehal, the soil is an important theme in Algerian literature, particularly for writers born during the colonial period. He notes that for authors, both individual ancestry and the idea of a national community or state is conceptualized through a relationship to the earth. He explains: "sa [le peuple algérien] relation avec la terre est une relation très ombilicale. Il ne se sent libre que dans les immensités terriennes" (61). Soukehal's description indicates a generative, nurturing bond between the Algerian population and their land or even 'motherland'. His comment concerning the feelings of freedom that are produced by their physical connection to the land aid in explaining Zoulikha's negative perception of burial. Above the earth, she is able not only to become a part of it but also the new Algerian nation that it represents. Her integration into the land ends, however, once she is constrained and no longer freely exposed to the elements. This burial is also the act that most disturbs her children who are now unable to find her body.

Whereas this novel is motivated by Zoulikha's lack of true burial place, Louisette Ighilahriz begins the description of her own experience by finding a grave. The tomb, within the context of Algerian literature and the War of Independence holds particular significance. As Djebar's narrative indicates, many of the bodies of those who went missing during the war period were never recovered. Literary texts such as Tahar Djaout's *Les Chercheurs d'os* have focused on this idea, portraying attempts to recover the remains of the missing. Within the context of the war, the recovery and burial of corpses signified a form of closure for Algerian society. Those who had joined the maquis and subsequently gone missing could be brought home and officially recognized for their contribution to the new nation and given a religiously appropriate burial by their families. Louisette's text begins with her discovery of the grave of Dr. Richaud who was responsible for rescuing her from her torturers. Although she often searched for him after the end of the war, she was never able to personally thank him for his actions. The recognition that she is finally able to give to him by putting a plaque on his grave signifies that, to a certain extent, she has laid the past to rest.

Louisette became involved in the independence struggle as a teenager, participating alongside the majority of her closest relatives. By the time she was wounded, taken prisoner and interrogated by a troupe of parachutists, she had already become a notorious figure for the French forces. After shooting her in the arm and leg, the parachutists plastered her wounds and left her immobile and naked, except for a

blanket, on a camp bed in the corner of an office. Her description of the first two days at these headquarters indicates an evident fascination with her sexuality:

> mus par la curiosité, les bérets rouges vinrent un à un rendre visite à la 'fellagha'. Certains soulevaient la couverture et s'exclamaient : 'Ca alors, mais c'est une vraie femme !' Ils se plantaient devant moi et me regardaient comme une bête curieuse alors que j'étais dans l'impossibilité de bouger […] à un moment, j'ai osé demander à un para entré dans ma piaule si je pouvais uriner. Je l'entends encore ricaner…Il avait fait exprès de ne pas comprendre ce que je lui avais demandé et me tournait en dérision (109).

The officers' expression of fascination, underlined by Louisette's characterization of herself as a 'une bête curieuse' or a novelty, recalls the traditional Orientalist preoccupation with and representation of the Oriental woman as a reclined and exposed spectacle. The act of lifting the blanket and declaring that she is a 'vraie femme' not only calls to mind the traditional Western preoccupation with lifting the veil but is also similar to the wartime military practice of undressing women and examining their genitals to verify their gender. As Lazreg notes, in addition to making sure that they were indeed women, this type of examination also served as a proof of sexual intercourse. She explains: "shaving her pubic hair meant (according to the army's assumed knowledge of Algerian culture) that she was sexually active with her husband, who must have been around or expected for a visit" (165). In Lazreg's opinion, the policy of requiring that this kind of verification take place essentially facilitated rape. In Louisette's case, this act was accompanied by exclamations and penetrating gazes, as if her Algerian body differed from other women they had seen. As she recalls, due to the casts covering her gun-shot

wounds she was unable to protect herself from their intrusive and curious looks. This vulnerability was also increased by her nudity, contrasting directly to the clothed authority of the officers. It also seems significant that the aggressive nature of this gaze is amplified by the presence of a group of men and the sexual remarks accompanying this intrusion. As the sexuality of Ighilahriz is paraded and evaluated, it is also attacked and debased as the officer refuses to help her attend to her physical needs.

The undressing of prisoners was a common tactic to subdue prisoners. In addition to this, Scarry notes that forcing prisoners to attend to physical needs in public is a method used to dominate the victim, eradicating the prisoner's sense of self. She states: "the prisoner is forced to attend to the most intimate and inferior acts of his body (pain, hunger, nausea, sexuality, excretion) at a time when there is no benign privacy for he is under continual surveillance, and there is no benign public, for there is no human contact" (54). The uncontrollable nature of the victim's physical needs, coupled with the increasing pain that he/she feels makes the victim even more aware of their physical presence and utter powerlessness.

In Ighilahriz's description, this technique appears to be not only a direct attack on her identity, in general, but also on her sexual identity. She further notes that she was forced to urinate, defecate and menstruate on herself: "je baignais dans la merde, dans le sang coagulé de mes menstrues" (112). Rather than using euphemistic language or medical terminology in her description, Louisette chooses to use common terms such as 'merde' or shit and 'menstrues' with everyday activities such as 'baigner' or bathing

which are familiar to the reader. The result is that the image of her state is not only vivid but also shocking to the reader, due to its nature and Louisette's candor as an elderly woman. As she notes, her torturers utilized her physical state, the farthest from an ideal of femininity, in their sexually directed attacks: "je n'ai pas eu droit à la "gégène". Il ne pouvait pas non plus me violer, j'étais trop dégueulasse ! En revanche il m'enfonçait toutes sortes d'accessoires dans le vagin" (114). As will be discussed later, in contrast to other victims such as Djamila Boupacha, Louisette clearly and carefully distinguishes between penetration with objects and rape, inferring that neither her virginity nor her social purity were affected by her torturers' acts. Her torturers do debase her sexuality, transforming her body from something that could inspire desire into that which is found to be disgusting and repulsive. Within their torture methods, we find a paradox. Although declaring Louisette to be no longer of any interest to them, her torturers still find it necessary to penetrate her with objects in order to completely have control over both her and her sexuality. Moreover, this sexual attack maintains a colonial presence both psychologically and physically in the victim. Louisette not only suffered permanent physical injuries from her torture but was also forced to undergo electric shock treatment.

Her torturers repeated this type of act on an almost daily basis during her two week incarceration at the headquarters. Throughout this time, she continued to be immobile and without the possibility of attending to her physical needs: "mon urine s'infiltrait sous la bâche du lit de camp, mes excréments se mélangeaient à mes menstrues jusqu'à former une croûte puante. Je n'avais pas été nettoyée une seule fois et ne

possédais pas non plus de tinette comme j'ai eu l'occasion d'en utiliser plus tard en prison" (117). The nature of the language used in this description is again shocking, referring to bodily acts that are not normally discussed. Also, the level of detail has a strong effect on the reader since it references how both biological functions and hygiene have been intentionally disregarded, giving the reader a vivid image of the result. The forced bonding of menstrual blood, traditionally associated with maternity, with feces may be interpreted not only as a symbol of the French colonizer's contempt for the Algerian family but also, as will be discussed later in this chapter, his desire to destroy it.

Eventually, Dr. Richaud, whose grave Louisette finds at the beginning of the text, examined her and succeeded in transporting her to a hospital and then prison. She notes his shock at her physical state: "mon corps était couvert d'ecchymoses. Mon pubis était rouge et enflé. De toute évidence, mes plâtres avaient été malmenés, les traces de violences à mon encontre étaient manifestées" (118). In contrast to the previous emotive description of her body which used informal language, this explanation is replete with medical terminology which renders it sterile and devoid of emotion. This clinical aspect is also underlined by how she appears to designate her body as a separate entity. As she notes later in this text, once the physical signs of torture disappeared, she continued to experience their effects. During her time in prisons in both France and Algeria, her leg wounds continued to inhibit her physical movement. Later in life, she would admit her constant pain and the difficulty of her decision to begin using a cane.

Although the physical consequences of torture had enduring implications on her life, her psychological wounds appear to have had the most bearing on her own identity. Even though she describes in this text how the torturers' used objects to penetrate her during torture, she admitted after publication that her main torturer, Graziani, had physically raped her. In an interview she stated: "il m'a violée, 45 ans après je n'en dors plus, il a brisé ma vie, brisé l'éducation de mes enfants. Oui, j'ai subi l'innommable de la part du capitaine Graziani" (Bouzeghrane). In this statement she describes rape as destroying her life and consequently that of her children. Referring to rape as 'l'innommable', Ighilahriz indicates an important denial that took place in Algerian society during the war. The victim avoided naming this crime, as Lazreg states, preferring to use the 'code word' torture to indicate its occurrence (159). Within the context of Algerian society, torture represented a victim's contribution to the struggle for independence and could be recognized as a sacrifice for the nation. Female victims of rape, however, appear to have suffered both social and judicial denial. According to Lazreg, the FLN was fearful of men's reactions to the widespread occurrence of rape and thereby instructed women to suffer it in silence: "in a situation of war, women should accept rape, endure it as part of the struggle" (158).[45] In this way, rape was represented as their contribution to the revolution, a sacrifice to be made for the greater good. In addition to this forced individual amnesia, Lazreg notes how rape was ignored at an official level: "the denial of rape-torture by civil and military authorities added a layer of humiliation to victims who insisted that their condition be acknowledged" (163). As

Lazreg indicates, the disgrace that victims suffered would have been increased by the act of publicly acknowledging their rape without the consolation or support of official recognition and punishment. They would have therefore been left to face the social consequences of their avowal. Algerian society attributed particular value to a woman's virginity, connecting it to masculine honor.[46] As Branche argues, the community was therefore also violated by this act: "à travers la femme, bousculée, violentée, violée, le soldat atteint sa famille, son village, et tous les cercles auxquels elle appartient jusqu'au dernier: le peuple algérien" (297). It is important to note that Louisette's reluctance to reveal Graziani's rape was directly related to the pain this information would cause her family. For this reason, she waited until her father had died and her mother had become senile. Her decision therefore signifies an attempt to limit the power of the act over her family unit and herself.

In addition to having long-term psychological effects on the victims and their families, rape also perverted the moral codes associated with Algerian society. As Branche notes, by raping Algerian women, France was also able to maintain a physical presence in Algeria after independence. An important example of this presence is the children who were the product of these rapes. According to Ruth Harris, France had suffered the same kind of national violation during the First World War as German soldiers systematically raped French women during raids. The children produced by these rapes were interpreted as symbols of German domination of the French population: "impregnation by the foe was seen as one more example of the German's capacity to

penetrate both French women and French territory in their drive towards victory" (191). Similar to the Algerian context, offspring of rapes were considered to be a foreign presence and influence, threatening national security. In the case of France, a national debate took place concerning the fate of the French/German offspring: "commentators argued that these infants should either be eradicated as a virus or nurtured on maternal love to make them truly French" (175). This solution indicates the high level of anxiety caused by the existence of half-German children; to eradicate their threat it was necessary either to abort them or make them overly French. The government chose the latter solution, integrating the children completely into French society. Women were allowed to hand the children over anonymously for adoption after giving birth in Parisian maternity hospitals. There is a note of forced amnesia in the measures taken to protect the mother's identity: "no attempt was made […] to quantify the number of rapes or resulting children […] these children were virtual phantoms and consequently could be endowed with any qualities the participants wished to give them" (193). It appears that the nation preferred not to know the identity of these children in order to protect both them and the nation. The recognition of foreign, enemy blood flowing through the national body would have certainly had a negative influence on the perception of national unity.

The French experience with German wartime rape provides important insight into the Algerian context showing French awareness about the implications of its actions and the strong relationship that exists between France's previous war experiences and the war

in Algeria. The French army transferred methods used against it during World War II such as electricity to this modern confrontation. Similarly, France had suffered as a rape "victim" and then became an aggressor, knowingly attempting to compromise the Algerian perception of national unity. As Branche notes, Algerian society also attempted to integrate the offspring of rape. In the majority of cases they were accepted by the husbands of victims (298).[47]

The fate of these children, to a large extent, has remained unknown with the notable exception of Mohamed Garne. Born in a resettlement camp to a married woman, he grew up in orphanages and foster homes. As an adult, he searched for his mother for three years, eventually finding her living in a cemetery outside of Algiers. According to the historian Joshua Cole, although she told him the name of her dead husband, she refused to help officially establish Mohamed as her husband's son. Garne took his mother to court, the result being that her family testified that her husband had been sterile and she was forced to admit on the witness stand "that she had been raped and tortured over a period of weeks by French soldiers, who beat her and shocked her with electricity when she became pregnant" (Hargreaves 135).[48] According to an article in *Le Monde* quoted by Cole, Garne left Algeria and went to France: "with one fixed idea: to make his story known to the one father he had left: the French state" (Hargreaves 135). Garne's use of the term 'father' to refer to the French nation may therefore be interpreted as an attempt to appropriate colonial discourse and use it against the colonizer. In 2001, he was granted a 30 percent pension as a 'victime de guerre', but the court never confirmed his

paternity. His case attests to the traces left by violence on the Algerian family. According to Ranjana Khanna, a specialist in postcolonial theory and literature, his situation is indicative of the fate of rape victims of the war: "the shadow victims of the war are violently cut from this pathbreaking legal finding in which the father nation, France, belatedly acknowledges its bastard son - by skipping a generation of women silenced though amnesty or madness" (4). Although the fact that Garne's mother was not recognized as a war victim is clearly indicative of the status of women, it is also important to recall that France did not recognize Garne's paternity. The ignored suffering of female rape victims occurs, therefore, in conjunction to the French government's denial of heritage. Chapter Three will explore how the dislocation of the Algerian family that occurred due to the war, namely the absent patriarch and the non-maternal mother figure that we see in Garne's story, becomes a central theme to narratives taking place during the civil war. As this analysis argues, the image of the disrupted family may be read as a commentary on the absence of governmental authority witnessed during the war period.

In conjunction to this very real reproduction of French offspring, the Algerian population's own regeneration was contaminated by this act. Ighilahriz, for example, relates to the reader her eventual marriage and pregnancy, citing the psychological pain that she endured throughout this period due to her experience of torture. Concerning this first pregnancy she says: "cette grossesse fut difficile. Je voulais cet enfant, mais mon corps, lui, le refusait. Je lui ai donné naissance dans un bien triste état. J'avais

l'impression d'être incapable de mettre au monde un être normal à cause des Bigeard, Massu et Graziani" (204). She clearly designates her body as a separate entity from herself and, although she emotionally wants to give birth, her body physically rejects her reproduction. Additionally, she strongly associates her body with her torturers. Their violence becomes responsible for producing an abnormal being as she feels the child, if not produced biologically by her torturers, psychologically to be their product.[49]

Due to the physical effects of her torture, Louisette was advised by her doctor that her body would not be able to bear numerous pregnancies. She became pregnant with her second child shortly after the birth of her first. To her dismay, the psychological effects of her torture intensified during this pregnancy, she states: "tous les jours, je ne parlais que de mes tortionnaires; je ne m'alimentais plus…j'avais honte de mon état" (207). In this description, again, she establishes a direct relationship between torture and procreation whereby her body, divorced from her through its past degradation, is a symbol of her humiliation. The experience of sexual torture and rape is thereby regenerated by her pregnancy or biological reproduction. Ighilahriz's psychological symptoms are not identical to those traditionally associated with trauma sufferers who, according to the literary critic Cathy Caruth, are normally unaware of their experience.[50] However, in the feelings that Louisette describes during her pregnancy, namely the re-torturing of her body, she becomes similar to other trauma victims. Caruth explains that trauma is defined as an experience that has not been integrated into consciousness and is destined to repeat itself continually in the actions of the victim : "the experience of a

trauma repeats itself, exactly and unremittingly, through the unknowing acts of the survivor and against his very will" (2). For Freud, this repetition should be interpreted as a kind of unconscious remembering (161). Although the victim is either unable or unwilling to come to terms with the trauma, it continually forces itself on the victim through repetition in an attempt to become consciously known. For Ighilahriz, this repetition did not lead to the incorporation of the traumatic event, rather it led to the disintegration of her psychological state. As she describes, her mental state worsened during her third pregnancy and she was forced to abort in order retain her sanity. With regard to this period of her life she explains that her hallucinations connected to her torture intensified: "ma hantise était que mon père me laissât seule avec mes tortionnaires. Les médecins ont alors décidé de me soumettre à quelques séances d'électrochocs pour me faire oublier ce passé que je ne cessais de ressasser" (210). Unable to overcome the trauma provoked by this experience, she underwent a forced amnesia. In this way, her trauma was doubly reversed. Not only did the destruction of her memory represent a solution to her psychological suffering but also amnesia traditionally represents the initial state of the trauma victim. In a sense, her treatment was reversed, ending with the traditionally initial state of non-memory concerning the event.

This effect of torture on procreation that is evident in Louisette's experience is also explored in Djebar's novel through Zoulikha's daughter Hania who believes herself to be haunted: "être habitée: d'autres femmes autrefois, disait-on étaient 'peuplées',

‘habitées’- en arabe, on les surnommait les meskounates” (62). Her specification that this word was used ‘autrefois’ or in other times, gives the impression that this other period was before colonization and subjugation of Algerian tradition and beliefs. Additionally, the Arabic word referenced by her مسكون means to be inhabited, haunted or even possessed. Within the novel, this affirmation takes place after Hania has tried to find the grave of her mother, and during this process Djebar describes her as being guided to this place by “la mère en elle” or the mother within her. Hania, therefore appears to be haunted by her mother, carrying her within. The Arabic word for carrying حمل also means to be pregnant. This latter meaning, a literal maternal pregnancy, explains Hania’s biological infertility: “elle n’eut plus jamais de menstrues, précisément depuis ce jour de sa recherche en forêt…Les voisines, les parentes par alliance, quand elle s’alite dans le silence, interrogent: “Quand nous annonceras-tu une grossesse? Une naissance?” Hania ne répond pas. Elle sait” (62). Hania is unable to bear a child since she ‘carries’ her mother. This impossible childbirth, renders her eternally pregnant with her mother and also forever biologically infertile. In this way, the novel addresses the issue of genealogy in the post-war Algerian context. Rather than representing a traditional family unit, Djebar describes a family in which Hania is at once maternally pregnant and mothering her brother who was only a small child when Zoulikha died. Traditional roles have not only become subverted by the war but more importantly, the family has become dysfunctional and infertile.

These two texts illustrate how sexual torture became a powerful tool that facilitated the colonizer's revenge on the resistant female body. Systematically attacking the sexual organs of the torture victim and proceeding to rape, the victim was left to suffer both the psychological and physical consequences of this act long after the end of the war. Contaminated by this experience, the female victim's body loses one of its most important functions in Algerian society, the ability to normally reproduce. Ighilahriz's experience shows that the female victim lived reproduction as a repetition of torture and rape. Even when the child was not biologically related to the torturer, she felt that he continued to have a direct influence on her offspring. Similarly, Djebar's text demonstrates how torture interrupts family trees through Zoulikha's experience, one which leaves her daughter, Hania, sterile and forever haunted by her tortured mother. Both of these texts explore not only the implications of torture on reproduction but also on the birth and development of the Algerian nation. Torture not only led to infertility but twisted the genealogical line, for example, by forcing the Algerian family to accept French offspring. The idea of a repetition or reproduction of violence appearing in these texts may be read as consequence of the struggle for independence but may also be a commentary on the nature of violence in Algeria. In this way, as we will see in Chapter Three, violence becomes the Algerian family tree and the most recent branch is the civil war.

In contrast to the colonial fascination with the Oriental woman, the Algerian man was feared and hated for his perceived sexual potency. This fear was expressed and

theorized by the concept of degeneration. The potential sexual interaction between the Western woman and the masculine racial other not only threatened the colonizer's authority and masculinity but more importantly, the future of the white race. Through both his perceived racial inferiority and disease, the Algerian male became invested with the white colonizer's fear of physical and psychological impotency. As a reaction to the Algerian's imagined unbridled sexuality, the colonizer attempted to punish the masculine body through torture and rape. This violence, portrayed by both testimonial and fictional texts, was understood by the male victim as an attempt to destroy his sexuality, the result being a physical and emotional castration. Additionally, as Mostaghanemi's novel demonstrates, the victim then became unable to contribute to the developing Algerian nation.

Although the masculine and feminine experiences of torture differed significantly, they both share the private nature of the victim's pain. The torturer was often careful not to leave visible traces of their sexual aggression and therefore many victims were left with no physical evidence of their experience. Within the context of the Algerian struggle for independence, the lack of physical evidence has facilitated the policy of silence and amnesia characterizing both French and Algerian governments. Although some victims such as Alleg did publicize their experiences of torture as a way of fighting against the French colonizer during the war, the majority never told their stories. Both female and male testimonials of torture are rare, and it appears that only a few Algerian authors have discussed sexual torture in their novels. This has important consequences

not only for our understanding of the effects of sexual torture on the victim but also for the Algerian nation. Testimonial documents and fictional narratives suggest that the French colonizer's sexual aggression against and violation of Algerian prisoners damaged the birth of the new Algerian nation through its physical and psychological harm.

Chapter Two will show that violence has become a cohesive element in the Algerian national narrative, giving the suffering and pain associated with the independence struggle not only a meaning but an honorable quality. As historian James McDougall argues, the civil war is the most recent example of Algeria's national history of violence. Although events have been cohesively sewn together, little is known about individual actors. More specifically, since the victims of sexual torture have remained silent, we are left to question their role within the Algerian national narrative. As the unknown victims of violence, how do they understand the most recent outbreak of hostility? Also, what role did they play as former victims living in an Algerian society that was literally torturing itself?

Notes

[1] Born in London to a French mother and Algerian father, the journalist Henri Alleg moved to Algeria in 1939 and worked for the newspaper *Alger Républicain*, becoming its director in 1951. After many of his colleagues had been arrested by the French government due to their sympathy for Algerian nationalism, he went into hiding but was arrested in June 1957. Concerning the issue of his national identity or familial background, which could be interpreted as having an effect on his experience of torture, differentiating it from Algerians, Lazreg writes: "it is not that Alleg wanted to suffer just

like his Algerian friends did, but that torture separated him from his fellow Frenchman who were now treating him as an enemy, as if he were a native Algerian. In a sense, he was glad that he was (mis)treated like a native Algerian. He perceived his torture as demonstrating that his French torturers, with whom he shared a nationality, inhabited a different France from his. Torture helped to separate him from this fellow Frenchmen qua torturers, and at the same time brought him closer to Algerians whose (denied) humanity he shared" (214).

[2] In an interview with Jonathon Karl for ABC News, which aired on December 16, 2008, former Vice President Dick Cheney stated: "on the question of so-called torture, we don't do torture. We never have. It's not something that this administration subscribes to. Again, we proceeded very cautiously. We checked. We had the Justice Department issue the requisite opinions in order to know where the bright lines were that you could not cross. The professionals involved in that program were very, very cautious, very careful -- wouldn't do anything without making certain it was authorized and that it was legal. And any suggestion to the contrary is just wrong. Did it produce the desired results? I think it did […] I think, for example, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who was the number three man in al Qaeda, the man who planned the attacks of 9/11, provided us with a wealth of information. There was a period of time there, three or four years ago, when about half of everything we knew about al Qaeda came from that one source. So, it's been a remarkably successful effort. I think the results speak for themselves. And I think those who allege that we've been involved in torture, or that somehow we violated the Constitution or laws with the terrorist surveillance program, simply don't know what they're talking about". When asked by Karl, who conducted the interview, "one of those tactics, of course, widely reported was waterboarding. And that seems to be a tactic we no longer use. Even that you think was appropriate?", Cheney responded "I do" (Jonathon Karl).

[3] According to the United States' Office of Legal Counsel, the CIA's definition of waterboarding is as follows: "the individual is bound securely to an inclined bench, which is approximately four feet by seven feet. The individual's feet are generally elevated. A cloth is placed over the forehead and eyes. Water is then applied to the cloth in a controlled manner. As this is done, the cloth is lowered until it covers both the nose and mouth. Once the cloth is saturated and completely covers the mouth and nose, air flow is slightly restricted for 20 to 40 seconds due to the presence of the cloth. During those 20 to 40 seconds, water is continuously applied from a height of twelve to twenty-four inches. After this period, the cloth is lifted, and the individual is allowed to breathe unimpeded for three or four full breaths. The procedure may then be repeated. The water is usually applied from a canteen cup or small watering can with a spout" (Wikipedia "Waterboarding"). Considered by many politicians, legal experts, and human rights organizations among others as a form of torture, the Bush administration did not consider

it to be a form of torture and thereby validated its use during the the interrogation of terrorist suspects.

[4] According to Pierre Vidal Naquet, an activist and prominent historian, the investigation conducted by Wuillaume was a reaction to an increasing amount of published documentation regarding the occurrence of torture within the police force. For example, in January 1955 the author François Mauriac published an article entitled "La Question" in *l'Express*. Before transferring 'compromised' police officers out of Algeria and back to France, the short-lived government of Pierre Mendès France wanted to know more about the situation in Algeria (26).

[5] Concerning the frequency of torture within the police, Vidal-Naquet notes in his analysis: "des sévices de toutes sortes sont couramment pratiqués en Algérie sur la personne des suspects, et M. Wuillaume en dresse une liste […] les tortures sont pratiquées par "toutes les polices", par la gendarmerie, par la police judiciaire, par la P.R.G. (police des renseignements généraux) […] les magistrats, dans la pratique, sont complices" (27).

[6] In his report, Wuillaume even specified the way in which water and electricity could be used in interrogation sessions: "la méthode consisterait, pour le tuyau d'eau, à introduire l'eau dans la bouche jusqu'à la suffocation seulement, sans évanouissement ni ingestion; quant à l'électricité, ce serait uniquement des décharges rapides et multiples pratiquées sur le corps à la façon de pointes de feu" (Vidal-Naquet 28). In her analysis, Lazreg notes how officers later attending the training center established in May 1958 in Philippeville were taught 'humane torture' : "According to the notes taken by a trainee, this kind of torture must: (1) [be] clean; (2)...not take place in the presence of young [soldiers]; (3)… not take place in the presence of sadists; (4)…not [be] inflicted by an officer or a person of rank; (5) and must especially be "humane" that is to say, it must end as soon as the guy has talked, and mostly that it does not leave any trace. Considering which, in conclusion, you had the right to use water and electricity" (114).

[7] As Darius Rejali, a specialist in Political Science points out, the United States government is not the first to use water-based interrogation techniques. The practice of choking or 'ducking', "temporarily submerging the body in water" (281) dates back to the Crusades. It became more sophisticated throughout the centuries that followed, reappearing more recently during the Second World War when 'Masuy', a Belgian torturer who worked for the Nazis, made chocking his 'signature technique'. According to Rejali, it was then adopted by the Gestapo throughout Western Europe becoming known as 'la baignoire' in France.

[8] In his examination, Vidal-Naquet cites the recalling of all available soldiers to serve in Algeria in 1956 as a critical point in the expansion of torture to the army: "il y avait moins de 60 000 hommes en Algérie le 1er novembre 1954: une armée de 500 000 hommes y est désormais installée […] des lors, le problème de la torture va changer de nature: il ne s'agit plus des exploits de quelques policiers ou de quelques officiers

particulièrement brutaux, c'est l'ensemble de la jeunesse française qui va être confronté avec ce problème" (34).

[9] Stora writes: "la Parlement vote massivement, par 455 voix contre 76, cette loi sur les "pouvoirs spéciaux", qui, entre autres, suspend la plupart des garanties de la liberté individuelle en Algérie. Cette impressionnante majorité croit que cette approximation irresponsable de la dictature en Algérie est la bonne solution" (*La Gangrène et l'oubli* 75).

[10] In her analysis of the war, Lazreg also notes how the extension of military power also signaled the implementation of Revolutionary War Theory that: "suggested that to combat revolutionary war, conventional armies must adjust their methods and adopt antisubversive strategies that borrow from their adversaries. Revolutionary terror must be met with counterrevolutionary military terror […] it reduced complex sociopolitical and economic problems to logical propositions amenable to precise military interventions. Ironically, the doctrine sought to win the hearts and minds of the people all the while advocating the destruction of their physical and social environment, and the remaking of their selves through torture and psychological action" (16).

[11] As Stora explains, a law passed on April 3, 1955 declaring a state of emergency gives the government the ability to: "prendre toutes les mesures pour assurer le contrôle de la presse et des publications de toute nature ainsi que celui des émissions radiophoniques, des projections cinématographiques et des représentations théâtrales" (*Le livre, mémoire de l'Histoire* 77).

[12] *Le Petit Soldat* by Jean-Luc Godard was only officially shown to the public after the end of the war in 1963.

[13] Stora notes in his analysis: "le menu du journal du soir était préétabli, chaque jour, par le Service de liaisons interministérielles (SLI), composé de douze membres du gouvernement […] le journal télévisé illustre au plan formel, les préceptes de l'information […] la guerre n'existe pas (plus?). Les soldats français n'ont du soldat que l'uniforme. On les voit toujours soigner, construire, enseigner" (*La Gangrène et l'oubli* 42-43).

[14] According to Stora, *La Question* was the first text to be seized and openly censored. He notes: "la franchise brutale du récit déchire les premières années de mensonge de la guerre, bouleverse les consciences. Le 12 février 1958, le livre *La Question* est diffusé pour la première fois au cours d'une conférence de presse au Comité Maurice-Audin. 60 000 exemplaires sont vendus en quelques semaines, on fait la queue devant les Editions de Minuit. Plus d'un mois après sa parution, le gouvernement de Félix Gaillard s'avise que ce livre est subversif. La saisie est ordonnée le 27 mars" (*La Gangrène et l'oubli* 57).

[15] The official definition of the Convention is as follows: "the term "torture" means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person

information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions" (UN online).

[16] Emmanuel Sivan, a specialist in Islamic history, confirms Fanon's thoughts in his analysis of Algerian popular culture. He notes that texts such as the famous *Cagayous* series of novels portray that: "social interaction was very limited with residential segregation reinforcing social segregation […] contact is casual and occasional. No real friendship is created […] Too close a contact was deemed dangerous" (29).

[17] For more information concerning literary representations of colonial society and its system of racial segregation, see Rabat Soukehal's chapter "Société" in his analysis *Le Roman algérien de langue française (1950-1990).*

[18] Lazreg echoes this idea in her analysis, writing: "the native man is a politically despised subject: a 'rebel,' and a member of a culture held in contempt. He also exists in the mythifying consciousness of the colonizer as a sexually potent male who fathers an infinite number of children and often appeals to many a French woman" (127).

[19] Gobineau's theory was based on the idea that there are three main races in the world: white, yellow and black. Concerning the definition of this division, he states "j'entends par blancs ces hommes que l'on désigne aussi sous le nom de race caucasique, sémitique, japhétide. J'appelle noirs, les Chamites, et jaunes, le rameau altaïque, mongol, finnois, tartare. Tels sont les trois éléments purs et primitifs de l'humanité" (150). As mentioned in his statement, there are three pure races, however there are also tertiary races such as Polynesians who he determines to be a mix of black and yellow races. However, in Gobineau's opinion, there was a fundamental difference between white, black and yellow races concerning their ability and desire to mix. In his opinion, the white race was more apt to mix than the other two: "les penchants essentiellement civilisateurs de cette race d'élite la poussaient constamment à se mélanger avec les autres peuples. Quant aux deux types jaune et noir, là où on les trouve à cet état tertiaire, ils n'ont pas d'histoire, car ce sont des sauvages" (153). His theory was based on the idea that the mingling of races led to civilization and development. However, in order for this mixing to occur, races had to overcome their inherent dislike of combining their blood with that of another race. In short, although the white race mixed with other races, these other races did not and therefore remained in a state of backwardness. Concerning the place reserved for 'Arabs' within his theory, he does consider that they belong to the white race. However, his opinion of this people is less than complimentary. For example, he notes how they have been distanced from the white race: "jusqu'aux derniers jours de l'empire romain, la civilisation métisse qui régnait dans tout l'Orient, y compris alors la Grèce continentale, était devenue beaucoup plus asiatique que grecque, parce que les masses tenaient

beaucoup plus du premier sang que du second" (181). Due to Gobineau's preference for the white race, which he deemed to be the most beautiful and likely to advance, this statement may be interpreted as a condemnation as he considered 'Arabs' to be more 'Asian' than Greek or European/white. Later in his analysis, he expands on his opinion of 'Arabs', stating: "aujourd'hui, c'est notre tour d'agir sur les débris de la civilisation Arabe […] cette nation bâtarde n'avait donc jamais cessé, des l'antiquité la plus haute, d'entretenir des relations suivies avec les sociétés puissantes qui l'avoisinaient. Elle avait pris part à leurs travaux et, semblable à un corps moitié plongé dans l'eau, moitié exposé au soleil, elle tenait, tout à la fois, d'une culture avancée et de la barbarie" (183). In this description, it may be assumed that the 'civilized' aspect of the Arab people was that belonging to its 'white' origins. However, not only the purity but also the development of the Arab people has been compromised, in Gobineau's opinion, through their coupling with lesser, uncultured groups. Writing in the nineteenth century, it was now left up to Westerners to save this people from its decline. It appears, however, that this salvation would have to be restricted to bringing Western civilization to them. From a racial perspective, Gobineau does not seem to agree with the colonial project: "les invasions successives, le commerce, les colonies implantées, la paix et la guerre ont contribué, à tour de rôle, à augmenter le désordre, et si l'on pouvait remonter un peu haut sur l'arbre généalogique du premier homme venu, on aurait chance d'être étonné de l'étrangeté de ses aïeux" (155). The racial interaction and reproduction that occurred due to colonization, in his opinion, led to random and uncontrolled mixing. Rather than advancing the white race, it led to racial confusion and distanced this race from its origins. However, as the postcolonial theorist Robert Young notes in *Colonial Desire*, there appears to be one acceptable form of mixing for Gobineau, that between the white male and a female from another race: "this union can be effected because the white male, belonging to a strong, conquering race, will be in a position of power: according to Gobineau's logic, it can only be that this allows the instinctive attraction felt by the white man to overcome the allegedly natural repulsion felt by the black or yellow woman" (108). Gobineau's theory illustrates a clear gendering of colonial desire. Whereas lust for the colonized woman could reinforce white power and domination, that involving a relationship between the colonized male and a white female would threaten the colonizer's power and possibly lead to the disintegration of his race.

