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Abstract

In *Raising Their Voices: Memory, Justice, and Genre in Second-Generation French Literature*, I examine how Patrick Modiano's *Dora Bruder* (1997), Lydie Salvayre's *Pas pleurer* (2014), and Zahia Rahmani's *Moze* (2003) employ genre tropes and intertextual references to reframe traumatic family memories of the Nazi Occupation of France, the Spanish Civil War, and the Algerian War. I consider these texts "second-generational" insofar as they have a close relationship to Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory and they are preoccupied with questions of familial, national, and literary heritage. Each text grapples with the burden of an inherited story of trauma that reflects the author's own families' experiences as groups marginalized in France during the twentieth century. As family members mediated between the authors and past trauma, the authors, in turn, use references to other literary texts to mediate their own retelling of that trauma. Accordingly, the authors function as curators of the representation of both the past and literary heritage. These writers break with traditional genre structures to express the multigenerational effects of violence, and their writing forms a new informal movement of *littérature engagée* in the tradition of Émile Zola or Jean-Paul Sartre.

I suggest that these texts by Modiano, Salvayre, and Rahmani function as postmemorial countermonuments to the dead—that is, rather than employing the didactic or elegiac function typical of neo-classical monuments (such as the *Arc de Triomphe*), these texts commemorate victims, while also constructing an unsettling and ambiguous view of dark moments in history, in a manner similar to the German countermonuments studied by James E. Young. The ethical drive in countermonumental

texts urges the duty to remember the past for the sake of honoring victims, exposing wrongdoing, urging accountability, and generating debate about current social or political circumstances that may perpetuate discriminatory practices or historical lacunae. Among the many elements at hand, particularly important are the foregrounding of memory and testimony, the tension between fact and fiction, and the aesthetic qualities that underscore fragmentation.

While the authors of textual countermonuments may engage with experimental styles, they also readily appropriate other texts—even their own prior texts (in the case of Modiano and Salvayre). Throughout their texts, they adapt styles and themes from other writers, and these acts of appropriation situate these texts as joint artifacts of historical trauma and of literary heritage. Indeed, the authors reject a passive reception of the past (both literary and familial); instead, they assert their agency and become curators as they select which aspects of the family narrative to highlight and which authors and literary works to reference. While literary forefathers may inspire what Harold Bloom called the “anxiety of influence,” the posterity of those same writers depends on a continued network of references to them. While it is of course quite common for authors to recycle other literary works, in the cases of Modiano, Salvayre, and Rahmani, the authors’ selections bear an additional layer of meaning since the constellation of literary references serve to recontextualize or reinterpret the violence of their own family history. It is especially the obligation to recount the family’s past that leads to an act of artistic creation, which embodies both a conversation with the dead and a testimony to pass on to others.

Introduction

In February 2017, as a candidate for the presidency of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron criticized French colonialism during a trip to Algeria as a “crime contre l’humanité” (“Colonisation”). The statement—and his location when he made it—provoked outrage from a number of politicians, including François Fillon, the presidential candidate for the conservative party, *Les Républicains*, and Marion Maréchal-Le Pen, a member of parliament for the far-right *Front National* (and niece of the Marine Le Pen, the party’s presidential candidate). Maréchal-Le Pen responded to Macron’s statement with a tweet: “#Macron, le candidat des élites, des banques, des médias et . . . de la repentance!” (“#Macron”; ellipsis in original). Fillon denounced “cette détestation de notre histoire, cette repentance permanente” (“Colonisation”). Indeed, it appears that the notion of *la repentance* in the French political context has become an insult (rather than evidence of a healing form of contrition), implying that the accused person peddles a narrative of national shame that overshadows past successes and discourages honest pride and authentic patriotism.

In fact, through the debate over *la repentance* over the past two decades, France has confronted dark moments in its twentieth-century national history more and more publicly. In 1995, Jacques Chirac made the first official apology for the role of the French in the deportation of 76,000 Jews during the Second World War. In 1999, the National Assembly recognized the conflict in Algeria from 1954 to 1962 as a war; prior to this moment, it was simply referred to as “l’opération de maintien de l’ordre” or, in an even more obtuse form, “les événements” (Enjevin 62). Although there had previously been some open public discussion of both the Vichy deportations and the

Algerian War, official state recognition finally led to the possibility of additional conversations, research, and commemorations for these painful events that many had tried to obfuscate, for a variety of reasons. For years, the popular narrative of the Second World War focused on a mythologized tale of resistance, with Charles de Gaulle depicted dramatically as the central hero, ruling from afar. As president during the latter half of the Algerian War, de Gaulle also participated in the effort to maintain French colonial power in Algeria. Thus, as Géraldine Enjelvin observes, after the death of de Gaulle and others of his generation, space for alternate national narratives increased (70) and the proliferation of memorial efforts, particularly since the 1990s,¹ has ushered in a new period of reflection on the controversies of France's past. However, like Fillon and Maréchal-Le Pen, other public figures, including Nicolas Sarkozy and Pascal Bruckner, have criticized the notion of *repentance*, suggesting that the preoccupation with past wrongdoing precludes moving forward in the present. They express concern that French society is unmotivated and unproductive, and needs to be uplifted rather than shamed in order to spur a cultural and economic renaissance. In a 2014 opinion piece for the *Los Angeles Times*, Bruckner states: "No longer a world leader, contemporary France has increasingly abandoned itself to self-denigration. The French don't like themselves any longer. . . . A country so unsure of itself, needless to say, is incapable of inspiring enthusiasm among the young" ("France, A Down-in-the-Dumps Nation"). For those who worry that France is on the decline, inquiry into

¹ Of course, earlier historical reevaluations, such as Robert Paxton's 1972 *Vichy France* and Henry Rousso's 1987 *Le Syndrome de Vichy*, established an important precedent.

historical offenses appears to reinforce the paralyzing threats of introspection and inaction.²

Now, these political, social, and ethical questions of memory, *repentance*, and national identity from the 1990s to the present correspond, not surprisingly, to a wider cultural interest in these issues, as demonstrated by the publication of the volumes of Pierre Nora's *Lieux de mémoire* between 1983 and 1992, as well as to an increased interest by authors in history and memory as valuable literary subjects. In the revised 2008 edition of *La Littérature française au présent*, Dominique Viart and Bruno Vercier describe the contemporary era of literature as beginning in the 1980s with a shift away from the "jeux formels" of the 1960s and 1970s (such as those that characterize the *Nouveau Roman* or Oulipo) and marked by a move toward "des livres qui s'intéressent aux existences individuelles, aux histoires de familles. . . . Le passé aussi est revisité, l'Histoire reconquise" (7-8). The recent texts that return to history as a primary subject also foreground ethical considerations about justice (on a personal scale, a national scale, or both, and even beyond, on a more universal level), and these concerns link contemporary authors to a tradition of *littérature engagée* associated with prominent figures throughout French literary history, including Jean-Paul Sartre, Émile Zola, and Victor Hugo. Within this simultaneously introspective and retrospective atmosphere, some contemporary French fiction writers, such as Patrick Modiano, Zahia Rahmani, and Lydie Salvayre, create texts that explore the remembrance of historical events in a familial context while they seek to undermine or at least to complicate popular cultural narratives about the idea of history more generally.

² Recent books on the themes of *repentance* and French decline include Daniel Lefeuvre's *Pour en finir avec la repentance coloniale* (2008) and Éric Zemmour's *Le Suicide français* (2014).

Modiano, Salvayre, and Rahmani are notable as authors who write a generation after the historical traumas they explore and whose own parents were directly involved in those events. It is particularly in this sense that I employ the term “second-generation” in the title of my dissertation. The works of these authors reflect their own families’ experiences as groups marginalized in France during the twentieth century. In Modiano’s *Dora Bruder* (1997), Salvayre’s *Pas pleurer* (2014), and Rahmani’s *Moze* (2003) the narrators tell the stories of those who have been misunderstood, in large part in order to achieve justice or, at the very least, to acknowledge injustice. They examine the hardships faced by their parents’ generation and find official discourse on all sides inadequate in that it of necessity oversimplifies and fails to account for the depth and diversity of individual and collective experiences. At the same time, these authors emphatically write more than mere testimony; they each engage in a resolutely literary enterprise. Within this framework, then, I document how the authors employ literary structures such as genre and intertextuality to function as screens or filters through which to reinterpret past trauma, and, with these literary elements, the authors construct nuanced monuments. The authors’ use of genre conventions and references to other texts thereby mediate between the past and the present, and also link historic and personal losses to an extended web of human tragedy recorded over the ages in literature. Though the authors originally heard wartime stories filtered through their parents’ generation, the literary structures and references they use to retell these stories and create textual memorials expose their own preoccupations and priorities in remembering the past.

In addition to operating at a generational distance from the events they recount, these authors are “second-generational” in a literary sense, as well: they “come after” other writers, whether public intellectuals, such as Jean-Paul Sartre, or those already deeply associated with literature and memory, such as Marcel Proust and Georges Perec. Their experimentation with voice on a stylistic level can be read from this perspective as a form of raising their voices to be heard over the din of previous artists, as well as a means of demanding justice for past wrongs. To what extent do these authors grapple with the challenges of producing art in the aftermath of trauma, especially considering their position at a generation’s remove from direct witnesses? How does appearing after other writers ease or increase the obstacles in writing after trauma, either as an additional buffer from trauma or as a source of added anxiety, as per Harold Bloom’s *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973)?

1. Summary of Chapters

My chapters follow neither the order of the book’s publication, nor the chronology of historical events, instead following a progression which better suits my theoretical goals. I chose to begin with a chapter on Modiano’s *Dora Bruder* since it allows me to clearly establish a solid foundation, especially since many key memory studies concepts originate from Holocaust studies. Additionally, Modiano’s renown makes him an accessible entry point for readers. Next, I move backward in history, to a moment only slightly preceding the Occupation with Salvayre’s *Pas pleurer*, which examines the Spanish Civil War and the wave of Spanish refugees who came to France in the late 1930s. Despite the dark themes in the novel, Salvayre manages to offer a

somewhat more hopeful text because of the emphasis placed on her mother's brief utopian experience with the Spanish Revolution, giving the reader some respite before the final chapter on the tragic *Moze* by Rahmani, which examines the mistreatment of *harkis* in both France and Algeria during and after the Algerian War, as well as her father's act of protest by means of suicide.

In my first chapter, I turn to Modiano, recipient of the 2014 Nobel Prize for Literature. As with Art Spiegelman's graphic novel *Maus*, first serialized in 1980, or Georges Perec's *W ou le souvenir d'enfance*, published in 1975, Modiano's texts also return to the dark years of the Second World War. He was born in the summer of 1945 to a Jewish father of Italian heritage and a Flemish Belgian mother. Haunted by the events immediately preceding his birth, as with many other writers of the period, Modiano is preoccupied—one could even argue “obsessed”—with questions of memory, the German Occupation, Vichy France, and the general effects of the Holocaust on the French. Specifically, *Dora Bruder*, published in 1997, investigates and imagines the life of a historically verifiable young French Holocaust victim, but the narrator spends as much time contemplating what remains unknown about her and reflecting on his own memories as he does seeking out the actual facts of this young woman's life. Biographical data are interspersed with speculation, doubt, and literary intertextual allusion that indicate that this book does not fit neatly into either fictional or non-fictional genres. Indeed, it is well known in critical circles that when organizing details to create a coherent narrative, biographies and autobiographies can stray into some degree of fiction. With the ambiguous generic timbre of *Dora Bruder*, Modiano addresses the challenge, or, perhaps, the impossibility of writing an accurate narrative

about someone whose memories are entirely inaccessible. The book functions as an aesthetic monument in so far as it commemorates Dora Bruder, while it also refuses to create an ultimate, fixed biography of her experiences.

The second chapter investigates Salvayre's *Pas pleurer*, published in 2014. Salvayre's parents fled to France as refugees from Franco's Spain, and Salvayre focuses on the time of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) in this novel. The book won the Prix Goncourt, considered by most as the highest honor for a novel written in French, and has brought renewed critical attention to Salvayre, previously most frequently recognized for *La Compagnie des spectres* (1997), a novel that explores the aftermath of Vichy France in a mother-daughter relationship in 1990s Paris. In *Pas pleurer*, the narrator interweaves conversations with her elderly mother about the Spanish Civil War with long quotations from the Catholic and French monarchist Georges Bernanos's book about the war, *Les Grands cimetières sous la lune* (1938). This project will concentrate on *Pas pleurer* rather than one of her other works in large part due to its intertextual qualities (such as its extensive paraphrases of Bernanos), its narrative style, and its connection to the author's family history. Additionally, *Pas pleurer* contributes an unexpected angle to the exploration of memory in contemporary French literature. Although the Spanish Civil War has received little attention in current French memory trends, it had in fact a significant role in the debate over fascism in France in the 1930s, and young Frenchmen volunteered on both sides of the conflict. Furthermore, the war holds an important place in literary history: it shaped an international cadre of writers, including André Malraux, Ernest Hemingway, George Orwell, René Char and Tristan Tzara. Today, among continued discussion about immigration and refugee crises,

Salvayre's reexamination of the Spanish Civil War and the migrant experience contributes to an extremely important and ongoing French debate about national identity.

The third chapter in this study examines Rahmani's *Moze*, published in 2003. Rahmani exemplifies a recent surge of French writers of *harki* heritage. The *harkis* were the native Algerian men who served as auxiliary troops for the French during the Algerian War, and the term now also refers to their spouses and descendants. Many *harkis* were executed by members of the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) after the war. Others, like Rahmani's father, escaped to France where they were coldly welcomed, despite the fact that they had fought for the French, and some technically held French citizenship.³ *Harkis* were housed in French camps for months, if not, in some cases, for years (in fact, certain camps, such as Rivesaltes, had formerly been used to intern Jews prior to deportation). Particularly over the past two decades, discussion and scholarship about the Algerian War have become increasingly significant as the taboos surrounding it have faded with time and the generations directly involved have aged. In *Moze*, Rahmani tells the semi-autobiographical story of her *harki* father's service to France, his betrayal by the nation of France, his silence about the war years, and his suicide. The work is also quite engaging on a formal level. With its structural experimentation and its spoken-word rhythm, *Moze* confronts family history, as well as questions about silence, voice, and language. Incorporating poetic passages, long

³ In "Le Statut des musulmans en Algérie coloniale: Une Nationalité française dénaturée," Patrick Weil notes that when Algeria was annexed by France in 1834, Algerian Muslims and Jews received "une nationalité de sujet" which made them "français" without the full rights of citizenship (95). By 1865, Muslims and Jews could apply for "la pleine nationalité," and in 1870 all Algerian Jews were declared full citizens (97). However, by 1962, "seuls quelque dix mille musulmans sont pleinement français, soit qu'ils aient été eux-mêmes naturalisés, soit qu'un de leur parent l'ait été" (108). See Weil's article for more details on the intricacies of nationality, naturalization, and citizenship in French Algeria.

dialogues, and copies of official documents, *Moze* defies clear generic classification. Indeed, the blending of genre conventions provides an opportunity for analyzing the genre structures that Rahmani does choose to maintain, as well as how she draws the reader's attention to certain themes through intentional disjointedness. Her text confronts questions of memory while bridging literary tradition and avant-garde experimentation.

2. Memory Studies

My analysis of *Dora Bruder*, *Pas pleurer*, and *Moze* refers significantly to memory studies, an interdisciplinary field encompassing contributions from history, cultural studies, and psychology, a discipline that examines how the past is remembered and why it is portrayed in particular ways. Memory studies as an area of research has grown particularly out of Holocaust studies and has been further influenced by the expanded application of the concept of trauma to postcolonial and gender studies (Erll 9). Much work has been done on trauma within memory studies, though not necessarily from the particular angle of the relationship between trauma and intertextuality, and I address how authors curate intertextual references to interpret past traumatic events. For analysis of traumatic memory, I will draw on work by such critics as Astrid Erll, Michael Rothberg, Max Silverman, and Brett Ashley Kaplan, among others. Marianne Hirsch's *Family Frames* and *The Generation of Postmemory* will occupy a particularly important role in my analysis, since her concept of postmemory, or traumatic memories passed down to subsequent generations, is particularly relevant for my approach to the analysis of the authors in question.

Due to the many influences on the field and its interdisciplinary nature, there is no consensus on a methodology unique to memory studies, and, thus, many approaches do exist. However, Erll and Ansgar Nünning have attempted to create a more cohesive vision in their article, “Where Literature and Memory Meet: Toward a Systemic Approach to the Concepts of Memory Used in Literary Studies,” as well as in their edited volume, *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*. Their article accentuates the relationship among the notions of memory and genre, intertextuality, and canon formation. It works well in conjunction with Liedeke Plate and H. G. Els Rose’s proposal that the concept of “rewriting” can organize studies on memory and literature; they describe rewriting as a “productive concept for understanding cultural memory as an act of transfer” (623) and they include as rewriting anything from the medieval practice of copying a manuscript, to retelling or even re-editing a story (613). It is noteworthy that unlike several other theoretical frameworks, such as postmemory, theirs does not concentrate on trauma-based cultural memory. Plate and Rose claim that the act of rewriting “performs memory. It engages in the labor of remembering and forgetting, involving people in it as an active process of production and repression in relation to institutional discourses and cultural and social practice and, as such, it is implicated in power dynamics” (613). However, I will explore the means by which using these elements (genre conventions and intertextuality) within the context of literature recalling traumatic history may serve as a way of mediating between the present and the past or between unspeakable suffering and a more universal call for justice.

2.1 Postmemory

Each of the three authors in this study was born during or after a major conflict: Modiano was born near Paris in 1945 after the end of the Second World War, Salvayre was born in France over a decade after her parents fled Spain in 1939, and Rahmani was born in Algeria at the end of the Algerian War in 1962. All three retell stories from wartimes they did not witness, while they borrow creatively from literary tradition. Accordingly, Hirsch's concept of postmemory helps to orient the second-generational aspect of Modiano, Rahmani, and Salvayre's texts. In *Family Frames*, Hirsch describes postmemory as

distinguished from memory by a generational distance and from history by deep personal connection. Postmemory is a powerful and very particular form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation. This is not to say that memory itself is unmediated, but that it is more directly connected to the past. (22)

Given these considerations, I argue that part of that mediation, in the context of postmemorial literature, is, to slightly rephrase Hirsch, an "imaginative investment" in recycling specifically literary memories and structures. That is, the use of references to texts, genres, tropes, and symbols forms an important part of this "imaginative investment."⁴ Literature generally leans strongly on these elements, but in the case of postmemorial literature, the use of these structures becomes a manner both for the authors to construct a text and for them to relate to the family memories recounted.

⁴ While Hirsch examines some literary texts from a postmemorial angle, she primarily analyzes family photographs or artifacts, and considers how the descendant responds to and connects with these objects.

In *The Generation of Postmemory*, Hirsch describes postmemory as a process of “intergenerational acts of transfer” (2). Indeed, children potentially acquire their “postmemories” more or less passively as they grow up—from family photographs, from the silence around certain topics, etc.—and for some individuals, postmemory will always remain passive. However, as Hirsch notes, postmemory includes the imaginative component alluded to above, in which the recipient contemplates the past and interprets it according to his or her own experiences. I suggest that descendants (such as, in our case, authors or narrators) who engage directly with inherited memories accordingly transform their status from that of a (passive) repository to that of a (dynamic) curator. They confront the burdens of postmemory directly by enacting a return to the past. Through reading and research, the descendant may actively construct productive literary scaffolding for the received memories, thereby taking a role in their interpretation and assuming agency. Indeed, Hirsch’s idea of an “intergenerational act of transfer” applies as well to intertextuality as it does to traumatic postmemory, recalling Plate and Rose’s proposal that rewriting is a way for understanding “cultural memory as an act of transfer” (623). However, I am less interested in the process of transfer, than in the authors’ present-day reconstruction of the past, because my concentration in this study is on the artistic and curatorial choices made deliberately in the process of creating literary texts. Indeed, the authors’ intertextual references function not only to curate the representation of the past, but also to evaluate the legacy of prior literary works. By selecting which events and which authors to pass on to the next generation of readers, the authors shift from simply receiving narratives to critically deciding which aspects of (literary, historical, and familial) legacy to conserve or, on the contrary, discard.

For each text that I study, I examine which events in the narrator's present function as catalysts for their acts of "return."⁵ For Modiano's narrator, it is a *fait divers* he discovers in the 1980s about a girl who ran away in 1941. Rahmani's narrator must face her father's history after his suicide-cum-protest on November 11 (Armistice Day). Salvayre's narrator, after having long evaded her family's past,⁶ reads a witness's account of the Spanish Civil War while confronting her elderly mother's mortality and disappearing memory. Thus, rather than concentrating on how the burden of family memories demands an outlet in the present, I examine the factors of the present in the texts that initiate the need to look to the past, to revisit family stories, and to share them.

2.2. Genre as a Medium of Memory

Given the blended styles of *Moze*, *Pas pleurer*, and *Dora Bruder*, Erll's thoughts on studying genre in order to study memory help to clarify the cultural significance of the authors' structural choices. Erll proposes reading genre as a form of cultural memory in the sense that genre conventions tap into cultural memories that readers can then use to decode the core content. She also suggests that the way in which personal narratives are constructed is based on our (often unconscious) absorption of these genre conventions: "Genre schemata are . . . not neutral containers to be filled with specific memories. Instead they are charged with ideological meaning. Genres . . . carry values, norms and worldviews" (74). Defying simple genre classifications, the traits Modiano,

⁵ Hirsch describes her first viewing of Claude Lanzmann's (nine hour-long documentary) *Shoah* (1985) as a turning point which marked the beginning of her personal and scholarly research about the Holocaust (*Generation 7*).

⁶ The narrator does not explain why she formerly had little interest in exploring her family's past, though Salvayre herself, in an interview with Marianne Grosjean for the *Tribune de Genève*, states that she and her siblings distanced themselves from her parents' origins during childhood: "nous ne voulions rien entendre à l'époque. Nous voulions être de petits Français comme les autres, avec des parents qui auraient parlé sans accent, qui auraient eu une histoire banale. Il a fallu du temps pour que nous acceptions d'être les enfants de ces immigrés, réfugiés politiques, qui parlaient mal le français, qui avaient vécu l'exil."

Rahmani, and Salvayre borrow from various genres (such as autobiography, tragic theater, detective fiction, and oral history) can aid in the elucidation of how the authors perceive the past.

All three books relate to the lives and family histories of their authors, though none of them are strict autobiographies.⁷ More accurately, these texts relate to the realms of semi-autobiographical fiction or autofiction, as I will discuss in the chapters dedicated to each book. For example, in the case of *Dora Bruder*, Modiano primarily borrows from genres such as autobiography, biography, and detective narrative. The narrator becomes an informal investigator fascinated with uncovering Dora's past, but he connects her whereabouts and actions with his memories of his own childhood and youth, and especially his father's account of being arrested during the occupation. For Rahmani and Salvayre in particular, theater and oral traditions mark their texts visibly. Rahmani's narrative evades clear generic classification, avoiding a subtitle (such as *roman*) on its cover. Though the text initially seems disjointed and collage-like, given the occasional insertion of official documents or poetic passages, an internal organizing structure does emerge. Rahmani arranges the semi-autobiographical narrative into five parts, mirroring the traditional structure of a five-act play. The vast majority of the text consists of dialogue suited well to reading aloud in order to appreciate the effect of the author's style and voice. Appropriately, the French artist Sapho has adapted *Moze* to the stage as a one-woman dramatic recitation.⁸ Unlike Rahmani, Salvayre formally

⁷ *Dora Bruder* appears initially to have the author as narrator, but, as I discuss in Chapter 1, it is closer to autofiction due to some authorial liberties; *Pas pleurer* is subtitled "Roman" and the narrator's name is Lidia (rather than Lydie); and Rahmani explains that she views *Moze* more as a stylized, universal literary story about exile (in the tradition of *Oedipus At Colossus*) than as a narrative about her own father.

⁸ An excerpt from one performance from the 2008 Marathon des mots at the Théâtre Sorano in Toulouse is available on YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJgTv_FhCyk).

classifies *Pas pleurer* as a *roman* on the book's cover. However, as with her *La Compagnie des spectres*, which has been adapted to the stage by at least four different individuals since 2002,⁹ *Pas pleurer* makes extensive use of dialogue of a theatrical nature, and was also produced as a play in 2017 by Denis Laujol at the Théâtre du Poche in Brussels. In both Salvayre's and Rahmani's texts, the emphasis on orality appears to stem partially from the authors' bilingual upbringings and their interest in issues of language and national identity. In the chapters on these authors, I explore how genre, style, and linguistic choices perform as a form of engagement with contemporary political discourse in France, particularly that surrounding immigration, integration, and national identity. The connection to the spoken word resonates with the anger and energy in Salvayre's texts and in *Moze*, and reinforces their call for justice.

2.3. Curating Intertexts

As the memories flow from one generation to the next in *Dora Bruder*, *Pas pleurer*, and *Moze*, the process of passing on words and stories parallels the exchanges that occur between generations of writers. Whether through subtle references to Proust, direct quotes from Bernanos, thematic preoccupations alluding to Perec, or more universal symbolism anchored in Greco-Roman or French literary traditions, the authors draw upon their own readings to reprocess and represent their family stories. Speaking of rewriting in a broad sense, Plate and Rose stress that "[a]s an act of transfer enabling cultural remembrance, rewriting inscribes time and difference. It is an act of repetition that re-members, re-collects, and re-calls, for it puts the memory together again, gathers

⁹ Mónica Espina (2002, Théâtre National de Chaillot in Paris), Gérard Lorcy (2006, Salle Henri-Salvador in Villiers-Saint Paul), Pierre Bézières (2008, Théâtre du Lucernaire in Paris), and Zabou Breitman (2011, Théâtre de la Commune in Aubervilliers).

it anew, and calls or names it again” (613). Plate and Rose focus on the cultural value of rewriting, since authors perpetuate cultural values and stories, and even the reputations of fellow authors, through recreating or referencing them in their own new works.

Each of the three texts in question borrows substantially from and alludes to other works of literature. These literary memories in turn frame the historical memories. As an example, Modiano’s intertextual references anchor his work within a specific French literary tradition; for instance, he includes allusions to Abbé Prévost’s *Manon Lescaut* (1731), noting that the hospital his father stayed in was once used as a prison for women of supposedly dubious character, women who were later deported to Louisiana (652). This reference creates a link between the architectural spaces of the eighteenth century and the present, as well as between events in the eighteenth century and Dora’s ordeal. It also layers literature into the discussion of real experiences; in such a way, a work of literature offers a surrogate memory for events not personally experienced. In *Pas pleurer*, in addition to the long passages from Bernanos, the narrator makes brief allusions to Malraux. These choices prompt many questions: Why are their voices needed in the present? Why give them a literary afterlife? What are the implications of including them in the novel? *Moze* does not directly reference other literary figures in the way that Salvayre cites Bernanos or Modiano quotes Hugo. However, Rahmani clearly also situates herself within the tradition of *littérature engagée*, closely associated with celebrated writers, such as Sartre. Her stylistic innovations also give a nod to the experimentation of the *Nouveau Roman* from the 1950s and 1960s, such as in a chapter that consists of a dialogue that does not indicate which individual speaks which lines, reminiscent of Nathalie Sarraute’s condemnation

(in *L'Ère de soupçon*, 1956) of the tired novelistic conventions which typically introduce speech. *Moze* also bears a resemblance to Zola's famous *J'accuse* (1898) in which he condemns the unfair trial of Dreyfus. Through the textual structure and themes, Rahmani also indirectly references two plays by Sophocles: *Oedipus at Colonus*, about an exiled father, and *Antigone*, about a young woman's quest for justice.

As much as it can be said that *Dora Bruder*, *Pas pleurer*, and *Moze* are works of familial and national memory, these are also works of literary memory. Thus, one can ask in what sense the traumatic dimension of Bloom's concept of the "anxiety of influence" might be fitting for literature dealing with its status as emerging after historical trauma. In *The Anxiety of Influence*, Bloom suggests that the literary encounter with a favorite author creates a degree of trauma for the younger author because the latter attempts to live up to the writings of the former; indeed, the younger author may feel a desire to rewrite the former's works, jealous that he or she did not write the other texts herself (25). I therefore work on what I consider to be an important connection between memory/trauma studies and Bloom's ideas on intertextuality. The postmemorial author comes to the forefront after the traumatic historical event; however, he or she also comes after admired writers. Reading those other writers initially can produce a feeling of satisfaction, but when writing something new, the author's awareness of the earlier author shadow creates anxiety. The more recent author also faces potential ethical pressures to represent the historical trauma faithfully, even if fictionally. In Salvayre's case, the extensive passages quoted from Bernanos raise questions about her motivation, or even perhaps "anxiety," in borrowing rather than retelling the story in her own words. The negotiation between the author and prior

writers means that the intertextual allusions of the former writers potentially honor or memorialize the latter. But is the contemporary author bowing at the altar of his or her predecessor or wielding his or her own authority to selectively maintain or disrupt the predecessor's position?

3. Monuments and Countermonuments

I believe that it is only fair to point out that there exist some exceptions to the general critical neglect of the present moment in postmemory, such as Hirsch's discussion of the relationship between postmemory, justice, and activism. Justice and activism imply a rootedness in a present attempt to achieve remembrance or reparations for the past, or a use of the knowledge of the past to oppose current or future atrocities. In the texts by Modiano, Rahmani, and Salvayre, the narrator speaks as part of an effort to achieve justice or, at least, to acknowledge justice for those who are dead or have been misrepresented.

In these efforts to remember past suffering, the authors create their own literary monuments, or rather, what have been called "countermonuments," to the dead. The term "countermonument" (sometimes written as "counter-monument") was popularized by James E. Young in 1992, who coined it to describe a wave of new German Holocaust memorials in the 1980s and 1990s, such as Jochen Gerz and Ester Shalev-Gerz's 1985 Monument against Fascism, War and Violence—and for Peace and Human Rights, or Horst Hoheisel's 1987 Aschrott Fountain (Stevens et al. 952, 954; see figs. 1 and 2). The former was a column with an easily engravable lead surface inviting public participation, and which was lowered into the ground annually over a seven-year period



Figure 1. Ester Shalev-Gerz, Photograph of Jochen Gerz and Ester Shalev-Gerz's Monument against Fascism, War and Violence—and for Peace and Human Rights, n.d.¹⁰



Figure 2. Eistreter, Photograph of Horst Hoheisel's 1987 Aschrott Fountain, 2009.

¹⁰ The monument was originally twelve meters high when it was inaugurated in 1986; here it is shown prior to finally being lowered to be flat with the ground in 1992. The etchings and graffiti show how the public interacted with the monument.

until it was no longer visible, and the latter is a reproduction of a pyramid-shaped fountain destroyed by the Nazis, since it had been donated by a Jewish businessman, but the reproduction is inverted and embedded in the ground. In both the Gerzes' and Hoheisel's memorials, formerly tall and vertical structures are buried. However, the Gerzes' monument appears to imply a rejection of monolithic ideologies as much as monoliths, whereas Hoheisel's buried fountain suggests historical rupture and the annihilation of a flourishing culture. Traditional monumental design (such as one sees with the Arc de Triomphe or the Lincoln Memorial) may inspire awe or reverence, but forms like Hoheisel's fountain and the Gerzes' column intend to disrupt customary memorial aesthetics, with the deliberate intention of provoking questions, contemplation, and engagement on the part of the public. Monuments of this sort attempt to eschew an absolute narrative through abstract shapes or ambiguous symbolism, inviting viewers to reflect on what they might actually mean. As Richard Crownshaw observes, for a number of countermonumental architects, traditional monuments evoke fascism (213) insofar as they perceive monuments to be tainted by possible historical abuse as propaganda (e.g. commemorating war victories or displaying political dominance). Yet, while fascist movements employed the art of architecture, and especially monumental forms, to assert their power, the decision to relegate any monument of a traditional, classical style to the fascist camp clearly oversimplifies past memorials through a zealous overcorrection. Crownshaw borrows Kaplan's term "aesthetic pollution" to describe the consequent "fear of re-inscribing the same aestheticisation of fascist politics" which "effaces the specific political and historical discourses and contexts that are materialized in post-fascist memorial forms"

(214). Much of this concern arises from the German context in which countermonuments proliferated, particularly with the Gerzes' anti-fascist obelisk as a reference point. However, obviously many classical monuments predate 20th-century fascism, and the division between postmodern countermonumental fluidity and classical monumental rigidity creates a false binary, especially considering the role of inquiry and skepticism have played since the Enlightenment.

The term "countermonument," then, suffers from being perceived as rather imprecise, as also noted by Quentin Stevens et al. (952). These critics observe that it has been "used interchangeably with other terms that may have very different connotations, including anti-monument, non-monument, negative-form, deconstructive, non-traditional and counter-hegemonic monument" (952).¹¹ Thus, they limit their discussion to two types ("anti-monumental" designs, which are conceived in opposition to traditional monumental styles, and "dialogic" designs, which are constructed as a negative response to a specific, existing monument) and seek to provide precise definitions by examining a range of monuments, as well as writings about them. As these countermonumental descriptions relate to literature, the texts discussed in this dissertation best correspond to the "anti-monumental" type described by Stevens et al. Table 1 summarizes the five traits (subject, form, size, visitor experience, and meaning) that they compare between "traditional" and "anti-monumental" memorials, with the

¹¹ Stevens et al. summarize four essential qualities found in Young's descriptions of countermonuments:

- (1) "they express a position opposing a particular belief or event rather than affirming it."
- (2) "they eschew monumental forms (indeed, in their inversion of form, both became nearly invisible)."
- (3) "they invite close, multisensory visitor engagement."
- (4) "rather than being didactic, they invite visitors to work out the meanings for themselves."

(954)

	Traditional Monuments	Anti-Monuments
Subject	“affirmative”; “glorifying an event or a person, or celebrating an ideology” (956)	“recognise darker events . . . or the more troubling side of an event”; “may warn of the evils of an ideology”; “recognise the suffering victims . . . and admonish the perpetrators” (956)
Form	“solids”; “light tones”; “elevated”; “unified into a single, orderly composition at a single location” (956)	“voids”; “dark”; “sunken”; “dispersed”; “fragmented” (956); “abstract” (961)
Site	“often prominent, highly visible, set apart from everyday space through natural topography, height or enclosure” (960)	“some . . . are to be encountered by chance during everyday travels”; “presume no focused, idealised viewing position” (960)
Visitor Experience	“often discrete objects, demanding solemnity and deference”; “engage primarily . . . the sense of sight”; “viewed from a distance” (960)	“unsettle . . . conventions of reception by inviting close, bodily encounter by visitors”; “Senses other than sight may be stimulated” (961)
Meaning	“didactic, imparting clear, unified messages through figural representation, explicit textual or graphic reference to people, places or events, allegorical figures, and archetypal symbolic forms” (961)	“offer no easy answers”; “ambiguous and resist any unified interpretation”; “often dependent on visitors’ historical knowledge, or supplementary information made available”; “effac[es] or conceal[es] overt narratives, in order to depoliticize commemoration or to open it up to multiple and potentially conflicting interpretations”; “prevents a single narrative from dominating” (961)

Table 1. A chart summarizing the characteristics of traditional and anti-monumental memorials, as defined in Stevens et al., 956-61.

aim of providing a clearer definition of the qualities of countermonuments. It is noteworthy that they avoid equating “traditional” with “fascist” and concentrate instead on how traditional monuments and more modern anti-monuments are perceived (or

intended to be perceived) by the public. These traits and their descriptions are referenced throughout this dissertation, as I consider how works of commemorative literature characterized by a fragmented, plurivocal style (reminiscent of Mikhail Bakhtin's "heteroglossia"), and an ambivalent relationship to the past can function as literary countermonuments in an anti-monumental strain. Before proceeding with an analysis of how some works of literature may be considered anti-monumental, it may be helpful to view more examples of architectural works typically considered as countermonuments. Countermonuments contrast with neo-classical grandiosity of monuments such as the Brandenburg Gate or the Jefferson Memorial, and include works such as Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial (see fig. 3) completed in 1982 in Washington D.C. and Peter Eisenman's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (see fig. 4) inaugurated in 2005 in Berlin. In "The Memorial's Arc: Between Berlin's *Denkmal* and New York City's 9/11 Memorial," an article describing the development of memorial architecture over the past century, Young states that countermemorial designers, such as Jochen Gerz, indicate that Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. was a turning point that "made their own work possible" (326). He also notes that Lin claims two works in France as inspiration for her design: Sir Edwin Lutyens' Memorial to the Missing of the Somme (1924; see fig. 5) in Thiepval and George-Henri Pingusson's Mémorial des Martyrs de la Déportation (1962; see fig. 6) in Paris. In these works, Young sees "precursors to the 'negative-form' realized so brilliantly by Maya Lin, . . . articulations of uncompensated loss and absence, represented by carved-out pieces of landscape, as well as by the visitor's descent downward (and inward) into memory" (326). Lutyens' memorial, while grand and



Figure 3. Carol M. Highsmith, “Aerial View of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.,” 20 April 2007.

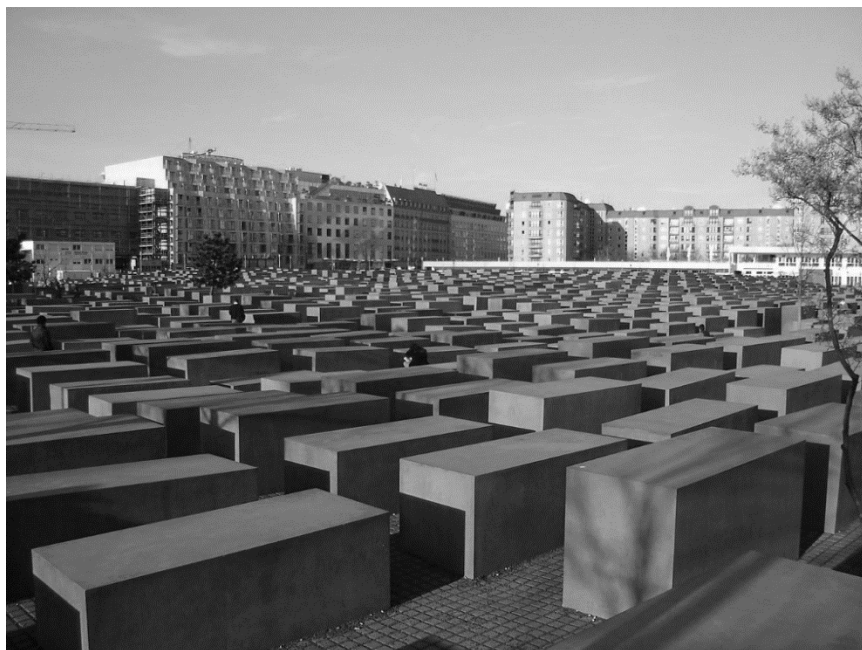


Figure 4. Jonay CP, “Denkmal für die Ermordeten Juden Europas in Berlin, Deutschland,” 4 Apr. 2007.



Figure 5. Argus398, “Thiepval Memorial World War 1 Battlefield,” 21 Feb. 2009.



Figure 6. Tangopaso, “Border of the Memorial of the Martyrs of Deportation, Square de l’Île-de-France at the East End of the Île de la Cité,” 29 July 2010.

stately, is riddled with arches, holes that recall images of loss. Pingusson's memorial is unassuming and easy to overlook, occupying the tip of the Île de la Cité east of Notre Dame cathedral. Visitors descend concrete steps to reach an empty, sunken courtyard that blocks the view of the city. An entryway leads to a series of small rooms lined with quotes from celebrated authors, such as Sartre, and a tomb encased in a hall lined with golden light. Both Lutyen's and Pingusson's memorials make use of negative space, that is, the emptiness evoked by the shape of the memorials' structures. Lin's Vietnam memorial also evokes emptiness: it is not simply a wall on ground level, but a space cut into the earth. The designs' negative spaces highlight absence, potentially connoting death, while also opening the structures to varied other interpretations as the viewer reflectively engages directly with the space. It is precisely this malleability of interpretation—which foregrounds the viewer's experience and imagination, rather than imposing a didactic message—that most uniquely characterizes countermonumental forms.

4. Textual Countermonuments

Though the traits outlined by Young and Stevens et al. specifically describe physical memorials, the characteristics presented also elucidate a trend that applies more generally to artistic and literary representations of memory. For example, in 2000, the Museum of Modern Art in New York hosted an exhibit entitled, “Counter-Monuments and Memory,” which included mixed-media projects, sculpture, and excerpts from Spiegelman's graphic novel about the Holocaust, *Maus*. Joshua S. Jacobs has also discussed Adrienne Rich's poem, “An Atlas of the Difficult World” (1991), a

text treating the subject of America and the Gulf War (1990-1991), as a countermonument (727-28). However, Jacobs's analysis does not clearly define the concept of a literary countermonument; instead, he briefly elaborates on ways in which a countermonument differs from a traditional monument before referring readers in a footnote to other authors who have theorized physical countermonuments, such as Benedict Anderson. I am therefore interested in articulating a more nuanced framework for textual countermonuments—and, in the context of the writers I am studying—particularly postmemorial countermonuments.

Accordingly, it is useful to distinguish between the types of texts that fulfill a more traditional memorial function and those that take on a countermonumental role. Repurposing Stevens et al.'s descriptions of traditional and anti-monumental memorials for a literary context, the elegy (a poem mourning the dead) and the eulogy (a speech commemorating the dead) qualify as two of the most traditional textual memorial forms from the beginnings of European literature. As a more modern example, in Malraux's *Oraisons funèbres*, a collection of speeches he gave between 1958 and 1965 and published in 1971, he praises individuals such as the iconic Joan of Arc and the Resistance hero, Jean Moulin. The former defended France against the English before she was captured and burned at the stake, and the latter kept Resistance secrets despite brutal torture by the Gestapo, and died during deportation to Germany. Other orations in the collection commemorate highly significant historical events, such as the liberation of Paris in August of 1944. These speeches, primarily given during Malraux's tenure as Minister of Culture, can be seen to serve to inspire a sense of national pride and cohesion in the wake of two extremely significant events that impacted France's sense

of identity deeply: the destruction of the Second World War and the loss of the country's status as a colonial power; greatness is therefore understandably newly presented as to be sought in universal values and culture. As Marie Gérard notes in her article, "L'Oraison funèbre selon Malraux, ou comment concilier l'art et l'action," these speeches also have an important didactic purpose, representing an idealized hero whose values should be emulated (1005). In keeping with the elegiac genre, Malraux projects a narrative of inspiration and transcendence over hardship, rather than an account of the ambivalent realities often uncovered in the details of history.

However, just as memorials in a classical, authoritarian style can come across as gauche in post-war Germany, many artistic works originating in post-war France also reject a simplified patriotic tone, and directly and courageously confront the gray zones of history. Indeed, prior to the "second-generational" texts (which each examine different twentieth-century events) that I examine in this dissertation, certain French "first-generational" texts in the immediate post-war period also rejected simplistic portrayals of the war years. One example is Jean Genet's novel *Pompes funèbres* (1947), in which the narrator's mother has a Nazi lover, to whom the male narrator also feels physically attracted. At a time when few French authorities would publicly discuss the extent of French collaboration, Genet brazenly confronts this powerfully charged term in his text. He undermines a patriotic narrative about the war, revealing the hollow grandiosity of official national ceremonies, reflected in the "pompes funèbres" of the title. Phillip Watts describes the subject of the novel as "a variation on a traditional poetic topos, the quest for beauty in evil," and he suggests that Genet moves the historic and political crimes of the Nazis into the realm of mythology,

while also drawing attention to the myth-making of contemporary propaganda surrounding the *libération* (195-96).

Other texts published immediately after the war address the horror of the concentration camps, including two works by members of the Resistance who survived the camps: Robert Antelme's *L'Espèce humaine* (1947) and David Rousset's *L'Univers concentrationnaire* (1945). A little over a decade after the first texts about concentration camps, André Schwarz-Bart's *Le Dernier des justes* (1959) traced descendants of the fictional Lévy family from the Middle Ages to the Holocaust. *Le Dernier des justes* became what Jeffrey Mehlman describes as "[t]he first great novelistic success of Holocaust literature [in France]" (179). Mehlman also observes that a similar trend is visible in both French memorials and French literature about the war. Memorials (such as the *Mémorial des martyrs de la déportation*) and literary texts initially emphasize victims of the war in a more general sense, including political and resistance deportees such as Antelme and Rousset (177). Schwarz-Bart's novel, published a year after the French edition of Elie Weisel's *Night*, as well as others in the years that followed, as with Modiano's *La Place de l'étoile* (1968) and Perec's *W ou le souvenir d'enfance* (1975), confront the deportation and extermination of Jews more directly, as do later memorials such as the *Vél d'hiv*¹² (a plaque was installed in 1958 and a statue was erected in 1993) and the *Mémorial de la Shoah* (2005).

