The Algerian War Era Through a Twenty-First Century Lens:

French Films 2005-2007

by
Nicole Beth Wallenbrock

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in French in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the City University of New York

2012

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in French in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Jerry Carlson

December 13, 2011 ______________________________

Chair of Examining Committee

Peter Consenstein

December 13, 2011 ______________________________

Executive Officer

Royal Brown ______________________________

Jonathan Buchsbaum ______________________________

Jerry Carlson ______________________________

(Supervisory Committee)

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

THE ALGERIAN WAR ERA THROUGH A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY LENS:

FRENCH FILMS 2005-2007

By Nicole Beth Wallenbrock

Directed by Jerry Carlson

This dissertation addresses French films made between 2005 and 2007 in which the Algerian War serves as a cinematic subject and setting. The Algerian War as a film genre has never been more significant than post-2005; in fact, ten films (either set during the war or that make important reference to the conflict) were made between 2005 and 2007, more than in any previous decade. My project thus examines the reasons for the frequency of the Algerian War in cinema during this time period. The policies of Jacques Chirac and Nicolas Sarkozy, the rise of second and third-generation North-African immigrants, and the revelation through recent literature and media of previously unknown acts of torture that took place during the Algerian War increased interest in the subject. I investigate how these historical phenomena surface directly and indirectly in contemporary cinema, revealing the current place of the Algerian War in the popular imagination. In chapter 1, I generally discuss all Algerian-War films before 2005, presenting the New Wave as a development concurrent with the war in a study of *Le petit soldat* (made in 1960 released in 1963) and *Muriel ou le temps d'un retours* (1963). The chapter concludes with an investigation of the reception of the Italian-Algerian production *La Battaglia di Algeri* (1966) in France. In the following three chapters, I place recent films in thematic pairs: Chapter 2 The PTSD flashback: *Caché* (2005) and *Mon Colonel* (2006), Chapter 3 Victim or

Perpetrator?: *L'ennemi intime* (2007) and *La trahison* (2005), Chapter 4 The Child Immigrant and the Child Witness: *Michou d'Auber* (2007) and *Les Cartouches Gauloises* (2007). These films alter, amplify, and adjust the meaning of the war period to correspond to recent historical findings and a changing political climate in the twenty-first century. As a multicultural French population confronts the legacy of colonialism with growing magnitude in the streets, the classrooms, and courts, a study of the concurrent cinema is imperative. These films represent a discourse in which memory and nationalism intersect, critiquing the past and present.

Acknowledgements

I would above all like to thank my mother, a French scholar herself, who offered unending support to this dissertation. My director, Jerry Carlson, helped many of these ideas come to fruition and his belief in the project secured my confidence. Although I was unable to continue working with David A. Gerstner, I learned immensely from his early guidance. I would also like to thank Jonathan Buchsbaum for encouraging a cinema studies approach that added a new dimension to my style and analysis. I am grateful to Marnia Lazreg with whom I audited a course on torture during the Algerian War in 2007. Her lectures and writing provided much of my historical background. In a very different realm, I must mention Wayne Koenstenbaum, with whom I audited a course on repetition in 2009. Although Wayne did not obviously contribute to this dissertation, his teaching style and eclectic writing continue to inspire my most creative writing impulses. Furthermore, I cannot forget William Wilson, a departed Bard College professor, who taught a course entitled "Voltaire-Flaubert" my freshman year. My memories of this course continually remind me how to read and how to teach, and above all, the joy of learning.

Table of Contents

Title page……………………………………………………………………………..i

Approval page…………………………………………………………………….....ii

Abstract………………………………………………………………………………iii

Acknowledgments……………………………………………………………………v

Table of Contents…………………………………………………………………..vi

Illustrations…………………………………………………………………………vii

Introduction………………………………………………………………………..1

Chapter 1 Algerian-War Torture in 60s cinema:
Le Petit soldat, *Muriel ou le temps d'un retour* and *La Battaglia di Algeri*…………………..14

Chapter 2 The PTSD Flashback : *Caché* and *L'Ennemi intime*…………………………………83

Chapter 3 Chapter 3 Victim or Perpetrator ?: *L'Ennemi intime* and *La Trahison*…………..134

Chapter 4 The Child Immigrant and the Child Witness:
Michou d'Auber and *Cartouches gauloises*………………………………………………....186

Conclusion…………………………………………………………………………..258

Appendix……………………………………………………………………………267

Bibliography……………………………………………………………. ………….....272

Filmography…………………………………………………………. …………….291

Illustrations

Chapter 1

Le Petit Soldat A.1-A.4…………………………………………………………..80

Muriel ou le temps d'un retours B.1-B.4…………………………………………81

La Battaglia di Algeri C.1-C.5……………………………………………………83

Chapter 2

Caché D.1-D.2……………………………………………………………………113

Caché D.3-D.5…………………………………………………………………...114

Caché D.6-D.8…………………………………………………………………...115

Caché D.9-D.11…………………………………………………………….......116

Mon colonel E.1-E.5……………………………………………………………..131

Caché D.13-D.15…………………………………………………………………132

Caché D.16………………………………………………………………………133

Chapter 3

L'Ennemi intime F.1-F.7…………………………………………………………184

La Trahison G.1-G.7……………………………………………………………...185

Chapter 4

Le Viel homme et l'enfant H.1, *Michou d'Auber* H.2-H.4,

and *Paul as Pierrot* H.5…………………………………………………………...254

Michou d'Auber H.6-H.10………………………………………………………...255

Cartouches gauloises I.1-I.4……………………………………………………....256

Cartouches gauloises I.5-1.7, I.9 and *Roma : Città Aperta* I.8, I.10……………………...257

Introduction

My dissertation addresses French films made between 2005 and 2007 in which the Algerian War of Independence serves as the cinematic subject and setting. The Algerian War as a film genre has never been more significant in France than post-2005; in fact, eleven feature-length French fiction films (either set during the war or that make important reference to the conflict) have been made since 2005.[1] This half decade of the Algerian War in French film surpasses the output of the war-period and its immediate aftermath; eight films about the Algerian War were made by French directors during the 60s, only seven in the 70s. My project thus examines the reasons for the frequency of the Algerian War in French cinema during 2005-2007; the political climate in the final years of Jacques Chirac's presidency, which prepared France for the candidacy and eventual presidency of Nicholas Sarkozy, the concurrent rise of second- and third-generation North-African immigrants (France has the highest Maghrebi population in Europe), and the revelation through literature and media of previously undocumented acts of torture that took place during the Algerian War. I investigate how these historical phenomena surface directly and indirectly in contemporary cinema, revealing the place of the Algerian War in the popular French imagination in the two years preceding Sarkozy's presidency and during his first year in office. These recent films alter, amplify, and adjust the meaning of the war period to correspond to recent historical findings and a changing, twenty-first century, political climate. As a multicultural French population confronts the legacy of colonialism with growing magnitude in the streets, the classrooms, and courts, a study of the concurrent cinema is imperative. These films represent a discourse in which memory and nationalism intersect, critiquing the past and present.

A Historical Context

A strong historical background in the Algerian War guides my analysis of the films; one must know what occurred in order to distinguish between verity and fiction in the twenty-first century depictions. Texts written during the war such as *La Guerre Moderne* by Robert Triniquer, which apologized for torture, and *La Question* by Henri Alleg, which condemned the practice, provide unique insight into the reasoning behind the military's practice, as well as the anti-war movement. However, as my project considers why the Algerian War became a popular cinematic subject in 2005-2007, I also examine recent historical texts that revisit the war-era, and how these books influenced the larger media, and thus the popular understanding of the Algerian War.

In general, historians' investigating the Algerian War preceded the wave of films. Jean-Luc Einaudi's work demonstrates how police bombarded a peaceful march for Algerian independence in Paris and killed as many as 200 demonstrators on October 17, 1961[2].Although Le Seuil published a new edition of Einaudi's *La Bataille de Paris-17 octobre 1961* in 2001, the original print was ten years earlier, before the government's acknowledgement of the violent event (See Chapter 2). Cinema's address of the scandal helped disseminate the facts: first a documentary *17 octobre 1961: dissimulation d'un massacre* by Daniel Kupsterstein, that Michael Haneke viewed on television and inspired the historical trajectory of his film *Caché* (2005) and also Alain Tasma's film, *La nuit noire*: *17 octobre 1961* (2005) which was made for television but also played in theaters to mark the 44th anniversary massacre. Cinema's renewed interest in the Paris Massacre continues today. As I discuss in the conclusion, Rachid Bouchareb's *Hors la*

[2] After Einaudi gained the public's interest in their own ignoble past he published a second book with photos of the massacre in 2001, *17 Octobre 1961*.

loi (2010) culminates and concludes with a violent depiction of the massacre, and *Ici, on noie les Algeriens* a documentary, premiered to memorialize 50th anniversary in 2011. Furthermore, after the death of Jacques Panijel, his censored documentary piece *Octobre à Paris*, made in 1961, was finally released to theaters and on DVD. In this way, we see how a historian's examination of the police crime, brought about the cinematic one, inducing a larger national awareness, which is still, twenty years later, questioning the acts committed by the police and the military, as well as their censorship.