[20] For Sander Gilman, a specialist in cultural and literary history, degeneration also meant "to lose the generative force" (Young ix). The theory of degeneration was therefore also linked to infertility and human sexuality. Sexual degeneration became a constant subject of discussion in the nineteenth century in psychological works, including those of Sigmund Freud, Henrich Kaan and Eduard Reich. The latter clarified the threat of contamination from the uncivilized other by relating it to sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis.

[21] Taraud explains: “contrairement à ce qui se passe le plus souvent en France métropolitaine, l’administration coloniale n’a pas joué la carte de la dissémination. Elle a imposé, au contraire, une concentration et une ségrégation des bordels pour éviter un trop grand émiettement géographique” (131). She describes how the colonial administration in Morocco constructed a new self contained prostitution quarter or ‘quartier réservé’ on the outskirts Casablanca in the 1920’s. The aim of this quarter, named Bousbir after the old quarter in the city center, was specifically to geographically separate indigenous prostitution from the rest of the population: “le système réglementariste […] repose donc sur la légalisation d’un état, la hiérarchisation d’un milieu et le cloisonnement d’un espace dans le but d’éviter croisements et mélanges entre gens de classes sociales et de races différentes” (104). As further evidence of this system of sexual segregation, she notes that within Bousbir only one ‘European’ brothel attracted a ‘European’ clientele (132). As a further guarantee of the containment of indigenous prostitution, a security system was put in place to limit the circulation of prostitutes: “système de double porte; fenêtres munies de barreaux et de verres dépolis; visites sanitaires à domicilie pour les maisons de tolérance; enceintes et postes de gardes pour les quartiers réservés” (104). As indicated by Taraud, the fear of interaction between classes through prostitution was also a fear of the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. The indigenous prostitute was considered to be a primary carrier: “capable de ruiner la résistance des corps par l’inoculation lente ou foudroyante de maladies vénériennes multiples” (104).

[22] Considering Algeria’s importance as a colony, Stora writes: “elle représente trois départements français, dépendant directement du ministère de l’Intérieur. Beaucoup plus, donc, qu’une colonie lointaine comme le Sénégal, l’Indochine, ou la Tunisie, simple protectorat. Il semble hors de question d’abandonner un territoire lié directement à la France depuis cent trente ans, avant même la Savoie rattachée en 1860!” (*La Gangrène et l’oubli* 18).

[23] Within the group, according to Branche, each participant appears to have had a specific ‘role’ as translator or witness: “il faut bien quelqu’un pour maintenir le prisonnier pendant qu’on le bourre de coups ou qu’on lui serre les testicules. D’autres soldats sont photographiés en train d’observer la scène […] comment définir la participation en effet ? Chacun répond avec sa morale, avec sa conscience. Le seul critère clair est l’appartenance au groupe” (322-333). As Lazreg notes in her analysis, witnesses also played a role in actually confirming the occurrence of torture in Algeria: “a number of soldiers took pictures of torture seances not just to send home as mementos, but also to prove that they happened. This prompted the state to prohibit mailing all war pictures outside of Algeria” (135). The fascination with documenting the event and sending pictures home is not only interesting as a form of documentation or evidence but may also have a relation to the colonial fascination with post-cards of the native population that has been documented by Malek Alloula in *Le Harem colonial.*

[24] Alleg later notes in his testimony how his torturer(s) congratulated him after he had survived being subjected to truth serum: “je regardai ce jeune à la figure si sympathique, qui pouvait parler des séances de tortures que j’avais subies comme d’un match dont il se souviendrait, et qui pouvait venir me féliciter sans gène, comme il aurait fait pour un champion cycliste” (91).

[25] In his case notes in *Les damnés de la terre,* Fanon transcribes the history of a torturer who also describes sessions in terms of a personal challenge: “c’est un problème de succès personnel ; on est en compétition quoi…En fait, il faut être intelligent pour réussir dans ce travail. Il faut savoir à quel moment serrer et à quel autre desserrer. C’est une question de flair” (528). His comments reveal his own personal pleasure in the physical and psychological test that torture represents to him.

[26] According to Rejali, this kind of generator or magneto produces a high voltage spark necessary for starting machines in the twentieth century such as telephones, car engines or even planes (145).

[27] Rejali’s hypothesis concerning the spread of the magneto or gégène involves Pierre Marty, a former police inspector in Tunisia who was police chief of Montpellier during the Occupation in France and ran the ‘Marty Brigade’. This group became famous for its use of electrical torture using the ‘confectionary box’ or ‘Radio London’. This technique consisted in a magneto, with one end “attached to the wet hands of the patient , while the other pole, by means of a mobile wire, was place on the most sensitive parts of the body and provoked deep burns” (112). According to Rejali, Marty was most probably responsible for the introduction of magneto torture in France. Regarding its transfer from Indochina to France, Rejali notes: “it seems more plausible to think it traveled through backroom apprenticeships in the French military and colonial police to France. Marty’s Brigade was one conduit” (149). It appeared in Algeria by way of officers who had served in Indochina, according to one officer quoted by Rejali: “what happened afterward in Algeria were methods of torture that were imported in our units in 1939-1945 by a fringe of officers from the colonial army” (158). In addition to this link, it is also true that at least some of the officers present in Algeria had been imprisoned and tortured during the Occupation by units such as the Marty Brigade. They therefore transformed themselves during the war from victim into torturer using against others the same methods, such as electricity, that they had suffered during World War II. For example, one of Moussa Khebaili’s torturer’s told him: “j’ai connu la torture chez les Nazis; maintenant, je l’applique” (*La Gangrène* 69).

[28] Regarding the mechanism of the field telephone, Rejali notes: “cranking generated a powerful, but short shock at very low amperage to ring the phone at the other end. The operator increased the voltage by cranking faster. Field magnetos also came equipped with wires ending in alligator clips, spring-loaded clips with serrated jaws. Torturers used these for quick, temporary attachments to various body parts” (145).

[29] In Rejali's analysis of the electric torture methods utilized during the war, he notes that electricity was sometimes also used in conjunction to 'la broche' or barbecue/electric spit technique. He states in his description of this method that "torturers tied a victim's hand to his feet, slipped a pole in the bend of the knees, and rested the pole between two tables. Then they electrified the pole with one cable and picked the body with the other end" (163). One of his sources for this information is *La Gangrène* however "la broche" technique also appears in Leïla Sebbar's novel *La Seine était rouge* and is discussed in more detail in Chapter Two. In the novel, "la broche" is referred to using its Arabic name "le mechoui" and is associated with harkis operating in Paris. Within the novel, the use of the Arabic term for this technique emblematically designates the practice as Arab and thereby infers that 'harkis' are responsible for its presence in France. Harki brutality is symbolized by their use of particularly violent torture methods in which they take pride: "on a fait 'chanter les caves' comme disaient les Parisiens. Et pour le méchoui…on était les meilleurs" (46). The harki's description of torture sessions demonstrates his feelings of satisfaction but more importantly a certain conceit, proclaiming the nature of his activities despite public disdain and condemnation. This form of interrogation also appears in the police officer's testimony in the novel who explains the procedure in more depth: "ils leur font 'le méchoui', qu'on appelle, je l'ai pas vu, des collègues m'ont raconté : on attache le type, les pieds et les mains à un bâton, comme un chevreuil ou un mouton, on le fait tourner et on le frappe à coups de cravache ou de nerf de bœuf" (122). It is important to note how the police officer is represented as distancing himself from this practice, not only by affirming that 'ils' or the harkis use it, but by underlining that he has not even seen it practiced.

[30] In her analysis of torture, Elaine Scarry notes that victims of torture often interpret their own bodies as becoming a tool of the torturer: "the person in great pain experiences his own body as the agent of his agony. The ceaseless, self announcing signal of the body in pain, at once so empty and undifferentiated and so full of blaring adversity, contains not only the feeling 'my body hurts' but the feeling 'my body hurts me'" (47).

[31] In *La Gangrène*, Moussa Khebaili describes how electrodes were attached to other sexual areas of the body during this technique: "en même temps, deux autres policiers, également des Français de Tunisie, m'appliquaient des électrodes un peu partout sur le corps et même dans la bouche, dans l'anus, et sur mon cœur" (68). Not only were these parts of the body associated with sex, but perhaps more importantly with regards to the mouth and anus the torturer penetrates the victim's body in order to attach the electrodes, highlighting to him his total subjugation. In addition to electricity, Alleg mentions that he was also burned as part of the continued attempt to make him speak: "[j]e vis Lorca qui allumait lentement une torche de papier à la hauteur de mes yeux. Il se releva et tout à coup je sentais la flamme sur le sexe et sur les jambes, dont les poils s'enflammèrent en grésillant […] Il recommence une fois, deux fois, puis se mit à me brûler la pointe d'un sein" (42). This technique demonstrates how sexually associated areas of the body were

targeted by the torturer. Additionally, it appears significant that the victim would not only feel the pain associated with this brutality, but unlike the 'gégène' would actually see his own torture.

[32] Concerning this particular form of rape, Lazreg notes: "*Sitting* prisoners on bottles was an old torture method used against the Viet Minh. The bottle perforates the intestines often causing death. The French text uses the word "sex" for "sexual organ," connoting the invasive and totalitarian nature of sexual torture. From the standpoint of the victim, his whole sexed being was not only on display, but played with. His identity as a male was violated. To be "forced" to sit on bottles connotes an unsettling image of a man who is embarrassed to say that he was raped with bottles" (125).

[33] In an interview with Hakim Kateb, Mostaghanemi explains her relationship to poetry and her decision to write novels: "c'est peut-être un trahison. Je crois que c'est ça. La poésie (Echiîr) en arabe c'est masculin. Pour moi, c'est presque une relation amoureuse. La poésie est un amant. Un amant jaloux qui refuse de me partager avec quelqu'un d'autre. Mais il fallait choisir: soit être poète ou m'occuper de mes enfants. La vie conjugale m'a éloignée de la poésie. J'étais attelée à la charrette du mariage, de la maternité et j'ai trahi la poésie. Je l'ai trahie en me mariant, je l'ai trahie en devenant mère, je l'ai trahie avec le roman et la poésie m'a trahie aussi. Je pense que la poésie est un trône lourd à porter" ("Assia Djebar n'est pas représentative de la société algérienne").

[34] In the novel, it is Khaled who travels from Algeria to Tunisia on behalf of his friend Si Tahar, Ahlam/Hayat's father, to tell her mother that his daughter who, had already been named Hayat (meaning 'life' in Arabic), should be officially registered as Ahlam ('dreams').

[35] All translations are by the author unless otherwise cited.

[36]

وصوته يشتم بالفرنسية معذّبيه ويصفهم بالكلاب والنازيّين والقتلة .. فيأتي متقطعا بين صرخة و أخرى
"criminels..assassins..salauds..nazis"
فيردّ عليه صوتنا بالأناشيد الحماسيّة و الهتاف" (320).

His voice would curse his torturers in French and describes them as dogs, nazis, and murderers, and intermittent words would come between one scream and another: "criminals ... assassins ... bastards ... nazis". Our voice would reply to him in enthusiastic anthems and calls.

[37]. According to Rabat Soukehal, the issue of language characterized Haddad's work. He writes: "de tous les écrivains algériens de langue française, Malek Haddad est l'écorché vif par excellence, l'éternel exilé dans la langue de l'Autre" (472). His most prominent novels include: *La dernière impression* (1958), *Je t'offrirai une gazelle* (1959), *L'élève et la leçon* (1960), and *Le Quai aux fleurs ne répond pas* (1961).

[38] In her analysis, Bamia notes: "after the mother it is the beloved who stands for the country" (89). Fariel Namzul writes:

إن تماهي البطلة حياة \ أحلام مع الوطن أمر لا يختلف عليه اثنان، فهي الجزائر، وهي الوطن العربي بكل مأسيه وكوارثه" (174).

That the heroine Hayat/Ahlam mixes with the homeland is an undisputed matter for she is Algeria and the Arab homeland with all of its tragedies and disasters.

[39] In his controversial account of his own involvement in the Algerian War of Independence, Aussaressess describes how electrical torture was systematically used by the French forces in the war.

[40] The French literary interest in the Orient is well documented. A number of writers travelled to the Middle East and North Africa in the nineteenth century, publishing their travel journals afterward. René de Chateaubriand appears to have initiated this trend, stating at the beginning of *Itinéraire de Paris à Jerusalem* (1811) during which he visited Carthage: "on peut donc dire que le sujet que je vais traiter est neuf, j'ouvrirai la route; les habiles viendront après moi" (1165). Gerard de Nerval, for example, is among a number of writers who expressed a particular interest in the Oriental woman. He published an account of his trip to the Middle East, *Voyage en Orient* (1848) in which he describes his impressions of Beirut and Cairo where he was socially obliged to search for an 'indigenous' wife. Gustave Flaubert also travelled extensively in the Middle East and North Africa with Maxime du Camp from 1849 to 1851 and his personal experiences of the Orient were published posthumously. He returned to the Orient in 1858, traveling to Tunisia and Algeria to complete his controversial fictionalization of the Punic Wars *Salammbô* (1862) that focuses on Hamlicar Barca's daughter. Also, Théophile Gautier's *Le roman de la momie* (1858) fictionalizes a love story between a Western explorer and an Egyptian mummy. Later in the century, Guy de Maupassant published *Au Soleil* (1884), a work that documented his extensive travels in North Africa and appears to have inspired his short story *Alloula* about an Algerian woman. Isabelle Eberhardt also wrote extensively about her life in Algeria, the collection of short stories *Amours Nomades* published after her death offers a unique feminine perspective of Algerian society and women.

[41] Within Arabo-Muslim society, the community traditionally takes precedence over the individual and the expression of individuality. For her, this taboo remains powerful, "the upbringing that I received from my mother and others around me had two absolute rules: one, never talk about yourself; and two, if you must, always do it 'anonymously' [...] as for speaking anonymously, one *must* never use the first person pronoun" (*Women of Algiers in their apartment* 172). The taboo that exists in Muslim cultures compelled Djebar to choose to write using a pseudonym at the beginning of her literary career in order to protect the anonymity of both herself and her family. Djebar chooses to focus on the stories of many different characters in this collection, to invalidate this notion of the 'other.' In addition to this, Djebar alternates between acting as narrator herself and letting many of the characters narrate their stories. However, unlike traditional narrators who are omnipotent, controlling everything that takes place in a scene, Djebar does not wish

to control the scene or speak for the characters. She chooses instead to speak with them and merely translate their stories, somewhat acting as an intermediary: "ne pas prétendre 'parler pour', ou pire 'parler sur', à peine parler *près de*, et si possible *tout contre"* (8). The autobiographical content expressed by some of her characters therefore appears to come from them and not necessarily from the narrator. Her work therefore facilitates the expression of women's stories that have remained unexpressed, somewhat liberating them from social taboos. However, their expression does not seem to transgress these taboos since their stories form a collection, so they appear to be speaking from within the protection of a group with Djebar acting as an intermediary. Djebar continues to act as an intermediary for women in *L'Amour, la fantasia*. In the third section, for example, the novel focuses on the narratives of women who participated more recently in the liberation movement. Djebar translates the interviews that she conducted with these women, thereby allowing their perspective to be expressed. However, their anonymity is protected by the fact that their narratives are introduced as "Voix" and their identities are not revealed. They are therefore remaining faithful to the social custom by being indistinguishable, but somewhat transgressing it by expressing themselves and their individuality. Their narratives once again form a collection and they are protected by their membership in a group of women, a collectivity.

[42] Djebar contextualizes Zoulikha's reflection by recalling Algerian women's history of resistance, particularly that of Berber female warriors who fought against the colonial campaign: "on raconte qu'un siècle exactement avant que je monte dans les douars de montagne […] les guerrières berbères sautaient sur les chevaux de leurs époux morts sous leurs yeux et allaient sous les remparts braver l'ennemi" (123). Faced with religious conservatism, she appears to be reminding her readers of the kind of active role that Algerian women have traditionally occupied in Algerian society. At the same time, she is inscribing the struggle for independence within Algeria's long history of armed battles against oppression. As will be discussed in Chapter Two, she is thereby participating in what the historian James McDougall refers to as the construction of a national narrative based on violence and "sacralized struggle" (52).

[43] In an account written by Gisele Halimi and Simone de Beauvoir entitled *Djmaila Boupacha* (1962), her rape is described in the following way: "l'inspecteur qui l'avait giflée et le 'bleu' qui la faisait basculer dans la baignoire, lui écartait les jambes. Ils lui introduisent dans le vagin une brosse à dents, du côté du manche. Puis ils prennent une de ces bouteilles de bière qu'ils venaient de vider, et lui enfoncent le goulot. Djamila s'évanouit dans son sang. Elle était vierge" (34). Her torturers appear to have added to the humiliation associated with rape by using a beer bottle. Specifically, as discussed in terms of a symbol of the entertaining aspect of torture, the beer bottle appears to not only undermine the gravity of the act for the victim but transgresses the Islamic practice of avoiding alcohol thus combining multiple violations.

[44] In her analysis, Lazreg notes how torturers imagined themselves to be involved in a childbirth-like process during torture sessions: "one of the images used by torturers evokes labor pains preceding the birth of a child, an image at odds with the gender of its users who, in the Algerian War, happen to all be men. Nevertheless, in their minds, their actions facilitate the release of information. A prisoner is subjected to extreme pain, just like a pregnant woman must endure labor pains as she gives birth to a child […] Because it is he who inflicts pain and suffering, and makes the prisoner 'labor,' *he* has *produced* the information. The pregnancy metaphor enables the torturer to look upon his actions as producing life. After all he is involved in a life-giving process that marks the familiar justification of torture: It saves lives " (132-133).

[45] Feraoun mentions this strategy in his *Journal,* adding that the FLN argued that victims should even trivialize rape: "les fellaghas de leur côté ont expliqué aux femmes, texte du Coran à l'appui, que leur combat à elles consistait précisément à accepter l'outrage des soldats non à le rechercher spécialement, à le subir et à s'en moquer" (290).

[46] As Branche explains, Algerian men also remained silent concerning the occurrence of rape during the war since they interpreted it as damaging perceptions of their masculinity: "le viol, ce crime si particulier dont l'auteur se sent innocent et la victime honteuse, est une tache, que les femmes taisent, mais que les hommes cachent aussi puisqu'il a dévoilé leur impuissance à protéger leurs femmes, pierre de touche de leur autorité et de leur honneur" (298).

[47] In her analysis, Branche cites Djamila Amrane's text *Des Femmes dans la guerre d'Algerie* as evidence of their adoption. Amrane's analysis is actually a series of interviews with former female combattants. In one of these transcribed interactions, the former nurse Mimi ben Mohamed describes a conversation that took place with an FLN officer: "Farida et moi avions posé le problème du viol. Les nôtres au début, ils ne voulaient pas le croire. Bon après, ils savaient. Toutes ces grossesses qu'allons nous en faire ? Alors le commandant Si Lahkdar, peut-être parce qu'il était jeune, a dit: 'Bon, on tue les bébés'. Nous avons dit: 'Non, ce n'est pas possible, on ne peut tuer des innocents. Les gosses n'y sont pour rien et les femmes non plus, puisqu'elles ont été obligées. Ce n'est pas possible de détruire un enfant comme ça, ce serait un crime.' Effectivement, ils ne l'ont pas fait, ils ont gardé tous ces enfants. Les maris n'en voulaient pas, mais finalement ils les ont gardés. Il y a eu des difficultés, mais chacun a compris" (299).

[48] According to the political scientist R. Charli Carpenter, following the occurrence of mass rape and the forced impregnation of victims during the Bosnian war, discussions erupted concerning the fate and rights of the offspring of these kind of acts. According to Capenter, an estimated 20,000 women were raped during the conflict. Victims described being sometimes violated several times in one day due to the their aggressors' conscious intention of making them pregnant: "women were examined by gynecologists. If found to be pregnant, they were segregated, given special privileges, and held until their seventh month when it was too late to obtain an abortion" (445). As Carpenter discusses in great

depth, it has been argued that not only rape but the forced impregnation of women constituted not only crimes against humanity but separate acts of genocide: "evidence of forced impregnation helped excite moral sentiment because rape-induced pregnancy was presented as a worse crime against women than rape itself since, and it helped frame rape as genocidal because of pregnancy's unique role in corroding the victimized culture" (429). Unfortunately, as Carpenter notes, the offspring of Bosnian war- crimes have continued to be socially and legally overlooked as victims. She writes: "children may be tacitly acknowledged as victims, but their rights are never articulated directly within any legal framework. Instead, they are footnoted and marginalized" (452). As an example of their exclusion she cites legal discussions or arguments made during war crime trials that actually associate them with the perpetrators of rape: "whereas children were ignored in detailing 'forced impregnation' as a war crime and crime against humanity, overt references to the child of rape were made throughout the arguments on 'forced impregnation' as genocide. But by placing the child outside of the group against which genocide was being committed, these references distanced the idea of the war-rape orphan from the image of victim and categorized the orphans instead with the ethnic group perpetuating the genocide" (453). Her discussion recalls the way in which children of rape have been anonymously integrated into society because, as discussed in relation to France's experience during World War II, it is feared that they bear an association with the enemy that could threaten national unity.

[49] Although Louisette was not impregnated by her torturers, her conflicted feelings towards her child and body are similar to those associated with victims of rape who are impregnated by their aggressors. According to Anne Goldstein, a specialist in gender violence and human rights, women are confused about their feelings towards their child who they associate with both their aggressor and their own prolonged violation: "a woman may […] find that she is unable either to wholly love it or wholly despise it. Once it is born, the woman must either try to repress her loathing and revulsion and raise the child with love, perhaps with every feature of her assailant imprinted on the child's face as a constant reminder of her violation" (Carpenter 453).

[50] In her analysis, Caruth builds on Freud's definition of trauma as a "wound of the mind - the breach in the mind's experience of time, self, and the world - is not, like the wound of the body, a simple, healable event, but rather an event that […] is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor" (4).

Chapter Two
La part du tort: Harkis and the non-birth of a nation

This chapter considers three literary texts that focus on the issue of harkis or Français Musulmans Rapatriés (FMR): *La Seine était rouge* by Leïla Sebbar, Yasmina Khadra's *La Part du mort* and غداً يوم جديد or *Tomorrow is a new day* by Abdelhamid Benhadouga. This analysis concentrates on the relationship between representations of this group of former combatants and political ideologies associated with the Algerian War of Independence. More specifically, this study will argue that the manner in which harkis are represented may be interpreted as a gesture of support for or a contradiction of official versions of the Algerian war of Independence proposed by the French and Algerian governments respectively.[1] In recent years, this community has become a more prominent subject of discussion in literary texts from both countries as children and grandchildren of harkis have become more politically and socially active.

As a group excluded from both nations, "harkis" continue to provoke controversy in France and Algeria today. As Mohand Hamoumou, who completed the first comprehensive sociological study of this community explains, even the terms commonly used to designate this group prove problematic. In the name Français Musulmans Rapatriés, the term 'Musulmans' erroneously attributes Islamic beliefs to a religiously heterogeneous group and contains, in this overt religious designation, a certain prejudice. Additionally, the utilization of the term 'rapatriés' implies that, by moving to France, members of this group were returning to their homeland despite the fact that the majority

had never been to France. The term FMR also references a controversial French nationality which, until 1945, was withheld from the majority of Algerians.[2]

Within this analysis, the term "harki" will be used unless the author has chosen to designate this community otherwise. It appears that members of the group sometimes choose to refer to themselves both individually and collectively in this manner.[3] However, this designation will be used with the implicit understanding of its limitations. For example, this term only references the combative role of certain members of this group, and not the various non-aggressive functions carried out by Algerians.[4] In recent years, it appears that the status of harki has functioned like an ethnic identity. Children of harkis are now referred to as the 'deuxième génération de harkis' wrongly implying, as the historian Tom Charbit points out, that being a harki is "une caractéristique héréditaire qui se transmettrait 'de génération en génération'" (*Harkis dans la colonisation et ses suites* 169). Leïla Sebbar references this social phenomenon in her text in the form of a discussion between the two main characters concerning the 'harki' origins of the singer Etienne Daho.[5] Another aspect of this false ethnicity is that harkis are seen as constituting a cohesive group. Mohammed Harbi, a former member of the FLN who has become a prominent historian of the war period, points out that this "community" was artificially created: "les harkis sont devenus une communauté en France et non pas pendant la guerre d'Algérie. Il est important de souligner ce fait, car, quand on parle aujourd'hui de la "communauté harkie", on a l'impression que les harkis existaient comme une force constituée pendant la guerre d'Algérie. Or, ce n'était pas le cas" (*Harkis dans la*

colonisation et ses suites, 93). As Harbi's remarks imply, this population of Algerians with different linguistic, geographical and political backgrounds only developed into a discernible group when they were forced to leave Algeria. They became a recognizable group as a result of the national, social and political 'no-man's land' imposed upon them by both the French and Algerian governments. They were no longer Algerian due to their "treacherous" association with the French forces, but at the same time not French since, because of their Algerian 'Arabness', they were always considered as (inferior) foreigners. For example, in Hadjila Kemoun's novel *Mohand le harki*, the character Jacques reproaches his father for working for the French forces, saying: "tu crois qu'Arezki, Dehbia, Christine ou moi, on ne l'a pas porté ton passé? Pour les Arabes, nous étions des "sales harkis". Pour les Français, des bougnoules qui devaient rentrer chez eux" (41). Jacques' remark not only illustrates the hereditary nature of harkiness but also the extent to which the war transformed these Algerians into a community with no clear social or national identity.

The French government, for example, systematically attempted to avoid responsibility by denying them repatriation while accepting the return of millions of 'French' pieds-noirs at the end of the war. French forces abandoned the majority of harkis who were subsequently publicly tortured and executed during the summer and fall of 1962.[6] Although the exact number of deaths continues to provoke debate, estimates of the number of disappearances range between 55 000 to 75 000 (*La Gangrène et l'oubli* 202). According to the historian Michel Roux, approximately 85 000 harkis and their

families were ‘repatriated’ during the period immediately following the war (*La Gangrène et l’oubli* 261). Upon their arrival in France, the government created a social, geographical and administrative ‘non-place’ for them. For example, upon their arrival in France the government hid their presence on French soil by secretly transporting them to secluded internment camps. They either remained in camps such as the Joffre Camp in Rivesaltes near Perpignan or they were subsequently relocated to “chantiers de forestage” where they became responsible for the maintenance of the surrounding forests.[7] In both cases they were essentially cut off from French society, having little contact with inhabitants of nearby villages. Administratively, they were also at a disadvantage as they were differentiated from other types of ‘rapatriés’ and were denied various types of governmental aid.[8] By the 1970s, harkis and their children were beginning to acutely feel the effects of this exclusion.[9] The result was that this “second generation” revolted in the summer of 1975 in a number of camps, including Saint-Maurice-l’Ardoise near Avignon, where the camp director was taken hostage. As a direct result of these events, the government decided to close all of the internment camps. However, it was not until 1994 that the government changed its policy of denial and officially admitted this community’s presence in France by recognizing their contribution to the war through a law.[10]

With regard to Algeria, their existence disturbed the founding myth of the Algerian nation. Stora explains that the newly formed government represented the struggle for independence as a unified battle against the colonizer fought by one people battling under the banner of a single party, the FLN. According to Stora, the war was

portrayed as: “la transformation des individus isolés en un être collectif, le peuple seul héros pour la nation nouvelle, qui est érigé en même temps en légitimité suprême et en acteur unique” (*La Gangrène et l’oubli* 162). This representation denied the struggle for power between parties such as the FLN and MNA during the war. It also erased any evidence of weakness regarding popular support for the FLN and its ‘revolution’. For the government, harkis therefore represented an embarrassing physical reminder that this battle involved anything but a unified Algerian people. The historian Sylvie Thénault echos this thesis in her analysis of the war, stating that the participation of harkis in the war undermined the ALN (Armée de Libération Nationale) or the armed division of the FLN. She argues that harkis’ presence “fait de l’ALN une armée moins ‘nationale’ que son appellation le proclame” (98). Through public torture and execution targeting not only Algerian soldiers but also their wives, children, and extended family; the FLN attempted to eradicate any trace of their existence. Those who escaped effectively no longer existed, as the government forced them to renounce their citizenship.

In recent years, Algeria has continued to appear desirous of maintaining their ‘non-existence’, discouraging their return to Algeria. Most notably President Bouteflika stated in June of 2000: “les conditions ne sont pas encore venues pour des visites des harkis […] C’est exactement comme si on demandait à un Français de la Résistance de toucher la main d’un collabo” (Besnaci-Lancou 14). He later clarified his feelings towards this community, stating that although harkis themselves were still considered traitors and were unwelcome on Algerian soil, their children could travel freely to

Algeria. Both testimonial and fictional texts attest to the fear felt by members of this population concerning a return to Algerian soil. The contemporary Algerian novelist and playwright Mustapha Benfodil examines these difficulties in his short story "Paris-Alger classe enfer" published in 2003. Sabrina, the daughter of a harki, travels to Algeria in order to fulfill her father's wish and bury his bones on Algerian soil. As a commentary on the difficulties she encounters, the narrator asks "la France avait-elle le droit de nous envoyer les os de ses collabos?" (Kacimi 61). This statement appears to mock Bouteflika's inflammatory comparison but also demonstrates the level to which some members of the Algerian population reject the harki community, refusing their presence on Algerian soil even after death. Within the context of Algerian literature, Benfodil's short story echoes Djaout's novel *Les Chercheurs d'os* (1984), which contemplates the Algerian population's fascination with bones. As the narrator states, the remains of 'martyrs' who died in the independence struggle became a symbol for the new Algerian nation: "le peuple tenait à ses morts comme à une preuve irréfutable à exhiber un jour devant le parjure du temps et des hommes" (11). Djaout's narrative, which describes a boy's journey to find his brother's bones, recounts not only the way in which sacrifice and violence becomes part of the national narrative but also how the memory of the war is constructed.

Until recently, harkis have been largely absent from historical or literary examinations of the war. Michèle Chossat notes in her article "In a nation of indifference and silence: Invisible harkis or writing the other" that since the 1960s, only a handful of

historical texts have focused on this subject, very few articles exist, and it was only in 2003 that children of harkis began to publish texts relating both their parents' and their own experiences (75). However, very few fictional texts have attempted to portray the controversial and painful fate of this community during or after the war.[11] This examination will concentrate on three texts written in both French and Arabic in which this group appears. These novels differ significantly in temporal, geographical and linguistic perspective, and therefore offer the reader multiple viewpoints of this group. For example, Leïla Sebbar's novel takes place in present-day France and focuses on the events of October 1961, whereas Yasmina Khadra's narrative is set in post-independence Algeria. However, among these differing perspectives, it is possible to find a common representation of the harki as a non-identity, excluded from and rejected by both Algerian and French society. This analysis will concentrate on the issue of national identity as it appears in each novel in order to demonstrate how denying a clear identity to this group of Algerians is related to the construction or maintenance of a national identity in both Algeria and France.

Les calots rouges

Leïla Sebbar dedicated her novel *La Seine était rouge* to the victims of the demonstrations that occurred on October 17, 1961 in Paris and to others, such as the historian Jean-Luc Einaudi and the photographer Elie Kagan, whose work contributed to

obtaining official recognition of these violent events.[12] The title of Sebbar's narrative recalls perhaps one of the most disturbing acts that took place during the protest, namely the police force's practice of beating Algerian demonstrators and then throwing them into the Seine to drown.[13] The novel appears to take place during the late 1990s and is set in Paris. The principal story line concerns the character Amel's desire to learn about the demonstrations, information that her mother (Noria) and her grandmother, who both participated in the events, have refused her. As Amel later discovers, Noria and other witnesses consented to participate in a documentary completed by her friend Louis. Amel and her friend Omer, who has fled to France to escape assassination in Algeria, watch this documentary together and then embark on a geographical retracing of the events in Paris. Throughout this activity, Amel refers back to her mother's testimony from the documentary that is mixed with statements dating from 1961 of other witnesses. The text creates a parallel between the past and present indicating that the struggle for independence is seen through the events of the civil war taking place at the time of the novel. Rather than representing the War of Independence as a traditional battle between two actors, the text explores its complexity, showing how Algerians were not only fighting the French colonizer but also each other. The actions of harkis are thereby contextualized in an intricate web of violence that characterized the war and also involved, for example, the FLN's frequent assassinations of MNA (Mouvement national algérien) members, its political rival. The French government has previously emphasized the civil violence associated with the war period to divert attention from its own role in

brutal events. For example, bodies of Algerians retrieved from the Seine were frequently attributed to reprisal killings caused by the 'in-fighting' between the two political parties.[14] This study will demonstrate that, rather using the complexity of the war to downplay France's role in the violence, the novel actually highlights French involvement. The text draws attention to the government's employment of harkis or supplétifs to carry out interrogations that French soldiers and policeman were no longer willing to complete. The result is that the novel demonstrates the government's direct involvement in torture sessions that occurred on French soil and undermines the government's attempt to maintain France's image as a proponent of civil rights.