Not unlike some architects of countermonuments (for instance, Lin or Eisenman), some writerly figures employ a similar strategy of structuring a text around

¹² On 16 and 17 July 1942, under German orders, the French police arrested 13,000 Jews in a *rafle* ("roundup") in Paris. The Jews were then held in the *Vélodrome d'hiver* stadium for five days with almost no food or water before being transferred to internment camps and, later, death camps.

the concept of absence, though authors of literature in the countermonumental vein may avoid some of the pitfalls encountered by architects, in the sense that a textual creation can more clearly construct a specific historical context. Someone approaching Eisenman's *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*, on the other hand, might not realize its referent if he or she does not know the title, given the memorial's abstract form.¹³ In fact, concerns about its overly abstract nature led to the late addition of the *Informationsort* ("information center") to the design. And yet, this information center is located below ground and accessed only from a far corner of the field of stelae, so an observer who visits the site unaware of that resource might conclude that this represents simply some sort of maze.¹⁴ As Crownshaw argues, certain critics, such as Kaplan, have interpreted the countermonument as representative of a more general "postmodern condition of placelessness," thus divorcing it from the Holocaust and rendering the memorial a victim of "its own anxieties about historical reference and the over-determination of the past" (216). However, in the literary sphere, even an author as fond of games and puzzles as Perec provides substantial reference points to historical events, making the events impossible to ignore even if one were to approach the book with minimal historical background. With his novels touching on French collaboration in the

¹³ For more thoughts on the monument's vagueness, see "The Inadequacy of Berlin's 'Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe'" (published online by the *New Yorker* on 12 July 2012) by Richard Brody. Brody argues, "Without that title, it would be impossible to know what the structure is meant to commemorate; there's nothing about these concrete slabs that signifies any of the words of the title, except, perhaps, 'memorial'—insofar as some of them, depending on their height, may resemble either headstones or sarcophagi." He also points out the title does not even clearly refer to the Shoah: "The reduction of responsibility to an embarrassing, tacit fact that 'everybody knows' is the first step on the road to forgetting."

¹⁴ Brody observes that he did not even see the *Informationsort* during his visit; he only learned about it when reading about the memorial at a later date. Indeed, a number of visitors approach the site more as a playground than as a monument to the dead. See Shahak Shahira's criticism via the *Yolocaust* project (<http://yolocaust.de>), in which he transposes images of dead bodies from the Holocaust into tourists' photographs (such as images of teenagers leaping off of stelae).

deportation of Jews to the death camps, his stories relate to actual loss in his own family: his mother was killed at Auschwitz. His novel *W ou le souvenir d'enfance* interweaves two narratives that initially appear to be quite dissimilar: the account of a young boy sent to the countryside during the occupation (an experience that Perec himself survived) and a utopian fantasy story. The latter narrative converges with the former as it gradually shifts into a horrific allegory condemning the Nazi concentration camps. In a similar manner, Perec's 1978 *La Vie mode d'emploi* initially appears to be a straightforward chronicle of the rooms and inhabitants of a Parisian apartment building, yet the extensive cataloging of objects comes to expose exactly that which is missing: there is a room with nothing in it, a puzzle with a missing piece. The theme of absence points to those who were deported and killed in the Holocaust.¹⁵ Furthermore, in *La Vie*, tales of murders and passion belie the staid appearance of the building, while they point to the era of occupation and collaboration that the inhabitants try to ignore. The missing objects in the book, as well as the discursive gaps in the narrative, mirror the voids in countermonumental structures.

Today, Perec's influence (as well, of course, as the even longer impact of an author associated with memory much more generally, Proust) pervades works of literature engaging in traumatic memory, especially by recent authors who are either survivors of trauma themselves or the descendants of those who have. Just as the *Nouveau Roman* declared the end of what have become known as the "grand narratives," the deliberate uncertainty and fissures of these countermonumental novels reflect common postmodern preoccupations and a rejection of the authoritative certainty

¹⁵ In Perec's *La Disparition* (1969), the total absence of the letter "e" throughout the text also signifies the absence of "eux."

still present in some modern commemorative forms (perhaps most clearly seen in celebratory, propagandistic monuments erected by the state). And yet these texts, while engaged in postmodern questioning, also center around a significant core event to be commemorated. As impossible as it may be to approach “Truth,” as impossible as it is ever to have access to all of the facts in any situation, these texts testify to an important event that did happen that has left a legacy of emptiness or pain.

Naturally, the texts by Modiano, Rahmani, and Salvayre leave some questions unanswered, and the texts include debate about the past, about what can (and cannot) be known, as well as about the relationship of these phenomena to the present. The texts also demand that readers wrestle with moral issues and with the lapses of history and memory. *Dora Bruder*, *Moze*, and *Pas pleurer* thus encompass diverse viewpoints embedded within their narratives and seek to incite continued discussion beyond the text, an idea very much in line with Young’s description of a fitting contemporary monument as one that engages in polemics rather than offering a fixed account of the past (“Memorial’s Arc” 331).

This dissertation responds both to the ongoing debates in France over the role of memory in the public sphere and to the need for further theorization of memory studies approaches to literature. It addresses issues that are potential blind spots in memory studies, particularly as laid out in Hirsch’s concept of postmemory, such as the relationship between the structures of literature and memory, both of which involve creative processes. The relationship between memory and history has received much attention, such as in Dominick LaCapra’s *History and Memory After Auschwitz*, in which he observes that “Memory—along with its lapses and tricks—poses questions to

history in that it points to problems that are still alive or invested with emotion and value. Ideally, history critically tests memory and prepares for a more extensive attempt to work through a past that has not passed away” (8). However, postmemorial approaches to literature concentrate particularly on the depiction of the past from a present perspective or on the act of transmission. In the chapters that follow, I draw a detailed parallel between the act of artistic creation and the act of remembering. Furthermore, while postmemory involves the mediation of a witness between the initial event and the teller, intertextual influences in postmemorial literature add a substantial third party (or more) to the equation. An author’s direct confrontation with another author’s work becomes a prism through which the former refracts his or her story. The genre structures and intertextual references drawn upon in postmemorial writing thus aid in interpreting the initial event, or in any case the author’s perception of that event, while also creating an additional buffer between the author and the historical trauma. Additionally, the narrative voice retelling family memories can take on an activist role, fashioning a verbal memorial and calling for action beyond the literary sphere in the form of avoiding future atrocities, seeking justice for past wrongs, or simply not forgetting.

Chapter 1. *Dora Bruder* as Patrick Modiano's Monument to Filial

Guilt

As with Art Spiegelman's graphic novel *Maus*, first serialized in 1980, or Georges Perec's *W ou le souvenir d'enfance*, published in 1975, Patrick Modiano's texts also return to the dark years of the Second World War. He was born in the summer of 1945 to a Jewish father of Italian heritage and a Flemish Belgian mother. Haunted by the events immediately preceding his birth, as with many other writers of the period, Modiano is preoccupied—one could even argue “obsessed”—with questions of memory, the German Occupation, Vichy France, and the general effects of the Holocaust on the French. Specifically, *Dora Bruder*, published in 1997, investigates and imagines the life of a historically verifiable young French Holocaust victim, but the narrator spends as much time contemplating what remains unknown about her and reflecting on his own memories as he does seeking out the actual facts of this young woman's life. Biographical data are interspersed with speculation, doubt, and literary intertextual allusion that indicate that this book does not fit neatly into either fictional or non-fictional genres. Indeed, it is well known in critical circles that when organizing details to create a coherent narrative, biographies and autobiographies can stray into some degree of fiction. With the ambiguous generic timbre of *Dora Bruder*, Modiano addresses the challenge, or, perhaps, the impossibility of writing an accurate narrative about someone whose memories are entirely inaccessible. The book functions as an aesthetic monument insofar as it commemorates Dora Bruder, while it also refuses to create an ultimate, fixed biography of her experiences.

In *Dora Bruder*, the narrator's fascination with Dora originates with his discovery of a notice found in an old copy of *Paris-Soir*, dated December 31, 1941, which details the real woman's disappearance. The book opens with a reprint of the notice, and it is worthwhile to note that this is a factual newspaper ad, not a literary invention:

On recherche une jeune fille, Dora Bruder, 15 ans, 1 m 55, visage ovale, yeux gris marron, manteaux sport gris, pull-over bordeaux, jupe et chapeau bleu marine, chaussures sport marron. Adresser toutes indications à M. et Mme Bruder, 41 boulevard Ornano, Paris. (645)

The narrator finds this ad in 1988 and, eight years later, having remained preoccupied with the question of Dora's fate, begins a long search in administrative archives for information about her.¹⁶

To best understand the motivation behind *Dora Bruder*, let us turn to Modiano's description of the origins of his own interest in Dora, as described in an article first published in *Libération* in 1994, entitled "Avec Klarsfeld contre l'oubli." Modiano recalls that "[l]e hasard a voulu que je sois tombé un jour sur une annonce qui figurait dans le *Paris-Soir*" (177). He subsequently found Dora's name, followed by her father's, in Serge Klarsfeld's *Mémorial de la déportation des Juifs de France* (1978) (177). Klarsfeld's book documents the names, birthdates, and deportation convoys of thousands of individuals. It indicates that Dora and Ernest Bruder were deported in the same convoy on 18 September 1942. Her mother, Cécile, faced the same fate several months later.

¹⁶ Taking inspiration from the ad clearly evokes the role of the *fait divers* in literary history, including when Gustave Flaubert based *Madame Bovary* (1856) on the suicide of a country doctor's wife.

In this same article, Modiano declares that, next to Klarsfeld's *Mémorial*, he perceives that in his first novel, *La Place de l'étoile* (1968), "je rusais avec l'essentiel, en tâchant de répondre de manière désinvolte aux journalistes antisémites de l'Occupation, mais c'était comme pour se rassurer, faire le malin quand on a peur et que l'on parle très fort dans le noir" (176). Fiction, particularly the satirical intellectual games of *La Place de l'étoile*, seems inadequate and even foolish compared to the gravity of the data in Klarsfeld's book. Accordingly, he announces his intention to follow Klarsfeld's example, since, upon reading the *Mémorial*, "j'ai douté de la littérature. Puisque le principal moteur de celle-ci est souvent la mémoire, il me semblait que le seul livre qu'il fallait écrire, c'était ce mémorial, comme Serge Klarsfeld l'avait fait" (176). Faced with facts that document the violence of the past, Modiano appears to entertain thoughts reminiscent of Theodor Adorno's oft-cited phrase from the 1951 essay *Cultural Criticism and Society*: "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" (34).¹⁷ It is worth noting, however, that Modiano has consistently published fiction about the Occupation from the 1960s to the present. Modiano does not clarify when he first read Klarsfeld's *Mémorial*, though, and since he writes, "Je n'ai pas osé, à l'époque, prendre contact avec lui, ni avec l'écrivain dont l'œuvre est souvent une illustration de ce mémorial: Georges Perec" (176), it seems probable that his first reading took place significantly prior to his 1994 *Libération* article, given that Perec passed away in 1982. Furthermore, the allusion to Perec complicates the discussion about how to engage authentically with the past since Perec

¹⁷ Adorno's position, however, is more nuanced than his statement, and popular use of it, may suggest. See the full essay, as well as Antony Rowland's 1997 article in *Critical Survey*, "Re-reading 'Impossibility' and 'Barbarism': Adorno and Post-Holocaust Poetics."

wrote fiction that engaged with the legacy of the Holocaust. Accordingly, while Modiano “[a] douté de la littérature” when confronted with Klarsfeld’s work, his allusion to Perec offers a remedy for that doubt insofar as Perec demonstrates that there is indeed a role for fiction in commemorative art.

Modiano’s *Libération* article coincided with the publication of another textual memorial by Klarsfeld, entitled *Le Mémorial des enfants juifs déportés de France* (1994), which includes over 1000 striking pictures of children from their lives prior to their deportation. Modiano expresses hope that he will learn more about Dora in *Le Mémorial des enfants* (“Avec Klarsfeld” 177). Despite Modiano’s expectation, a consultation of the book shows that her name is not included on the page for her convoy since her age was unknown at the time of publication (*Mémorial des enfants* 1994; 152). By the third edition of *Le Mémorial des enfants*, however, Klarsfeld has added Dora, as well as copies of letters of thanks he had received from Modiano after assisting him in the search for information and photographs about Dora (*Mémorial des enfants* 2001; 250, 534-38). The dialogue between Modiano and Klarsfeld thereby results in an expansion of each of their textual memorial projects. Especially because of its relationship with Klarsfeld’s books, Modiano’s *Dora Bruder* can be read as a monument to Dora, as well as to the innumerable others who died in violence and obscurity.

1. The Contested Genre of *Dora Bruder*

Dora Bruder functions as literary document also serving as a memorial, and it is worth considering what sort of text Modiano has constructed, particularly in light of *Dora Bruder*’s connection to Klarsfeld’s project. In the *avant-propos* to the 2013

Gallimard single-volume collection of ten of Modiano's novels (entitled *Romans*), Modiano refers to the works included as the "épine dorsale" of his œuvre (9). *Dora Bruder* ranks among these pieces, as do *Un Pedigree* and *Livret de famille*, books that address directly his own family history. Especially important is that he labeled all of these books as "novels," even the family history accounts and *Dora Bruder*, though he does indicate some ambiguity of genre in choosing the use of quotations for the word *roman* each time he writes it in the foreword. Of the ten books in the collection, seven included the label *roman* on the original covers, but the autobiographical works, *Dora Bruder*, *Un pedigree*, and *Livret de famille* lack any formal designation printed beneath the titles. Nevertheless, the choice to collect these ten works together without distinguishing among their genres, simply calling them all "*romans*," implies that the texts all exist along a fictional spectrum; this choice suggests that even though *Dora Bruder* has a biographical or even autobiographical component, the text also relies on imaginative invention.

Dora Bruder hints that the narrator serves as a double for Modiano himself, given that the narrator states that he is the author of *La Place de l'étoile* and *Voyage de nocces* (1990), both of which represent titles of texts written by Modiano (*Dora Bruder* 704; 674). The narrator also mentions that his father's name was Albert and that he was of Italian-Jewish heritage, details equally true of Modiano's father (703). Indeed, Modiano's father's Occupation-era legacy appears to influence all of Modiano's work, most obviously on a thematic level, since all of his books involve a search for a missing person, a scenario set in wartime France, or a plot based on the enduring impact of World War II. Thus, given that the most clearly identified fictional works in Modiano's

œuvre also have an autobiographical link to the author, as Dervila Cooke analyzes in great detail in *Present Pasts: Patrick Modiano's (Auto)Biographical Fictions* (2005), it is worth considering whether it might be wise to see *Dora Bruder* as a lightly autofictionalized account rather than as what might be considered as “pure” autobiography.¹⁸ For example, the narrator’s account of his process of uncovering information about Dora implies that he simply came across the notice and gradually researched Dora’s life on his own—for no clear reason beyond curiosity and a mysterious affinity with the young woman.

In fact, the narrator omits completely the role of Klarsfeld in Modiano’s own search for information about Dora, a role elucidated in the *Cahier de L’Herne* dedicated to Modiano, which reproduces the initially amicable correspondence between Klarsfeld and Modiano. Their letters confirm that Klarsfeld provided Modiano with a wealth of information, including photographs of Dora’s family and information from archives in New York. Their prior collaboration notwithstanding, the exchange ends abruptly with a letter (more formally addressed “Cher Patrick Modiano,” instead of the “Cher Patrick” of earlier letters) documenting Klarsfeld’s reaction to *Dora Bruder*:

¹⁸ Technically, the book fails to meet Philippe Lejeune’s definition of autobiography in *Le Pacte autobiographique* (1975) since the reader learns very little about “l’histoire de [la] personnalité [du narrateur]” (14). If we overlook this aspect and focus on whether we can trust the narrator as a representative of the author, Lejeune suggests that a work is an autobiography if the narrator, author, and protagonist are the same person, and this identity is verified either by a “pact” (which may be a title, i.e. *My Life*) or an introductory remark by the author, or textual details (i.e. the unnamed first-person narrator who claims to have written other texts by the author). Though *Dora Bruder* meets this second condition, Lejeune’s analysis in *Le Pacte* entirely overlooks autofiction, simply claiming that the presence of inaccurate information would constitute a lie—rather than fiction—in an autobiography (30), though he also states that when there is any doubt about the genre of a narrative, a text must be a fiction: “Il n’y a pas de degré possible, et tout doute entraîne une conclusion négative” (15). He also limits himself to what can be known from the text itself, without consulting outside sources. In “L’Autofiction, un genre pas sérieux” (1996), Marie Darrieussecq argues that the playful style of autofiction exposes the hybrid genre, even without recourse to fact-checking.

Permettez-moi . . . de remarquer que l'enquête, telle que vous la narrez, tient plus du roman que de la réalité, puisque vous m'effacez et pourtant Dieu sait que j'ai œuvré pour découvrir et rassembler des informations sur Dora et vous les communiquer. Je ne sais si cette disparition . . . est significative d'une trop grande présence de ma part dans cette recherche ou si c'est un procédé littéraire permettant à l'auteur d'être le seul demiurge. (Modiano and Klarsfeld, "Correspondance" 186)

This conflict over attributions helps to affirm the ultimately autofictional nature of the novel since the narrator's story does not match exactly Modiano's life. Instead, the structure of the text posits the narrator as a lone detective figure, since *Dora Bruder* is a stylized work of literature, rather than a straightforward personal reflection by the actual Modiano on his search for information about Dora. The detective-like function of the narrator closely resembles that of the typical narrator of Modiano's novels. As Akane Kawakami observes in her book *Patrick Modiano* (2014), Modiano's novels "generally involve a mystery, shrouded in the past, which the narrator attempts to solve as a detective (he is generally an amateur . . .). He interviews people, collects evidence, and tries to piece the facts together into a coherent narrative . . . however, this is generally in vain" (92). We see a similar pattern with *Dora Bruder*, although Dora is a verifiable individual, and the narrator possesses numerous traits of the author, and so the genre appears to be a blend of (auto)fiction and biography.

Nonetheless, how best to label *Dora Bruder* has raised a great deal of critical debate. Kawakami suggests that *Dora Bruder* is more biography than novel, and she denies that it is autofiction since the autobiographical elements appear accurate;

however, she does not address, and indeed may be unaware of, the issues related to Klarsfeld (123; 126). In the 2007 issue of *Studies in 20th- and 21st-Century Literature* dedicated to *Dora Bruder*, some critics collapse the distance between the author and narrator, simply referring to the narrator as Modiano,¹⁹ while others address him as “the narrator.”²⁰ Other scholars whose work is contained in the volume engage directly with the question of *Dora Bruder*’s genre and the identity of the narrator; nevertheless, they conclude generally that the narrator is in fact Modiano himself. For example, Mary Green (“People Who Leave No Trace”) acknowledges that the narrator is “hard to separate from Modiano himself,” and she takes the evidence from Klarsfeld about the historical Dora and about Modiano’s real investigation into her life as proof that the narrator is Modiano (435). In “Modiano and Sebald,” Steven Ungar describes “a first-person narrator” as “presumably the nominal author, Patrick Modiano” (380), though he also highlights the ambiguous genre that “mix[es] elements of novel, autobiography, and essay” (379). Ungar goes on to use “Modiano” and “the narrator” interchangeably throughout his article. Susan Suleiman (““Oneself as Another””) refers to the “autobiographical discourse” in the text and stresses that “it is not a novel (despite some critics calling it one)” (334). She elaborates on the latter point, objecting to “a widespread tendency to call any highly crafted literary work by that name,” such as Marguerite Duras’s *L’Amant* or Elie Wiesel’s *La Nuit* (346). She argues, “While there are a few ‘novelistic’ moments in it [*Dora Bruder*] . . . the book is powerful—and ethically compelling—precisely because it is not a novel but a work that combines

¹⁹ See Susan Weiner (“*Dora Bruder* and the *Longue Durée*”) and Richard Golsan (“Modiano *Historien*”).

²⁰ Lynn Higgins (“Fugue States”) consistently refers to “the narrator,” as does Judith Greenberg (“Trauma and Transmission”).

historical documentation with imaginative reflection and self-reflection” (346).²¹ With regard to this question, while I agree that the factual components of *Dora Bruder* hold particular importance for the memorial functions of the book and that labeling the book as a novel may be misleading or even inaccurate, I question finally Suleiman’s reading of the text—she appears to believe that Modiano is honoring *le pacte autobiographique*, and suggests that he should have referenced his sources in a paratextual addendum (346-47). While the book is constructed from verifiable aspects of the author’s own life, the novelistic in *Dora Bruder* extends beyond a few scenes; it permeates the text by means of the author’s playful engagement with genre conventions. In its testimony about one young woman’s experiences, *Dora Bruder* may not be a novel, but it is a “novel,” albeit one blended with a scattered biography of Dora.²²

Considering the amorphous qualities of *Dora Bruder*, it is hardly surprising that the critic Alan Morris observes that the question of the text’s genre spurred the lengthiest discussion at a Modiano conference held at the University of Kent in 2004 (288). Morris’s 2006 article, “‘Avec Klarsfeld Contre l’Oubli’: Patrick Modiano’s *Dora Bruder*,” examines the revisions Modiano makes between the 1997 and 1999 editions and also pinpoints the historical information Modiano likely received from Klarsfeld. Morris observes that Modiano’s choice to revise the text beyond correcting typos is atypical of his usual authorial practice (270). A review of the publication information for the ten texts included in *Romans* shows that only three list multiple copyright dates: *Remise de peine* (1988, 2013), *Chien de printemps* (1993, 1995), and *Dora Bruder*

²¹ Suleiman does concede that she would not consider *Dora Bruder* “a straightforward ‘memoir’” (346).

²² As previously discussed, Modiano writes about his books as “romans,” in quotation marks, to indicate that the works collected in the volume *Romans* may relate to the genre in a non-standard way.

(1997, 1999, 2013). The 2013 editions obviously were published after the appearance of Morris's article, and, as yet, I have not performed a comparative analysis to identify the nature of additional modifications; this endeavor could prove to be an interesting future avenue of research.

The modifications Morris uncovers in the 1999 *Dora Bruder* include minor rectifications, such as correcting misnamed streets, as well as elaborations on historical data about which the narrator previously claimed ignorance, including the addition of details about Ernest and Cécile Bruder's wedding (270-72). These alterations imply that the author values factual accuracy, and support the view of Modiano as a historian.²³ However, Morris also notes Modiano's contradictory tendency to maintain certain authorial liberties obstinately. For example, although Modiano corrected a number of the inaccuracies reported in *Le Figaro*,²⁴ Morris observes that he ignores others, including details about the correct layout of the *bureau de l'état civil* (274). Furthermore, Morris emphasizes that the more egregious omission in *Dora Bruder* is, as I have already noted, the absence of Klarsfeld himself: "The famous *militant de la mémoire* has been airbrushed out of the narrative completely, his work and that of his team regularly being appropriated by the author-figure himself—'J'ai retrouvé . . . '—or attributed to one of his own personal contacts: 'Un ami a trouvé . . . '" (283). Morris also suggests that Modiano staged Klarsfeld's absence for the sake of literariness of the text, a premise supported by a 1999 interview with Lamberterie and Palmiéri in which Modiano states:

²³ For additional discussion of this perspective, see Golsan's "Modiano *Historien*."

²⁴ Bertrand de Saint Vincent. "Patrick Modiano joue au détective." 8 March 1997, pp. 122-23. Cited by Morris.

j'ai senti que j'approchais au plus près de ce quelque chose qui ne serait pas un roman. Mais, faute d'éléments, j'ai été obligé de broder, de délayer le vrai dans une sorte de potage. J'aimerais avoir un dossier comme en ont les avocats, rempli de toutes sortes de pièces, de rapports de police, de dépositions des témoins, de conclusions d'experts. Là, je n'aurais plus besoin d'avoir recours à la fiction. (quoted in Morris 276)²⁵

Taking inspiration from Morris's analysis, then, I agree that, in the context of *Dora Bruder*, Modiano rests somewhere in the spectrum between a novelist inspired by a real event and a biographer who, no matter how faithful, inevitably exercises some degree of creativity in constructing a narrative.

2. *Dora Bruder* and Postmemory

It is important to note that the narrator's fascination with the mysterious Dora also relates back to his own family history. He knows that his father operated on the black market and was once arrested by the Gestapo, but he managed to slip away. Yet, due to his father's silence about his past, the narrator knows little of his father's personal thoughts on Jewishness, the Occupation, or the Holocaust, increasing the aura of mystery surrounding his wartime experiences. Mesmerized by this historical period, often considered as taboo in France, and one that has overshadowed his own life, he is drawn to the story of Dora. She would have traversed the streets of Paris at the same

²⁵ Interestingly, Modiano's description of arranging a collection of documents resembles Émile Zola's description of *roman expérimental* as "le procès-verbal de l'expérience, que le romancier répète sous les yeux du public. En somme, toute l'opération consiste à prendre les faits dans la nature, puis à étudier le mécanisme des faits, en agissant sur eux par les modifications des circonstances et des milieux . . ." (*Le Roman expérimental* 8).

time as his father, and so, in searching for this young girl, he simultaneously interrogates his father's legacy. The narrator harbors a feeling of survivor's guilt related to both his father's escape and to his own birth after the war. He feels so strongly marked by the legacy of the Occupation that it is as if he feels that he was born in the wrong era.

As with the narrator, Modiano's circumstance as a member of the next generation after his father's corresponds to Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory as she defines it in *The Generation of Postmemory*, specifically mentioning

the relationship that the "generation after" bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before. . . . Postmemory's connection to the past is . . . actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation. To grow up with overwhelming inherited memories, to be dominated by narratives that preceded one's birth or one's consciousness, is to risk having one's own life stories displaced, even evacuated, by our ancestors. . . . These events happened in the past, but their effects continue into the present. (5)

Considering Modiano's own family history, the book could be appropriately described as a postmemorial monument, in the sense that Modiano has no personal memories of Dora, nor any lived experience of the Occupation, yet the Occupation overshadows his own life through his family history, and his literature testifies to the past through the "imaginative investment, projection, and creation" described by Hirsch. This particular text also explores the limits of imagination, as well as an author's ability to mediate between the past and present, by introducing a narrator who struggles between his

temptation to fill in the unknowns of Dora's life with fiction and his desire to honor her memory by adhering strictly to facts. For Modiano, the past is ever-present; as the narrator explains, at times this link "s'amenuise et risque de se rompre, d'autres soirs la ville d'hier m'apparaît en reflets furtifs derrière celle d'aujourd'hui" (672). The narrator senses the past looming wherever he turns, and after learning about Dora, begins to perceive possible associations between her and the buildings and streets he encounters throughout Paris. It seems appropriate, therefore, to consider *Dora Bruder* a "postmemorial" work, despite the fact that the term "postmemory" is often applied to the memories passed on to children of those who have experienced great trauma. Hirsch also recognizes that postmemory, while "intensely personal and urgent" is not always "autobiographical and familial" (15). Yet the narrator of *Dora Bruder* does also write a familial dimension into the book, as he tells stories about his father alongside his quest to learn facts about Dora. The recollections about his father hold clear postmemorial weight, but his sense of obligation and duty to Dora also appear to stem from the overwhelming presence of the war years in his upbringing.

In his Nobel Prize lecture, Modiano reflects on the particular burdens of memory that he and others born in the immediate aftermath of the Occupation underwent, especially when faced with their parents' desire to forget:

Les personnes qui ont vécu dans ce Paris-là ont voulu très vite l'oublier, ou bien ne se souvenir que de détails quotidiens, de ceux qui donnaient l'illusion qu'après tout la vie de chaque jour n'avait pas été si différente de celle qu'ils menaient en temps normal. Un mauvais rêve et aussi un vague remords d'avoir été en quelque sorte des survivants. Et lorsque leurs enfants les interrogeaient

plus tard sur cette période et sur ce Paris-là, leurs réponses étaient évasives. Ou bien ils gardaient le silence comme s'ils voulaient rayer de leur mémoire ces années sombres et nous cacher quelque chose. Mais devant les silences de nos parents, nous avons tout deviné, comme si nous l'avions vécu. (*Conférence Nobel* 6-7)²⁶

What Modiano describes in this speech corresponds extraordinarily precisely with Hirsch's concept of "postmemory" in which the "generation after" feels an acute relationship to prior trauma. Be that as it may, the motivation for writing about the past is complicated for everyone, and it represents something with which Hirsch states that she and colleagues who were children of survivors also wrestled: "Were we appropriating their stories, overidentifying, perhaps—and this was always in a whisper—envious of the drama of their lives that ours could never match?" (15). Modiano stops short of appropriating Dora by rejecting a fictional portrayal of her, but a sneaking envy and guilt seem to lurk in his near-nostalgic depiction of the Occupation.

Clearly, the narrator feels a sort of kinship with Dora, perhaps partially in response to his personal sense of guilt.²⁷ Mireille Hilsum believes that Modiano may

²⁶ All Nobel Laureates of literature are required to give a public lecture within a year of receiving the award. Modiano gave his lecture in Sweden, the day following his acceptance speech.

²⁷ In his Nobel lecture, Modiano discusses the question of the distance between the novelist and his subject:

En définitive, à quelle distance exacte se tient un romancier? En marge de la vie pour la décrire, car si vous êtes plongé en elle—dans l'action—vous en avez une image confuse. Mais cette légère distance n'empêche pas le pouvoir d'identification qui est le sien vis-à-vis de ses personnages et celles et ceux qui les ont inspirés dans la vie réelle. Flaubert a dit: "Madame Bovary, c'est moi." Et Tolstoï s'est identifié tout de suite à celle qu'il avait vue se jeter sous un train une nuit, dans une gare de Russie. . . . Cet état second est le contraire du narcissisme car il suppose à la fois un oubli de soi-même et une très forte concentration, afin d'être réceptif au moindre détail. Cela suppose aussi une certaine solitude. Elle n'est pas un repli sur soi-même, mais elle permet d'atteindre à un degré d'attention et d'hyper-lucidité vis-à-vis du monde extérieur pour le transposer dans un roman. (*Conférence Nobel* 11-12)

Similarly, Modiano's depiction of Dora exhibits an intermingling between the identities of the author, narrator, and Dora.

have chosen to focus on Dora—rather than one of the other individuals he considered researching—at least partially because of her name (190). Bruder means “brother” in German, and Modiano’s younger brother Rudy died as a child. In point of fact, Modiano long claimed his birth year to be 1947,²⁸ rather than 1945, though 1947 was, in fact, Rudy’s, and several of Modiano’s works, such as *Livret de famille* and *Un Pedigree* mourn the brother’s absence. Though the narrator of *Dora Bruder* makes no mention of a brother, given Modiano’s exacting attention to names, Hilsum’s suggestion that the name motivated Modiano (if not the narrator) seems entirely plausible. Furthermore, Morris demonstrates the Bruder family’s surprising tie to Perec, one of the authors most prominently associated with French Holocaust memory:

can Modiano really not have known that the Bruders’ story regularly reflects that of Perec’s parents? Can he have been totally unaware that Mme Cyrila Perec was normally called Cécile and happened to be deported in the same convoy (number 47, 11 February 1943) as Mme Cécile Bruder? It is very unlikely, to say the least. (“Avec Klarsfeld” 277)

Given Modiano’s familiarity with Klarsfeld’s *Mémorial*, he would have observed that the names Cyrila Perec and Cécile Bruder were recorded on the same page. The familial and literary associations proliferate throughout *Dora Bruder*, and in the case of Modiano, family and literature are practically synonymous: during his teenage years Raymond Queneau tutored him in mathematics, and Queneau and André Malraux later served as witnesses at his wedding.

²⁸ The backstory is rather curious: he had modified his ID card to appear two years older, and when he later wanted to change it back, it was easier to disguise the “3” as a “7.” When he published his first novel in 1967, the press reported that he was born in 1947, so he went along with the fabrication for years. See Cosnard’s *Dans la peau de Patrick Modiano* for more details.

The narrator, whatever his motivation, pursues any information he can find about the mysterious Dora. He acquires photographs of Dora and her family, navigates bureaucratic pathways for archival documents, and speaks with a surviving cousin. Since few traces remain of Dora, he turns to historical documentation to describe what occupied Paris would have been like, especially for Jewish inhabitants. He lists the dates when regulations pertaining to Jews were enacted, and the dates of roundups. He notes that curfews were imposed in sections of the city to retaliate for various infractions. Much of the book depends on making inferences about what Dora might have experienced and what her family may have been like, based on the location and quality of housing and schools. Most of the details the narrator uncovers about Dora are limited to records of dates and locations; hence his obsession with examining and interpreting the places associated with her in order to grasp what her daily life might have been like. Throughout the narrator's quest, though, Dora herself remains unreachable because her personality cannot be reconstructed from a few bare facts. Her hopes, her feelings, and her life experiences ultimately must remain unknown. For the narrator, Dora's death becomes representative of the more general notion of human death and suffering of the war years, as well as of the loss of his father (as with the author's father) who mostly kept silent about his experiences during the Occupation. Although the narrator gradually discovers more details about Dora's life and death, much remains obscured by time and the destruction of buildings and records. The book monumentalizes Dora while exploring the limits of history, memory and fiction.

3. The Geography of Memory

Not only does the narrator engage in archival research, he also transforms the Parisian landscape into an archival space where history is encoded if the viewer (and particularly in his case, the walker—reminiscent of the *flâneur* of the 1800s) is prepared to read it. Through a painstaking investigation over the course of several years, the narrator tracks down dates and places connected to Dora: her birthdate (25 February 1926) and birthplace (rue Santerre 15 in the 12th arrondissement), her home and school addresses, the periods of her *fugues*²⁹ from school (from 14 December 1941 until an unknown date) and from home (from 7 April to 9 April 1942; again from 4 May to 13 June 1942), and the dates when she was interned at the Tourelles camp (19 June 1942), sent from the Tourelles camp to Drancy (13 August 1942), then from Drancy to Auschwitz (18 Sept. 1942). He claims that the discovery of her birthdate alone took four years, followed by another two years to pinpoint the location. When applying for a copy of her birth certificate at the 12th-arrondissement Register Office, he is told that he is ineligible to receive the record since he is neither a relative nor a legal representative. He is redirected to apply for an exemption from the Superintendent Registrar in the Palais de Justice. After a disorienting trip through that Kafkaesque building, he is told to write to the Public Prosecutor. Several weeks later he finally has a response with the certificate. From the details that it provides he slowly pieces together information about Dora, and then moves on to make other inferences. For example, the narrator analyzes the family's address in Sevrans: "Cette avenue . . . faisait partie d'une agglomération . . . que l'on avait appelée Freinville. Le quartier était né autour de l'usine de freins

²⁹ Dora's *fugues* are reminiscent of Arthur Rimbaud's, something I discuss in more detail in section 4.1 of this chapter.

Westinghouse” (653). The fact that the district housed many working-class families drawn by employment at the factory leads him to conclude that “Ernest Bruder, le père de Dora, était sûrement, en cet hiver de 1926, manœuvre à l’usine de freins Westinghouse” (653). Throughout the text, the narrator makes similar inferences, offering the reader a believable and plausible narrative of the Bruders’ lives. Ignorance and silence from the State and the historical record become a blank canvas onto which the narrator projects his own preoccupations.

As the narrator paces through Paris, he relives memories of his youth in parts of the city connected to Dora, or he simply revisits them with her in mind. The associations that arise from the notion of a narrator or character moving through space bring to mind Gaston Bachelard’s *Poétique de l’espace* (1957). Bachelard concerns himself largely in this specific text with the psychological impact of the layout of the home, and he is particularly interested in how a home transcends its material components to become a place of comfort and refuge: “nous savons bien que nous sommes plus tranquilles, plus rassurés dans la vieille demeure, dans la maison natale que dans la maison des rues que nous n’habitons qu’en passant” (69). Bachelard perceives the city, including apartment dwellings, as failing to provide the cozy sensation of security that can be attained in a country abode. According to Bachelard’s sensibilities, then, Dora may be read as abandoning her family’s apartment and her school given their apparent failure to provide a psychologically secure space; even the streets, as exposed as they are, seem preferable to her. With the streets may come a type of freedom, compared to the constraints of home and school, but it is an illusory freedom in the era of Occupation.

Modiano attaches great importance to the geography of Paris, and, throughout his books, his characters' relationship to the streets that goes beyond Bachelard's suggestion that the streets are a place traversed "en passant." Indeed, the narrator of *Dora Bruder* hardly describes himself at moments when he is indoors, and, despite its risks and history, he seems most "at home" in the urban environment with which he is intimately familiar. Bachelard proposes, "il y a un sens à dire qu'on 'lit une maison,' qu'on 'lit une chambre,' puisque chambre et maison sont des diagrammes de psychologie qui guident les écrivains et les poètes dans l'analyse de l'intimité" (64). For Modiano it is the city in particular that becomes a map of the individual psyche, as he explains in his Nobel lecture:

à mesure que les années passent, chaque quartier, chaque rue d'une ville, évoque un souvenir, une rencontre, un chagrin, un moment de bonheur. Et souvent la même rue est liée pour vous à des souvenirs successifs, si bien que grâce à la topographie d'une ville, c'est toute votre vie qui vous revient à la mémoire par couches successives, comme si vous pouviez déchiffrer les écritures superposées d'un palimpseste. Et aussi la vie des autres, de ces milliers et milliers d'inconnus, croisés dans les rues ou dans les couloirs du métro aux heures de pointe. (18)

In precisely this manner, the street name in Dora's address brings forth the narrator's recollections of times when he would spend weekends in that part of town with his mother, as well as memories from 1965 when he frequented the street while visiting a girlfriend in the neighborhood. He notes, "L'immeuble du 41, précédant le cinéma, n'avait jamais attiré mon attention, et pourtant je suis passé devant lui pendant des mois,

des années” (646). He seems unnerved by the tragedy contained in the small newspaper announcement, a tragedy underpinning formerly innocuous parts of Paris. Importantly, such observations transform the cityscape in significant ways; the streets do not remain a map of one’s individual memories, but, reminiscent of Marcel Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913-1927), become instead a palimpsest which accommodates historical data and the memories of others.

3.1 Embedding Legible Traces

The horrors of the past are concealed in virtually every corner, but they also affirm themselves in plain sight, either paradoxically unnoticed or willfully ignored by passersby. The narrator revisits locations to summon his own memories, as well as to try to discover the sensation of any traces left by Dora’s former presence, enacting in such a way a memorial process reminiscent of Simonides’ mnemonic method.

According to Cicero in *De Oratore*, Simonides identified the victims of a collapsed building by visualizing where he had seen them sitting around the table earlier in the evening. He then developed a memory technique based on the concept of place: images related to information one wishes to remember are visualized and imagined in a familiar space. Then, when one needs to recall information, one need only imagine traversing the familiar space and encountering the objects held therein. In *Dora Bruder*, the narrator links his memories to specific places, and creates an annotated geography of Paris. He recalls having previously felt a sensation of emptiness in several locations around the 18th arrondissement, as if the Bruder family’s disappearance left a permanent mark on the space itself: “J’ai ressenti une impression d’absence et de vide, chaque fois que je me suis trouvé dans un endroit où ils avaient vécu” (658).

If encountering places brings back the narrator's memories, the cityscape arguably becomes a rich memorial space, with meaningful sites highlighted in a manner similar to that of Gunter Demnig's ongoing project, *Stolpersteine* ("stumbling stones/blocks"), in which the artist installs brass cubes as cobblestones in the ground to indicate homes and other sites associated with the Nazis' victims in cities across Europe (see fig. 7).³⁰



Figure 7. James Steakley, "Stolpersteine für Berthold Weil und Else Weil geb. Stern vor dem Haus Salzstraße 29a (an der Ecke Salzstraße / Augustinergasse) in Freiburg." ³¹ 28 June 2011.

³⁰ Since Demnig began the project in 1996, over 61,000 *Stolpersteine* have been installed. These are primarily located in Germany, as well as parts of central and eastern Europe. Very few have been placed in France, at least partially due to difficulties securing local permission. The project remains democratic and relatively accessible, insofar as anyone can sponsor the creation and installation of a *Stolperstein* for the cost of 120 euros. The *Stolpersteine* commemorate members of any group persecuted by the Nazis, and can be for both those who died and those who survived. They are usually embedded in front of the individual's last voluntary residence prior to deportation, and they are frequently placed in a family grouping so that names are reunited. According to the website, "Gunter Demnig cites the Talmud saying that 'a person is only forgotten when his or her name is forgotten'. The *Stolpersteine* in front of the buildings bring back to memory the people who once lived here. Each 'stone' begins with HERE LIVED... One 'stone'. One name. One person" (*Stolpersteine*).

³¹ "Stolpersteine for Berthold Weil and Else Weil née Stern in front of the house at 29a Salzstraße (at the corner of Salzstraße / Augustinergass) in Freiberg, Germany." The *Stolpersteine* read: "HERE LIVED /

Not unlike the *Stolpersteine*, the places noted by Modiano fit into Quentin Stevens et al.'s observation³² that the sites typical of countermonuments may be easily overlooked and a single, abstract memorial may be dispersed across scattered venues, in contrast to a traditional monument which may make the impression of being more prominent and unified (1960). In such a way, placing reminders of the past along both thoroughfares and alleyways, Modiano and Demnig render history inescapable. A single, specialized memorial site might provide easier group closure or catharsis, but these many small reminders embed instead the memory of violence and complicity into the commonplace arena of daily life. There is no resolution, but rather a renewed sense of unease each time one recalls that an otherwise inconspicuous location was a scene of cruelty or persecution.

Again, as with the *Stolpersteine* that enable the past to coexist visibly with the present, Modiano creates rich palimpsests of time and space in the narrative of his work. So, although Dora's story progresses in a mostly chronological fashion (apart from moments when the narrator uncovers a detail that causes him to renew speculation about an earlier period in her life) over the course of the book, following the narrator's gradual archival detective work, the narration frequently also moves away from her story, to the 1960s and the 1990s, transitioning fluidly from Dora to the narrator's youth and to the narrator's present, with the aim of underscoring how the trauma continues to impinge upon subsequent eras and individuals. The narrative structure also reminds the reader that the narrator does not tell Dora's story in a vacuum; while some authors may

BERTHOLD WEIL / BORN 1899 / DEPORTED 1940 / GURS / MURDERED 1942 / AUSCHWITZ” and “HERE LIVED / ELSE WEIL / NÉE STERN / BORN 1909 / DEPORTED 1940 / GURS / MURDERED 1942 / AUSCHWITZ.”

³² Stevens et al.'s work on countermonuments is discussed in detail in the introduction to this dissertation.

attempt to conceal their biases with an authoritative voice, Modiano's narrator clearly displays how he is influenced by his own biases, since he interprets her past through comparisons with his own experiences. Within this context, one important location upon which Modiano layers memories and meanings is the Saint-Cœur-de-Marie boarding school where Dora resided for a year and a half before running away—this was the disappearance announced in the newspaper notice. He contemplates old maps showing the school property, he walks past the space where the school was located, but by then the boarding school had been demolished and an apartment complex had been built. He reads the academic records, including the biography of the Mother Superior, for any hints about Dora and the academic atmosphere she would have experienced. In order to glean what life at the school would have been like, he speaks with a woman who was several years younger than Dora and came to the school after she was gone. However, he learns little from the school and its former occupants; he discovers instead the strongest, and most startling, connections to Dora deeper in the neighborhood's past.

The narrator observes that the peaceful-sounding names of the religious establishments in the *arrondissement* (“Bon-Pasteur d’Angers. Refuge de Darnetal. Asile Sainte-Madeleine de Limoges. Solitude-de-Nazareth”) belie the fact that in one cemetery “sont enterrées, dans une fosse commune, plus de mille victimes qui ont été guillotonnées pendant les derniers mois de la Terreur” (666). By adding this reference of the historically charged Revolutionary event of *la Terreur* to the landscape of Dora's neighborhood, he highlights again how brutality continually permeates places that might otherwise seem banal, no matter the social context at hand, and the mass violence of *la Terreur* reverberates in Dora's trajectory to Auschwitz. Moreover, several of the

establishments in the neighborhood, including Saint-Cœur-de-Marie, were “pour la rééducation des filles,” where “l’on vous enfermait sans que vous sachiez très bien si vous en sortiriez un jour” (666). The narrator does not specify the time period of these reeducation centers, but in the study, “Violence et internat: les centres de rééducation pour filles, en France, de la Libération au début des années 1960,” Anne Thomazeau discusses the institutionalization of girls considered to be “difficult,” such as the delinquent or homeless; she analyzes the cruelty inherent in the logic of their environment, which held them against their will and controlled their schedules, their actions, and their interactions with others. Thomazeau quotes the “directrice de Brécourt” who maintains that the strict *emploi du temps* was designed to restrain the girls’ own vicious tendencies through “un travail assidu du matin au soir, tout en évitant lassitude ou révolte et ce, pour provoquer la fatigue physique, canaliser l’agressivité sublime les pulsions instinctuelles, ‘entraîner’ à l’effort” (113). Indeed, Thomazeau’s depiction of the institutionalized constraints is reminiscent of Modiano’s description of the demeaning rhythms of boarding school life.

The *centres de rééducation* and *la Terreur* serve as social and spatial palimpsests in which violence echoes across time. As Max Silverman notes in *Palimpsestic Memory: The Holocaust and Colonialism in French and Francophone Fiction and Film* (2015), multiple traumas converge upon specific places, whether mundane or iconic, as seen in texts such as Leïla Sebbar’s *La Seine était rouge*, in which the young protagonist spray paints French war memorials along the route of the 17 October 1961 protest of the Algerian war with inscriptions to the Algerian protestors

who were massacred (Silverman 3-4). In Silverman's analysis of how trauma has been interpreted in literature, he also argues that

in the immediate post-war period when returnees from the camps commented on the catastrophe that had just occurred and the victims of colonial dehumanization were attempting to understand the nature of racialized violence and horror, the perception of interconnectedness between different moments of violence was an important part of the reappraisal of the human in the wake of extreme terror. In more recent decades, however, histories of extreme violence have tended to compartmentalize memory on ethno-cultural lines and, hence, blinker the attempt to see multiple connections across space and time. . . .