Raphaelle Branche's *La torture et l'armée pendant la guerre d'Algérie 1945-1962*, also largely impacted the twenty-first century definition of the Algerian War, and subsequently French cinema. When previously concealed French military records concerning the Algerian War were "officially" open to the public for a decade, 1987-1997,[3] Branche researched the military's practice of psychological warfare in Algeria, with staggering results. Her book brought new attention to the torture committed. The fascination, confusion, and anger over torture committed by the military surfaces in *La Trahison*, *Mon colonel*, and *Cartouches gauloises.* However, as Patrick Rotman specifically probed the effects of torturing on the torturer in his interviews with veterans (*La guerre sans nom : les appelés d'Algérie (1954-1962)* (2001) and *L'ennemi intime* (2002)) before directing and producing a documentary on the subject, the fiction film based on his book and documentary, *L'ennemi intime*, whose screenplay he co-wrote, offers the sole reenactment of a torture session. The work of Branche and Rotman from 2001 and 2002,

[3] Marnia Lazreg conducted research in the military archives during this time period. She explained during her fall 2007 seminar course, "Torture and Empire," that important pages were many times missing, and that often words were redacted.

demonstrates how the historical study of the torture policy in documents, encouraged and demanded a cinematic representation found several years later.

Benjamin Stora's *La Gangrène et l'oubli* (1992) made an initial impact, and specifically addressed the lack of French interest in the Algerian War in its aftermath. Stora broke ground as he utilized psychoanalytic terminology to address France's dismissal of the war and found a *réfoulement* in the general public. He secured this approach with specific historical data concerning both France and Algeria. In this way, the project was courageously bi-lateral and asked contemporary post-colonial questions concerning the consequences of the Algerian War on both France and its former colony. The new interest in the topic compounded with the book's success rendered a second edition in 2005. Stora continued and continues to write histories of the Algerian War that are popular and make television and radio appearances.

While it is not clear if the historical press found the Algerian War timely due to the contemporary politics of France, or if inversely, a larger awareness of the past war instigated by historians formulated contemporary French politics, we find politics and historical studies coalescing in the years preceding and concurrent to the films' premieres. Thus, a study of contemporary French politics equally guides my study. For such information, I relied heavily on French press, specifically the newspaper *Le Monde*, and magazines such as *Le point* and *Le Nouvel Observateur*. The now defunct French government website on national identity demonstrated the fascination with the Sarkozian campaign concept, and how the UMP (Union pour un Mouvement Populaire) abandoned it when it became political liability in 2010. Likewise, very recent politics post-dating the films by several years concerning the expulsion of Roms (a nomadic population originating from Romania) and the interdiction of the *niquab* (an Islamic

veil that covers a woman's face except for her eyes) situate the films within a specific Sarkozian moment.

The memory of the Algerian War became especially current due to the February 23, 2005, colonization law. Article 4 of this law sought to enforce the positive role of the French presence abroad in high school courses with an emphasis on North Africa. By featuring both conservative senators in favor of the law and opposing academics that detested the article's implications, the media inflamed the controversy. After nearly a year of debate, the senate dismantled the law in January of 2006. Although this specific effort to officialize French history was short-lived, the colonization law of 2005 put the historical events of the Algerian War into relief with the present; in this way the national memory and its fragile future were challenged.

Article 4 was an attempt by the French government to ameliorate its reputation, after the popularity of books by Einaudi, Branche, and Stora. The war crimes were additionally making strong currents in visual media when both General Aussaresses and Maurice Papon[4] (the head of Paris police at the time of the Paris Massacre) were stripped of their Legions of Honor. Journalists investigated these stories and discovered even more occurrences of torture committed during the Algerian War.

A cluster of banlieu riots in 2005 increased the furor over revelations of Algerian-War crimes. The participants in the riots were primarily second- and third-generation Africans and North Africans, a fact that forced the international community to question the so-called solidarity

[4] Although Papon is not central to this dissertation, he is an important historical figure. Papon's release from prison in 2004 for health care provoked much debate, and his death also renewed interest in the Paris massacre.

of France and the origins of the current malaise. The catalyst for the riot – the electrocution of two teens hiding from the police in a sub-electric system – publicly demonstrated the entrenched divisions in economy, community, and opportunity that occurred across racial lines. France could no longer ignore the legacy of colonialism. The riots destroyed nearly 9,000 cars by fire and affected 274 towns. The reinstatement of *l'état d'urgence* (not coincidentally, a law which France had instituted during the Algerian conflict) further highlighted the relationship of the 2005 riots to the war. During a state of emergency, the president holds more power over the government, police may search without permission 24/7, and a curfew is enforced. The reinstitution of the state of emergency squarely placed the civil unrest of 2005 in the context of the Algerian War, since it recalled violence and murder exchanged between police and Algerians forty-some years earlier. The Algerian War for Independence (which had only received the right to be entitled "war" in 1999 by the French government) was now through broad media coverage of the 2005 riots, the colonization law, and past torture crimes, rewritten as an epoch of shame. Despite decades of hiding and censoring the actuality of French combat, symbols and effects of psychological warfare now reemerged in political and cultural spheres.

Not insignificantly, cinema followed the trend set by reporters. On October 17th of 2005, coinciding with the 44th anniversary of the 1961 Paris massacre, two films, *La Nuit Noire* and *Caché*, which reference the slaughter, premiered.[5] The Paris Massacre was now central to

[5] Although Michael Haneke, the director of *Caché,* is Austrian, I consider *Caché* a French film. It is Haneke's third film in French; it is set and filmed in France and features exclusively French actors. Furthermore, a French company, Les Films de Losange, produced the film. This is not to say that Haneke's nationality does not pose interesting questions of othering, similar to Pontecorvo's Italian nationality, or even Jean-Luc Godard's Swiss background—the dissertation will explore all such tendencies of othering and nationalism.

France's cinematic imagination. Ten days later, proving the relevance of the films, the first in a string of *banlieue* riots occurred in Clichy-sous-bois. As the senate debated the pedagogy of the Algerian War, cinema taught what had been previously censored.

A dissertation, French Algerian-War Films from 2005-2007

Although this dissertation primarily studies films made during a three-year period forty some years after the war they depict, I ground my analysis in three pivotal films from the 1960s that exceptionally portrayed torture, and or the effect of torturing; *Le Petit Soldat* by Jean-Luc Godard (made in 1960, released in 1963), *Muriel ou le temps d'un retour* by Alain Resnais (1963), and the Italian-Algerian production *La Battaglia di Algeri* by Gillo Pontecorvo (1966). One finds many references to the use of torture during the Algerian War in the films of 2005-2007, and even the portrayal of perpetrator guilt. Therefore, I study these first cinematic attempts of the French interrogation technique early in the dissertation, so that the reader may view in proceeding chapters how twenty-first century productions alter the discourse in accordance with their proper political climate. Both New Wave productions, *Le Petit Soldat* and *Muriel*, are set in Europe, and both were conceived before the Evian Accords when the government censure exercised extreme vigilance concerning any reference to Algeria.[6] Therefore, these New Wave films portray the French political atmosphere pre-Algerian independence, but simultaneously confront such censorship and denial.

I have chosen to include the Italian-Algerian production *La Battaglia di Algeri* in this study of French films; despite infrequent screenings and unavailability in France until 2004, *La*

[6] The censure still exists today though it is less cautious.

Battaglia greatly impacted French popular culture. Pontecorvo's film caused international discussion of torture and of the Algerian War, and the French critical press reacted defensively, refusing to confront the war depicted. The Italian nationality of the director further problematized a French reaction, which viewed Pontecorvo as condemning and cruel in his depictions of the French. For this reason, after studying the film's most iconic scenes, which the 2005-2007 films reference with frequency, the torture montage, the bombings of French cafés, and the use of children, I will consider the film's reception in France. As the *La Bataille*'s television premiere and re-release occurred in 2004, one year before the dissertation's central thrust, I will closely study the French critical response in this year, particularly in *Les Cahiers du Cinéma*.

While several television films of interest were also made between 2005-2007, I have limited my study to feature films made for theatrical screenings. I would add that though documentaries, several made for television, preceded and encouraged the fiction films made about the Algerian War, they are outside of the realms of this study.[7] Instead, this dissertation addresses fiction films, as their directors and crew interpret the conflict in a wholly creative manner, which allows for a study of sets, mise-en-scène, casting, and evocative camera-work. I have paired the six remaining films in chapters: *Mon colonel* and *Caché* in Chapter 2, *L'ennemi intime* and *La Trahison* in Chapter 3, *Michou d'Auber* and *Cartouches Gauloises* in Chapter 4. In each chapter, the first film discussed follows a more mainstream trajectory in terms of French

[7] *Une autre guerre d'Algérie (*Dir. Djamel Zaoui, 2003), *Un rêve algérien* (Dir. Jean-Pierre Lledo, 2003), *C'était pas la guerre* (Dir. Alexdrine Brisson, 2003)

nationalism, and technique, and accessibility for a mainstream public. This allows for an interesting contrast in the second half of the chapters, in which I analyze a more confrontational, art-house, feature, several of which contain elements of Algerian nationalism.

The flashback form, an element of narration in *La Battaglia di Algeri*, finds new relevance in twenty-first century films concerning the Algerian-war period. The past war has particular political significance in contemporary France due in part to a large immigrant, and second- and third-generation immigrant population from Maghrebi in France. Furthermore, the *Front National*, whose anti-immigrant platform relates to the founder's Algerian War service as a paratrooper, has never been more popular than in the twenty-first century. In fact, Jean-Marie Le Pen was in the second round of the presidential elections in 2002.[8] Therefore, the interchange of the Algerian-war epoch and the present illustrates the effects of the conflict on contemporary French society. The two films paired in Chapter 2, the Costa-Gavras production *Mon colonel* by Laurent Herbiet and the internationally successful *Caché* by widely regarded Austrian auteur, Michael Haneke, demonstrate the Algerian-war past resurging in France's present.