In the narrative, Sebbar, like the historian Einaudi, who completed perhaps the first and most important historical analysis of the events in *La Bataille de Paris: Octobre 1961* has chosen to juxtapose testimonies from various viewpoints including that of a harki, a policeman and an Algerian demonstrator.[15] The novel also integrates a number of historically correct details and facts, offering the reader a fictional interpretation of the testimony found in Einaudi and others' analyses.[16] For example, in the statement of the Algerian demonstrator saved from drowning in the river, he notes at the end: "j'étais bien habillé, ce jour-là. Cravate et tout" (*La Bataille de Paris* 60). This detail is recalled by a number of witnesses such as Idir Belkacem who, in preparation for the demonstration, was dressed in the following way: "revêtu ses plus beaux habits: un costume trois pièces, une cravate. Il a ciré ses chaussures" (*La Bataille de Paris 136).* According to Elisabeth Arend, a specialist in comparative and North African literature and editor of the essay

collection *Histoires inventées*, the mixing of historical fact with fiction is a strategy used by postcolonial writers to challenge official history: "travailler signifie re-écrire ainsi que reinterpréter sa propre histoire (rewriting) et ceci en confrontation avec d'un côté le point de vue historique colonial ou eurocentrique" (25). Like Sebbar's text, Assia Djebar's award winning novel *L'Amour, la fantasia* offers the reader a variety of textual components. Djebar, a contemporary of Sebbar, combines her own autobiographical experience as a child growing up in Algeria with documents written by soldiers and observers involved in the original colonial conquest of Algeria dating from the 1830s such as Eugène Fromentin. Djebar also includes testimony in her narrative that, according to Arend, is one example of the untraditional sources used by postcolonial authors in their texts. This mixing of different sources takes place, she notes, naturally in postcolonial texts: "la narration glisse sans transition du passé autobiographique au passé collectif, de la citation d'une source historique cautionnée, à l'imagination et à la conjecture ouvertement fictionnelle" (27). In Arend's opinion, the use of new narrative techniques is often combined with examinations of events that have not been integrated into the dominant historical narrative, such as the demonstrations of October 1961, which had been, until recently, subjected to a strict policy of amnesia and denial by the French government.

In addition to focusing on these lesser known events, Sebbar's narrative also constitutes one of a small number of texts that discusses the employment of harkis or supplétifs on French soil.[17] As an author and activist, Sebbar empathizes with the social

and political situation of harkis and their families in France.[18] In her autobiographical scrapbook *Journal de mes Algéries en France*, she recounts her trip to the camps and forest communities where harkis were placed by the French government. Her motivation for seeing these locations is that: "j'ai besoin de savoir, c'est l'histoire de l'Algerie en France" (197). In *La Seine était rouge*, she integrates this history of Algeria into a story, one which examines the relationship between these two nations both yesterday and today.

Sebbar's text focuses on a group within the harki community that has traditionally been differentiated and considered to be more controversial, "harkis de Papon" or harkis employed by the French government to dismantle FLN networks in metropolitan France. Concerning this group, Harbi notes in his essay: "les auxiliaires de la préfecture de police de Paris chargé de lutter contre le FLN […] sont un cas très particulier. Les "harkis de Papon" ont joué incontestablement un rôle dans la manière dont, à gauche comme chez les Algériens immigrés, on a appréhendé le phénomène harki" (*Les harkis dans la colonisation et ses suites,* 94).[19] Harbi's statement shows that this group of combatants is perceived to be responsible for the negative reputation attributed to harkis. More specifically, they are commonly charged with not only having tortured fellow Algerians, but with having been overly brutal in their interrogation methods. For example, the journalist Paulette Péju who published the only contemporary examination of this group in 1961, writes: "clandestins, irresponsables, ils n'ont pas de comptes à rendre sur leurs méthodes : une seule chose importe, l'efficacité" (35). As her statement indicates, the

public viewed this group as operating without rules, giving them free reign to use extreme interrogation methods.

Their association with Maurice Papon appears to have further sullied their image. Papon, convicted in 1998 of crimes against humanity for his involvement in the deportation of Jews during World War II, was the parisian Chief of Police at the time of their recruitment in 1959.[20] Upon his arrival in Paris in 1958, Papon was eager to use some of the methods he had learned as prefect of Constantine in his new position in Paris. In Péju's opinion, the government's decision to employ Algerians on metropolitan soil was also made in response to the French officers' increasing reluctance to torture after the scandal of *La Gangrène*. She notes:

> les policiers français ont de la mémoire et une solide tradition. Ils se souviennent de certaine épuration qui suivit l'effondrement du régime vichyste. Demain, peut-être, ce sera la paix. Inutile donc de risquer sa carrière en prenant des risques inutiles...la police française leur [aux harkis] livra les 'suspects', les récupéra après 'l'interrogatoire'. Elle veut ignorer ce qui se passe dans l'intervalle. Elle gardera la conscience tranquille et les mains pures (30).

French police officers were fearful of utilizing these practices on French soil due to a dread of future reprisals. Although their superiors supported their methods, it is understood that society would not accept torture in metropolitan France at the hands of French citizens. Noting how the French administration dealt with the controversial issue of torture, Péju states: "la Commission de sauvegarde n'empêche pas la torture, elle la cache, elle l'enveloppe, elle l'orne des fleurs sauves de la civilisation occidentale et

chrétienne. Tout ce qu'elle 'sauvegarde', c'est le prestige de la police et celui de l'armée" (67). Péju's comment attempts to underline how torture became, under the authority of the administration, not only hidden by embellishment but something to be admired. Also, as she points out, the dissimulation of the occurrence of torture in France was a matter of protecting the concept of occidental civilization. Post-Enlightenment Western civilization viewed torture as uncivilized and considered it at odds with its concept of its own sophisticated social and political values.[21] For Péju, the problem faced by the administration was solved by hiding French participation in this act and using Algerian forces: "en opposant des Algériens à des Algériens, l'oppresseur garde les mains propres et tente de déchirer, contre elle-même, la communauté opprimée" (108). As Péju points out, the French government's method of maintaining a positive public image operated at the expense of relationships between Algerians. As will be discussed later in this analysis, this crack in Algerian unity is also tackled by Sebbar's text through a parallel established between the struggle for independence and the later civil war.

Sebbar's narrative addresses the issue of harkis by including the 'testimony' of a harki who worked in Paris and was involved in the demonstrations of 1961. Not only does her text distinguish itself by analyzing this group of combatants, but it also attempts to re-evaluate at least some of the charges brought against them. Within his testimony, the harki prefaces a description of his recruitment by noting: "mon père, je l'ai à peine connu. Lui aussi, il avait traversé la mer, pour gagner son pain. Je suis né, il était en France. Il envoyait des mandats à son frère, pour ma mère. Les premières années, après,

plus rien" (45). The importance of this reference to his father is that the reader is able to recognize him as a person, an individual with a family and problems. Also, his decision to accept employment is explained in terms of a real economic need rather than a political motivation, a common misrepresentation of all harkis.[22]

In addition to describing his reasons for accepting employment, the text depicts the way he changed when he started working for the French forces:

> l'officier de Noisy trouvait que j'apprenais vite et bien. C'est vrai ça me plaisait. J'avais un uniforme de la police française et un calot bleu de l'armée. L'officier m'a regardé, le premier jour: "On te reconnaît pas, tu es plus le même. Tu es fait pour l'uniforme, t'es superbe" […] c'est vrai, je savais plus que c'était moi. Depuis ce jour, tout a changé (46).

The text continues to focus on this character as an individual rather than a stereotype by highlighting his naivety. Directly after stating that he enjoyed his new position, he proceeds to describe his uniform. The text therefore implies that part of his happiness in this position comes from his recently acquired right to dress 'officially'. This section of the text focuses on the relationship between him and his superior, and suggests that his eagerness to learn and happiness is strongly associated with a desire to please. The repetition of the phrase 'c'est vrai' underlines his enthusiastic agreement with the officer's opinions. His testimony also illustrates a concept that appears throughout Sebbar's novel with regard to the harki community, the idea of a disjointed identity. Algerians treated harkis with disdain due to their activities on behalf of the French 'enemy' but at the same time, the French failed to accept them as truly French due to their physical, cultural, and linguistic 'Algerianness'. As Harbi notes in his analysis, those

who supported the Algerian struggle for independence were particularly harsh in their evaluation of this group.[23] As seen in the harki's discussion, the symbol of his new status is a uniform that outwardly manifests his association with the French forces. However, his costume is contradictory since it indicates a relationship to both the police and the army and therefore represents an identity which is neither one category nor another. Additionally, his new association has not only altered others' perceptions of him but has rendered him unrecognizable. Perhaps more importantly, it has created a change in his own perception of himself in that he has become someone he does not know.[24]

The transformation in identity is an aspect of the war that Lazreg discusses in *Torture and the Twilight of Empire,* where she argues that the war involved a battle to preserve the image of France as an Empire. The war not only signified an attempt to retain Algeria as a colony but also to transform Algerian citizens back into 'obedient' colonial subjects (134). Torture, she contends, played an important role in this process. Concerning the recruitment of harkis (which sometimes involved torture), she states: "'turning' a frightened youth into a Harki, a former combatant into a torturer of his comrades, or an 'intellectual' into an active promoter of colonial rule, transformed the war into a mission of social engineering" (255). For Lazreg, the recruitment of harkis was an important part of France's ideological campaign. Rather than interpreting recruitment of Algerians as an attempt to win the war with 'local' information or an aspect of a campaign of psychological warfare to gain Algerian citizens' support by

example which are the traditional interpretations of France's use of harkis, Lazreg sees them as individuals who underwent a very real change in their identity.

As the novel demonstrates, other Algerians considered this transformation to be incomplete. For example, Amel's mother Noria remembers the presence of this group in the bidonville or shantytown in which she lived as a child and her father's warning:

> ces hommes en uniforme, sous les ordres des Français, ressemblaient à mon père, aux hommes du bidonville, à des Algériens et ils étaient là, pas comme des frères. Mon père m'a dit **:** ces hommes-là sont des ennemis, ils nous surveillent, ils nous dénoncent à la police, ils nous tuent. Méfie-toi d'eux, ne leur parle jamais, si tu en vois un, éloigne-toi, c'est la peste, tu comprends, la peste. On les appelle 'les harkis de Papon', 'les calots bleus', des collaborateurs…pires que la police française (43).

In this description, the 'harkis' are excluded from the literal Algerian family. Although physically and socially similar to Noria's father, they are not 'brothers'. In the context of the war, the term 'frère' also referenced the familial bonds between those involved in the revolutionary struggle underlining the idea of a symbolic Algerian family.[25] In addition to their exclusion from this national lineage, the word 'ressembler' immediately evokes both similarity and difference. Even though they looked like other Algerians, they were not the same. In her analysis of this community, Péju refers to them as 'faux frères'.[26]

Although the idea of resemblance will be discussed in more depth later in relation to Benhadouga's text, at this point it is necessary to explain the impossibility of the harki's condition. In *The Location of Culture*, the postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha discusses at length the idea of colonial mimicry. He argues that the colonizer sought to

create a group of individuals who would resemble him in ideology and would communicate with the indigenous population on his behalf, ensuring the execution of his wishes and continuation of his power. However, the colonizer essentially depended upon the existence of an innate difference between this group of 'interpreters' and himself:

> colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference (86).

In short, although the mimic could bear a resemblance to the colonizer, he could never truly be or become the colonizer. The 'almost but not quite' in Bhabha's statement kept the colonial system viable and operating since there remained enough of a difference between the mimic and the colonizer to keep the latter in power. After all, if the colonized had the ability to become exactly like the colonizer, then there would be no need for the colonizer and colonial society would disintegrate.

To return to Sebbar's text, the harki's testimony clearly illustrates his own attempt not only to mimic the actions of the French forces but also their discourse. For example, describing his training, he states: "au fort Noisy-le-Sec près de Romainville […] on nous a appris à manier les armes, à conduire un interrogatoire" (46). The use of the impersonal pronoun 'on' avoids identifying who trained him. It also appears to replicate the unclear discourse used by the French government in relation to the war that averted attributing or accepting responsibility. The significance of his statement is that it references the way in which the government instructed supplétifs in the art of torture.

The harki appears similar to the colonial mimic described by Bhabha since he was also trained to carry out the colonizer's tasks. For example, concerning the demonstrations of October 1961, he states: "on a bloqué le pont de Neuilly […] on a cerclé les bidonvilles de Nanterre, ils étaient fait comme des rats. On a tiré sur des manifestants. On a jeté des manifestants dans la Seine" (46). Similar to members of the police force, the harki is described by the text as shooting and throwing Algerian demonstrators in the Seine. His designation of Algerians as rats duplicates the colonial practice of animalizing the indigenous population through names such as 'ratons', 'bougnoules', and 'bicots'.[27]

As Sebbar's text describes, however, although these Algerians replicated French discourse and carried out their tasks using 'approved' methods, they betrayed their difference or 'slippage'. In the text, they distinguish themselves from French officers by demonstrating an overly enthusiastic attitude towards their duties. The police officer, for example, states in his testimony: "il parait que c'est les pires, des féroces" (122). Additionally, as we saw in Chapter One, the text also describes the use of torture methods such as 'mechoui', during which the victim is attached by his hands and feet to a pole and beaten. Discussing his use of this method, the harki proudly proclaims "pour le mechoui...on était les meilleurs" (46). As Bhabha indicates, the mimic's slippage is the factor that permitted the colonial system to continue operating. Within the context of the Algerian war, the harkis' overzealous attitude dissociated them from the French forces and by extension, disconnected their violence from the French government. The

perception of French civilization could thereby remain intact and France could continue to be the symbol and birthplace of modern human rights.

During the course of the war, the harkis' eagerness developed into a stereotype applied to all members of the 'community'. Sebbar's text does not dismantle this label by denying their involvement in the demonstrations or in interrogations. However, her text does describe their actions within the complicated context of the Algerian war. The narrative, for example, appears to compare the actions of harkis against fellow Algerians to the FLN's activities. This can be seen, for example, in the testimony of the café owner:

> ils sont venus plusieurs fois "les calots bleus", les harkis de Papon, on les appelle comme ça, je sais pas pourquoi. Je fais pas de politique. Les autres aussi, les FLN, ils m'appellent "Frère" pour moi, c'est pas des frères. Je dis rien. "Pas d'alcool, pas de tabac. Interdit de jouer aux cartes, interdit de jouer aux courses. Si tu me désobéis, tu sais ce qui t'attend." L'un d'eux a passé son index sur sa gorge en levant la tête, de gauche à droite. J'ai compris" (37-38).

Referring to members of the FLN as 'les autres' infers a comparison between harkis and the FLN. Additionally, his sentence 'c'est pas des frères' is similar to Noria's description of the harkis she saw as a child: "ils étaient là, pas comme des frères" (43). The owner's comments signify his reluctance to be a part of the FLN's Algerian family. At the same time, his testimony also highlights the artificial nature of this family by describing the threats and manipulation upon which it is dependent.

In addition to this description of the FLN's recruitment methods, the text also repeatedly cites their assassination of members of the MNA party.[28] Noria, for example, not only describes the discovery of her uncle's body, who had been a member of the MNA, but returns to this issue later in her testimony, stating: "j'étais étudiante et mon père refusait de me parler de ces histoires entre le FLN et le MNA, de son frère et de lui dans ces histoires, de son frère assassiné, son corps exposé à tous, pour l'exemple… D'autres, aujourd'hui assassinent, laissent pourrir les cadavres sur les places, au bord des routes, des frères, des pères, des amis…des ennemis" (43). As previously noted, the image of the war that was projected by the FLN after independence was of a unified battle fought against the French colonizer. As Sebbar's text highlights, discussions of the violent conflict which took place among Algerian political parties contradict 'official history'. Within Noria's statement, repetition of the word 'frère' not only recalls the FLN's image of a cohesive Algerian 'family' but undermines it. Through the story of Noria's uncle's assassination by the FLN, the text clearly demonstrates how family members literally found themselves on opposing sides during the war either because they were harkis or, as Sebbar shows, they were members of different political parties. Another important aspect of Noria's statement to this analysis is the relationship it establishes between the struggle for independence and the civil war.[29] Within the text, not only is there a link between these two periods, but even the forms of violence are the same. More specifically, the text recalls the practice of exhibiting bodies, repeating

words associated with the family in the second part of the phrase such as 'frère' and 'père' in order to suggest the repeated dissolution of the Algerian (national) family.

Sebbar's narrative, in fact, continuously returns to the relationship between these two periods, particularly during the interactions that take place between Amel and Omer. For example, at one point in their tour of Paris, Amel accuses Omer of being disinterested in the events of October 1961: "tu sais rien et tu veux pas savoir. C'est pas important, parce qu'aujourd'hui des Algériens tuent des Algériens? On sait pas qui, ni pourquoi... parce que ta tragédie est plus excitante que celle de ma mère et de ma grand-mère? C'est ça?" (52). Amel's statement accuses Omer of placing more importance on the civil war. The use of the word 'excitante' to describe this latter war indicates an almost sensationalist aspect of it, heightened in her phrase by the mystery surrounding this dispute 'on sait pas qui, ni pourquoi'. However, at the same time, these two wars appear associated through the image of generations. The struggle for independence belongs to Amel's grandmother and mother whereas Omer, and also herself, are living through the civil war. The characterization of the civil war as more newsworthy is referenced again in the text by Omer:

> de la pacotille exotique […] qui veut entendre parler de cette histoire, de ce jour du 17 octobre 1961? Qui? Ni les Français, ni les Algériens, ni les immigrés, ni les nationaux...Alors...Tout ça pour rien. On préfère Khaled et ses fadaises...ou alors l'Algérie qui se déchire, l'Algérie qui saigne, l'Algérie dans le noir, dans la merde, après plus de trente ans d'indépendance...la belle revanche (106).

The civil war receives more attention than the events associated with the War of Independence due to the fact that it conforms to an image of Algeria that is supported, in particular, by France. His statement references a desire to see Algeria either in a colonial, exotic context or as a nation ripped apart by violence. The reference to 'la belle revanche' clearly situates this desire within France. An Algeria that is unable to govern itself, vindicates 'la mission civilisatrice' and France's image as social savior. As Edward Said notes in *Orientalism*, the colonial project aimed to "restore a region from its present barbarism to its former classical greatness; to instruct (for its own benefit) the Orient in the ways of the modern West" (86). Algeria's descent into civil war therefore points to both its inferiority and present-day need for French civilization. Omer's statement also involves France in the current state of Algeria, pointing to the way in which Algeria's 'failure' bolsters France's national image. The use of the word 'revanche' also implies that France is somehow involved in this outcome.

Sebbar's narrative constitutes a conscious effort to examine not only the role of harkis in the War of Independence but more importantly, how their employment aided in maintaining the image of France as the guardian of personal and political rights. She successfully represents them as, in Bhabha's terms, the mediators who interacted with the Algerian population on behalf of the French administration. Their "almost but not quite" status meant that France could continue to perceive and project itself as a model of civilization. Moreover, the text undermines some of the stereotypes associated with this community by demonstrating the complexity of the war. More specifically, the narrative

sets up a comparison between harkis and the FLN, exploring how the war involved battles between Algerians as much as it concerned defeating the French colonizer. Through the structure of the narrative, which alternates between past and present, the text also establishes a parallel between this earlier war and the civil war taking place in the novel's 'present'. The link it creates between these two events raises important questions concerning French responsibility with regard to Algeria, regarding France's role in past events such as the demonstrations but also in relation to the nation's current political situation. Most notably, given the novel's reference of civil war as France's 'revanche' or revenge, it is possible to wonder if the French administration employed Algerian supplétifs not only to maintain its own image but also to damage that of Algeria. In other words, the employment of harkis may have created a rift between Algerians that, as the civil war clearly illustrates, has only widened with time.

Mimics and Mercenaries

In contrast to Sebbar's novel, which takes place in France, the Algerian author Abdelhamid Benhadouga represents an Algerian perspective of the war in غداً يوم جديد or *Tomorrow is a new day*. Considered by critics to be one of the most important Algerian authors of texts written in Arabic, Benhadouga was extremely involved in the independence movement and continued to have a strong relationship with the government throughout his career. In his final novel, which is set in post-independence Algeria, he

offers the reader a collection of textual fragments related to the life of the main character, Massaouda. This examination focuses on a section of the narrative that describes the interrogation of her husband, Qadoor, by both a French chief and an Algerian officer. Within the scene, particular attention is paid to the 'local' or 'native' officer who overtly rejects his Arab origins and prefers to identify himself with French culture and civilization. The interrogation scene becomes a way for him to demonstrate his 'Frenchness' through a constant and aggressive debasement of the Arab "other" and his culture. However, although the officer aspires to become Western, constantly mimicking what he perceives to be Frenchness, the novel represents this as impossible since he always betrays his own difference. Similar to Sebbar's narrative, this dissimilarity is symbolized by his overzealously cruel behavior that simultaneously reveals both his desire to become Western and his inability to do so. This analysis argues that the novel explores the idea of mimicry through the character of the officer. However, rather than focusing on his rejection from both communities and attributing a 'non identity', the narrative attributes to him a negative identity. He appears to be not only "unAlgerian" or "unFrench" but more importantly someone who strives to become French but fails. As this analysis demonstrates, the negative representation of those aligned with the French colonizer aids in constructing a positive representation of the Algerian independence movement. The 'official' ideology of the war as a noble and collective cause is maintained and supported. More importantly, the novel participates in the literary

construction of an independent Algeria, building an image of both the Algerian people and their nation that, at the time of the narrative, is still to come.

Similar to Sebbar's narrative, Benhadouga's text avoids presenting the reader with a linear narrative. The narrator of novel describes himself as undertaking : (5) "سفر في الزمن، بلا زمن" or a "trip in time, without time". As the narrator's description infers, the novel switches back and forth between the past and present. According to Muhsin Al-Musawi in his extensive analysis *The Postcolonial Arabic Novel,* an experimentation with time is an important characteristic of the postcolonial narrative in Arabic: "as long as the narrative takes coloniality as a referent, its engagement with the past becomes also its threshold for the present […] The postcolonial consciousness of time is not, therefore, a linear one, despite its contextualization in time and space" (307). With regards to Benhadouga's text, the 'present' may be defined as a moment many years after the end of the war when the narrator meets Massaouda, who asks him to tell her story for her. The text consists of a series of segments focusing on events and people connected to Massaouda. She describes the structure of the narrative in the following manner:

أنا إذن أريد، بل أرجو، عفواً، أرجو أن تكتب حياتي بهذا الشكل. كل فصل يشكِّل موضوعا قائما بذاته. أعرف أنّ ذلك صعب، ولكنك تقدر عليه. لقد قلت لي ذات مرة: إنَّ الكتابة ليست صعوبتها في رسم الشخصيات ولكن في الخيط الذي تربط بينها (65).

I want, then, rather I beg, excuse me, I beg that you write my life in this way. Every chapter forms an independent subject. I know that this is difficult but you are capable. You told me once: the difficulty in writing is not depicting the characters but the thread that joins them.

Within the text, chapters focus or narrate events in characters' lives including Massaouda, her husband Qadoor, and a man known as 'the lover' or 'الحبيب' whom she meets briefly while her husband was in the police station. The interrogation scene takes place shortly after her marriage to Qadoor, when they are waiting for a train to take them from her small village to Algiers. While they are at the train station, another Algerian man begins to stare at the new bride, eliciting anger from her husband. A fight ensues and both men are taken to the police station for questioning. The narrative then relates Qadoor's experience at the station where he is questioned by a 'native' officer and a European police chief.

One of the most visible ways in which this novel problematizes the 'native' police officer's identity is through naming techniques. For example, at the beginning of the interrogation scene, he is referred to in the following manner:

ترجمة الدركي "العرب" فيها كثير من التحريف المقصود الذي يثقل إدانة قدور (45).

There is a lot intentional distortion in the translation of the 'Arab' officer that weighs heavily on the guilty conviction of Qadoor.

Within the novel, the word 'harki' does not appear as a designation for this officer. Although this term is currently used to refer to this group in the Arabic media and originates in the Arabic root 'حرك' or 'h-r-k' meaning movement, it is not clear whether this designation would have been understood by readers outside of North Africa or was used by the media at the time of the novel's publication in 1993.[30] In order to indicate that the officer is an Algerian who has chosen to work for the French authorities, the

narrator designates him as Arab. However, the presence of quotation marks around this ethnic designation immediately and consciously questions his identity and as the first reference to the officer, it sets the tone for the text. In later passages he is alternatively called, without quotation marks 'الدركي الجزائري' or the Algerian officer. Unlike other characters whose nationality is not mentioned, his almost becomes part of his title. Within the context of the novel, which takes place during the independence struggle, this name appears to sarcastically highlight his lack of participation in the construction of the Algerian nation. Rather than fighting for Algeria, he is working against it. Within the narrative he is also referred to as 'الدركي الاهلي' or the native officer. This term also sardonically points out his non-native behavior of smoking European cigarettes and speaking French. The text returns to the use of quotation marks in another designation for this officer, 'الدركي المرتزق' or the mercenary officer. As with earlier use of quotation marks and in the context of the failed identity attributed to the officer, the narrative is perhaps indicating the officer's failure to be true a mercenary.

As mentioned, the officer is represented as consciously rejecting his own identity, through both his negative estimation of other Arabs and his espousal of 'occidental' behavior. For example, at the beginning this scene, he accuses Qadoor of deception since, in his opinion, all Arabs are dishonest:

عندما يجيب قدور بالنفي أو عدم العلم يكذبه الدركي الجزائري . يتهمه بأنه يتظاهر بالصدق وهو يكذب ككل العرب! ينسى انتماءه هو. يعتبر نفسه متطوراً ليس عربياً مثل الآخرين. ولكي يؤكد ذلك

يخرج سيجارة ملفوفة، عصرية، من علبة "جوب" التي معه. ويقدم سيجارة منها الى عريفه. ثم يوقد سيجارة العريف وسيجارته بولاعته البنزينية. يجذب أنفاساً بتلذذ وينفثها في وجه قدور (47).

When Qadoor responds with a negative answer or says he doesn't know, the Algerian officer accuses him of lying. He accuses him of pretending to be truthful but all the while he is lying like all Arabs! He forgets his own origins. He considers himself a civilized man that isn't Arab like the others. To prove this he takes out a modern rolled cigarette from the 'Jub' pack that he has with him. He offers a cigarette from the pack to his chief. He then lights the chief's cigarette and his own with his gas lighter. He draws puffs with pleasure and blows them in Qadoor's face.

The officer does not reject his Algerian identity but perhaps more significantly, his Arab identity. His negative perception is therefore not limited to one country or nation but to the entire population of a region in the world which, within the political context of this time period, held a very strong meaning.[31] A similar rejection of Arab identity is found in Rabat Belamri's novel *Regard blessé* suggesting a common perception of those working for the French forces. The narrator Hassan relates the story of his cousin who was married to a harki and describes her husband's abusive treatment: "il me battait, ma tante. Il me posait la bouche de son fusil sur le cœur en blasphémant. "Crie: "Vive de Gaulle" et "Mort aux fellagas et aux Arabes" ou je te descends" (30). This section of Belamri's novel clearly represents the uncontrollable aggression attributed to this community. The text contextualizes his brutality within the Algerian family, similar to Sebbar's novel, to underline his exclusion from it. Additionally, the rejection of his origins is demonstrated through an overt appropriation of colonial discourse signified by his use of French slogans.

The Algerian officer in Benhadouga's novel also imitates colonial discourse, referring to an inherent dishonesty found among all Arabs. This particular characterization of Arabs can be found in Lord Cromer's text *Modern Egypt* as cited in Said's *Orientalism:* "Orientals or Arabs are thereafter shown to be […] much given to "fulsome flattery," intrigue, cunning […] Orientals are inveterate liars […] and in everything oppose the clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race" (38-39). As Said notes in his discussion, the aim of this type of discourse was the establishment of occidental superiority that justified the colonial project as a way to elevate these inferior cultures. This ideology, which established a binary opposition whereby the Occident represented 'civilization' and the Orient 'backwardness', is reflected in the officer's later use of the term 'developed' to refer to himself. The officer thinks he has adopted both a Western value system and behavior. He underlines his affiliation to this civilization by smoking rolled cigarettes that were unavailable to the majority of the Algerian population at this time, due to their cost. He then vindictively exhales the smoke from his cigarette in Qadoor's face, demonstrating both his cultural superiority and power. His cigarettes therefore become, within this context, a symbol for occidental civilization and authority.

Within the novel, both the officer's negative categorization of Arabs as liars and his cigarettes consistently reappear, symbolizing both rejection of his Arab origins and appropriation of occidental culture. For example, when Qadoor talks about his new father-in-law, who we then discover is a rebel, a discussion ensues concerning the true

relationship between the man who raised Massaouda and her biological father. The Algerian officer proclaims to his chief:

عندي انا- شاف (رئيس) – كلّ العرب يكذبون! لا ينبغي تصديقهم، ولا تصديق حتى بطاقاتهم المدنية. انت تعرف كيف يعملون في مكتب القائد. شاهدا زور، ويتم الموت أو الحياة، أو الزواج، او الطلاق! لا، لا ينبغي تصديقهم. سواء عزوز أو غيره. إنّ عزوزاً نفسه خبيث لا يؤمن. هو صديق القوي. غداً، إذا وجدك بلا قبّعة رسميّة لا يقول لك "بون جور!" (52).

I have – Boss – all Arabs lie! You mustn't believe them, and don't even believe their identity cards. You know how they work in the director's office. Two false witnesses and you have death or life or marriage or divorce! No, you mustn't believe them. Whether Azouz or anyone else. Azouz himself is malicious and isn't trustworthy. He's a friend of the strong. Tomorrow, if he found you without an official cap, he wouldn't say bonjour to you!

The officer's statement repeats his earlier description of Arabs as liars. In order to avoid doubt concerning his own honesty, he attempts to distance himself from this group. He tries to establish himself as superior even to those who, like himself, work within the French power structure. For example, he attempts to establish his own fidelity by differentiating himself from Azouz who is only loyal to whoever is in power.

However, the officer's representation of his allegiance is undermined by the way he utilizes the power and civilization with which he has associated himself. The modern rolled cigarettes he smokes in order to appear more Western clearly illustrate his manipulation of power. For example, he later uses his cigarettes not only as a way to demonstrate his authority to Qadoor but also to control his actions:

الدركي يخرج علبة "الجوب"ويقدم سيجارة لقدور...ثم يضع ولاعة البنزين على المكتب امام قدور. يأخذها هذا. كان في حاجة ملحة الى التدخين. يوقد السيجارة، وقبل أن يجذب منها نفساً ينزعها الدركي من فمه بعنف، و يفتعل الغضب: من سمح لك بالتدخين؟ (57).

> The policeman gets out a packet of 'Jub' and offers a cigarette to Qadoor…He then puts the benzene lighter on the desk in front of Qadoor, who takes it. He urgently needed to smoke. He lights the cigarette but before taking a puff from it, the policeman rips it violently out of his mouth, pretending to be angry: who permitted you to smoke?

The officer forcefully demonstrates that he can either permit or deny Qadoor the possibility of smoking. Although this may appear to be an insignificant act, within the context of the interrogation, it clearly demonstrates Qadoor's forced subjection to the authority and will of his interrogators. As Scarry notes in *The Body in Pain*, the act of interrogation should be interpreted as an integral part of torture that is at the same time a demonstration of the torturer's power and the total eradication of the victim's authority. Within this process, everything that exists within the increasingly restricted world of the victim is utilized as a tool to establish and reinforce this power structure: "everything human and non-human that is either physically or verbally, actually or allusively present has become part of a glutted realm of weaponry, weaponry that can refer equally to pain or power" (56). A cigarette therefore represents for both Qadoor and the Algerian officer a power dynamic. Whereas Qadoor's authority is decreasing, the officer's power is steadily increasing. As previously mentioned, the officer's rolled cigarettes are a symbol of a world in which the officer desires to be included and from which Qadoor has been excluded as an Algerian. Therefore, in a very real sense, this part of the scene is a microcosmic representation of the denial that occurs every day in colonial Algerian society. The rolled cigarette returns at the end of this scene to participate once again in the torture process, not as a symbolic tool but as a physical weapon with which the officer

burns Qadoor's arm. It has therefore literally become, in Scarry's terms, a weapon for both power and pain.