[Though more recent works] are a model for a concept of cultural memory which re-engages with the post-war attempt to seek interconnections. (4)

In *Dora Bruder*, the narrator clearly examines how the trajectory of Dora's brief life intersects with his own and that of his father, but he also alludes to how her moment in history and the places she inhabited foster echoes of prior brutality.

3.2 Colonial Connections

Additional palimpsestic passages connect the streets and inhabitants of Paris to French colonial history. For instance, the narrator makes a reference to the Algerian War as early as the second page of the book, hinting at additional violence perpetrated by the state: "Je me souviens du boulevard Barbès et du boulevard Ornano déserts, un dimanche après-midi de soleil, en mai 1958. À chaque carrefour, des groupes de gardes mobiles, à cause des événements d'Algérie" (646). The narrator offers no additional commentary on his observation of the presence of the guards; he simply overlays this

association onto his mental map of the boulevard Ornano. Yet the group of guards does inevitably evoke images of surveillance and repression, echoing crucial themes for Modiano's narrative about Dora. In a subsequent chapter about Dora's father Ernest, the narrator finds Ernest Bruder's name in a collection of documents used to organize the *raffles*, and Ernest is listed as a former *2^e classe, légionnaire français*. The narrator speculates that Ernest may have joined the *Légion étrangère* around 1920, and he paints a picture of desperation driving this Austrian man to become a mercenary, a decision common among many other central European recruits accustomed to poverty, many of whom "avaient été sousalimentés pendant leur adolescence, à cause du rationnement des quatre années de la guerre [1914-18]" (655). He expects that Ernest figured among those sent to Morocco "afin de pacifier les territoires encore insoumis" (655). The narrator depicts Ernest himself as a figure of pity (essentially as a likely victim of circumstance), and writes little directly about the historical import of the battles in Morocco.

As with *les événements d'Algérie*, the narrator employs the very terms contemporaries would have used to describe the colonial conflict (as with "pacifier" and "territoires . . . insoumis"); rather than explicitly name these North African conflicts "wars" (he goes on to catalogue a list of a dozen "combats" Ernest may have seen between 1920 and 1923, exposing the harsh methods of so-called pacification). The *légionnaires* with whom Ernest may have served essentially policed the colony in a way that draws striking parallels to the German Occupation and Vichy France; at the time, Morocco was a protectorate divided between France and Spain in which the traditional rulers primarily served as figureheads while real power lay with the Europeans. The

légionnaires were tasked with repressing rebellion (or resistance), particularly from Berber tribes in the mountains. The narrator humanizes Ernest through his descriptions of the hardships he most likely faced; but he does not condemn the elder Bruder's role in the overall project of colonialism. While the narrator appears to be neutral on this issue, Modiano's decision not only to mention Ernest's military service, but also to speculate on its potential relationship to France's colonial history, confirms his commitment to record inconvenient or contradictory historical situations.³³ The fact that Ernest is later a victim of the Holocaust does not erase the possibility that he once also participated in oppression, even if he may have enlisted merely as a means of escaping poverty in eastern Europe. Near the end of the book, the narrator reflects in a similar manner on the German author Félix Hardaub, who was stationed in occupied Paris, "dans un univers de boucherie et d'apocalypse où il se trouvait par erreur et dans un uniforme qu'on lui avait imposé mais qui n'était pas le sien" (701). Hardaub thereby also becomes a pawn of his historical circumstance as a German soldier in wartime. In the end, Modiano's works dwell frequently on these people framed in grey zones who are condemned by history for their action or inaction. Juxtaposing *la Terreur* and the Occupation, or German soldiers stationed in France and *légionnaires* sent to Morocco, Modiano draws attention to cultural correspondences that transcend temporal or geographic boundaries.³⁴

³³ See also Mary Green's "People Who Leave No Trace: Dora Bruder and the French Immigrant Community," a discussion of the presence of colonialism and allusions to the citizenship debates of the 1990s in *Dora Bruder*.

³⁴ For additional discussion of transnational memories, see Michael Rothberg's "*Nœuds de mémoire: Multidirectional Memory in Postwar French and Francophone Culture*."

3.3 A Carceral Environment

Imprisonment is a recurring motif in the novel, a motif that resonates far beyond the literal incarceration Dora suffers at Tourelles and later Drancy and Auschwitz, and we see that Paris itself transforms into a carceral setting. The narrator feels physically and psychologically trapped on several occasions throughout the book. For example, upon entering the *Palais de Justice* to find an office that might help him obtain Dora Bruder's birth certificate, the narrator must remove his keys and any other metal objects as part of a security screening, and he is bewildered by the experience: "Était-ce un gendarme? Un policier? Fallait-il aussi que je lui donne, comme à l'entrée d'une prison, mes lacets, ma ceinture, mon portefeuille?" (651). He also describes how Dora was constrained by walls, curfews, and, by extension, social expectations, before her final literal capture. Institutional settings such as prefectures, hospitals and schools strike the narrator as especially prison-like.

He also compares Dora's boarding school to a prison many times. In the following quote, he imagines what Dora may have experienced upon returning to the school after spending a weekend with her parents: "C'était comme de retourner en prison. Les jours raccourcissaient. Il faisait déjà nuit lorsqu'elle traversait la cour en passant devant les faux rochers du monument funéraire. Elle suivait les couloirs. La chapelle, pour le Salut du dimanche soir. Puis, en rang, en silence, jusqu'au dortoir" (669). Paradoxically, the school also embodied a sanctuary; when Jews were required to register for a census, Ernest Bruder registered himself and his wife but, interestingly, did not record his daughter on the form on October 4, 1941. The narrator speculates, "Qui sait, elle aurait pu y échapper jusqu'à la fin. Il suffisait de rester entre les murs

noirs du pensionnat et de se confondre avec eux; et de respecter scrupuleusement le rythme des journées et des nuits sans se faire remarquer” (670-71). She would have had to accept one form of restraint to avoid another—final—restraint from which any chance of escape would be impossible.

Even the meteorological phenomena that characterize the narrative replicate the theme of entrapment. The narrator often encounters rain, which acts as a physical and environmental barrier to his searching (“De temps en temps, les averses d’été m’obligeaient à m’abriter sous un porche”), and which reflects the hue of mourning and sadness present throughout the book (671). Rain, as with shadows and the passage of time, obscures and blurs one’s vision (both literally and metaphorically), and evokes visually the many eras the narrator perceives as overlapping in a given space. Falling vertically, it creates temporary bars, reminiscent of a prison cell. The whims of nature serve as limitations to him, in another echo of the boundaries and regulations that constrained Dora during the Occupation. At one point in the book he comments on the weather in Paris while he has been writing during the month of November in 1996:

Les journées sont souvent pluvieuses La nuit tombe tôt et cela vaut mieux: elle efface la grisaille et la monotonie de ces jours de pluie où l’on se demande s’il fait vraiment jour et si l’on ne traverse pas un état intermédiaire, une sorte d’éclipse morne, qui se prolonge jusqu’à la fin de l’après-midi. (672)

Is not the narrator trapped in his own “état intermédiaire” as someone trying to mediate between the past and the present? Even the present moment seems to conspire to imprison the narrator since it is impossible to fully access the past. He can read about it, he thinks he can even feel its presence, yet he is separated from the past as by a window

or a scrim made of the very fabric of the weather. He can see, but not be seen. The narrator also finds himself isolated from contemporary society by his preoccupation with the past: “J’ai l’impression d’être tout seul à faire le lien entre le Paris de ce temps-là et celui d’aujourd’hui, le seul à me souvenir de tous ces détails” (672). Furthermore, the history of the Occupation eclipses his life experiences, overshadowing him with its unbearable weight, recalling strongly Hirsch’s description of post-memory cited earlier. Juxtaposing scenes from the narrator’s life, the life of the Bruder family, and French history on a more macrocosmic level, *Dora Bruder* constructs this *lien* between then and now. The narrator may feel alone, but the book transmits the responsibility of remembering to its community of readers. Indeed, who, after reading *Dora Bruder*, can avoid thinking of the young Holocaust victim when crossing the boulevard Ornano? As with Demnig’s *Stolpersteine*, which physically embed memory in the landscape, *Dora Bruder* creates a textual network of geographical associations to the woman, Dora, and to the violence in French history that the reader cannot ignore.

4. Intertextual Palimpsests

In addition to superimposing historical references to attempt to recreate Dora’s Paris, the narrator uses literature and film as powerful lenses through which to hope to view her psyche in more depth. In the middle of the text, the narrator considers whether Dora might have seen the film *Premier rendez-vous* (1941), given that a cinema was located next to her family’s apartment. Upon his own most recent viewing of the film, the narrator realizes that

ce film était imprégné par les regards des spectateurs du temps de l'Occupation—spectateurs de toutes sortes dont un grand nombre n'avaient pas survécu à la guerre. . . . On oubliait, le temps d'une séance, la guerre et les menaces du dehors. Dans l'obscurité d'une salle de cinéma, on était serrés les uns contre les autres, à suivre le flot des images de l'écran, et plus rien ne pouvait arriver. Et tous ces regards, par une sorte de processus chimique, avaient modifié la substance même de la pellicule, la lumière, la voix des comédiens.

(691)

The narrator thus perceives works of art as transmitting not just their content, but also a substantial emotional aura based on prior audiences' reception of the production. When watching the film decades later, he finds it impossible not to contemplate how the communal escapism afforded by film served as a moment of respite from the war. Writing about Modiano's novelistic work in a general sense, Kawakami observes that "a Modiano novel leaves the reader with the overall impression that chronology, although definitely there, is curiously redundant. . . . It is as if the different chronological levels are situated on a single plane, on which they enjoy an hierarchical and interdependent existence" (Kawakami 25). In this fashion, people and memories overlap, either geographically, as we have seen with the narrator's meanderings around Paris, or embedded in an object, as with the film *Premier rendez-vous*.

Just as the narrator perceives that the film is transformed by the specific conditions of its viewing, or that the city is altered by memories of the dead, the narrator participates in generating textual echoes which in turn modify the interpretation of other works of literature. The narrator reaches for literary references to evoke atmosphere or

to create a matrix through which the past can be interpreted authentically. For example, he recalls pacing around the Pitié-Salpêtrière when his father was hospitalized there: “cette église majestueuse et ces corps de bâtiment irréels, intacts depuis le XVIII^e siècle . . . m’évoquaient Manon Lescaut et l’époque où ce lieu servait de prison aux filles, sous le nom sinistre d’Hôpital Général, avant qu’on les déporte en Louisiane” (652). The site doubles as a geographic and literary palimpsest, with Modiano employing Abbé Prévost’s *L’Histoire du chevalier Des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut* (1731) to illustrate the dark history of the labyrinthine and menacing space of the hospital. Manon suffered precisely the fate Modiano’s narrator describes: she was imprisoned for prostitution before being deported to Louisiana. By evoking Prévost’s text, or, perhaps, even Puccini’s operatic adaptation from 1893, Modiano uses a form of literary shorthand to reinforce the reader’s perception of the tragic history of the hospital. Though Modiano evokes Manon Lescaut in a digressive passage about the narrator’s father, the allusion mirrors Dora’s own imprisonment and deportation, while it strengthens the theme of Paris as a potentially carceral environment. Furthermore, Prévost’s novel is also the story of a man pursuing a woman, thereby setting up a parallel between the narrator and Des Grieux, Manon’s lover who follows her across the Atlantic.

Intertextual references such as these act as mediators between the narrator and historical trauma, and the narrator also embellishes the former meanings of the intertextual allusions by inserting them into another, newly conceived, context. Furthermore, as previously noted, the genesis of the novel takes its inspiration particularly from two other texts: the *fait divers* in *Paris-Soir* and Klarsfeld’s *Mémorial de la déportation des Juifs de France*. Modiano accumulates as well other fictional and

non-fictional texts to construct his literary monument, and the polyphony of voices (the narrator's commentary, quotes from legal documents and decrees, excerpts from letters by deportees, and references to other works of literature) resists a single meaning and renders the text particularly countermonumental. The novel becomes a literary monument in, at the very least, two significant senses: it is a monument in literary form for Dora, and it is a monument to literature, particularly literature which permeates the landscape of Paris.

4.1 Modiano, *dix-neuvièmiste*?

As explained above, *Dora Bruder* opens with the ad about the young woman's disappearance, evoking the use of *faits divers* by authors such as Gustave Flaubert. This intertextual relationship is reinforced in Modiano's earlier novel *Voyage de nocces* (1990), a fiction also inspired by the same ad about Dora's disappearance, in which the main character, Ingrid, runs away from home at age sixteen. However, while *Voyage de nocces* includes an altered version of Dora's ad as well (in which Dora's name is replaced with Ingrid's), it opens with a different newspaper announcement: one featuring Ingrid's suicide decades after the war. By inventing this suicide, Modiano references Emma Bovary's suicide, and, by introducing Ingrid's suicide textually as a *fait divers* (albeit a fictional one), he also gestures to the real *fait divers* about a woman's suicide that inspired Flaubert to write *Madame Bovary*.

Beyond the *fait divers*³⁵ which opens the novel, *Dora Bruder* shows the strong influence of general nineteenth-century French literature. Even the title, *Dora Bruder*,

³⁵ For more on Modiano's preoccupation with *fait divers*, particularly from the time of the Occupation, see Morris, "Patrick Modiano et le fait divers" (2012) and Denis Cosnard, *Dans la peau de Patrick Modiano* (2010).

recalls novels, particularly those by Romantic authors, which bear the protagonists' names as titles, pointing to the Romantic preoccupation with the individual (see, for example, Chateaubriand's *René*, George Sand's *Indiana*, and Madame de Staël's *Corinne*, to name just a few). The nineteenth-century imprint is most obvious when the narrator notes a peculiar rapport between Dora and Victor Hugo. In *Les Misérables* when Jean Valjean and Cosette flee Jalvert, they come to a fictional Parisian neighborhood called "Petit Picpus," and the convent garden in which they hide is also attached to a school, one that "Victor Hugo situe exactement au 62 de la rue du Petit-Picpus, la même adresse que le pensionnat du Saint-Cœur-de-Marie où était Dora Bruder" (*Dora Bruder* 673). As Annelise Schulte Nordholt points out in her book, *Perec, Modiano, Raczynow: La génération d'après et la mémoire de la Shoah* (2008), it may help to understand *Dora Bruder* not so much as a historian's investigation, but rather, primarily, as that of the work of a novelist. She notes that he does not cite his documentation but, alternatively, treats the documents instead as important intertextual references (128). Accordingly, allusions to Victor Hugo, personal recollections, and facts from police reports hold a similar weight in the narration, an authorial move that creates a network of relationships between strata of time and the forces of history, memory, and fiction.

The passage about the *lien* with Hugo also leads the narrator to reflect upon his own writerly clairvoyance. In the poetry collection, *Les Contemplations* (1856), Hugo writes about the author as a kind of *voyant*³⁶ or medium, and indeed one can hardly hear

³⁶ See, for example, "À un poète aveugle": "Le poète des sens perce la triste brume / L'aveugle voit dans l'ombre un monde de claret / Quand l'œil du corps s'éteint, l'œil de l'esprit s'allume" (52) and "Magnitudo parvi": "Œil serein dans l'ombre ondoyante, / Il a conquis, il a compris, / Il aime; il est l'âme voyante / Parmi nos ténébreux esprits" (203).

the word *voyant* without also thinking of Rimbaud and his celebrated *Lettres du voyant* (1871). Rimbaud, never referenced by name in the text, nevertheless creates a striking parallel with Dora. Rimbaud's teenage *fugues* to Paris coincide with the Franco-Prussian War and the Prussian Occupation. Notably, while Rimbaud was attracted by the aura of military adventures, Dora's motivations are less clear. She may have been seeking a way by which to escape the conflict in the city, or she may have been trying to break away from the institutional rigidity of life in a Catholic boarding school. Did she repeatedly leave home and school for reasons related to national politics or a more personal impetus? We can never know for certain. Nevertheless, the literariness of her *fugues*, both their Rimbaudian aspect and a poetic reading of *fugues* as a musical motif,³⁷ inscribe her within an artistic constellation. Modiano also comments on the musical sensibility of his writing in his Nobel lecture:

J'ai toujours pensé que l'écriture était proche de la musique mais beaucoup moins pure que celle-ci et j'ai toujours envié les musiciens qui me semblaient pratiquer un art supérieur au roman—et les poètes, qui sont plus proches des musiciens que les romanciers. J'ai commencé à écrire des poèmes dans mon enfance et c'est sans doute grâce à cela que j'ai mieux compris la réflexion que j'ai lue quelque part: "C'est avec de mauvais poètes que l'on fait des prosateurs." Et puis, en ce qui concerne la musique, il s'agit souvent pour un romancier d'entraîner toutes les personnes, les paysages, les rues qu'il a pu observer dans une partition musicale où l'on retrouve les mêmes fragments mélodiques d'un

³⁷ As Higgins observes in "Fugue States: Modiano *Romancier*," "a key characteristic of fugal or polyphonic composition is that no single voice dominates the whole. . . . Through Modiano's fugal narrative composition, although many stories (or songs) never coincide or occupy the same space at the same time, Dora's voice can be heard across the void" (459).

livre à l'autre, mais une partition musicale qui lui semblera imparfaite. Il y aura, chez le romancier, le regret de n'avoir pas été un pur musicien et de n'avoir pas composé *Les Nocturnes* de Chopin. (*Conférence Nobel* 5)

Though Modiano is not actually a practicing musician (he did, however, pen a dozen or so songs in the 1960s and 70s), he engages in a musical repetitiveness reminiscent of a Wagnerian leitmotif among and within his works, always returning to the same theme of searching. In critical circles, it has become a *lieu commun* that his books are essentially all the same, and yet, rather than representing a liability, his subtle variations on a theme form a sustained meditation on history, memory, and literature.

The narrator situates himself in a literary lineage when he claims his place in a line of clairvoyant writers, and here Rimbaud and Hugo are obvious forefathers:

Comme beaucoup d'autres avant moi, je crois aux coïncidences et quelquefois à un don de voyance chez les romanciers. . . . [C]ela fait simplement partie du métier: les efforts d'imagination, nécessaires à ce métier, le besoin de fixer son esprit sur des points de détail . . . toute cette tension, cette gymnastique cérébrale peut sans doute provoquer à la longue de brèves intuitions "concernant des événements passés ou futurs," comme l'écrit le dictionnaire Larousse à la rubrique "Voyance." (673)

Also, as we see with Hugo and Rimbaud, Modiano writes to give a voice to those on the margins of society. Dora was doubly marginalized as a Jew and as the daughter of poor immigrants living in a tiny apartment. We know that the Romantics often express nostalgia, a feeling of having been born in the wrong era, as evidenced by numerous historical works, such as Hugo's *Cromwell* (1827) and Alfred Vigny's *Chatterton*

(1835). For the Romantics, the sensation took on the guise of a spiritual affliction they termed *le mal du siècle*. Modiano evinces an altered sort of nostalgia throughout his books. Whereas the Romantics faced life after the Revolution, if Modiano or his characters were born in the wrong era, it is because they were born after the Second World War and the Occupation, as most strongly—and shockingly—visible in *La Place de l'étoile*, Modiano's parodic criticism of anti-Semitism's place in French intellectual history. In *La Place*, the young Jewish Raphaël Schlemilovitch fashions himself as a wartime collaborator, even imagining himself as Eva Braun's lover, though he was born after the war, having imbibed anti-Semitic discourse in society and school.³⁸ With tinges of both reminiscence for a long-gone historical *époque*, in Charles Péguy's sense of the word,³⁹ when even everyday decisions carried serious risks, as well as a deep sense of guilt for living in a seemingly easier era, the narrator of *Dora Bruder* comments: "Oui, malheureusement, je venais trop tard" (684), referring to his life generally, but also particularly to his attempt to confront anti-Semites in *La Place de l'étoile* since the authors he targeted were dead by the time of publication in the late 1960s.

In another parallel with a central Romantic trope, one could argue that the narrator conceives of Dora as his *âme sœur*. In his search for her through the streets of Paris and through the halls of archives, he is especially fascinated with potential

³⁸ As Hervé Allet explains: "Raphaël Schlemilovitch is the product of an anti-Semitic discourse whose literary origin is itself a reflection of a historically rooted, popular French attitude. . . . He is the Jew who carries within himself the stereotypes of his forefathers' persecutors and who acts as a foil for the hatred of the anti-Semites and the nationalism of carnal France" ("The Names of the Fathers" 104).

³⁹ His conception of time recalls Charles Péguy's description of *périodes* and *époques* in *Clio* (1931; published posthumously). For Péguy, *périodes* are the moments throughout history or of one's own life "où il ne se passe rien," whereas *époques* are the times of crisis (e.g. the personal dramas of youth, the national disruptions of revolutions) where everything seems to become urgent and vibrant; the latter are what make life worth living (300-1).

commonalities between himself and Dora. Nonetheless, the distance imposed by the passage of time further reinforces the impression that he was born too late. When the narrator contemplates his own teenage *fugues*, he admits that they insufficiently approximate hers, since he faced few risks compared to a young woman on her own during the Occupation. Furthermore, the Romantics view nature as a mirror or “un état d’âme” (Henri-Frédéric Amiel), and Modiano agrees in part, employing frequent references to atmospheric conditions which accentuate the mood of his characters, as with the example of rain that I discussed earlier. In contrast to the Romantics, however, his scenes are rarely set in what we might consider as pure “nature”; instead, he focuses on crowded city streets and lonely apartments. Paris itself is a literary place. Walking there evokes his memories and history, but also—especially—the presence of literature. The intertextual references relate to the geographic palimpsests in *Dora Bruder*, creating a tangled web of culture and history that informs the narrator’s search for Dora. In the process, the references called forth over the course of the search constitute a multifaceted homage to Dora and to Modiano’s literary inspirations. Modiano’s allusions to nineteenth-century writers such as Hugo, who counts politics and class issues among the themes explored in his novels (for example, *Les Misérables* and *Notre-Dame de Paris*), reflects a concern for the historically marginalized, as well as a determination to write about those who simply cannot offer up their own testimony.

4.2 Memorializing Dora: A First Attempt

Dora Bruder also has a particularly interesting intertextual relationship with several of Modiano’s other works, since the narrator identifies himself as the author of two real books by Modiano (*Voyage de nocces* and *La Place de l’étoile*), an inclusion

that reinforces the impression that Modiano himself represents the narrator. The narrator describes the reasons for which he wrote *Voyage de nocces*:

En décembre 1988, après avoir lu l’avis de recherche de Dora Bruder, dans le *Paris-Soir* de décembre 1941, je n’ai cessé d’y penser durant des mois et des mois. L’extrême précision de quelques détails me hantait. . . . Il me semblait que je ne parviendrais jamais à retrouver la moindre trace de Dora Bruder. Alors le manque que j’éprouvais m’a poussé à l’écriture d’un roman, *Voyage de nocces*, un moyen comme un autre pour continuer à concentrer mon attention sur Dora Bruder, et peut-être, me disais-je, pour élucider ou deviner quelque chose d’elle, un lieu où elle était encore passé, un détail de sa vie. (673-74)

At the time the narrator wrote *Voyage de nocces*, he claims that the only information he had about Dora apart from the ad was the appearance of her name and her father’s on a list of convoy occupants headed to Auschwitz on 18 September 1942 (674). It is worth noting that this information corresponds to what Modiano mentions in his *Libération* article, implying that the likely source would have been Klarsfeld’s *Mémorial de la déportation des Juifs de France*.

Among the many authorial inventions of *Voyage de nocces*, one of the most curious is the name for the character who stands in for Dora. Though *Voyage de nocces* lists Ingrid’s place of birth as Vienna (27), her name sounds distinctly Scandinavian. Considering that the address in the advertisement is adjacent to the cinema at 43 Boulevard Ornano (that is, the same cinema in which Dora may have watched *Premier rendez-vous*, according to the narrator of *Dora Bruder*), and that Modiano has a marked interest in films from the period (his own mother was a film actress), “Ingrid” cannot

fail to bring to mind the actor Ingrid Bergman who played the role of Ilsa Lund in the film *Casablanca* (1942), and *Voyage de nocés* abounds with indirect allusions to the film. Like *Casablanca*, in which Ilsa and Rick first meet and fall in love in Paris just prior to the German invasion in 1940, *Voyage de nocés* also includes a romantic plotline, insofar as it recounts Ingrid and Rigaud's relationship that began during the Occupation. Additionally, the main action of *Casablanca* takes place in Morocco in December 1941, the same time as Dora's first *fugue*. Furthermore, the narrator of *Voyage de nocés*, a Parisian named Jean who, without notice, abandoned his Danish wife and his life as a documentary film maker,⁴⁰ twice compares the sweltering summer streets he wanders in the peripheral zones of Paris to the city of Casablanca (*Voyage* 23). The name Ingrid, then, heightens the romantic allure of the mysterious young runaway's character.

The surname Teyrsen, on the other hand, appears to be Modiano's invention entirely. In fact, Modiano has a clear history of creating surnames, such as with the character of Schlemilovitch in *La Place de l'étoile*. As noted by Charles O'Keefe, Schlemilovitch appears to be a modified compound of the Yiddish *schlemiel* 'fool' and the Slavic ending *-vitch* 'son of' (68). Like Schlemilovitch, the name Teyrsen offers some clues about the character. The ending *-sen* is the Danish patronymic suffix, though *teyr-* has no meaning in Danish. The Danish suffix, however, reinforces the Scandinavian *prénom*. *Teyr-* sounds roughly like the French verb *taire*. Given the novel's preoccupation with secrecy as Ingrid and Rigaud evade detection, keeping quiet is a way of life for them, but it is also a burden. Throughout the novel, Ingrid avoids

⁴⁰ Jean's Scandinavian wife and his profession in film amplify the novel's allusions to film star Ingrid Bergman.

stating openly that she is Jewish. Early on, her choice to refrain from naming the reason for which she is so concerned about missing curfew appears to be out of self-preservation until she can be sure whether she can trust the handsome Rigaud who offers to let her stay at his apartment for the night. Instead, she tells Rigaud, “nous avons des ennuis, mon père et moi” and that her father “était un médecin autrichien émigré en France avant la guerre. . . . Elle [Ingrid] n’a pas abordé le fond du problème [avec Rigaud]” (134-35). Rigaud must eventually learn more about Ingrid’s status because he helps her get false papers that identify her as his wife, to protect her from the dangers of Paris. He expresses acute concerns about potential detection while they stay in the south of the country, pretending to be on their honeymoon. Ingrid’s silence extends to her relationship with her father, through her struggle to admit to him that she does not want to return home. She misses her final opportunity to speak with him when she hangs up the phone before he has a chance to answer her call (135). A few weeks after that attempted phone contact, she returns to the hotel where she had lived with her father, but the owner of the hotel informs her that her father was taken away by the police, and that new tenants have already taken his place (154). She must then live with the knowledge of her father’s disappearance and probable death for the rest of her life, a tragedy that the reader infers to be the cause of her eventual suicide. The verb *taire* and the theme of silence also echo the blanks that the biographer faces when trying to document someone’s life, as well as the silence of members of generation that experienced the Occupation (such as the narrator’s father in *Dora Bruder*).

Ingrid is approximately twenty years older than the narrator Jean, mirroring the age gap between Modiano and Dora, had she survived. While in his early twenties, Jean

meets Ingrid and Rigaud when they pick him up as a hitchhiker in the south of France. Ingrid reads *romans policiers* (43), an obvious authorial nod to her preoccupation with crime, mystery, and evasion. Jean meets her on one other occasion several years later when he sees her on a sidewalk in Paris. They spend the evening talking in a restaurant, and she shares more of her story with him, even to the point of giving him a clipping of the newspaper ad from the time she ran away from home. Not unlike Modiano himself, Jean then decides to write the biography of a woman he barely knows. He identifies strongly with her, including her desire to flee familiar places and social commitments. Of himself, he declares, “Ma vie n’avait été qu’une fuite” (95). Reflecting on the common elements between his own life and Ingrid’s experiences, Jean comments (using words that would seem equally appropriate coming from the narrator of *Dora Bruder*), “Le passé et le présent se mêlent dans mon esprit par un phénomène de surimpression” (*Voyage* 25). Consequently, while *Voyage de nocces* does not divine much of the real Dora’s actual existence, it certainly foreshadows the relationship between the biographer-narrator and his subject in *Dora Bruder*.

The narrator of *Dora Bruder* informs the reader that, in order to develop Ingrid’s character in *Voyage de nocces*, he used memories of women he knew in the 1960s who would have been close to Dora’s age during the Occupation, and, as discussed in section 4.1 above, the narrator also relied on a feeling that he has a writerly “don de voyance.” Nevertheless, he then undermines this claim to perceptiveness when he reveals that, in *Voyage de nocces*, he largely failed to intuit Dora’s trajectory. In point of fact, the link he claims between his earlier novel and Dora’s life is fairly tenuous. Though he had hoped to “deviner quelque chose” about Dora by writing a novel, he now realizes that he only

came close to Dora “dans l’espace et le temps” in a single passage of *Voyage de nocces*, which he quotes and analyzes here:

Cela tient en quelques mots: “La rame s’arrêta à Nation. Rigaud et Ingrid avaient laissé passer la station Bastille où ils auraient dû prendre la correspondance pour la Porte Dorée. À la sortie du métro, ils débouchèrent sur un grand champ de neige [. . .]. Le traîneau coupe par de petites rues pour rejoindre le boulevard Soult.”

Ces petites rues sont voisines de la rue Picpus et du pensionnat du Saint Cœur-de-Marie, d’où Dora Bruder devait faire une fugue, un soir de décembre au cours duquel la neige était peut-être tombée sur Paris. (*Dora Bruder* 674; bracketed ellipsis in original)

In this snowy scene in *Voyage de nocces* when Ingrid and Rigaud go to their new apartment a few weeks after she broke curfew and never returned home, the streets they traverse in a sleigh are situated behind Dora’s boarding school. In other words, our narrator had little success at reconstructing Dora’s trajectory by means of his intuition when he wrote *Voyage de nocces*. While the narrator documents his feelings and impressions throughout *Dora Bruder*, it is more crucial that the latter iteration of Dora’s story builds from a series of documented facts, rather than from a single *fait divers*, displaying a marked dedication to move away from fictionalizing the person of Dora herself.

The narrator further puts into doubt the notion of a writer’s clairvoyance when, several pages later, he speculates that the day of Dora’s escape might have been a rather different sort of day than the snowy one he formerly described for Ingrid’s experience:

“Il faudrait savoir s’il faisait beau ce 14 décembre, jour de la fugue de Dora. Peut-être l’un de ces dimanches doux et ensoleillés d’hiver où vous éprouvez un sentiment de vacance et d’éternité” (677). He might feel that his is an intuitive stance, but his examples do little to prove this assertion and instead reinforce his unreliability and instability as a narrator. As Kawakami explains in *Patrick Modiano*, techniques such as hesitations, contradictions, a blurring of genres, and a “decentered” and “disordered narrative” show Modiano as reflecting a particularly postmodern aesthetic, he tends to confront problems without feeling the need to resolve them (3). In the context of *Dora Bruder*, the unstable nature of his work contributes to its countermonumental aesthetic by rejecting the possibilities of establishing a fixed, absolute narrative.

Indeed, although the narrator of *Dora Bruder* provides some temporal and geographical details about Dora’s life, much about it must remain ultimately unknowable. For example, the narrator manages to find the approximate dates of Dora’s *fugues*, including the one advertised in *Paris-Soir* after she ran away from school and the two subsequent times she left home. Despite uncovering the dates pertaining to her disappearances, he cannot find out for certain exactly why she fled, nor how and where she survived during these periods. This mystery represents part of her appeal: why did she take these risks? Clearly, she represents a figure who cannot be understood simply through the details available in archives. In total, the facts uncovered about Dora in the narrator’s research could possibly fit onto only a handful of pages, so the rest of the text is filled with a mix of documents, letters, and decrees which explain the context in which Dora lived, and which feed his speculations. The narrator’s constant questions, along with his statements of uncertainty and tendency to retract his assertions, expose

the limitations of the biographical (about Dora) component of the book. Statements such as the following demonstrate the text's cumulative uncertainty and instability: "J'ignore si Dora Bruder s'était fait des amis du Saint-Cœur-de-Marie. Ou bien si elle demeurait à l'écart des autres. Tant que je n'aurais pas recueilli le témoignage de l'une de ses anciennes camarades, je serai réduit aux suppositions" (667). Further, regarding the circumstances of her capture and internment at Tourelles, he states: "Je me demandais s'il existait un document, une trace qui m'aurait fourni une réponse" (678). Once again, though, he concludes: "J'en étais réduit aux suppositions" (678). He seeks facts and certainty, but when almost always left without them, he endeavors to construct reasonable possibilities of what might have happened to Dora, in large part out of his desire to create a more complete picture of her life, in order to leave a meaningful textual trace of her existence.

One way in which the narrator delves into Dora's past is by recalling his own emotions in circumstances that parallel some that she herself faced. For example, he also ran away on his own as a teenager. However, his efforts to find congruence between their experiences are tempered consistently by a recognition of the limitations of the real effect of any such comparison. The narrator admits that the challenges he faced as a renegade were insignificant compared to those of a Jewish girl in Occupied Paris: "Je me dis que sa fugue n'était pas aussi simple que la mienne une vingtaine d'années plus tard, dans un monde inoffensif. Cette ville de décembre 1941, son couvre-feu, ses soldats, sa police, tout lui était hostile et voulait sa perte" (690). Despite the complications of comparing their predicaments, he attempts to bridge the gap in any case, with the aim to discover a common thread, a shared sense of humanity. Thus,

interestingly, he neither implies a conclusion of “I cannot understand” nor “I do understand” but instead looks for images and echoes of her life in the mirror of his own that might help in understanding and empathizing with the young woman.

Despite his tendency to proceed cautiously, at times the narrator does present the speculations as certainties, giving the reader an ambivalent sense of what can be known, or perhaps obliging the reader to wonder whether the author had evidence justifying a particular statement. Then, a few sentences, pages, or chapters later, the narrator often undercuts these projections, which were essentially fictional imaginings of what Dora might have experienced. As an example, early on when describing the Bruder household at Ornano 41, the narrator claims, “Ses parents ont emmené Dora au cinéma Ornano 43”; but Modiano then shatters the illusion of confidence when the narrator immediately asks, “Ou bien est-elle y allée toute seule?” (661). In another instance, the narrator gives the impression of being fairly sure that she must have been taken to Tourelles in February of 1942, but it becomes clear that his certainty was merely based on a hope that his own story would have an affinity to his father’s.⁴¹ Yet after additional research, he learns that he is mistaken. From this revelation, we learn that the narrator’s personal preferences and life experiences make some aspects of his account about Dora more speculative than he initially implies, and, on that account, the reader may realize that he is not an entirely reliable source of information about Dora. Details such as these suggest that even if the reader (unaware of the Klarsfeld affair) assumes at the outset of the book that there is no separation between Modiano and the narrator, he or she may nevertheless identify the narrative’s playful backtracking as a deliberately constructed

⁴¹ I will discuss this scene in more detail in section 5.

authorial strategy to tread in a gray zone between fact and fiction, rather than an attempt to come across as a confessional guarantor of authenticity.

Returning to *Voyage de nocces*, the *décalage* between that novel and the historical facts that the narrator of *Dora Bruder* uncovers about Dora pertains to one of the central questions raised by *Dora Bruder*: how should the dead be memorialized? And, what are the obligations of literature to historical accuracy versus fictional creation, particularly when writing about known individuals and events? The question of writerly ethics in crafting a biography emerges as a preoccupation in *Voyage de nocces*. After the narrator Jean has left his wife, he looks over his notes and research about Ingrid. He tears apart several pictures he had collected of people she had known, including one of a film producer she met in the 1950s and whom she followed to America, where she stayed for several years. The destructive act prompts him to wonder, “. . . un biographe a-t-il le droit de supprimer certains détails, sous prétexte qu’il les juge superflus? Ou bien ont-ils tous leur importance et faut-il les rassembler à la file sans se permettre de privilégier l’un au détriment de l’autre, de sorte que pas un seul ne doit manquer, comme dans l’inventaire d’une saisie?” (52). In a similar manner, the narrator of *Dora Bruder* exposes the choices a biographer makes with his or her constant questions, proposals, and doubts. While a biography has the potential to appear clean and polished, that work potentially involves privileging certain motifs or narrative events in the process of constructing a coherent history. In *Dora Bruder*, on the other hand, the narrator describes the obstacles to his research. The narrator hesitates to fictionalize Dora’s life, as demonstrated with frequent expressions connoting degrees of uncertainty. Modiano makes editorial choices—such as eliding the role of Klarsfeld and

the foregrounding of the narrator's efforts—to construct a loose detective narrative about the search for Dora rather than a standard biography of Dora herself.

5. Memories of the Father

While Modiano gave the novel *Dora Bruder*'s name for the title, the figure of the narrator's father (who, as I mentioned earlier, is based on Modiano's own father) undeniably haunts the text. While the narrator failed to develop a close relationship with his own father, he prefers to know this young woman for whom he feels an oddly personal sense of kinship. The narrator compares Dora and his father in several passages: both were Jews and considered as "outlaws" of sorts during the Occupation. Both remained unregistered during the census. Both kept secrets and both are now silent in death. And yet, while Dora perished with her parents at Auschwitz, the narrator's unnamed father evaded internment and passed away decades after the war. At one point in *Dora Bruder*, the narrator describes his father with a tone of admiration, painting him almost as a tragic hero, "puisque'on avait fait de lui un hors-la-loi, il allait suivre cette pente-là par la force des choses, vivre d'expédients à Paris, et se perdre dans les marécages du marché noir" (680). The darker side of his father's involvement in the black market does not come to the foreground in this book, and this omission allows for a stronger parallel with Dora, insofar as they both seem to be "forced" to live outside the law, due to the constraints placed on Jews during the Occupation. Instead, the tension here with his father stems primarily from the latter's coldness and, later, his complete absence.

Of the four key scenes about the father, the father only speaks to the narrator in two of them. The narrator seems burdened by his father's silence, since most

recollections of his father in this book focus on his absence or his refusal to speak. But, perhaps, also in the search for Dora, we can identify a quest for that which his father was not, as his father did not suffer the deadly consequences of his identity, as did many whom he knew, and the narrator acknowledges this between them. He sees Dora as unable to avert her fate, a condemnation amplified in a sense by her very yearning to escape (as illustrated by her repeated disappearances, which rendered her a suspicious person to the authorities). As previously discussed, when the narrator attempts to understand Dora by comparing his own adolescent experiences with hers and tries to imagine what she may have felt, he becomes acutely aware of the ultimate inadequacy of his speculations to reconstruct Dora's inner life. Is there a degree of guilt, given his own relative ease, a guilt also discernible in the manner in which his father survived the Occupation? The narrator's initial fascination with Dora stems arguably from her disappearance, which displays rebellion and independence in a time of oppression. Is Dora so fascinating to the narrator because she died at Auschwitz, though his father, her contemporary, did not?

Indeed, it is notable that throughout his collection of 28 novels, Modiano offers ambiguous interpretations of his father's role during the war. At times he seems to judge harshly his father's black-market work which necessarily had to connect him directly with collaborators. Along these lines, Morris observes that, in his novels, "Modiano choisit comme images paternelles des personnages historiques qui sont morts de façon violente. . . . Pourrait-on y voir un moyen—conscient ou inconscient—de punir le géniteur par personne interposée?" ("Patrick Modiano" 65). Nevertheless, at other moments, Modiano seems more empathetic, if not necessarily approving, of his

father's choices made in wartime. In any case, paternal figures are always emotionally distant in Modiano's texts, and the narrator in *Dora Bruder* stresses his ignorance of his father's thoughts and experiences. Because of the implications of the narrator's overlapping identity with the author, it is worth noting that Modiano takes great care to recover names and places from that period in the autobiographical⁴² *Un Pedigree* (2005):

Je suis un chien qui fait semblant d'avoir un pedigree. Ma mère et mon père ne se rattachent à aucun milieu bien défini. Si ballottés, si incertains que je dois bien m'efforcer de trouver quelques empreintes et quelques balises dans ce sable mouvant comme on s'efforce de remplir avec des lettres à moitié effacées une fiche d'état civil ou un questionnaire administratif. (831)

The task of investigating traces so essential to many of Modiano's books appears to originate in his evidently frustrated attempt to reconstruct his own past and that of his parents. Modiano and the narrator of *Dora Bruder* must both turn to official documents, witness testimony, and old newspapers to uncover clues. In both cases, the direct transmission of a heritage was disrupted or disjointed, and so Modiano and the narrator

⁴² In an interview for *Le Point*, when the journalist asks him why it took him so long to write an autobiography, Modiano explains: "je voulais me débarrasser d'un certain nombre de choses qui m'avait fait du mal. J'ai voulu dire que je m'en désolidarisais. Ensuite seulement je me suis aperçu que c'était une entreprise littéraire, et que ça se raccordait avec tous mes autres livres" ("Modiano, l'ange bizarre"). Given that several texts by the other authors I study have been adapted to stage performances, it is also interesting to note that the actor Édouard Baer performed a dramatic reading of *Un Pedigree*. In an interview in 2008, Baer says of the book: "[ce] n'est pas un texte narratif, c'est une déposition" (Dufray). Cosnard also observes that, unlike a typical autobiography, "ces souvenirs qui s'assemblent ne sont nullement l'occasion pour l'écrivain de dégager une unité harmonieuse dans son parcours. . . . S'il fait resurgir le passé, c'est pour mieux le rejeter. . . . Sa vraie vie . . . n'a débuté qu'en juin 1967, lorsqu'il a appris que son premier livre allait être édité. . . . [Il] arrête brutalement son livre [*Un Pedigree*] en 1967, au seuil de sa 'vraie' vie" (257).

must turn to outside textual sources—indeed, these sources include literature as much as administrative paperwork in the attempt to recover lost memories.

One of the few details the narrator of *Dora Bruder* knows of his father's experiences during the Occupation materializes when he is trying to identify when Dora may have been taken to the Tourelles internment camp. He speculates initially that she may have been picked up in February of 1942. That period suggests an incident about which his father had told him in June of 1963, when the narrator would have been approximately 18 years old. The father had been arrested in a *rafle* by the Jewish Affairs police in February 1942 because he had no papers (679). A young woman was in the transport van with him, but he knew nothing of what became of her afterward. He managed to escape from the police station during a moment of confusion when a light went out. The narrator confesses, “Peut-être ai-je voulu qu'ils se croisent, mon père et elle” (680). However, a few pages later, he confirms that the girl in the van could not have been Dora, after having tried to “retrouver son nom en consultant une liste de femmes qui avaient été internées au camp de Tourelles” (680). Though Dora and the narrator's father probably never met, the narrator nevertheless identifies other parallels between their lives, such as their unregistered status (both had evaded the census of Jews in 1940). Of his father, he declares, “Ainsi n'avait-il plus aucune existence légale et avait-il coupé toutes les amarres avec un monde où il fallait que chacun justifie d'un métier, d'une famille, d'une nationalité, d'une date de naissance, d'un domicile. Désormais il était ailleurs. Un peu comme Dora après sa fugue” (680). Though he acknowledges that Dora faced great challenges as “à la fois juive et mineur” (680), his attempts to find connections between his father and Dora underscore the extent to which

his investigation into Dora's life is entangled with his preoccupation with his own personal family history, and how his search for her cannot conceal his search to comprehend his father, as well.

The retelling of his father's arrest and transportation in a police van in 1942 prompts another story about his father, which the narrator says has taken on "un caractère symbolique" for him (683). When the narrator is 18 years old, his mother sends him to his father's apartment to collect a child support payment, but his father refuses to listen to the request: "Il m'a claqué la porte au nez; j'entendais la fausse Mylène Demongeot [the father's girlfriend] hurler et appeler police secours, en disant qu'un 'voyou faisait du scandale'" (683). Shortly thereafter, the police arrive and the narrator and his father are collected in a van ("un panier à salade") and taken to the station. The narrator wonders if his father is thinking of his own arrest in 1942, but his father remains silent during the ride in the police van: "Il était là, assis devant moi, impassible, l'air vaguement dégoûté, il m'ignorait comme si j'étais un pestiféré et j'appréhendais l'arrivée au commissariat de police, ne m'attendant à aucune compassion de sa part" (684). Though the father sits across from the narrator, his characteristic silence renders him, as always, as opaque as Dora.