I begin by researching the term flashback, and its association with both film and the psychological disorder PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). This definition enables my study of a form that portrays an Algerian-war era trauma; the flashbacks of *Caché* reveal a childhood trauma surrounding the Paris Massacre, and the flashbacks of *Mon Colonel* depict an intergenerational post-trauma of war. Although French press received Michael Haneke's film

[8] What ultimately became Sarkozy's party, the centrist right-wing UMP (Union pour un Mouvement Populaire), formed after the election demonstrated the National Front's broad success. The UMP continues to adopt FN issues of nationalism and immigration in order to win right-wing votes.

favorably, reviewers did not dwell on the film's reference to the Paris Massacre, which proves to be the motor of a plot concerning French society's guilt and racism. For this reason my study relies on interviews with the director, as well as scholastic studies in British and American journals. *Mon colonel* was virtually ignored by French as well as international press and or academic studies. Therefore the principal text that informs my study of the film is Sigmund Freud's description of a father's dream of his child who had recently died from fever. The film's narrative, dependent on expositive flashbacks, reveals letters written by a soldier, that his father only finds and reads several decades after the Algerian War in which his son was labeled MIA. Thus, the dream recounted by Freud, in which the child says, "Father, I'm burning", demonstrates the same elements of paternal guilt, and revenge, found in the film, symbolic of a contemporary French malaise that questions whether it is too late for vengeance.

I follow my study of the flashback in the 2005-2007 film of the Algerian war-era, with an analysis of two films set in French military camps in Algeria in 1959: *La trahison* (2005) and 1960 *L'ennemi intime* (2007). *L'ennemi intime* can be compared with the American film, *Platoon*, for several reasons; there are scenes of bombings, including a napalm bomb, and ground battles. Although the starring platoon of *L'ennemi intime* includes several *harkis* (Algerians who worked for the French military) the central characters are French. Torture is a key theme of the film, and the main character is a French humanitarian (Lieutenant Terrien, played by Benoît Magimel) who is driven to torture others through combat. In discussing torture, I rely on Marnia Lazreg's *Torture and Twilight of Empire* : *From Algiers to Baghdad* which provides a well-researched background into the practice during the Algerian war, as well as the military motivation and reasoning. The film serves as a psychological portrait of war (a character who once sympathized with the FLN eventually hates and tortures its members.) Although

L'ennemi intime depicts the pain and violence of torture with realism, it also excuses the French military by depicting torture as a natural reaction to guerrilla warfare. Ultimately, the film portrays the military favorably; French soldiers torture, but only in revenge for the loss of their comrades.

The film *La trahison*, based on the autobiographical novel by Claude Sales, describes Sales' service as a lieutenant in Algeria and his reluctant decision to accuse a *harki* of conspiring with the FLN for his murder. Like *L'ennemi intime, La Trahison* demonstrates the ambivalence of the French military, but the film equally and exceptionally depicts the ambivalence of *harki* soldiers who suffer with contradictory loyalties. Although *La Trahison* depicts torture less directly, the interrogation practice surfaces as an abhorrent element of the war that prolongs the decision by Rogue (Vincent Martinez) to report his *harki* comrade, Taieb (Ahmed Berrhama), for plotting with the FLN against him. Rogue understands Taieb's reasoning, and contrary to the patriotic portrayal of the military in *L'ennemi intime,* there is no French uplift.

While the child is a symbolic element of *La Battaglia di Algeri*, children do not participate in the Algerian-war films of the 60s or 70s and thus appear as a post-2005 development of the genre. As a touchstone of humanity, the child represents primitive innocence and fear, and acts as a cathartic device. For example in *L'ennemi intime*, the French military protects an orphaned Algerian boy after the FLN vengefully murders his village. In this manner, the narrative represents France as an adopting parent to Algeria. This treatment of the child in the

Algerian-war film is specific to the post-2005 renaissance. In Chapter 4 I will analyze two films starring children, *Michou d'Auber* (2007) and *Cartouches gauloises* (2007).[9]

Although both films take place during the Algerian War, their locations offer alternate perspectives of the war and cater to different genres. *Michou d'Auber*, set in the peaceful *métropole*, allows for comedy in a family film, while *Cartouches gauloises*, proffers a very grim view of daily life in Algeria during the last weeks of French rule. Still, both films utilize children as innocent and pure witnesses who struggle to understand the hatred and racism of adults. Athough *Michou d'Auber* is a mainstream comedy-drama filmed in Berry with two of France's highest paid actors, and *Cartouches gauloises* was filmed in Algeria with a cast of non-professionals, both films employ the perspective of a bewildered child to obtain sympathy and anger from the audience. Yet despite the common use of the child, themes of patriotism are opposed. Mehdi Charef, a *beur* (a North African living permanently in France) author of many novels and films, depicts his memories of the revolution before moving to France and complicates his French film with Algerian influences. On the other hand, Thomas Gilou co-wrote and directed *Michou d'Auber* with Messaoud Hattou, which is based loosely on Hattou's experience in a French foster home. Both films which premiered in the year of Sarkozy's election adhere to the French politics of their era: *Michou d'Auber* demonstrates Sarkozy's views on immigration (relayed by Gérard Noiriel in *A quoi sert l'identité nationale?*) as directly as the accessible film, and *Cartouches gauloises* portrays the dual loss of France and Algeria during the warfare, despite a celebration in the film's final minutes which recalls *La Battaglia di Algeri.*

[9] It should be added that the presumed innocence of children is questioned with insinuations that Georges' son is involved with sending the surveillance videocassettes to his father in *Caché.* In this manner Haneke subverts the audience's faith in the traditional film narrative and its use of children as a symbol of purity.

This dissertation approaches the recent French Algerian-War films as a discourse, investigating how the similarities and contradictions of the films reveal the national memory of France in these recent years. Undoubtedly, the six films studied in this dissertation span a variety of styles and themes. Yet, each shares an insistence on the memory of the Algerian-war era in the twenty-first century and resolves to retrospectively confront the war and its negative effects. In this way, my corpus demonstrates a weighty debate between a critique of France and national uplift, and not incongruously, between current historical findings and past censorship.

Chapter 1. Algerian-War Torture in 60s cinema:

Le Petit soldat*, *Muriel ou le temps d'un retour* and *La Battaglia di Algeri

La Nouvelle Vague and the Algerian War

Although many view the New Wave of French cinema as a post-war phenomenon, shaped in large part by new access to American films banned during the Second World War and technological progress, we should understand the movement equally as a development concurrent with the Algerian War. The movement, born of *cinémathèques* and film criticism, questioned form as much as content, resulting in films that confronted the French establishment. François Truffaut's ideological declaration of the *auteur* theory and a new French cinema, "Une certaine tendance du cinéma français" appeared in the November 1954 issue of *Les Cahiers du cinéma*. Demonstrating the Algerian War's simultaneity, the first of that same month the FLN launched attacks against French colonists and became known as *la Toussaint Sanglante*, the beginning of what the French government would eventually in 1999 term war. Though New Wave directors continued to make films during the war, the heart of the movement is frequently understood as ending in the early 60s—Michel Marie claims 1963 as the last year of the New Wave—indicating the movement's proximity to the Evian Accords (July 1, 1962) that represent for many the conclusion of the Algerian War. The cover of the December 1962 issue of *Les Cahiers du cinéma* pictures Jean Seberg of *A bout de souffle* with the headline, "La nouvelle vague : une légende en question." This end of the year cover demonstrates the founding New Wave magazine relegating the movement's pertinence to the past while debating its uncertain future. As young men served the required 18 months in the military (which became 27 months in

April of 1958)[10] and as many were then recalled for six months and drafted across the Mediterranean, young directors at home experimented with narrative form and garnered international accolades. *Les événements d'Algérie*, as the war was then called, escalated as the two most famous New Wave films appeared: *400 coups* (Nov. 1959) and *A bout de soufflé* (1960). At this time, 60,000 *harkis* or *soldats supplétifs* served France with over 440,000 French soldiers in Algeria—seven times the number of soldiers there in 1954.[11] The New Wave director, Alain Resnais emphasized the importance of the conflict to the movement saying in the early 60s, "on ne peut pas faire de film, en France, sans parler de la guerre d'Algérie."[12]

Sam Di Iorio argues that André Bazin's theory of total cinema (that film and its advances derive from our mimetic impulses) was one aspect of a larger "discourse of 'truth'" taking place with lighter cameras, live sound, and *cinéma vérité*.[13] Furthermore, as Di Iorio and Michael Rothberg prove respectfully in their discussion of *Chronique d'un été*, the new insistence on truth in French cinema cannot be separated from the film community's general discontent with

---

[10] Jean-Charles Jauffret, *Soldats en Algérie, 1954-1962 : expériences contrastées des hommes du contingent* (Paris : Autrement, 2000) 27.

[11] Jauffret, 80.

[12] Resnais' statement actually concerns *L'année dernière à Marienbad.* Resnais continues to say, "D'ailleurs je me demande si l'atmosphère close et étouffante de *l'Année dernière à Marienbad* ne résulte pas de ces contradictions sur cette guerre qui n'en finit plus. " *Image et Son* 158 (1963) found in Rachid Boudjedra, *Naissance du cinéma algérien* (Paris : Maspéro, 1971) : 24.