Within the context of the novel, the Algerian officer not only admires Western civilization as an alternative to his own Arab origins, but more importantly attempts to emulate Western behavior, for example in this propensity of smoking rolled cigarettes, his knowledge of French, his position with the French forces, and his espousal of colonial discourse. This characterization embodies the idea of mimicry as developed by the theorist Homi Bhabha. In his discussion, Bhabha cites instances of colonial discourse in which this idea of mimicry is evident, for example within Macaulay's Minute, he speaks of "a class of interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern – a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, opinions, in morals and in intellect" (87). Educated by the colonizer and having appropriated his culture, the mimic was to be used by the colonizer in governing the indigenous population. Macaulay's description illustrates how he would neither be Indian nor English. Sebbar's novel shows how the creation of mimics within the colonial structure responded to the colonizer's need to distinguish something familiar in the colonized 'other'. As Bhabha notes, the colonizer needed the colonial subject to be almost the same as himself, acting as an intermediary between him and the indigenous population. However, at the same time, the colonized man needed to display a difference or in Bhabha's words: "he is the effect of a flawed colonial mimesis, in which to be Anglicized is *emphatically* not to be English" (87). Bhabha's description demonstrates an important difference between

passive versus active appropriation of culture. Although it was acceptable for the mimic to be 'Anglicized' by the colonizer, it was unacceptable for him to actively assimilate the colonizer's culture or to become exactly like him. A difference had to separate them. This dissimilarity for the colonizer proved paradoxical, it signified the colonized male's inability to be like the colonizer reassuring the colonizer of his superiority, but also menaced colonial power in the colonized male's ability to appropriate some of the civilization of the colonizer and thereby become a 'partial presence' as opposed to being an absent indigenous presence (86).

In Benhadouga's novel, the Algerian officer has effectively become the tool of the colonizer, utilizing his linguistic and cultural knowledge of the Algerian population to reinforce the power structures of colonization. For example, within the interrogation, the Algerian uses his knowledge of social customs against Qadoor:

الدركي الجزائري يغتنم فرصة الحديث عن الزوجة ليعرض كل ما يعرف من أنواع البذاءة: هل وجد قدور زوجته ثيباً أم وجدها بكراً؟ ...يحاول قدور التملص من كل الاجوبة التي تتعلق بزوجته. يلاحظ الدركي ذلك فيشدّد عليه الحصار: كم مرّة جامعها منذ زواجهما؟ كم يجامعها في الليلة الواحدة؟ هل تستجيب له عندما يرغب في ذلك؟ هل تساعده، تحفَزه, تشحذ غريزته؟ قدور يتصبّب العرق من وجهه حنقاً وصبراً (48).

The Algerian officer takes the opportunity to talk about his wife so that he can demonstrate everything that he knows in the way of obscenity: did Qadoor find his wife deflowered or did he find her a virgin?...Qadoor tries to escape all answers that comment on his wife. The officer notices this and tightens the noose: how many times has he slept with her since their wedding? How many times did they have sex in one night? Does she respond to him when he wants it? Does she help him, turn him on, sharpen his impulses? Qadoor's face drips with sweat, angrily and patiently.

It is important to note how the Algerian officer exploits Arab sensibilities, purposely asking what would be considered insulting and indiscrete questions concerning Massaouda's virginity. When it becomes clear that Qadoor is trying to avoid revealing immodest details about her, the officer intensifies his interrogation by asking about the nature of their sexual relations. However, it is clear that the European officer knows to ask this type of question only after the Algerian officer has set the tone. Later in this part of the scene it becomes evident that the native officer is aware of his chief's shortcomings with regard to Arab culture:

يفضّل أن يستعمل معه اسلوباً آخر لردعه ويذكر لرئيسه أن لا شيء يثير هذا الغبي كالمرأة (57).

He prefers to work with him in a different style to deter him and to remind his boss that nothing stirs up this idiot like a woman.

The officer therefore intensifies his questioning of Qadoor concerning his wife, talking about her presence in a stranger's house where a young cultured single man is in the process of seducing her while Qadoor sits in the police office. This he does, not only to strengthen the interrogation of Qadoor by putting more psychological pressure on him, but more importantly, to demonstrate his knowledge to the chief.

However, the Algerian officer's relationship to the colonizer and his civilization is not automatic. He consciously has to think about how to become closer to it, to be indispensable to it, and to imitate it. Even in the physical actions of the officer, an unnatural and studied quality appears:

يستعمل كل ما يعرف من أنواع الحركات أثناء الاستنطاق، يقف مرّة ويجلس أخرى. يدخّن. يدور في القاعة. يغضب ثمّ يلين. يبتسم ثمّ يعبس...رجل المحطة يواصل متابعة المسرحيّة، لكنّه لا يبدي أيّ شيء من عواطفه وردود فعله. الدركي الجزائري بالخصوص، بين الفينة والأخرى يلتفت إليه، ليتعرّف ردّ فعله (49).

He uses all the types of motions he knows during the interrogation: he stands at one time and sits at another. He smokes. Circumambulates the room. He gets angry, then calms down. He smiles, then frowns. The man from the station continues to follow the play but he does not show any emotion or reaction. The Algerian officer in particular, from time to time, turns to see his reaction.

He consciously tries different poses and actions, attempting to appear as if he knows what he is doing. Essentially, he attempts to appear authentic but the result is that his actions appear exaggerated and almost caricatural. He is only able to work within opposites such as smiling or frowning and seems unable to find a moderate kind of behavior. He also surveys the other prisoner in order to establish whether or not he has an audience for his performance. Checking for a reaction to his show, he appears to seek approval from his spectator in much the same way as he does from his boss. The narrator also utilizes the word 'المسرحية' from 'المسرح' or theatre to describe this section of the narrative, adding to the artificial nature of the Algerian officer's actions.[32]

The scene, however, betrays the officer's ultimate difference, or in Bhabha's terms the slippage, which clearly distinguishes his 'unFrenchness' in the way he carries out the interrogation. Similar to the representation of the harkis in Sebbar's novel, the Algerian officer constantly demonstrates an overzealous and unrestrained attitude towards his duties in comparison to his boss. The text consciously demonstrates this by contrasting his behavior to that of the chief:

العريف يحاول التدقيق في كلّ شيء خلاف الدركي الجزائري الذي همّه هو إدانة قدور وإثارة عواطفه وغضبه (47).

The chief tries to examine everything with the utmost precision, unlike the Algerian officer, whose concern is to convict Qadoor and to incite his emotions and anger.

Unlike the chief, the officer is unable to keep a professional distance from the interrogation. He therefore appears incapable of controlling his emotions and his own motivations. The text also underlines the difference between these two men with regard to the ferocity or cruelty they exhibit. For example, when the officer eventually succeeds in provoking Qadoor, who then hits him unrepentantly, both men are tempted to kill him. However, the text once again distinguishes between their behaviors:

يقوم الدركيّان ويخرج كلّ منهما مسدّسه ويصوّبه إلى قدور...الدركي الجزائري ينزع صمّامة الإطلاق، وهو في غضب شديد، ولا يدري ماذا يفعل. رئيسه يمسكه ويحول بينه وبين إطلاق النار على قدّور الذي لم يكن يبدو عليه ايّ خوف. بل عاد إليه هدوؤه الطبيعي الوديع! العريف يقول لمساعده:"لا، لا تعفل. هناك ما هو أبشع من القتل! لنا وسائل أخرى أفضل. لا ينبغي أن تتورّط في عمليّة قتل، نحن في غنى عنها" (60).

The two officers get up and they both take out a pistol and point it at Qadoor…The Algerian policeman rips out the safety catch, extremely angry, not knowing what to do. His boss restrains him and tries to intervene in him shooting Qadoor, who does not appear at all frightened. Rather his natural calm peacefulness returns to him. The chief says to his assistant: "No, don't do it. There are things uglier than murder. We have other means that are preferable. It is not necessary to involve yourself in an act of murder, we can do without that".

Although both men get out their pistols and aim them at Qadoor, it is the Algerian officer who takes off the safety catch and is prepared to kill. The chief's restraint demonstrates not only his authority over the Algerian officer but also his superiority as a Frenchman.

In addition to this, the Algerian officer appears unaware of the official limits or protocol of interrogations since he has to be informed that his actions are inappropriate in this particular place. Although it would be obvious to someone 'civilized' that this kind of act would fall outside the realms of social conventions, it is anything but clear to this officer. His essential and unalterable difference is thereby revealed. He may be able to appropriate or esteem certain Western behaviors, but his relationship to violence cannot be learned.

Within the interrogation session, this idea is supported by the fact that the European chief has to repeat his warning to his Algerian officer, essentially trying to make the concept clearer for him:

يعود العريف من جديد إلى مقعده. يشعل سيجارة. في ذلك اللحظة يدخل الدركي الاهلي. ينهال بالركل على قدور الموقس على الأرض! يتدخل العريف: إنَك توشك أن تقتله! هدِئ نفسك. إنَنا مسؤولان عن موته, إن مات هنا بالمركز. لا تفعل! ليس لنا الحقَ في التعذيب بالمركز (62).

The chief returns again to his chair. He lights a cigarette. At this moment the local officer enters. He lays into Qadoor, who is bent on the floor, with kicks! The chief intervenes: "You're nearly killing him! Calm down! We're responsible for his death,if he dies here in the center! Don't do it! We don't have the right to torture here in the center".

Whereas his first warning attempted to calmly explain the matter to him, in this interaction he is forced to shout orders at him and use the explicit term torture. In this instance the Algerian's lack of comprehension points to his difference, that has once again taken on an inferior quality. Within the the novel, the 'harki' is designated as the 'other', however his otherness is not that of the French colonizer. His difference is essentially a failed difference. It seems that a new category has been created in which the

'harki' alone is attributed responsibility for his voluntary alienation from his native culture and his aggressive behavior towards those belonging to that culture. He is represented as non-Algerian, but more importantly, as failed-French.

In the context of the novel and the struggle for independence, the active negation of the officer's identity appears to be related to a generation of writers and their conceptualization of the Algerian nation. Reda Bensmaia, a specialist in Algerian literature and criticism, writes in *Experimental Nations* about the different stages in the Algerian literary conception of Algerian nationalism. Benhadouga, who began his career during the struggle for independence, belonged to a generation who, according to Bensmaia, felt that no reconciliation with the French was possible. Any relationship between these two entities – colonizer and colonized – had to be abandoned, destroyed. Represented by Fanon's texts in which, for example, independence signified the re-birth of both Algeria and its citizens, this generation interpreted its relationship to the colonizer in terms of a binary opposition. Either there was a colonial relationship or no relationship at all. Understood in these terms, the colonial mimic would thereby suffer a fate similar to that of the French colonizer. In this way, Benhadouga's 'native' officer's identity is negated rather than being a non-identity. In other words, he fails to be French rather than falling in-between a French or Algerian identity.

In his analysis, Bensmaia also discusses this generation of writers' conception of Algeria, writing that they perceived a symbiotic relationship between the literary conception of the nation and its existence: "writing was contemporary and synonymous

with the *laying of the foundation of the nation to come*…To write (the fiction of) Algeria was to write Algeria; it was to yield up an Algeria that, although mythical, was no less real, no less authentic" (23). For Benhadouga's generation, anything seems to have been possible for the new Algeria, and literature played a fundamental role in shaping possibilities. What was written shaped not only the idea of the state but what the state would eventually become.

Within the novel, which takes place during this somewhat magical time, this positive and possible notion of Algeria is apparent in the representation of Qadoor who is contrasted directly to the native officer. Whereas Qadoor narrates the scene and is therefore present and close to the reader, the 'native' officer is absent from the narrative process and has no voice. Perhaps the most striking difference between these two characters is their level of awareness concerning the political situation in Algeria. Whereas the officer uses the political unrest to guarantee his employment with the French forces; Qadoor knows absolutely nothing about the independence movement. However, in contrast to the native officer's treacherous actions, Qadoor's lack of knowledge is portrayed positively as a kind of innocence. At one point, he even blames himself for his lack of awareness:

إنَه يشعر باحتقار نفسه أن يكون هو، المديني، لا يعرف كلَ هذه الأشياء (53).

He feels contempt for himself that he, the city dweller, doesn't know all these things.

He later wonders why he had not heard about the independence struggle from the people with whom he is in contact with in the village or at the 'Turki' club such as the Sheikh Aquabi. He even goes as far as to question his own intelligence, wondering if they had talked about this movement but that he had just not understood what they were saying.

Benhadouga's gesture of absolving Qadoor for his ignorance is interesting given his own strong relationship with the independence movement. During the war, he wrote for the FLN journal "El moujahid" and after independence he continued to be associated with the newly formed government as director for both television and radio stations eventually becoming President of the 'Conseil National de la Culture'. His representation of this character's unawareness and lack of involvement in the independence movement could be interpreted as being counter to the official ideology associated with the war as a united struggle of the Algerian people. However, he avoids any negative connotations associated with Qadoor's ignorance through this character's enthusiastic response to the existence of an organized independence movement:

> وهو سعيد أن يسمع لأوّل مرّة أنّ هناك من يعمل ضدّ هذه الحضارة المتوحشّة! وسعيد أكثر أن يكون أبو زوجته، المخفي، سبب لفرنسا الكبرى ذات الجيوش الجرَارة كلّ هذه المخاوف. وقال في نفسه: "لو عرفته قبل أن أكون صهره لدخلت في حزبه!" (53).

He is happy to hear for the first time that there are those that are working against this beastly civilization! And he is even happier that his wife's father, Al Makhfi, caused the great France that has a huge army all this fear. He said to himself: "if I had known him before I was his relative I would have become a member of his movement!".

Even though Qadoor remains quite uninformed about the nature of the political movement he is ready to join it. It only matters to him that there is a movement fighting

to remove France from Algeria. He even regrets not knowing beforehand so that he could have joined forces with his father-in-law's covert activities.

Within the larger context of the novel, Qadoor appears as a model citizen. For example, Massaouda repeats throughout the novel that her children do not know their fathers, however she attributes to Qadoor an important role in their lives:

قدور ترك في بطني واحداً منهم استشهد في الجبل. لكن في عروق جميع أبنائي الباقين دم قدور! ترك لنا جميعاً شجاعته ولقبه! (14).

Qadoor left one of them in my belly who was martyred in the mountain. But in the veins of all the rest of my sons is Qadoor's blood. He left us his courage and his name.

Qadoor then becomes, even after his death, the root of generations to come. He mythically passes on his heritage, and sense of national duty to others. As the text indicates, his true son became a martyr and a defender of revolutionary principles like his father.

Within the novel Qadoor's eagerness to fight the presence of the French colonizer contrasts directly with the Algerian officer's activities alongside this colonizer. This narrative device reveals the officer's actions to be all the more treacherous and negative due to the presence of Qadoor. Similarly, Qadoor's character and the independence struggle also benefit from the presence of the 'native' officer within the narrative and appear all the more commendable. Therefore the inclusion of the Algerian officer within the narrative not only permits a commentary on the choice of Algerians to work with the

French, but also aides in representing the independence movement in a positive manner, ultimately upholding the official Algerian ideology associated with the war.

La part du tort

In his detective novel *La Part du mort*, the author Yasmina Khadra not only gives the reader a glimpse of pre-civil war Algeria but also returns to a painful period in Algerian history, namely the 'harki' massacres that occurred at the end of the war of independence.[33] This study aims to demonstrate how Khadra's representation of harkis in this novel constitutes a controversial attempt to undermine negative stereotypes associated with the 'harki' community. As mentioned, they have previously been represented as having aligned themselves with the French forces for financial means and used excessive violence in their operations. Khadra's novel portrays this community as victims of brutality rather than the perpetrators of aggression. Khadra's background makes his gesture all the more surprising; his father fought alongside the FLN in the struggle for independence and Khadra himself spent 36 years in the army, eventually becoming a Commander. His novel returns to controversial events that occurred shortly after Algeria had obtained independence from France. The main character, Inspector Llob, investigates these undigested and unsavory moments in Algerian history in order to solve a crime. In the process, he uncovers another crime that has a direct influence on the shape of the Algerian

nation. This study argues that the novel not only uncovers layers of responsibility and guilt associated with Algeria's past, but also re-examines the very foundations of the nation.

Khadra's choice of literary genre appears to be in keeping with his choice of controversial subject matter. According to Pim Higginson, a specialist in francophone literature who has published an analysis of the African crime novel, the detective novel has become increasingly popular among postcolonial writers since "the genre's preoccupations and narrative strategies make it particularly well suited to articulating a critique of dominant ideologies" (163). For Khadra, the intrigue/mystery associated with the detective novel permits him to both challenge the official policy of amnesia associated with the massacres and to question the government's glorification of the independence struggle as a united battle against the French colonizer.[34]

It appears that, as a writer, Khadra is part of a larger literary movement that seeks to break with tradition and re-examine the reality of the post-independence Algerian nation. As the literary critic Rabah Soukehal writes in his extensive examination *Le Roman algérien de langue française*, the joy of defeating the French colonizer was soon replaced by a feeling of betrayal concerning the new Algerian political system and society. Describing the writer's reaction, he writes: "l'écrivain se singularise par son combat contre un système politique immobile en apparence […] pour lui, c'est l'ère d'une seconde occupation ; un autre combat commence" (389). Writing represents a powerful medium through which authors represent reality and fight against an unjust and corrupt political system. In terms of the relationship between literature and nationalism, Khadra's

generation of writers no longer writes to create a myth of Algeria or to construct its future based on an image or idea. Rather, according to Bensmaia, they write to de-mythicize reality: "the myth (of the nation) was interrupted, and its very interruption gives voice to and exposes an unfinished community" (25). Bensmaia's use of the term 'unfinished' is telling of how Khadra's generation of writers perceives Algeria. Rather than discussing the nation in terms of an entity that lacks unity or coherence, they feel that it has never even been complete. In their opinion, the process of creating an Algerian national community was disrupted by political corruption and a renunciation of the 'revolution's' values. Within Khadra's narrative, this idea surfaces through references to Algeria as a partially born nation, or as one character states, a "république avortée" (272). Rather than being the desired outcome of the independence struggle, it is the rejected and unwanted offspring that is not completely developed. Following on from this image of unwanted reproduction, Inspector Llob refers to his own children as 'rejetons' (20) or discarded entities.

In the novel, the underdeveloped or unfinished status of the nation is attributed to a privileging of the individual over the group. Haj Thobane best symbolizes this individualistic philosophy: once a famous combatant during the War of Independence, he chose his own political and financial success over the democratic values espoused by the independence struggle. During a conversation with police commissioner Llob, the renowned fighter Cherif Wadah, known as the Algerian 'Ché Guevara' due to his own revolutionary actions, describes Thobane:

> il considérait toute proposition politique ou économique comme une atteinte à son empire financier et s'appliquait à maintenir la société dans le marasme et dans la décomposition mentale…Cet homme devait disparaître d'une manière ou d'une autre. C'était lui ou l'Algérie (414).

In Wadah's description, the weakness of the nation is insinuated by his declaration that one man is able to determine Algeria's future. In the contrast established between Thobane and the 'marasme' and 'décomposition mentale' that characterizes the rest of the population, he also resembles the former colonizer as the term 'empire' evokes the colonial enterprise. Additionally, similar to the colonial system, he seeks to maintain a structure of difference within Algerian society in order to preserve his own position and wealth. As a solution to corruption and the privileging of the individual, a return to the principles of the revolution is proposed; more specifically, a restoration of the idea of the community as a collective entity. This idea is symbolized in the narrative by Llob's yearly reunion with other former maquisards that takes place on the anniversary of the beginning of the war:

> tous ensemble, la main dans la main, on se soutient et on se promet de *continuer le combat* jusqu'au bout. La tribu renoue ainsi avec ses engagements ancestraux et renaît de ses cendres comme une superbe salamandre. L'espace de vingt-quatre heures, je redeviens digne (78).

For Llob, this meeting is of fundamental importance to his own identity since he feels as if he has regained personal worth due to his attendance. His sense of self is directly related to his obligations to society. His use of the terms 'tribu' and 'ancestraux' imply a return to traditional Algerian society that consisted of nomadic tribes before French colonization.[35] Additionally, through the use of the notion of ancestry, this group appears as the rightful successor to a national heritage. The image of rebirth associated with the figure of the

salamander further substantiates their legitimacy, representing them as the vindicated heir to a communal tradition and value system.

The idea of the national community, stressed in Llob's reflection, played an important role both during and after the war. As previously stated, the founding myth of the independent Algerian nation is based on the notion of a just and collective struggle against the French colonizer. Independence is represented as having been achieved by "un seul héros, le peuple" but as Hamoumou notes, this struggle involved anything but a united population: "la guerre d'Algérie n'est pas une guerre classique entre deux États constitués, reconnus, disposant de forces armées. Il s'agit, on l'a vu, d'une guerre 'révolutionnaire' ou 'subversive'. Une minorité doit conquérir, par la persuasion doctrinale ou par la terreur, la majorité de la population" (154). Thus the war did not involve two official parties representing the interests of their respective nations. The independence movement of the FLN was in fact led by a small number of combatants and was unknown to and unsupported by the majority of the Algerian population at the beginning of the war. As a reaction to this lack of support, the movement identified two objectives: "le FLN mène la 'guerre' sur deux fronts: - contre l'autorité française, en réclamant l'indépendance au nom du peuple algérien, - contre le peuple algérien, pour s'imposer à lui comme son 'représentant'" (Hamoumou 134). As we see in the latter part of this statement, the FLN did not originate from the Algerian people but rather established itself as a separate entity in the hope of gaining popular support and recognition. Rather than 'winning over' the Algerian people through persuasion, the

FLN imposed its authority through violent means.[36] Testimonies of harkis illustrate that their enlistment in the French forces was frequently motivated by a desire for protection from the brutal actions of the FLN.[37] This idea is also confirmed by the political leader Ferhat Abbas: "les responsables utilisent la menace, la peur. Ils commirent de regrettables erreurs poussant les braves gens dans les bras de l'armée et des autorités françaises. Ce fut le cas de nombreux Algériens, devenus 'harkis' malgré eux" (Hamoumou 184). Enlistment in the French forces was a choice made under duress and was not accompanied by political motivations. Rather, it was a reaction to the threats of physical violence and execution made by the FLN in an attempt to establish its own authority and legitimacy.

The novel echoes this idea, representing the war as a period of confusion in which the Algerian people were forced to choose between the lesser of two evils. For example, the character Jelloul Labras, a former combatant, notes that for the Algerian inhabitants there was little difference between the colonizer's domination and the threat of the FLN: "plus ça bardait dans les maquis et moins on savait où donner de la tête. D'un côté les fellagas multipliaient les exactions contre les indécis; de l'autre; la pacification manipulait les plus démunis" (257).[38] Within this statement, neither the representation of the FLN nor that of the French army is positive. Both parties appear to exploit the Algerian people, either through the utilization of force or psychological manipulation. Caught in the middle, Algerians were forced to make a decision and align themselves with one entity. However, as Labras points out, this decision was generally not based on

political beliefs, since the uneducated majority did not understand the nationalistic ideas associated with the revolution: “hormis quelques lettrés et d’une poignée de citadins initiés, le nationalisme relevait de l’ésotérisme” (255). In his discussion, political ideals are represented as a luxury which the indigenous population could not afford, being more concerned with survival in a time of economic hardship. The decision to enlist in the French forces was therefore sometimes motivated by financial concerns: “on se tuait pour ne pas crever de faim et, souvent la mort nous prenait au mot. Certains s’improvisaient palefreniers, serfs, bergers ou chasseurs de mouches; d’autres se ruaient sur les casernes pour être goumiers, spahis ou zouaves non dans l’intention de guerroyer mais juste pour aider la marmite familiale” (255-256). It is important to note that Labras equates employment with the French with other positions taken by Algerians in an effort to earn money as shepherds or servants. However, he clearly underlines that this desire for financial reward was not associated with politics. Indeed, within his statement only the positions associated with humanitarian activities are listed and the position of harki, known for its combative responsibilities, is glaringly absent.

In addition to satisfying financial concerns, Labras refers to enlistment as a familial tradition. Service to France had effectively created a bond between generations of Algerians and offered some inhabitants a solution to their dilemma. He states: “l’unique repère qu’on avait était cette photo jaunie qui gauchissait à vue d’œil, punaisée, maladroitement sur le mur en torchis, nous contant l’épopée de tel ou tel parent sanglé dans son uniforme français, la moustache grande comme sa fierté et sa poitrine bardée de

médailles" (257). The use of the word 'repère' or reference infers that Algerians were turning toward ancestors for guidance in a period of political confusion. However, as the text indicates through a description of the picture as old and yellowed and hanging lopsided on the wall, the past does not appear to have been a period without difficulties. As previously stated, a number of harkis had chosen to serve the French forces in keeping with this kind of tradition. Rather than betraying their nation, as seen in this description, they perceived themselves to be upholding an honorable ancestral tradition. More importantly, this very idea of heritage appears to surpass notions of national identity since they were not fighting for France but their own sense of communal identity.

This discussion, which focuses on the motivations of combatants, undermines the stereotypical representation of this group as mercenaries. By including the character of Jelloul Labras, who aligned himself with the French forces during the war, the narrative effectively attributes this community with a voice, one that is able to respond to this negative characterization, demonstrating both the varied and apolitical nature of its association with the French. Additionally, as previously noted, Labras' discussion of the massacres further undermines this stereotype, offering the reader a representation of the victimization of this group, categorically designated by the FLN as traitors.

The novel offers a view of events missing from official accounts of the period. Hamoumou notes that only weeks after the Evian agreements had been concluded in March 1962, Algerians who had joined the French forces began to disappear.[39] Aggression against this group intensified after Algerian independence was officially

established in July of the same year. Hamoumou estimates that over one hundred thousand victims were killed. For Boussad Azni, author and political activist, the Algerian government's actions during this period represent an attempt to "gommer le peuple harki de la surface de la terre" (64).[40] As Azni's statement indicates, the government did not seek their expulsion from Algerian territory, but rather it attempted to destroy any evidence of their existence on Algerian soil. These massacres have traditionally been silenced by both the French and Algerian governments. For Stora, the existence of harkis essentially undermines the Algerian national image: "reconnaître l'histoire des supplétifs musulmans conduirait à relativiser 'l'élan spontané et l'enthousiasme permanent suscités par le FLN' ce serait briser le mythe fondateur du 'peuple uni' contre la colonisation" (*La Gangrène et l'oubli* 207). However, as mentioned, it was necessary for the FLN to convince or more specifically threaten the Algerian people in order to produce participation and eradicate other political movements obstructing its path to power. As James McDougall, a prominent specialist in North African history, states in *Memory and Violence in the Middle East and North Africa*: "people (singular), in fact imposes itself on people (plural), willing them to conform to its "glorious" prescriptions, and condemning to anathema those who fail to do as their destiny requires" (60). As McDougall notes, those who did not participate, namely the harkis, could not be part of the national narrative.

Challenging the official policy of silence concerning these events, the novel places them at the center of its intrigue, linking them to Haj Thobane's corruption and

provoking his political downfall. However, rather than representing this period as a well-known piece of Algerian history, the novel consciously and repeatedly indicates the difficulty involved in the initiation of a discussion and the discovery of information relating to these events. For example, after their initial conversation with Labras, Soria chides Llob for his lack of diplomacy: "nous pataugeons dans les éclaboussures d'une formidable vomissure historique…personne n'en sortira rincé" (258). As seen in Soria's statement, this event is a 'vomissure' and has remained undigested, unaccepted and unprocessed by the majority of the Algerian population. Those who attempt to investigate it will be marked by its unsavory spatter or 'éclaboussures', a term that brings to mind the splashing of blood and the brutality of the massacres. As Labras mentions, the threat of reprisal that accompanies their investigation thereby surpasses the local level: "c'est un sujet très controversé, vous ne trouvez pas ? Rares sont ceux qui l'abordent sans s'attirer des représailles" (253). Although Soria and Llob are able to conclude their investigation, the reader later discovers that this is due to the protection of Cherif Wadah and possibly other influential political leaders.

However, Soria and Llob encounter difficulties not only due to the threats associated with their investigation but also due to a lack of evidence. Potential witnesses such as Tarek Zoubir and Rabat Ali are found dead by Llob after having agreed to co-operate. For example, Labras finds Zoubir : "suspendu à une poutrelle, le corps nu recouvert de bleus, les bras ballants. Du sang s'est ramifié sur son menton et sur sa poitrine. La nuque tordue par le nœud de la corde, il fixe un coin de la pièce, une partie de langue sur la lèvre. Le

bourreau lui a tranché le nez avant de le pendre" (282). As seen, this punishment targets the parts of the body associated with the original crime. In Zoubir's case, his tongue is cut off since he has transgressed a policy of silence. Additionally, the reader is made aware of the significance of cutting off his nose thanks to Llob's comments that follow: "en Algérie le nez est l'organe de la fierté. Durant la guerre d'indépendance, les maquisards tranchaient le nez de ceux qu'ils considéraient comme félons avant de les faire défiler dans les rues pour que les gens en tirent les enseignements qui s'imposent. La signature et le message étaient clairs, à l'époque" (283). An additional importance of Llob's remarks is that the reader understands how Zoubir's murder does not constitute a mere execution but rather an attempt to socially humiliate and condemn him. Ironically, these assassinations, which attempt to dissuade the investigation by eliminating the evidence, actually imitate the violence of the post-war period that they aim to hide. The implication within the novel is that Zoubir, who tries to discuss the post-war execution of presumed traitors, becomes a traitor.

The character Jelloul Labras is one of the few people left in the novel who is both able and willing to discuss this period and is possibly the only harki to have survived the massacres in this area. His testimony reveals the widespread nature of the violence and further corroborates the link between Zoubir's death and this period:

> les fellaghas se déchaînaient, ils mettaient le feu aux maisons et aux champs des vaincus; les exécutions sommaires se prolongeaient dans des purges inouïes. Dans les ruelles, tous les matins, on faisait défiler les "traîtres" auxquels on avait coupé le nez et les lèvres avant de leur trancher le cou sur la place du village. Je n'oublierai jamais ces centaines de corps charcutés

> qui pourrissaient dans les vergers, ces pauvres bougres livrés à la vindicte populaire que les galopins lapidaient en leur crachant dessus, ces femmes et ces mioches terrorisés qui fuyaient vers les montagnes d'où ils ne reviendraient plus (255).

The method of execution objectifies the 'traitors', described by Labras as bodies or 'corps'. His use of the word 'charcuté' combined with his reference to the rotting that took place after their execution, makes it seem as if they were no longer individuals but rather merely pieces of meat. We note at the beginning of this description, these executions were very public and, from the use of the impersonal pronoun 'on', appear to have actually involved the inhabitants of the area in addition to the moudjahidines. Children are also specifically mentioned as being responsible for the last step of the execution process, spitting on the corpses of the victims.

As the novel progresses, the descriptions of these events become more detailed. At this point, the distinction between fiction and reality also appears to become less defined as the novel consciously references testimonial accounts and historical analyses of these events. In addition to providing the reader with historically accurate descriptions, this narrative style constitutes a powerful attempt to combat the amnesia and silence surrounding these events. One example of Khadra's use of historical fact within the novel concerns public participation in the events. From historical analyses such as those completed by Hamoumou and Azni, it appears that during the massacres the Algerian public was not only a witness to the executions but actively participated in them. For example, Azni notes: "la plupart des supplices se passaient en public. Les enfants étaient encouragés à lapider les victimes, pendant que les femmes poussaient des youyous" (80). The executions appear to

have been considered by the general public to be moments of celebration. The feminine tradition of 'ululating' normally occurs at, for example, weddings, circumcisions or upon hearing good news. In this instance, it also demonstrates approval for the children's actions and encourages additional violence. The involvement of both women and children in these activities also signals the involvement of Algerians, as a collective community, in these events that appear to constitute a nation-building activity.

In his analysis of public punishment, Michel Foucault also attributes to the public a fundamental role in the carrying out of punishment act. For him, their participation went beyond physical involvement: "not only must people know, they must see it with their own eyes. Because they must be made to be afraid; but also because they must be the witnesses, the guarantors, of the punishment" (58). By partaking in this punishment, the public not only vindicated it but more importantly recognized and defended the power of the punishing authority. Torture and execution constitutes a public exhibition of power in which this authority demonstrates its victory over the criminal: "execution must be spectacular, it must be seen by all almost as a triumph" (34). Within the context of the Algerian war, which was concluded by a private agreement, these public events offered the Algerian population visible confirmation of the FLN's victory against the French through the punishment of those who had aligned themselves with the colonizer. They additionally acted as a reinforcement of the newly established authority of the FLN.