After the father registers his complaint to the officer at the station ("mon père lui a expliqué, d'une voix sèche, que j'étais 'un voyou'"), the pair stride back to their neighborhood without exchanging a word, and the narrator analyzes their situation for the reader:

Je ne lui en voulais pas. Comme nous habitions dans le même immeuble, nous avons suivi notre chemin, côte à côte, en silence. J'ai failli évoquer la nuit de

février 1942 où on l'avait aussi embarqué dans un panier à salade et lui demander s'il y avait pensé tout à l'heure. Mais peut-être cela avait-il moins d'importance pour lui que pour moi. (685)

This statement about the importance of that once-told story in the life and imagination of the son is another striking example of Hirsch's concept of postmemory, in which the previous generation's trauma overshadows the identity of the next generation and possibly even displaces the latter generation's experiences. Throughout the interaction with the police, the teenage version of the narrator considers the event entirely from the perspective of his father's arrest: "j'étais étonné que mon père, qui avait vécu pendant l'Occupation ce qu'il avait vécu, n'eût pas manifesté la moindre réticence à me laisser emmener dans un panier à salade" (684). He cannot help himself from thinking about what happened in the years before his birth, and his fascination may only be compounded by the sheer mysteriousness of that long-gone time. Is his father simply a private, distant figure who accords little import to the past? Or did the environment of the Occupation and the reality of the deportation of many other individuals affect him so deeply that he holds himself aloof from his son? The narrator then adds that he only saw his father two or three more times during the following year and "[e]nsuite, je ne l'ai plus jamais revu" (685). The father disappears from the narrator's life having confided few details about his past, seemingly remaining a stranger to his son.

The only other passage in which the father appears in the text is a brief summary of a dinner with him that occurred at some point before the father shared the account of his arrest: "Nous allions dîner dans un restaurant, rue Grefflhe—peut-être au bas de l'immeuble de la Police des questions juives où l'on avait traîné mon père dans le

bureau du commissaire Schweblin” (681). The narrator then reproduces word-for-word several paragraphs from “un rapport administratif rédigé en novembre 1945”⁴³ about Schweblin’s cruelty and his propensity to steal valuables taken from prisoners before adding that “Schweblin a disparu en 1943. . . . Pourtant, mon père . . . m’avait dit qu’il avait cru le reconnaître porte Maillot, un dimanche après la guerre” (681-82).

Concluding the chapter with these words gestures to the fact that the past has clearly not been laid to rest. Perpetrators may have continued to walk free for years after the war, a situation reminiscent of the investigation and trial of Maurice Papon, a Vichy police official who organized trains deporting Jews, which was ongoing as Modiano wrote *Dora Bruder*. In any case, in these pages the reader learns more about Schweblin than about the narrator’s father, so again the father remains a distant, ill-defined figure. The narrator only reveals his retrospective awareness that some of the places he frequented with his father may have held dark memories from the father’s experiences during the Occupation, and this interest in interpreting the history of geographic locations hints at an archeological effort to excavate his father’s psychological state.

In another passage that comes near the beginning of the book, which I briefly referenced above in the discussion of *Manon Lescaut*, the narrator describes a failed effort to reconnect with his elderly father (somewhat reminiscent of the scene in *Voyage de nocces* when Ingrid attempts to visit her father, but it is too late) after learning that he had been hospitalized. However, the narrator wanders in the hospital for hours searching without success. He explains, “je questionnais des infirmières qui me

⁴³ Modiano documents his source in a footnote, in contrast to his failure to acknowledge Klarsfeld. However, this choice accords with foregrounding the narrator as the “investigator” who discovers primary source material throughout the narrative.

donnaient des renseignements contradictoires. Je finissais par douter de l'existence de mon père. . . . J'ai arpenté les cours pavées jusqu'à ce que le soir tombe. Impossible de trouver mon père. Je ne l'ai plus jamais revu" (652). He recalls the story of the exploration for his father in the hospital on a much later date when he finds himself lost in the *Palais de Justice* while investigating Dora's history. Bureaucratic difficulties notwithstanding, he eventually obtains the information he needs (652). Given that in these juxtaposed scenes the narrator manages to access Dora's *état civil* but never locates his father, the reader might wonder: is the narrator's own father more lost to him than Dora? He never speaks of doubting Dora's existence; it may be that she is more real to him than his own father.

Following the preface to Modiano's *Romans*, a collected volume of ten of his novels, including *Dora Bruder*, the author adds in family photographs, further blurring the line between his family and his fiction. He discusses in that context the fluid relationship between his life and his work:

Les quelques photos et documents reproduits au début de ce recueil pourraient suggérer que tous ces "romans" sont une sorte d'autobiographie, mais une autobiographie rêvée ou imaginaire. Les photos mêmes de mes parents sont devenues des photos de personnages imaginaires. Seules mon frère, ma femme et mes filles sont réels. (*Avant-propos* 9-10)

One might wonder whether Dora also figures among the "real" in the author's psychological landscape; his parents, especially his father, have haunted much of his fiction. His parents may have been close to Modiano in a biological sense, but they were emotionally and physically distant during portions of his youth, due to their break

up and his mother's film career, as is also suggested in the autobiographical novel from 2005, *Un Pedigree*. Accordingly, perhaps Modiano implies in the *avant-propos* that he has imagined his parents largely in his attempts to recreate them in writing because he did not truly know them. In *Dora Bruder*, the narrator's father's feelings and thoughts about the past are inscrutable since he only describes a few past events, but he seems emotionally detached from them. In his Nobel Prize speech, Modiano also mentions that he spent much of his childhood separated from his parents, in a series of different locations, and that in later years he tried, and was unable, to identify all of the names of the constantly shifting people and places that marked his youth: "Cette volonté de résoudre des énigmes sans y réussir vraiment et de tenter de percer un mystère m'a donné l'envie d'écrire, comme si l'écriture et l'imaginaire pourraient m'aider à résoudre enfin ces énigmes et ces mystères" (*Conférence Nobel* 15-16). Modiano's pursuit for the precise details of his own past is mirrored in his (and the narrator's) attempt to document Dora through her geographical history. With Dora, while she must remain unknown in the most essential ways, the narrator seems to feel an affectionate, familial bond for her that he does not experience with his actual father. He experiences an affinity with the young woman described by a cousin as rebellious and independent, a young woman who may have felt imprisoned at home in her parent's one-room apartment and also in the confines of regimented life in a Catholic boarding school. Trapped, she sought freedom, running away from home again after being caught and returned to her mother. At that point in 1942, her father was already interned. Ultimately, her actions raise the question of what she sought and what she might have desired. This enigma seems to propel Modiano's fascination with her, especially since

her spiritedness and apparent desire for freedom contrast so utterly, and so sadly, with her eventual capture and murder.

By preserving the unknown in a novel about Dora's life, Modiano displays a memorial aesthetic similar to what Richard Crownshaw observes in many German Holocaust countermonuments: the "incompleteness of these monuments—their architectural articulation of the wound and their refusal to complete the representation of those they remember—creates space for the visitor's continuation of the memory-work that cannot be concluded by the monument" (213). In a similar approach, Modiano's *Dora Bruder* remains an open-ended memorial work of mourning. The narrator proposes plans to visit Dora's father's birthplace of Vienna, as well as Sevan, where Dora's parents lived at the time of her birth, but he does not complete these tasks within the scope of the book (652-54). These omissions point to the unending nature of researching the past—there is always more to know and even more that has been lost. The narrator describes an ongoing feeling of loss at her death, one that makes the streets of Paris feel empty to him, no matter the hour: "Je marche à travers les rues vides. Pour moi, elles le restent, même le soir, à l'heure des embouteillages, quand les gens se pressent vers les bouches de métro" (735). The narrator ends *Dora Bruder* with the observation that what remains unknown about Dora is perhaps her greatest possession since it can never be taken from her:

J'ignorerai toujours à quoi elle passait ses journées, où elle se cachait, en compagnie de qui elle se trouvait pendant les mois d'hiver de sa première fugue et au cours des quelques semaines de printemps où elle s'est échappée à nouveau. C'est là son secret. Un pauvre et précieux secret que les bourreaux, les

ordonnances, les autorités dites d'occupation, le Dépôt, les casernes, les camps, l'Histoire, le temps—tout ce qui vous souille et vous détruit—n'auront pas pu lui voler. (735)

From one perspective, one could argue that by refusing to force a narrative into the gaps of her factual life, Modiano has set Dora free. He did not write her into a novel, as he did with the character of Ingrid Teyrsen, who was based on Dora, in the novel *Voyage de noces*. With this story, however, Modiano gives Dora the freedom of having a secret, inner life that can neither be pieced together with archival data nor with fictional imaginings. The richness of his narrative lies in the countermonumental voids.

Discussing how to recount stories of the Holocaust and other traumas today in *The Generation of Postmemory*, Hirsch asks, “What do we owe the victims? How can we best carry their stories forward, without appropriating them, without unduly calling attention to ourselves, and without, in turn, having our own stories displaced by them?”

(2). Modiano shares the book with Dora and perhaps does manage to avoid an exploitative appropriation insofar as he continuously undermines his own attempts to imagine her life. The facts rooted in archives stand firm, but the other details and suppositions shift unsteadily. It is as if Modiano is trying to take on Dora's memories, to be the bearer of “postmemory” for her, but this attempt is not quite entirely possible to realize since he does not have access to her memories, but only to traces left in bureaucratic records. The narrator wishes to recreate Dora's memories, but such an endeavor is not, in the end, possible because her absence is absolute. He thus grapples with the limits of both fact and fiction, as each proves to be inadequate in the face of such massive loss and destruction. Instead of a “Tomb of the Unknown Soldier,” his

book can be best read perhaps as a “(Counter)Monument to the Unattainable Dora Bruder,” and, by proxy, as a monument to the many others who died in the Holocaust, and especially those who died in obscurity and whose stories are still relatively unknown today. Under the burden of transmitting the past and the very knowledge of the impracticality of that task, Modiano chooses to construct a narrative that refuses neat categories and grandiose hagiography. Shifting between times and places, between factual documents and literary references, between Dora Bruder and his own family history, Modiano creates a space for her remembrance without claims of finality or ownership over her story.

Chapter 2. Lydie Salvayre's *Pas pleurer*: An Aesthetics of Retelling

Whereas Patrick Modiano's *Dora Bruder* looks to investigate a past that, in the end, can never be recovered (the narrator of the book is in search of lost time that cannot be found), Lydie Salvayre's *Pas pleurer*, published in 2014 and based largely on Salvayre's mother's experiences in the Spanish Revolution (*la révolution libertaire*) and the Spanish Civil War,⁴⁴ focuses on the preservation (rather than the excavation) of fragile memories in order to transmit a heritage. In the novel, that heritage is threatened especially by the mother's failing memory, and the narrator emphasizes her desire to honor her mother and save her name from "[le] néant auquel il était promis" (12). Her mother has forgotten nearly all of the details of her life, apart from her treasured memories of 1936. While that year marked a time of national turmoil, on a personal level it was a moment of self-discovery, liberation, and love:

De tous ses souvenirs, ma mère aura donc conservé le plus beau, vif comme une blessure. Tous les autres . . . , effacés. Tout le pesant fardeau des souvenirs, effacé. . . .

Ne persiste en sa mémoire que cet été 36, où la vie où l'amour la prirent à bras-le-corps, cet été où elle eut l'impression d'exister pleinement et en accord avec le monde, cet été de jeunesse totale comme eût dit Pasolini et à l'ombre duquel elle vécut peut-être le restant de ses jours, cet été qu'elle a, je présume, rétrospectivement embelli, dont elle a, je présume, recréé la légende pour mieux combattre ses regrets à moins que ce ne soit pour mieux me plaire, cet été

⁴⁴ The Spanish Civil War lasted from 17 July 1936 to 1 April 1939. The Spanish Revolution, associated with libertarian anarchist movements, coincided with the beginning of the civil war when various workers' organizations called for strikes and for an egalitarian restructuring of society. By mid-1937, the territory controlled by the workers was retaken by the Spanish government.

radieux que j'ai mis en sûreté dans ce lignes puisque les livres sont faits, aussi, pour cela. (278-79)

The book thus becomes a monumental, or even countermonumental, edifice erected to combat the effects of time, to which Modiano referred in *Dora Bruder* as “tout ce qui vous souille et vous détruit” (735).

In keeping with the motif of preserving or transmitting the past, Salvayre's *Pas pleurer* is arguably an exercise in stylistic and thematic repetition and reorganization. Certainly, many literary works rely on retelling, whether in a consideration of Racine's plays reconstructing Greek mythology⁴⁵ or, much more recently, of Maryse Condé's rewritings of canonical texts such as Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* (1953) and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) in her *Moi, Tituba, sorcière* (1986) and *La Migration des cœurs* (1995). And, of course, there are frequently subtler forms of rewriting involved in weaving intertextual references into a novel. In the case of *Pas pleurer*, the novel incorporates two main sources. The first is Salvayre's own mother's memories of the utopian anarchist experiment during the Spanish Revolution of 1936 when a number of communities established egalitarian collectives. The second source, comprising roughly a tenth of the novel,⁴⁶ is Georges Bernanos's *Les Grands Cimetières sous la lune* (1938), a non-fictional eye-witness account of the Spanish Civil War beginning in 1936. Bernanos's pamphlet, originally published as a serial in French newspapers, aimed to awaken the French public to the full horror of Franco's atrocities in Majorca and to the disturbing complicity of Spanish Catholic church whose priests

⁴⁵ In twentieth-century French literature, as well, Greek myth functions as an important referent. André Gide's *Œdipe* (1930), Jean Giraudoux's *La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu* (1935), and Jean Anouilh's *Antigone* (1944) factor among the many examples of this significant literary trend of rewriting myths.

⁴⁶ Bernanos is substantially referenced or paraphrased on at least 40 out of 279 pages.

absolved mass murder. Alternating between these two very different stories, Salvayre creates a fuller picture of the complexity of the historical moment:

L'été radieux de ma mère, l'année lugubre de Bernanos dont le souvenir resta planté dans sa mémoire comme un couteau à ouvrir les yeux: deux scènes d'une même histoire, deux expériences, deux visions qui depuis quelques mois sont entrées dans mes nuits et mes jours, où, lentement, elles infusent. (279)

The narrator serves primarily to repeat—but, equally essentially, also to curate—Montse's and Bernanos's radically differing accounts of their experiences during the summer of 1936. She selects how to display their narratives to maximize their effect, such as contrasting the birth of Montse's daughter with Bernanos's observation that 3,000 people were murdered in Majorca over the preceding seven months (235), or observing that around the time Montse fled to France as a refugee in the *Retirada*, Bernanos and his family departed France for a life in Paraguay, feeling betrayed by France's failure to intervene in Spain (272).

In *Pas pleurer* the narrator resembles closely Salvayre herself, even mirroring her name—which is given as “Lidia” rather than the actual name, “Lydie.” As Salvayre notes in a 2015 interview with Marianne Grosjean (“Lydie Salvayre remporte”), her mother serves as the inspiration for the character of Montserrat Arjona, called Montse, who was 15 in the summer of 1936 and is 90 in the novel's present, set in 2011. While Salvayre does draw from facts and family memories, she blends them freely with fiction to a degree that is more evident than what we find in Modiano's *Dora Bruder*. For example, in *Pas pleurer*, both of the narrator's parents grow up in the same village and marry in Spain, whereas Salvayre's own parents met in a refugee camp in France. It

appears that Montse is primarily inspired by Salvayre's mother in temperament and style; however, the plot is less tightly bound to the details of Salvayre's mother's actual lived experience. As Salvayre clarifies in an interview with Ben Faccini, the English translator of *Pas pleurer*:

My mother, Montse, and her brother, José, joined the [Anarchist] struggle. My childhood in France was in many ways nurtured by their accounts of the war. . . . I didn't need to do any specific research to bring their stories back to life or study the context to events—even though my penchant for romanticism meant that I modified, embellished or erased some aspects of the stories I knew.

(“Lydie Salvayre and Ben Faccini Discuss *Cry, Mother Spain*”)

Nevertheless, the narrator's words in the novel may prompt the reader to wish to collapse the distance between the narrator and author when she states, “Dans le récit que j'entreprends, je ne veux introduire, pour l'instant,⁴⁷ aucun personnage inventé. Ma mère est ma mère, Bernanos l'écrivain admiré des *Grands Cimetières sous la lune* et l'Église catholique l'infâme institution qu'elle fut en 36” (15); thus it is hardly surprising that some reviews of the book, such as one published on 21 August 2014 in *Le Figaro*,⁴⁸ fail to distinguish between author and narrator. In actuality, the similarity between the author and narrator embodies a deliberate, playful strategy. Salvayre offers the illusion of the classic notion inspired by Philippe Lejeune, the *pacte autobiographique*, through the first-person narration, and the text avoids breaking this illusion (apart from the subtitle of *roman*, which testifies that the contents of the book

⁴⁷ The “pour l'instant” makes this passage slightly tricky; perhaps the narrator coincides briefly with Salvayre herself, and Montse with Salvayre's mother—or this may just be a narrative device to help to draw in the reader.

⁴⁸ Sébastien Lapaque, “Lydie Salvayre remporte le prix Goncourt avec *Pas pleurer*.”

have some relationship with fiction) by offering little information, beyond her name, about the narrator. *Pas pleurer* is decidedly a fictional text playing with facts, and Salvayre orchestrates carefully the recounted situations in Montse's life to construct a more compelling drama, as she also clarifies in a 2015 radio interview for a program on France Culture, *À Voix nue*, after the interviewer repeatedly assumes that the characters in the novel depict direct representations of Salvayre's real family members (Salvayre, "Les Livres"). For example, Salvayre's mother did not have a child with a French soldier, nor did she marry Diego, Salvayre's father, until after their arrival in France. Indeed, the real Diego's father disowned his son for being a Communist, yet in the novel the newly married characters of Diego and Montse live with Diego's parents in a situation which represents a microcosm of the Spanish political scene, since each character has vastly different convictions.

These changes to the family history, formulated in order to create the core drama for the plot of a novel represent one important aspect of Salvayre's curatorial approach to literature. However, my main interest in this chapter is to explore how and why this novel relies so substantially on various forms of retelling. Salvayre uses the novel to construct a modified version of her mother's story, as well as to capture the rhythms and sounds of her mother's unique speech patterns (those of *fragnol*, or Spanish-inflected French). Yet that voice is not presented in isolation; she also places her mother's story in dialogue with other voices, most prominently that of Bernanos. She incorporates as well a range of other literary references, including André Malraux and Charles Péguy. Salvayre even reconstructs elements of her own novel, *La Compagnie des spectres* (1997), recycling many themes and scenarios. As a listener, reader, and writer, then,

Salvayre adapts the stories of others (as well as her own stories), indicating an aesthetic of adaptation, which combines both change and conservation.

1. “Un écrivain est une oreille”

Pas pleurer privileges the spoken word. The text reads as if the narrator is recounting Montse’s story aloud, since the 90-year-old Montse frequently interjects with first-person comments, even mid-sentence, interrupting the narrator’s discourse. Even Montse’s Proustian moment of recall is prompted by impassioned words delivered over a television:

Ma mère, ce soir, regarde la télévision où l’image fortuite d’un homme interpellant le président de la République lui rappelle soudain l’enthousiasme de son frère José à son retour de Lérima, sa jeune impatience et sa ferveur qui le rendaient beau. Et tout remonte d’un coup, la petite phrase de don Jaime Burgos Obrégon, l’allégresse de juillet 36, la découverte euphorique de la ville, et le visage de celui qu’elle a aimé à la folie. . . . (15)

This elevation of sounds and speech patterns brings to mind Salvayre’s philosophy of literature outlined in *Sept femmes* (2013), a non-fiction book consisting of Salvayre’s thoughts about the lives and work of seven authors (Emily Brontë, Marina Tsvetaeva, Virginia Woolf, Colette, Sylvia Plath, Ingeborg Bachmann, and Djuna Barnes) who influenced her own writing practices. In *Sept femmes*, Salvayre states that “Un écrivain est une oreille. Rien d’autre” (196), and that the writing she enjoys most “. . . est un rythme, c’est-à-dire la voix inimitable d’un sujet, sa voix innée, sa voix singulière, laquelle résiste à tous les métriques sociales” (196). Salvayre’s own tendency to

foreground speech is a key characteristic of her novels more generally, as is most clearly on display in *La Conférence de Cintegabelle* (1999), in which the entire text is the protagonist's monologue. Throughout her books, including *Pas pleurer*, the precise division between spoken and unspoken words is not always evident, particularly given her writerly style which often omits the punctuation typically used to introduce speech, and the fact that the narrator's unspoken words are also very conversational, even confessional, in tone. It is also worth noting that the dialogue and the tone of the book lend it very well to public performance; in 2017, *Pas pleurer* was adapted as a play by Denis Laujol for the Théâtre de Poche in Brussels.⁴⁹

1.1 Mother Tongue: *Fragnol* and Frenchness

The oral quality of *Pas pleurer* is reinforced by the way in which Salvayre records Montse's voice. When the narrator describes Montse's past, she uses standard French, though she occasionally punctuates the narrative with Spanish expressions for local color, particularly when reenacting dialogue. However, when Montse speaks, she uses *fragnol*, as seen in expressions such as "je me raccorde" (14) in place of "je me rappelle," "Diego . . . me mire" (31) rather than "me regarde," and "j'avais appris" (71) instead of "j'avais appris." Indeed, when Lidia listens to her mother, she often cuts in to correct her French, as in the following parenthetical comment on Montse's word choice: "je me mets à griter (moi: à crier)" (13). In a similar manner, as when Montse recalls how she joined her brother in his new-found anarchism, her phrasing often blends French and Spanish: "je suis devenue en une semaine une anarquiste de choc prête à abandonner ma famille sans le moindre remordiment et à piétiner sans pitié le

⁴⁹ Additional details are available at <http://poche.be/spectacle/paspleurer>.

corazón de mi mamá” (78). This sentence, a typical example of the elderly Monste’s speech patterns throughout the novel, incorporates words directly from Spanish (“corazón,” “mi mamá”), as well as *fragnol* (“anarquiste,” “remordiment”). Salvayre’s linguistic choices brought significant attention in interviews and commentary about the novel at the time of its release—both for her mixing of languages, as well as for the inaccuracies of her usage (I will address this latter issue more extensively in the section on Catalan below).

Interestingly, the president of the *Académie Goncourt*, Bernard Pivot, could not resist joking about the issue of the language in the novel: “Nous avons d’abord couronné un roman d’une grande qualité littéraire, un livre à l’écriture très originale, même si je regrette qu’il y ait parfois trop d’espagnol” (“Lydie Salvayre, Goncourt 2014”).⁵⁰ Even if expressed in a comedic vein, Pivot reanimates nonetheless the very anxieties about language and identity that Salvayre attributes to her younger self. In an interview, Grosjean asks Salvayre about her decision to write in a hybridized language; she inquires “La mère sort des expressions gratinées comme: ‘C’est le cadeau de mes soucis.’ Avez-vous forcé le trait?” to which Salvayre responds,

Oui, c’est complètement réinventé, de façon à ce que le lecteur non hispanophone puisse comprendre à peu près tout grâce aux étymologies communes. Ma mère sortait des expressions encore plus caustiques. Ce “fragnol” de ma mère m’a longtemps fait honte: c’était la langue de l’étrangère

⁵⁰ Pivot’s comment does not appear to be intended to disparage the novel. In his statement, he added, “Cette mère, qui ne se souvient de rien si ce n’est de cet été 36, c’est formidablement émouvant” (“Lydie Salvayre, Goncourt 2014”).

mal intégrée. En inventant cette nouvelle langue, ma mère était l'écrivain qui m'a précédée. ("Lydie Salvayre remporte").

With the final sentence of this reply to Grosjean, Salvayre positions her mother's "langue de l'étrangère mal intégrée" as a valuable linguistic heritage.⁵¹ Resituating her mother as an "écrivain," Salvayre rejects the shame and awkwardness formerly associated with her mother's speech. Salvayre repeats these sentiments in an interview for *L'Actualité Littéraire*, in which she notes that, while, earlier in her life, she was embarrassed of her mother's foreign way of speaking, she eventually came to view her mother's speech as an influence on her own literary sensitivity to sounds and rhythms. Speaking of her mother's heavily accented French, Salvayre observes, "aujourd'hui, je m'émerveille des sens nouveaux, inattendus, que cette langue sans cesse faisait naître ... de sa fraîcheur, de sa poésie, de sa drôlerie parfois, de sa singularité toujours. Ce qui me fait dire à présent que ma mère fut de toute évidence mon premier grand écrivain" ("*Pas pleurer*: Interview avec Lydie Salvayre"). In these interviews with Grosjean and *L'Actualité Littéraire*, Salvayre says nothing about her mother producing actual written texts. Instead, her status as "écrivain" derives from her inventive relationship to language, specifically the startling juxtapositions created by her hybridized words and her inventive expressions. Salvayre embraces linguistic diversity as a way of renewing

⁵¹ It is interesting to note that Salvayre is not pigeon-holed generally as a "Francophone" writer, despite her immigrant heritage. Others, such as Zahia Rahmani, still have their books shelved in the "Francophone" section of French bookstores. When I was in Paris in 2015 and looking for a copy of Rahmani's *France: Récit d'une enfance*, a bookstore specializing in French literature redirected me to their branch dedicated to Arabic and North African works—this, in order to find a book about growing up in France. Grosjean does ask Salvayre whether she feels closer to Spanish or French, and Salvayre responds: "Ma langue, c'est le français. Mais l'esprit de la langue espagnole m'est demeuré. Dans mes livres, j'usais et j'abusais de l'imparfait du subjonctif. Je croyais faire un clin d'œil à la perfection de la langue française telle qu'elle se parlait aux XVII^e ou XVIII^e siècles, jusqu'à ce que je me rende compte qu'en espagnol, l'imparfait du subjonctif est banal car très employé" ("Lydie Salvayre remporte").

the language, creating new cadences and accentuating the sound, the construction, and, ultimately, the meaning of words.

Linguistic unity has long been a source of anxiety connected to French national identity, as has been demonstrated in 2017 by the polemic surrounding the proposed *écriture inclusive*.⁵² As announced in *Déclaration de l'Académie française sur l'écriture dite "inclusive,"* on 26 October 2017, the *Académie française* voted unanimously to oppose the form on the grounds that it posed a "péril mortel" to the French language. More than the rejection itself, the alarmist tone of the response is particularly interesting from a historical perspective. The *Académie*, which also attempts strenuously to stem the casual adoption of foreign words, implies that the "irregular" use of French threatens the survival of the language—implying therefore as well the survival of a distinctly French culture in a globalized society. Today's emphasis on a unified language has roots that date at least back most notably to the Revolution (as well as earlier Protestant movements which promoted literacy). In his article "Lingua Populi, Lingua Dei: Language, Religion and the Origins of French Revolutionary Nationalism," historian and literary critic David A. Bell remarks that, while local dialects were used in disseminating Revolutionary ideas, as the Revolution progressed, standardized French became the norm. Such a move eased broad communication without translation, and the standard form reflected the desire by some, such as the Jacobins, to create a clear measure of national loyalty (1405). For example,

⁵² One aspect of the proposal calls for masculine and feminine forms to be used simultaneously with the addition of the "point médian," rather than following the rule that a single male in a group makes a noun or adjective masculine. For example, the inclusive plural of "acteur" becomes "acteur·trice·s" and the inclusive plural of "engagés" becomes "engagé·e·s." The full manual is available at www.ecriture-inclusive.fr/.

in 1794, the Jacobins “began a campaign to eradicate patois”; however, Bell remarks that these plans did not come to fruition, though the general principles continued to influence “the educational policies of later French regimes, particularly the Third Republic, thereby hastening the decline of the regional languages” (1405-06). In *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (1971), Eugen Weber also observes that diversity between regions and classes became a more significant social issue with the advent of the Revolution, which “had brought with it the concept of national unity as an integral and integrating ideal at all levels...” (9). School reports and works by writers from the time frequently portray peasants negatively, including accounts of their awkward interactions when in town and their continued practice of superstitious rituals. Weber documents an “imperialistic sentiment” in the effort to teach the peasants the French language and French national values through the school system (73). The critic notes that though the diminishing practice of regional languages and folk customs over the course of the nineteenth century was partially due to economic changes and migration, the government played a significant role as well in this endeavor through its attempts to bring about the national integration of the peasants through education, seeking an end to their perceived backwardness in order to produce active citizens integrated into the nation.⁵³ Interestingly, then, the *mission civilisatrice* began within France itself before spreading to the colonies, and it continues to this day—in a modified form—in the public school system and policies related to the integration of immigrants.

⁵³ Though French is the only officially recognized language of the French Republic, in recent years a number of regions have engaged in efforts to promote local languages such as Catalan, Breton, and Alsatian.

Salvayre's decision to feature Spanish and *fragnol* prominently, thus, is obviously indicative of important meaning. Montse's immigrant accent and broken French are not neutral characteristics. Not only do the words reflect the way in which Montse's character speaks, they also connote historical traces, and, indeed, perhaps even more importantly, historical trauma. The accent and linguistic malformations, which were once considered as burdensome during the author's and the narrator's childhoods as markers of otherness, specifically as a reminder of refugee status, suggest that every spoken word from the character of the mother indirectly evokes the violent past that thrust her from her homeland. In *The Generation of Postmemory*, Marianne Hirsch describes how trauma can be passed down from the generation of witnesses to the "generation after" in a way that causes one to "grow up with overwhelming inherited memories, to be dominated by narratives that preceded one's birth or one's consciousness" and "to risk having one's own life stories displaced, even evacuated by our ancestors" (5). In *Pas pleurer*, Montse's Spanish and her *fragnol* are enduring traces of her arduous experiences of war and her two-month-long trek to France in the midst of bombs being dropped around her. When the narrator corrects Montse's French early in the narrative (a practice which diminishes as the novel continues),⁵⁴ she conceivably tries to erase her mother's otherness, which is rooted deeply in the traumatic past.

1.2 Savoring Sounds

The writer as *oreille* implies attentiveness to the sound of words, as well as awareness of the words of others. Lidia's early annoyance with her mother's speech

⁵⁴ Lidia's unannounced decision to progressively cease correcting her mother may reflect a growing acceptance of Montse's voice as she (Lidia) becomes increasingly aware of, and appalled by, the violent realities that her mother had to flee. Her admiration and affection for her mother's strength of character grow over the course of the novel.

may also suggest a resistance to the power that her mother's history has had over her own life and general relationship with language. But while the narrator Lidia sometimes displays an eye-rolling discomfort with her mother's unique linguistic style ("Ma mère me raconte tout ceci dans sa langue, je veux dire dans ce français bancal dont elle use, qu'elle estropie serait plus juste, et que je m'évertue constamment à redresser")—even though they are in the privacy of the mother's apartment—Salvayre problematizes that kind of dismissive attitude by foregrounding Montse's ludic use of language and her obvious relish for words and sounds (111-12). For example, when Montse latches enthusiastically onto her brother José's new ideology, she depicts her transformation primarily in terms of an exciting new vocabulary which opens previously unexplored horizons:

Il faut que tu sais,⁵⁵ ma chérie, qu'en une seule semaine, j'avais augmenté mon patrimoine des mots: despotisme, domination, traîtres capitalistes, hypocrésie bourgeoise, cause prolétarienne, peuple saigné à blanc, exploitation de l'homme par l'homme et quelques autres, j'avais appris les noms de Bakounine et de Proudhon, les paroles de *Hijos del Pueblo*, et le sens de CNT, FAI, POUM, PSOE, on dirait du Gainsbourg. (71)

Likening her burgeoning terminology to the pleasure of listening to music, Montse displays an infectious joy of the pleasures inherent in language, both spoken and written.

⁵⁵ One of Montse's quirks in French is a lack of the subjunctive, as we shall also see in additional citations from the novel. This passage and others include examples of *fragnol* (such as "augmenté" and "hypocrésie").

Stylistically, the oral dimension of the text extends to Salvayre's frequent use of the spoken word as a catalyst for character development in the text. For instance, the beginning of Montse's class consciousness starts with the utterance of an unfortunate phrase. When Montse's mother takes Montse to Don Jaime's abode to propose her as a maid, Don Jaime declares, "Elle a l'air bien modeste" (13). These words infuriate Montse: "cette phrase me rend folle, je la receptionne comme une offense, comme une patada al culo . . . qui ameute mon cerveau qui dormait depuis plus de quinze ans et qui me facilite de comprendre le sens des palabres que mon frère José a rapportées de Lérima" (13). She complains to her mother, "Elle a l'air bien modeste . . . Ça veut dire . . . que je serai une bonne bien bête et bien obédissante! . . . Ça veut dire que . . . je ne rechisterai jamais contre rien, que je ne causerai aucune moleste d'aucune sorte!" (13). While Montse finds her voice (in the sense that she becomes aware of her social limitations as a peasant and challenges the role laid out for her by her parents) in response to a perceived insult, her brother's transformation into a local political leader begins with his decision to speak publicly:

José prend la parole.

C'est la première fois de sa vie.

Il dit les grandes phrases bibliques qu'il a entendues à Lérima et qu'il a lues dans le journal *Solidaridad obrera*. Il dit⁵⁶ Soyons frères, partageons le pain, mettons en commun nos forces, créons une commune.

Et tous y mordent.

Il est théâtral. Romantique à mourir. Un ángel moreno caído del cielo. (55)

⁵⁶ As observed earlier, Salvayre does not adhere to standard punctuation when introducing spoken language.

José's charisma is expressed in literary terms. He is dramatic, he employs biblical phrasing, and he parrots political expressions he has read. While he later becomes disillusioned, his early longing for justice expresses itself in an eloquent lyricism that complements his visionary idealism. A poor farmhand, he speaks now in a romantic vein as a poet or a prophet. The spoken word awakens Montse and José to new possibilities, and by highlighting the transformative power of language, Salvayre points to the perspective-altering possibilities of literature.

The narrator also observes that her mother has an equal enthusiasm for both distinguished expressions and vulgar terms. The former predilection is on display in this passage in which Montse addresses her daughter:

À mon humble avis, dit ma mère (qui a du goût pour ce genre de formules explétives dont l'usage lui donne l'impression de maîtriser le français; elle aime aussi beaucoup les expressions Si j'ose dire et Si je ne m'abuse qu'elle trouve distinguées et qui viennent en quelque sorte racheter sa propension à dire des grossièretés), à mon humble avis, ma chérie, ceux qu'on nommait les nationaux voulaient épurer l'Espagne de 36 de tous ceux qui ressemblaient à mon frère. Y nada más. (96)

Montse's relish for expressions that connote a certain French elegance parallels her enjoyment of Jose's anarchist-tinged vocabulary, as well as the obscenities that allow her to test out a different sort of linguistic freedom. For example, when the narrator recounts how Doña Pura, a member of the local nobility (and the sister of Montse's future father-in-law, Don Jaime), experienced serious anxiety about social changes that resulted in a physical sensation of "douleurs perforantes la poitrine . . . comme des

piqûres, des pointes de feu qui la pénètre,” Montse interjects (as commentary on Doña Pura’s repressed sexuality), “Comme des bites” (81-82). The narrator then feels a need to explain her mother’s puerile giggling at the statement:

Depuis que ma mère souffre de troubles mnésiques, elle éprouve un réel plaisir à prononcer les mots grossiers qu’elle s’est abstenue de formuler pendant plus de soixante-dix ans, manifestation fréquente chez ce type de patients, a expliqué son médecin, notamment chez des personnes qui reçurent dans leur jeunesse une éducation des plus strictes et pour lesquelles la maladie a permis d’ouvrir les portes blindées de la censure. . . . Elle qui s’était tant évertuée, depuis son arrivée en France, à corriger son accent espagnol, à parler un langage châtié et à soigner sa mise pour être toujours plus conforme à ce qu’elle pensait être le modèle français (se signalant par là même, dans sa trop stricte conformité, comme une étrangère), elle envoie valser dans ses vieux jours les petites conventions, langagières et autres. (82-83)

The opposing impulses toward “un langage châtié” and “les mots grossiers” paradoxically both stem from a pleasure in the sound, power, and meaning of words. Montse enjoys the air of authority and fluency that accompanies elegant expressions, but she also relishes the ability to shock. Cultivated phrasing and crude formulations both have the potential to display wit and linguistic mastery. Montse’s blending of high and low taste is reminiscent of a tradition celebrated in the work of Rabelais, or, indeed, since the emergence of medieval *fabliaux*.

In fact, the figure of Rabelais makes an appearance in a scene set in Barcelona, where Montse and José have gone to join the libertarian revolution and have found a

society where hierarchies have been dismantled. Montse describes a light-hearted discussion among friends about beans, digestion, and humor. The conversation concludes with an acquaintance praising the “génie” of Rabelais as a Frenchman who excelled in vulgar humor: “car Rabelais était espagnol, camaradas, espagnol en esprit, claro, hermano de Cervantes, claro, et qui plus est, libre-penseur, pour ne pas dire libertaire” (119). By “libertaire,” this young man means that Rabelais represented essentially a libertarian anarchist, reminiscent of the youths participating in the conversation; this description somewhat echoes Mikhail Bakhtin’s observation in *Rabelais and His World* (1965) that “No dogma, no authoritarianism, no narrow-mindedness can coexist with Rabelaisian images; these images are opposed to all that is finished and polished, to all pomposity, to every ready-made solution in the sphere of thought and world outlook” (3). The episode of Montse’s *séjour* in Barcelona presents a joyous, utopian experience, similar to Bakhtin’s description of carnival, in which “everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. It has a universal spirit” (7). Montse divulges that she felt as if “ma vraie vie commençait” (119) in the midst of the open, warm camaraderie she found in Barcelona in 1936, “cet été où tous les principes se renversent” (125). With her displacement from home, Montse undergoes a dramatic reversal of circumstances, suddenly finding herself independent and in control of her movement, rather than subject to her parents and social expectations.⁵⁷ Accustomed to a

⁵⁷ A greater freedom of expression, particularly for women, in the revolutionary city contrasts starkly with what Montse had observed in her traditional village; upon arrival in Barcelona, she sees “Deux jeunes filles en pantalon, les ongles peints en rouge, leur offrent, avec des airs cranes, des cigarettes

rough life as a peasant farmer's daughter, she revels in her first experience of modern luxuries: "l'eau courante, chaude et froide, des baignoires à pieds de tigres, des W.-C. avec chasse d'eau et couvercle rabattable, des ampoules électriques dans chaque pièce, des réfrigérateurs, des pendules, des thermomètres muraux, des téléphones en ébonite, bref, de l'extraordinaire, de la féerie" (121). The experiences and ideals Montse encounters in Barcelona form the core of her identity, an idea that is further reinforced by the fact that her only lucid memories of the past revolve around this event and the months immediately preceding and following it. Montse goes so far as to admit to her daughter: "Tu vois, si on me demandait de choisir entre l'été 36 et les soixante-dix ans que j'ai vécus entre la naissance de ta sœur et aujourd'hui, je ne suis pas sûre que je choisirais les deuxièmes" (123-24). Strikingly, Montse's positive impressions of Barcelona contrast with both her brother's growing sense of unease vis-à-vis the realities of war,⁵⁸ as well as Bernanos's steady litany of atrocities in Majorca.⁵⁹

In addition to the mix of registers and accents present in the text, Lidia's and Montse's voices blend together so that it is not always clear who is speaking. The following excerpt demonstrates how Salvayre succeeds at fluidly shifting the narration

blondes, et Montse découvre avec stupéfaction que des femmes qui ne sont pas des putes peuvent fumer comme les hommes" (112).

⁵⁸ Later, she adds, "...parce que, précisément, José est paysan, c'est à dire rompu à vaincre par le soc la terre aride, il sait bien que l'esprit ne vainc pas la matière, surtout si celle-ci prend la forme d'un fusil-mitrailleur MG34, il sait bien qu'on ne peut pas lutter avec trois pierres et un idéal fût-il sublime contre une armée surentraînée et pourvue de canons, panzers, bombardiers, char d'assaut, pièces d'artillerie et autres engins hautement qualifiés dans la liquidation d'autrui. . . . Lui qui a rêvé follement d'être le fervent d'une révolte qui bouleverserait à tout jamais l'Histoire, il se demande à présent ce qu'il fout là, à regarder passer les camions chargés de jeunes gens offerts à la boucherie. . ." (131-32).

⁵⁹ For example, Lidia notes that, "Il ne peut plus ignorer ce que son honneur de catholique refusait jusqu'ici à admettre. . . des hommes sont raflés chaque soir dans des hameaux perdus, à l'heure où ils rendent des champs. Des hommes qui n'ont tué ni blessé personne" (68). She also quotes Bernanos directly as he describes what happens to the men after their arrest: "des équipes de tueurs, transportées de village en village par des camions réquisitionnés à cet effet, abattent froidement des milliers d'individus jugés suspects" (70).

between the two women. When Montse leaves her village for the first time to visit Barcelona:

Elle entend, pour la première fois de sa vie, des langues étrangères, c'est un plaisir de l'âme. Car il y a là une foule panachée de jeunes gens venus de tous les coins du monde pour soutenir l'armée républicaine: des Américains qui font deux fois la taille de son frère, des Anglais à la peau laiteuse et aux lèvres roses (muy feos), des Italiens aux cheveux luisants, des Suisses, des Autrichiens, des Français, des Allemands, des Russes, des Hongrois, des Suédois. On parle fort (allez savoir pourquoi, l'Espagnol pense qu'il a toujours affaire à des sourds), on fume, on rit, je suis soûle, on se dit tu sans se connaître. Et dans ce jaleo, dans ce brouhaha, quel mot formidable ma chérie!, dans le brouhaha des discussions, des éclats de rire, des Me cago en Dios lancés à tout propos et du tintín des verres entrechoqués, une voix tout à coup s'élève, une voix grave et légèrement palpitante. Lidia, sers-moi une anisette, ma chérie. (115)

In this passage, which again displays Montse's enjoyment of language, her literal Barthesian *plaisir du texte*, as she encounters new languages for the first time, and also as she comments on her enjoyment in pronouncing specific words (i.e. "brouhaha"), the reader experiences the playful textual instability of the narrative voice. As happens frequently throughout the text, Montse interjects parenthetical comments (i.e. "muy feos"), and she also takes charge of the narration mid-paragraph. Moving from Lidia's third person narration, last indicated with the phrase "son frère," to the "on" and "je" of Montse's first-person account, the reader has the impression that Montse was listening to her daughter's narration and has disrupted it to add her own thoughts. The immediacy

of Montse's words is underscored by her sudden shift to the present moment, with her request for "une anisette." The conversational flow of words between the mother and daughter that alternates between time periods ultimately gives the text a compelling vitality.

While Lidia provides the narrative frame, her personality traits are nearly impossible to define because her personal thoughts are limited to brief musings related to writing the text, to reading Bernanos, and to listening to Montse. In "Le Sujet de l'expression dans *Pas pleurer* de Lydie Salvayre," Marianne Braux aptly observes that the narrator's reproduction of the words of others corresponds to her relative lack of interiority within the narrative:

la narratrice se garde bien d'expliciter lesdits "échos" qu'elle perçoit dans sa "vie d'aujourd'hui," conformément au principe esthétique du roman consistant à se mettre soi-même en retrait pour se faire le réceptacle du discours d'autrui et atteindre ainsi à une vérité que nul discours égocentré ne saurait produire. Ce qui importe ici, c'est donc de saisir dans ce pudique dévoilement la possibilité pour le sujet d'advenir à lui-même dans une écoute attentive de ses autres en lui. (76)

According to Braux's interpretation, the narrator's disinterest in foregrounding her own story allows her to become the "receptacle" of the words of others. However, her employment of others' stories may also be read as something more than a respectful or humble ceding of ground. Perhaps it would be more fitting to depict the novel itself as the receptacle for many voices, and to portray the narrator as the curator who makes active selections—and omissions. In the case of literary narrators, their perspective necessarily circumscribes the story available to the reader, but the degree to which the

narrator (as opposed to the author) reflects on the content of the story in a self-aware manner may mark the difference between the narrator as the vessel for the story and the narrator as the curator of the story. In a museum setting, the curator operates in the background, but his or her choices determine the content and its presentation, and therefore shape how viewers interpret the material. Braux's description of the narrator as the someone who yields space to other voices may relegate the narrator to too passive a role—while the narrator creates a framework for the expression of others' stories, she nonetheless takes on an active role in selecting the voices and in fashioning a narrative around them. Indeed, her accounts of the interior thoughts of characters apart from Bernanos and Montse especially do not fit neatly into the concept of the narrator as a recipient. For example, the narrator describes the private emotions and thoughts of Doña Pura and José—but from whom does she receive them? Both would have long been deceased at the time of the narration in 2011. While José may have confided in Montse, Montse and Doña Pura had little sympathy for one another. Therefore, the narrator must do more than relinquish the page to their accounts; she must even go beyond the selective pruning function of a curator to become a creator who expands and embellishes the narrative.

1.3 The Catalanian Catastrophe: “I de-catalanized the book”

While the narration in the text remains unstable, particularly insofar as it can be difficult to distinguish whether Lidia or Montse is speaking at a given moment, the very words printed on the page have shifted since the first printing of the work. In the copies printed in the spring of 2014, Montse's brother Josep is depicted as returning with revolutionary ideals after laboring in the orchards of Lérida. By the time of the August

2014 printing, Josep has disappeared, and Montse's brother—renamed José—is described as returning with revolutionary ideals after laboring in the orchards of Lérima. Lérida, also known as Lleida, is a town in Catalonia, but Lérima does not exist on any maps of Spain. Josep is a Catalan name, but José is Castilian. Other characters undergo a similar transformation: Joan becomes Juan, Don Jaume becomes Don Jaime. Why did Salvayre erase Catalonia from the novel, particularly when the city of Lérida has a long history of revolutionary activity and separatist movements? Historical events that date from the 1930s are in her novel, such as the rise of nationalism and the plight of refugees, and they resonate with contemporary challenges; why, then, remove Catalonia, when its push for regional independence also corresponds to recent events (in fact, the resonance has grown even stronger since *Pas pleurer* was published, in light of the 2017 vote for independence from Spain)?