[13] Sam Di Iorio, "Total Cinema: *Chronique d'un été* and the End of Bazinian Film Theory," *Screen: the journal of Society for Education in Film and Television* 48.1 (2007): 25-43.

the military involvement abroad.[14] In fact, in 1960, many writers, from the *Cahiers du cinéma* and *Positif* as well as New Wave directors François Truffaut and Alain Resnais, signed the *Manifeste des 121*, more formally known as the "Déclaration sur le droit à l'insoumission dans la guerre d'Algérie". [15] Though the censure always attempted to control French morals (Roger Vadim's *Les Liaisons dangereuses* was also banned in 1960), censuring became increasingly political in order to keep the public comprehension of the Algerian War minimal and national sentiment of the French presence abroad favorable. Directors resented the *la commission de contrôle*'s dictates over their expression, which only increased an anti-war/anti-government sentiment in their films and encouraged a rebellion that acclaimed film's truth-telling powers. When General De Gaulle returned to presidency in 1958 and formed the fifth Republic of France, he created a ministry of culture headed by author André Malraux. While Malraux certainly encouraged the New Wave financially by basing government funding less on box office receipts, the *commission de contrôle* restricted artistic impulses by banning any portrayal of torture or the Algerian War in films. Though only three feature length films about the conflict were made before the Evian accords (*La Belle Vie* (1958), *Le Petit soldat* and *Tu ne tueras point* (1960), all debuting after the war ended and the censure was lifted), eight short films made in France about

[14] Michael Rothberg, "The Work of testimony in the age of decolonization: *Chronicle d'un été*, *cinéma vérité*, and the emergence of the holocaust survivor," *PMLA* 119.5 (2004): 1231-46.

[15] The declaration appeared in the leftist magazine *Vérité-Liberté*. The document specifically denounces the use of torture in Algeria.

the Algerian War that were banned, screened in underground spaces via the circuit of *cinéma parallel*.[16]

Furthermore, some filmmakers who did not address the war directly, made indirect allusions to the conflict. In fact, Resnais stated that *Nuit et brouillard* (1954) which largely photographs concentration camps from the Holocaust, warns France about the Algerian War. Jean Dewever, the director of *Les Honneurs de la guerre* (made in 1960) claims the story of soldiers objecting during World War II pertains to the Algerian conflict—this allusion, not subtle enough, caused the *commission de contrôle* to ban it until 1962.[17] Subjects discuss the Algerian War in *Chronique d'un été*, a documentary collaboration between Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin, but after editing, only a befuddled dialogue remains, obscuring any anti-Algerian War sentiment. If the filmmakers avoided banning through self-censoring, they were successful; *Chronique d'un été* was the first French film screened publicly to broach the conflict.

---

[16] *5-8 2-B.* (Guy Chalon, 1959), *S.P. 89098.* (Philippe Durand, 1959), *Le retour.* (Daniel Goldenberg, 1961), *J'ai huit ans.* (René Vautier, Olga Baïdar-Poliakoff, Yann LeMasson, 1961), *Parfois le dimanche.* (Ado Kyro, 1961), *Demain l'amour* (Dir. Paul Carpita, 1962), *Fille de la route.* (Louis Terme, 1962), *La quill.* (Jean Herman, 1962), *27 mois après.* (Jean-Claude Bourlat, 1963). Although the filmmakers published their manifesto a few years after the war, it does say, "L'Algérie ou l'avortement …autant de sujets qui heurtaient le conformisme béat et contre lesquels veille la Censure, la censure du pouvoir comme la censure de l'argent…Les Resnais, les Marker, les Autant-Lara et autres cinéastes courageux doivent pour voir leurs films distribués, choisir l'ambiguité. Leurs secrètes intentions n'ont, c'est le moins que l'on puisse en dire, aucune chance d'être comprises par le public…" Francis Courtade, *Les Maledictions du Cinéma Français* (Paris: Éditions Alain Moreau, 1978) 262.

[17] Courtade, 266.

After the Evian Accords, we find more cinematic expression of the war and trauma: In *Le Joli mai* (1966)*,* Chris Marker's more political take of *Chronique d'un été*, he asks veterans how they understand Algeria in 1962, exposing the veterans' and the general population's disinterest. *Cléo de 5 à 7* (1962) and *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg* (1964) primarily reference the war from France, yet it is still a life-threatening experience that hinders love relationships (Demy states in *Jacquot de Nantes* (1991) that *Les Parapluies* is about the after effects of the war). Although the director, Robert Enrico, was not part of the New Wave, his black and white film made on a low-budget and without a studio, demonstrates the New Wave's influence. Made in 1959 and banned until 1962, *La Belle Vie* is the first film in which an Algerian War veteran suffers from flashbacks. Directly after the veteran's audial flashbacks, documentary footage of warfare, and/or riots appear, predating *La Bataglia di Algeri*'s mix of documentary style within a fiction film. Unfortunately, due to cuts made by the censure, these scenes only disrupt the narrative, and like the round table discussion of the Algerian War in *Chronique d'un été*, perplex the viewer.[18]

The New Wave, a movement of the late 50s and early 60s, cannot be extracted from a France struggling to keep its empire. An atmosphere of censorship and denial, in which underground organizations fought against censorship and for Algerian independence, is the same environment that created such curious, experimental, narrative films. In a more careful probing of the epoch's content, allusions to the Algerian War are less rare than commonly suspected. The New Wave's interrogation of form poses still deeper questions about expectations and trust

---

[18] I hope in the future to research the film and to find evidence of the director's intention, as well as references to these scenes of demonstrations in which *gendarmes* are seen storming the *métro*.

running parallel a deceitful government's attempt to hide a war abroad. Of the films about the Algerian War, *Le Petit soldat* and *Muriel* are the most successful, commercially in a retroactive sense (perhaps due to the directors' *auteur* status), as well as critically. Yet both films do not directly confront their primary subject matter. They present the war, but from Switzerland and France respectively. Furthermore, *Muriel* demonstrates the effects of a soldier's traumatic experience rather than warfare. Yet, both Godard and Resnais do question the torture practice widely rumored by the left press. As these films are the first in French cinema to discuss the torture taking place during the Algerian War, their study is imperative in situating the post-2005 films made after the twenty-first century revelation of torture. Made, or conceived in *Muriel's* case, at the height of the French censure, both films comment on censorship while inciting it. As these two French films discussed French military torture techniques years before Gillo Pontecorvo's *La Battaglia di Algeri*, an analysis of their approach to the Algerian War will introduce and contextualize Pontecorvo's film as well as the French reception of the Italian-Algerian production.

Le Petit soldat

"La photographie, c'est la vérité, et le cinéma, c'est 24 fois la vérité par seconde,"

The above, often cited Godard aphorism is actually dialogue from *Le Petit soldat*; Bruno (Michel Subor), the protagonist, makes the statement as he snaps shots of Veronica (Anna Karina), an attractive young woman he has recently met. However, if considering the historical circumstances of French filmmakers in 1959, the aphorism represents much more than a flirtatious show of wit. On closer inspection, the statement encapsulates the Bazinian theory of total cinema already mentioned, but doubly defies the censure. The SCA (*Service*

Cinématographique de l'Armée) provided nearly every image of Algeria in French media, selecting shots and footage that encouraged the myth of pacification. On television and in newsreels by the SCA, happy soldiers provide food and healthcare to indigenous people, children in particular. Additionally, *la Commission de Contrôle* helped to ensure naïve public support by banning any media that questioned or exposed the violence of French involvement (eventually public support waned due to contrary reports from veterans as well as efforts by underground organizations). Cinema's relationship to truth has always been complicated in Godard's œuvre, as a *mise-en-abyme* often reveals the process of illusion in cinema; whether characters speak to the camera (*A bout de souffle*, *Une Femme est une femme* etc.) or there is a shot of a camera (*Le Mépris*), Godard surprises the public by exchanging what has come to symbolize reality, for reality itself. Here, by claiming cinema's truth telling power in a film about Algerian-War espionage and torture, Godard advertises his product, and fully aware of his inflammatory subject matter, dares the censure.[19] In *Le Petit soldat*, Godard depicts supporters for Algerian Independence and advocates of French imperialism as equal alternatives with torture as their commonality. Simply acknowledging the conflict abroad and the resulting violence in Europe, reveals the actuality of the Algerian War to the public. The discussion of torture, utterly banned, is another attempt at proving cinema's powers.

[19] Although unrelated to the Algerian War, Godard had previously conceded to a censure of a shot of President Eisenhower and President De Gaulle on the Champs Elysée in his first full-length picture *A bout de souffle.* The Comission, "a toujours considéré comme à tout le moins inopportune, la représentation, dans un film, de chefs d'État et de chefs de gouvernement en fonction. » Hélène Liogier, « 1960 ; vue d'Espagne, la nouvelle vague est fasciste, » *1895 : Bulletin de l'Association française de recherche sur l'histoire du cinéma* 26 (1998) : 147.