The nature of this punishment is also significant and simultaneously indicates a rejection of the punished group from the Algerian community and their association with

France. First, the initial act of publicly displaying the 'traitors' immediately designates their difference from the rest of the local population. This otherness is then solidified by the physical marking of their bodies. With regard to the execution of the harkis, the significance of the nose within Algerian society is that it is "l'organe de la fierté" (283). Cutting off the nose of a man therefore constitutes not only an act of emasculation within a society which places very high value on a sense of pride, but also symbolically excludes this criminal from society by physically demonstrating his lack of integrity. This act would also leave a permanent and visible physical mark, guaranteeing the permanent designation of the victim as a traitor. As seen in Labras' testimony, the most symbolic and definitive act of exclusion was the execution of these criminals, a procedure that guaranteed their elimination from Algerian society. As Labras goes on to describe, this exclusion continued even after their death. Denied burial, there would be no commemoration of their existence. Their bodies, exhibited and left to decompose would eventually disappear, leaving no trace. In addition to demonstrating their ultimate rejection by the Algerian community, this act also appears to firmly associate them with the French forces. As discussed, Branche notes that the exposition of bodies was a psychological tactic used by the French to demonstrate their own power and weaken the resistance of the Algerian population during the war. The act of exposing bodies of harkis is therefore not only continuation of their punishment but also an appropriation of a 'French' method as a means of revenge against those perceived to be associated with the enemy. It also signifies how, in post-independence society, the formerly colonized

took the place of the colonizer. As Fanon states in *Les Damnés de la terre,* the colonized man dreamt of becoming like the colonizer: "le regard que le colonisé jette sur la ville du colon est un regard de luxure, un regard d'envie. Rêves de possession […] le colonisé est un envieux […] il n'y a pas un colonisé qui ne rêve au moins une fois par jour de s'installer à la place du colon" (43). Appropriating the colonizer's wartime methods appears to have been one of the ways through which the Algerian realized his dream of becoming the colonizer and taking over his power.[41]

To return to Khadra's novel and the harki massacres, in addition to permitting the FLN to symbolically represent its own victory, these events also eradicated any evidence of dissension among the Algerian people and thereby allowed the creation of the myth of a united struggle. It is significant that the FLN not only targeted those who had combated alongside the French forces but also their immediate families. As Labras indicates in his description, women and children were thereby also executed or forced to flee. Real witness testimony supports this, for example Azni includes the testimony of Mohammed G. in his analysis who states: "j'ai vu des femmes enceintes se faire ouvrir le ventre par des membres du FLN qui leur sortaient les bébés des entrailles" (77). From other testimonial documents, we know that violence systematically targeted pregnant women. There seems to be a symmetry involved in the execution process, 'Algerian' children participated in the torture, stoning and spitting on victims and at the same time harkis' children were targeted by violence. More specifically, the murder of harkis' unborn offspring may be interpreted as the destruction of this 'community's' future. The brutal

gesture of cutting open the mother's womb may also be seen as an aggressive assault on her sexuality. In a society that seeks to protect female intimacy by hiding it from the public and which values discretion and modesty, the gesture of opening a woman's stomach and exhibiting her womb appears particularly atrocious, especially since the uterus, which performs many functions in facilitating reproduction, may be considered to be the most physically and socially protected female reproductive organ.

Given the brutality of these events and the nature of participation of all levels of Algerian society, one may wonder how they influenced the construction of the Algerian nation that was still in its early stages when they occurred. According to McDougall, there was a need after independence to construct an explanatory and comprehensive narrative. A"mobilizing memory of the past was required, one that could not only legitimate the new political order, but could also deal with the exceptionally traumatic recent past in which Algerians had been subjected to seven years of sustained revolutionary violence and repressive counter insurrectionary warfare" (60-61). In his opinion, the solution was to consciously integrate violence into the national narrative, uniting it historically with the nation and glorifying its existence. The national narrative thereby became:

> a history of sacralized struggle in which the recourse to violence is not a legitimate, if tragic, strategy, a necessity of last resort in pursuit of this-worldly political aims, but the only worthy means of struggle, the heroic continuation of a perennial historic mission in defense of the community's "essential self" rooted in the memory of martyred ancestors and promised to the fulfillment of a utopian destiny (52).

Violence became part of the national identity, uniting post-independence Algeria with its historical roots. It became something of an inheritance passed on from generation to generation. However, as McDougall notes, as much as this idea structured national memory and identity, it also shaped society and power. Those associated with violence for the good of the nation such as the moujahid and the shahid (martyr) were invested with power while others such as the "French Muslims" were excluded.

This aspect of Algerian social history is addressed in Khadra's novel by Labras who did escape execution but was excluded from the local community that considered him a traitor. Within the novel, Labras is both physically and socially exiled. He has been forced to live outside the geographical realm of the local community. The narrative notes the difficulty faced by Llob and Soria in finding him: "nous gravissons plusieurs collines pour finalement aboutir à une ferme perdue au fin fond des bois" (249). He does not merely live outside the village, but rather deep within a forest where there is no risk of interaction with others. The extremity of his geographical isolation, which is similar to that of many harkis living in France, is explained by the community's reaction to him:

> personne ne voulait m'embaucher. Personne, en ville ou ailleurs, ne supportait ma vue. J'étais le pestiféré ; je le suis encore même si on me jette plus la pierre. Je n'avais pas de boulot, plus de proche ni de soutien, ma maison m'avait été confisquée par les fellaghas (298).

Not only does the local population not tolerate his participation, as he states, it cannot even stand to see him. This may be explained by the fact that they consider him a traitor, but also, as the only survivor of the massacres, Labras serves as a physical reminder of

their own participation in this violence. Although the FLN initiated his exclusion by confiscating his house and killing his family, it is the inhabitants who guarantee the continuation of his punishment. In his interactions with Llob, we perceive the extent to which contemporary relationships between Algerians and 'French Muslims' continue to be characterized by tension. For example, at one moment in their conversation, Llob utilizes the pejorative term 'harki', an act that elicits anger from Labras who attempts to combat the negative stereotypes associated with this term and justify this group's position in the war: "c'est quoi un harki?… Le souffre-douleur, puis le bouc émissaire de l'Histoire" (255). Within the context of post-independence Algeria, the harki has been the preferred object of negative attention; first as the victim of uncontrolled violence and today as the victim of sustained rejection by the Algerian government and society. Within this context, the harki serves the purpose of deflecting internal violence away from the community. In his analysis of the nature of sacrificial violence, the historian and critic René Girard discusses the communitarian aspect of this rite. Sacrifice takes place for the good of the community: "c'est la communauté entière que le sacrifice protège de sa propre violence, c'est la communauté entière qu'il détourne vers des victimes qui lui sont extérieures. Le sacrifice polarise sur la victime des germes de dissension partout répandus et il les dissipe en leur proposant un assouvissement partiel" (18). In his opinion, sacrifice acts as an outlet for the violence that would normally erupt inside a community due to arguments and tensions between individual members. However, as we see in the above discussion, the sacrificial violence must

concern an individual outside of the community such as a harki in order for the sacrifice to work, to unite the community and establish harmony: “ce sont les dissensions, les rivalités, les jalousies, les querelles entre proches que le sacrifice prétend d’abord éliminer, c’est l’harmonie de la communauté qu’il restaure, c’est l’unité sociale qu’il renforce” (19). It is perhaps for this reason that not only the harki but also his children continue to be excluded from society. Within the novel, Llob’s aggression towards Labras escalates until he feels forced to prove the extent to which this group has been victimized. He does this by undressing for both Soria and Llob, revealing his castration to them: “le fermier a le pénis et les testicules tranchés. Un silence tombal écrase la tête” (301). This act demonstrates the extent of his rejection from society since he is not only geographically and socially excluded but also physically. His castration is a sign of the destruction of his masculine identity and his inability to participate in Algerian society through reproduction.

The sight of Labras’ emasculation appears to put an end to Llob’s aggressive attitude and negative evaluation of this group. Both seeing and hearing about the effects of the event has transformed him into a witness. Discussing this phenomena in his analysis of trauma, Dori Laub notes:

> the listener to trauma comes to be a participant and co-owner of the traumatic event : through his very listening, he comes to partially experience trauma in himself […] comes to feel the bewilderment, injury, confusion, dread and conflicts that the trauma victim feels (57).

A transferal takes place between the victim and the witness and both now bear the burden of the trauma. This transformation in Llob's status leads him to question his own perceptions of this period. In short, although Llob is at the heart of the discovery of Haj Thobane's corruption, which provokes the latter's political downfall, he is no longer able to believe in the possibility of a new era under the reign of the FLN promised by Cherif Wadah. For example, he tells Wadah in their discussion that only a new generation of leaders would be able to change the political system: "laissez les jeunes générations prendre leur destin en main. On ne peut pas réussir un festin à partir des restes de la veille" (418). The implication of Llob's affirmation is that the corruption characterizing the Algerian political system is not limited to individuals, but rather entire generations, like Haj Thobane, associated with the independence struggle and tainted by its violence. We understand from Llob's discussion that a new generation, unconnected to either this earlier period or its ideals will need to take control in order for Algeria to progress and perhaps be completely reborn.

Discussing the novel in an interview with Mehdi Lafifi, Khadra explains his motivations for writing it in the following manner: "j'ai voulu remonter aux sources des malheurs de l'Algérie, comprendre le pourquoi de tant d'incompréhensions et de déchirures, pourquoi tant d'animosité dans nos relations et tant de violence dans nos propos". Within the narrative, the 'harki massacres' of 1962 are at the center of the intrigue as information relating to these violent events provides the main characters with the key to solving a crime and deposing one of Algeria's most corrupt political leaders.

Given the importance attributed to them in the novel, does Khadra believe that the future of the Algerian nation depends upon their integration into the national memory? This narrative does consistently attempt to combat some of the negative stereotypes associated with this community and re-integrate forgotten events into Algerian history. However, it appears that although attempts may be made to come to terms with and correct the national narrative, Khadra indicates that the root of Algeria's political and social problems concerns much more than national memory. An explanatory note by the author recounting Algeria's decline into civil war concludes the novel and cuts short Llob's first expression of optimism concerning Algeria's future.

Although these three novels take place in different geographical locations, time periods and even languages they do reveal significant similarities regarding representations of harkis. More specifically, each of these novels illustrate harkis' rejection by both French and Algerian societies. Their exclusion is related to concepts of both French and Algerian nationalism. With regard to France, the harki's status permitted the government to distance itself from unacceptable torture practices and maintain the image of France as a leader in civilization and human rights. With regard to the Algerian perspective, the nuances in treatment of the harki community help us to understand literature's developing relationship to nationalism. From Benhadouga's negation of the colonial connection to Khadra's eradication of the founding myth, we understand how the fate of Algeria appears to be connected to the very group that it has

so enthusiastically rejected. However, given the continued exclusion of this group from both nations, we must ask in what ways do both societies continue to benefit from their rejection? As scapegoats of modern society, what internal tensions or violence do they help to erase?

Notes

[1] The origin of the name harki is actually the Arabic word حركة , haraka or 'movement' that was utilized to designate the first group of Algerians that agreed to align themselves with the French army in 1954. Their cooperation occurred after a bus of travelers was seized in the Aurès, killing a European teacher and injuring his wife. The day following the incident Jean Servier, a former French officer and ethnologist, utilized his insight into the disagreements that pervaded the relationships between clans in this region to convince the local Agha to unite his men in search of the killers (Charbit 13). They were officially integrated into the army in 1956 by the minister Robert Lacoste who defined the harkas as: "formations temporaires dont la mission est de participer aux operations de maintien de l'ordre" and fixed their number at 10 000. However, due to their knowledge of both the terrain and the methods utilized by the fellaghas, their number quickly increased and, by 1959, they represented the most numerous group of Algerian combatants at 60 000 men (Charbit 14).

2 In *La Gangrène et l'oubli* the historian Benjamin Stora refers to Algerians' status with regard to France as 'faux citoyens' noting that for many years after the initial colonization in 1834, French citizenship came at the price of renouncing Islam (18). Algerians were therefore considered 'sujets' until 1945 when they officially obtained citizenship (Hamoumou 48). Measures taken in 1944 and 1947 respectively gave Algerians the right to vote but the establishment of a double electoral college meant that one European vote was equivalent to eight Algerian votes (*La Gangrène et l'oubli* 19).

[3] For example, Boussad Azni states in his analysis: "le terme Français musulman, nous on n'en veut pas (…). Je demande qu'on m'appelle harki parce que cela a un sens historique. Parce qu'on se détermine par rapport à cela non par rapport à une religion" (41).

[4] As Tom Charbit notes in *Harkis*, in addition to the harkis a number of other sections of the French army utilized the skills of Algerians. For example, Charbit states that in 1955 the first units of GMPR or *groupes mobiles de protection rurale* were officially

established and mostly involved civilians or former combatants of the French army (18). Later becoming GMS or *groupes mobiles de sécurité,* they were also known as 'goumiers' and were assigned to protect rural zones including buildings such as Prefectures, at times ensuring the safety of public officials and generally ensuring that peace was maintained. Their status was civil and they were mostly volunteers. By the end of the war, they numbered approximately 10 000 men (Hamoumou 119). The GAD or *groupes d'autodéfense* were created to protect villages or farms from the FLN, essentially depriving them of places of accommodation and thereby sources of necessary supplies such as food. They were constituted mainly of volunteers who were not paid and were not directly associated to the French army although they received arms from the army and were normally located near to an army post. By 1962 there were approximately 60 000 men participating in the GAD (Hamoumou 119). The Algerian forces also involved *Moghazni*, established to protect the SAS or *sections administratives spécialisées* that were created by General Parlange to re-establish a direct relationship with the local population through social action (118). Each SAS chief was responsible for a maghzen, normally composed of 25 men. As Hamoumou notes, the goals of the SAS were threefold: political, administrative and military (118). However, since the responsibilities of the SAS were varied and involved such varied tasks as the collection of taxes and the collection of information through interrogations, they have often been the subject of criticism. In an attempt to smooth over certain problematic aspects of their action, Hamoumou explains that the nature of an SAS effectively depended on the tone set by the chief (118). Regardless of the questionable practices of the SAS with regards to torture, Hamoumou stresses in his analysis that Algerian forces perceived their responsibilities as being mainly of a humanitarian nature: "les moghaznis protégeaient les infirmières, les instituteurs, ou les soldats faisant office de pédagogues" (118). By 1961, the moghaznis constituted approximately 20 000 men in Algeria.

[5] The conversation takes place between Amel and Omer during their tour of Paris: ""Et tu sais quoi ? J'ai appris que c'est un fils de harki…Tu te rends compte…Si ça se trouve, son père a été un 'calot bleu'. Il a toujours caché qu'il est algérien, enfin un Français de parents algériens, 'Français musulmans' comme on dit pour les harkis" "Qui t'a dit ça ? C'est peut-être pas vrai." "Quelqu'un qui connaît son père et d'ailleurs, j'ai vérifié, Daho c'est un nom algérien et si tu l'as vu à la télé, il a une gueule d'Arabe, il a pas réussi à se cacher malgré son look de dandy"(106). Within their remarks the hereditary aspect of being a harki appears, and, Amel's accusation infers that this status is something that he is ashamed of and consciously tries to hide. Additionally, the way in which she switches from term to term, for example 'harki', 'Algérien' , and 'Français musulmans' clearly demonstrates the difficulty involved in naming this group, who have been attributed an unclear and uncertain identity.

[6] On May 16, 1962, Louis Joxe, ministre d'Etat at the time ordered the return to Algeria of "supplétifs débarqués en métropole en dehors du plan général de rapatriement". Later

in the same year, General Brébisson who commanded the French army in Algeria ordered all soldiers to: "cesser de donner asile sauf dans des cas très exceptionnels […] [sauf] personnalités politiques francophiles" (*Les harkis dans la colonisation et ses suites* 213-214).

[7] The Joffre camp had been used by the Vichy government to detain Jews during World War II.

[8] Mohand Hamoumou notes in his analysis how supplétifs were normally either ineligible or unable to take advantage of governmental support. He states, for example: "les musulmans profiteront peu de la bourse nationale de l'emploi pour les rapatriés créée par l'arrêté du 10 août 1962 en raison de leur manque de qualification. De même, ils n'auront guère recours aux prêts avantageux consentis aux rapatriés pour acheter un commerce ou une exploitation agricole. Seuls quelques musulmans instruits (élus, caïds...), ou aidés dans leurs démarches par des amis européens ou par leurs anciens officiers, utiliseront cette possibilité" (282). As seen in Hamoumou's statement, administrative discrimination took place based, for example, on their level of education or the position that they held during the war.

[9] Inhabitants of the internment camps were forcefully prohibited from any contact with the outside world and treated like prisoners, as Azni recalls: "l'entrée principale était gardée de jour comme de nuit, et les premières années il fallait une autorisation écrite pour sortir" (117).

[10] Voted on the 11th of June 1994, law 94-488 states: "La République française témoigne sa reconnaissance envers les rapatriés anciens membres des formations supplétives et assimilés ou victimes de la captivité en Algérie pour les sacrifices qu'ils ont consentis. "

[11] Literary representations of harkis dating from the period before the coming of age of the 'second generation' in the late 1990s appear to be rare. For example, Mouloud Mammeri's *L'Opium et le baton* (published in 1965), which takes place during the war, addresses the question of harkis through the stereotypical character of Tayeb, whose brutality was renowned among inhabitants of the main character's village: "ce qu'ils craignaient le plus ce n'était pas les soldats, c'était Tayeb et les harkis" (Dugas 893). It also includes the character, Moustique, who left the French army after they had assassinated his wife and children. In addition to this, it is important to mention that Rabah Belamri's novel *Regard blessé* (1987), which will be discussed later in the chapter, includes a controversial and lengthy description of the harki massacres.

[12] Although the media was prohibited from attending the demonstrations, Kagan disobeyed the government's censorship and travelled around Paris both in the metro and on his vespa documenting the violence. His pictures are the only ones in existence concerning these events and were published as a collection *Dix sept octobre 1961* in 2001.

[13] Although Einaudi notes that this practice occurred before the demonstrations, the largest number of victims occurred during the demonstrations. For example, consulting

the archives of Thiais Cemetery and the Institut medico-legal of the Préfecture de Police, Einaudi notes that a total of 57 North Africans were buried during October in addition to those associated with the demonstrations ("Octobre 1961" 102). The presumed cause of nine of these deaths was drowning.

[14] For example, upon the discovery of a corpse with a "North African" appearance in the Seine on September 16, 1961 police officers wrote in their report: "nous pouvons supposer qu'il s'agit d'un règlement de comptes probablement entre musulmans. […] Il est probable que nous nous trouvons en présence d'un des nombreux règlements de comptes entre les mouvements nationalistes algériens, le Front national de libération (FLN) et le Mouvement nationaliste algérien (MNA), la victime appartenant soit à l'une ou l'autre de ces formations et ayant été "liquidée" par l'autre, selon les méthodes habituelles à ces mouvements" (*Octobre 1961* 89).

[15] Although Paulette Péju's text *Ratonnades à Paris* is of fundamental importance to an understanding of these events, offering the reader a perspective contemporary to the events themselves, it is not a historical analysis. Rather, as her husband states in his introduction: "il brosse d'abord le panorama horrifié des réactions immédiates de la presse française, puis donne la parole aux victimes" (23).

[16] Einaudi's text is a chronological reconstruction of the events that is based upon both archival evidence and witness testimony. Einaudi has stated that the inclusion of this testimony in his examination was an attempt to write the history of those that had traditionally been excluded from this practice: "il s'agit en quelque sorte, de donner voix aux sans-voix" (*La Bataille de Paris* 70). Einaudi's gesture becomes all the more important within the context of the long-standing governmental refusal to validate the victim's voices and words.

[17] One of the most important, if not the only texts to examine this particular group of harkis is Paulette Péju's *Les Harkis à Paris,* published and subsequently confiscated in 1961. Her text, to be discussed later in this chapter, relies heavily on documents given to her by the FLN's official lawyer, Jacques Vergès.

[18] Due to her own background, Leïla Sebbar is difficult to categorize: the child of an Algerian father and French mother whose mother tongue is French, she spent her childhood in Algeria and her adult years in France. She has discussed her 'in-between' status openly stating: "eux, n'en sachant rien et ne s'informant pas non plus, suivant l'humeur ou l'impératif professionnel, m'ont tantôt prise comme maghrébine, tantôt comme algérienne nationale, ou comme immigrée, ou fille d'immigrés" (*Lettres parisiennes* 125*)*. In her opinion, her background has had an immeasurable influence on her work: "si je parle de l'exil, je parle aussi de croisements culturels; c'est à ces points de jonction ou de disjonction où je suis que je vis, que j'écris [...] métisse obsédée par sa route et les chemins de traverse" (*Lettres parisiennes* 125).

[19] Beginning in 1959, approximately 850 men were employed and administrated by the police forces. Recruited in Algeria, they were trained at the military fort in Romainville

for a period of eight days prior to commencing their duties. According to Paulette Péju, their training consisted mainly in "le maniement du pistolet et de la mitraillette, les utilisations diverses du tuyau d'arrosage et le fonctionnement du magnétophone – pour aveux éventuels, puisque la plupart ne savent ni lire ni écrire" (31).

[20] These two wars, World War II and the War of Independence in Algeria, have often been compared. The French historian Henri Rousso completed an examination of the process by which France came to terms with its role during the war. In his view, the association between the two wars originally developed as France was living the War of Independence: "les enjeux de la guerre d'Algérie n'avaient qu'un lointain rapport avec ceux de l'Occupation. Mais les contemporains ne l'ont pas ressenti comme tel. Dans leur imaginaire, dans les mots d'ordre, parfois dans leur actes, les protagonistes de cette nouvelle guerre franco-française se sont identifiés aux hommes et aux évènements de 1940" (87). As stated by Rousso, the Algerian War of Independence was frequently lived on a political and social level through France's experience of the Vichy government and collaboration. For example, those attempting to rally support for this conflict recalled the actions of the Resistance and the clearest use of this technique was De Gaulle's return to power as President. However, others tried to draw attention to the injustices of this later conflict, frequently likening them to the racist practices of the occupation and thereby appealing to collective feelings of shame. Contemporary critics such as Anne Donadey, continue to draw parallels, more specifically by likening the stages of anamnesis of the Algeria war to those established by Rousso regarding the Second World War. Although some believe that this association eclipses the specificity of the Algerian War of Independence, on a literary level it has facilitated discussions of the war. For example, during the 1980s when an atmosphere of heightened racial tension was combined with a confrontational attitude towards the memory of collaboration, it offered writers a prism through which the war could be remembered.

[21] Michel Foucault notes in *Discipline and Punish* that after the Enlightenment, torture and execution were considered as an 'atrocity' (55) adding: "at the end of the eighteenth century, torture was to be denounced as a survival of the barbarities of another age: the mark of a savagery that was denounced" (39).

[22] However, according to Hamoumou, financial considerations were far from being the only motivation behind the harkis' recruitment. In his analysis, he attributes their enlistment to the following reasons: inability of becoming a moujahid, the increasing violent practices of the FLN, pressure from the French army, economic hardship and family traditions. With regard to the first of these motivations, he notes that due to a lack of available resources, most notably arms, the FLN was very reticent at the beginning of their combat to recruit a large number of participants. Those who wanted to fight alongside the FLN had to prove their allegiance by assassinating a suspected Muslim traitor or a European inhabitant, a policy that many potential participants found hard to carry out. As he reveals, due to the inexistance of a clear definition of treason and the

utilization of this violence by some for personal revenge, this policy led to the structure of the FLN being compromised. This recruitment process effectively led to the establishment of a mentality of brutality within the FLN that targeted the local population and thereby produced an increase in allegiance to the French army.

However, as he notes, the French army was not merely an innocent recipient of these local forces. Realizing the importance of local participation due to both an inability of increasing the number of French officers and the crucial information that local fighters could impart, the army utilized various means to coerce Algerians to pledge their allegiance. Perhaps the most problematic method utilized by the French army was to knowingly compromise the integrity of a Muslim inhabitant in the eyes of the FLN. At this time, being designated as a traitor was as simple as smoking or talking to a European: "l'armée française a pu jouer la carte de la compromission avec facilité et succès. Le procédé le plus simple consistait, pour les officiers français, à se montrer avec des musulmans. Ces derniers, dénoncés au FLN, étaient acculés à demander la protection de l'armée" (168). In addition to this, the army also recruited among those that it had imprisoned for their suspected activities alongside the FLN. Using both psychological pressure and physical threats against both the individual and their family, the army effectively forced those that it had made captive to join its camp (169-173).

In addition to this, participation in the French army also represented a family tradition for some whereby their fathers and/or grandfathers had fought alongside the French in either the First or the Second World War. Although the decision to align themselves with the French rather than the FLN and the struggle for independence was a difficult choice to be made, Hamoumou notes that the majority chose to continue their service within the French army. He also cites certain economic factors as motivation for joining the French army. Most notably, the local Algerian population was effectively facing an economic crisis caused by a decrease in available agricultural land due to the reattribution of property to the European population. The rural exodus that ensued worsened an already strained metropolitan employment market. Unable to find either employment in the industrial sector or enough revenue from their agricultural exploits, Algerians were often left without the means to support themselves financially and therefore turned to the French army for an income (195).

[23] According to Harbi:"la fraction de l'opinion française favorable à l'indépendance a eu tendance à assimiler les harkis aux collaborateurs dans la France occupée" (94-95).

[24] Another example of this occurs in Rabat Belamri's semi-autobiographical novel *Regard blessé* when Hassan's childhood friend Tayeb starts working with the French forces: "Tayeb n'était plus le même. Il marchait en regardant droit devant lui. Il ne parlait à personne, ne saluait à personne. Même quand il croisait Hassan, hier encore son camarade de jeu, il semblait ne pas le reconnaître. Et Hassan, de son côté – pour des raisons qu'il ne s'expliquait pas -, se sentait désormais incapable de l'aborder. Il passait vite en feignant de ne pas le voir" (38).

[25] See Frantz Fanon's chapter entitled "La famille algérienne" in his analysis *L'An V de la révolution algérienne.*
[26] In her examination, Péju discusses harkis' problematic identity as an explanation for their aggressive attitude toward other Algerians: "méprisés par ceux qui les utilisent, rejetés de la communauté algérienne, ils s'acharnent avec d'autant plus de violence sur leurs compatriotes qu'ils assassinent en eux leur propre image perdue; ils tentent d'effacer ce qu'ils ne peuvent plus être, ils fuient désespérément ce qu'ils sont devenus: les faux frères" (109).
[27] Within the context of the novel, this racial custom reappears when Amel and Omer meet Mourad in a café. Discussing the events with them he states: "j'entendais des flics qui disaient: "C'est comme des rats, il en sort, il en sort...C'est de la vermine, il faut les écraser, ces ratons" (93).
[28] The MNA or Mouvement National Algérien was a political party founded in December 1954 by Messali Hadj, spiritual founder of the Algerian nationalist movement. The MNA appeared after the dissolution of Hadj's previous political parties: l'Etoile Nord Africaine (ENA) founded in 1926, the Parti du Peuple Algérien (PPA) established in 1937 and finally the Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques (MTLD) that appeared in 1946. During the war, the MNA and FLN fought to become the official party of the Algerian people and the independence movement. From 1955 onwards, the FLN began a violent campaign against officials and members of the party that occurred on both Algerian and French soil. Justifying the FLN's actions, Colonel Mohammed Said stated: "c'était un devoir sacré contre les traîtres. L'ennemi numéro un, c'était le traître, le soldat français venait après" (*La Gangrène et l'oubli* 142-143). According to a report published in Le Monde dating from 1962, approximately 12,000 attacks, 4,000 deaths, and 9,000 deaths were committed by the FLN in France (*La Gangrène et l'oubli* 143).
[29] As discussed in Chapter Three, it appears that a number of authors wrote texts about the struggle for independence while Algeria was encountering another period of violence and social disruption, including Assia Djebar, Leïla Sebbar, Yasmina Khadra, Maïssa Bey and Rachid Boudjedra to name a few. The relationship between these two wars may be due to the similarity of the violence. More specifically, although the struggle for independence involved civil violence to a lesser degree, both wars concerned Algerians fighting against each other. Additionally, the forms of violence occurring during both periods seem to be similar, namely the way in which supposed 'traitors' were executed and displayed as examples. Many authors expressed the idea of reliving the earlier war in their texts. For example, a character in the contemporary author Ali Malek's short story "Le facteur oublie de sonner" observes: "quotidiennement, la une des journaux reconstitue le passé dans son intégralité. Le présent n'est qu'un tissage continu de résurgences multiples. Peu importe l'identité de l'expéditeur!" (*Bleu mon père, vert mon mari* 94).
[30] Since Benhadouga's novel was published in Lebanon it is possible to assume that it aimed at attracting readers throughout the Arab world.

[31] At the time when the war of Independence was taking place, Arab Nationalism was an active political ideal proposing Arab unification and condemning Western colonization. The Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser who was seen by some to be the leader of the Arab world, supported the independence movement in Algeria and a number of other Arab nations. The novel references the relationship of the Algerian revolution to the larger Arab political action through the character of Massaouda's biological father:

"من أصدقاء شكيب أرسلان. ينادي مثله بالوحدة العربية من الخليج إلى المحيط. يعادي الاستمعار مثله. يقول مثله ايضا: وحدة اللغة و الجنس والدين لا تتوفَّر لدى أيّ مجموعة بشريّة مثلما هي متوفِّرة بين الشعوب العربيّة" (88).

Among the friends of Shakib Arslan. He also calls for Arab unity from the Persian Gulf to the Ocean. He also opposes colonization. He also says, like Arslan : unity of language and ethnicity and religion is not prevalent to any other human group as it is available to the Arab people.

Shakib Arslan, a Druze prince, was a Lebanese political activist and writer who campaigned for Islamic unity (despite his own religious origins) and believed that the Ottoman Empire was the way to combat Western imperialism and occupation.

[32] The theatrical character of torture is an aspect that can be clearly seen in the forms of public execution and punishment analyzed by Foucault. Concerning the role of the public, for example, in execution and torture, he writes: "in this scene of terror […] people were summoned as spectators: they were assembled to attend exhibitions and *amendes honorables*; pillories, gallows and scaffolds were erected in public squares or by the road-side; sometimes the corpses of the executed persons were displayed for several days near the scenes of their crimes" (58). From Foucault's description it clear that public torture took place on a stage, such as public square. It also involved props such as scaffolds and depended heavily on the presence of the general public as an audience. His use of terms such as 'scene' and 'spectators' further underline the theatricality of this act.

[33] Concerning these massacres, Mohand Hamoumou notes in *Et ils sont devenus harkis* that only weeks after the Evian agreements had been concluded in March 1962, Muslims who had joined the French forces began to disappear. Aggression against this group intensified after Algerian independence was officially established in July of the same year with public torture and executions taking place throughout Algeria between July and September. The exact number of deaths continues to provoke debate, for example in his analysis Benjamin Stora estimates of the number of disappearances to be between 55 000 to 75 000 (*La Gangrène et l'oubli* 202) whereas Hamoumou estimates that over one hundred thousand victims were killed.

[34] Writers such as Didier Daeninckx have also used the detective novel to discuss controversial events associated with the Algerian war of independence. In *Meurtres pour Mémoire* originally published in 1985, he challenged the French government's policy of denial associated with the October 1961 demonstrations in Paris, during which approximately 300 Algerians were killed by the French police force.

[35] As Harbi explains in *Harkis dans la colonisation et ses suites*, even during the war, a sense of community was defined locally rather than nationally in Algeria: "l'identité du lignage ou de la confrérie était beaucoup plus forte que l'identité national" (94).
[36] In his analysis, Hamoumou notes that due to a lack of available resources, most notably arms, the FLN was very reticent at the beginning of their combat to recruit a large number of participants. Those who wanted to fight alongside the FLN had to prove their allegiance by committing an assassination of a suspected Muslim traitor or a European inhabitant, a policy that was difficult to observe for many potential participants. As Hamoumou reveals, due to the inexistence of a clear definition of treason and the utilization of this violence by some for personal revenge, this policy led to the structure of the FLN being compromised. As Mouloud Feraoun noted in his diary: "tout le monde comprend que les 'frères' ne sont pas infaillibles, ne sont pas courageux, ne sont pas des héros. Mais on sait aussi qu'ils sont cruels et hypocrites" (*Journal* 269). This recruitment process effectively led to the establishment of a mentality of brutality within the FLN that targeted the local population. For example Mohammed Muslim describes his village's experience of the FLN's violent methods: "en 1956, des hommes du FLN sont arrivés, je ne sais pas qui les commandaient, ils ont ramassé quarante-deux personnes du village et on les a retrouvées le lendemain toutes assassinées. C'était une manière de dire au village: vous n'avez pas le choix, il faut nous suivre" (*Les Harkis dans la colonisation et ses suites* 68). The violence of the FLN produced an increase in allegiance to the French army. A number of Algerians aligned themselves with the French after a moudjahid had raped their wife or daughter, according to Hamoumou: "les viols furent probablement nombreux puisque le FLN dut prévoir dans son "code pénal" la peine capitale pour viol" (180). In addition to this, he adds that the FLN became increasingly demanding of the local population by requiring them to pay large sums or restricting their behavior, for example by ordering them not to buy French products or collect their pensions. Failure to abide by the rules of the FLN led to an increasing number of cases of brutal physical punishment: "les châtiments lui apparaissent disproportionnés par rapport aux "fautes commises". Les mutilations faciales ou la mort d'hommes, souvent âgés, surpris à assouvir en cachette un plaisir ancien devenu accoutumance heurtent la population" (Hamoumou 175). The result of these increasingly cruel and senseless practices directed at both individuals and groups was that the local population increasingly sought the protection of the French army against the FLN.
[37] During the war, the FLN targeted those that it considered traitors. However, as Hamoumou notes, it was a relatively easy matter to fall into this category: "fumer, se rendre dans une administration, voter sont perçus comme autant d'actes flagrantes de traîtrise, puisqu'il s'agit de transgression d'interdits poses par le FLN. Mais d'autres actes, comme le simple fait de parler à un militaire ou à un Européen, sont également susceptibles d'entraîner la mort" (164). These remarks are corroborated by the testimony of Tayeb in *Harkis dans la colonisation et ses suites* who states: "c'est en 1957 que je suis

devenu harki, après que les hommes du FLN m'aient condamné à mort à la suite de mon arrestation par des militaires" (74-75).