Salvayre answers this question while responding to a slightly different inquiry during a second interview with Grosjean for the *Tribune de Genève*. Grosjean asks her why the villagers speak Castilian instead of Catalan in the novel, and why Salvayre renders Montse's speech in *frangnol* rather than *fratalan*, considering that Salvayre's mother came from Catalonia. Given the significance of this issue, I quote Salvayre's response in full:

L'utilisation du "frangnol" m'est venue naturellement: mes deux parents parlaient espagnol entre eux et avec mes sœurs et moi. Mais ma mère parlait catalan avec ses amies du village. Je le comprends donc, sans être capable d'en parler un mot. En ce qui concerne le roman, je l'ai échappé belle, il faut que je vous raconte: dans la première version du livre, l'histoire est située à Lérida, en Catalogne, et

tous les personnages ont des prénoms catalans. Un premier tirage est donc imprimé comme ça. Tout à coup en lisant le livre, ma sœur s’écrie: “Tu dis que ça se passe en Catalogne, mais ils parlent tous castillan?” Catastrophe! J’ai fait des corrections immédiatement, délocalisé l’histoire, et les prénoms ont été modifiés. Actuellement, tous les exemplaires qui sont en vente ont été corrigés.

(“Lauréate du Goncourt 2014”)

The rather unfortunate error was discovered rather late; many of the reviews of the novel, including those published when Salvayre’s won the Prix Goncourt, reference the Catalan names. In fact, the linguistic slippage in the original text reflects force of habit and of childhood memories. As she elaborates in a 2017 interview:

[It was an] error that can be explained by the fact that my own Catalan mother spoke only Spanish at home because that was the language my father imposed on our family. As I was unable to write in Catalan, I decatalanized the book in later versions . . . what mattered to me was to recreate the language my mother invented when she arrived in France, a trans-Pyrenean language, a language split in two, an inventive, joyous, poetic tongue that laughed at and manhandled the dominant language, and thereby opened new horizons of meaning.

(“A Conversation”)

It is clear that she associates her mother’s identity more strongly with *fragnol* than with Catalan, and it would appear that, though the novel took place originally in Catalonia, the location’s historical and political significance did not factor strongly into the choice of setting; rather, it was a convenience due to familiarity from family history. We might ask, which is the “real” edition of the book? Salvayre refers to the new edition as

“corrigé,” but the original textual content actually more closely reflects her family history—and, yet, as I have already discussed, the trajectory of the characters already departs from the lived experience of Salvayre’s real relatives, so precision in this matter is not of as much importance as if the text were presented as an autobiography (rather than as a novel loosely based on autobiography). The concept of “corrections” here clearly refers to internal consistency within the world of the text. In order to create an air of *vraisemblance*, rather than risk having readers continue to be distracted by the lack of Catalan, she moves farther into fiction by giving Lérída the invented name Léríma. In this sense, the text—even in its original form—could be described as a sort of *Homage to Catalonia*⁶⁰ *manqué*, as the novel did not foreground the specificities of the region’s history and culture, beyond using names common to Catalonia. Interestingly, Laujol’s theatrical adaptation maintains the use of Catalan names (see, for example, the play’s *Dossier de presse*).

Salvayre also views the possibility of a fixed language with skepticism. In the West interview, Salvayre explains that *fragnol* is a “language that, with its mischief and mistakes, pushes away away the veil, the seriousness, the solemnity of well-spokenness,” in contrast with “the repulsive French of *France 2*, . . . I mean that smooth, proper, insipid French, that perfectly mediocre, perfectly dismal, and perfectly dead French, that agreed-upon French that harbors no surprises and no audacity and tries to pass itself off as the sole legitimate language” (“A Conversation”). In light of this attitude, it is perhaps fitting that her novel exists in more than one form, and that the

⁶⁰ This is the title of George Orwell’s account 1938 of his wartime involvement in Catalonia during 1936.

variations on the story continue to proliferate in theatrical adaptations and literary translations that add to the polyvocal nature of the text.

2. Salvayre as a Reader: Cultivating the Canon

In *Sept femmes*, Salvayre discusses her aesthetic preferences as a reader and her growing interest in authors' biographies, though, she says, "J'avais, jusqu'ici, tenu dans le plus grand dédain tout savoir sur la vie d'un auteur" (10). As Salvayre contemplates the lives and literature of seven women she admires as writers, she becomes fascinated by how "leur vie et leur œuvre étaient indissociablement, inextricablement, irrémissiblement liées" (10). She sees the strength and durability of their—now canonical—texts as originating in this intersection between the personal and the aesthetic: "leur texts étaient . . . une protestation—arrangeant, il faut bien le reconnaître—qu'il y avait d'un côté: l'art, et de l'autre, à distance prudente: la vie quotidienne" (11).⁶¹ *Sept femmes* reveals as well Salvayre's thoughts on literary heritage and how it is transmitted. She writes:

Leurs livres à présent n'ont plus à être protégés ni défendus. Les chefs-d'œuvre consacrés ne demandent plus rien. . . . C'est leur beauté qui vaut . . . d'être dite et redite. Quoi d'autre mérite véritablement, dans ce foutoir, d'être transmis? Quoi d'autre mérite d'être sauvé de l'oubli et de l'indifférence qui constamment menacent? (*Sept femmes* 12-13)

⁶¹ I interpret *Sept femmes* as an invitation to consider how Salvayre's family history intersects with her literary works in the manner similar to the way in which she analyzes the lives and texts of writers such as Woolf and Plath.

Salvayre suggests that, in light of these writers' texts status as part of the cultural literary canon (as implied in Salvayre's evaluation of them as "chefs-d'œuvre consacrés"), they no longer require a defense. However, there exists an important difference between a defense of status and a discussion of merit, and Salvayre here engages in the latter. She sees value in engaging with the texts in order to explore what makes them compelling, and, in so doing, she simultaneously takes part in the continuance of their transmission. As with *Sept femmes*, Salvayre also contributes to relaying a text—and an author—to her readers in *Pas pleurer*: Bernanos's *Les Grands Cimetières*. At the same time, unlike Woolf and Plath, one could argue that Bernanos has not maintained a reliable place in contemporary literary memory, let alone in academic study. As the narrator notes: "Il a les idées que l'on sait. Il a milité à l'Action française. Il admire Drumont. Il se déclare monarchiste, catholique, héritier des vieilles traditions françaises et plus proche en esprit à l'aristocratie ouvrière que la bourgeoisie d'argent, qu'il exècre" (12). These qualities would not appear to recommend him to Salvayre, an author who, in the novel *La Compagnie des spectres*, is deeply critical of nationalism and religious hypocrisy. Indeed, in a 2014 interview with Eléonore Sulser of *Le Temps*, Salvayre herself says that she long put off reading *Les Grands Cimetières* precisely because of Bernanos's political views. She does not retransmit his works due to their "beauté"; at least, she does not elaborate on this point. Rather, if we revisit one of the questions she poses, "Quoi d'autre mérite . . . d'être transmis . . . d'être sauvé de l'oubli et de l'indifférence . . . ?," we may find that, in *Pas pleurer*, she answers what was originally a rhetorical question: that "something else" is courage. To her surprise, the narrator in *Pas pleurer*, like Salvayre herself, finds that she admires the Catholic

Bernanos despite his right-wing ideology. Salvayre perceives Bernanos, unlike the hypocritical nationalist Catholics depicted in the novel, such as Doña Pura, to be someone who examines conscientiously his beliefs and seeks to align his values with his actions. She explains to Sulser,

Je considère le courage comme une vertu littéraire. Le courage, en effet, pour Bernanos de dire ce qu'il voit, tandis que les catholiques espagnols, eux, préfèrent le crime à la vérité. . . . Bernanos ne cesse de s'interroger sur ce refus de percevoir des hommes. . . . Ce qui révolte, qui met Bernanos en colère, c'est cette passion des hommes d'ignorer une certaine réalité dès lors qu'elle les met en péril avec eux-mêmes. (Salvayre, "Je ne suis pas toute une")

Bernanos's steadfast determination to speak the unpleasant truth of the Spanish nationalists' bloody purge and the supporting role of the church to his political allies resonates in the moral dimension of Salvayre's aesthetic sensibility.

While Salvayre does not write directly about the concept of a literary canon in *Sept femmes*, it is true that when she notes that some books, such as those by Woolf, need not be protected or defended, she implies rather that certain texts become accepted cultural touchstones of canonical value. Of course, the concept of a formal literary canon has become controversial in recent decades, especially since, historically, the canon has excluded marginalized voices. Be that as it may, some form of aesthetic canon appears to be inevitable, at least on an informal basis, in part because academic courses curate literary works taught, and shifting cultural interests determine which kinds of writing remain in print. In "Where Literature and Memory Meet," Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning discuss the study of canon formation and the institutionalization of

memory of literature and society. They acknowledge the so-called “canon wars,” but focus on analyzing two specific forms of canon. The first are the texts which Aleida Assmann calls “Cultural Texts,” those such as the Bible, the *Illiad*, or Shakespeare’s plays, those that have surpassed their status as individual artistic works to become much larger, even universal, cultural icons. These cultural texts are transmitted over the course of generations and serve as what Assmann terms “storage media,” that is, they function as means of preserving information beyond the capacity of any given individual’s or group’s functional memory. The second group are those that make up a less formal, ever-fluctuating canon, one based on the changing priorities and tastes of contemporary society (Erll and Nünning). These works function as “circulation media,” which Erll describes as “collective texts . . . [which] dissimulat[e] and shap[e] cultural memory” since they are perceived as a means of transmitting memory of the past (164). This process of dissemination is especially reinforced by the “transmedial phenomenon” in which novels are adapted as comics, plays or films (164). While *Pas pleurer* participates in this “transmedial” trend through its adaptation to the stage, in my current analysis I am more interested in how Salvayre adapted Bernanos’s non-fictional account in her novel, thereby increasing its circulation.

While *Pas pleurer* focuses on Montse, Bernanos is situated at the core of the text’s genesis, according to Salvayre herself. In the interview with Grosjean, she states:

C’est d’abord la lecture des *Grands Cimetières sous la lune* de Georges Bernanos qui m’a bouleversée. Son courage et son indépendance d’esprit dans le témoignage des massacres perpétrés par les franquistes. Ce récit très sombre a réactivé en moi le désir de faire entendre également d’autres puissances que

celles de mort. Soit les puissances de vie et de liberté qui sont nées pendant l'insurrection libertaire. ("Lydie Salvayre")

In such a way, we see how the author's desire to revisit and to retell her mother's experience with the libertarian socialist revolution came about, at least on one level, with Bernanos serving as a textual mediator. In a sense, then, Montse's story is part of the rewriting of *Les Grands Cimetières*, complementing or completing it through an account of a teenager's failed dream of a utopian revolution in a vein similar to Adrienne Rich's call for "re-vision," which she represents as "the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering a text from a new critical direction" (18). After confronting her own mother's story through the lens of Bernanos, Salvayre approaches his work within the context of the narrative about Montse and her daughter. With fitting symmetry, she prompts readers to look anew at Bernanos as a literary and cultural icon.

In Salvayre's preface to the English translation of *Pas pleurer*, titled *Cry, Mother Spain*, she contemplates the reception of *Les Grands Cimetières* when it was initially published, as well as Bernanos's status as of the time she wrote the novel; the remarks included in this passage are particularly noteworthy, thus I quote at some length:

The book was published in France in 1938 and caused an immediate uproar. The diehards on the right accused Bernanos of betrayal, while the left-wing intelligentsia praised him to the skies, perhaps not fully understanding his stance.

Bernanos refused to be pinned down by anyone, however. Exponents of both right and left would never succeed in claiming his work as their own.

Thought he declared himself to be passionately Catholic and a monarchist, his freedom of spirit meant he eschewed all labels, prejudices and ideologies.

Bernanos is not read much in France nowadays and remains largely unknown abroad. Is it because he was a solitary writer and so hard to categorise? Is it because he refused to mould himself to the attitudes of his time? I don't know. I'm just delighted English-language readers will now get the chance to discover his writing through my book. (8)

Clearly, Salvayre admires Bernanos for his refusal to submit to pressures from his acquaintances and the Church—and she undertakes the perhaps unexpected action of bringing him back to the attention of French readers and, through translations of her book, to readers around the globe. Accordingly, *Pas pleurer* resurrects Bernanos's œuvre and challenges the adequacy of his reputation as a right-wing nationalist; she reminds readers of the nuances of his views, and particularly of his moral courage.

2.1 Literary Legacies: Reviving Bernanos

Interestingly, while Salvayre credits reading Bernanos with spurring her to write *Pas pleurer*, the narrator of the novel—who also claims to be its author⁶²—frames the reason for Bernanos's inclusion somewhat differently. In the narrator's account, the 90-year-old Montse begins to recount her story when memories flood back after seeing a man on television who reminds her of her brother José (15). The narrator then explains that her concurrent reading of Bernanos complicates Montse's romanticized tale with a darker substratum. As the narrator describes listening to her mother, she states, “Tandis

⁶² For instance, the narrator appears to claim authorship of the novel with statements such as: “Dans le récit que j'entreprends . . . ” (15) and “Je n'avais eu, jusqu'ici, le désir de me rouler (littérairement) dans les souvenirs maternels” (104).

que le récit de ma mère sur l'expérience libertaire de 36 lève en mon cœur je ne sais quel émerveillement . . . le récit des atrocités décrites par Bernanos . . . vient raviver mon appréhension de voir quelques salauds renouer aujourd'hui avec ces idées infectes que je pensais, depuis longtemps, dormantes" (17). The narrator's comments represent an indirect reference to rising nationalism (and religious extremism), as well as the unexpected relevance of Bernanos's ideas in the novel's present, set in 2011. In fact, though Montse inhabits the novel's present, Bernanos is the one who appears to speak most prophetically to the present and future. Montse's brief, even joyful, experience among the anarchists in Barcelona testifies to a nearly unbelievable moment of harmony, soon to be shattered by the tragic violence of war. The utopian summer does not appear to foretell a future of bliss, though it offers a sublime vision that may inspire. Unlike Bernanos's testimony that delivers a message of caution, the narrator primarily links Montse's experiences to the present as memories that she intends to save from oblivion because public memory has not privileged the account of the Spanish Revolution, largely because of the overwhelming shadow of the Spanish Civil War. In addition to restoring knowledge of the Spanish Revolution, the narrator also speaks of her intention to distance her mother's name from "[le] néant auquel il était promis" (15). Therefore, with these two divergent accounts of Spain in the later 1930s, Salvayre communicates a mix of history lesson and personal homage, while also sounding a political alarm.

By writing her reading of *Les Grands Cimetières sous la lune* into the novel, Salvayre has the narrator undergo an encounter with the horror of the Spanish Civil War through Bernanos, engaging the reader alongside the narrator in the discovery of the

now well known atrocities. Of course, the narrator functions as an editor when she paraphrases Bernanos: *Les Grands Cimetières* is a 300-page book, and she picks and chooses what to rewrite and thereby what to pass on as part of Bernanos's legacy. As noted by Liedeke Plate and H. G. Rose in the article, "Rewriting: a Literary Concept for the Study of Cultural Memory," rewriting is a "labor of remembering and forgetting"; "an active process of production and repression . . . implicated in power dynamics" (613). The passages Salvayre selects for reproduction determine a portrait of Bernanos for a new generation of readers who may not have read any of his texts otherwise. Her sections devoted to Bernanos repeat scenes describing the death of innocent peasants and the complicity and hypocrisy of the Catholic church in Spain. These matters present indeed recurrent topics throughout *Les Grands Cimetières*, but, problematically, Salvayre elides the portions of Bernanos's account that consist of his energetic denunciations of the errors of the elites of French conservative movements and of the idiocy of the masses. She avoids citing his anti-Semitic comments, though she alludes to this tendency when she calls him an admirer of Drumont. For her purposes, she is most interested in the bravery of his condemnations that went against the opinions of many of his former friends:

Il voit les nationaux se livrer à une épuration systématique des suspects, tandis qu'entre deux meurtres, les dignitaires catholiques leur donnent l'absolution au nom du Père du Fils et du Saint-Esprit. L'Église espagnole est devenue la Putain des militaires épurateurs.

Le cœur soulevé de dégoût, Bernanos assiste impuissant à cette infâme connivence. Puis, dans un effort éprouvant de lucidité qui l'oblige à rompre avec

ses sympathies anciennes, il se décide à écrire ce dont il est le témoin déchiré.

(12)

While the title of *Les Grands Cimetières* refers to the mass graves of Spanish Civil War, the content of the book is as much about France's past, present, and future—a future the narrator sees repeated in the Second World War, as well as in a possible future yet to come, when she quotes Bernanos as having written: “Je ne me lasserai pas de répéter que nous pourrions entreprendre un jour ou l'autre l'épuration des Français sur le modèle de l'épuration espagnole Une fois la chose en train, nous fermerons les yeux” (213).⁶³ His statement foreshadows chillingly the deportation of French Jews just a few years later. Bernanos is convinced that what he observes in Spain is not a uniquely Spanish phenomenon, but a symptom of a deeper menace of nationalist movements to society more broadly.

Rather than arranging each passage about Bernanos to correspond to a single segment of text in *Les Grands Cimetières*, Salvayre often borrows details from multiple episodes to constitute a single Bernanos-themed passage in *Pas pleurer*. Her wording, in any case, remains very close Bernanos's own. She typically paraphrases sentence by sentence, though the sentences she places next to each other may come from different paragraphs or even from separate chapters. She occasionally uses quotation marks for longer phrases or sentences copied directly, but not in a consistent manner. For example, when she writes, “des hommes sont raflés chaque soir dans des hameaux perdus, à l'heure où ils rentrent des champs,” this phrasing displays nearly a direct

⁶³ In this instance, Salvayre employs a direct quote rather than a paraphrase. As I have previously mentioned, Salvayre does not make use of quotation marks to record speech in *Pas pleurer*. She does, however, use them when providing a word-for-word quote from Bernanos or another author.

quotation of Bernanos, who states: “On les raflait chaque soir dans les hameaux perdus, à l’heure où ils reviennent des champs” (77). So, Salvayre has modified “On les raflait” to “des hommes sont raflés” and “ils reviennent” to “ils rentrent.” Many of her paraphrases involve similar light editing and rewording, and in so doing her approach puts these paraphrased passages in a potentially gray ethical zone. She is not summarizing his experiences, but cutting and pasting his words without clarifying the extent to which they belong to him.

Though Salvayre seems to have made few alterations in the content from Bernanos, as she has simply rearranged his material and minimally paraphrased it, she has nevertheless deconstructed his text through her choice of what to reproduce. Plate and Rose note that writing may be associated with “stability” and permanence, whereas the term “rewriting” more clearly invokes both continuity and change “through de-stability and the fluidity of circulation and reproduction” (623). By giving Bernanos such a prominent, albeit edited, voice within her text, she destabilizes the centrality and authority of (her own) authorship, stressing writing as a task especially engaged in incorporating divergent voices. Yet one could also question whether the slightly paraphrased passages border on plagiarism, particularly since the line between quotation and paraphrase is notoriously blurry, though the front matter of the novel includes a copyright notice attributing “toutes les citations des *Grands Cimetières sous la lune*” to “Le Castor Astral, 2008.” On the other hand, it is worth noting that in *Sept femmes*, when discussing how Bachmann borrowed words and phrases from other writers, especially Paul Celan, Salvayre rejects accusations against Bachmann of plagiarism. More broadly, she also challenges straightforward labels related to questions

of authorship, arguing for a more communal view of literature and literary creation. She portrays Bachmann's act as a means of constructing "une longue, une poignant, un inlassable conversation" with Celan (216-17).⁶⁴ This aspect to the construction of *Pas pleurer* invites comparisons to a truly conversational stylistic format, as the narrator brings her mother and Bernanos into dialogue with one another. In the remarks about Bachmann in *Sept femmes*, Salvayre elaborates on her view of authorship:

Ce qui importe . . . c'est moins l'individualité d'un auteur que cette communauté élective qui constitue sa bibliothèque.

Et que les textes jouent entre eux dans leur asymétrie.

Et qu'ainsi ils renaissent et se prolongent en d'autres.

Et qu'ils enfantent inépuisablement de nouvelles œuvres. (217)

Thus, Salvayre sees rewriting as a way to breathe fresh life into another work, to create a dialogue with it, and to participate in the creation of something new.

2.2 Mysterious Malraux

In a French novel about the Spanish Civil War, it would not be unreasonable to anticipate a reference to the French author most well-known for both his involvement in and his writing about the war. Indeed, Salvayre does reference Malraux and his mythic status in French letters and culture, while also ambiguously reframing him. However, rather than allude to Malraux's texts, Salvayre takes the iconic figure of Malraux—the writer, the adventurer, the collector, the revolutionary fighter in the Spanish Civil War, the member of the French resistance, the Minister of Culture—and transposes his image upon her own creation of an earnest, young French poet whom Montse meets in a café:

⁶⁴ With this perspective, Salvayre joins Lautréamont, who famously declared "Le plagiat est nécessaire" (*Poésies*, Vol. II, 6).

“Montse l’aima dès la première seconde, entièrement, et pour toujours” (147). The young man and Montse spend a single passionate night together before he leaves for the front. All Montse knows about him is his first name—André. Despite the brevity of their time together, their relationship has lasting consequences: “ Les jours passèrent, les règles ne venaient pas, et Montse dut admettre qu’elle était bel et bien embarazada de celui que ma sœur et moi appelons depuis l’enfance André Malraux, à défaut de connaître son nom véritable” (151). In *Pas pleurer* itself, the narrator and her mother do not suggest that “le Français,” as they call him, is in fact the celebrated author named André Malraux. Rather, the designation “André Malraux” is an intentionally playful name used by the daughters. The nickname appears to derive from the overlapping qualities between the two men: the first name André, literary ambition, French nationality, and involvement in the Spanish Civil War. The name has a lighthearted, comical dimension due to the unexpected (even uncanny) juxtaposition between the cultured (real) Malraux and the vulnerable young man with “une voix tremblée” (150) who inspires Montse’s devotion:

Montse rejoignit l’appartement qu’elle partageait avec Francisca dans une joie insensée, une joie presque insupportable, . . . une joie qu’elle aurait voulu crier et qui, littéralement, débordait de ses yeux, au point que lorsqu’elle entra dans la cuisine où s’affairait Francisca, celle-ci la regarda avec une expression médusée, et comme si elle soudainement changé de matière.

Qu’est-ce qui t’arrive?

Je suis amoureuse.

Depuis quand?

Depuis hier soir et pour toute la vie.

Tout de suite les grandes phrases!

C'est la saison des grandes phrases, répondit Montse, rayonnante. (150-51)

As we see in this passage, the young man instantly acquires mythic status in Montse's life. The sentiments she attributes to her 15-year-old self do not wane over time; rather, they are reinforced, since Montse recalls the relationship permanently through the lens of what is for her an intoxicating love. The romance functions as an embodied experience of the transformative summer ("la saison des grandes phrases") that Montse has spent in Barcelona.

But we may ask, why does Salvayre associate Malraux's name with Montse's lover, apart from the few obvious similarities between them? What does it mean in a larger sense, in relation to the themes of transmission and heritage in the novel? If Salvayre is the curator of stories, reframing the accounts of her mother and Bernanos, here she also mischievously works to reimagine Malraux's legacy. Malraux himself was known as a curator and collector, though his work in this domain is clouded by his arrest for stealing artifacts from a temple in Cambodia.⁶⁵ In an interesting turn, one could argue that Salvayre "steals" Malraux, stripping him of much of his historical, literary, and cultural identity, and uses him as an ornament for her text. Within this novel, the legacy of "le Français" is not his literary work nor his cultural contributions; instead, his legacy is genetic. His lasting influence in fact presents itself through a baby, one who radically changes the course of Montse's life; to wit, without the pregnancy,

⁶⁵ For details, see Raphaël Aubert's entry in the *Dictionnaire André Malraux* entitled "Cambodge: L'Affaire d'Angkor" (131-38).

Montse would not have entered a hasty marriage with her brother's archenemy Diego. Furthermore, the birth of Lunita signals a digression in Montse's original family line:

elle était toute au bonheur de voir son enfant grandir, laquelle se montrait si éveillée, si têtue, et si volontaire sous ses airs de douceur que Montse ne put s'empêcher de penser que la révolution de 36 avait eu un effet inespéré: celui de modifier l'ADN familial, car il ne subsistait trace dans le visage de Lunita de cet air de modestie transmis de génération en génération comme un trait dominant du génome et un appel à l'humiliation. (236-37)

While Montse attributes the change to "la révolution de 36" rather than to the actual DNA of the baby's father, in her mind the liberating experience of the summer and the whirlwind romance of 1936 are synonymous. The man himself is not what represents the most important element in this episode. What truly matters most are the emotions and experiences that Montse experienced, as well as the fact that the father is erased from them. In a similar manner, Salvayre has arguably expunged the actual Malraux from her text by avoiding any direct engagement with his writing about the Spanish Civil War. She is less interested in Malraux the man than in the question of heritage and transmission in a more universal sense. "Le Français" leaves a substantial genetic trace, as well as an indelible mark on a family's oral (and actual) history. And, given these developments, one might ask: how does a literary legacy survive? One response might be: only if the author's works are transmitted and retransmitted to subsequent generations, including by his or her "literary offspring." As an author, Salvayre co-opts Malraux as a literary father figure by inserting him into this fiction based on her own mother.

2.3 Mythologizing Courage: Intertextuality Beyond Bernanos and Malraux

There is no question that the novel is peppered as well with other, briefer, intertextual references, which prove to be particularly important. These seemingly fleeting allusions reinforce indeed the motif of artistic expression as a form of engagement. Like Bernanos and Malraux, a number of the authors to whom Salvayre alludes also have a history of political involvement and moral courage. For instance, the narrator evokes Charles Péguy's description of Bernard Lazare, an early defender of Dreyfus, to illustrate Montse's mental and emotional state several months into her reluctant marriage with Diego:

elle retrouva son air de bonté renseignée comme l'écrivait Péguy à propos de Lazare, c'est-à-dire non pas cette bonté des innocents et des simples, non pas la bonté des anges ni des saintes nitouches, mais la bonté désabusée, la bonté clairvoyante, la bonté qui sait la nuit des hommes et la surmonte, qui tente à tout le moins de la surmonter." (216)

This description of Montse lends to the character a particular persistence in the face of adversity, with a notably philosophical edge. The narrator also places some of Bernanos's political difficulties as a writer and public figure in comparison with challenges faced by André Gide. For instance, she observes that Bernanos's reports from Spain were censored in France "par les dominicains, accusés de propager l'idéologie communiste," and that, "Gide, qui avait pris d'emblée fait et cause pour la République espagnole, était au même moment accusé de trahison pour avoir dans *Retour de l'URSS* (publié en 36), critiqué le régime soviétique, tous les fanatismes décidément se ressemblent, et tous se valent" (214). With this connection established

between Bernanos and Gide, the narrator makes an important point about the problematic nature of all overly zealous political (or clerical) movements, which abuse their authority in order to suppress inconvenient facts. Furthermore, the incorporation of Gide—a canonical author, still considered as canonical today—underscores the historical breadth of *littérature engagée*.

In another instance, Salvayre also claims a literary kinship with the Russian poet Tsvetaeva who spent 14 years in exile in France, a status that recalls certain parallels with Salvayre's parents' situation as refugees in France, when she borrows Tsvetaeva's admonition in the face of sorrow and hardship, "pas pleurer," for her title, seeing in it the spirit of Montse.⁶⁶ In *Sept femmes*, Salvayre discusses this expression and her interpretation of it: "Pas d'esthétisation de la douleur chez Tsevtæeva, et rien de lacrymal. *Pas pleurer*, c'est l'injonction qu'elle se faisait à elle-même. La douleur qui touchait au plus intime de son être ne pouvait en aucun cas être feinte, ni servir d'ornement, encore moins être comptabilisée, ou regardée comme poétique rentable" (137-38). Moreover, the titular emphasis on facing hardship without tears corresponds to the limited role Salvayre gives to Diego, the character based on her father, in the text, since she explains in an interview that "My father was knocked down, broken irreparably by the war and exile. There was no place for him in [the novel]. Another book would have to be written for him, a book of despair." ("A Conversation"). Instead, in *Pas pleurer*, Salvayre turns to literary figures who do not allow themselves to be

⁶⁶ Salvayre confirms that the title is inspired by a quotation of Tsvetaeva in her 2014 interview with Grosjean: "Ce titre m'est venu alors que j'écrivais *Sept Femmes*. Dans un texte, Marina Tsvetaïeva se plaint. . . . Et tout à coup, elle s'arrête et elle dit: 'Pas pleurer.' J'ai trouvé que c'était une belle posture existentielle, littéraire, philosophique. J'ai donc écrit le livre puisque j'avais un titre" ("Lydie Salvayre: 'Je ne suis pas toute une'").

knocked down, but instead display courage and integrity in the face of adversity. By incorporating Bernanos, Malraux, Tsvetaeva, Péguy, and Gide into the novel, Salvayre positions herself as their literary descendant.

3. *Pas pleurer* in the Company of a (Novel's?) Ghost

Not only does Salvayre face writing after trauma and after other writers, she also writes after herself. With *Pas pleurer*, Salvayre arguably rewrites her 1997 novel, *La Compagnie des spectres*. Salvayre herself discusses the relationship between the two novels during the first of five interviews for the radio program *À Voix nue* in 2015, when she says, “J’ai pensé depuis longtemps à écrire ce livre. J’y ai pensé au moment où j’ai écrit *La Compagnie des spectres*. Mais je craignais que d’être trop près des événements d’Espagne—trop près de ma famille, trop près de moi—me fera aller vers le pathos, vers le dolorisme, vers ces choses que j’exècre vraiment” (“Les Livres”). In the fourth interview, she adds, “il me semblait que parler des années de la collaboration étaient au fond la même chose que de parler du francisme” (“La Colère”). *Pas pleurer* shares many core themes, such as memory, trauma, and heritage, with the prior novel, though it is concerned specifically with the Spanish Civil War rather than Vichy France. In *La Compagnie*, a *huissier*⁶⁷ arrives to take stock of the belongings of a mother, Rose Mélie (the name is a reference to Marie Redonnet’s 1987 tale of matrilineal

⁶⁷ I will retain the original French term of “huissier” to describe this character. The novel’s English translation, *The Company of Ghosts* (2006), by Christopher Woodall, renders this professional title as “process-server,” and the Collins French-English online dictionary offers “bailiff” as a direct translation, which seems unsatisfactory. Further, since the general American usage of “bailiff” does not readily correspond to this *huissier*’s actual job description, it may be more helpful to consider the *huissier* as a civil servant whose duties include, especially in the current context, debt collection. His role as a representative of the State increases Rose Mélie’s skepticism of his motives in surveying their belongings.

transmission, *Rose Mélie Rose*) and her teenage daughter, Louisiane. They are in debt to their landlord, and their possessions are being assessed as payment. Their cluttered apartment contains little of monetary value, but the objects—and the presence of the intruding official—spur an account of the enduring legacy of Vichy, particularly in light of the 1943 murder of Rose Mélie’s brother, Jean, when she was just a child.

At this point, it will prove useful to explore the parallels between the two novels in detail—but even their very existence provokes a range of larger questions, to which many may not ultimately have clear answers. Why did Salvayre return to certain concepts, such as the mother-daughter relationship and a brother’s murder, from *La Compagnie*, in *Pas pleurer*? By effectively rewriting *La Compagnie*, does *Pas pleurer* imply that the author previously failed to fully explore topics of family and state violence to her satisfaction? Is Salvayre going against herself or facing anxieties about the previous work, which had received considerable critical acclaim, including the *Prix Novembre* and *Lire* magazine’s prize for the *Livre de l’année*? Interestingly, Salvayre chooses to address dangerous moments in the history of France (that is, Vichy as explored in *La Compagnie*) before finally turning to the even more personal history relating to her parents’ experience in Spain. In a 2014 article for the *Le Journal de Dimanche*, Ludovic Perrin quotes Salvayre’s friend Annie Morvan (who is also an editor for Salvayre’s publisher, Seuil): “Jamais elle n’avait eu la force de plonger dans ses entrailles. Là, c’est une autre histoire. Pour la première fois, elle s’est servie de ses tripes pour dire l’intime . . .” (“Lydie Salvayre”). Accordingly, Morvan implies that Salvayre had avoided using her personal history too explicitly prior to *Pas pleurer*. The narrator in *Pas pleurer* makes a similar claim: “j’essaie de déchiffrer les raisons du

trouble que ces deux récits [de ma mère et de Bernanos] lèvent en moi, un trouble dont je crains qu'il ne m'entraîne là où je n'avais nullement l'intention d'aller" (17). Given the greater personal connection of the more recent novel to Salvayre's own family history, it seems that at least some of the topics that are duplicated in the two books may draw on especially personal preoccupations.⁶⁸

As is the case with many books drawing from autobiography, without precise knowledge of all the details surrounding the author's family, it is impossible to know with certainty where best to distinguish between invention and recollection. In any case, the books also foreground the ways in which the line between memory and imagination can be uncertain, such as when Louisiane observes that her mother's stories become more elaborate with each retelling:

la mémoire de ma mère, au lieu de s'épuiser, s'enrichit et enfante sans cesse de nouveaux souvenirs. De nouveaux détails apparaissent à chacune des versions de cette année 43 si prodigue en désastres, tant et si bien que j'ai le sentiment que cette histoire . . . n'est qu'un tissu de mensonges fondés sur quelques faits réels, une histoire qui n'existe pas, n'exista jamais, et à laquelle elle me somme de croire, une fable funèbre qu'elle parfait chaque jour, qu'elle embellit ou dramatise pour se faire valoir et donner à sa vie le sel, le sang, l'éclat qui lui

⁶⁸ These connections may hinge on a subconscious desire to compete with herself, through a sort of Bloomian "anxiety of influence" relative to her own texts, particularly since *La Compagnie* represented her novel with the most critical acclaim prior to *Pas pleurer*. In fact, she only lost the Goncourt for *La Compagnie* by a single vote. She may also have felt a need to revisit concepts with which she remained preoccupied—and such a preoccupation might stem from her own family history. Given that her mother's story inspired Montse's character in *Pas pleurer*, plot details from *La Compagnie* that repeat in *Pas pleurer* may actually be tied to a family history that was more indirectly explored in *La Compagnie*, and to which she felt the need to return in its original context: the Spanish Civil War. I lean toward seeing this repetition as Salvayre's attempt to purge herself of (or to confront?) her family history, but this conjecture cannot be confirmed without more information from the author herself or from others to whom she may have expressed her thoughts.

manquaient. Une telle supercherie vous paraît-il possible, monsieur l'huissier?

Dois-je donner crédit à une telle hypothèse? (*La Compagnie* 76-77)

As commonly happens in the mind of most humans, Rose Mélie's memories have become distorted or embellished over time, raising the question of the extent to which the changes are purely subconscious or perhaps also tinged by an intention to reframe previous experiences. The traumatic past has powerfully impacted the lives of the mother and daughter, but the details of that history have been blurred and reconstructed. The continual recounting of the past incorporates imagination and delusion—and what is, in the end, truly reliable? As we have seen, Montse poses a similar problem, with her failing memory contrasting with the exquisitely detailed account of her final years in Spain.

A reader familiar with *La Compagnie des spectres* may begin to anticipate certain plot developments and familiar motifs in *Pas pleurer*, as the links between the novels accumulate. In both texts, a father is absent and thus somewhat mysterious, and the books foreground matrilineal transmission of heritage. The lives of a mother and a daughter are affected into the present day by historical events related to fascistic governments (Franco's Spain and Pétain's France) in place during the mother's childhood. In both novels, historical traumas translate into intensely personal family tragedies when fascists murder a beloved brother in his youth (Jean in *La Compagnie* and José in *Pas pleurer*). Furthermore, madness and mental illness are present in both families, and the inclusion of these details belies a narrative choice reflecting the chaotic madness of history itself.

3.1 A Family Romance

In each novel, a father disappears without a trace. The teenage Montse became pregnant with Lidia's older sister Lupita after a spending the night with a young poet who came from France to fight on the side of the Republicans. Knowing no more than his first name, Montse has no way to contact him and returns to her parents in shame, leading to her hasty marriage with Diego—a Communist and the son of the local nobleman Don Jaime Burgos Obregón—to cover up the scandal. In *La Compagnie*, Rose Mélie also becomes pregnant after a brief relationship. In her case, this development occurs during a stay at a mental institution, and, speaking to Louisiane about how she met her father, she summarizes,

En salle de télé, je rencontrai ton père, un Espagnol, noir de peau et de cœur.

Une bande d'extraterrestres dotés du don d'ubiquité le poursuivaient, pour ainsi dire, de leurs assiduités, ourdissant de perverses machinations dont il était en même temps le victime et la victime. Il se confia. Nous nous aimâmes. Le lendemain, il m'appela d'un nom étrange. Il ne savait plus qui j'étais. Un mois après, il disparut. (172)

In Rose Mélie's case, unlike Montse's, she was already approaching middle age when she met this man. However, both she and Montse know nothing about what happened to their lovers. André leaves to fight, and the Spaniard simply leaves. Even Rose Mélie's own father is occulted from the family history she recounts to her daughter; she only mentions briefly that “mon père est parti pour la guerre” (84), but she never says more about memories of him from before the war, nor does she clarify his fate. Thus, in both texts, the biological fathers frequently play nearly insignificant roles in the lives of their

lovers, wives and children. The absence of the fathers bears a resemblance to Freud's theory of the "family romance" in which the child, becoming aware of the flaws in his or her own parents, imagines "being a step-child or an adopted child" ("Family Romances" 298). The child then precedes to "replac[e] them with others, who, as a rule, are of higher social standing" (299). The process may lead to the child's rejection of the father in particular, once the child realizes that the identity of the mother is, by the very nature of human sexuality, biologically certain. By doubting his or her parentage, a child can replace it with a fairy-tale-like narrative, such as the possibility of a royal lineage, though Freud also notes that the invented parent may not actually be a rejection of the real parent, but

an expression of the child's longing for the happy, vanished days when his father seemed to him the noblest and strongest of men and his mother the dearest and loveliest of women. He is turning away from the father whom he knows to-day to the father in whom he believed in the earlier years of his childhood; and his phantasy is no more than the expression of a regret that those happy days have gone. (300)

In *La Compagnie* and *Pas pleurer*, the missing biological fathers facilitate their daughters' fascination with other male figures as potential substitutes, a point I will return to momentarily. First I will focus on the dynamics between daughters and their mothers due to their greater visibility within the texts.

Both *Pas pleurer* and *La Compagnie* embody novels that emphasize the motif of matrilineal heritage. This topic is apparent already in the foregrounding of the mother-daughter relationship, and it is reinforced by Salvayre's clear allusion, with Rose

Mélie's name, to Marie Redonnet's *Rose Mélie Rose* (1987), a novel about the transmission of stories throughout three generations of women. In *Pas pleurer* and *La Compagnie*, the daughters also experience role reversals with their mothers. Due to her mother's mental instability, the teenage Louisiane declares, "ma mère est ma fille . . . ma mère est ma fille plus vieille que moi de quarante ans, et je dois l'élever" (43). Louisiane associates her mother's psychological state specifically with her mother's inescapable memories: ". . . sa mémoire de terreur la suit comme une chienne et lui lèche les mollets, [elle est] une mère que je dois surveiller telle une enfant . . . une mère que je nourris, que je punis pour le principe et la vengeance . . ." (42). Due to her mother's mental illness, Louisiane has taken on the role of the adult, reminding her mother to bathe and to take her medication. In *Pas pleurer*, the middle-aged daughter has also become her elderly mother's caretaker:

ma mère . . . passe à présent ses journées assise dans son fauteuil d'invalidé situé près de la fenêtre d'où elle regarde les enfants jouer dans la cour de l'école car c'est l'un des derniers bonheurs qui lui restent, ma mère à qui je donne à manger comme à une enfant, que je lave et j'habille comme une enfant, que je promène comme une enfant car elle ne peut marcher qu'accrochée à mon bras. . . (30)

Despite the difference in age between the mothers and daughters in each novel, the demand on the daughters to take on maternal responsibilities is the similar—though Lidia handles the transition with considerably more grace than the teenage Louisiane. The latter daughter resents her responsibilities—and her mother—as demonstrated when Louisiane complains about monitoring her mother's daily routines: "maman, tes gouttes, cinquante, et trois comprimés, tu dis qu'ils t'assomment? pas assez! maman, ne

sors pas dans cet attirail, tu es grotesque, maman, ne fais pas ci, ne fais pas ça” (173). Instead, the rage of Louisiane finds a strong analogue in the young version of Monste who resents the social limitations of her class and sex.

In each novel, the mother also has a beloved brother who is killed in his youth by fascists. Rose Mélie’s brother Jean dies at the hands of the thuggish Jadre twins on 13 March 1943 (*Compagnie* 22). The Jadres seek to prove themselves as loyal to the *milice* and avenge the mockery they had endured as children (71). In *Pas pleurer*, a skirmish between some *phalangistes* and Diego’s contingent of Communists protecting the town leads to the death of Montse’s brother José: “José fut touché en pleine poitrine par un coup de feu dont l’origine ne put jamais être établie” (258). Some in the town speculate that Montse’s husband may have killed her brother, though they fought on the same side of the war:

L’attaque de décembre déchaîna [les] fictions [des villageois]. Et celles-ci se conjuguant à leur désir invétéré de trouver des coupables à toutes choses, ils en vinrent à désigner Diego, unanimement et sans preuve aucune, comme le meurtrier de José.

Cette calomnie, qui rendit Montse folle de douleur, plongea Diego dans un désespoir d’autant plus profond que lui-même à présent s’accusait, après s’en être d’abord défendu, d’avoir conduit, par son imprévoyance, des jeunes hommes à la mort. (261)

In fact, Diego had a long history of jealousy of José, a feeling not without homoerotic undertones (“une jalousie . . . amoureuse peut-être,” 161) which also leads to an indirect suspicion that his wife harbors incestuous love for her brother: “Il [Diego] ne pouvait se

défaire du sentiment que José était plus aimable que lui, plus séduisant . . . qu'il possédait cette chose si mystérieuse et féminine qui s'appelle le charme, et que son épouse Montse ne pouvait faire la comparaison, à supposer qu'elle la fit, qu'en sa défaveur" (244). Nevertheless, while Montse admired her brother and his idealism,⁶⁹ it is Rose Mélie's unbending admiration of her brother that verges truly on becoming an unhealthy obsession. She goes so far as to refer to her brother as "le père géographique" of her daughter, since the name Louisiane came from Jean's fascination with travel (*La Compagnie* 120). Louisiane also observes that Rose Mélie is "une mère qui se dit veuve de son frère mort de plus de cinquante ans" (42). Rose Mélie's disturbing depiction of Jean as a figurative father and husband underscores the degree to which the family is turned inward on itself. The women are trapped by its history, unable to open their circle to outsiders because their attention is entirely consumed by ghosts—most especially that of Jean. Hence, as we have already seen, Louisiane's biological father is, in practical and metaphorical terms, excluded completely from her actual genealogy.

Moreover, the daughters in each novel, Louisiane and Lidia, have underdeveloped personal lives. In Louisiane's case, she finds herself unable to disentangle herself from her family, a frustration represented by her frequent laments about her lack of a boyfriend. Lidia, on the other hand, reveals little about her personal life. Only her interactions with her mother and her reading of Bernanos are recorded in the text. She becomes thus primarily a conduit for her mother's story, reframing it with connections to the broader historical context of the 1930s in Spain and with allusions to

⁶⁹ According to Montse, "José est un cœur pur. . . . Il s'est dédié à son rêve avec toute sa jeunesse et toute sa candeur, et il s'est lancé comme un cheval fou dans un plan qui ne voulait rien d'autre qu'un monde plus beau" (79).

its resonance with the growing nationalism of the book's present, set in 2011. Lidia's role as storyteller contrasts significantly with Lousiane's. Louisiane, simultaneously embarrassed about her mother and their apartment while also wanting to be perceived as surpassing her squalid surroundings, recounts her mother's story with alternating sheepishness and condescension, in an effort to distance herself from her mother in front of the *huissier*. Lidia, on the other hand, admires Monste and decides actively to become a medium for amplifying her voice and her story.