Unfortunately, the censure banned *Le Petit soldat* until after the Evian Accords, post-dating the aphorism, and displacing it from its original, historical context. When French movie theaters finally screened *Le Petit soldat*, the public's enthusiasm for Godard, strong after *A bout de souffle*, had declined. This, compounded with their distaste for his second film's dark political subject matter, left film critics like Gérard Legrand of *Positif* with negative assessments of the film and the *auteur*'s oeuvre: "*Le Petit soldat*, ce n'est déjà plus *le mépris* (reference to another work Godard was filming that Legrand earlier dismisses), c'est *l'ennui* ..."[20]

Exploring *Le Petit soldat*'s political message, I will first study Godard's use of the *film noir* genre to portray a contemporary war, a manner of touching on the duplicity of the warfare, while remaining ambiguous. Next, I will investigate the torture sequences, including a missing one, while speculating as to why Godard vacillates between relaying and concealing specific information. Finally, I will explore the film's transgressions by comparing Godard's comments on Soviet films in "Pour un cinéma politique" with his second feature film. Ultimately, this study of the *Le Petit soldat*'s genre and torture sequence, as well as the *auteur*'s text on political cinema, establish *Le Petit soldat* as Godard's subversion of the political film.

Film noir

Godard's first feature-length film *A bout de souffle* mimics and parodies aspects of *film noir* (a femme-fatale and a damned love triangle) and informs Godard's use of black-and-white film; however *film noir* plays a more austere role in the mood and plot structure of his second film, *Le Petit soldat*. Godard was a huge fan of the genre, and even dedicated *A bout de souffle*

---

[20] Gérard Legrand, "*Le Petit Soldat*," *Postif* 53 (1963): 90.

to Monogram Pictures, the studio that produced *film noir* B-movies such as *Dillinger* (1945) and *The Gangster* (1947). How fitting that Godard would be obsessed with a genre that represents the reverse of the controlled optimism of classical Hollywood films—a style that he openly dismissed. With numerous organizations fighting secretly for their factions, and wide spread confusion about the military presence due to a powerful censure, the Algerian War provided Godard with an ideal backdrop for an intrigue of duplicity.

In fact, Godard's second feature perfectly adheres to what is outlined as the typical *film noir* plot. As James Damico describes it:

> Either he is fated to do so or by chance, or because he has been hired for a job specifically associated with her, a man whose experience in life has left him sanguine and often bitter meets a not-innocent woman of similar outlook to whom he is sexually and fatally attracted.[21]

In *Le Petit soldat,* such a protagonist is Bruno Forestier (Michel Subor), a deserter from the Algerian War, who introduces himself to the audience as "sans idéal."[22] In spite of lacking ideals, Bruno works for a French organization similar to the OAS (Organisation de l'Armée Secrète)

---

[21] James Damico, "*Film Noir* : A Modest Proposal," (1979), Alan Silver and James Ursini Ed., *The Film Noir Reader* (New Jersey: Limelight Editions, 2006)103.

[22] The Algerian-war hero *sans idéals* returns once again as Thomas Vlassenroot (Alain Delon) in *L'insoumis* (1964) by Alain Cavalier. Thomas, from Luxembourg, deserts the Foreign Legion but is promised money in exchange for kidnapping an Algerian nationalist. Similar in storyline to *Le petit soldat*, Thomas falls in love with his enemy. However, unlike *Le petit soldat*, the protagonist of *L'insoumis* becomes politicized by his love, and ends defending Algerian independence in a fight with another OAS member, injuries from which cause his death.

that kills figures associated with the Algerian independence movement.[23] When Bruno meets Veronica Dreyer (Anna Karina), whom he believes works for France, he falls in love at first sight. By the time he discovers that she spies for the FLN, it is too late. Several FLN members capture and then imprison him in their apartment, where they torture him for an important phone number. Bruno refuses to give the information, admitting in a voice-over that he does not know why he cannot give the number (he is still "sans ideal"). After contemplating suicide, Bruno escapes through a bathroom window. When he finds Veronica again they plan their escape to Brazil.

Le Petit soldat continues to follow the climax and conclusion of a typical *film noir*. When Bruno leaves to murder Palivoda, a pro-Independence professor, the French men, who know Veronica works for the FLN, kidnap her from her apartment. Therefore, like a *film noir* in which the protagonist kills the man to whom the woman is attached and causes "…the sometimes metaphoric, but usually literal destruction of the woman," Bruno allows Veronica's murder when he leaves to murder Palivoda; as a small female, she is incapable of defending herself from the men of the imperialist organization. We see Veronica attempt to flee the men's grasp while Bruno's voice-over tells us that he later learned the French men tortured and killed her. The film then ends abruptly.[24]

Although there are other neo-*noir* films from New Wave directors (most obviously Claude Chabrol), as well productions made in the 70s (*Body Heat* (1981) Dir. Lawrence Kasdan), the time period originally associated with *film noir* is post-war. Traditionally, *film noir* depicts

---

[23] The dialogue never reveals the name of the organization. It is likely that Godard chose to make the organization nameless in order to keep the film a more general statement about warfare.

[24] Damico, 103.

the isolation and disillusionment proceeding war, and often the predicament of the newly returned veteran. Godard transposes "the confusion, fear, anxiety, and paranoia that existed at a specific moment in American History"[25] to a similar wide spread mood existing in 1960 France caused by a misunderstood war abroad. Furthermore, though Bruno fails to discuss his war experience, he introduces himself to the audience as a deserter, essentially a veteran, who due to his illegal status has difficulty reintegrating into the French economy.

Although we hear dialogue between various characters and the protagonist, his voice-over commenting on events in the past tense runs throughout the narrative. In fact, Michel Marie describes the film as a "journal intime en voix intérieure." By using the voice-over, Godard pays hommage to Robert Bresson, who used the same technique in several of his films including, *Un prisonnier condamné à mort*, and *Pickpocket* (voted by Godard as the best film of 1959), while simultaneously referencing *film noir*. In both the Bresson films and in *film noir*, this interior dialogue demonstrates an existentialist bent through the self-questioning of the non-committed protagonists.

It was much easier to comment on the dissimulation during the Algerian War in a genre known to expose corruption and immorality than to financially and technically orchestrate battles in a war film. Neo-*noir* was not only appropriate because of the public's associations with the genre, but also because it was cheap, a requirement of the post-war, B-film, industry and the New Wave. Clean apartments, outdoor shots of tall apartment/hotel buildings, and scenes in parks and parking lots, were inexpensive and easy to film. Although Godard originally wanted to film in France, the CNC (Centre Nationale de Cinématographie) denied the crew a permit

[25] Silver, 275.

because of the subject matter.[26] Switzerland was a backup location. Nevertheless, the setting, outside of France and far from Algeria, augments the film's stylistic distance, a distinction that pertains to the director as well, a Swiss citizen. Furthermore, the action occurring in a country known for its neutrality and considered pacifist emphasizes the film's absurdity and contradictions. In fact, although we assume the characters fight for and against Algerian independence, any actions that might be occurring in North Africa seem irrelevant to the mirroring of the FLN and the French imperialist organization in Geneva parks and modern buildings.

In one scene, Bruno lies with Veronica in bed as the camera pans photos on the wall, whose images might also illustrate Bruno's thoughts. We see military units in Panama, Alexandria, and the Soviet Union, as well as pictures of Brigitte Bardot, a Bulgarian couple in traditional costumes and a car burning in Paris. The broad geographical span of the photos universalizes war and violence, but despite the precise historical basis of the narrative, there is no image of the Algerian War. Furthermore, the characters do not discuss any dates, legislation, or death tolls, keeping the specificity of the war exterior to the general philosophical query. Allying himself with a broader critique of warfare Godard said, "Il aurait pu aussi bien s'agir de Hongrais continuant à lutter sur terrain-neutre."[27] However, despite the scarcity of Algeria in the

---

[26] Richard Brody, *Everything is Cinema : The Working Life of Jean-Luc Godard* (New York: Metropolitan, 2008) 85.

[27] *Libération,* April 26,1960. Found in : "Infortunes de la liberté," *Positif* 36 (1960): 63.

This statement mirrors Michael Haneke's in a discussion of *Caché* (see Chapter 2), which he claims could have been filmed in various countries. Interestingly, though both Haneke and Godard are often considered French directors because of their choice of French productions, they are foreign, born in Austria and Switzerland respectively.

film's dialogue, the radio playing behind the characters sometimes mentions events abroad. Much like the radio playing in the taxi of *Cléo de 5 à 7*, the news events contextualize the self-centered characters and the plots, reminding the viewer of the larger historical significance of the Algerian War. These sounds are in the background and not always fully audible, but the presence of radios in the car, at Veronica's, and later the FLN apartment, suggest a larger awareness of the Algerian War.

It is not irrelevant that the action of *Le Petit soldat* begins on April 3, 1958, and ends a month later. On this day, military personnel associated with the OAS attempted a coup d'état on the government of Algeria, and weeks later Charles de Gaulle returned to presidency to restore order. Godard's use of *film noir* thus comments on the French politics of the era, the secrecy of government, the OAS, as well as the *porteurs de valise* working for the FLN. As Bruno and Veronica shuffle and are shuffled between the FLN and the French imperialist organization, a France in confusion and denial of its falling empire emerges, a screen mood not dissimilar to post-war America.