[38] For example, Mouloud Feraoun's statements in *Journal* concerning both the French military and the FLN confirm this sentiment among the people: "les fellagha égorgent celles qui trahissent, les militaires fusillent, arrêtent ou torturent celles qui travaillent avec l'organisation. Les uns et les autres couchent avec les plus belles et font des bâtards aux jeunes filles et aux veuves, les femmes mariées, Dieu merci, étant à l'abri de tels accidents" (289). Within traditional Arabo-Muslim society, married women are considered to be 'protected' by their husbands and would therefore not be the targets of sexual advances or attention. In this case, their status guarded them from being raped.

[39] In this analysis the plural form of massacre will be used (rather than the traditional singular term 'massacre de harkis' in keeping with the historian Sylvie Thenault's analysis in *Harkis dans la colonisation et ses suites*: "dire "de" harkis plutôt que "des" harkis, en effet, signifie que tous les harkis n'ont pas été tués. Au total, l'expression "les massacres de harkis" rend mieux compte des événements, tels que les travaux de recherches actuelles permettent de les reconstituer" (86).

[40] In addition to publishing *Harkis, crime d'état* in 2002, Azni is vice-president of Haute Conseil Rapatriés, counsellor for le monde Combattant, les Harkis et la Citoyenneté, a part of the Secrétaire d'Etat à la Défense et aux Anciens Combattants.

[41] In Rabat Belamri's novel *L'Asile de pierre*, this appropriation involves not only the colonizer's techniques but also his tools: "tu vois tout ce matériel, professeur ! C'est la police française qui nous l'a légué. Et il est toujours en bon état. Il nous sert bien […] Je commence par la règle de fer. J'ai un chiffon pour essuyer le sang. Et si tu refuses d'avouer, je te plongerai dans le baignoire" (Soukehal 423). Belamri's novel, as Soukehal notes in his analysis of Algerian literature, denounced those who came to power after Houari Boumediene's coup d'état in 1965 when he deposed the first president and FLN leader Ferhat Abbas and established a political system characterized by corruption and repression.

Chapter Three
Une généalogie du sang: representations of the post-colonial Algerian family

This chapter examines two contemporary narratives taking place during the civil war, Arezki Mellal's *Maintenant ils peuvent venir* and Yasmina Salah's وطن من زجاج or *Glass Nation,* to explore the literary development of the post-colonial Algerian nation. As Reda Bensmaia demonstrates in his analysis *Experimental Nations*, in the case of Algeria, the relationship between literature and nation has traditionally been strong, especially at the beginning of the independence struggle when "writing was contemporary and synonymous with the *laying the foundation of the nation to come*" (23). As discussed in Chapter Two, over time this association transformed from constructing the nation into exposing its falsehood or status as, according to Bensmaia, an "unfinished community" (24). The aim of this analysis is to explore how writers represent this fragmentation at a time when the cracks in national unity became not only visible but exploded, setting Algerians violently against each other.

According to Eva Corredor, a specialist in literary theory and philosophy, in the immediate wake of independence, the desire for national transformation and development was explored by literary texts in a particular manner. Specifically, a number of Algerian writers attempted to overcome the inequality associated with traditional patriarchal society.[1] She states: "the father's body constituted the immutable rock to which they were chained by their culture and tradition […] that body was aggrandized and mystified far beyond its material presence and physical importance" (295). One of the authors that she cites as an example of this trend is Rachid Boudjedra, who addressed the

misogynistic nature of Algerian society in his first novel, *La Répudiation,* published in 1969. According to Corredor, this narrative tells the story of his mother's life, "we climb over the walls of an Arabic household, dominated by the phallic figure of the patriarch in whom much of the evil targeted by the critical discourse seems to converge" (297). Given both the social and literary importance of the father figure, it seems significant that in *La Vie à l'endroit* published in 1997 during the height of civil war, the father has completely disappeared from Boudjedra's text.[2] Similarly, we find that the patriarch is missing in both Yasmina Salah's novel وطن من زجاج and Arezki Mellal's narrative *Maintenant ils peuvent venir*. Between the social transformation of the newly independent nation and its disintegration during the civil war, the Algerian family appears to have undergone a number of significant changes.

In traditional Arabo-Muslim society, for Tunisian sociologist Abdelwahab Bouhdiba, the patriarch may be described in the following way: "a terrible image of the father: Ab. This all-powerful, all serious colossus cannot but represent an impenetrable wall" (219). Or, as the contemporary author Mustapha Benfodil writes in his play *Clandestinopolis*: "l'enfer c'est le père" (81). Society, according to Bouhdiba, is based upon the superiority of the masculine presence. In this way the division of the sexes is established and inequality reinforced: "sexual dimorphism tends ultimately to place all positivity on the side of masculinity and to empty femininity of all value. To be more precise, femininity is reduced to being no more than the obverse of masculinity. Woman is the shadow of man, in the literal as well as the figurative sense" (214). For Hédi

Abdel-Jaouad, a specialist in North African and comparative literature, this misogyny is best represented by the space attributed to the sexes within society. More specifically, the woman is forced to have a more passive role being confined to the interior space of the home whereas the masculine place is outside of the house where the man is in constant interaction with society (19). For example, in her novel *Rêves de femmes,* the author and sociologist Fatima Mernissi describes life in a domestic harem:

> le portail d'entrée de notre maison était un véritable *hadada*, une frontière aussi surveillée que celle d'Arbaoua. Nous avions besoin d'une permission pour entrer et sortir. Chaque déplacement devait être justifié et rien que pour se rendre au portail il y avait déjà tout un protocole à respecter. Si on venait de la cour, il fallait d'abord suivre un interminable corridor, puis on se trouvait devant Hmed, le gardien, nonchalamment assis sur son sofa comme sur un trône, un plateau à thé devant lui (23).

As seen in this extract, daily life is organized by the idea of *hadada* or *huddud*, clearly delineated boundaries that separate the exterior from the interior world and feminine from masculine space within the house itself. As the young narrator of Mernisssi's novel explains, even the path to the front door to ask permission is clearly marked out. Further underlining the patriarchal nature of this system is the presence of the employee who, as a male of a lesser social class, has more authority than any of the women inhabitants of the house.[3]

As previously discussed, in the case of Algeria, this traditional conception of gender roles and sexual boundaries was challenged during the struggle for independence by women's active participation in the war. Rather than remaining in the domestic space,

the independence movement required that women take on more public roles.[4] Not only were traditions challenged but more importantly the family was transformed into a collective national entity as women entered the public sphere and fought alongside their revolutionary 'brothers'. Omar Carlier, a specialist in political sociology, notes that the end of the independence struggle signaled a return to traditional gender roles.[5] However, Algerian society had been irrevocably changed and women had obtained, if not an equal role in the outside world at least the desire to participate. Their potential separation from the domestic realm meant, according to Carlier, that masculine identity had been challenged:

> paid work, even in its most modest forms, conferred on the women involved a status and income that spouses, in-laws, neighbors, and citizens in general, were obliged to take into account. The husband and father was no longer the breadwinner upon whom everyone depended. What is more, a woman who works is by definition absent from the home, subjected to a daily schedule and rhythm not necessarily convenient to her spouse […] as a result, men have lost part of their authority (Berger 96).

Participating in a paid professional activity meant that symbolically women had physically and psychologically entered masculine space. The clear social roles attributed to men and women had been challenged by employment.

In addition to the wife/mother's increasing presence in society, Carlier notes that women were generally becoming more educated. The university, once designated as a masculine realm, had now become accessible to women.[6] Daughters began to follow in their mother's footsteps by challenging boundaries and obtaining an education. However,

this step towards universal education required even more adaptation within the familial structure, as Carlier notes:

> it is within the intimacy of the domestic unit that the female student tends to disrupt the usual order of things. Her emancipation, or her evolution, may or may not be integrated into the family model […] Because of her education […] she can flaunt her knowledge […] before her father, the figure of male authority, the imam of the household, the 'natural' religious leader of the basic social unity (Berger 92).

Becoming educated represented advancement, not only for the individual but for the family. Although the daughter may 'flaunt' her knowledge in front of her father eliciting his pride, she would also be demonstrating her intellectual superiority. In this way, she represents a challenge to his authority.

In addition to women's employment and education, traditional gender roles have also been challenged by economic factors. More specifically the segregation of the sexes has been affected in recent years by a number of factors. For example, in the 1990s, increasing unemployment levels affecting the younger generation, in conjunction to matrimony taking place at a later age, resulted in this generation's inability to establish independent households (Kouaouci 37). According to Andrea Khalil, a specialist in North African literature, this delay in self-sufficiency combined with a housing crisis means that: "men and women are forced to cohabitate, thus making for illicit contact between men and women and subsequently forcing a rethinking of the gender-forming narrative" (333). The traditional segregation of sexes that, as stated, established clear and distinct physical spaces for both men and women was no longer possible.[7] This may be

seen, for example, in Aziz Chouaki's novel *L'Etoile d'Alger*, a novel that focuses on the main character, Moussa's, transformation from fashionable singer/socialite to Islamic fundamentalist. One morning he returns home from singing in a nightclub and tries to figure out if he'll be able to sleep: "c'est mercredi, Saliha, Kahina et Mohand doivent être partis au boulot, Nacéra et Ourdia à la fac. Papa dévore la page politique du journal […] Maman prend ses médicaments […] Mémé roule déjà son couscous […] Z'hor doit faire la lessive […] Sahnoun, chômeur simple […] Et Slimane, chômeur-islamiste […] quatorze personnes dans trois pièces" (12-13). Here, in the main character's household not only do the sexes mingle, but also different generations and individuals with varying degrees of religious beliefs.[8] At the beginning of the novel, Moussa's 'Western', capitalist lifestyle contrasts with his brother's unemployment and strict Islamic practices. In Chouaki's narrative, these harsh social and economic conditions hasten Moussa's downward spiral into unemployment, drugs, and eventually prison, where his transformation into a religious extremist takes place.

According to Carlier, changes in familial structure and traditional gender roles did have a profound influence on the popularity of Islamic fundamentalism and Algeria's eventual descent into civil war. He states: "mass education and mass Arabization each played a part in the economy of tensions and corresponding violence in the past decade, by redistributing sex roles in social and familial structures" (Berger 93).[9] To combat the destabilization of social conventions, the FIS or Front Islamique du Salut proposed the establishment of an Islamic state, including the extension of Shari'a law to various facets

of both public and private life, including segregation of the sexes and the regulation of morality between the sexes such as women's dress (Willis 242).[10] Additionally, it proposed the Arabization of the entire educational system. After independence, the FLN launched a program underlining the importance of Arabic instruction in schools, universities, and the administration. Unfortunately, although this system was able to produce a generation of individuals entirely educated in Arabic, the Algerian economy was unable to support the pace of educational reformation.[11] Additionally, both state administration and international corporations continued to prefer French speakers. Consequently, by the 1990's, an increasing portion of the Algerian population found itself unemployed.[12]

Algerians demonstrated their support for these principles when the FIS won a surprising victory in the 1990 parliamentary elections.[13] It was expected that their win would be repeated in the next elections scheduled for 1992. The military, fearing the FIS's popularity, cancelled the next round of elections, deposed the President, banned the party, and imprisoned thousands of its members. For Hugh Roberts, a renowned specialist in Algerian history and politics, the civil war was not only a violent dispute over the structure of the individual Algerian household but also concerning Algeria's political family. The FIS, pronounced in the same way as the word 'fils' or son in French, attempted to use the nationalist sentiment associated with the FLN of the independence movement to represent itself as "the legitimate offspring of the original FLN" (Marty 455). It marketed its program as a return to Algeria's roots and attracted a

new generation of young men who came to perceive themselves as the political and social inheritors of their father's revolution. According to Carlier: "mosques and schools used the words and symbols of the past revolution to transfer the heroic, populist, and messianic model of the fathers' generation to the generation of the sons, that is, the FIS's future troops and leaders. In this sense, the new FIS is very much the son of the FLN" (102). Supporters of the FIS thus believed themselves to be fighting for the establishment of a new family on an individual level that would return the Algerian national family to its proper roots, interrupted by the political and social corruption of the post-independence FLN. As Carlier states, Algeria's sons imagined themselves to be battling for "a cult of ancestors, not to reestablish as such the family of days gone by and the prophet's medina, but rather to support a new public and private order where every brother might become powerful and equal, a male order of the Shari'a to which the family and the Islamic republic held imaginary keys" (Berger 102). It was an ideology that placed the FIS's actions and program within a historical context, giving it genealogical roots while promising the new generation a better and different future.

It is important to note, however, that the FIS as the inheritor of the FLN's revolutionary principles was also the heir to the belief in legitimate political violence. As a reaction to the governmental crackdown, guerilla groups such as the GIA or Groupe Islamique Armé and MIA or Mouvement Islamique Armé emerged and waged a violent armed struggle against the government and army.[14] Civilians were caught in the middle, particularly those 'associated' with the former French colonizer such as journalists and

writers.[15] Additionally, women increasingly became the targets for not conforming to 'Islamic' principles, such as covering their hair or dressing 'modestly'.[16] As a result, approximately 150,000 to 200,000 Algerians were killed during this 11 year long period of violence.

As discussed in Chapter Two, according to the historian James McDougall, violence has become a national heritage. In his opinion, in an attempt to construct a comprehensive and unifying national identity out of a past replete with brutal invasions and foreign domination, Algeria has incorporated violence into its national narrative. Martyrdom and sacrifice have become essential components to the national identity. Civil violence is thereby understood by the guerilla groups as an 'authentic' act, one which pays homage to an Algerian ancestry of struggle. As this analysis will demonstrate, literature is one of the arenas that clearly highlights the issue of violence and its relation to the family, specifically focusing on the dissolution of the Algerian household. Traditionally, within Algerian society, literature has played an important function as both public commentary and instigator of change. Discussing the complex role of the author, Kateb Yacine writes: "ici [en Algérie], l'écrivain ne peut s'abstraire de la vie sociale. C'est radicalement impossible […] pour nous, il est vital de lutter. Ceci n'est pas un choix ou une vision purement intellectuelle, mais une lutte qui nous est imposée" (Soukehal 18). For Yacine, as for other writers, an author also acts as a social and political activist. In the immediate post-independence period, writers attempted to transform social tradition by undermining the authority of the patriarch in their texts. By

the civil war, this figure of power and authority had disappeared. In both Mellal and Salah's texts, the father is absent and the narratives thereby concentrate on the mother. However, each novel presents the maternal as fleeting figure. For example, the narrator in Salah's novel searches in adulthood for an adoptive mother but is forced to accept his unchangeable status as an orphan.[17] Additionally the main character in Mellal's text hunts for the ideal but eternally intangible mother.

In the post-colonial Algerian nation facing daily civil violence, how should we interpret these untraditional and dysfunctional familial structures that lack paternal power and represent the mother as an unattainable ideal? Previous chapters have demonstrated the strong relationship between torture or violence and reproduction, and how the 'birth' of the nation was impeded by the (sexual) torture of the War of Independence, and also how certain Algerians, such as harkis, were excluded from this birth. The aim of this chapter is to explore how these narratives represent a nation devoid of both familial and political structure.

Où est la mèr(e)? : idealization and absence

According to Abdel-Jaouad, beginning in the 1960s, the mother became the predominant subject of literary texts among male Maghrebian francophone authors. Referencing novels such as Boudjedra's *La Répudiation* (1969) and Abdelkébir Khatibi's *Amour bilingue* (1983), Abdel-Jaouad interprets this trend as an expression of the mother/

son bond with specific motivations: "writing whether it be on, about, or in the name of the mother, becomes for the son a mode of self-empowerment, which potentially becomes a will to power over others. The son's desire to emancipate his mother is, first and foremost, a desire for self-emancipation" (16). As this examination will demonstrate, although Arezki Mellal's text *Maintenant ils peuvent venir* continues the post-independence trend of focusing on the mother, the self emancipation that occurs is now overtly from her rather than from the father. The absence of the father may signal freedom from patriarchal domination but also from the essential structure provided by this figure. For example, the narrator of Mellal's text discusses his missing father in the following terms: "c'est le père qui te met en contact avec la vie extérieure. C'est lui qui te met le pied dans le monde. L'absence du père, c'est mettre un pied mal assuré dans ce monde, peut-être pour la vie" (158). Without the father, the family is not balanced, and in the case of Mellal's text, becomes over-dominated by the mother. In an attempt to free himself from the bonds of this dysfunctional relationship, the narrator constructs his own family by getting married and having children. However, as a direct result of the civil violence, this genealogy is diverted from its natural course and eventually destroyed.

Maintenant ils peuvent venir is Mellal's first published novel.[18] Although he had always been involved in the publishing world, Mellal attributes his transformation from employee into author to the civil war.[19] Explaining the reasons why he had chosen to stay in Algeria and face the violence rather than seek safety elsewhere, he stated: "parce que c'est là que je vis, c'est une question de racine; je crois" (La Maison des auteurs). The

importance of roots and relationships forms the subject of his novel. Narrated in the first person, the text describes the narrator's life through his relationships with women and within the context of the spreading violence and brutality of the civil war. Since both of his older brothers have 'fled' to other countries, he has become entirely responsible for the care of his mother who suffers from diabetes. From an imaginary conversation he has with his mother, the reader learns that his father is entirely absent from his life: "Mère, tu oublies le père dont je ne sais rien. Qui était mort. Qui n'est pas mort. Qui vit loin de toi" (17). His statement contains a parallel between memory and knowledge: his mother knows his father but she chooses to forget him whereas he continues to remember him even though he knows nothing about him. It is significant that his father's absence changes from being unavoidable (death) to becoming a matter of personal choice (living elsewhere). Although his mother's decision to forget his father may have been explained by bereavement, it takes on another meaning when it becomes clear that his father merely lives far away. Her amnesia becomes a denial of her son's relationship to his father, one that the narrator echoes in his impersonal reference to his father as 'le' père.

In the novel, his relationship to his mother constantly fluctuates between guilt and accusation. This duality of emotion becomes even more evident as the image of the 'mer' is introduced in the text. In contrast to the real and impossibly dominant mother or 'mère', the intangible, ideal 'mer' or sea appears as an escape. Whereas his feelings for his mother seem contradictory and complicated, when speaking about 'la mer', he expresses only admiration. Essentially, 'la mer' is everything that his true 'mère' is not,

but that he would like her to be. In establishing the relationship between mère/mer within the narrative, Mellal inscribes his text within an Algerian literary tradition. More specifically, this same relationship appears in Mohammed Dib's novel *Qui se souvient de la mer* published in 1962. Similar to Mellal's novel, Dib's narrative takes place during a period of violence, namely that associated with the independence struggle. The narrative, which resembles a science fiction novel, focuses on the main character's experience of the violence and his relationship to his wife and mother of his children, Nafissa, who is always associated with the sea. This link represents the strength and assurance of women amid the violence and chaos of the war. According to Miriam Cooke, who has written extensively about North African literature, the role attributed to women in Dib's narrative was a departure from the way in which he normally represented them: "Dib depicted women as social victims always acted upon and never acting, in *Who Remembers the Sea* women are strong. It is they who initiate action and remain active and alert throughout the anarchy" (134). It even appears that within Dib's text, the women form a sharp contrast to men, offering them reassurance when they become destabilized from the violent environment. The main character observes: "sans la mer, sans les femmes, nous serions restés définitivement des orphelins; elles nous couvrirent du sel de leur langue et cela, heureusement, préserva maints d'entre nous!" (Dugas 374). In Dib's society, women save others from death by calming their fears. They also fight against those attempting to kill all the inhabitants and take over the city with new, concrete buildings. His characterization of men as 'orphans' attributes them a less mature role. In addition to

offering a sense of serenity during a traumatic period, for Abdel-Jaouad, they also functioned as a stabilizing element in an Algerian society undergoing a transformation: "the homonyms mer 'sea' and mère 'mother' constitute the fundamental and permanent elements in life, and those to which the son/child returns and finds solace. In the postcolonial period, the image of the mother as the custodian of pure values is again resurrected" (22). In addition to underlining the role of woman as protector of values, the association mère/mer also highlights women's role as a genealogical source. For example in Dib's description above, as the mère/mer they keep others from becoming orphans and thereby preserve the nation's lineage. According to the sociologist Klaus Theweleit, the universal association between women and water has a strong association to procreation: "human life emerged from the water, just as every individual human still does. A fetus develops within the amniotic sac of the mother's womb" (269). Women as water elements not only calm and protect in times of unrest, but also serve an important role as the guarantors of regeneration. At the end of the novel, Dib makes them responsible for the birth of the new world: "et si c'était elle [Nafissa] justement qui préparait la venue d'un autre monde? Il y avait dans sa manière d'être distante une distraction de femme enceinte" (Dugas 460). In Dib's narrative, which clearly illustrates the way in which literature sought to construct the new nation, women are represented as fertile providers of the future Algeria.

In contrast to Dib's narrative, in *Maintenant ils peuvent venir* the association mère/mer does not underline women's role as protectors, guaranteeing tradition and familial heritage. The narrator's mother, for example, appears as a maternal absence:

> lors d'une plongée je ne suis plus remonté, ma tête est restée dans ta poitrine, laisse-moi prendre le large, nous sommes aujourd'hui, mère. Aujourd'hui encore que t'ai-je fait? Tu es toujours malade et je suis toujours avec toi. Tu as toujours été malade. J'ai toujours été là […] Mais nous sommes aujourd'hui. Mère, quelle crime ai-je commis? Que dois-je expier? La mer rutilante, tous ses diamants sortis, s'offre, radieuse. S'offre, la mer (14).

In this section, the narrator tries to make this mother as large as the sea, using verbs such as 'plonger' and 'remonter'. Additionally, he uses the expression 'prendre le large' which means to sail but also to make oneself scarce. The second colloquial expression gives the impression that he wants to escape but is unable to, bound to her by his feelings of guilt. Contrasting to self accusation, the 'mer' symbolizes an appealing alternative, 'rutilante' or shining signifies an attractive escape.

Although his mother seems tangible in contrast to the ideal 'mer', their relationship appears elusive as if neither is able to play the appropriate or traditional roles. For example, he states:

> mère, je veux être ton fils seulement. Devenir ton fils. Tu n'as jamais été ma mère, tu m'as toujours manqué. Vois, j'ai mal grandi, je n'ai pas grandi. Mère je veux te retrouver. Comment faire pour voir celle qui n'a jamais été? Tu n'as jamais été ma mère, tu as été mon mal. Je ne t'en veux pas. Je veux me libérer de ces terribles liens invisibles. Ce cordon ombilical que j'ai forgé et qui a forgé ma vie. Je n'étais pas un enfant comme les autres. Ma vie a été le vide que tu m'as donné. Tu étais l'absence, j'étais la solitude (17).

The narrator stresses the lack of traditional filiation by mentioning his desire to *become* her son. In contrast to the natural, biological bond between mother and son, the link he has to his mother is artificial. It is represented by a fabricated umbilical cord that he made himself. Expanding on the image of a false gestation, he explains how he was not able to grow 'je n'ai pas grandi'. The image of him as an underdeveloped or abnormal child is further underlined by his statement 'je n'étais pas un enfant comme les autres'. Within his statement, both his own development and his relationship to his absent mother appear irregular.

The issue of absence appears again as the narrator remembers an episode that occurred when he was a child at school. Instructed by a teacher to write his mother's name upon the board, he not only found himself unable but also unwilling to complete this assignment:

> "Maman", ce mot que je n'ai jamais pu dire. Que je n'ai jamais pu écrire, su écrire, voulu écrire. Ecrire est un autre interdit […] Je n'ai pas de maman, j'ai une mère, et je ne peux pas écrire son nom. Ma mère n'a pas de nom, ou alors je l'ai oublié. Je ne peux pas le prononcer, je ne peux pas l'écrire. Je vous en supplie, madame, je ne peux pas. C'était le premier jour de la rentrée, il fallait passer au tableau devant tout le monde, quelle horreur! Ecrire l'imprononçable (44).

The narrator constructs a contrast between the word 'maman' which evokes both informality and affection versus the proper and impersonal word 'mère'. His inability to write or even utter her name essentially renders her anonymous. During this scene, in order to escape the assignment without punishment he tells the teacher that, similar to

another student, his mother is dead. This gesture not only eradicates his mother's identity but more importantly her presence. In addition to referencing the formality between himself and his mother, the narrator may also reference the linguistic challenges that continue to influence Algerian culture, namely the struggle between French, Arabic, and Tamazight and oral versus written culture.[20] As Hafid Gafaïti, a prominent specialist in Algerian literature, notes in "The Monotheism of the Other", French colonization had a destructive effect on Algerian culture. The French administration closed Arabic and Berber schools and restricted access to education in French. In 1962, 80% of the Algerian population was illiterate. Additionally, Arabic had been treated as a foreign language since 1938, was forbidden from official documents and mostly absent from the school curriculum (Berger 25). For this reason, language was and continues to be an important issue in Algerian literature.

Francophone writers often examine and explore their own relationships to both French and the dialectical Arabic mother tongue in their texts. For example the writer Malek Haddad, who appears in Ahlam Mostaghanemi's novel *Memory in the Flesh* discussed in Chapter One, explained his own feelings towards French in the following way: "Maman se dit Ya Ma et moi je dis ma mère" (Abdel-Jaouad). In this sentence we see the same division expressed by Mellal, that of informal and emotive dialect (Ya Ma) versus proper and distant French (ma mère). In addition to being a question of French or Arabic, the linguistic discussion also involves the subjugation of oral dialect by written language. This idea is expressed by the narrator in his emphasis on the fact that he is

unable to inscribe his mother's name on the board, the 'mother tongue' being an oral and unwritten linguistic form. However, the last sentence not only refers to the oral nature of this language but also the narrator's separation from it, as his mother's name is unknown and unpronounceable.

The main character's discussion of his relationship to oral language calls to mind Assia Djebar's linguistic experiences that she documents in *L'Amour, la fantasia*.[21] In this semi-autobiographical novel, she also describes how she associates the orality of Arabic dialect, which she has lost, with her mother: "ma langue mère disparue […] je me retrouve désertée des chants de l'amour arabe" (244). This feminine, emotive, oral language is contrasted directly in the novel with the more formal and sterile French language, one which she associates with her father who was responsible for her education at a French school.[22] Rather than merely discussing the linguistic issues Algerians encountered, Djebar's text contextualizes linguistic problems within a familial structure reflecting the complexity of the colonial 'marriage' between France and Algeria. Mellal, in contrast to Djebar, focuses only on his 'mother tongue', the language of his mother in his discussion. His father is missing as a linguistic presence in the narrator's description. Also, contrary to tradition, that places the most importance on the father's name ensuring that both his first and last name are passed to his children, the father is literally unnamed by the narrator. His teacher only asks for his mother's name and it is only this name that becomes the object of his fear and guilt.

As previously mentioned, the narrator appears to continuously fluctuate between feelings of remorse and accusation concerning his mother in the text. At one point he returns to a possible origin of his self-accused crime: "alors, cette voix dans tes cauchemars: "Tu as voulu coucher avec ta mère." Oui, mère je t'ai désirée, c'est vrai, c'était dans ma tête. Dans ma tête, je te voulais pour toutes les femmes, tu étais l'unique, je te voulais unique" (14). According to Abdel-Jaouad, francophone writers often turn to psychoanalysis in an attempt to explore and affirm their own identity. Although Western readers may recognize a clear reference to the Oedipus complex, Bouhdiba stresses that in Arabo-Muslim society the mother/son relationship is not quite the same. Rather than attempting to interpret a non-Western society in Western terms, Bouhdiba suggests a culturally specific alternative. He finds an equivalent type of rite of passage recounted in *The Thousand and One Nights*, the myth of Judār. In his quest to obtain secret treasure, Judār is required to get past a number of obstacles but finds himself unable to succeed in the last challenge that requires him to ask a woman who resembles his mother to remove all of her undergarments. Rather than only focusing on this tale in terms of incest, Bouhdiba prefers to interpret it as an affirmation of the son's identity:

> life is a treasure that can be acquired only if one is first able to kill the inanimate shades (shabah bila ruh). Psychological maturity is an attack on the mother. One must kill in oneself the image of the mother, profane it, demythify it. To kill in oneself the false image of the mother is to find security (amina). It is our hesitations, our scruples, our childhood memories that prevent us from realizing our desire for happiness. Respect for our mothers prevents us from flying with our own wings (227).

In this sense, the narrator's affirmation of desire may be interpreted as an attempt to overcome his feelings of guilt in order to become independent from his mother and 'prendre le large' or escape. In his statement he does not deny the fact that he felt longing, but does underline that it was of a purely psychological nature. Similar to Judār's inability to undress his mother, the narrator's longing for his mother is a figment of his imagination of which he appears to be conscious.

With regards to the nature of the relationship between mother and son in traditional Arabo-Muslim society, as Bouhdiba informs us, they suffer from a similar lack of consideration by the father. This rejection compels the equally disregarded mother and son to form a bond. The nature of their association becomes even closer and more important than that of either the wife/husband or father/son bond: "by a subtle, but very natural strategy, mothers and children have decided since time immemorial to combine their efforts to hold in check if possible, in any case to circumvent and to compensate for, whatever is abusive in patriarchal power" (220). Their closeness, it appears, is forged not only from their similar subjugated status but from a desire for mutual protection. In fact, it is customary for the mother to choose the wife of her son since, in this way, she may guarantee her position in his future household.

This maternal duty is discussed by the narrator's mother, who accuses him of not permitting her to be a true mother by not allowing her to chose his wife. Out of a sense of guilt concerning his duties, the narrator concedes and marries Yasmina. The daughter of a family acquaintance, she visits his mother daily during her hospital stay and a bond

develops between the two women. Since his mother has in fact chosen her for him, he associates both Yasmina and their relationship with his mother. He states:

> elle a été ma femelle sur injonction de ma mère. Je me suis déversé en elle, complètement vidé. Yasmina ouverte. Mer étalée. Moi, comme un navire. Elle, soumise. Flot assujetti en long, en large, en travers. Morsure, rage, éruption. Assouvir la folle envie, la fureur à ciel ouvert […] Qui est-elle bon Dieu! Je ne savais qu'une chose: ma mère me l'avait mise entre les pattes, entre les bras, entre les jambes (61).

From the beginning of this description, their relationship is described in abnormal terms. It appears to be animalistic rather than human indicated by the use of terms such as 'femelle' and 'pattes'. This is also underlined by his feeling of uncertainty concerning her identity asking 'qui est elle' and affirming that he is only certain that his mother chose her for him. With regard to the sexual aspect of their association, the image of water returns as Yasmina is likened to the sea. However, this is not the ideal sea of the narrator's fantasies that is in control and offers itself to him. The sea associated with Yasmina is a passive body of water, a 'mer étalée' that accepts him. In contrast to Yasmina who is submissive, being described as 'ouverte' or opened, the narrator is attributed an aggressive role. The use of adjectives such as 'rage' and 'fureur' to describe his emotions underlines the idea of violence. The word 'en travers' to describe his navigation suggests that something is amiss or unbalanced in this act and also in their relationship.

Due to the link between his mother and wife, his marriage appears to be tainted. Referencing his relationship to the two women after his mother's death and son's birth he

states: “mère est morte. Mère-Yasmina, la femme éternelle. Je ne m’étais jamais résolu à la mort de ma mère comme on ne se résolu pas à sa propre mort. Mère-femme, ténèbres et lumière, j’ai vu, ce jour, l’univers se briser. Je suis mort, la vie continue” (62). For him, his wife has attempted to take the place of his mother. Whereas his mother is dead, Yasmina lives on forever. In the latter part of his statement, it appears that he almost thinks positively of her, describing his wife ‘mère-femme’ in terms of both shadow and light. However, he remarks that this light has only illuminated his own figurative death. His reaction to this realization in the narrative is to ask Yasmina for a divorce. It is at this point that the ideal ‘mer’ reappears to offer him reassurance regarding the correctness of his decision: “en face, la mer, splendide, me ramena à mon envie folle de vivre. Vivre ma vie comme un atroce besoin. Mais Yasmina se dressait définitivement entre moi et la vie. Définitivement? La mer me sauvera toujours” (64). It appears that, at this point, the contrast mère/mer has been re-established with Yasmina taking the place of his mother, representing an imperfect and constricting alternative to the expanse of the ocean. Similar to his mother, Yasmina stands between him and his ideal.

The narrator later affirms to Zakia, with whom he falls in love, how this ideal mother/mer represented an intangible aspiration: “je cherchais ma mère que je n’ai jamais trouvée, jamais. Ecoute-moi, j’ai cru que j’allais devenir dingue dans cette recherche de la mère. Puis, pour ne pas devenir dingue, j’ai du me trouver une réponse” (151). As he reveals, his solution to not finding the ideal mother was to create his own, new family tree. Rather than continuing to deny his status as father, he accepts and embraces it by

recognizing the existence of his son. However, rather than re-establishing a traditional familial structure, his new household is yet another representation of the unraveled Algerian nation, literally conceived by the war.