3.2 Surrogate Fathers: *Patrie* and *patrimoine*

If the fathers in *Pas pleurer* and *La Compagnie des spectres* are generally distant or absent, in both novels *patrimoine* replaces *père*. Within this framework, literary heritage takes on a paternal role; Rose Mélie frequently cites aphorisms from male Greek and Roman thinkers for even the most mundane situations, such as when she declares: “Les grandes choses, a écrit Épicure, sont celles qui ne s’achètent pas. C’est une phrase, ma chérie, que je me répète chaque fois que j’ouvre le frigo” (40). Similarly, Lidia's joking about Malraux as Lunita's father inscribes the family within a specific literary lineage. Of course, one of the exceptions to the series of absent fathers in the two novels is the narrator Lidia's biological father, Diego, who is in fact present during her childhood. However, Lidia's birth and upbringing in France are not central subjects of the novel—the text focuses instead on Montse's memories of Spain, since the majority of Montse's memories of her life in France have been effectively erased, and, with them, the recollections of her long marriage to Lidia's father have also disappeared. When Lidia asks if Montse sometimes thinks of her husband, who died five years prior, Montse replies, “Non jamais. D’ailleurs je me demande comment j’ai

pu, on dit pu?, comment j'ai pu passer avec lui tant de jours, tant de nuits, tant de cènes, tant d'anniversaires, tant de Noël's, tant de soirées télé et tant de tout, année derrière année, sans en conserver le moindre raccord" (120). In point of fact, Montse resents her relationship with Diego to such an extent that one could argue that the mysterious young man becomes a symbolic father for Lidia as well. Returning to Freud's notion of family romance, this "Malraux," already idealized and romanticized by Montse, would possess a much greater allure than Diego, whose inability to integrate into a new life in France would have been apparent to the daughters. The young Frenchman, on the other hand, offers the promise of a French heritage and a literary pedigree. Tellingly, neither "Malraux" nor Diego tell their own stories; instead, accounts about their actions are filtered through Montse, a technique that appears to heighten the contrast between them given her emotionally colored recollections.

Bernanos, on the contrary, holds a relatively strong narrative voice among the male characters in *Pas pleurer*, though his account is also edited according to the narrator's taste and interests. Nevertheless, the narrator accords a great deal of respect to his perspective on the events he witnessed. Bernanos's prominent role as a symbolic interlocutor with Montse in *Pas pleurer* also contrasts with the silent *huissier* in *La Compagnie*. Bernanos becomes a forefather for the Lidia in *Pas pleurer*; although she does not describe him in those terms, she discovers an unexpected sympathy with him for his moral courage. Bernanos does not hold the foundational importance of a childhood influence or a long-admired literary giant, but Lidia adopts him in a way when she incorporates him into her family narrative, especially since it is his testimony,

rather than her father's, that provides the counterpoint to Montse's. Bernanos, along with his book, thus becomes a surrogate parent.

In *La Compagnie*, Salvayre illustrates literary kinship on a more direct level—books lounge quite literally in the maternal bed: “Maman se coucha au milieu des livres qui encombraient les draps et les papiers sur lesquels elle écrivait sa vie” (25).

Alongside the books, Rose Mélie keeps her notes for her personal mission to track down high-ranking Vichy officials, including “le porte-document qui enfermait le réquisitoire Bousquet, le dossier Darnand et ses écrits sur le maréchal Putain, comme elle l'appelait” (25). Indeed, Rose Mélie's hunt for high-profile collaborators, as absurd as it might seem, mirrors real events. For example, when René Bousquet was assassinated in 1993 before his trial, the assassin accomplished precisely what Rose Mélie had planned to carry out. Her excessive, all-consuming—even maddening—fixation upon her self-imposed mission stems largely from the disruption in her life, and in her family's dynamics, in the wake of Jean's murder. She has not sought a husband or partner, apart from her brief affair with Louise's father; she is emotionally bound to her brother's murder and dedicates herself to two primary activities: reading literature and plotting revenge. It is worth noting that caring for her daughter does not count among her priorities, and that Louise passed in and out of foster care throughout her childhood. Indeed, Rose Mélie's mother, Jeanne, grieves over her son Jean's death to the point that she distances herself from her own daughter, as Rose Mélie explains to Louisiane,

j'aurais donné n'importe quoi, ma chérie, pour qu'elle [Jeanne] me touche, pour qu'elle me serre dans les bras et m'étreigne contre son ventre en m'appelant

mon bébé, mon amour, ma beauté, ma colombe, comme avant, ou qu'elle me frappe, qu'elle m'injurie, mais, bon Dieu, qu'elle me fasse exister.

Je vivais, ma chérie, comme une ombre, ne sachant que faire de l'ombre que j'étais, ne sachant où aller puisqu'il m'était interdit de pénétrer dans l'ancienne chambre que nous partagions, Jean et moi, et qui était devenue un sombre mausolée. (138-39)

The room shared with Jean becomes an idealized space from a romanticized era situated before the familial rupture, depicted as a sort of Eden from which the young Rose Mélie was evicted, possibly reinforcing her personal mythology of her idealized brother-husband. Cut off from human affection and touch, then, she found solace in texts, but her attempt to cultivate an intellectual refuge—as well as an eventual mission of revenge—deeply impacted her future ability to connect with her own daughter. The trauma that cooled the relationship between Rose Mélie and her mother therefore contributes to the disjointed relationship in place between Rose Mélie and Louisiane.

Another figure competing to step in as a father is Pétain. The local curate, to whom Jeanne refuses to send Rose Mélie for catechesis, describes Pétain as “Père de la Patrie,” even framing a version of the *Pater Noster* in which Pétain is substituted for God: “*Monsieur le Maréchal, Père de la Patrie, Donnez-nous aujourd’hui notre pain quotidien, Et ne nous laissez pas succomber aux tentations de la faim, Mais délivrez-nous plutôt de ce mal comme vous nous avez délivrés de la guerre, La première par la Victoire, cette fois-ci par l’armistice, Ainsi soit-il*” (110; italics in original). Not surprisingly, Jeanne refuses to attend the town’s nationalistic celebration of *la fête des mères*, having recently scandalized the town when, as an act of outraged protest, she

performs a Nazi salute and yells “Heil Putain” in a shop selling *pétainiste* propaganda (109). Hence, the embodiment of the *patrie* is replaced with a textual *patrimoine*, and Rose Mélie’s literary fascination populates the house (including the most intimate spaces: the bed and the bathroom) with books. Comically, Rose Mélie even speaks in the *passé simple* and Louisiane, who enjoys employing a rather esoteric vocabulary in an attempt to appear sophisticated, says of herself, “Je parlais comme un livre” (31). She even goes so far as to say, “. . . il m’arrive de penser, monsieur, *que le monde où je vis n’est qu’une tricherie, une fable* sinistre créée de toutes pièces par le cerveau malade de maman et qu’il peut à tout instant s’anéantir et chavirer dans le vide. Et moi avec” (82; italics mine). Of course, Louisiane is, in fact, a character in a novel, so her world is a fiction, “une tricherie.” These metatextual nods from the author to the reader, aimed to highlight the constructed nature of the fictional text, point to the literary genesis of the characters—their textual parentage and heritage.

3.3 The Madness of History

Another similarity between *La Compagnie* and *Pas pleurer* is the presence of mental illness in the family. This “madness,” however, is perhaps more plausibly understood to embody the madness of history itself, as manifested in the behavior of several individual characters. Rose Mélie spends time in a mental hospital after she disrupts a live television program to denounce France’s past: “L’heure de la justice a sonné, s’écria-t-elle” (166). When her daughter tells the *huissier* that her mother was taken to “l’hôpital Sainte-Anne,” Rose Mélie corrects her:

Au camp Sainte-Anne. . . . Sous prétexte que je n’étais pas responsable de mes actes, des policiers vinrent me cueillir sur le trottoir comme une, tiens, le

féminin de l'assassin n'existe pas, je le réclame, comme une assassin. . . . On me fit par la force une piqûre de Drolepan qui me priva soudainement de ma capacité de penser. Le lendemain, les miliciens en blouse blanche me transportèrent par la force au camp d'internement Sainte-Anne. (169)

For Rose Mélie, the hospital embodies an internment camp because she thinks that she still lives during the time of the Occupation and Vichy—or at least that the conditions of those governments remain in place. As Louisiane explains, “Ma mère habite synchroniquement le passé et le présent. . . . Son esprit intemporel opère d’incessants navettes entre l’année 1943 et la nôtre, sans nul égard pour la chronique officielle. . .” (29) and “Ma mère . . . ne distingue pas le passé du présent, le jour de la nuit, ni les vivants des morts. C’est un cas d’aliénation mentale très atypique et qui résiste aux traitements psychiatriques les plus carabinés ainsi qu’à l’eau de Lourdes, nous avons tout essayé” (80). Is Rose Mélie actually mentally ill? Or is she partially right, in the sense that the past is not truly resolved—a case of “un passé qui ne passe pas,” in the words of French historian Henri Rousso?⁷⁰

Indeed, Rose Mélie does appear to suffer from paranoia, as evidenced by her repeated question to the *huissier*, which implies that she believes he has been sent by Vichy authorities: “C’est Darnand qui t’envoie?” (11). Moreover, her fears may not be as unreasonable as they first appear: men responsible for murder still walk in the streets of Paris, as in the case of Bousquet prior to his assassination. Rose Mélie’s Spanish lover’s hallucinations about aliens could also be connected to his “alien status” as an immigrant or refugee from Franco’s Spain. Indeed, in *Pas pleurer*, Lidia explains that

⁷⁰ Henri Rousso, *Un Passé qui ne passe pas*. Fayard, 1994.

her father suffered psychologically after immigrating to France, and he too stayed in mental institutions due to his “*délire de persécution*” (265). His struggles, like those of Rose Mélie, extend back to a traumatic childhood. Further, his mother Paloma, Don Jaime’s girlfriend during his time at university, also experienced paranoid delusions: “Paloma, qui se croyait dotée d’un sixième sens, passait la presque totalité de ses jours à épier les bruits venant du logement voisin, des bruits codés, disait-elle en tressaillant, des appels chargés d’allusions inquiétants, des signaux indéchiffrables que la voisine envoyait pour entrer secrètement en contact avec don Jaime” (229-30). After Diego’s birth in 1917, Paloma’s situation worsened: “il est vrai que l’esprit humain peut devenir un endroit de tourments bien plus cruels encore que ceux de l’enfer. Se croyant victime d’un maléfice et en danger de mort, elle déboula un soir chez son ennemie, armée d’une paire de ciseaux avec lesquels elle menaça de lui crever les yeux” (231). The police intervened and “elle fut internée dans un hôpital psychiatrique” (231). From the age of two to seven (at which point Don Jaime married Doña Sol), Diego lives with foster parents who conceal from him details about his real parents and reprimand him for his sadness. In front of “sa tía et son tío,” “il apprit à serrer les dents, à taire ses douleurs, à se durcir contre leur lame” (233). Diego’s emotional isolation resembles aspects of Rose Mélie’s childhood after her mother becomes more distant once Jean is killed:

C’est lorsqu’il [Diego] était couché, seul, sans défense, dans le noir, livré aux ombres, sans un mot d’affection, sans un geste d’affection, sans un sourire d’affection, que le désespoir l’inondait et prenait la forme des choses terrifiantes. Alors il appelait au secours, il sanglotait, il ignorait de quoi il avait peur, mais il mourait de peur, et cette peur sans bords décuplait ses imaginations

effroyables. (Il devait garder toute sa vie ce sentiment d'insécurité terrible qui finirait, dans les dernières années de sa vie, par tout recouvrir, et le conduire lui aussi à l'hôpital psychiatrique.) (233)

Montse also notes that Diego had an obsession with cleanliness and order, perhaps as a means of exercising control, in contrast with his confused disorientation as a small child: "Et toutes ses manies de Diego, son démon de l'ordre, ses fureurs hygiéniques, et ses longues stations au W.-C., venait renforcer la retenue, la réserve, la réticence (tous ces mots me semblent un peu exagérés, me dit ma mère) qu'elle éprouvait à son endroit" (210). Diego's exile in France, which left him untethered and insecure, appears to have dredged up childhood fears, and amplified them into a state of paranoia.

Rose Mélie's designation of the *hôpital Sainte-Anne* as a camp clearly evokes the prison and deportation camps of the Second World War. It also resonates with France's larger history of refugee camps. In *La Compagnie*, a Spanish refugee who had formerly spent time in an internment camp lives with the family: "Filomena, Filo pour les intimes, était née à Fatarella . . . en Espagne. Elle avait quitté à pied son village le 6 janvier 1939 et atterri chez nous après un mois d'internement dans le camp d'Argelès-sur-Mer" (139). Filo thereby offers a preview of Montse's story, since Montse spent time in the same camp after crossing the border on 23 February 1939: "[Montse] resta quinze jours dans le camp de concentration d'Argelès-sur-Mer dans les conditions que l'on sait, puis fut dirigée vers le camp d'internement de Mauzac où elle retrouva Diego, mon père" (*Pas pleurer* 277). It is also worth noting that Filo, while generally only a peripheral character in the overarching narrative, served in the important role as a comforting maternal figure for Rose Mélie when her mother became distant after Jean's

murder: “Filo me caressait de sa voix tender, *Anda hija, no sufras, mañana será otro día*. Elle avait presque toujours les mots qui font du bien” (139, italics in original). Furthermore, Filo’s reassuring words were in Spanish, so even in *La Compagnie* the Spanish language is portrayed affectionately. Filo and Montse also share some personal characteristics, such as their propensity for vulgar language. For example, Rose Mélie observes that her mother learned to swear from Filo, who considered it as an art form: “Filo répétait souvent que les Français, à l’exception de ta grand-mère et moi, n’avaient pas assez de délicatesse en leur cœur, pas assez de musique en leur âme pour apprécier les jurons à leur juste valeur. C’est triste, disait-elle, et leurs arts s’en ressentent” (*Compagnie* 140). In this, the reader can detect a relish for obscenity quite similar to Salvayre’s depiction of Montse’s view of language. Regarding specific terms, we even see that, in writing *Pas pleurer*, Salvayre has Montse employ Rose Mélie’s preferred epithet for Pétain: “maréchal Putain dans les premières années de mon tourisme en France excuse l’humour (allusion aux pérégrinations des années 39-40 au cours desquelles ma mère et Lunita voguèrent de camp de concentration en camp d’internement . . .)” (176). Remarkably, in both *La Compagnie* and *Pas pleurer*, these two historical moments, the Spanish Civil War and Vichy France, overlap in the lives of those who participated in the *Retirada*, or the flight from fascist Spain. Furthermore, both Vichy France and the Spanish Civil War evoke instances of internal conflict and resistance, as well as stark divisions within communities and families.

The devastating violence of these two historical moments leads to ongoing family trauma. When history itself has seemingly gone mad—how can individuals remain sane? In *Pas pleurer*, Diego’s father, Don Jaime, “demeura le seul dans le

village à ne pas se prononcer pour un camp, et le seul à faire le constat, non sans un serrement de cœur, de la folie des hommes et la folie de son siècle” (220). His reticence to commit to one of the political movements stems from his insight into the human capacity for prejudice and violence. As illustrated by Diego, the communist, and José, the anarchist, even those who despised Franco expended much of their energy in opposing one another’s ideologies. Blinded by a zealous commitment to ideological purity, Diego was inadequately prepared to cooperate when nationalist forces reached their own town, leading to José’s tragic death. Perhaps this is why Lidia—and Salvayre herself—incorporates Bernanos in the text as a counterexample of someone who places humanity above politics. For all of Don Jaime’s noble sentiments, he does not take action, whereas Bernanos uses his voice, and his pen, to transmit to an international audience what he has witnessed and demand justice for the murdered and the oppressed.

4. (Re)Covering Memorials and Texts

In *Les Grands Cimetières*, Bernanos repeats the phrase “Je ne me lasse pas de répéter . . .” Salvayre’s *Pas pleurer* similarly does not tire of repeating. Interestingly, the author stakes little claim to original content; her work is in organizing elements and creating a meaningful form of communication among them. Repetition recycles texts, transmitting them to new readers. Repetition also memorializes others, whether the mother who inspired Montse or the dead mourned by Bernanos. But Salvayre recognizes that written words are not immortal—their illusion of stability deceives. Only by repeating, by breathing life into words again, can people, events, and texts be preserved in cultural memory. The structural and aesthetic choice to reconstruct the

stories of others points to the writer as reader, editor, curator, listener, and, ultimately, as medium, that is, as one who channels and voices the words of others.

It is interesting note that a solo project by Jochen Gerz⁷¹ provides an apt comparison with Salvayre's act of refurbishing or salvaging the stories of others. With his *Monument vivant de Biron* (1996; see fig. 8)⁷² in Aquitaine, Gerz transformed a neglected *monument aux morts* dedicated to the memory of the village's losses from the First and Second World Wars into an interactive space for contemporary reflection. In an interview, Gerz explains why he modified the existing monument to draw attention to it—particularly since this approach differs significantly from his disappearing monument in Hamburg or his invisible memorial in Saarbrücken (in which the names of destroyed Jewish cemeteries were inscribed on cobblestones, and the cobblestones were then placed with the inscriptions toward the ground):

À Hamburg et Sarrebruck, je devais sacrifier la visibilité de l'œuvre pour que les gens la réclament. C'est la première fois qu'ils disent: on ne voit rien, alors que pendant toute leur vie, ils ont dit: on n'a rien vu. C'était donc nécessaire. La visibilité du Monument Vivant vient de la visibilité de la notion de tradition en France: ce n'est rien qu'un petit dérangement, le "ceci n'est pas une pipe" de Magritte. (Gerz et al.)

In other words, by taking something ordinary and adjusting its context, as well as by calling into question its very meaning and symbolism, Gerz provokes passersby to take

⁷¹ In a previous chapter, I discussed Esther Shalev-Gerz and Jochen Gerz's 1986 Monument against Fascism, War and Violence—and for Peace and Human Rights.

⁷² For additional images, see the page on Gerz's personal website dedicated to the monument: www.jochengerz.eu/works/le-monument-vivant-de-biron.



Figure 8. Claude Dupuis, Photograph of Le Monument vivant de Biron, n.d.

another look at the *monument aux morts* and to grapple with its possible interpretations.

The monument's plaque explains the process used to create the refurbished monument:

Cette œuvre est constituée de l'ancien monument aux morts restauré en pierre de Dordogne, et de plaques émaillées reproduisant les réponses des habitants de Biron à une même question secrète posée par l'artiste. "Le monument vivant de Biron," inauguré le 13 juillet 1996 avec 127 plaques, est en perpétuelle création puisque les réponses des futurs habitants lui seront ajoutées. Ainsi l'ancien monument aux morts, comme la mémoire même, ne cessera de changer.

The villagers' responses are recorded anonymously on red plates that are affixed to the stone monument. These responses ponder past wars, family memories, and which causes are (or are not) worth risking one's life. Strikingly, the remarks (for sample texts, see fig. 9) rarely include concepts such as nation or glory, often associated with official monuments. As Audrey Rousseau notes in "La Volonté politique de commémoration des morts appartient aux vivants," "La reproduction de ces réponses soumet ces interprétations du passé au jugement populaire; un traitement qui rompt avec la facture classique des monuments aux morts (p. ex. généralement constituée d'une formule rituelle annexée à la liste des noms des personnes disparues)." She also observes that the format invites an emotional response from the reader—"La lecture des plaques convie le lecteur à ressentir l'émotion de ces histoires qui lui sont livrées en première personne ('je,' 'nous')"—and that "les contradictions qui émergent en rapport aux interprétations des événements historiques, rendent visibles la cohabitation des souffrances intimes et sociales en relation avec le passage du temps." The villagers' comments help to illustrate how Gerz transforms a monument to the dead into a more complex monument negotiating the relationship between the beliefs of the living and the losses in the past.

Rather than using the words of the dead (as from preserved letters or other documents), Gerz has the living ruminate on questions about death, life, and the worth of more general human values. Along with an actual, physical monument (or countermonument), a book, too, especially one like Salvayre's with its interwoven accounts, keeps memories alive, as Salvayre stated was among her purposes in writing.

Notre parcours sur terre n'est pas grand. Je ne vois pas l'intérêt de donner sa vie, sinon pour un enfant. Car il doit vivre de toute façon après moi. Je baigne dans la culture de la mémoire, ce qui me fait pressentir une guerre, imaginer une guerre civile. Le passé, c'est le passé; il rend amer. Quand la grand-mère me parle, cela m'intéresse: Ici, quand ils ont fait sauter les carrefours, dit-elle, on a utilisé les meubles pour combler les trous. Le piano aussi. Chaque fois qu'ils font des travaux maintenant, je ne peux pas m'empêcher de chercher ces choses des yeux. Et vous savez, moi aussi.

Plaque number 3

Aujourd'hui, on est bien avec les Allemands. C'est la suite des temps, c'est la fatalité. Il ne faut pas oublier la guerre, encore moins la faire. Il faut garder le souvenir pour les jeunes. On n'en parle pas assez à l'école. J'ai vu tant de malheureux, j'ai tellement pleuré. Comment la jeunesse peut-elle ignorer cela? Mon père est parti avec deux francs en poche et nous, on a pleuré. Il faudrait leur expliquer qu'on a vécu deux guerres horribles. À présent, les choses se passent bien. Moi aussi, j'ai étudié l'histoire de la guerre de Cent ans; je me demande si on peut vivre grand-chose sans étudier le passé.

Plaque number 10.

Si j'avais à défendre une patrie, un parti politique, je prendrais la fuite; mais pour quelqu'un que je connais, je prendrais des risques. À quoi a servi la Première Guerre, sinon à faire mourir les hommes? À quoi a servi la guerre d'Algérie, pour tout abandonner ensuite? Les morts sont morts, ils ne revivront pas quelle que soit l'issue de la guerre. Les stupidités à supprimer sont encore nombreuses: les curés, les communistes, les Croix de Feu—le tout c'est d'y croire. La vie collective, cela ne fait pas de mal. C'est ce qu'on trouve justement ici.

Plaque number 63.

Je suis d'accord pour garder le Monument aux morts. C'est important de ne pas tirer un trait sur le passé et je suis contente que cela sensibilise les jeunes. La façon dont on abordait ces problèmes dans ma famille a laissé des traces. On a peu parlé de ce passé. Il faut en parler. Des gens se sont trouvés pris au piège. Pour sauver leur famille, ils ont eu des contacts avec l'ennemi. Il ne faut pas jeter la pierre. La vie est plus simple aujourd'hui.

Plaque number 74.

Figure 9. Examples of the villagers' statements recorded on the plaques affixed to the *Monument vivant de Biron* (Gerz, Réponses).

While an exact comparison with Salvayre is imperfect—after all, her text represents a finished product about a different conflict—there is a parallel between how Gerz resituates an old, neglected monument within new, vital conversations and how Salvayre brings Bernanos’s text into dialogue with her mother’s lively account and speculations about the present moment. Like the *Monument vivant*, Salvayre records numerous voices by incorporating characters with a variety of viewpoints. James E. Young observes that in contexts where many points of view are represented, finding unified and unifying narratives about the past often proves to be a particularly challenging endeavor for those who develop monuments:

. . . in an increasingly democratic age . . . monolithic meaning and national narratives are as difficult to pin down as they may be nostalgically longed for. The result has been a shift away from the notion of a national “collective memory” to what I would call a nation’s “collected memory.” Here, we recognize that we never really shared each other’s actual memory of past or even recent events, but that in sharing common spaces in which we collect our disparate and competing memories, we find common (perhaps even a national) understanding of widely disparate experiences and our very reasons for recalling them. (“Memorial’s Arc” 330)

Young’s concept of “collected memory” seems especially appropriate when applied to textual memorials. Who collects the memories? Who has access to the “common spaces” where the memories might be shared? In the case of the *Monument vivant*, the memorial shifted from a “monolithic” and “collective” meaning to a series of quite

literally “collected” memories arranged in a central space. With *Pas pleurer*, Salvayre herself takes on the task of collecting (or curating) accounts of the past.

As focused as *Pas pleurer* indeed aims to be around the words of Montse and Bernanos, in this text, materiality is not generally central to the mechanism of memory. Living in a small space, barely described apart from the window from which she can observe children playing in the courtyard, Montse’s recollections can be her only ornaments. Displaced from her homeland for decades after her flight on foot as a young refugee and mother, she does not have a wealth of mementos from past times. Nevertheless, allusions are made to a few salvaged items: Montse’s wedding dress, some pictures of José. These objects must have been sent over or retrieved at some point after she settled in France, since on the day of her departure Montse had only “Lunita dans un landau, et une petite valise noire où elle avait rangé deux draps et des vêtements pour sa fille” (275). At least one item remains with Montse from that treacherous journey on foot. It could be easy to overlook, but because of its presence in a novel sparsely populated by material objects, it is very much worth noting. It is “une mince couverture marron” in which Montse bundled herself and the infant Lunita during the cold nights of the *Retirada* (276). Montse reminds Lidia: “cette couverture, tu la connais, c’est la couverture du repassage” (276). Why has this object, very banal and domestic, become one that has endured for decades? Because, in truth, the blanket has served, unfortunately inadequately, (literally and metaphorically) for warmth, comfort, and protection. Montse carried it through great hardship, and now its continued use demonstrates a frugal sensibility, repurposing what is old rather than disposing of it. The *couverture* hardly seems to have been preserved for sentimental reasons, given that

its current placement as an ironing board cover leaves it susceptible to further damage. It has been in that spot since Lidia's own childhood, but, as with her parents' own experiences, it has only represented a thing, one among many others, in the background. An unassuming object, it was easy to ignore, and Lidia had long chosen to avoid inquiring about her parents' history. Now, the past is nearly out of the reach of memory, given the age of Montse. It would be as easy to overlook as a *couverture de repassage*. Thus, with the passage of time, trauma becomes domesticated.

Similarly, not unlike the *couverture* that acquired a second life as a *couverture de repassage* (and as the *Monument aux morts* in Biron that assumed renewed significance as the *Monument vivant*), Montse's recollections find a new existence in the esthetic guise of a book. To an extent, one could argue that the *couverture de repassage* also serves as a metaphor for storytelling. What does an author do but return (*re-passer*) to histories, themes, characters, and beyond? Specifically, intertextual references could be understood as a sort of *re-passage*, particularly implying a "coming after." In Salvayre's case, she has repurposed major motifs from *La Compagnie* in *Pas pleurer*, just as Montse has quietly recycled the blanket. Salvayre also returned to Bernanos's text, which had fallen into relative obscurity. As with the *couverture*, *Les Grands Cimitières sous la lune* held little interest in 2011 when the story takes place. Yet, through *Pas pleurer*, Bernanos continues to witness to those who take the time to read (or reread it). Salvayre has covered (or recovered) others' stories, which may remind us of the potentially slippery nature of originality in the general notion of authorship. Truly, texts, themes, and concepts are endlessly recycled, though pieced together in new ways. In the end, the book and the *couverture* remain as physical

witnesses—as countermonuments, even—if only they are read or if an effort is made for them to be deciphered.

Chapter 3. Testifying for the Dead in Zahia Rahmani's *Moze*: Duty and Justice

Zahia Rahmani's *Moze*, published in 2003, announces the titular character's suicide in the prologue: "À 8 h 30, on l'a vu qui saluait le monument aux victimes de la Grande Guerre. À 9 h 15, deux chasseurs le trouvaient noyé flottant dans l'étang communal" (20). The book is narrated by Moze's (unnamed) daughter, who views his suicide not as random act, nor solely the end result of depression or despair. His own military service as a *harki*, or a *supplétif de l'armée française* has no sign of a memorial in his town, and—at the time of Moze's suicide in 1991—the *harkis* were not generally commemorated in a nation with conflicted emotions about the Algerian War. Susan Ireland observes that this character's act, taking place after the ceremony for "the 'unidentified' soldier of other wars, ironically highlight[s] the difference between the sense in which that soldier and Moze are 'unknown'" ("Algerian War" 210). Rahmani's text counterbalances that memorial and the ceremony, carving out a *lieu de mémoire* for Moze and other *harkis*. Refusing to excuse his participation in such horrific activities as torture during the war, the narrator of the text rejects his unjust treatment by the nation which made him fight and which failed to recognize him as an equal son. She also grapples with the conflict between her emotions about Moze and her feeling of duty as an individual who has inherited his story: "Je dois plaider pour quelqu'un contre quoi tout ce que je pense, tout ce que je suis, tout ce que ma raison est, s'oppose. Je dois pourtant plaider non pas pour le réhabiliter ou le disculper mais pour dire ce que signifier le devoir de témoignage dont je suis moi le légataire" (131). While the narrator disapproves of her father's role in the war, she also expresses an obligation to confront

what she perceives as a historical amnesia in French society. Accordingly, this book serves as a testimony to a difficult period in French history, as well as an exploration of the multiform nature of familial, national, and literary heritages. The text's themes also influence its form; Rahmani's portrayal of Moze as both an accused traitor and a victim creates a tension that plays out in the fragmented style of the book.

The memorialization of *harkis*, particularly when attempted at the national level, poses specific challenges, since an acknowledgement of their military service to France may not easily coincide for many with a space for dissatisfaction with and a critique of the nation. Literary works, such as Zahia Rahmani's *Moze*, challenge the narrative in the public sphere in manner more dynamic and ambiguous than a patriotic and monolithic memorial. In this chapter, I will discuss how *Moze* functions as a complex counter memorial response to the paucity of public discussions and memorials of *harkis* as of the time of its publication in 2003. First, in this introductory section, I will address the history of how the *harkis* have been commemorated to date in France. Then I will analyze how *Moze*'s form relates to its subject matter; Rahmani arranges her text with an emphasis on stylistic theatrical elements that underscore the tragic nature of Moze's experience and of the history of the *harkis* more broadly. Next, I will complete a close textual analysis of the voices in the text and the connection between speech and justice. I will then examine how several memorials and tombs—both real and proposed—are represented within the text itself, with an emphasis on how Rahmani portrays physical memorials as insufficient, as they must be accompanied by open discussion which confronts the nation's complex and shameful history. Finally, I will conclude with an examination of the historical and intertextual references incorporated into the narrative,

which connect this textual memorial to the tragedies of colonialism and to the representation of the exploitation of enslaved and indigenous peoples in American history and literature.

To contextualize the memorial work Rahmani accomplishes with *Moze*, it is useful to situate the text within the history of aftermath and public memory of the Algerian War. Broadly speaking, the long-term societal silence about *les événements* in North Africa bears an important resemblance to the difficulty in confronting the full implications of Vichy France in the postwar period. Indeed, Ireland, Géraldine Enjelvin, and Nada Korac-Kakabadse point to an “Algeria Syndrome” paralleling France’s “Vichy Syndrome” (Ireland, “Algerian War” 203; Enjelvin and Korac-Kakabadse, “France” 154). Further, given the ambiguous memory of the Algerian War, Mohand Hamoumou describes the *harkis* as a “trou de mémoire franco-algérien” (25). As Sung Choi documents, after the Évian Accords in 1962, nearly 50,000 *harkis* escaped to France (27) and, in an article for *La Croix*, Antoine Fouchet estimates that their population in the Hexagon as of 2014 numbered around 500,000. Many of those who remained in Algeria faced torture and even death at the hands of the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN), and Hamoumou estimates the number of dead at over 100,000 (44), although other sources claim vastly different numbers, due to the difficulty of confirming data since records are incomplete or unavailable.⁷³ Regarded as traitors by the Algerians, *harkis* also faced discrimination in France, where they were also seen as untrustworthy, considered as having turned upon their brothers to fight the French. The French government further complicated their otherness by designating them “Français

⁷³ For example, in *Moze*, Rahmani criticizes the French government’s lack of transparency, since military archives that catalogue the identity of *harki* fighters remain largely sealed (91).

musulmans rapatriés,” distinguishing them from the repatriated *pieds noirs*, individuals of European ancestry who had lived in Algeria and returned to France after the war, as well as by assigning the *harkis* to live in ill-equipped camps upon their arrival in the country (Hammoumou 25). This position situated on the fringes of French society created a dynamic in which the *harkis* were effectively doubly punished by banishment from their place of birth—as noted in *Moze*, the *harkis* had to renounce permanently the right to return to Algeria as a condition of their residence in France, (119)—and by ostracism in metropolitan France.

The *harkis*, however, have become more visible in French society over the past two decades, due to an increase in French political gestures of recognition and a wave of cultural productions by the children of *harkis*. For instance, on the literary front, Rahmani, in addition to writing *Moze*, has also published “*Musulman*” *roman* (2005), a novel exploring the complicated intersection between French national identity and Muslim heritage, and *France, récit d’une enfance* (2006), an account of her childhood experiences in a *harki* family. Other notable texts addressing *harki* heritage include Dalila Kerchouche’s *Mon père, ce harki* (2003), Hadjila Kemoum’s *Mohand le harki* (2003), and Fatima Benasci-Lancou’s *Fille de harki* (2005). In the political realm, Jacques Chirac held a *journée nationale en hommage aux harkis* on September 25, 2001. This decision subsequently engendered an annual day of remembrance. In his speech, Chirac described the *harkis* as individuals who fought for France and its ideals (1). Enjelvin likens this strategy to that of de Gaulle in the sense that, as with de Gaulle who perpetuated the myth of the majority participation in the French Resistance, Chirac, in his speech, imagines all *harkis* as loyal Frenchmen willing to die for the European

nation (Enjelvin 68; Chirac). In *Moze*, Rahmani discusses the pressures men faced to join the French forces, which undermine Chirac's patriotic discourse: "L'armée ayant peu de Français, peu de catholiques et peu de volontaires sur le territoire, elle a cantonné les villageois hors de chez eux, dans des terrains vagues, derrière des barbelés avec ration de semoule limitée. . . . Un peu de palu, un peu de typhus et, dans le noir, la nuit, des pères et des maris affamés. Et on dit de ça que c'était une armée de volontaires!" (37-38). Hamoumou and Choi support this perspective, noting that, while the *harkis* fought for France in the sense of fighting *with* the French during the war, their actions do not mean that they necessarily fought *for* either continued French colonial rule or French republican values (Hamoumou 33; Choi 26). Choi enumerates additional extenuating circumstances that contributed to the participation of *harkis* in the war: some joined to protect their families from the FLN, others needed a stable income or came from families with a tradition of serving in the French military in the World Wars (Choi 26). Thus, while the *harkis* finally received more formal acknowledgement from Chirac, he coopts them for a narrative that bolsters his own national pride.

While some memorials do exist to commemorate the *harkis*, they—not unlike the speech by Chirac—focus primarily on the *harkis*' military service, rather than engaging directly or indirectly, with the problematic legacy of French treatment of the *harkis*. Within this context, we see that as much, if not more, than mere days of remembrance, monuments have the dangerous potential to compress the meaning of an event, though if done well they clearly evoke a past event while allowing for openness of interpretation. Plaques mark the vast majority of sites dedicated to the *harkis*, and,

accordingly, on the date of Chirac's 2001 speech, a plaque in their honor was placed on the wall of the Hôtel des Invalides. Twenty-seven plaques were affixed at sites, such as the camps, important to *harki* history in France (Chirac). In 2002 a memorial for the Algerian War was inaugurated on the Quai Branly in Paris (see fig. 10). It consists of three narrow vertical columns with electronic screens which list the names of those who died "for France," including soldiers and auxiliary forces such as the *harkis* ("Le Mémorial national"). Each screen displays a different color—blue, white, and red—to denote the colors of the French flag. A plaque added in 2006 near the Quai Branly monument includes a dedication to civilians who died unjustly in Algeria in massacres during the war and after the Évian Accords (see fig. 11).



Figure 10. Soklelne, Photograph of the *Mémorial national de la guerre d'Algérie et des combats du Maroc et de la Tunisie*, March 31, 2011.

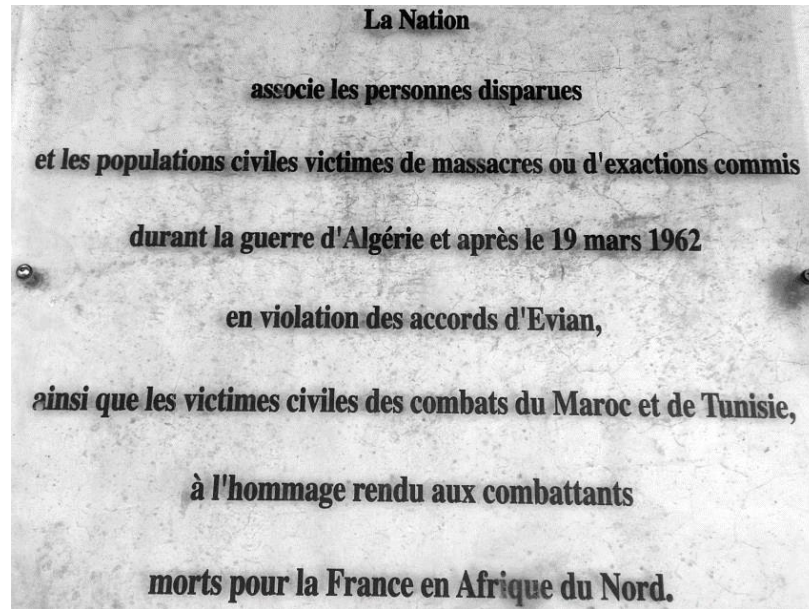


Figure 11. Marc Ducrot, Photograph of a plaque next to the *Mémorial national de la guerre d'Algérie et des combats du Maroc et de la Tunisie*, n.d.

Other small monuments, some more informal, exist at some of the former camps, such as the stele by the *harki* cemetery at the former Bourg-Lastic camp bearing the inscription “Ils ont bien servi la France” (though Kerchouche, in *Mon père, ce harki*, suggests it should more accurately state, “La France s’est bien servie d’eux” [53] because France pressured a number of *harkis* to join, as also noted by Choi above). The largest memorial specifically for the *harkis* appears to be the *Mémorial national des harkis* (fig. 12) located in the commune of Jouques in Provence and inaugurated in 2012, the year marking the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war.



Figure 12. Jean-Joseph Juland, photograph of the *Mémorial national des harkis* in Jouques (Bouches-du-Rhône), September 25, 2013.

According to a local online news article by Anne-Aurélien Morrel, the memorial in Jouques is the first and only national memorial for the *harkis* (“Harkis”). However, although the word “national” appears on the memorial, little else about it or its inauguration indicates its role as a French national site of memory for the *harki* population. Located in the commune of Jouques at the site of the former Logis d’Anne camp, the monument received no coverage from popular national news sources such as *Le Monde*, *L’Express*, or *Le Figaro*, though local papers documented its inauguration and websites for *harki* associations throughout France mentioned its construction, generally with approval. Most politicians in attendance hailed from the region, such as the *sous-préfet de l’arrondissement d’Aix-en-Provence*, Yves Lucchesi, who spoke briefly about the support of the local communities and of *harki* associations. Slimane Djera, a member of a *harki* association from Aix, also described the isolation and

physical deprivation endured by the *harki* community. In an interview after the event, Maryse Joissains-Masini, the mayor of Aix, denied any political interest on her part and denounced other political figures who may have attended with a political agenda (“dessein”), noting that the history of neglecting the *harkis* extends from the right to the left, from de Gaulle to Mitterrand (Morrel). However, the overall tone and style of the ceremony placed *harkis* within a narrative of patriotism; the ceremony included two renditions of *La Marseillaise* and dozens of French flags (Morrel).

The memorial, located in a rural setting in close proximity to the site of the Logis d’Anne camp, stands five meters tall and is flat, nearly two-dimensional and consists of three layers. The first layer is a reflective black marble arch into which is cut—as described by local journalist J. Darras—a “porte de style oriental” above which is carved “MEMORIAL NATIONAL DES HARKIS” (“Un Mémorial”). The doorway does not open up to the natural landscape behind it. Instead, another black marble slab covers the doorway’s exit. The final layer of the piece resembles abstract golden-colored wings or horns curving around the marble arch, with two tips pointing upward. Two large blocks are situated in front of the main structure, and each block is capped with sloping slabs of black granite inscribed with gilded text. The text on the left reads “HOMMAGE AUX HARKIS ET À LEURS FAMILLES” and includes a list of important years and certain details about the Logis d’Anne site: 1963 marked the arrival of the *harkis* and their families, the site closed in 1994, and the memorial was inaugurated on September 29, 2012 “pour que la mémoire [of these *harkis*] ne soit pas oubliée” (“Inauguration”). Although the heading on this slab, and the general title of the monument, give the impression that the memorial is for all *harkis*, the specifics offered

below the heading focus on information relevant uniquely to those who lived at the Logis d'Anne location. While some inaugural speakers, such as Djera, discussed the challenges faced by the *harki* community, no allusions to them appear in the memorial's text, and the inscription also lacks the necessary context to situate the Logis d'Anne camp within a larger narrative of *harki* mistreatment in France. Thus the word "national" in the title of the memorial implies larger ambitions which are not fulfilled. The text on the first slab concludes with the following words, highlighting that the *Mémorial national des harkis* was the product of a local effort: "Le Collectif des Associations de la Communauté des Harkis d'Aix et du Pays d'Aix" ("Inauguration"). It is notable that the association is for Harkis in the region of Aix, but not necessarily those who had previously lived in the Logis d'Anne, or elsewhere.

The inscription on the block on the right contains text which, quite problematically, removes the focus from the *harkis* altogether. Occupying the same amount of physical space and on the same plane as the first informational slab, the one on the right reads: "Mémorial inauguré par Madame Maryse JOISSAINS-MASINI, Maire d'Aix-en-Provence et Président de la communauté du Pays d'Aix, le 29 septembre 2012," followed by "Réalisation de la commune d'Aix-en-Provence sur un terrain cédé par le Conseil Général des Bouches du Rhône avec l'accord de la commune de Jouques" ("Inauguration"). Obviously, giving such prominence to those who created the memorial potentially undercuts those to whom the memorial is dedicated. Furthermore, the regional sources named once again call into question the "national" designation.

Intentionally or not, the smooth black marble of this monument recalls Maya Lin's 1982 Vietnam memorial in Washington D.C. due to its mirror-like quality. However, with the blocked doorway, the memorial gives the impression of a trapped, tomb-like space. Perhaps this design is appropriate: many *harkis* were essentially imprisoned in the French camps and many more were massacred in Algeria. Within this vein, the architect Arounthone Phimphavong gave an interview in which he stated that he hoped the memorial would transmit the memory of those *harkis* who passed away and are resting in the hereafter ("Inauguration"). Thus, from his perspective, the monument is a sort of tomb, though it is unclear whether in his conception of the monument it was meant to honor those who died in Algeria, or those who died since arriving in France, or both. Whatever the architect's intentions may have been regarding the exact symbolism of the tomb-like appearance (no specifics as to motivation have been published), the memorial's textual components center around those *harkis* who were at the Logis d'Anne, not those many others who faced unjust deaths. Indeed, one *harki* woman who had lived in the Logis d'Anne expressed her displeasure with the monument, saying that neither it nor the *harki* organizations involved with its creation represents all of the *harkis* of the region, claiming that the monument is a way to "enterrer" their history. Visibly upset, she told a journalist: "On nous a pas consulté, on nous a rien dit. Ça s'est fait avec la politique . . . parce que les élections arrivent. Je ne me reconnais pas dans le mémorial et pour moi, c'est qu'on nous a enterrés complètement. On nous a enterrés. Nos parents" ("Inauguration"). She seems to imply here that by creating this memorial, those with a voice were the ones to close a door on memory, finalizing it without the consent of others and excluding them once again. An

elderly *harki* man on the verge of tears gave a reporter his reaction to the inauguration of the memorial: “Je me sentais comme un cadavre dans un . . . trou, parce que . . . à quoi ça sert? Tous mes frères, tous ils sont crévés, il y n’a pas d’originaux ici, il n’y en a pas. C’est les gens pour profiter des harkis, c’est tout” (“Inauguration”). For him, the monument represents yet another effort to shape the *harkis* into something they are not. As Hamoumou notes in his article, “Un Trou de mémoire,” the *harkis* and their different associations are too numerous and heterogeneous in their goals to become a unified political force (41). Reactions to the monument in Jouques reflect this reality.

In his essay in Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning’s *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, James E. Young notes that the “motives for . . . memory are never pure” and that monuments for traumatic events such as the Holocaust serve a variety of purposes, functioning as sites of guilt, tourism, nationalism, and more (“Texture” 357). As he describes it, memorials do not necessarily fulfill the purpose originally intended, and often take on new meanings based on their reception by the community or even by a single individual. Since the *harki* memories center largely around the notion of trauma, the idea of a “countermonument” would seem appropriate for a memorial to individuals in these situations and their losses. However, the Jouques monument has an undeniably tomb-like grandeur. The tone of patriotic mourning at the inauguration solidified its complex relationship with glorification of sacrifice and the state, rather than contributing to a nuanced monument that could acknowledge the French responsibility for the *harkis*’ deep suffering.

1. Fractured Lives, Fractured Texts

In the introduction to this dissertation, I suggested that each author in this study confronts a family heritage and then constructs (in fact, actually curates) a literary response to that heritage that reinterprets both the family's past and the literary landscape from antiquity to today. With this thought in mind, it is appropriate to note that in the preface to *Moze*, the narrator, as the daughter of a *harki*, examines her inherited sense of guilt: "La faute de Moze, je veux dire qu'elle est ma chair et mon habit. J'ai vécu le monde d'ici en cette houle et cette enveloppe. Seule elle m'a amenée là. Et ce pays [la France] qui ne me voulait pas m'a prise contraindre" (24). The life she leads in France—rather than in the place of her birth—is a direct result of her father's involvement in the war. This heritage, an attribute that by definition is beyond her control as with every author, has determined her life's trajectory. With this text, however, the narrator places herself in a position of power.⁷⁴ She determines what to recount and how to recount it. By speaking, she purges herself of a noxious narrative, one that has been echoed continually back to her by French society: "On dit que tous les harkis et leur descendants sont des lâches, des traîtres et des pleureurs. Toutes les insultes, tous les mépris, sont autorisés à leur sujet" (56-57).⁷⁵ She also uses her writing

⁷⁴ As an author, she, like other authors, takes on a position of authority; both "authority" and "author" derive from the Latin word *auctoritas*.