Torture and *La Question*

Exposing the director's interest in the racialized scenario, characters called "Algerians," who torture, reappear in Godard's 1965 feaure, *Pierrot le fou.* In *Pierrot*, they seek Ferdinand's (Jean-Paul Belmondo) girlfriend, Marianne Renoir (Anna Karina).[28] However, while Ferdinand

[28] After one man ties a red dress around Ferdinand's face, he then pours water over his head. Although the torturers in *Pierrot le fou* do not seem to be fighting in revenge of the war, and though only one, a little person, appears to be Arab, Godard's interest in bathroom torture scenes most probably derives from his knowledge of the French practice during the Algerian war.

of *Pierrot le fou* confesses his girlfriend's whereabouts after an Arab pours water over his wrapped head twice, Bruno of *Le Petit soldat* proves stubborn and stoic, even when lacking a reason to remain mute. In this way, Bruno differs from Ferdinand; he reflects on torture and appears determined to oppose its effectiveness. In fact, Bruno's fortitude closely resembles the narrator/author of *La Question* (1958), who also refuses to give information in spite of excruciating waterboarding, shocks, and even "truth" drugs.

The journal/essay by Henri Alleg (Alleg was Henri Salem's pen name and *nom de guerre*) sold over 60,000 copies in its first two weeks, but was then banned and confiscated. However, the censure only increased the book's popularity; Jean-Paul Sartre wrote a review in *Les Temps Modernes* and signed a petition against its banning to the president with other well-known authors, André Malraux, Roger Martin du Gard, and François Mauriac. By the end of 1958, 162,000 French homes owned copies of *La Question* while the press had made the book's scandal popular knowledge.[29] In this way, Alleg's diary of torture made the public aware of the French military's brutality in Algeria and ignited the anti-war movement. By placing this contemporary controversy in *Le Petit soldat*, Godard doubly confronts the censure of the book and of cinema.

In fact, the torture victim's silence is not the only motif from *La Question* in *Le Petit soldat.* The narrational style of the film also recalls *La Question*; the voice over that pays tribute to the *film noir* genre discussed earlier also references Alleg's book which is a first-hand account. Furthermore, while the FLN certainly tortured the French, the specific techniques that Godard films are recorded practices of the paratroopers found in *La Question*. After Bruno refuses to

[29]Lewis Nichols, "In and Out of Books", *New York Times*, 25 Jan 1959: BR8.

give the FLN members the phone number he asks, “Est-ce que vous allez me torturer?” expecting what ensues. We see Bruno handcuffed to the bathtub, in a white undershirt and boxers. Though he is not forced to strip completely as Alleg was, procedures typical to French interrogation follow, threatening the prisoner with a flame and waterboarding. One should note that the *paras* in Alleg’s book torture with much more brutality—the narration of *Le Petit soldat* tells us that the torturers do not want to leave a trace. Furthermore, the *paras* of *La Question* continue to humiliate the narrator sexually; in *Le Petit soldat*, the torturer waves a lighter flame at Bruno’s wrists, in *La Question* the *para* holds a torch and threatens the narrator’s penis and nipples.[30] The waterboarding sequence is also less brutal; unlike Alleg of *La Question*, Bruno of *Le Petit soldat* is not tied to a board, which would have been technically difficult in the apartment’s small bathroom. Nevertheless, the torturers do wrap cloth tightly over Bruno’s face before they force his head under the bathtub faucet: as in *La Question*, the torture victim briefly loses consciousness after waterboarding. Therefore, although Godard dared the censure and made allusions to the popular essay, he did not repeat the cruelty to its logical extent. Despite the similarity of *Le Petit soldat*’s torture sequence to Alleg’s harrowing account in *La Question*, Godard portrays a lighter, softer version of the torment.

Interviews reveal that Godard actually forced actor Michel Subor to undergo such physical pain for realism. Perhaps this explains why the actor is not sexually demeaned, or tied to a board; Godard may not have wanted to humiliate the actor and or be accused of homosexual tendencies. Yet despite the water torture taking place, the actor remains collected, never crying

---

[30] Henri Alleg, *La Question* (Paris : Éditions de Minuit, 1961) : 42.

“Je vis Lorca qui alluminait lentement une torche de papier à la hauteur de mes yeux. Il se releva et tout à coup je sentis la flamme sur le sexe et sur les jambes, dont les poils s’enflammèrent en grésillant.”

and rarely gasping. Again Godard chose a less sexual place of brutality; in *Le Petit soldat* the FLN shock Bruno's feet, rather than his sex organ as practiced in *La Question*—this was much less painful considering the wire was also powered by a real electric current.[31] Yet similar to the book, Bruno maintains his silence while being shocked. In this way, as in Alleg's book, the torture victim refuses to speak, even though his silence ensures more *séances*. Alleg writes, "Dans l'abrutissement où les coups et les tortures m'avaient plongé, une seule idée restait claire pour moi: ne rien leur dire, ne les aider en rien. Je n'ouvris plus la bouche."[32] However in the torture sequence (roughly 3.5 minutes) of *Le Petit soldat*, Bruno's voice-over denies any particular reason for not giving the number, whereas a strong belief in Algerian independence inspires Alleg. Thus, Godard places the principal plot of *La Question* at the center of his film, but uses Marxist aesthetics to distance the viewer from Bruno, unlike the emotional plight of Alleg in *La Question* which considerably affects the reader. Bruno barely reacts to physical pain, and continues to lack a reason for not disclosing the information, thus we feel little or no concern.[33]

Yet, while *Le Petit soldat* illustrates Alleg's essay, the film alters the role of torturer—though the victim remains French (Henri Alleg/Bruno Forestier) the torturer in the film is not.

---

[31] Henri Alleg, *La Question* (Paris : Les Éditions de Minuit, 1961) : 33.

« Toujours souriant au-dessus de moi, Jacquet m'avait branché la pince au sexe. »

[32] Alleg, 62.

[33] Nevertheless, Bruno explains that by thinking of Veronica and the countryside, he controls his desire to scream and cry. In this way, the memory of Veronica and the desire to be with her invoked by the voiceover sympathize with Bruno and instill a love motif in the otherwise detached film, a motif consistent with the *film-noir* genre invoked.

Verifying Godard's familiarity with *La Question*, the Arab torturer reads a section of the book out loud to Bruno (which is actually Godard himself, as the film was dubbed) as Bruno says to "m'indoctriner" (Alleg also reports to have had intellectual, political conversations with his torturers in between *séances*.) By making the torturer Algerian, and the reason for not speaking irrelevant and unapparent, the reenactment of the gravely serious exposition of French military interrogation touches on parody and satire.

Furthermore, the FLN's technique, similar even if less violent than the French practice, suggests their equality in viciousness. Physically the make-up of the FLN and the OAS in the film is nearly identical; both torture teams consist of two men, and although Bruno refers to the FLN members as Arabs, they wear no dress that culturally others them (Images 1 and 2) (In fact, the torturer referred to as Arab is actually Hungarian!)[34] In this way, the OAS (or its cinematic equivalent) and the FLN can be likened to two opposing teams attempting to win a game of information. Both "teams" utilize torture and Lenin quotations as equipment. Their resemblance in techniques and appearance legitimizes Bruno's ambivalence and follows an absurdist, philosophical critique, in which *La Question* serves as the axis. In this way Godard unravels the political precision of Henri Alleg's text in his cinematic version; because the torturer is Arab, the exposition concerning the French policy abroad dissipates, and because the torture victim lacks ideals, his silence appears narcissistic and self-heroizing. Yet, the torture sequence communicates a statement that extends beyond the Algerian War; Godard presents torture as a universal weapon of warfare, which is senseless by definition.

---

[34] László Szabó is the Hungarian actor who plays the Algerian terrorist in *Le Petit Soldat.* Although, there are also Algerian torturers in *Pierrot le fou*, Szabó only appears briefly as himself in this film, saying his name and calling himself a student in exile. The Algerian in *Pierrot le fou* is Jimmy Karoubi.

The Missing Torture Sequence

Although the film explains that both the French unit and the FLN torture, the depiction of their torturing is not commensurate. The film exhibits the FLN torturing at length, but only visually suggests the French torturing. We see the French team grasp both sides of Veronica when she attempts to flee (Image 3). A shot shows her handcuffed in a car to explain her arrival at a Geneva park. In a long shot outdoors, she struggles in vain to run from one of the French men. (Image 4) Therefore, though the film only depicts the FLN torturing, the French carry equal blame because they shoot Veronica, whereas Bruno escapes. Although Richard Brody finds that Godard evaded scenes of the French torturing to avoid censorship, I find this unlikely. In 1960 addressing the Algerian War in any form would guarantee banning. However, the film would certainly have been more controversial in France if the French were pictured committing these acts, acts which no fiction or documentary film pre-*La Battaglia di Algeri* portrays. Of course Godard's response to why he only pictured the FLN torturing counters such logic:

> Why did I show a scene of torture by the FLN? Because at that time, the opposite would have been too easy: at that moment, the FLN was more sympathetic and it was more meaningful for my treatment of torture to show them using torture and to leave only the suggestion that the French do the same.[35]

Although whether the general French population sympathized with the FLN is debatable, it is clear from Godard's statement as well as other documentation that his immediate circle was beginning to drift towards the left cause. However, even if the image of European men torturing

[35] *Les Lettres Françaises*, Jan. 31, 1963 found in Brody, 100. I am currently unable to find the original interview in French.

a small attractive female would be easy to film, the sexual overtones inherent in two men dominating a female in any such hypothetical scene would distract from the *Le Petit soldat*'s larger statement about torture as a common and unsuccessful method. Thus, we cannot argue the film's bias in depictions of torture; though we only see the FLN torturing, the death of Veronica, and the possible misinterpretation of the French torturing her oppose any imperialist sentiment.

Sans idéal, a bias?