Due to the increase in violence and her precarious situation as a divorced woman, the narrator decides to invite Yasmina and their son, Kamel, to live with him. However, at the same time as he is concerned with his son's safety, he is also worried by the fact that he has caused his son to suffer the same kind of unhappy childhood that he suffered: "tu découvres que tu as un fils. Tu te rappelles, enfant maudit, ton enfance de malheur. Tous les soirs, dans ta solitude tu découvres un autre enfant maudit. Ton fils. Tu n'en peux plus" (106). The source of his concern is the presence of Yasmina who he has assimilated to his own mother. He therefore intervenes in his son's development in order to stop what he perceives as a repetitious circle of mis-development.

At the same time as Yasmina and his son return to his apartment, he meets Zakia. Within the contrast mère/mer in which both his mother and Yasmina are incorporated, Zakia appears as an exterior presence. Neither the imperfect mother nor the intangible ideal, she represents a feminine otherness to the narrator or as he names her 'une fée': "nous regardons la mer: trois bateaux blancs, posés sur l'horizon, discutent posément. Au bord de la fenêtre, ta main dans la mienne s'affole doucement. Le bonheur est bleu ce matin" (146). Within this description, the narrator focuses on their unity symbolized by the pronoun 'nous' and the image of their joined hands. Additionally, rather than turning to the 'mer' as an escape, as in previous instances, he is contemplating the ocean with her.

The future, rather than being constricted, is blue and like the ocean, expansive and permissive. In the novel, their relationship therefore represents an ideal union, one which remains stable and functional despite the presence of his ex-wife Yasmina and the constant violence of the civil war.

However, the narrator's ideal future family tree with Zakia eventually becomes distorted by the civil war and the assassination of the narrator's close friend Salah. An activist who refused to either flee to France or give up his beliefs, Salah is killed by Islamists and his death is discovered by his wife: "Baya butera quelques jours plus tard sur un sac à ordures devant sa porte. Elle n'aura pas besoin de l'ouvrir pour savoir, la flaque de sang dira tout. Elle ne retrouvera jamais le corps de Salah. Elle se contentera de la tête dans ce sac" (108). The placement of his head in a garbage bag demonstrates a clear attempt to show both disrespect and disregard for his death. His decapitation, an execution style strongly associated with the civil war, symbolizes a castration of his masculinity and his position as an intellectual activist. Also, in its separation from his body that is not returned, beheading prohibits a true burial. It also signifies the guerrilla's control over both the victim and his family, denying the latter access to the complete corpse. For the sociologist Michael Humphrey, the body acted as a battlefield during the civil war: "the politics of Algeria is that of violence against the nation, against itself […] the tortured (wounded, mutilated or dead) body is the space in which power is being contested in Algeria today" (3). As will be discussed in more detail later in this analysis,

dismemberment of the individual actually then becomes a microcosm for the dissection of the national body.

Describing his reaction to his friend's death, the narrator states: "Salah, maintenant, je me déchire. Je pleure, je suis un torrent. Je suis redevenu un enfant, un bébé, un foetus, un sanglot, un éclat, un cri, un rien, un néant. Le rien existe, le néant existe. Je n'existe pas" (131). His emotional response to the assassination is to revert to a childlike state that he attempts to describe as even less than human or even an existence. This is evoked by the decreasing stature of the terms used. For example, there is a clear transformation from child to a fetus. His physical regression is further underlined by the changes in the emotional sounds he makes, moving from crying to screaming, indicating his lack of control over his emotions. The narrator's reaction is similar to that described by Humphrey; namely that when confronted by the spectacle of violence, our reaction is to immediately consider our own mortality (6). However, within the Algerian context, inhabitants were continuously reminded of the fragility of their own lives:

> terror claims the bodies of 'innocent' victims as a strategy of power which declares that there is no zone of safety, only total war. When the sanctuaries of home, mosque and the bodies of children and women are violated or destroyed everyone is terrorized as a potential victim. The murder of the innocent, a status guaranteed by them being chance victims, allows one death to stand for a whole category (7).

As Humphrey indicates, during the civil war, guerrilla groups did not target any specific group; rather, anyone could be their victim. Even those such as women and children,

who are traditionally spared in conflicts, were killed. Thus Algerians were confronted with their own possible death on a daily basis.

In the novel, Salah's death provokes the narrator's emotional breakdown and he confusedly accepts Yasmina's attempt to comfort him. The result, the reader later discovers, is her second pregnancy. With this event, a relationship becomes established between reproduction and violence. However, this procreation signals the beginning of a genealogical disruption. As an indirect result of Salah's murder, the narrator is unable to marry Zakia, and his family tree makes another unplanned turn. As the narrator informs the reader, Zakia marries another man and Yasmina gives birth to a daughter, Safia. At the same time, there is a steady increase in violence and the narrator interrupts himself more frequently with descriptions of the daily brutalities and of those committing the violence: "des articles de la presse parlent de 'l'émir' Abidallah. Un sauvage des plus sanguinaires qui sévit dans notre région. Il se déplace à cheval, ses troupes dévastent les douars par les massacres et les viols" (163). As the narrative references, during the civil war, violence became increasingly focused on women. As proponents of an Islamic state, guerilla groups targeted those who transgressed 'religious' boundaries. For example, the narrator relates how the hijab or veil became obligatory in certain areas of the capital: "un jour, Yasmina avait oublié de prendre son foulard. Trop tard pour revenir en arrière. Elle s'est trouvée contrainte, la mort dans l'âme, de s'affubler du chiffon qui sert à dépoussiérer la voiture" (188). In contrast to other texts, Mellal's narrative does not contain specific details about the nature of the violence. It indicates the sexual nature of

the retribution and the fear felt by the population, especially women, leaving precise details unknown. For example, in the above citation, the level of desperation is evident in Yasmina's action of using a cleaning rag to cover her head. Although the possible consequence is inferred, particularly in the phrase 'la mort dans l'âme', it is not specified. The result of this style is that the reader is left in a similar condition to the victims, unaware of what paths the violence may take.

As a reaction to the increasing brutality, the narrator and his family move out of the city center to be in a more stable area. However, he has to return to his old apartment to find a tax document and takes his young daughter with him. Unfortunately on their return, the car breaks down and they find themselves encircled in a forest by guerilla members and, more importantly, l'émir. He remembers a story he heard about the level of his cruelty:

> dans un des douars anéantis par l'émir une rescapée avait dit à son mari : "S'ils viennent, tue-moi et tue les enfants." Le mari ne le fera pas. Tous les membres de la famille seront décapités sous ses yeux et sa fille de quinze ans enlevée. Après avoir été violée et torturée, elle suppliera 'l'émir' de l'achever. 'L'émir' la laissera en vie (165).

The choice presented by this situation involves either the voluntary or involuntary destruction of the family. Either the father decides to kill his wife and children or the islamists will physically eradicate the majority of the members. This act would then lead to the psychological destruction of the father, both rendering him responsible for the death of his family and forcing him to be a witness to this violent act. In addition to the emotional consequences of this act, the survivor would also suffer socially. In traditional

Arabo-Muslim society, the male is responsible for the protection of female family members who are traditionally viewed as the bearers of the family's honor. If her reputation is sullied, then the reputation of the family suffers as a direct consequence. Sexual violence, according to Soukehal, is socially perceived as proof of a woman's promiscuity: "la société traditionnelle masculine est très à cheval sur la question de l'honneur tribal (familial). Si une femme se fait violenter sexuellement c'est de sa faute" (175). Within the context of the narrative, not only does the father fail to protect his daughter but is left to suffer the social repercussions of her rape. This section of the novel also indicates how the nature of the violence is reminiscent of that associated with the struggle for independence. In an effort to control the rest of the Algerian population, the islamist guerillas used a combination of sexual violence and torture.

At the end of the novel, the narrator is faced with the same choice. However, rather than surrendering control of his own family tree, he destroys it himself by strangling his daughter. By killing his offspring, he also symbolically castrates himself. He has severed his own bloodline and eradicated the possibility of his own biological continuation. Strangely, it is at this point, when he has acted on his decision that he remembers the mère/mer: "dans ma tête, un ruissellement de vagues. La Mer, je suis né il y a quarante millions d'années. Il y a quarante ans, Mère" (201). In this reflection, his association to the ocean takes precedence over that between he and his mother. Not only is the sea mentioned first for the first time, but he characterizes himself as older and more established in relation to it. In definitively taking control of his own biological legacy, he

feels himself to have established his identity. However, by making this decision he has also unknowingly given authority to the islamists to destroy it: “du haut de sa monture, l’émir Abidallah dit à ses hommes: “Laissez ce chien en vie. Qu’il rentre chez lui. Qu’il raconte ce qu’il a vu. Qu’il raconte ce qu’il a fait” (202). The emir chooses not to kill the narrator since death, in this situation, would mean that this violence would be silenced. Rather he keeps him alive so that this viciousness may be retold and repeated, becoming an oral chain of brutality that keeps the émir’s power alive. His family, despite the narrator’s efforts, is not destroyed. However, it has been transformed into an incomplete and traumatized unit, becoming a contemporary version of the family from which he emerged and an individual reflection of the nation.

In this narrative, Mellal represents the process of self-affirmation in war-torn Algeria. From the absent father and dominating presence of the mother, the narrator attempts to affirm his own identity. In the context of the narrative, this assertion takes the form of the establishment of a new family. Combatting the dysfunctional nature of his own upbringing, the narrator re-constructs a traditional familial structure amidst civil violence. However, as the reader later sees, he is not able to sustain this unit in the light of national cruelty. His reaction is to destroy it, rather than risk its further distortion. However, due to his attempted act of self-affirmation, he not only kills his daughter but more importantly condemns his son to a non-operational familial structure. The result is that another distorted family is created, generated by civil violence.

Algérie rahet[23]

Yasmina Salah belongs to the new generation of Algerian writers who seek to show the reality of the post-independence Algerian nation in their work.[24] As this analysis argues, her novel وطن من زجاج or *Glass Nation* goes beyond demonstrating the myth of the Algerian family to describe its violent destruction. More specifically, the narrative represents the 'family' as a collection of orphaned children searching for parents. The narrator's mother died in childbirth and his father disappeared when he was young. As a result of this, the narrator searches for an adoptive mother. As this study argues, his quest for a mother figure is also for a motherland. However, he is forced to abandon his efforts to find a replacement mother as civil violence escalates and the national Algerian family is brutally dismembered.

In an article focusing on the issue of gender and nationalism within the context of South Africa, Anne McClinktock explains the tradition behind the image of nation as gendered entity: "nations are frequently figured through the iconography of familial and domestic space […] We speak of nations as 'motherlands' and 'fatherlands'. Foreigners 'adopt' countries that are not their native homes, and are 'naturalized' into the national family […] In this way, nations are symbolically figured as *domestic genealogies*" (62). The allegory of the nation as parent offers the citizen a comforting way in which to consider an abstract and intangible entity. The nation, as a 'mother' or 'father' will look after its citizens, both providing and protecting them. As we note in McClintock's discussion, the English language lends itself to this association, easily permitting the

bond between the concepts of family and nation, forming one word: motherland.

Turning to the specific context of Algeria, the story becomes a little more complicated. As Françoise Vergès points out, the French colonial project seems to have negotiated the issue of (linguistic) gender by narrating a family romance based on a single parent: "colonial family romance invented one parent, the Mère-Patrie, and consequently sought to impose a process of identification that rejected the reality that each human being has two parents" (5). In this story, France became the mother of the colonized and replaced not only biological parents but also subjugated the feminine figure of Algeria. Within this new familial configuration, La Mère-Patrie was an ambiguous figure: "a character mixing the feminine and the masculine: the castrating and protective mother" (5). Offering security and shelter from exploitation by local tyrants, the French family justified the complete domination of Algeria. France, in the name of the revolutionary principles of égalité, fraternité et liberté was actually saving people by colonizing them. However, as Vergès points out, being rescued came at a price: "colonized 'children' had contracted a debt to France […] she would save her children and elevate them toward full humanness. The children, once women and men, would naturally want to pay their debt" (6). Repayment occurred through complete submission to French rule and when colonial children rebelled against France they were viewed as ungrateful. For the historian Benjamin Stora, this is perhaps why the French government avoided associating the struggle for independence with the term 'war': "nommer la guerre, ce serait reconnaître une existence séparée de l'Algérie, ce serait admettre une

'autre histoire'. Dire la guerre, ce serait évoquer 'la ruine du ménage'" (*La Gangrène et l'oubli* 18). Rather than admitting that its adoptive Algerian children rejected French protection and the liability that came with it, the French government preferred to represent the war as a case of its Algerian children misbehaving. The war was therefore nothing more than 'événements' or 'actions de maintien de l'ordre'.

Algeria's independence was also conceptualized in familial terms, being referred to as a divorce. A number of writers have discussed this eminent separation in their work. For example, Mouloud Feraoun notes in his *Journal,* written during the war years from 1955-1962: "pourquoi le divorce est si brutal. La vérité c'est qu'il n'y a jamais eu mariage! Les Français sont restés à l'écart. Ils croyaient que l'Algérie, c'était eux […] Ce qu'il eut fallu pour s'aimer? Se connaître d'abord" (9). As Feraoun indicates, the union between France and Algeria had never been perceived by Algerians as consensual. Algeria had been forcibly taken by the French and there had never been a marriage. Furthermore this union took place between strangers. Indicating the illicit and violent nature of this relationship, Fanon refers to it as rape in "L'Algérie se dévoile"[25], Assia Djebar describes is as "une copulation obscène" (32) in *L'Amour, la fantasia*.[26] In addition to reflecting on the illicit nature of the association between these two countries, writers associated with the independence struggle also appear to have been concerned with their own status as the 'products' of this relationship. Kateb Yacine's groundbreaking novel *Nedjma* (1956) focuses on genealogy and roots. The main character, for example, explains the relationship between himself and his friends in the

following way: “Mourad, Nedjma, Rachid et moi; notre tribu mise en échec répugne à changer de couleur; nous nous sommes toujours mariés entre nous; l’inceste est notre lien, notre principe de cohésion depuis l’exil du premier ancêtre; le même sang nous porte irrésistiblement à l’embouchure de fleuve passionnel” (176). As Soukehal observes, Yacine’s fascination with roots concerned a quest for an identity (363).[27] However, as seen in this section of the novel, his characters search for an irrefutable, exclusive, pure bond with other Algerians as a way of establishing this identity. Incest, within this context, may represent a desire for unity or sameness as a response to the colonial experience that introduced the ‘other’ into Algerian society. Yacine’s attachment between Algerians, solidified by both blood and ancestry, is rooted in a distant past as his characters recall Algeria’s pre-colonial tribal social structure as a way of negotiating Algeria’s independence. Similarly, in Mouloud Mammeri’s novel *L’Opium et le baton* (1965) the main character, who fights alongside the FLN during the war, considers the fate of child born to ‘mixed’ parents: “le fils d’un Algérien et d’une Française c’est idiot, ça n’a pas de sens, il sera malheureux toute sa vie; il ne sera chez lui nulle part, ni parmi les tiens [en France], ni en Algérie. Ce sera le bâtard de tout le monde” (Dugas 730). For Mammeri’s character it is impossible to consider the offspring of an encounter between France and Algeria as anything other than illegitimate. The child would be rejected not only by its ‘parents’, but universally by ‘tout le monde’. It would literally not have a place in the world and would be uncomfortable everywhere. Feraoun serves as another example of this preoccupation with identity, reflecting on how he was taught to consider

himself as a child: “il [le professeur] m’a appris très tôt que la France était ma patrie adoptive et que par conséquent j’étais un petit orphelin dont on prenait soin” (98). His statement demonstrates the way in which he was taught about France’s selfless act and the gratitude he owed her, echoing Vergès’ discussion of the colonial debt. But also, given the political context in which he was writing, his statement as well as the other authors’ preoccupation with identity, may be interpreted as an expression of anxiety concerning the fate of ‘adopted orphans’ in a broken colonial marriage.

Upon independence, as discussed, the FLN attempted to construct a new family for Algerians by inventing a national narrative emphasizing a solid and united community. In order to bolster this solidarity, it created a triple unity based on the idea of one language, one religion and one nation. Additionally, as Soukehal notes, the government embarked on an active ideological campaign: “entre 1962 et 1975, les dirigeants […] veulent absolument anesthésier le peuple par des discours idéologiques emphatiques, un programme de rééducation idéologique […] très strict : Chants patriotiques, jeunesse volontaire sur tous les fronts, peuple militarisé, socialisme de masse” (52). Similar to the French educational campaign which taught Algerian children about their ancestors, ‘Les Gaulles’, the Algerian government taught citizens how to actually be Algerian.[28] In the process, a new history of the revolution was invented that mythified the unified battle of the Algerian people against the French colonizer and heralded the actions of the FLN. Habib Tengour writes about this glorification in his novel *Les Vieux de la Montagne*: “les édifices publics arboraient fièrement par le peuple

et pour le peuple. Glorification du moindre geste. On exhumait les martyrs et les héros exhortent la jeunesse à l'exemple. Les mérités étaient exhibés dans des foires annuelles" (Soukehal 55). As Tengour demonstrates, martyrs not only died in the name of the political construction of the Algerian nation but were also used to build a national sentiment, a feeling of community. In this particular example, the theatrical or artificial nature of the government's campaign is underlined through Tengour's description of annual fairs or festivals.[29]

As demonstrated by Salah's narrative, the myth of the national family quickly collapsed. On a purely symbolic and linguistic level, the Arabic language does not permit the joining of words. For example, in this novel وطن or homeland has to be considered and discussed separately from أب و أم or mother and father. However on a more tangible level, Salah's novel represents and investigates the dissolution of this association, showing the violent disintegration of the Algerian national community. As an abrupt introduction to the nature of Algerian violence, the novel begins with an assassination. Reflecting on the victim's identity or rather describing it to the reader, the narrator then begins to retrace his own life. As the reader discovers, although the narrator was surrounded by family members such as his father, grandfather, and aunt for part of his childhood, he considers himself an orphan. This is perhaps due to the fact that there appears to be no traditional emotional bonds between the individual members of his family. For example, he describes the relationship between his father and grandfather in

the following way:

يصطحبني جدي معه في نزهاته اليومية متباهياً بالأرض ومنتقداً والدي الذي كان يصفه بالغبي لأنه ظل حزيناً ووفياً لامرأة أحبها عن واجب الحب ...امرأة ماتت وهي تضعني للحياة. كان أبي يشعر بالضغينة نحوي لأنه ربط بين حياتي وبين موت والدتي [...] كان جدي حين يتكلم عنه يقول "ذلك الشخص" ليعني ابنه (31).

My grandfather took me along on his daily strolls, proud of his land and cursing my father who he described as an idiot because he was still sad and longing for a woman he loved out of duty to love...a woman who died giving birth to me. My father hated me because he linked together my life and my mother's death [...] When my grandfather used to talk about him, he used to say that 'person'.

Not only is there a lack of affection between his father and grandfather, the latter even refuses to recognize the former as his son, preferring to call him by a generic term 'that person'. It appears that this broken familial link is then repeated between the narrator and his own father who also harbors hostile feelings towards his son. As the narrator later informs us, his father disappears permanently from his life due to his grandfather's attempts to re-marry him. His mother's death in childbirth is a critical event in his life, setting him on a life-long quest for maternal figures. Within the political context of the novel, the emotional instability felt by the main character also appears to mirror the insecurity affecting the Algerian nation. As the political situation worsens, his quest for a mother becomes more hopeless and he is eventually forced to abandon his search.

In the novel, his aunt represents the first maternal presence he experiences during his childhood:

لم يكن لي أب أتباهى به، منذ غادر أبي دونما رجعة، ولم تكن لي أم أحلم بأعيادي الحميمة في حضورها منذ ارتبط موت أمي بولادتي، ولكن كانت لي ذراعي عمتي وحضنها ويدها التي كانت

تمسح بها على شعري. كان لي صوتها وحزنها وذاكرتها المعطوبة حد الشلل...عمتي التي مع الوقت صارت تناديني "بني" و صرت أناديها عن لا وعي: أمي! (32)

I did not have a father to be proud of since my father had left without returning, and I did not have a mother to dream of intimate birthdays in her presence since her death was tied to my birth but I did have my aunt's arms and her embrace and her hands that stroked my hair. And I had her voice, her sadness and her deficient memory on the verge of paralysis...my aunt who, as time went by, began to call me "my son" and I began to call her without thinking, "my mother".

Within this description of their relationship, there is a sharp contrast between how he describes his absent parents versus his aunt. Specifically, in his description of his parents he focuses on a positive emotion (pride) and a happy event (his birthday). In contrast to this, he discusses his aunt in an uncomplimentary manner, describing her in terms of a partial physical and emotional presence. His first 'replacement' mother is disabled, both on a physical and symbolic level as she is unable to give to him the emotional support he seeks. As the narrator informs us, this maternal presence was eventually taken away from him. By forbidding his aunt's marriage, his grandfather caused her death.

Rather than acting as a solidifying presence within the family, bringing other members together, the narrator's grandfather actually causes the family to disintegrate. It is for this reason that the schoolteacher intervenes. By paying attention to the young narrator and introducing him to his own family, he seeks to give him another masculine role-model:

كنت أظل أبحلق فيه صامتاً، ولعل شكلي كان يثير عطفه ويذكره أنني اليتيم الذي لم يجد يداً تربت على كتفه أو تسمح على رأسه خارج لعبة اللوم والعتاب. كان المعلم يبتسم لي بطريقة مختلفة ويمد يده إلي ويمسكني من يدي ويقول :"أنت لا تشبه جدك"(33).

I used to gaze at him, at length, silently. Perhaps my appearance stirred his emotions or reminded him that I was the orphan who did not find a hand to pat my shoulder or stroke my head outside of being the butt of blame or reproof. The teacher used to smile at me in a different way, and extended his hand to me, taking me by the hand and say: "you are not like your grandfather".

Similar to the description of his relationship with his aunt, he focuses on the physical contact that he has with the teacher. Additionally, he reminds the reader, once again, that he is alone. His orphan status is also highlighted by the teacher who tells him that he does not resemble his only present relative. This remark is contrary to both tradition and genealogy whereby similarity is desirable.

Arabo-Islamic society, as Bouhdiba informs us, is centered around the family, which is determined by both blood ties and marriage. However, the position of an orphan within this society is a very tenuous one since without a family, there seems little social or religious opportunity for their incorporation. Islam prohibits adoption, maintaining "the mythical, physical character of the notion of kinship, it [Islam] seems to be concerned exclusively with consanguinity" (17). Due to the importance of blood line, the orphan's own genealogy remains important and present. Even in the absence of a biological family, Islamic law dictates that it must be recognized. For example, when cared for by another family, the child will always retain his family name and remains an outsider to the bloodline of this second family. This means that as an adult, marriage is permitted between the orphan and members of the second family (as long as the orphan was not nursed by his adoptive mother). Additionally, even as a child, rules of modesty apply to family members of the opposite sex. Within the home, women traditionally

remain unveiled in the presence of immediate male family members. In the case of a male orphan, however, female members of the household should wear the hijab in his presence, signaling his status as a non-family member and outsider.

The orphan within this society is always recognized as such and suffers from perpetual social rejection. In the novel, it appears that the narrator's ostracism was amplified by an unfortunate event in which several children drowned while swimming in a ravine. As the only survivor, he was accused of being to blame and, as he notes, was subjected to being called a nickname:

مع الوقت صار الناس يطلقون علي لقبا غريباً: لاكامورا! شيئاً فشيئاً فهمت أن لاكامورا تعني ببساطة من لا حق له في الموت براحة! (37).

With time people began to call me by a strange nickname: Lakamoura! Little by little I understood that Lakamoura simply means he who has no right to a peaceful death.

In a sense, as the survivor of two tragic events, his mother's death in childbirth and this drowing accident, he is perceived by the community as unnatural. In order to explain his survival, the village believed him to be associated with black magic. His presence in the community is thereby interpreted as supernatural and sinister. As revenge for his ability to escape death, he is then sentenced by the community to a difficult death.

This negative, abnormal characterization of the main character as an orphan and survivor recalls the representation of Lounès in Mustapha Benfodil's short story "Paris-Alger classe enfer", discussed in Chapter Two. The product of the collective rape of his mother who was a fellaga with the FLN during the war, he describes his birth in the

following way: “elle finit par me chier dans les toilettes en faisant ses grands besoins, tant elle ne supportait pas de porter dans ses entrailles une telle souillure. Je suis né avec son ultime cri. On me croyait mort-né, et je fus jeté dans une décharge sauvage. Le médecin militaire avait ordonné qu’on me brûle pour éviter que les chiens qui me mangeraient me colporteraient la maladie de la Révolution” (Kacimi 53-54). From his birth, he was literally considered waste and he survived two attempts to discard him. His mother treated him as excrement, delivering him in a toilet at the same time as she defecated. The parallel established between these two acts, delivery and defecation, transgresses the traditional esteemed image of motherhood by putting it on the same level as possibly the most unpleasant biological process. Also, rather than representing the mother as nurturer, she is associated with rejection. Concerning the French army, it not only attempted to get rid of him but tried to eradicate any evidence of his existence. Due to the unfortunate circumstances of his birth and his physical handicaps, he is unable to hear, see or speak, his grandmother has given him the nickname “Dhaoussou Ladjdhoudh” or “La Malediction des Ancêtres”. In the case of both characters, Lounès and the main character in Salah’s novel, their nickname is expressed in terms of a curse against them. It appears that society is unable to pardon their existence. As orphans they are a troubling presence, destabilizing a culture that places the highest value on an individual’s familial origins and bloodline.

In Salah’s narrative, the teacher’s son named Alnathir (or Harbinger) is the only child who did not go to the ravine with him. Unlike others in the village, his father

continued to allow interaction between his children and the narrator. As a result, the narrator spent a lot of time playing with both Alnathir and his sister on his grandfather's land. Unfortunately, after he developed a close relationship the family, his grandfather provoked the teacher's dismissal and the entire family was forced to leave the village. However, as an adult the narrator seeks to rekindle his relationship with this adoptive family and eventually contacts Alnathir. The narrator, who works as a journalist and Alnathir who is now the editor of a newspaper find that they have as much in common as adults as they did as children. However, their friendship is interrupted once again. Alnathir is assassinated by an extremist group due to his 'intellectual' activities. Shortly after his death, the narrator visits his mother:

شعرت بشيء يقرص قلبي، وأنا أقف هكذا متأملا وخجولا من وقفتي التي بدت طويلة...ثم...التفتت نحوي، تلك الأم التي ظلت فاتحة ذراعيها لي، وبدون انتظار وجدتني أعانقها ... لم أقل شيئاً مهما، كنت سعيداً بحضنها، وبيدها وهي تتلمس وجهي كما تتلمس أم وجه ابن يعود إليها بعد سنوات من الغياب (93).

I felt something that stung my heart, and I was stood pondering and embarrassed by my visit that seemed to be long ... then ... she turned to me, that mother who opened her arms to me and without waiting, I found myself embracing her … I didn't say anything important to her, I was happy with her hug, and her hand as she was touching my face as a mother would touch the face of a son returning to her after years of absence.

The narrator describes this encounter in a very similar way to his relationship with his aunt. He focuses on her physical actions which resemble those of his earlier adoptive 'mother', describing how she embraces him and touches his face. In both situations, he associates physical contact and consolation with a maternal presence. However, as his aunt represented a 'disabled' mother, in this instance his interaction takes place with

someone else's mother. His use of the term 'تلك الأم' or that mother underlines that she can never be 'his' mother. During a conversation with Alnathir's sister, he addresses this impossibility:

خرجت من عندك أكثر إحساساً باليتم. في تلك الليلة أحسست أنني فقدت أمي إلى الأبد (159).

I left your house feeling like more of an orphan. That night I felt that I lost my mother forever.

His meeting with Alnathir's mother and sister does not lessen his need for a maternal figure in his life, rather he feels his mother's absence more acutely after this meeting. The strength of the narrator's need for a mother may be explained by the civil violence in which he is living. As the national family ruptures, the need for unifying presence becomes more apparent. However, his encounter with Alnathir's mother makes him understand that although he may seek reassurance from adoptive mothers, he can never be truly incorporated into a family unit.

In addition to the narrator's experience as an orphan, the novel focuses on the story of Kremo, a photographer with whom the narrator develops a friendship. Although he has both a mother and a father, he was born out of wedlock. When his mother was presented with an opportunity to get married, she accepted and left her son in an institution:

بين أطفال كبروا معه على نفس الشعور باليتيم. كان لهم آباء وأمهات. كان لهم أخوال وخالات..أعمام وعمات. ولكنهم عاشوا في الملاجىء لأنهم ولدوا غير شرعيين! أليست تلك الصورة التي بقيت راسخة في ذاكرته؟ صورة اليتيم المتكرر (130).

Children who grew up with him had the same feeling of being orphans. They had mothers and fathers. They had aunts and uncles. But they grew up in an asylum because they were born illegitimately. Isn't that the image that remained established in his memory? The picture of recurring orphan.

Similar to the narrator, Kremo and these orphans have families. However, due to the illegitimate nature of their conception, they are subjected to the same social rejection as the narrator. Spending their childhoods exiled in asylums, they resemble the narrator who was forced to distance himself from the other children due to his reputation and nickname. Kremo also considered himself a perpetual social exile, a perception which had a clear influence on his work as a photographer:

كان كريمو يشعر أنه لم يخن، وإن كان ينظر إلى نفسه كابن حرام حقيقي..! كريمو الذي أصبح مصوراً بارعاً هو نفسه الذي أصدر قبل سنة كتاباً يضم ما أسماه بالصور اللقيطة الأجمل بالنسبة إليه..صور النساء المطرودات من بيوتهن قانونياً، والرجال المطرودين من وظائفهم قانونياً والأطفال المولدين في الملاجئ قانيونياً!(134).

Kremo did not feel that he was a traitor … he thought of himself as a true son of shame (illegitimate child)! … Kremo who became a talented photographer, he published a book a year ago that included what he called the most beautiful pictures ever taken … pictures of women thrown out of their houses legally and men thrown out of their jobs legally and children born in asylums legally.

The novel consciously plays on the idea of relationships or lineage, using the term ابن حرام to describe Kremo. On a literal level this term can be translated as 'son of shame' but designates someone as 'illegitimate' in colloquial register. The word حرام or haraam is used to designate anything that is unlawful or forbidden within Islam from acts such as drinking wine and eating pork to committing adultery or stealing.[30] The narrative later plays with the concept of 'legality' referencing the way in which the state lawfully, albeit

inhumanely, treats citizens. As a reaction to his own illegitimacy, Kremo constructs a family of similarly 'unlawful' individuals and groups them together into a unit, a photographic collection. In this way, an absent genealogy actually constructs a familial lineage. Also, something that is shameful within Arabo-Muslim society, namely illegitimacy, symbolically takes on the socially acceptable form of the family unit.

In addition to these adult experiences of exclusion, the novel also examines those of children orphaned by civil war violence. For example, as a journalist it was necessary for the narrator to report the daily murders and massacres. However, in the descriptions of these events, he pays particular attention to the destruction of families that makes children orphans:

كان هناك طفل قالوا إن الجماعة الإرهابية اغتالت كل أفراد عائلته، وإنه الوحيد الذي في لحظة رعب قررت أمه أن تخفيه في كيس الدقيق...كان رئيس البلدية يتكلم عن "حظ" هذا الطفل الذي بقي على قيد الحياة !(71).

There was a child that they said the terrorist group had assassinated every member of his family and that he was the only one left alive, in a moment of horror, his mother decided to hide him in a sack of flour ... the council head spoke about the 'luck' of this child who remained alive.

This section betrays a note of sarcasm, using quotation marks around the word luck, the narrator mocks the politician's opinion that this orphan is fortunate. It also underlines the disconnected relationship between the government and the people, as politicians appear unaware of the reality of the situation.

With regard to the type of brutalities caused by these groups, the narrator recalls a conversation that he had with a policeman, remembering how the islamist groups decapitated and massacred a group of people:

حكي لي عن [...] الجثث التي يعثرون على بعضها مقطوعة الرأس فيضطرون إلى البحث عن الرأس لساعات. أحياناً يجدون رأسا قد لا يتناسب مع حجم الجثة ومع ذلك لا يجدون حلا سوى في تركيبه على جثة أخرى. وإن لم يكن الشكل مقنعاً فكان الأمر حتمياً بحيث لا يمكنهم أن يأخذوا جثة بلا رأس، مثلما لا يمكن أخذ رأس بلا جثة[...] ذات مرة، اكتشفنا أن الخطأ صار فادحاً حين تم إضافة رأس امرأة إلى جثة رجل. رجل لم يعثر أحد على رأسه بينما المرأة لم يعثر أحد على جثتها، فاضطر الطبيب إلى خياطة رأس المرأة إلى جثة الرجل الذي لم يأت أحد للمطالبة بكليهما، فاضطرت إدارة المستشفى إلى دفنهما في مقبرة قريبة من المستشفى واضعين على القبر عبارة: جثة شخصين مختلفين لم يتم التعرف على رأس المرأة ولا على جثة الرجل! (79).

I was told [...] the bodies that they would find, some of them with heads cut off. They had to search for the heads for hours. Sometimes they found a head which did not match the size of the body; however, they didn't find a solution other than leaving it for a different body. Even if the shape was not convincing then the matter was unalterable since they could not take a body without a head, just as they could not take a head without a body [...] Once, he said, we discovered that the error had become serious when (the doctor) had finished adding the head of a woman to the body of a man. No one had come across the man's head and at the same time no one had stumbled upon the woman's body. The doctor was obliged to sew the woman's head on the man's body. Since no one came to ask after either of them, the hospital administration had to bury them in a nearby cemetery. The tomb read: 'the body of two different people, the head of the woman and the body of the man were not identified' !