⁷⁵ The narrator takes note of incidents in which the politicians André Santini and Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres used "harki" as an insult; she does not provide a date, and I have not been able to locate any news articles tracing the events she describes. In the text, the narrator characterizes Santini as explaining his intent to refrain from voting in the presidential election with the rhetorical question: "Serons-nous les harkis de la droite française?" (57), which she interprets thusly: "Moi j'entends que ce bonhomme . . . ne trahira pas son clan. Mais il dit par la même occasion que le harki est un traître, que mon père est un fumier, un fumier qui a trahi sa communauté en soutenant l'État français. C'est peut-être vrai, mais lui, il n'a surtout pas le droit de le dire" (57). Additional examples of public figures using *harki* as an insult suggesting treachery or false loyalty born of convenience, can be found in several more recent French sources. In 2010 the *secrétaire d'Etat aux Transports*, Dominique Bussereau, used the term disparagingly in an interview when referring to the supporters of Ségolène Royal ("Des Harkis demandent").

to reframe the image of her father; Moze never overcame his ambivalent shame of being both victim and perpetrator, but the daughter decides that, through her writing, she can both rise above and redirect her father's shame: "Par l'écriture, je sais que je l'expose et le réduis. Par l'écriture je me défais de lui et vous [à la France] le remets. Mais je rappelle, étant sa fille, que je suis aussi ce qui est venu par lui et qui le continue. Un legs. Une exécution testamentaire ouverte par son salut aux morts" (24). She steps into her heritage as a choice, on her own terms, to create her own multifaceted countermonument to a transnational tragedy.

1.1 Points of Departure

Though Moze has already died at the time when the text opens, the narrator expresses a still unfulfilled need to rid herself of him, as his conflictual legacy continues to haunt her: "Ce regard insoutenable, cette figure extrême de la culpabilité, je veux m'en défaire. Je ne veux portant pas l'innocenter. Qu'en est-il de cette faute? Celle que je porte, qui n'est pas mienne et que je ne peux pas pardonner? Comment sortir seule d'une culpabilité endossée? Cette vie donnée au berceau" (23). Born in Algeria in the final days of the war while her father was imprisoned, the narrator lived there until he escaped from prison five years later at the advice of his sixteen-year-old son, who knew that the family could seek refuge with the Red Cross. The narrator's comments about the burden of her father's legacy recall *The Generation of Postmemory*, in which Marianne Hirsch discusses how postmemory involves having one's "own life stories displaced, even evacuated, by our ancestors" (5). In the narrator's case, her displacement also extends to the physical plane since she was literally uprooted from the home and extended family she knew in order to be transported to an unknown and—

with some exceptions⁷⁶—unwelcoming France. In fact, the circumstances of her father's evasion further ensnare the narrator within Moze's narrative of guilt and betrayal; as she explains, "Il a persuadé ses geôliers de le laisser me voir, moi qui était née alors qu'il était en captivité, moi qui était malade et qu'il n'avait jamais vue" (*Moze* 43). Indeed, the father figure later blames his family indirectly for the difficulty of their circumstances and unhappiness in France, as if they needed to repay him: "Il disait qu'il s'était évadé pour nous. Il était amer. Il voulait qu'on le remercie" (64). The father's complaint implies perhaps that in his state of disgrace he still belonged in the very prison from which he escaped.

The moment of the Moze's escape offers a microcosmic overview of key themes that resonate throughout the text, particularly the centrality of the relationship between the father and his daughter, the duties owed to family, and the potential conflict between family and nation. In this very gesture to save his family at the behest of his son⁷⁷—an attempt to display loyalty to his immediate family—Moze repeats his betrayal of the Algerians (albeit also his captors) by mixing fact and fiction in order to win their trust: "Il leur a dit sa fidélité algérienne, il leur a dit son impasse, sa famille nombreuse, ses cinq ans d'enfermement, cette France qui ne le voulait pas. . . . Il leur a présenté les

⁷⁶ I will return to this subject later in the chapter. The family was kindly greeted by neighbors in their first apartment building.

⁷⁷ It is worth noting that this son, the eldest of the family, corresponds to the brother to whom Rahmani dedicates her text ("à la mémoire de mon frère Mokrane," 7). The narrator describes this brother's death in *Moze*; the deaths of Moze and Mokrane, then, recall the deaths of Antigone's two brothers (though Moze also shares similarities with Oedipus). Mokrane had remained in Algeria when the rest of the family fled, and when he came to visit several years later, he and his friends died in a car crash before he was reunited with his family. The narrator also implicates her brother and his four friends in the conflict between family and national loyalty: "Ils venaient tous d'Algérie, pays qu'ils avaient trahi pour faire partir leurs pères. Pour les sauver. . . . Ils sont morts ensemble" (139). Thus, by helping their *harki* fathers escape to France, these young men had betrayed Algeria in a sense; their loyalty to their fathers also mirrors Moze's loyalty to his own father that led him to fight against the Algerians who killed his father. The five young men's demise also echoes the execution of five brothers in which Moze is complicit when he wrongfully believes that the men murdered his father.

certificats médicaux” (45-46). If he must recreate his betrayal in his escape from the prison, it is the act of pleading that he will repeat indefinitely once he arrives in France—a country that he depicts accurately to the Algerians as not wanting him. Humiliated, he must beg for reinstatement of his citizenship, and he writes to multiple government and military officials to “réclame[r]” his due (53).⁷⁸ As with his plea to his Algerian captors, in these acts of pleading in France, he must present certificates and other documents to support his case. His daughter, in turn, uses her narrative, also replete with reproduced memos and letters, to plead dutifully for a more accurate public memory of the *harkis*, all while denouncing what she considers as the poor and immoral choices of both the country of France and the character of her father.

The moral ambiguity and unspoken violence of the father’s wartime involvement reverberate throughout the narrator’s childhood, first in circumstances that recreate Moze’s former isolation and imprisonment, and later in instances of physical attacks. The seclusion begins when the narrator finds herself with a father she does not know (since she had never met him before he escaped from prison) when she arrives with her family in the camp de Saint-Maurice-l’Ardoise, an institution enclosed by barbed wire and surveilled by military personnel (41). The prison-like imagery continues even after the family relocates from the camp to an apartment in Beauvais⁷⁹ in Oise since Moze keeps the family cloistered indoors: “Il verrouillait la porte et les volets avant de partir. . . . tout nous faisait peur. . . . Nous ne possédions rien.

⁷⁸ The narrator even says, “Il les noyait de plaintes,” which again echoes Moze’s mode of death (52).

⁷⁹ Their relatively short stay in the camp contrasts with the fate of many *harkis*, some of whom remained in the camps for years. For instance, as Keith Moser notes in the introduction to *A Practical Guide to Harki Literature*, a number of the *harki* camps were in use until the 1970s (xii). The narrator attributes her father’s ability to find a job to some French friends who assisted him (50). For an account of the type of prolonged camp life experienced by many *harki* families, see Kerchouche’s *Mon père, ce harki*.

Strictelement rien” (50). When he sees his wife and children making friends with neighbors in their apartment building, despite his attempts at maintaining a state of isolation, Moze abruptly transplants the family to a rural village, “un lieu qui nous était étranger. Un village où déjà notre histoire avait fait fermer toutes les portes” (69). The repercussions of Moze’s *harki* identity take a physical turn when and local children begin throwing stones at the narrator and encouraging their dogs to attack her (69-70). When her uncle Ali, another *harki*, had a disconcerting mental breakdown, his family hospitalized him, and Ali died—or, rather, was killed by cruel and excessive “treatments”—while in custody.⁸⁰ These accumulated experiences of trauma, which trace their origin to the crimes of the paternal generation, punctuate the narrator’s life and shape the fragmented nature of the text itself.

Accordingly, Rahmani employs a hybridized stylistic approach with *Moze*, blending genres and eschewing more conventional and straightforward narrative structures. As with Modiano’s *Dora Bruder*, *Moze* lacks a subtitle. This absence is all the more noteworthy considering that the other texts in Rahmani’s informal trilogy have titles⁸¹ that reference their textual category: “*Musulman*” *roman* and *France, récit d’une enfance*. Critics, including Aline Bergé-Joonekindt, Crystel Pinçonat, Michel Lantelme, Évelyne Ledoux-Beaugrand, and Anne Martine Parent tend to refer to *Moze* as a “récit,” though Ledoux-Beaugrand and Parent use the term interchangeably with “roman” in their 2016 article “Telle Antigone, relever le père harki” (55). While

⁸⁰ The text includes an excerpt from an unconvincing autopsy report that denies the abuse suspected by the family: “marques de coagulation et présence de morphine n’ayant pas causé la mort. Mort d’un arrêt cardiaque. Affaire classée” (34).

⁸¹ Rahmani incorporates the generic information (the words “roman” and “récit”) within the titles themselves, rather than as separate subtitles.

referring to *Moze* as a novel seems problematic since Rahmani avoids printing that label on the published text, and the term “novel” may obscure the ambiguous genre of this text that incorporates autobiographical, theatrical, and poetic elements. Nevertheless, even Rahmani herself refers to her texts as “mes trois . . . romans” in a 2006 interview (“Zahia Rahmani”). Thus, though *Moze* lacks a clarifying subtitle, her remark underscores that *Moze* also has a relationship with creative fiction, though it is also related to her own family history.

With Modiano’s *Dora Bruder* in Chapter 1, I felt it necessary to stress that the author was not identical to the narrator, since a number of academic critics have in fact interpreted the narrator as a representation of Modiano himself. Yet extra-textual details, such as Modiano’s exchange with Serge Klarsfeld, confirm that, although Modiano’s narrator often resembles Modiano himself, the author takes an autofictional approach that transforms the narrator into a more detective-like figure for literary purposes, rather than using the narrator to give the exact account of how he, the author, actually uncovered facts about Dora. In the case of Rahmani, since she is less well-known and (at least for now) less studied than Modiano, little information about her personal background is available that would allow one to examine how she maintains or alters aspects of her family story in *Moze*. However, given the innovative stylistic nature of *Moze*, particularly the surreal and theatrical elements that I will address later in this chapter, Rahmani’s text already has a stronger, if still partially ambiguous, relationship to fiction than Modiano’s highly realistic text. To me, then, locating the exact border between fiction, autofiction, memoir, and autobiography is less essential in the context of examining *Moze* and it is less important for the overall interpretation of

the text, given that *Dora Bruder* appeared to make specific claims to veracity with its painstakingly researched—and verifiable—details reported about the historically documented individual named Dora Bruder. With *Moze*, however, I feel that it is sufficient to acknowledge that personal family memories inspire aspects of the text, and that the author draws upon these memories to address much broader issues of national history, as well as universal themes related to the motifs of inheritance, betrayal, and shame, particularly since the characters transform into archetypal figures—a topic I shall return to shortly.

In fact, the question of genre extends beyond the discussion of fiction and autobiography because other aspects of the genre become increasingly indeterminate upon examination of the text itself. Structured within five main sections—each marked with a roman numeral—the text appears to be composed of five “acts,” reminiscent of a classical tragedy. Four out of the five “acts” consist nearly exclusively of dialogue, further underscoring the suggested connection to the theatrical stage. Moreover, the dramatic action of each section progresses so as to correspond to the traditional functions of the five acts: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution (see table 2 below for my summary and categorizations of each “act” and the paratexts the author includes). Nevertheless, while the text may contain many theatrical elements, it also incorporates blank spaces, fragments of poetry, and reproductions of official documents. On several occasions, the content even ventures into the surreal;⁸² for example, in the prologue, the narrator describes her bizarre, rather Kafkaesque, metamorphosis after learning of her father’s death:

⁸² I will address this important aspect of Rahmani’s work in more detail later in this chapter.

J'étais soudainement devenue une mouche collée à la vitre de la lucarne. J'étais un insecte. Une petite chose.

Mes pattes s'accrochaient vainement, je n'entendais plus rien, tout était sourd, le monde s'était réduit. (16)

The surreal and other stylistic variations invite comparisons to countermonumental aesthetics in the sense that they disrupt an illusion of permanence or solidity. Moreover, the aesthetic choice to examine the story of a single, relatively unknown individual rather than the history of an entire, communal group also corresponds to what Stevens et al. call an “anti-monumental strategy” (961). The hybridized style and the provocative content (which accuses both Moze and the French nation of heinous wrongdoing) also “unsettle” (961) the reader, in contrast to the stable, monolithic form and message of a traditional monument. As Stevens et al. observe, countermonumental works may “invite a close . . . encounter,” and may disorient the viewer, demanding a reaction and participation (961). The narrative style of *Moze* certainly creates emotional intimacy, while it also evokes oral speech and seems to

Section	Summary	Characters	Style
[Paratext: Dedication]	Dedication to the author's deceased elder brother.		
[Paratext: Quotation]	A quotation from Elias Canetti.		
[Paratext: Poems]	Two brief poems about remembering.		Poetry.
[Paratext: "Tu es mort un lundi..."]	The narrator recalls Moze's death on a Monday and the arrival of his body at home on Thursday. She describes her transformation into a fly on the window. Setting: the narrator's parents' home in a village in Oise.	The narrator.	First-person narration which transitions from realistic to surreal.
Prologue: 11 novembre	Declaration of Moze's suicide and the narrator's sense of inherited guilt and duty. She writes both to purge herself of his influence and to continue his legacy.	The narrator.	First-person narration; poetic passages (pp. 21-22) written in fragmented style.
I. La Mort: Entretien sur Moze	Exposition: Discussion of the circumstances of Moze's death and of its historical motivations. Setting: The family home in Oise.	The narrator, her mother, one of the narrator's sisters, and a police inspector.	Dialogue with sparse first-person narration, as well as abrupt insertion of copies of government documents related to Moze or the <i>harkis</i> more generally.
II. La Sépulture: Les filles de Moze retournent dans le pays de leur père	Rising Action: Two of Moze's daughters attempt to arrange his burial in Algeria.	The narrator and one of her sisters.	Two paragraphs set the scene. The rest of the chapter consists of unmarked dialogue between the two sisters.
III. La Justice: La fille de Moze est reçue par la Commission nationale de réparation	Climax: The narrator demands justice from the <i>Commission</i> ; dissatisfied, she speaks in their stead to declare the guilt of the French nation.	The narrator and the members of the commission.	Dialogue with occasional first-person narration.
IV. La Femme de Moze: Ou comment la mère et ses histoires . . .	Falling action: The story of Moze's wife and her revelation of his crime, interspersed with excerpts of the daughter's journal chronicling her dreams—or, rather, nightmares.	The narrator, her mother.	More traditional prose, punctuated by surreal fantasies recorded in diary form.
V. Moze parle: La voix de Moze glisse en sa fille	Resolution: The narrator and the deceased Moze speak. Setting: Moze's gravesite in Oise.	The narrator, Moze.	Poetry; surreal dialogue.
Épilogue: Moze le magicien	Two villagers who knew Moze discuss the strange case of the plum tree growing out of a buried beef carcass at his family's home in Oise.	Two villagers: Jean-Marie and Denis.	A paragraph sets the scene, followed by dialogue a surreal event.

Table 2. An analysis of the structure and style of *Moze*.

demand to be read aloud (appropriately, the French artist Sapho has adapted *Moze* to the stage as a one-woman dramatic recitation).⁸³ The orality of the text also serves as an antidote to Moze's persistent silence about his experiences in the war and his treatment thereafter. The combination of theatrical, poetic, and surreal elements reinforces the idea that Rahmani is curating aesthetically a collection of styles to express her ability to portray the representation of past events, while also highlighting the way in which war and trauma have long-term disruptive consequences.

1.2 “*Moze se meurt*”: Historical Theatrics

Though the text initially may come across as free-handed and collage-like, even disjointed, particularly given the brief poems and vignettes which precede the preface, as well as the occasional insertion of official documents, the organization of the main portion of the *Moze* gestures, as I have suggested, toward the structure of a traditional five-act play. Furthermore, as I will examine in more detail below, the text also displays a clear relationship with Sophocles's three Theban plays, though none of the plays are named within the text itself. The vast majority of the text consists of dialogue well suited to reading aloud to appreciate the full effect of the author's stylistic cadence and rich literary voice. The orality of the text, with its theatrical structure and its long passages of dialogue incorporating multiple interlocutors, contributes to what Ireland describes as “the reconciliation [that] will be the result of a collective endeavor in which every voice is heard” (“Algerian War” 212). Since form and content are so closely bound in *Moze*, it is appropriate at this point to examine how the experiences of Moze

⁸³ An excerpt of Sapho's reading is available online (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJgTv_FhCyk).

and the narrator bear resemblance to those of the classical figures of Oedipus and Antigone.

As with Oedipus, Moze once held a position of authority and prestige during his time as a village *maire* in the Algerian *département*. Moze's father's murder seals his tragic fate, much like with the death of Oedipus's father (though the murders take place at different points in each narrative; Oedipus kills his father before becoming king, but Moze's father dies while Moze is already in a position of authority). As the narrator explains, Moze's father "avait été tué de plusieurs balles dans le ventre pour avoir servi des denrées alimentaires à des soldats français" (48). Moze thus does not commit the crime against his father himself; however, it remains a family affair on a symbolic level because, throughout the text, the narrator uses the term "frères" to refer to the indigenous inhabitants of Algeria, and so Moze's "frères" kill his father. Therefore, the term implicates native Algerians fighting on either side of the war, including the FLN supporters who killed Moze's father for a perceived act of betrayal. The father's murder makes it impossible for Moze to join the FLN; as the narrator's sister recounts to the *enquêteur*: "À vingt-six ans on tue son père. Et là, il est foutu. Mais jusqu'au meurtre de son père il est loyal. Ensuite, il a largement payé" (36). In this complex situation, no matter which side Moze chooses, he will be disloyal to some, and, in the end, he decides that he cannot betray his own father. When Moze later participates in an execution as a gesture that he feels is an act of vengeance—he falsely believes that the victims were responsible for his father's murder—Lantelme observes in *Figures de la repentance* (2016) that "Le caractère familial de cette tragédie est renforcé par le fait que les cinq Algériens exécutés et jetés dans un torrent après avoir été tortures (un crime auquel

Moze a participé) sont présentés comme des frères. Rongé par la honte, Moze acceptera du reste sa responsabilité puisqu'il choisira de se tuer, s'infligeant comme Œdipe une punition" (55-56). Alternatively, Moze's retreat into silence could be read as a form of self-punishment; the narrator also describes this taciturnity as a kind of metaphysical death that precedes his physical death. In this interpretation, instead of sacrificing his vision, Moze sacrifices his speech, unable and unwilling to talk of his shame.

However, even before Moze's father's death, the narrator problematizes Moze's various positions of relative power within the colony; it is possible that, as we know about the situation of Oedipus, his authority also derived from a problematic source:

En Algérie, Moze s'est glissé dans difficulté dans l'habit qu'on lui a prêté. Il espérait sans doute le garder. C'était un élu du deuxième collège. Celui des Arabes. Une poignée d'hommes pour neuf millions d'indigènes! Une assemblée blanche à quatre-vingt-dix pour cent, pour un million d'Européens. . . . Maire, conseiller général, vice-président du Conseil général et, qui sait, bientôt député!

Et Moze a accepté que sa voix compte pour si peu. (37)

The narrator critiques Moze for his prideful pursuit of advancement, a decision that actually represents a deliberate act of engaging in complicity with the French colonial system. In his arrogance and blindness, one might even identify a certain similarity to Eugène Ionesco's *Le roi se meurt* (1962), an absurdist play in which a foolish king's realm falls apart, and the king himself grows increasingly ill, though he remains in denial of his—and his kingdom's—worsening condition. Within this framework, the deteriorating government can be seen to correspond to the fracturing of France's former empire in the years following the end of the Second World War, with most former

French colonies in Africa gaining independence by 1960, except for Algeria, which only became independent after the Évian Accords were signed to end the war in 1962. Indeed, recalling Ionesco's king, Moze watches his status and his territory crumble around him while he remains powerless to stop the destruction. *Moze* could thus theoretically bear the subtitle, "le maire se meurt." Within the French department of Algeria, Moze accepted the status quo and hoped to move up in the ranks, but this decision, and a series of other choices, contributed to his downfall and to the loss of his homeland (even his ancestral lands were chipped away, bit by bit, traded as bribes to keep him alive) in the aftermath of the war. In France, he rules only over his family with isolationistic policies, seemingly ignoring the community surrounding them. Rahmani depicts him as imperious but ultimately ineffectual; even in the worst circumstances, the children still reach the outside world through their voracious appetite for reading (*Moze* 71). The wider horizons afforded by the very gesture of reading inform the author's own work; she takes the specific circumstance of her family's memories and rewrites them with interconnections to literature and world history.

1.3 The Antigone Who Lives

In her preoccupation with justice, the narrator becomes a contemporary representation of the iconic figure of Antigone.⁸⁴ "Act" II of *Moze*, entitled "La Sépulture," recreates aspects of Antigone's conversation with her sister Ismene, though instead of discussing funeral rites for a brother, the narrator and her sister ponder how to arrange a burial for their father in Algeria. Furthermore, the narrator and her sister stage

⁸⁴ In addition to Sophocles's *Antigone*, it is also important to recognize Jean Anouilh's 1944 play *Antigone* as another potential layer of Rahmani's intertextual reference. However, in this chapter, I will limit myself to a discussion of Sophocles, with the recognition that a comparative analysis of the two versions of *Antigone* with *Moze* could be a fruitful avenue for future research.

their encounter beyond French borders, in a symbolic space not unlike Antigone and Ismene speaking in secrecy outside of the palace gates. They converse alone in a room in Algeria, and the narrator goes so far as to propose hypothetical ways to smuggle Moze's corpse into the country: "Je pourrais déclarer un autre corps, fournir un autre certificat de décès. . . . On ne va pas vérifier un mort!" (104). Moze's injunction from entering Algeria extends to the repatriation of his body after death, and this permanent exclusion from his homeland and original community compounds the insults to his dignity that he endured during his entire life. When Antigone seeks to have her brother Polynices buried according to the proper rites, it is, as Ledoux-Beaugrand and Parent note, because the state, by decreeing that his body be left exposed, "le prive ainsi d'une dignité humaine fondamentale, qui s'exprimerait par sa mise en sépulture" (55). In a similar manner, the narrator also demands France's recognition of her father's innate humanity. Indeed, when the narrator prepares to leave Algeria to confront the *Commission nationale de réparation*, her sister urges, "À toi de faire exister cet homme. Ramène-le. Dis son existence" (Moze 96). As Lantelme's elaborates, Rahmani emphasizes repeatedly Moze's existence beyond war-time legacy: "Moze lui-même n'est pas juste un harki, mais père de famille et un époux, un immigré, un homme avec ses valeurs, ses croyances et ses déceptions" (58). Banished from Algeria, excluded from full recognition in French society, he had become nearly inhuman, so, part of the narrator's duty, as she sees it, is to restore Moze's most basic sense of personhood.

The third "act," "La Justice," also calls forth elements of the classic scene of Antigone's confrontation with Creon, with Creon replaced here by the *Commission nationale de réparation* as a representative of the State, while the narrator denounces

official French laws and decrees that she sees as violating a deeper level of universal moral law. Of course, it is worth noting that in the case of *Moze*, it is the father's burial at stake, whereas in the classical *Antigone* "la figure de Polynice demeure dans l'ombre" (Pinçonat 506). However, as Ledoux-Beaugrand and Parent observe,

Il est possible de lire dans la faute de Moze la transgression d'un principe familial faisant écho autant au délit incestueux d'Œdipe qu'à la trahison politique de Polynice: 'Mais on ne tue pas son frère, dit l'oracle' (*Moze* 132), même lorsque l'on a tué ce frère à la demande d'un État qui tient lieu de père symbolique. (56)

Like Polynieces, Moze has also killed his brother(s); (as we know, throughout *Moze* Rahmani uses the term "frères" to refer to Algerians), and, following the statement about "l'oracle" the narrator continues, "Si un frère tue un père, on ne tue pas le frère pour venger le père. Le meurtre du père n'appelle pas le meurtre du frère" (132). The narrator shares the classical *Antigone*'s concern for justice and familial duty, but she escapes *Antigone*'s ultimate fate. The narrator's resonance with *Antigone* tapers off after the dramatic confrontation with the imagined *Commission nationale de réparation* because the State does not punish her for speaking out, nor does she repeat *Antigone*'s suicide. Instead, the narrator appears to break away from this dual heritage of violence coming from her father and from the classical narrative. As the narrator seems to feel—with strong ties to the author's stance—the reclamation of *Antigone*'s life is a curatorial gesture that rejects the narrative that satisfying the law and/or family obligations must require payment in blood.

To interpret the significance of Rahmani's engagement with classical Greek theater, it may be helpful to engage with theoretical approaches to the concept of rewriting. In her 1972 article, "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision," Adrienne Rich calls for feminist rewritings of canonical texts as part of a "refusal of the self-destructiveness of male-dominated society" (18). In *Transforming Memories in Contemporary Women's Rewriting* (2011), Liedeke Plate classifies "women's rewriting" as a "literary genre" that includes texts such as Jean Rhys's 1966 *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Christa Wolf's 1983 *Kassandra*, Maryse Condé's 1986 *Moi, Tituba sorcière*, and Andrée Chedid's 1993 *La femme de Job* (6-7). These rewritings focus primarily on centering formerly minor (female) characters in order to "interven[e] in the production of cultural memory" (Plate 7). Moreover, in the case of Rahmani, there are several substantial differences from examples of the broader trend of women's rewriting. For instance, Antigone is far from a minor literary character, so the rewriting of her character does not necessarily involve centering an overlooked perspective. Also, the texts Plate describes foreground the act of rewriting of a canonical text with much more pointed allusions; in Rahmani's case, she employs such a text by Sophocles as a framework for exploring a much more current moment of family trauma—her father's suicide—and the ongoing implications of the Algerian War. She transforms the familial and historical narratives of the war and its aftermath by grafting them onto a theatrical structure and emphasizing their connections to classical tragedy. While her text can be read as a feminist and postcolonial rewriting of *Antigone*,⁸⁵ it can also be interpreted as an archetypically tragic retelling of much more recent history. Her use of the theatrical

⁸⁵ See Pinçonat's "Le Complexe d'Antigone. Relectures féministes et postcoloniales du scénario œdipien," for further detail on this interpretation.

five-act structure and her emphasis on dialogue may especially indicate what Lantelme terms as Rahmani's conception of history as "incarnée" (58). He elaborates: "*Moze* suggère que notre relation à l'Histoire relève non seulement du savoir mais qu'elle a aussi besoin, pour être intelligible et devenir objet de communication, d'en passer par la médiation d'une performance" (57). History becomes a legacy not simply passed down to subsequent generations, but one that requires active engagement on the part of the descendants, within the theatrical mode. To preserve memories and to understand their heritage, the descendants must interact with—or even reenact—history.

1.4 Shards of Text

In *Moze*, the effects of inherited traumatic memory emerge vividly not only in the themes of the book, but especially in the fragmented style of the narrative, which incorporates poetic passages, monologues, dialogues, and copies of official documents. The dialogue-based structure also fits well with Young's observation that countermonuments are sites of polemics and heteroglossia ("Memorial's Arc" 331) since the narrator intertwines the voices of her siblings, her parents, a police inspector, and the *Commission nationale de réparation*, to create a unified whole. A mixture of direct and indirect discourse makes the narrative unstable and deliberately confuses origin of the characters' speech. In the second "act," an extended 20-page discussion between the narrator and her sister, lacks clear indication of who speaks which lines, confusing the reader about the sources of arguments. This uncomfortable disorientation that Rahmani creates requires that the reader pay close attention; clearly, this is not a text to be consumed passively but one that demands intellectual engagement. Her

strategy also evokes the principles of the *Nouveau Roman*, as Pinçonat observes when she explains that

la narratrice et sa sœur . . . s'affrontent mais, dépourvues de nom qui permettrait de les distinguer clairement, leurs répliques perdent peu à peu leur ancrage.

L'échange évoque dès lors un texte comme *Enfance* de Nathalie Sarraute, un dialogue entre un même personnage scindé en deux instances d'énonciation distinctes qui s'opposent et se répondent. (504)

Surreal and/or absurd elements also reinforce the instability of the text. In addition to the narrator's description of her transformation into a *mouche* at the time she learned of her father's death, "Act" IV intersperses a description of the narrator's mother with what appear to be diary entries about the narrator's graphic nightmares. And, although in "Act" II the narrator and her sister discuss the narrator's anticipated appearance before the *Commission nationale de réparation*, when the narrator confronts in the *Commission* in "Act" III the setting is highly stylized, with the judges perched beyond the visual range of the narrator. The *mise en scène* suggests an imagined or dreamed encounter:

Je suis dans un grand espace face à un haut mur. J'entends, approchez et je sais que je vais dire ce que je veux dire. . . .

– Approchez.

– Je ne vous vois pas.

– Nous vous entendons.

Je lève la tête, Pourquoi si haut?

– Parlez librement, nous vous écoutons, me dit un homme. (107-8)

The surreal elements within the text point to a splintered view of reality. The narrator's mental landscape presents factual details with fantastical imaginings that the reader is to piece together; however, the aim here does not appear to be to depict the narrator as unreliable, as in so many cases of modern fiction. Instead, the breaks with reality appear to indicate the real psychic burden of a traumatic history, and, in these passages, the narrator engages with a symbolic representation of her struggle.

Offering another sort of interruption within the text, Rahmani inserts copies of official documents into the text. It is unclear whether the narrator presents these documents directly to the *enquêteur* or if the narrator provides them as additional evidence specifically for the reader to peruse, but they often disrupt the narrative flow. For example, a reproduction of a *certificat d'hérédité* with Moze's inheritors' names left blank is inserted after the narrator recounts the circumstances of her uncle Ali's death (35). The page following this *certificat* makes no mention of it; instead, the narrator returns to describing the banal interactions between her family and the police inspector: "Ma mère tend une tasse et un sucre blanc à l'enquêteur" (36). Similarly, with no introduction, she adds two copies of an order from Louis Joxe, "ministre d'État, chargé des Affaires algériennes," that "demande à haut-commissaire de rappeler que toute initiative individuelle tendant à installation métropole Français musulmans est strictement interdite" (42). The second copy, appearing on the following page and separated from the first copy by two paragraphs, is nearly entirely redacted (Rahmani includes the full text, but the majority of it is deliberately crossed out by the author), and is missing as well the label "ultrasecret" that had appeared on the first copy. It is

obvious that the fragmentation of the structure of the text reflects the violence of France's legacy in Algeria.

Elsewhere in the text, the addition of short passages of poetry or flashbacks aims to create further disorientation for the reader. After the dedication and a paratextual quotation from Elias Canetti (to which I will return shortly), *Moze* opens with a brief poem by Rahmani:

Je me souviens.

Écris que tu te souviens.

Que tu t'en souviens. (11)

The referents corresponding to the “je” and the “tu” here are entirely unclear, especially since the narrator's voice is not clearly established. After a blank page, another poem follows:

Je me souviens de mon lit de fer,

de tous ces lits de fer,

du hangar gris,

de la petite musique militaire. (13)

This “je” could be the same one from the previous poem, or it could be read as a response by the first poem's “tu.” If interpreted as a dialogue, in the first poem *Moze* might be asking the narrator to remember, to which she then responds with a memory of one of the shelters the family stayed in as refugees. Alternatively, the first poem could also be read as if it were intoned by the narrator as a plea for the reader to affirm her memories and join her in the task of recording the past. These poems are followed by another blank page after which the narrator's perspective becomes clearly recognizable,

as she recounts her reaction to the news of Moze's death. This passage begins with "Tu es mort un lundi" (15)—in this case, the "tu" represents Moze unambiguously—and continues to speak directly to the absent father in a manner that is not repeated until "Act" V, "Moze parle." In fact, that "act" begins with a repetition of the first poem, which is then followed by an unmarked dialogue between the daughter and her deceased father. Since the narrator is the first to speak ("Père je n'ai plus peur," 175), her words may support the interpretation of the poem as representing a plea from Moze addressed to his daughter, and her own speech or writing as a response to him. The "je" from the first poem testifies only to remembering, but does not describe any further action taken on his or her part; instead, the speaker seems to be begging his or her interlocutor to engage in writing. If Moze is the "je," then he who had long guarded his silence may be asking his daughter to take on the work of memory with the imperative "Écris" (11). These brief poems and the use of blank spaces reflect what Ireland describes as Rahmani's "fragmented, experimental style" that "serves to convey the psychological distress and the dissolution of the self caused by the harkis' experiences" ("Facing" 307). Furthermore, the polyphony and polyvalence of *Moze* highlights the pitfalls of official political discourse that often oversimplifies history.

In this vein, the narrator also turns to neologisms to express historical pain with great emphasis. For example, she employs the compound term "soldatmort" to describe the way in which many *harkis*, formerly abandoned by the French to die in Algeria, continued to lead their lives, all while seeming diminished and ghostlike (20). Not unlike the claustrophobic proximity of "soldat" and "mort" within the construction "soldatmort," the name "Moze" is also a construction of the author. Bergé-Joonekindt

notes that, in an unpublished interview, Rahmani said that it represents the “contraction du nom du père et du nom de la fille” (6). Pinçonnat elaborates on the invented name: “Moze est la figuration de l’indistinction mortifère qui menace l’héritière. De son prénom, Zahia, comme digéré par le nom du père, ne reste que le ‘z’ initiale: en Moze, elle est enclavée, presque déjà *mort*, comme le suggère la paronomase” (506; italics in original). Thus, even Moze’s name suggests both destructive division and uneasy juxtaposition, reminiscent of Moze’s inescapable legacy of shame and his daughter’s ineluctable obligation to pursue justice on her father’s behalf.

2. Vocal Legacies

2.1 Moze and the Broken Word

In *The Harkis*, a book that analyzes the author’s series of interviews with actual *harkis* and their descendants, in order to compile an extensive history based on the group’s own memories, Vincent Crapanzano notes that the reticence of the *harkis* who served during the war was a theme common to many families, causing the second generation to “suffer a double wound: that of the pain they themselves suffered and that which arises from their father’s stubborn silence” (9). Interestingly, he depicts the muteness about the past as a form of violence, one that obliges those living with difficult memories to dwell on those memories more fully than if they were spoken: “silence can resist forgetfulness more strongly than can the fullness of the articulated, if only because it offers nothing to be forgotten” (9). The potential deadliness of not speaking out is reflected in the repeated neologism of Rahmani’s narrator to describe (the living) Moze and his fellow *harkis*: “les soldatmorts” (*Moze* 20).

Resisting the long evasion of both of her father and of the French public regarding the *harkis'* history, Rahmani's narrator seeks to address this awkward, painful, and long-standing wound by finally making it public, though Moze had shrouded his own past in secrecy and refused to speak of the war and his involvement. His daughter explains:

Moze n'a pas parlé. Il a cessé. Il ne parlera plus. De ce qui l'a tué, de ce qu'il a compris, il n'a rien dit. Ce que sa langue ne suffisait pas à dire, c'est le système qui permit à l'État français de fabriquer une armée de soldatmorts sans se soucier qu'ils étaient des hommes. (20)

Moze remains basically entirely reserved after the war, not just on the subject of the war (123), for his mute stance pertains to both his wartime experiences and his feeling of betrayal by the French upon his arrival in France. His former positions in the colony and his military service make it all the more galling for him when he is received as a refugee, rather than as a citizen, upon his entrance in France. He even spoke flawless French: "il parlait lui un français très correct, comme il sied à un indigène éduqué des colonies. Moze n'avait aucun accent" (*Moze* 123). And thus therein lies the rub, so to speak, when France abandons him after the war. When he must go before a court to request recognition of his French citizenship, he is indignant, not understanding why his national identity card, on which are printed the words "il doit être fait au porteur de cette carte les honneurs dus à sa fonction" (48), is no longer recognized as valid. Moze's citizenship is eventually reinstated in light of his military record as a *harki*—not due to his prior status as a French citizen in the department of Algeria. The printed words on his *carte d'identité* have become empty signifiers, and, as his daughter states:

Moze avait été rétrogradé au rang de non-existant au fichier national. Humilié comme le chien qu'il a depuis toujours été. Son corps mutilé ne suffisait pas, l'armée algérienne le cherchait et la France le ridiculisait à nouveau. Ce pays ne sait pas à quel point il s'est nié, à quel point il a nié ses principes, nié sa raison dans cet acte. (48-49)

As we can see, in this passage, Rahmani postulates that by denying this evidence of Moze's true identity, the French government further humiliates him and, simultaneously, incriminates itself by hypocritically going against its own Republican ideals. With his identity erased, he, too, becomes deleted, paralleling a larger problem of marginalization associated with general French cultural memory of the *harkis*.

Through a series of disappointing events after the war, the French are shown to have broken their word to Moze, thereby undermining Moze's faith in communication and the very value of language. Indeed, the narrator makes clear, "La parole avait pour Moze une importance. Il n'a jamais pu se défaire de ce qui lui appartenait en propre; c'est-à-dire ses actes et sa parole. Ses mots étaient ses actes" (124). As Lantelme observes in *Figures de la repentance*, one could assert that Moze has an implicitly performative concept of language, following the spirit of J. L. Austin's Speech Act Theory (Lantelme 71). Austin elaborates this theory in *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), in which he describes how certain pronouncements function as actions of commitment in and of themselves, such as wedding vows, christening a ship, or making a promise (6). For instance, saying "I do" in a wedding ceremony enacts a change in civil status; the words are not simply a description of an action or an intent—they are the action itself. In Moze's case, he swore to serve the French government as a soldier,

but France failed to uphold its obligations to him as a soldier and as a citizen. Thus, according to Austin, this apparent failure does not make the words promised actually false, because the act of promising was indeed accomplished. However, the lack of fulfilling the promise makes it void (11). The emptiness of this action undermines Moze's faith in language,⁸⁶ and arguably contributes to Moze's own twisting of his word when he falsely pledges loyalty to the Algerians in order to leave the prison, and again when he must contort his speech to profess a sycophantic loyalty to the country that betrayed him, rather than being accepted on the basis of his previous service. According to Rahmani's narrative, though France's callous abandonment of the *harkis* verged on the criminal, the country of France is not called to account for its abandonment of Moze and other *harkis*; instead, it is Moze who is humiliatingly subjected to judgement upon his entry across French borders. Moze's silence dates from this very moment; constrained to speak against his conscience and cognizant that words no longer function as acts, that is, that many promises are apparently destined to be voided, he takes to action in order to speak. The narrator notes that he cried often, and of his tears she writes "Seule cette langue lui est restée" (19). Yet he does not entirely abandon the use of words in his cause; despite his verbal uncommunicativeness, he also drafts increasingly caustic letters of complaint or *réclamation* (76).⁸⁷ His frustrations thereby take on a palpable dimension as he attempts to purge himself of them, either as tears flowing outward or as letters sent away. These two languages, the language of

⁸⁶ It is worth noting that, unlike her father, the narrator does not appear to question the basic value of language. She believes emphatically in the power of words and the need to speak the truth about the past. So, she calls repeatedly for France to face its hypocrisy and speak words of healing to address the past breaches of trust.

⁸⁷ The topic of Moze's reliance on written expression once he refuses to speak about his past is an issue I am interested in returning to in future research.

tears and that of *réclamation*, respectively express his double source of shame: his status as a traitor to his people and as a victim of French betrayal.

In Rainer Maria Rilke's 1910 *Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, as translated by Burton Pike in 2008, the narrator reflects on the notion of death: "one knew . . . that one had death *within* oneself, like fruit the seed" (6; italics in original).⁸⁸ In a similar manner, Moze had been nursing his death for years as a "soldatmort," and Moze's acts-as-speech (rather than Austin's concept of speech-as-act) culminate in their ultimate expression: his extreme gesture of suicide. When he drowns himself after saluting the *monument aux morts*, he sends a final message to the French government (albeit one only understood by his family; the *enquêteur* and the *Commission* remain skeptical of Moze's motives) by enacting the empty promise of the French authorities. His daughter interprets the meaning of his death thusly: "N'étant rien, rien il n'est devenu" (22) and "Dans sa mort réside une vérité sur cette parole" (124). Moreover, in his suicide by drowning, Moze also retreats permanently into his lachrymose, silent, and penitent grief.

2.2 Ourida's Crafts and *Contes*

In this tragic story that describes the father's betrayal of his Algerian brethren and then addresses France's betrayal of the father, the mother is a figure of quiet hope who adapts to the challenging circumstances, even as her husband tries to shut out the world. The fourth "act" of the narrative, entitled "La femme de Moze: ou comment la mère et ses histoires . . ." (ellipsis original to title), brings forward the narrator's mother

⁸⁸ The italics are used in both Pike's translation and Rilke's original German: "Früher wußte man . . . daß man den Tod *in* sich hatte wie die Frucht den Kern" (*Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*, Kapitel 1).

and her own difficult experiences. Often simply referred to as “la femme de Moze,” throughout most of the book the mother’s identity depends entirely on her relationship to her husband, the *harki* (passim). Seventeen pages into the chapter, the reader finally discovers the name of Moze’s wife; her father named her Ourida, meaning “Rose-Libre” (164). This name, beautiful and rich in meaning, blooms forth. It embodies a germ of life in the middle of the darkness surrounding the *harkis*. Indeed, the names of Ourida and her sisters (“Fta pour dire l’Argent, Dabia pour dire l’Or, Faroudj pour dire l’Oiseau-Léger et Tassa pour dire Cher-Comme-la-Chair”) were, according to their father “les mots pour guérir les lendemains barbares” (164). The narrator calls her grandfather a “conteur infatigable” who foresaw the war and wanted to prepare his daughters for its coming (164). The mother’s desire for the restoration of harmony reflects the meaning of her name, her connection with the past, and her courage to tell the truth.

Indeed, despite multiple displacements, Ourida and her Berber heritage help enormously, albeit often indirectly, to ground the family. In an article about Mouloud Feraoun and Rahmani, Lucy McNair notes that both of these writers

draw upon shared Berber or Amazigh heritage, which is central to how their texts stage an escape from “frozen discourse” to reshape the narrative of the war in terms of a new ethics of memory. . . . the five subgroups of the Imazighen have long endured colonial encounters as well as persistently maintained and refashioned their ways of life and belief systems, sometimes at great physical and psychic cost. (157)

Whereas Moze separates himself from his ancestral heritage, both by working for the colonial government and later fighting for the French, Ourida steeps herself instead in her family's traditions of healing, storytelling, and weaving. Ourida lives up to expectations implied by her name as she strives to recreate a new life in the aftermath of war, making use of the traditions that she learned from her own parents. Contrary to Moze, who killed men in his capacity as a soldier and later commits suicide, she invests in acts of creation rather than actions of destruction (157). During Moze's five-year imprisonment in Algeria following the war, Ourida uses the skills learned from her father to blend herbs to make medicinal mixtures and perfumes, serving the local community and earning prosperity for her family (157). Furthermore, she continues in her father's footsteps as a teller of "contes" and "fables" (156). Although she can neither read nor write, she shares a rich oral tradition with her children (165); fittingly, then, orality stands out as one of the predominant features of Rahmani's text as a gesture toward this ancestral heritage of the spoken word. Ourida does not speak French, communicating exclusively in her native Berber tongue, and this linguistic background distances her from Moze's connection with colonialism. The narrator clearly associates her mother's storytelling with the traditional activities she passed on to her children, such as preparing orange water or weaving carpets (156-57). Ourida's stories lighten the burden of tedious work, as they also pass on an important cultural heritage. Ourida learned to weave from her mother, and although she could not write, she captured and related stories in the symbols and patterns of her carpets, not unlike Philomela in Greek mythology. Her daughter reminiscences: "Elle savait, d'une pelote, faire un monde de beauté et d'équilibre" (157). She weaves wool in the same way that

she weaves stories, creating wonders from everyday materials that are often overlooked as banal.

Ourida also deconstructs gradually the prison-like environment in which Moze attempts to fortify himself and his family. Despite the linguistic barrier she faces in France, she creates connections throughout the community through her hospitality; as the narrator observes: “Elle a décidé d’ouvrir sa maison, d’en faire un paradis pour nous” (72). She even offers tea and sugar to the *enquêteur* investigating Moze’s death (36). In Moze’s final summer, her kindness was able to soften his anger: “Il se mettait près d’elle et s’asseyait très bas pour lui parler. Ils se parlaient sans bruit. Ils riaient même. Il a souri durant l’été” (77). An important part of the equilibrium the mother brings emerges when she finally answers the question that the daughter has been repeating: “Qu’est-ce que Moze a fait?” (155). “La femme de Moze” confesses that Moze was involved in the torture of five men and that he and his brothers pushed them, bound, into a torrent of water because they suspected the men of killing their father. However, speaking of Moze and his brothers, Ourida continues: “Ils se sont trompés” (171). This striking revelation adds new meaning to Moze’s suicide. His death becomes not only a statement about his treatment by the French, but also a reenactment of his crime that adds to the guilt he feels for serving France during the war. By acknowledging the painful truth of Moze’s guilt, Ourida contributes to the narrator’s mission to “libér[er] la honte” (142). The narrator conceives of this obligation broadly, seeking to expose familial and national sources of shame. Overall, Ourida’s choice to embrace the healing power of speech, as well as the value of storytelling as a means of transmission, contrasts with Moze’s decision to shroud the past in secrecy.