In this web of general anti-war sentiment, the concept of "idéal" and the protagonist without an "idéal" beg a more precise question about French involvement. When Bruno asks Veronica why she began working for the FLN she says, "De toute façon j'ai trouvé que les Français ont tort et les autres ont un idéal. Mais pas les Français. Il faut avoir un idéal, c'est très important. Contre les Allemands, les Français avaient un idéal. Contre les Algériens, ils n'ont pas. Ils perdront la guerre." This statement is one of the few directly addressing the war, and by far the most judgmental towards France. Veronica's comparison of the Algerian War to World War II historicizes France's position and implies the current war's lesser moral stance.[36] In this moment, the thus far even-handed, anti-terrorism, film seems to reveal Godard's true bias against French-Algeria. However, Bruno's further deliberation against Arabs that he dislikes because he associates them with "les déserts, la mer Méditaneranée, et Camus" and love of France because of French 16th century poet, Du Bellay, counters Veronica's previous statement with nationalism.

Furthermore, Veronica's defense of ideals is further downgraded by the film's preference for the male anti-hero "sans ideal," who makes provocative statements about women's inferiority

---

[36] This comparison of the Algerian War lacking moral cause and the "great" war is also found in post-2005 films, which will be discussed at length in my analysis of *Mon colonel* (Chapter 2).

while he serves as our narrator ("J'aime faire des jeux d'enfants avec les femmes. Elles aiment ça,") and when speaking of their appearance ("J'aimerais que les femmes meurent à 25 ans.") Bruno's point of view dominates most obviously in a scene where Bruno photographs Veronica; Bruno orders her to move in certain ways, which she silently obeys, while he shoots her though she does refuse to pose showering. This masculine viewpoint is another aspect of the *film noir* genre incorporated by Godard that we find in numerous New Wave films. Geneviève Sellier calls this masculinity masochist, and believes that it represents a crisis in male representation. She writes:

> Si le masochisme masculin, comme le montre Frank Krutnik à propos du film noir hollywoodien des années 40, témoigne d'un moment de disjonction entre les possibilités de représentation d'une image personnelle de masculinité et les codifications culturelles traditionelles de l'identité masculine, c'est-à-dire d'une crise dans la culture et la société patriarcales, le cinéma de la Nouvelle Vague peut être lu aussi comme l'élaboration d'un moment de crise, et le culte que les jeunes cinéastes français vouent au film noir prend alors un sens nouveau.[37]

In this way Bruno Forestier's objectification of the female sex works in conjunction with the larger film to pay tribute to *film noir*, and by doing so exposes a contemporary French male crisis adjusting to women in positions of power (women finally won the vote in France in 1944, in large part due to their employment during the Second World War). Forestier's comments, the camera's investment in his point of view augmented by his narration, relegate Veronica primarily

[37] Geneviève Sellier, "La Nouvelle Vague: un cinéma à la première personne du masculin singulier, » *Iris* 24 (1997): 79-80.

to a secondary role as a love interest and a figure of beauty. Despite Veronica's lesser female status, Godard accredits her role with important statements about the Algerian War that counter Bruno's opinions. While her primary importance is as the object of the protagonist's (and camera's) desire, her words maintain the film's political ambiguity.

Interviews with the auteur, notorious for seditious statements, are as duplicitous as *Le Petit soldat*. Godard denied the film expresses any particular political point of view concerning the Algerian War saying, "On y parle de politique, mais il n'est pas orienté dans le sens d'une politique."[38] On the other hand, in an interview with *Paris-Presse,* Godard calls the film "Gaulliste," and reminds the *Presse* that it is the FLN not the French we witness torturing in detail.[39] Godard and the New Wave generally held a right-wing reputation at the time, encouraged by the Godard family's Vichy ties as well as by their producer at large, Georges Beauregard, who was once a Vichy government employee. Further labeling Godard right-wing, is the fact that he befriended fascist critic Jean Parvulesco, whose name appears in *A bout de souffle.*[40] Despite a ground-breaking style, the films were considered apolitical, because of their more intimate subject matter. Making Godard's pre-Maoist position more elusive, Godard did not sign *le Manifeste des 121*, although several other *Cahiers du cinéma* writers (and directors) did—in retrospect, this may have been a savvy decision on Godard's part to avoid expatriation,

---

[38] Jean-Luc Godard, "Entretien," *Godard par Godard : Les années Karina* (Paris: Flammarion, 1985) 34.

[39] « Sin embargo, creaia haber hecho un film gaullista ». Habla J.L. Godard, director de *Le Petit Soldat*, prohibido por la censura francesca. » p.13-14 traduction d'un article de Paul Giannoli dans *Paris-Presse* found in : Liogier, 144.

[40] *Positif* says that the protagonist of *À bout de Souffle* is "de ceux qui écrivent 'mort aux juifs!' dans les couloirs du métro en faisant les fautes d'orthographe." Louis Séguin, *Positif* 33(1960): 49.

as he was a Swiss citizen. Ultimately, Godard's statements and political behavior upon the film's release mirror the contradictory nature of the film itself.

War and Propaganda Films

A *film noir* set during the contemporary Algerian War was an opportunity to paint both sides as equally corrupt and cruel, and reject the larger war-film genre. Godard, who wrote for *Les Cahiers du Cinéma* before directing, was knowledgeable in Soviet propaganda as well as World War II pictures. In fact, Godard speaks favorably of the skilled manipulation of the public in his article "Pour un cinéma politique" (1952), in which he reviews *The Young Guard* (1948 Dir. Sergei Gerasimov) and compares Soviet and Nazi films. Though Godard's article speaks admirably of the power of these images and young actors, he views the actors' spell over the audience with cynisim. He writes, "l'acteur retrouve infailliblement ce qu'il fut d'abord, le prêtre," and later, "l'acteur soviétique interprète son rôle (son personnage de classe) de deux façons: soit comme saint, soit comme héros."[41] Godard both esteems such manipulation and discounts it. In subsequent years he realized that *film noir* proffered the tools to reverse such a formula.

By invoking *film noir*, Godard accesses the anti-hero, an important trait of the genre. Like Michel Poiccard of *A bout de souffle*, Bruno Forestier is ego-centric and selfish, and unable to navigate through the web of the *femme fatale*.[42] In this way both protagonists are an exercise in the antihero. More importantly, Bruno with a brooding voice over, is too ambivalent to be

[41] Jean-Luc Godard, *Godard par Godard*: *Les années Cahiers* (Paris : Flammarion, 1993) 46.

[42] A discussion of *Alphaville* (1965), in which Godard combines sci-fi and film noir, is beyond the breadth of this dissertation, as it does not discuss Algeria, or the Algerian War.

considered a national idol; a man who introduces himself to the audience as lacking ideals is incapable of serving the role of a priest, saint, or hero. Instead Bruno appears *ennuyé* and self-interested, not unlike the Antoine Roquentin, the protagonist of *La Nausée*.[43] Furthermore, *Le Petit soldat* with its tight shots and small cast, appears to be the paradox of the Soviet and Nazi films Godard cites with large orchestrated crowd scenes (*Ivan the terrible, The Young Guard, Rio Escondido*, *Hitlerjunge Quex*, Leni Riefenstahl films). Proving *Le Petit soldat*'s intentional contrasts to Soviet films, Godard said after its premiere, " je ne prends pas de position pour quelqu'un et (que) le sujet n'est pas 'orienté' à la manière des films russes."[44] Thus Godard defies the definition of the political film that he quotations in his article from Georges Sorel: "une organisation d'images capable d'évoquer instinctivement les sentiments qui correspondent aux manifestations de la guerre engagée…contre la société moderne."[45] In fact, the Marxist aesthetics of *Le Petit soldat*; the flat characters, the similar nature of team FLN and team OAS, the setting distant from the war in plain apartments deter affect and block any opinion of the war based on the film. To this extent, *Le Petit soldat* is as apolitical as Godard claims. However, because the film refuses a political position, it rejects the concepts of ideology and nationalism upon which war is built. This ultimately renders *Le Petit soldat* radical. Set during a contemporary war, the film was ripe with opportunities for nationalist uplift, and it is precisely

---

[43] "Despite the distance Godard kept from Sartre, the issues of existentialism appear in his first films as a Malrauxian quest for personal morality." Mauri Ylä-Kotola, "The Philosophical Foundations of the film work of Jean-Luc Godard." Sam Inken ed., *Mediapolis: Aspects of Texts, Hyper-texts, and Multimedial Communication* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999) 149.

[44] "Infortunes de la liberté." *Positif* 36 (1960): 62.

[45] *Godard par Godard: Les années Cahiers*, 48.

these prospects that Godard displays and then blatantly refuses. Any simple questioning of the war was a radical endeavor in 1960. Richard Brody is conservative when stating, "…by implicating France in a dirty war to which it had never admitted, *Le Petit soldat* was an act of defiance that belonged naturally to the left."[46]

Muriel ou le temps d'un retour

Although Alain Resnais conceived of *Muriel* during the war, the film's primary subject matter, a soldier's post-trauma upon returning to France, appeared appropriately timed for its post Algerian-war release. While the film was not a box-office success, critics studied its form and style, even when avoiding the feature's primary Algerian-war subject matter. In a 1963 issue of *Cinéma*, Pierre Billard appears confused on how to address the film, "La première réaction est une réaction de perplexité."[47] Even in 1976 when *Les Cahiers de la Cinémathèque* devoted 8 pages to a retrospective of the film, the debating critics appear more interested in discussing the film's style and a subplot about World War II (the Second World War emerged as a popular subject in France during the 70s).[48] Marcel Oms denies the film's treatment of the Algerian War: "Je vois dans Bernard une projection du problème de Cayrol (the screenwriter of *Muriel* who was a concentration camp survivor) beaucoup plus que le problème d'Algérie." Although, there are many references to the Second World War, these tie into the film's primary historical subject

---

[46] Brody, 99.