In this retelling of the massacre, decapitation signals the eradication of the victim's identity that takes place on several levels, on the most basic and literal leading to the victims' deaths. Also, the large number of casualties means that individual victims have lost consideration as they are regarded only as being part of a group massacre. The narrator references the indistinguishable nature of this violence by using the verb عثر or to

stumble, giving the impression that the victims are a mass of bodies. It seems that the most serious and problematic destruction of identity is related to the fact that due to the number of victims, it is almost impossible for the authorities to put the victims correctly back together. Similar to the decapitation that occurs in Mellal's novels, these victims have been denied an authentic burial. Added to this offense is the fact that different genders have been sewn together in order to construct corpses. This act not only transgresses the concept of a strict separation of the sexes but adds to the initial violence and violation that ripped the bodies apart. It also mimics the way in which writers represent the postcolonial Algerian nation as a construction or a piecing together of individuals who, like the main character, have no clear roots or genealogy. It is a community without continuity or organization. Also, within the context of the narrative, this scene appears to reference the political instability associated with the nation. Specifically, in Arabic the three letter root of the word head or رأس is the same as that of chief or president رئيس. Hence, the act of beheading individuals actually becomes an attack on the leadership of the nation itself. The scattering of indistinguishable headless bodies signals a very real and political anarchy.

As Humphrey indicates in his analysis, within the war it was never clear who had been the author of the violence: "unlike the tightly scripted triadic structure of the monarchical state, the contemporary triadic structure of violence/terror is loose. Agency is ambiguous. Who terrorizes, the state, its Islamic opponents, or both?" (4). In his

discussion, Humphrey recalls Foucault's analysis of public torture and execution as a way for the monarch to establish his authority and his law. In pre-Enlightenment Europe, the sovereign was present at every public execution, either symbolically or physically. However, as Humphrey explains, in the case of the Algerian violence it was not only never clear who had committed the violence but also which particular set of values the act was supposed to promote. In this way, all Algerians became potential victims of a threat that they could never recognize from an indistinguishable authority.

Within the narrative, the nation is overtly criticized, for example in the narrator's discussions of duty. He talks about individual responsibility to the nation but also recalls the nation's obligation to its citizens. For example, the novel opens with the assassination of the narrator's acquaintance Alrashid:

لم يكن الرشيد استثنائياً...لكنه كان عادياً و بسيطاً, ومنصاعاً إلى الواجب بشكل عجيب...واجب الوطن ... وواجب الوفاء للوطن من دون أن يقف يوماً ليسأل: لماذا لا يكون للوطن واجبه نحوي ايضاً (9).

Alrashid was not exceptional … rather he was ordinary and simple and yielding to duty in an astonishing way … duty to the nation … and duty of allegiance to the nation without once stopping to ask: why doesn't the nation have a duty to me also?

Whereas Alrashid appears innocent, the narrator attributes unspoken guilt to the nation. He appears to hold the nation directly accountable for his death, for not having fulfilled its own obligation towards him, presumably protection. As the narrative progresses and the level of daily violence and assassinations increases, the narrator becomes more

critical. Throughout the novel, the nation is increasingly represented as a dysfunctional entity that is actually in the process of disintegrating:

هل يمكن لوطن أن يعيش بعد مجزرة؟ تعيش الأكاذيب التي نلفقها عن الحلم والوطن القادم...وتعيش الخيانة التي عبرها نسمي هذا الطفل ضحية ونسمي من قتل أهله "تائبا مقبلا" ونسمي من اغتصب أخته "مغترا به"! (72).

Can a nation live after a massacre? The lies that we fabricate from dreams and the future nation live on… and treachery lives, thanks to which we call this child a victim and those who killed his family future repenters and we call those who raped his sister "tempted".

This lack of coherence or the clear shattering of the fragile national unity is directly caused by civil violence. More specifically, this description focuses on the familial structure as the narrator uses an example based on parents and children. The essential problem, for him, appears to be a denial of the implication of this violence on both individuals and the national community.

The result of both the collapse of the nation and the destruction of families by civil violence is another generation of orphans:

أبكي جيلا آخر يولد في نفس الملجأ..يولد يتيماً بلا أب ولا أم ولا وطن ولا حلم (170).

I cry for another generation that is born in the same asylum ... born an orphan with no father or mother or homeland or dream.

In this sentence the family is equated with the nation, being an orphan is not just an absence of parents but also of a homeland. The repetition of the negative particle reinforces the idea of an absence or a lack. The suggestion is that this new generation, rather than having absent parents and an un-protective nation, actually has nothing. It is a

negation. The narrator expands upon this idea in a discussion about Algerian identity. He states:

عادة حين يسأل جزائري من أنت يقول بعفوية "والو..."'RIEN'! ليعني أنه لا شيء تماماً، بكل ما يعنيه اللا شيء من معنى!! حتى عبارة جزائري حين يتباهي بعضهم بنطقها بالفرنسية: 'ALGERIEN', تتجسد عبارة 'RIEN' واضحة وبخروف استهلالية كبيرة ... ليؤكد ذلك ال"والو" الذي يتجلى أمامه (27).

Usually when someone asks an Algerian 'who are you', he automatically says 'nothing'! Meaning that he is completely nothing, in every sense of the word! Even the term Algerian, some take pride in its pronunciation in French: 'Algérien' which incorporates the phrase nothing (rien) clearly and with big capital letters … to confirm the 'nothing' that manifests itself in front of him.

In this discussion, Algerian identity is negated on a multitude of levels. Firstly, the sense of nothingness comes from the Algerian population itself. As seen from the narrator's first example, Algerians not only perceive national identity as a non-identity but represent themselves as such to others. The qualification of the Algerian's response to an inquiry about his/her identity as 'automatic' infers that there has been a global acceptance concerning this idea within the national community. Also, the narrator describes negation as taking place in both Arabic and French.

Salah's narrative presents the reader with an image of an Algerian nation that is being destroyed by civil violence and political confusion. As the narrator remarks, being Algerian no longer holds any meaning since the nation itself is falling apart. The novel thereby contrasts sharply with the work of authors associated with the independence movement. Whereas they were concerned with finding an identity for themselves and for a nation that had yet to be realized, Salah represents Algerian identity as an irrelevant

concept. When Algerians are killing each other, attributing a name that implies a shared sense of identity no longer makes sense. Those, such as the narrator, who attempt to create cohesion amongst the chaos eventually understand the impossibility of their efforts. The narrator abandons his efforts to find a replacement mother and re-establish a family, understanding that he has lost his own mother forever. Given the context of the narrative, his realization may also be applicable to his motherland. As a comforting and uniting presence, Algeria is as absent as his mother and may never be replaced. The novel thereby raises an uncomfortable question concerning the future of the Algerian nation and its ability to transform itself from nothingness into a truly cohesive national family.

In his novel *La Danse du roi*, Mohammed Dib observes: "y a peut-être une Algérie à tuer. A tuer pour qu'une autre plus propre puisse venir au monde" (Soukehal 52). Writing in 1968, Dib was expressing a sense of disillusionment concerning the newly independent Algerian nation which, for Dib as for a number of other authors, had started to move in a questionable direction. In his opinion, the 'right' or 'clean' Algeria had not been born. The Algeria represented in both Salah's and Mellal's novels is certainly not pure but rather is defined by a convoluted genealogy. Families are no longer structured by the authority of the father but are defined by the absence of the mother. Algeria's children describe themselves as misdeveloped, orphaned, illegitimate offspring. In short, the national family appears dysfunctional in every sense of the word. By the

1990s, it seems that Dib's solution to the 'problem' of Algeria was actually taking place. Algeria was literally being killed, aborted by its citizens who assassinated each other on a daily basis. Authors such as Mellal and Salah appear to have an important role to play within this context, bearing witness to civil war brutality and raising valid concerns related to Algeria's future within their work.

The role of violence within the Algerian context has previously been discussed within this analysis in terms of a relationship to national identity. Analysts such as James McDougall discuss how violence actually structures the way in which the Algerian nation imagines itself. It lends coherence, connecting the present to past and gives the nation a sense of continuity. Given the role of violence within the work of contemporary authors such as Salah and Mellal, it is possible to inquire also about the relationship between literature and violence within the Algerian context. More specifically, we may consider how violence structures the Algerian literary tradition. Algerian literature originally grew with the independence movement, commenting on the violence of the colonial state and describing Algeria's literally torturous path to independence. The interwar period appears to have been mainly concerned with a coming to terms with Algeria's violent history in an effort to build national authenticity. In the wake of the civil war, as discussed, authors are representing contemporary violence through memories of the struggle for independence. To what extent does literature, by bearing witness to Algeria's violent transformations, actually participate in inscribing that violence within the national narrative?

Notes

[1] In her article "The Scheherazade Syndrome", which appeared in the collection of essays *Algeria in Other's languages*, historian Lucette Valensi also discusses the way in which authors who began writing shortly after independence in the late 1960s and 1970s such as Rachid Mimouni or Rachid Boudjedra challenge social conventions. In her analysis she argues that this generation of writers tend to focus on the individual rather than the community in their work. Explaining the significance of this trend, she writes: "what is less expected and more upsetting is the recurrence of a lonely narrator in the novels […] This is both surprising and paradoxical, because, traditionally, family is the pillar of Algerian society; there is no room for loners, except for ascetic saintly figures, who are by definition out of the ordinary. A close relationship is supposed to connect the members of a family and a community" (Berger 147). For Valensi, this shift from the group to the individual is accompanied in literature by a disintegration of relationships within Algerian society. In contrast to Corredor, who perceives these authors' work as an attempt to change tradition, representing authors as empowered actors, Valensi represents this literary trend as a symptom of a disorder affecting Algerian society. She writes: "Algerian literature has succeeded in underscoring a blind spot of standard sociology, namely, that it is at the very center of the family that the blight of violence makes its home" (Berger 152). For her, literature mirrors society rather than transforming it.

[2] Both of the two main characters, Flo and Rac, suffer from the absent patriarchal presence: "elle [Flo] souffrait, comme lui, d'une sorte de perte d'identité due à l'abandon du père. Ce père instituteur emporté par son héroïsme, devenu après la Libération un sénateur arrogant et prétentieux, mesquin et cruel envers la mère de Flo, abandonnée, flouée et trompée" (169).

[3] Concerning this social phenomenon, Soukehal notes in his analysis of Algerian literature: "la fille, "dès sa naissance, est accueillie sans joie" fait remarquer Kateb Yacine ; elle est considérée comme une dévalorisation de la famille (du clan, de la tribu), une menace pour l'honneur patriarcal, pour la virilité patriarcale (un homme déshonoré par sa femme ou sa fille n'ose plus regarder les autres hommes en face, car sa virilité et sa place dans la société masculine n'ont plus de poids)" (239).

[4] During the war, women served a number of different roles such as messengers, bomb carriers, nurses, and educators to rural populations. Frantz Fanon discusses the significance of women's participation in the revolutionary movement in *L'An V de la révolution*, stating: "dans les montagnes les femmes aidaient le maquisard à l'occasion des haltes ou des convalescences après une blessure ou une typhoïde contractées dans le djebel. Mais décider d'incorporer la femme comme maillon capital, de faire dépendre la Révolution de sa présence et de son action dans tel ou tel secteur, c'était évidemment une attitude totalement révolutionnaire" (31).

[5] In her analysis of women's social and political in Algeria, the sociologist Meredith Turshen describes how, upon independence, male members of the FLN failed to support women's demands for equality: "only the [FLN] delegates from the city of Mostaganem demanded that women be allowed to work in the ranks of the party. In April 1964 at the party congress of the Economic and Social Commission, an UNFA spokeswoman called for equal responsibilities for women militants at every level of the party, an end to polygamy, regulated daycare for children, new adoption laws, and new laws concerning legitimacy. None of this was taken into account, and neither the FLN nor the UNFA returned to these problems at the meeting" (893). As a result of this lack of support, many female combatants have expressed feelings of betrayal. For example, the former combatant Houria Imache Rami states: "we were all equal in the war - it was afterward that our citizenship was taken away from us" (Turshen 893). The author Assia Djebar addresses this aspect of the independence struggle in her work. For example, in *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement,* the character Leila who fought in the war tells her friend Sarah, another combatant: "ils ont honte de moi! Je me suis desséchée, je suis mon ombre d'autrefois...Peut-être parce que j'ai trop déclamé dans les tribunaux d'hier, je suis trop souvent entrée en transes publiques et quand les frères applaudissaient, je croyais... (elle rit). Y a-t-il jamais eu des frères, Sarah?" (112). In addition to highlighting women's feelings of disillusionment, Djebar's text also underlines the way in which women combatants activism was turned against them in post-independence Algeria. According to Turshen, women were rejected by society and often found it hard to reintegrate after the end of the war. She notes: "although the *mujahidat* were admired for their patriotism and courage, they also were perceived as different and not marriageable because they had frequented men" (893). The non-traditional conditions of their participation which were deemed patriotic during the war were actually turned against the *mujahidat* upon independence.

[6] Rachid Boudjedra writes in *FIS de la haine* about the importance of education to women's status in Algerian society: "le FIS […] est venu trop tard. Une certaine émancipation des femmes a eu le temps de cristalliser. La massification de l'enseignement a permis à beaucoup d'elles de sortir de ce fracas familial qu'est la condition féminine musulmane. Pour beaucoup de femmes, le cordon ombilical a été coupé à coups d'ongles et de dents" (75).

[7] In her analysis *Beyond the Veil*, Fatima Mernissi lends important insight into the destabilizing effect that the 'desegregation' of the sexes has on society: "apart from the ritualized trespasses of women into public spaces (which are, by definition, male spaces), there are no accepted patterns for interactions between unrelated men and women. Such interactions violate the spatial rules that are the pillars of the Muslim sexual order. Only that which is licit is formally regulated. Since the interaction of unrelated men and women is illicit, there are no rules governing it. Those people now experiencing sexual

desegregation are therefore compelled to improvise. And whereas imitation is possible, creation is far more difficult" (137).

[8] As Ali Kaoucaoui notes in his article, the fact that different generations were obliged to live together also had a profound affect on Algerian society: "this forced cohabitation of generations has created extreme dependence, a potentially explosive source of tension and conflict. Young people no longer share the same historical references or political attitudes with their parents" (37).

[9] During the period of colonization that spanned over 130 years, the French government succeeded in establishing French as the national language in Algeria. By replacing the traditional religious instruction of the Arabic language with Ecoles Françaises, in which Arabic was infrequently taught and only as a foreign language, the colonial government effectively eradicated the Arabic language from the Algerian nation. Additionally, by limiting the number of places available to Algerians in the educational system, the government produced a small privileged class of educated Algerians. By 1954, the beginning of the War of Independence, only 14% of Algerian children attended school. Before 1962, the moment at which Algeria gained independence, only 557 Muslims attended the University of Algiers, in comparison to 4, 548 Europeans. In 1964, in a population of 10 million Algerians, only one million could read French and only 300,000 could read literary Arabic (Gordon 151-152). In order to establish Arabic as the national language, the Algerian government embarked on a program of Arabization shortly after independence.

[10] The Front Islamique du Salut or FIS, was founded in February 1989 by the leaders of the Rabitat Dawa or League of Islamic Call, a movement in which, according to Michael Willis was solely concerned with the "defense and propagation of Islamic values" (115). The FIS was therefore established to compensate for the evident lack of political mobilization within the Rabitat Dawa. The party presented itself for the first free, multiparty elections that were launched in 1990 for local representatives.

[11] According to Michael Willis : "arabization proceeded quite rapidly through the education system but it advanced at a far slower pace through Algeria's large state administration. The net result of this was that the education system was turning out far more Arabic-speaking students or 'Arabisants' than could be absorbed by the administration" (51).

[12] In addition to these linguistic considerations, Ali Kouaouci notes in his article that in the 40 year period from 1950-1990, Algeria's population nearly tripled. At the same time, the country faced an economic crisis brought about by dropping oil prices in the mid 1980s. The result of these economic and social issues meant that: "for every Algerian eligible for retirement in 2000, more than five young people were available, hypothetically, to fill his or her position" (35).

[13] In October 1988, the younger generation, which had reached adulthood during the oil crisis revolted against the economic hardship they were facing. As William Quandt

notes, President Chadli Benjedid decided to embark on political reform rather than repression. The result was that a new constitution appeared in 1989 that permitted the establishment of new political parties (most notably the FIS) and freedom of the press. This new political policy also led to the elections of 1990 in which the FIS was victorious against the FLN and which Quandt considers to be one of the two free elections ever to be held in Algeria (82).

[14] In *The Agony of Algeria*, Martin Stone who is a researcher in North African politics discusses the origins of both the MIA (Mouvement Islamique Armé) and GIA (Groupe Islamique Armé) in great depth. Concerning the MIA, which became the AIS or Armée Islamique du Salut in 1994, he notes that the majority of the members were associated to the FIS and for this reason the movement never: "attempted to mobilize popular support on a massive scale or to provoke a collapse of the state by assassinating senior members of the regime. The organization's strategy was to use violence with the aim of encouraging the state to abrogate its ban on the FIS and re-legalize the party" (184). In contrast to the MIA, the GIA's members had no association to the FIS and therefore rejected negotiation or compromise with the government. In fact, Stone explains that a large number had participated in the Afghan war, receiving training in guerilla warfare and becoming believers in ultra conservative Islamic parties such as Hezbi Islami. Upon their return to Algeria, they were often "unable to find employment and soon drifted towards the extreme wing of the Islamist movement. Adopting Afghan-style robes, tunics and beards, they found a natural home in the groups of activists who in 1989-90 were beginning to attack 'immodestly' dressed women" (183). In addition to the 'Afghans', GIA members were also followers of Mustafa Bouali who formed the first violent Islamic organization in Algeria in the 1980s and more conservative members of the MIA and FIS. The nature of the GIA's terrorist attacks differed from the MIA, as Stone notes they were more "spectactular" (184). In addition to their strategic and political differences, the MIA operated mainly in rural areas and the GIA operated mainly in urban areas with a few rural strongholds. The relationship between these two groups was always unstable, an attempt at a merger in 1995 failed when one of the leaders of the FIS, Abassa Madani, entered into negotiations with President Zeroual and both of the FIS leaders were given death sentences by the GIA.

[15] Assia Djebar's *Le blanc de l'Algérie* pays homage to writers and intellectuals killed during the civil war.

[16] According to Turshen: "from the beginning [of the war] it was clear that women were both the targets and pawns in the power struggles between the Islamists and the government" (897). In her article she proceeds to cite examples of how women became the targets of the war noting how the FIS's program dissuaded women from "working outside of the home, and creating separate administrative services, public transport, and beaches for women and men" (897). Additionally, in 1994 the FIS declared a *fatwa* which legalized the execution of women and children for not wearing the veil (897). In

addition to being murdered for their 'crimes' against Islam, women were also raped, kidnapped and forced to provide (sexual) services to members of Islamist groups (397). In his novel *La vie à l'endroit*, Boudjedra describes the way in which women were killed during the civil war: "il était au courant des fillettes violées dont on découpait les clitoris pour les coudre sur leurs lèvres. Il avait vu à la morgue les organes génitaux des victimes arraches avec les mains et enfonces dans leurs bouches" (137). Boudjedra's narrative demonstrates how women's sexuality became the specific target of guerilla groups.

[17] According to Nezim Fethi, Algerian law, in keeping with Islamic law, permits *kafala* or care of orphans but prohibits adoption or the replacement of a child's biological parents. This means that although a family may have custody of an orphan, he/she will never have the same legal rights as the family's biological children.

[18] Since finishing *Maintenant ils peuvent venir* in 2002, Mellal has also published three plays *La Délégation Officielle* (2004), *Sisao* (2004) and *En remontant le Niger* (2006).

[19] He stated in an interview: "je crois que c'est la situation, il a fallu qu'on en arrive là pour me décider, non seulement à éditer mais à écrire plus que ce que j'écrivais" (La Maison des auteurs).

[20] Martin Stone, a researcher in North African politics, describes the linguistic environment in Algeria in the following way: "the language spoken in the home and on the streets, despite the meddling of the politicians and the imams, is a rich and unique mix of Classical and Maghrebi Arabic, various local Berber dialects and "roumiya". This hybrid is a relatively recent development: before the French occupation, all inhabitants of the coastal littoral (though not all Kabyles) would have been proficient in Maghrebi Arabic as well as Classical Arabic. Maghrebi dialect itself is spoken across North Africa, and developed in the Middle Ages from Classical Arabic with a few borrowings from Spanish, Berber dialects and Turkish. As with all spoken languages, it is constantly changing but has a special ability to seize French words and mutate them into acceptably Algerian-sounding forms. In contrast, the language of broadcasting and official speeches is stilted and reflects the speaker's political and socio-economic status. Government ministers often lapse into French in the middle of a speech, frequently replying to questions put to them in French. Moreover, many Algerians have enormous difficulty understanding the Classical Arabic used in television news broadcasts, and prefer to watch the French satellite channels beamed from across the Mediterranean" (Berger 40). As Gafaïti notes in his analysis, the language debate in Algeria has often been simplified into a battle between Francophones and Arabophones in which French has become: "the language of the enemy; the language of colonialism; the expression of Western culture; and the negation of Algerian national identity. Arabic is: the language of the Algerian nation; the recuperation of Algerian identity; the expression of the Algerian soul (the language of the Koran and Islam); and the crucible of the Arab-Muslim community to which Algeria belongs" (22). However, this simplification denies the existence not only of another language but also of another ethnic group. Tamazight is the name attributed to

the six regional variations of Berber (Berger 48). Gafaïti explains the use of the term 'Berber' is an attempt by the Kabyles, who make up approximately five million of Algeria's thirty million inhabitants and are concentrated in the northeastern part of Algeria, to exclude 'non-Kabyle' or 'Arab' other even though most Algerians are also Berber. Gafaïti explains 'Berberist' discourse in the following way: "Arabic is: the language of Arab colonialism imposed on North Africa in the seventh century; an archaic language which, because of its underdevelopment and sclerosis, is not capable of adapting to the needs of the modern world; the vehicle of Islam and Pan-Arab ideology, which are alien and inauthentic traditions imposed on Algeria from the outside. Berber (Tamazight) and Algerian Arabic dialect are: authentic because they are ancestral; the real media of popular communication. French is: the language of modernity, science and technology; the expression of rationality and the opening to the Western democratic model" (Berger 22)

[21] The Moroccan writer and theorist Abdelkebir Khatibi has also written extensively about the issue of language in his work. For example, in his autobiographical novel *La Mémoire Tatouée* he explains that he considers himself: "triglotte, lisant le français sans le parler, jouant bribes de l'arabe écrit, et parlant le dialecte comme quotidien" (40). However, as Reda Bensmaia explains in his discussion of Khatibi's novel *L'Amour bilingue,* the value of Khatibi's work is not only to be found in what he writes concerning his own relationship to languages but in the way that he writes about it: "Khatibi has *changed languages* but with a breathtaking movement that consists not in a reterritorialization of Arabic or an "Arabization" of French, but in the continued use of *French.* At the same time, it consists of making French *see double, loucher* in the active sense of peering at, eyeing, by subjecting French to a *system* that puts it in a position to *translate the untranslatable,* to express the inexpressible. In a word, he radically tears it away from the *metaphysical* and pre*critical* space where the language was supposed to be only the *secondary* instrument for expressing a single or unified mind, culture, or subject" (Berger 168).

[22] In *L'Amour, la fantasia* Djebar also describes how French, for her, is not only the language of her father but that of the 'Other', the foreigner responsible for colonization. It is also a language that she associates with the death of her mother-tongue and its orality; "ainsi les premiers mots écrits, même s'ils promettent une fallacieuse paix, font, de leur porteur, un condamné à mort. Toute écriture de l'Autre, transportée, devient fatale, puisque signe de compromission" (48). For her, writing holds many associations, including the destruction of the colonizing military campaigns since it was also through the written word that the initial and subsequent effort to colonize Algeria gained its force: "le mot lui-même, ornement pour les officiers qui le brandissent comme ils porteraient un oeillet à la boutonnière, le mot deviendra l'arme par excellence. Des cohortes d'interprètes, géographes, ethnographes, linguistes, botanistes, docteurs divers et écrivains de profession s'abattront sur la nouvelle proie. Toute une pyramide d'écrits

amoncelés en apophyse superfétatoire occultera la violence initiale" (60). The French language was initially used as a weapon to subdue the Algerian people and their cultures. As an instrument of colonization, both physical and symbolic violence are associated with it, because the colonial campaign not only provoked the death of many Algerian inhabitants but also the traditions of Algerian culture. For Djebar, it was not only the fact that she was learning French that severed her from her native culture, but the fact that she had learned how to write in it. This distinguished her from other girls in her village and the traditions associated with the upbringing of women. They were not normally given the opportunity to become literate, because men feared that women would consequently be at odds with the traditional patriarchal society characterized by the feminine lifestyle of being cloistered. Writing had therefore symbolically separated her from her cultural traditions. However, this separation has allowed her to obtain a certain amount of freedom. Her education effectively exempted her from veiling and seclusion. She therefore feels a certain amount of gratitude for learning French: "au fur et à mesure que j'ai commencé à écrire, j'arrive au fait que si, à onze ans, je ne me suis pas voilée comme mes cousines, c'est grâce à la langue, c'est grâce à mon père" (Gauvin 27).

[23] According to Omar Carlier this expression, meaning Algeria is vanishing or collapsing, was common in both 1988 and 1992 (Berger 103).

[24] Previously Yasmina Salah has published: *When we meet foreigners* or "عندما نلتقي غرباء"، *Nostalgia* or "ناستالجا" and "بحر الصمت" or *Sea of Silence* translated into both French and Spanish.

[25] Discussing the significance of unveiling within the colonial context, Fanon describes it in terms of a violation on an individual level: "les responsables du pouvoir, après chaque succès enregistré, renforcent leur conviction dans la femme algérienne, conçue comme support à la pénétration occidentale dans la société autochtone. Chaque voile rejeté découvre aux colonialistes des horizons jusqu'alors interdits, et leur montre, morceau par morceau, la chair algérienne mise à nu…chaque visage qui s'offre au regard hardi et impatient de l'occupant, exprime en négatif que l'Algérie commence à se renier et accepte le viol du colonisateur" (24). Fanon's interpretation recalls the strength of the image of Algeria as woman, physically and psychologically subjugated by the French colonizer.

[26] In Djebar's novel, it is not only Algeria as woman who is raped, but the individuals killed in battle are also described as being violated: "mais pourquoi, au-dessus des cadavres qui vont pourrir sur les successifs champs de bataille, cette première campagne d'Algérie fait-elle entendre les bruits d'une copulation obscène" (32). The role of sexual aggression in war is a theme that she explores repeatedly in her work not only with regard to the initial colonization of Algeria but also, as discussed in Chapter One, concerning the War of Independence.

[27] Regarding Yacine's preoccupation with genealogy, Soukehal writes: "c'est le souci permanent chez Kateb, comme chez d'autres écrivains, de vouloir retrouver ses racines, afin d'embrasser une identité" (363).
[28] A number of writers address the French educational system and ideological campaign in their work. For example, Maïssa Bey imagines in *Pierre Sang Papier ou Cendre* educational indoctrination from a child's perspective: "Madame Lafrance entre dans la classe […] un à un, avant de recopier, les élèves doivent répéter après la maîtresse la phrase écrite au tableau. "J'aime mon pays, la France." Il y a ceux qui débitent d'un trait cette profession de foi. Avec conviction, avec ferveur […] Les autres élèves pouffent de rire. Un brouhaha vite jugule par la voix exaspérée de madame Lafrance. *J'ime mo piyi, la France.* L'enfant, lui, ne rit pas. Les sourcils foncés, il s'obstine. Mais les voyelles restent réticentes" (55).
[29] Tahar Djaout also references this aspect of the mythified martyrs of the War of Independence in his novel *Les chercheurs d'os* published in 1984. The novel, for example, opens with the following observation from the main character, a child who goes on a trip to find his own brother's bones: "nos morts sont les plus méritants d'entre nous, avaient pensé les villageois, eux seuls sont dignes de nous représenter au regard de ceux qui passent ou interrogent" (13).
[30] It is also the same root حرم or haruma from which originates the word harem or حريم defined as a sacred space or the female members of a family.

Conclusion

In his examination of the civil war, the sociologist Michael Humphrey addresses an important, although less prominent, issue related to Algeria's history of violence, namely how it is perceived and understood by the West. Citing Page du Bois, a specialist in comparative literature, he writes:

> while the struggle is largely contained the violence is assimilated into the new world mapping of global fragmentation. Fear of violence over there over here (the West) sees borders drawn demarcating secured from insecure zones. A landscape of pain is being used to reconfigure privileged zones: "the third world, in its complexity, multiplicity, multiple sites, has become, besides the site of torture, the spectacle of the other tortured for us"" (2).

For Humphrey, violence in developing countries such as Algeria may be interpreted as reinforcing not only the geographical borders of the 'developed' world but also buttressing a 'Western' identity. His comments recall Edward Said's argument that the Orient is overwhelmingly established as an entity that facilitates Occidental self-definition by manifesting a "contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" (2). However, whereas the contrast between the West and the East (or the Orient) was once based upon the idea of civilization, in which violence may have played a minor role, today it appears that violence defines this relationship. It is no longer a case of 'we are civilized and therefore cruelty does not occur here' but rather 'there is no violence on our soil and therefore we are civilized'. A 'landscape of pain' does exist for the West, but must remain on the very distant and indistinguishable horizon in order for the geographical, political and social self definition to occur. As recent political events

demonstrate, this does not mean that the West cannot become involved in brutalities occurring in 'other' territories. Du Bois' comment, in which the West watches the developing 'other' being tortured, not only suggests that it participates in this 'spectacle' of brutality but also somehow enjoys it.

As shown in Chapter Two, during the struggle for independence, French national identity relied on the projection of violence onto the Algerian other both psychologically and geographically. Torture was physically exported to Algerian soil by French soldiers and harkis became the facilitators of cruelty in metropolitan France. In more recent years, as the character Omer tells Amel in Sebbar's *La Seine était rouge,* an Algeria torn apart by civil war offers a long awaited vindication to France: "on préfère […] l'Algérie qui se déchire, l'Algérie qui saigne, l'Algérie dans le noir, dans la merde, après plus de trente ans d'indépendance…la belle revanche" (106). A failed independence, symbolized by Algeria's transformation from French 'département' into a site of civil bloodshed, avenges France's civilizing mission and national image as a defender of education, culture and human rights. As discussed, Sebbar's novel, which addresses both the civil war and the struggle for independence, raises questions about France's responsibility concerning Algeria's past and present political situation.

The main goal of this study has been to discuss how literature represents the relationship between violence and national identity within the Algerian context. At the same time, literature has also played an important role in constructing (and also dismantling) an Algerian national identity. During the struggle for independence authors

actively participated in the creation of the new nation by writing it into existence. In the post independence period, an important change occurred in this relationship as Algerian literature now focuses on representing the reality of the nation. In this way, civil war bloodshed dominated narratives dating from the early 1990s and even into the new century. At the same time, violence offered Algerians a way to understand the nation's past and present, and became the cohesive element in the national narrative. One important question that has yet to be discussed concerns the role of authors in writing violence into the contemporary national narrative. More specifically, what role have authors played, by narrating the cruelty of the civil war, in constructing or solidifying a national image for Algerians characterized by the concepts of victimization and martyrdom. Algerian literature has become known and more importantly internationally recognized, or literally 'put on the map' for not shying away from describing the more unsavory moments in recent Algerian history, in addition to discussing controversial aspects of its own political system and society. Thus, we may also consider how Algerian literature participates in the construction of what Humphrey refers to as a 'landscape of pain' for others. Namely, to what extent has the literary image of a bloodied and beaten Algeria solidified the imaginary borders constructed between a secure Western 'here' and a frighteningly cruel 'there'?

Previous discussions have taken place concerning the relationship between literature and Western perceptions of the Algerian woman. More specifically, Ahlam Mostaghanemi has argued that Assia Djebar's texts are written for a Western audience

and thereby do not truthfully represent Algerian women: “elle (Djebar) ne représente plus l’Algérie. Pour elle, l’image de la femme algérienne n’a pas évolué. Elle est toujours telle qu’elle l’avait décrite dans les années cinquante. Malheureusement, c’est cette image médiocre que les Européens nous demandent de brosser” (Kateb). For Mostaghanemi, the disconnect between reality and what authors such as Djebar represent in their novels is due to their popularity. However, it is plausible to assume that for authors living outside of Algeria, such as Djebar, geographical distance also plays a role in their conception and representation of Algeria. In addition to Djebar, a number of other authors included in this study also live permanently in exile, such as Yasmina Khadra and Mostaghanemi. Others such as Mustapha Benfodil and Arezki Mellal have lived for extended periods outside of the country. Physical absence, it may be argued, may have lead to authors’ estrangement from the reality of life in Algeria. Also, with the exception of Mostaghanemi, whose work has been extensively translated, all of them write in French. It may therefore be pertinent to consider to what extent their representations of violence in Algeria respond to a Western desire to see, what du Bois refers to as, “the spectacle of the other tortured for us”.

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