2.3. Paternal and Maternal Heritage in the Narrator's Style

The narrator combines her parents' two specific perceptions of speech, both considered as storytelling and as an act (in Austin's sense of a speech act). In the image of her mother, she weaves, but in her case, it is with words instead of with wool. She intertwines the voices of her siblings, her parents, a police inspector, and the *Commission nationale de réparation*, to create a unified whole. Yet again reminiscent of her mother, she is rooted in the past and is concerned with the eternal questions of heritage and transmission. And, although she chooses to write and not to work with physical artistic material, her style reflects the mother's oral traditions, since four out of the five "acts," as well as the epilogue, consist nearly exclusively of written dialogue. Further, the French language is also linked to issues of the narrator's own identity, as is the case with her father's. Although she is a French citizen and has lived in France since her early childhood, the *Commission* still looks upon her as foreign when one judge declares: "Vous insultez l'État qui vous accueille!" (123). The verb *accueillir*, particularly in the present tense, implies that France is currently welcoming and hosting the narrator, whereas France is the narrator's place of citizenship. Nevertheless, since her arrival as a young child, her presence on French soil has been a testament to France's failed North African policies (the end of French Algeria, a brutal war, and the unjust treatment of the *harkis*). To obscure the family's Algerian *harki* origin, the narrator explains that "On m'a . . . appelée Isabelle. Ma sœur est devenue Francine et mon frère Francis" (67); it is unclear to whom the "on" refers since the preceding passage uses "on" to refer to at least two different groups: French society and Moze's children. The "on" who renamed the children, then, could allude to any number of

potential sources: authorities at the camp, school officials, their own parents, or someone else. The names Francine and Francis both echo the word France, underscoring a heavy-handed approach to integration policies. Ever since their arrival in France, she and her siblings had experienced criticism of their presence; she suggests that, as a child, “On n’a pas voulu nous voir. Nous, ceux de la politique honteuse. Si seulement on avait parlé. Si on avait su. Mais on n’a pas su. Cette parole qu’on écoute, qui informe et qui libère on ne l’a pas eue” (66). Only as an adult does the narrator have the courage and strength to write and speak freely, and she chooses to re-appropriate the French language, which was the language of colonization and the language of her father, for her own goals. The narrator declares, “Ici, j’ai appris la parole, votre parole si belle qui me délivre même de vous” (136), and she claims France as her own country (“ce pays, votre pays, mon pays”) (142). She accepts a French identity and the French language and uses the language not to perpetuate the problems of the past, but employs it with the aim to create balance, as does her mother in another form. She chooses to “[p]arler pour que l’enfant joue, parler pour que la fille danse ... parler pour dire la mémoire, parler pour ne plus avoir honte Parler pour ne plus salir les tombes. Pour faire taire la mort” (136). In such a way, writing becomes a powerful means by which to vindicate the dead and to create a space for her own life within the Republic.

In the third “act,” when the narrator appears in front of the *Commission nationale de réparation*, she becomes frustrated with the commission’s equivocating stance, and so, as with her father, she uses her words to act. She turns her back to the commission and makes the surprising decision to speak in the commission’s stead:

– . . . Trahir son frère! C’est le crime de Moze. Mais trahir celui qui pour toi a trahi son frère, ça c’est un autre crime. N’est-ce pas le vôtre?

– C’était bien pour tuer son frère que Moze a accepté d’être armé. Il le savait qu’il devait le tuer!

Je lui dis oui. Oui, monsieur le juge. Je m’adresse à lui et me vient tout à coup l’envie, le désir d’être lui. Lui, le président de cette commission. Je lui tourne le dos, je regarde le vide et je dis, Oui, c’est pour tuer son frère qu’il a trahi son frère pour moi. Moi qui devais tuer son frère, je lui ai fait commettre ce crime. Je lui ai fait tuer son frère que je devais tuer. Cette guerre je ne voulais pas la faire. Mais je n’étais pas contre. Non, je voulais ce pays, je voulais cette guerre, mais je ne voulais pas la faire. (140-41).

In deciding to speak in the judge’s place, the narrator expresses herself as if she represents the French government or a French soldier who participated in the war. She makes France confess to the Algerian War as an unethical pitting of brother against brother. Obviously, the narrator and the judge on the commission have radically different perceptions of France’s role in the war; the narrator perceives both France and Moze as being at fault, whereas the State attempts to clear itself of the affair by focusing only on Moze’s decision. Similarly, in the essay, “Memory and Exile: Contemporary France and the Algerian War (1954-1962),” Jo McCormack suggests that such “[b]attles [over history] take place since there is no national consensual memory of the conflict, rather a set of mutually antagonistic group memories” (120). In her extended monologue acting as a judge and spokesperson for France, the narrator declares her right to describe the nation’s faults and its true guilt. Initially, the

commission believed that the narrator wished for financial compensation for Moze, failing to realize that she is more interested in a general cultural and political move towards openness and public apologies. Early in the discussion with the commission, she had demanded “des proclamations, des affiches et des livres. Des mots qui le disent!” (114). In the end, she becomes the one making these proclamations—and memorializing them in a book. In this vein, McCormack insists that “Writing can be seen as a healing trauma” and that the discourse in Rahmani’s text “set[s] out to challenge dominate discourses” (137). Thus, speaking and writing become active gestures of healing; the narrator breaks the silence of her father and of French society to recognize the shame of the nation and to move beyond that shame and into an open dialogue about the nation’s responsibility for its past actions.

The narrator takes up her father’s voice, noting that she has the same handwriting as his and that she can bring him back to life on paper:

J’écris comme lui, jusqu’à ma signature qui est la sienne. J’ai hérité de son écriture. Je pourrais refaire toutes ses lettres, les falsifier, changer sa vie, faire des faux, continuer à le faire vivre, harceler ses supérieurs, ses maîtres, écrire à ses geôliers. Devenir un fantôme. Un fantôme qui aurait compris ce qu’il y a à faire. Un soldat mort revenu de la mort! (77)

Her confession that she could easily falsify an account of her father’s life potentially destabilizes her narrative; we must trust that the narrator gives us an accurate account, even though she makes clear that it is in her power to do otherwise. Indeed, as mentioned previously, the exact contours of the separation between the autobiographical and fictional elements in the text are not easy to ascertain. Overall,

whatever the degree to which the narrator intervenes in the account, the book does serve to give her father, the *harki*, the “soldatmort” finally a voice, and certainly not one that exculpates him from his crimes. And yet this distance that the narrator feels from her father and her desire to be rid of his memory diminishes by the final “act” in which she imagines a posthumous conversation with him. The following exchange between them shows a new attempt at understanding one another:

- Tu ne m’as pas parlé.
- Je ne voulais pas t’entendre.
- Je t’ai quittée avec tristesse.
- Je ne l’ai pas su.
- Tu es ma fille. (175)

When, in the passage cited above, she admits that she had not spoken with him during his lifetime because she had not wanted to hear the answers to her questions, she asserts an indirect complicity in his former wordlessness (175). Although she has the opportunity at this point—as does the writer who determines the words on the page—to have Moze confess, in fact, this ghost of her father still refuses to speak of his shame; he states: “J’ai honte de cette honte que je ne vous ai jamais dite J’ai étouffé mes mots” (179). She replies: “Tu en es mort” (179). Rahmani has a unique opportunity to have the character based on her father to confess, but instead she leaves him entrapped in his state of shame and denial, which she represents as having destroyed him from within; indeed, it is true that while Moze faced difficult circumstances due to colonial policies, in the end, the narrator sees him as responsible for his own choices. In a sense, then, she refuses an act of mercy that would liberate him from his shame, while at the

same time liberating herself from that same indignity. Her refusal could be read as either the maintenance of a chilly, proud distance from her father, or as a form of humility that leaves her unwilling to force him to change.

3. Mapping Memories: Monuments, Tombs, and Texts

3.1 November 11 and the *Monument aux morts*

As I have argued, *Moze* derives from Rahmani's own family history, and it also, significantly, fits within a broader tradition of memorialization. In *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (2006), historian Jay Winter observes:

That act [of facing what happened to victims] starts alone in our individual reflections on an injured or absent person, but acknowledgement . . . never ends alone. It is a public act, a kind of remembrance expressed by groups of people prepared to face their shared past together. When they come together, remembrance becomes performative. It is materialized in the gestures and statements of the actors, those whose actions constitute remembrance. . . . (428)

Winter's description refers particularly to physical monuments and the public gestures that accompany memorial ceremonies, and texts such as *Moze* follow a similar logic of collective remembering; for instance, the theatrical structure and settings of the text underscore the performative dimension of commemoration (as well as *réclamation*). Monumental imagery also recurs throughout *Moze*, with the most prominent example being the *monument aux morts* that Moze visits before his suicide. The narrator recounts the details of that moment on three separate occasions: in the preface (20), in

conversation with the *enquêteur* in “Act” I (29-30), and again before the *Commission nationale de réparation* in “Act” III (128-29).

With each repeated description of the act, the narrator elaborates on her interpretation of Moze’s gesture. The first description broaches the details in a very matter-of-fact manner, stating merely the date, times, and locations of what happened.⁸⁹ Later, the narrator feels compelled to recount Moze’s death to the *enquêteur*—someone who already knows the particulars in great precision—because she becomes frustrated with his forensic analysis that fails to interpret accurately the deeper meaning of Moze’s actions. The *enquêteur*’s questions imply that he seeks to ascertain whether Moze’s death was truly a suicide. For example, he expresses doubts based on the fact that Moze locked his car (“Ouverte, je crois au suicide mais il l’a fermée à clé” 29). The narrator, considering the locked doors irrelevant, instead redirects the *enquêteur* to consider the care Moze took with the specifics pertaining to the event:

Devant le monument il a serré la main du maire et de ses conseillers. Ensuite il a salué les vieux soldats. Là il est mort. C’est dans ce lieu, devant ce monument qu’a eu lieu sa mort. Moze lui a dédié sa mort! Il a attendu ce jour de novembre pour partir. Il a repris sa voiture pour l’étang communal. Et puis, il y a eu ces quelques minutes, ces quelques minutes et sa vie s’est arrêtée.

⁸⁹ I included a portion of this quote in an earlier portion of this chapter, but I repeat it here for ease of reference in the present discussion: “Moze est supplétif de l’armée française. Il a rejoint ses compagnons d’armes le 11 novembre 1991. À 8h30, on l’a vu qui saluait le monument aux victimes de la Grande Guerre. À 9h15, deux chasseurs le trouvaient noyé flottant dans l’étang communal. Ses lunettes et son chapeau étaient près de lui” (20)

Il a mis son grand manteau d'hiver et son chapeau. Il est sorti de sa voiture, il est entré dans l'étang, il a pénétré dans l'eau, il a marché dans la vase, il s'est enfoncé le corps dans cette boue. (29-30)

The date of his death and the gesture of attending the ceremony leave the narrator without a doubt about his intentions, despite the fact that he neither discussed his plans with anyone nor left a note. She describes a *mise en scène* with precisely choreographed movements and impeccable costuming. The date, November 11, compounds the significance of Moze's physical location since it marks the national holiday in honor of the armistice of 1918. Winter observes, "In the twentieth century, warfare became everybody's business. Before 1900, commemorative statues mostly celebrated individual commanders; after 1900, and even more so after 1914, ordinary people became the focus of commemoration. That is why the preservation of names on war memorials is so important" (428). These World War I memorials—and the date of November 11—also came to commemorate the dead of later wars; when Moze returns to the source of contemporary memorialization to salute the dead, he underscores his absence from the sacralized ranks of those generations of *morts pour la France*. While Moze joins them in death, he does not join them in memorial status. His death can be traced to his wartime experiences, but the timing of his demise technically exempts him from counting as a casualty. Moreover, for Moze, "pour la France" could signify a less romanticized notion of "for France's purposes" or "while doing France's bidding" (regardless of desire or motivation), rather than out of the implied sense of loyal, patriotic fervor. The practice Winter discusses of naming the dead and recognizing their sacrifice (or victimhood) as individuals implies a recognition of their humanity—a

suggestion that reinforces one of the themes that Rahmani recreates from Sophocles's *Antigone*—and a mourning for their loss within the community. By giving the book the same name as the father in the text, Rahmani continues the commemorative tradition of naming the dead. By defining Moze as an individual, she challenges monolithic interpretations of the *harkis*, which ultimately reduce their individual agency.

Winter describes memorialization as a kind of acknowledgement that involves “the recognition, the rethinking, the restating aloud of claims—moral, political, material—which other human beings have on us. The least of their claims is that we not let them and their stories vanish without a trace, that we face them, that we face what happened to them” (427). When he was alive, Moze had already vanished from the national narrative; by entering the water, he participated actively in his own erasure and left a choice to those who survived him: to forget him or to recover his traces. His daughter makes the decision to put together those traces by reading his intent through his acts and that which he leaves behind, but the signs can only be illegible to the officials.

Returning to the narrator's description to the *enquêteur*, it is interesting that she claims that Moze died in front of the monument itself (“Là il est mort”) though in fact he returned to his car to drive to the *étang*. As Lantelme observes, with this first, symbolic death, “Moze entend imposer son nom, et avec lui celui de tous les harkis, aux commémorations officielles du 11 novembre” (68). In the third description of Moze's death, which occurs before the *Commission nationale de réparation*, the narrator dwells further on the discrepancy between Moze's military service and that of the individuals commemorated by the *monument aux morts* (128). During a longer complaint about the

treatment of the *harkis* by the French, the narrator mentions her frustration at her inability to bury her father with his family in Algeria, the *Commission* seizes on her brief allusion to the burial to ask about Moze's wishes. Her response is to recount the particulars of his death, implying that the circumstances of death itself were Moze's means of demanding recognition from the French state:

Moze a salué le monument aux morts. Entouré des élus, lui, le revenant d'une guerre inconnue, lui, le soldat inconnu, a salué le monument absent d'une guerre qui a eu lieu. Moze a salué le monument aux morts absents d'une guerre qui l'a enfoui. Il a salué le monument aux victimes d'une guerre avant de se tuer, de mourir d'une guerre qui n'aurait pas eu lieu! D'une guerre pour laquelle il ne serait pas mort comme soldat! (128-29)

As a *revenant* Moze becomes a true phantom from the *événements*, but the word *revenant* also evokes the notion of Moze's "return" to France after the war. Moze, as a *français musulman rapatrié*, had been displaced to a land he had not previously inhabited; return and repatriation seem to be as inaccurate, obtuse, and euphemistic as the term *événements*, obscuring the political and military realities of the conflict in Algeria.

3.2 A Plaque on the Zouave, or How Not to Create a Memorial

In "Act" II, when the narrator and her sister discuss the narrator's upcoming meeting with the *Commission nationale de réparation*, the sister responds to the narrator's pessimism about the encounter, claiming that "En France, ils feront un geste" (90). The narrator, however, reacts sarcastically: "Oui, un colis. Jus de pomme et chocolat noir pour Noël ou une plaque du souvenir. Pourquoi pas sous le pont de

l'Alma? Soudée sur le nez du Zouave. Ils n'ont rien entendu. Ils n'entendent pas! Personne ne veut entendre" (90). Although the narrator intends clearly for her suggestion to be absurd, as emphasized by the proposal that the plaque be affixed to the statue's nose, the full scope of the ridiculousness becomes evident when examining the history of this statue located in the middle of the Seine at the base of the *pont de l'Alma* (see fig. 12).⁹⁰ The bridge, inaugurated by Napoleon III, commemorates "la victoire des



Figure 13. The Zouave statue on the Pont de l'Alma. Agence Rol, "12-1-12, inondations," 1912. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

⁹⁰ It is interesting to note that the *pont de l'Alma* is particularly rich in mnemonic associations. For instance, the nearby *Flamme de la liberté*, installed in 1989, commemorates Franco-American friendship, but it has also been adopted by the public as a site to commemoration of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, due to its proximity to the location of her death.

forces franco-anglaises face aux Russes de septembre 1854 en Crimée,” and it is decorated with four military statues: “un zouave, un grenadier, un artilleur et un chasseur à pied” (“Le Zouave”). Notably, as observed in an article in the newspaper *La Voix du Nord*, the sculptor modeled the statue upon a man named André-Louis Gody who had served as a zouave (“Le Zouave”). The name of the zouave troops derives from a Berber tribe, and style of their attire indicates this origin; however, the majority of French military zouaves were of European heritage. The name “zouave,” then, gestures to French colonial history and appropriation of native culture. The narrator’s mocking description of an absurd memorial ridicules the oversimplification and confusion rampant in public narratives, in which she could imagine a public servant confusing the French-born zouave soldiers of the nineteenth century with the *harkis* of the Algerian War. The hypothetical plaque on the Zouave’s nose offers a further insult, in that the Zouave is associated with flooding—or symbolic drowning—since the statue is popularly used as a means of gauging the height of the river. The connection between drowning and the Seine thus also links Moze to the 17 October 1961 massacre in Paris when police shot at and threw Algerian protestors into the river, a tragedy described in Leïla Sebbar’s novel *La Seine était rouge* (1999).

If the narrator displays skepticism at the adequacy of a potential gesture from the French state, she also insists on the commemorative action that would most adequately address this “trou de mémoire” (Hamoumou 25): simply speaking about the past and releasing archival data, including the names of the enlisted and the dead. She dwells on the ongoing imprecision of the historical data in the French narrative about the war:

Ils nous emmerdent avec les chiffres! 20 000 morts? 30 000, 90 000, 100 000, 130 000 harkis fusillés! Ou lynchés ou brûlés? 150 000, 180 000 soldatsmorts ignorés? 200 000, 250 000, 300 000, 400 000 matricules! 600 000 ou 900 000 peut-être? 1 000 000, 2 000 000, 5 000 000, plus, plus encore! Tous les contrats ont eu un matricule et ces documents sont archivés. On sait leurs noms. Qu'on nous les dise les noms des disparus! Qu'on nous les donne les noms! Donnez-les! (91)

Obscure plaques and vague official pronouncements do not suffice; facts, names, and numbers are needed.⁹¹ It is worth noting that even a more formal monument—such as one in the style of the *monument aux morts*—may not be adequate to satisfy her goals. In *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory Cultures in France and Germany Since 1989* (2005), Peter Carrier points to the limitations of traditional monumental architecture: “The apparent invisibility of public monuments, ensuing from their duration and familiarity . . . is partially a consequence of the sheer longevity of this genre, since monuments have been in use as a form of social and political communication throughout history, during which their repertoire of forms has barely changed” (15-16). Of course, countermonumental styles attempt to disrupt the staid memorial landscape in order to more actively incite debate; and Rahmani’s *Moze*, with its blended genres and impassioned pleas, becomes thus an effective literary countermonument for the *harkis*. Rahmani’s text cannot supply the numbers and names demanded by the narrator because the adequate historical records are not publicly

⁹¹ Of course, Modiano’s *Dora Bruder* demonstrates that recorded facts are also insufficient for memorialization, but they are nevertheless an important point of departure for understanding the past.

available; nevertheless, the attention placed on their absence also corresponds to a countermonumental aesthetic.

3.3 Burial Sites: From Algeria to *le Zénith*

As mentioned in the prior discussion of similarities with Sophocles's *Antigone*, Moze's grave represents another site of commemorative tension. When the narrator travels to Algeria in her quest to bury Moze "dans son pays" (84), she must confront the doubts of her sister, a host of legal complications, and continued discrimination against the *harkis* in that North African country. In "Act" II, the narrator's sister voices her impression that Moze's burial would not be socially acceptable to the inhabitants of his homeland:

- . . . Ils ne sont pas prêts. Tout ça est nouveau et ils ne voudront pas faire d'erreur.
- Demander clémence pour une sépulture, ce n'est pas les obliger!
- Ils ne peuvent pas. Déposer Moze dans ce pays, c'est accepter qu'il en soit.
- Mais il en est! (101)

Moze's potential grave site conflicts in such a way with public memory, which contrasts the *harkis* with the "frères héros" (21) who fought against the French. The narrator also shares to her sister that even the graves of *harki* relatives who died—or were aggressively killed—in Algeria are hidden because, even decades later, their very existence is perceived as a threat:

- Les tombes sont dans les ruelles. Dans les passages. Elles dallent le sol. Tu marches au-dessus des morts! Ces femmes les veillent. Elles ne les visitent que la nuit. Le jour, elles font mine d'entretenir les allées.

– Ils déterrent les corps. Hier c’était celui d’un poète. . . .

– Il faut qu’ils restent, qu’ils l’exigent. Qu’ils vivent en cet endroit! (103)

Ironically, the narrator, who frequently described her own father as “mort” during his lifetime, now portrays the buried *harkis* as “living”; despite their death, the physical presence of their graves serves as a testimony that keeps their history and memory alive, even when it represents a problematic inconvenience to official narratives in Algeria.

In fact, in another passage, Rahmani points to another set of graves that testifies to the memory of a long-standing regional culture of coexistence between various religious and ethnic groups:

Il y avait là-bas des Juifs. Des frères sémites. Leurs cimetières jouxtent encore les tombes romaines et celles des tribus berbères. Dans ce pays ils ont vécu ensemble. En 1871 on les a faits français. Jules Ferry les a contraints à ne plus être ce qu’ils étaient, des Arabes. C’est lentement et avec méfiance qu’ils ont quitté le burnous pour le costume-trois-pièces-mocassins-noirs. En 1940, Pétain changea la donne, il les fit étoiles jaunes et indigènes. La suite vous la connaissez. Et ce monde-là est celui de la France. (122)

The French colonial “politique de séparation” (122) also fed into complicated strains of Algerian nationalism: “. . . la colonialisme fut une erreur grave et . . . aujourd’hui encore il faut considérer la violence de ce pays au regard de la pulvérisation opérée par la politique coloniale” (135). As for Rahmani, she connects the ethnic tensions heightened by colonialism and more recent French tactics during the Algerian War⁹² to

⁹² For example, the French removed *harkis* from their home villages and traditional structures in order to placing them in defense of camp-like military installations called *harkas*. The narrator calls this displacement a “technique concentrationnaire . . . basée sur la séparation des villages et des familles, des pères de leurs enfants, des mères de leurs parents, des hommes de leurs bêtes et de leurs terres” (135).

the Holocaust. Her comparative observations correspond to a broader trend that Max Silverman documents in his 2013 book, *Palimpsestic Memory: The Holocaust and Colonialism in French and Francophone Fiction and Film*. Silverman asserts that

in the immediate post-war period when returnees from the camps, commentators on the catastrophe that had just occurred and the victims of colonial dehumanization were attempting to understand the nature of racialized violence and horror, the perception of interconnections between different moments or violence was an important part of the reappraisal of the human in the wake of extreme terror. In more recent decades, however, histories of extreme violence have tended to compartmentalize memory on ethno-cultural lines. (4)⁹³

The critic goes on to suggest that literature and film, however, have more consistently continued to engage with the “superimposed traces of different histories” than more formal historical studies (4). In addition to connecting the history of anti-Semitic and colonial violence in Europe and North Africa, Rahmani’s text also draws parallels to the oppression of indigenous and enslaved peoples in the Americas (70-71).

Rahmani also incorporates a range of “superimposed traces” (Silverman 4) of a literary nature, particularly those that tie together the culture of societies bordering the Mediterranean, not unlike the situation of the neighboring tombs of Jewish, Roman, and Berber peoples. In the text, in addition to adapting Greco-Roman theatrical elements

⁹³ For a perspective from the view of political history, see also the 2010 article by Jim House, “Memory and the Creation of Solidarity During the Decolonization of Algeria.” House examines “links made by individuals and antiracist and anticolonial groups between anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, and fascism on the one hand, and forms of colonial racism and domination on the other” (16).

and Berber oral traditions,⁹⁴ she also features prominently Elias Canetti, a German-born author of Sephardic Jewish heritage who immigrated to England at the time of the *Anschluss*. For example, the paratextual quotation at the beginning of the text, only preceded by a dedication to the author's brother, comes from Canetti: "L'unique bien qui soit resté à l'homme: libérer la honte" (9). Canetti's quote encapsulates the *devoir de mémoire* essential to Moze, and Rahmani rephrases his words when the narrator addresses the *Commission* about the importance of speaking the truth about the past: "J'informerais le monde de cette trahison, ce pays, votre pays, mon pays, je le libérerais de sa honte" (142). She also opens "Act" II with a reference to the recorded version of a 1968 text by Canetti in which he transcribed the sounds and voices he heard during a visit to North Africa: "Je suis en Algérie. Je suis assise dans une pièce blanche et j'écoute une bande. C'est un enregistrement de *Voix de Marrakech*, le livre d'Elias Canetti. J'entends Allah Allah Allah Allah Allah" (83). Having returned to the land of her birth to attempt to bury her father, the narrator feels out of place, but rather than venturing into public spaces to acclimate to her surroundings, she turns to Canetti's

⁹⁴ Besides the references to her mother's oral tradition, the narrator also quotes lines from the Berber poet Si Mohand Mhand:

Ce siècle épouvante
 Qui fait le bonheur des chiens
 Et qui vous a brisés enfants de la bohème

De les fréquenter a blanchi mes cheveux
 Égaré ma raison
 On m'a surnommé Fils de Hélas

Je renonce à ce que je convoitais

The narrator then interprets the text, explaining that the older generation, already wearied by the insults of colonialism, is finally overwhelmed by "l'existence courbée, encore et toujours la même, de leur progéniture" (58).

recording to mediate her encounter. The decision to use Canetti as an intermediary corresponds to the author's broader choice to filter her family's history through a web of intertextual references.

While the narrator describes the buried *harkis* in Algeria as "living" witnesses to the country's past, when she visits the French cemetery in which Moze is interred in "Act" V, entitled "Moze parle," she attempts to have a conversation with her dead father. Moze's grave is at the periphery of town, and though his daughter remains indignant about the circumstances and location, Moze has no objections to remaining in his current location:

- Ce cimetière me convient.
- C'est un terrain vague! Même mort ça continue!
-
- L'endroit s'améliore. La compagnie s'agrandit.
- On t'a enterré devant le Zénith de la ville. Une salle de spectacles! Qui veut se divertir peut venir te saluer! (178; ellipsis mine)

As a "terrain vague," the site appears to continue the cycle of exclusion and forgetting, and the proximity of the Zénith seems irreverent. The building's function, however, also echoes the theatrical and performative aspects of the text, including this very dialogue; the encounter of an (adult) child with his or her deceased father evokes the conversation between Hamlet and his father's ghost, to cite just one example.

Unlike Hamlet's father who tells his son about the crime his brother and wife committed against him, Moze refuses to divulge the crime behind his own shame. Rather than ending with his disheartening and embarrassed refusal to speak, Rahmani

closes the novel with an epilogue consisting of a final story about her parents—and a metaphorical burial of sorts—as recounted by two French neighbors. They do not talk of Moze’s past as a *harki*, but of a time when he brings home provisions—a side of beef—for the festival of Eid, and his wife refuses to cook it because “ce n’était pas la bonne viande” according to religious requirements (185). In his frustration, Moze digs a hole and buries the beef: “Tant de viande jetée là. Il a tout recouvert. Il a fait taire tout le monde” (187). Later, in the same location, a plum tree grows, and the neighbors claim that it has “les meilleurs fruits” (184). This passage reads like a symbolic microcosm of Moze’s life. The wrong meat was sacrificed—and the wrong men were killed—and then he, knowing his error, hid his mistake and refused to express it openly. However, the fruit tree that grows from the buried meat symbolizes the fact that the past will not remain submerged and that new life springs forth even in the midst of tragedy. The text concludes in this vein: “Je veux vivre jusqu’au jour où tu porteras des fruits. C’est ce que vient de dire la femme de Moze au petit pêcher rapporté d’Algérie qu’elle a planté cet automne” (188). Moze died in November, so this peach tree planted in autumn, recalling the plum tree that grew out of the buried meat, symbolizes the fruit, illustrated by this text, that might be born out of his life and death.

Conclusion

With *Dora Bruder*, *Pas pleurer*, and *Moze*, each author seeks, in his or her unique manner, to recover or preserve a narrative about the past, given the permanent silence of the dead (in the cases of *Dora Bruder* and *Moze*) or the menacing lacunae in a loved one's memories (as with the character Montse in *Pas pleurer*). The concentration not only on the notion of memory but also on the concept of commemoration, or a formalized mode of marking or honoring memory, places the texts in dialogue with other commemorative modes, such as monumental architecture or ceremonial dates. The commemorative aspect of these books is heightened in that all of the texts analyzed in this dissertation engage in memorializing an individual who also serves as a representative of numerous other people who experienced or suffered unsettling historical events, such as the libertarian anarchist movement of the Spanish Revolution, *la Retirada* of refugees fleeing Spain for France, the Nazi Occupation of Paris, the deportation of French Jews, the Algerian War, and the French abandonment of the *harkis* after the Evian accords. The narratives also connect moments of import for national history to contemporary concerns about nationalism and the refugee crisis, in addition to issues such as how to commemorate troubling or ambiguous histories⁹⁵ and how to navigate multicultural identities (including postcolonial legacies) in France.

In the Introduction to this dissertation, I discussed how Quentin Stevens, et al., and James E. Young define countermonumental architecture, and I proposed that an equivalent countermonumental trend exists in contemporary French literature.

⁹⁵ As a recent example of the fraught nature of national memory, the French Ministry of Culture chose to include the anti-Semitic monarchist writer Charles Maurras in the *Livre de commémorations nationales de 2018* but, after significant public backlash, Minister of Culture Françoise Nyssen retracted his name.

Returning to Stevens et al.'s list of anti-monumental traits related to subject matter, form, site, experience, and meaning (outlined previously in the Introduction), we see that these three books do function in a countermonumental fashion. Following the elements listed above, first, their subject matter confronts troubling past events and tells the stories of those victimized. Further, the form of each text includes fragmented narratives (such as the chronological back-and-forth in *Dora Bruder*) and discursive voids (such as the use of blank spaces in *Moze*). Then, while the concept of site may seem less obvious in a specifically literary context, we could replace this term with "genre," contrasting these generically ambiguous semi-fictional biographies with other, more monumental, textual artifacts, such as political speeches by figures such as André Malraux and Jacques Chirac. Next, the experience of visitors can effectively be replaced by the idea of reader experience, and these narratives clearly aim to "unsettle" as well as to provide an intimate encounter with human suffering. For example, Modiano appeals to the reader to identify with Dora Bruder, to recreate in his or her imagination the details of her life, to join his narrator on a detective's hunt for personal details, and to be swept up in the tragic loss of this young woman. Salvayre invites the audience into Montse's apartment to hear her first-hand, accented account. Rahmani draws the reader into her personal grief and outrage about her father's treatment, as well as her ambivalence about his previous life and his treatment of his family once in France. Finally, each author also refuses to allow a single narrative to dominate the text and its meaning by means of including a variety of viewpoints throughout the books, as well as by having the narrators grapple with questions about how to testify for others who cannot speak out for themselves (or, in the case of Lidia and Montse, Montse can still

recount her experiences, and Lidia concerns herself with preserving her mother's memories before they are irretrievably lost).

Proceeding from Stevens, et al.'s definition in order to develop a concept of what might qualify as countermonumental literature, and having now examined three texts which bear functional and esthetic similarities to countermonuments, I propose a summary of the traits that unite these three texts as deeply countermonumental literature. Hopefully, these traits may be used to identify other works that share the aesthetic and ethical dimensions of countermonumentality in order to trace a particular strain of activism in contemporary French literature. The ethical drive in countermonumental texts reinvigorates the notion of *littérature engagée* by urging the duty to remember the past for the sake of honoring victims, exposing wrongdoing, urging accountability, and generating debate about current social or political circumstances that may perpetuate discriminatory practices or historical lacunae. Among the many elements at hand, I will examine particularly the role of the author, the foregrounding of memory and testimony, the tension between fact and fiction, and the aesthetic qualities that unite these texts.

While a countermonument or a countermonumental text need not be designed or authored by a witness to the trauma in question or by one of his or her direct descendants, each of the countermonumental texts that I examine in this dissertation is created from a postmemorial (that is, a second-generational) perspective. This second-generational dimension emphasizes the centrality of transmission; the authors received directly a familial heritage, and they, in turn, share their story with a wider public. Their narratives tell the stories of individuals, but their message applies to society more

broadly, and, especially, to European and North African societies and their understanding of their own history and identity. In *Dora Bruder*, *Pas pleurer*, and *Moze*, a central character engages intentionally in memory work, such as by investigating or testifying to a past event, often one of a profoundly traumatic nature.⁹⁶ In the texts studied here, a first-person narrator fills this role. Conceivably, this function could be taken on by a character (or characters) whose thoughts and actions are described in the third person; however, the use of the first-person point of view provides an immediacy and the impression of direct access to the character's hesitations, imperfections, etc., rather than having a potentially omniscient narrator make declarations. This presence of the narrative voice in first person also adds to the testimonial nature of the text; while the narrator may not purport to have witnessed the past trauma, he or she feels implicated in its aftermath and advocates for those affected. The use of the first person also relates to the quality of the countermonumental text as having an ambiguous relationship with fiction, since the first-person narrator may share traits with the author and could give the impression that the text is an autobiographical work though, in fact, such an assumption may prove either incorrect or impossible to verify.

The partially fictional elements in these texts underscore the constructed, imaginative dimension of memories. The process of recollection tends naturally toward arranging prior experiences into a coherent narrative arc, even though such an account

⁹⁶ As noted in Chapter 2, *Pas pleurer* engages with the Spanish Civil War and the plight of the Spanish refugees who fled to France. However, it also places a very positive memory at the core of the text: Montse's recollections of a utopian environment during the libertarian revolution. And yet, these pleasant memories are also bittersweet because the libertarian experiment was short-lived; even Montse's account of the months she spent in Barcelona are filled with references to young people preparing to go to war.

may, of course, be tempered by doubts. However, while the introduction of fictional components may further destabilize the reliability of the narrative and/or the narrator (as is most obviously the case in *Dora Bruder*), a countermonumental text also displays a deep commitment to the accuracy of documented facts; for example, Salvayre's narrator consults history books and engages with real eyewitness accounts, Modiano's narrator investigates the details of Dora Bruder's life, and Rahmani's narrator urges the transparency of government archives about the Algerian war. The compulsion to seek precision contrasts with the instability generated by fictional aspects of the narrative that relate to memory or are a stylistic reflection of the violence of trauma; this instability functions as a screen through which the reader must also engage, alongside the narrator, in the work of reconstructing and interpreting former times. The matter of accurately representing true past events—despite the challenges of creating such a representation—becomes ultimately a matter of justice, an ethical way to acknowledge the tragic suffering of individuals, as well as to highlight national culpability. These literary countermonuments demand conversations about somber moments in France's chronology (as well as Spain's and Algeria's), yet not for the mere sake of divisiveness, or what some politicians have framed as a shame-based call for repentance. Instead, these works call for openness and honesty about that which has come to pass, so that frank discussions may continue about the ongoing significance of historical traumas in the lives of individuals, as well as in the construction of social (including national) identities.

Inviting often complex dialogue, the texts themselves also incorporate multiple voices, sources, and modes of discourse. Furthermore, they draw intentionally from a

wealth of intertextual literary allusions and historical references to generate a much broader conversation about myriad connections between eras, events, and aesthetics. Indeed, the textual countermonument may escape one of the weaknesses of countermonumental architecture that Brett Ashley Kaplan documents in her 2007 book, *Unwanted Beauty*: the phenomenon that she labels the “fear of aesthetic pollution” (152). She considers this “fear of aesthetic pollution” an issue especially for countermonumental structures dedicated to the Holocaust, and she defines the expression as an emphasis on the notion that “commemorative sites dedicated to the Holocaust must not be monumental because in replicating the monumentality of fascist architecture they would reproduce the politics of fascism, hence polluting their aesthetic composition with traces of unacceptable political history” (152).⁹⁷ She suggests that this concern “has forced the architects and designers of some sites to diminish the emotional and political impact of many monuments, museums, and memorials by altering their original designs so that they are not perceived as ‘fascist’” (152). Accordingly, I propose that the avoidance of aesthetic pollution is a variation of Harold Bloom’s concept of the “anxiety of influence,” except—in the case of the countermonumental architects described by Kaplan—the artist’s sense of dread stems from fear of an ethical violation or of social condemnation. In Bloom’s model, on the other hand, authors strive for originality out of a desire to avoid mimicry of their artistic influences. Kaplan also asserts that countermonumental designers, in addition to steering away from suggestions of a fascistic aesthetic, aim for uniqueness since they intend to communicate the specificity of a trauma, while cautiously avoiding relativizing the

⁹⁷ It is important to note that Kaplan rejects the oversimplified correlation between neoclassical forms and fascism, stating that “there are no inherently guilty aesthetic forms” (163).

event (160). She suggests that, in creating Berlin's Holocaust memorial, "[a]ccording to the fear of aesthetic pollution that drives much Holocaust representation, Eisenman should have come up with an aesthetic uniquely appropriate to the unique event of the Holocaust, but . . . his appropriation of other aesthetic forms has nonetheless produced an interesting and effective commemorative site" (160). By locating Eisenman's repurposing of preexisting styles,⁹⁸ Kaplan contests the notion of representational purity and originality that artists and critics have markedly attached to questions of creating artistic representations of the Holocaust.

Compared to countermonumental architects, authors such as Modiano, Salvayre, and Rahmani would appear to be less motivated by a "fear of aesthetic pollution." First, there is no specific literary style closely associated with fascism, so the political concerns are less evident in the textual countermonument. Furthermore, while textual countermonuments may engage with experimental styles, they also, as I have shown, readily appropriate other texts—even their own prior texts (in the case of Modiano and Salvayre)—and thus they appear less preoccupied with broader concerns about influence. Throughout their texts, they adapt styles and themes from other writers, and these acts of appropriation situate these texts as joint artifacts of historical trauma and of literary heritage. For instance, in Chapter 1, I mention that Modiano relates Dora to Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, finding resonances in the themes of evasion and policing. In this way, and through many other allusions, Modiano rejects any attempt to

⁹⁸ She finds that, as an architect who engages with poststructuralism, Eisenman "employs forms that have been generated through a series of reflections on place and placelessness in postmodern life, and he is *not* therefore forging an aesthetics specific to the Holocaust" (156, italics in original). As an example, she observes links between his Holocaust memorial and two designs he created for office buildings in Japan whose appearance was intended "to produce . . . a sense of empathy for victims of earthquakes, bombs, and other forces of destruction" (159).

create an enclosed, hermetically sealed text. If he has an interest in some form of purity, it is in relation to the veracity of the details he reports about Dora Bruder. As previously mentioned, Alan Morris's "'Avec Klarsfeld Contre l'Oubli': Patrick Modiano's *Dora Bruder*" documents thoroughly Modiano's decision to revise subsequent editions of the book in order to increase their accuracy. Modiano's concern with the reliability of all reported details about Dora in *Dora Bruder* contrasts with his prior attempt to write an entirely fictional novel (*Voyage de nocces*) inspired by a single *fait divers* about the authentic Dora. Salvayre and Rahmani also appear unconcerned with stylistic contamination (given their many references to works of literature that also intentionally engage in comparative—though nuanced—historical connections). As with Modiano, Salvayre's and Rahmani's concern with accurately documenting abuses by authorities (as demonstrated by their inclusion of decrees by the government and church) relates to what I consider as their principled call for justice for prior wrongs.

The burden of the past becomes an avenue for creative exploration, though it is also fraught with questions about the ethics of representation. As described above, part of the innovative dimension in these authors' undertakings is the choice to connect with other past events and literary texts. These intertextual references and historical allusions could be read as a way to assert the legitimacy of the author's text as an artistically literary object (as opposed to popular literature, etc.) and as a document entreating the reader to engage in questions of historical justice; such a reading implies necessarily a degree of anxiety on the part of the author who may feel an obligation to convince the reader of his or her aesthetic and moral validity. At the same time, these references—which help to create rich palimpsests—allow the authors to display their confident and

competent control over the literary canon and familial (or national) history by actively deciding which allusions to perpetuate and which to suppress or to simply ignore. In this sense, the authors' choices empower them to curate the representation of a prior event via a careful selection of connections to other documented events and carefully chosen literary texts.

Finally, as a possible avenue for further research, I am interested in a closer study of the afterlife of the three countermemorial texts I examined in this dissertation. With countermonuments, which unarguably intend to generate public discussion, their reception can expose interesting societal preoccupations or fault lines. For instance, as mentioned in the Introduction, some tourists have used the Berlin Holocaust memorial as a playground (even as a skate park or a place for artistic self portraits), and one might wonder to what extent such modes of engagement were anticipated by the creators of the space. In a similar vein, with Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz's Hamburg Monument Against Fascism, Young observes that the public response included complaints about its location, because the construction of the work generated traffic-related complications, in addition to the application of anti-Semitic and neo-Nazi graffiti on the monument itself ("Counter-Monument" 281-83). The objections about inconveniences such as traffic could be interpreted as a distraction from its commemorative function, or they could be understood as another means to provoke debate about the greater inconvenience of Germany's past. Young notes that Gerz and Shalev-Gerz took the latter approach: they "intended this monument to torment—not reassure—its neighbors" like a "great black knife in the back of Germany," and they "[took] mischievous, gleeful delight in the spectacle of a German city's ritual burial of

an antifascist monument it just spent \$144,000 to make and in the social inconveniences generated by the monument” (281). When Gerz and Shalev-Gerz were asked about the graffiti, Young states that they accepted it as a barometer of German society since “resentment is a form of memory” (281). In the case of countermemorial texts, an analysis of their reception by literary critics and the broader public could also prove to be an interesting gauge of possible shifting emphases in how past traumas—especially those in which France was complicit—are perceived. Furthermore, I am interested in additional exploration of other creative projects inspired by these texts, as well as public response to those endeavors. Such a study would include analysis of the theatrical performances based on the texts by Salvayre and Rahmani (alluded to in Chapters 2 and 3) and of the “Promenade Dora Bruder” inaugurated in 2015 in the 18th arrondissement of Paris in honor of the young woman made known by Modiano’s book.

In closing, I would like to reflect on a recent memorial and museum in the south of France near Perpignan that demonstrates the interconnectedness of the historical moments described in *Dora Bruder*, *Pas pleurer*, and *Moze*. The *Mémorial du Camp de Rivesaltes* commemorates the individuals previously housed or interned in the Rivesaltes camp, including Spanish refugees in the late 1930s, French Jews, and other political “undesirables” in the early 1940s (over 2,000 of whom were deported to the German death camps), and *harkis* in the 1960s and 1970s. While none of the characters from Modiano’s, Salvayre’s, or Rahmani’s texts were housed at Rivesaltes, at least one person from each text did spend time in other, similar camps in France. Unlike the *harki* memorial in Jouques, the Quai Branly Algerian War memorial, and the speech by Jacques Chirac discussed in Chapter 3, which dwell on patriotic concepts such as *morts*

pour la France, the Rivesaltes memorial and museum articulates explicitly French failures in crucial moments during the twentieth century.

At the memorial's inauguration on 16 October 2015, Prime Minister Manuel Valls asked,

Car que sont ces pierres, sinon une mise en garde? Sinon un rempart contre les vents hostiles de l'époque?

Alors que la résurgence de l'antisémitisme, cette pourriture de l'histoire, vient ronger ce que nous sommes, alors qu'à Paris en 2014 on a crié de nouveau "mort aux Juifs," . . . alors que le racisme, la haine de l'autre, fracturent chaque jour davantage notre pacte républicain, nous ne devons à aucun moment faiblir et à aucun moment oublier. (4)

The present engagement necessitated by the texts by Modiano, Salvayre, and Rahmani is therefore reflected in the Rivesaltes memorial and in Valls's interpretation of it, which suggest that the nation's past and its lessons are urgently relevant to the present moment. In discussing the testimony of witnesses or of their descendants offered at the inaugural ceremony, Valls also states, "D'autres paroles se sont libérées, comme si au fond la mémoire avait été enfouie et qu'il avait fallu attendre la construction de ce mémorial pour qu'une forme de soulagement puisse avoir lieu, pour que la parole se libère" (2). Valls's promotion of candor in these remarks suggests a sympathetic view of the concept of *devoir de mémoire*, unlike other figures in French politics, such as Nicolas Sarkozy (as discussed in the Introduction). The Rivesaltes memorial and its inaugural speech serve, finally, as a public example of what Rahmani called "[d]es mots

qui le disent” (114) in order to “libére[r] la honte” (142), as she had insisted upon in *Moze*.

An increasing proliferation of memorials, then, both textual and architectural, testify to the past and plead for the present. However, while examples such as the *Mémorial du camp de Rivesaltes* show a possible alteration in public dialogue towards dark moments in France in the twentieth century, they do not guarantee that such a shift will gain prominence in the future. Furthermore, as historian Lyndsey Stonebridge notes after her own visit to Rivesaltes in 2017, this exceptionally self-aware memorial is in a very remote location and visitors often become lost while trying to find it (“Sacred Memory”). In contrast to the memorial, then, in a practical sphere, the texts of Modiano, Salvayre, and Rahmani are inherently simpler to access (that is, simple as regards their acquisition; their content and style, on the other hand, may render them less easily accessible in a metaphorical sense, which serves the purpose of jolting the reader out of passive consumption of the text) in that they are widely available through their multiple copies. Indeed, the very medium of the book lends itself to the concept of transmission (as a book may obviously be given to another reader), a notion that reinforces the important motifs of heritage found in *Dora Bruder*, *Pas pleurer*, or *Moze*. It is especially the sensation of the obligation to recount, or even curate, the family’s memories that leads to an act of artistic creation, which embodies both a conversation with the dead and a testimony to pass on to others.

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