[47] Pierre Billard. "*Muriel* (article d'ensemble et débat)," *Cinéma* 80 (1963) : 34.

[48] Although emotional and physical damage due to the second World War is an important aspect of *Muriel* that links to the central Algerian-war post-trauma, I have chosen to primarily address the film as it pertains to the Algerian war and my larger corpus in this dissertation.

matter, the impact of torture on the veteran. The critics in this issue still refuse *Muriel*'s confrontation thirteen years after its debut—in fact one critic, José Baldizzone, even suggests that the abuse of an Algerian woman during the war, the film's titled subject, is perhaps a lie.[49]

As already mentioned, Chris Marker suggests the veterans' denial of the Algerian War in *Le Joli mai* (filmed in 1962 released in 1966), while Robert Enrico's effort, *La Belle vie*, made in 1958 and banned until 1963, invokes a veteran's post-trauma through audial flashbacks. However, the censor's cuts to *La Belle vie* make the author's original intent unintelligible, leaving *Muriel* as the only film from the era to depict the effects of torture on the French veteran. In fact, the most successful Algerian-War films from the 1970s, *Avoir 20 ans dans les Aurès* and *R.A.S.,* follow the trend begun by *La Battaglia di Algeri*, filming a battle narrative in North Africa. These films do not discuss the soldiers' difficulty upon returning to France, thus *Muriel ou le temps d'un retour* is the first fiction film to specifically address the psychological effects of torture in the Algerian War after the fact, a landmark that was not revisited. Although we do see fictional French film soldiers regret actions against Algerians in the twenty-first century (see *Mon Colonel* in Chapter 2 and *L'Ennemi intime* in Chapter 3), we do not see these soldiers struggle as veterans to reintegrate in France.

To better understand the place of *Muriel ou le temps d'un retour* in the larger French cinematic Algerian-War discourse, we will first look at Resnais' pre-*Muriel* œuvre and its emphasis on screen-writing. The *mise-en-scène* of *Muriel* is an interface of past and present. Consequently I will discuss how this setting resembles its main characters and how the editing

---

[49] Oms says, « Bernard s'est peut-être inventé un passé en Algerie. » Marcel Oms, "La Mauvaise Mémoire," *Les Cahiers de la Cinémathèque* Spring (1976) :129.

and sound also represent their fractured understanding of time. This prepares us for an analysis of the film's most complicated sequence, which reveals the torture of Muriel without any images of the act. Psychoanalysis as a theory and as a practice was especially popular when *Muriel* debuted and we can locate many analogies to Freud's understanding of the psyche that appear intentional.[50] In conclusion, I will utilize psychoanalytic vocabulary to read the film's two Algerian-War veterans as aspects of the same ego.

Alain Resnais: Before *Muriel ou un temps d'un retour*

During the early period of Resnais' career, he collaborated with several authors of *nouveaux romans*; Marguerite Duras wrote *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959), and Alain Robbe-Grillet, *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* (1961). *Muriel* was the second Resnais film authored by Jean Cayrol, a poet sent to a concentration camp during World War II because of his involvement with the Resistance. Cayrol barely survived after attempting suicide through starvation, but succeeded in writing two volumes of poetry during his imprisonment. As a Holocaust survivor and poet, Cayrol was the ideal author for Alain Resnais' short documentary feature *Nuit et brouillard* (1955), whose title derived from Cayrol's book of poetry, *Poèmes de la nuit et brouillard*. The 32 minute film alternates between color shots of concentration camp remains (Auschwitz and Majdanek) and black and white footage of the camps at capacity. In this way the powerful contrasts of empty beds and starved prisoners haunt the viewer, who then imagines living and dying within the barbed wire. Though *Nuit et brouillard* is one of the first

[50] Eli Zaretsky, "Narcissism, personal life, and identity: The place of the 1960s in the history of psychoanalysis," *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society* 13 (2008): 94–104.

documentaries about the Holocaust, many French high schools still view the film in history courses.[51]

Cynthia Marker and Virginia Bonner respectively suggest that Cayrol and Resnais maintained a general approach to war in *Nuit et brouillard* in order to allude to the then current crisis in Algeria while avoiding the censure (however, in spite of this attempt at self-censure, *la commission de contrôle* still censored an image of a French gendarme working at a prison camp whose cap identified him as a French police).[52] Bonner cites Ilan Avisar, who notices that the film "does not concentrate on the genocide against the Jews," and "never mention[s] Germans or Germany either".[53] In interviews, after hinting several times that *Nuit et brouillard* was about the Algerian War by claiming the film warned of future atrocities, Resnais at last said in 1980, "The whole point was Algeria."[54]

---

[51] Sylvie Lindeperg, *Nuit et Brouillard*: *Un film dans l'histoire* (Paris : Odile Jacob, 2007).

[52] Resnais cut the image of the gendarme with the French hat in *Nuit et brouillard.* Still the film could not compete in the Cannes Festival of 1956, because "it wounded the national sentiment of a participating country"—obviously Germany. In 1959 *Hiroshima, mon amour* was withdrawn similarly, though this time the offended country would be the United States. Naomi Greene, *Landscapes of Loss: The National Past in Post-war French Cinema.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999) 35.

[53] (Avisar, 1988: 24). From Bonner Bonner, Virginia. "The New Executioners : The Spectre of Algeria in Alain Resnais's *Night and Fog*." *Scope* 13 (2010), 16 June 2011 <http://www.scope.nottingham.ac.uk/article.php?issue=13&id=1094>.

[54] Cited by Sandy Flitterman-Lewis: Charles Krantz, "Teaching *Night and Fog*: History and Historiography," *Film & History* 15.1 (1985): 2-15.

Like Resnais' earlier films, his second collaboration with Cayrol, *Muriel ou le temps d'un retour*, grapples with the concept of memory, its verity, and its effect on our actions in the present. In fact, Deleuze's description of *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* as an "architecture du temps" that implies "un passé éternel" also describes *Muriel.* [55] Cayrol himself suffered from bouts of amnesia, and a similar temporal confusion dominates the text. In this Resnais feature, it is neither concentration camps nor the atomic bomb but rather the memory of assisting in the torture and murder of an indigenous woman in Algeria that disturbs Bernard (Jean-Baptiste Thiérée), a young war veteran who speaks of the departed as a present-day girlfriend named Muriel. Naomi Greene believes that Bernard lies about Muriel to spare his step mother the details of his past.[56] However, this lie also allows Bernard to pretend that her brutal murder never occurred. By referring to Muriel as a living being, Bernard controls the past and for these moments erases it. More exactly when Bernard tells others that he is working on a project for Muriel, or that he is going to visit her, he denies her death. The allusions to a living Muriel also give Bernard needed to time to reflect and plan for future action.

Techniques: Mise-en-scène, Editing, Sound

The film is set in 1958 in Bologne-sur-mer, a city both rebuilt and devastated from World War II destruction when *Muriel* was filmed. Cayrol chose Boulogne-sur-mer because the city had changed dramatically during and after its reconstruction with remnants of the past still

[55] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinéma: L'image temps* (Paris : Les Editions de Minuit, 1985) 137.

[56] Greene, 48.

exposed.[57] The film references Boulogne-sur-mer's changes: One resident asks where the center of the city is, only to realize that he is at the city center; another character, Roland de la Smoke, a lover of Bernard's step-mother Hélène, was employed to destroy buildings before the reconstruction. Roland claims that Hélène's apartment, where most of the film's action takes place, was previously an attic. We witness the residents' confusion in the city again at the end of the film: When Hélène seeks the train to Paris, she is told, "le train pour Paris est fini, il ne part plus d'ici, il part d'une autre gare." Further demonstrating the city's transformation, a montage of Boulogne-sur-mer displays the city's changes in day and evening light *à l'impressionisme*, while a rack of postcards chronicles the city's past and present. One character describes the city as a "ville martyr", indicating the larger theme of martyrdom, which modifies Muriel, the unseen victim tortured to death, as well as to the many other characters who suffer unjustly for the sins of others (Bernard, Robert, Hélène, Erneste, Simone)**.** Though René Prédal exaggerates in saying all of Alain Resnais' characters resemble concentration camp survivors, one finds an element of injury, trauma, and survival in all the characters of *Muriel.*[58] As the characters mirror the city which they inhabit, the homophonic quality of the city name's ending, *sur-mer*, becomes apparent: the city serves as an appropriate *mère* to the disturbed characters, as destruction, a common trait, connotes a family resemblance. Although many omit the city's suffix, when the

---

[57] "I situated the story in Boulogne, despite Resnais' doubts, because Boulogne is also a town after a drama. There are two towns, the old one spared by the war and the reconstructed town, the topography of which the old inhabitants cannot recognize." Interview with Jean Cayrol found in: Roy Armes, "Resnais and Reality," *Films and Filming* 16:8 (1970):128.

[58] René Prédal, *Alain Resnais* (Paris: Minard, 1968).

characters shorten their city's name, it indicates a repression of the origins of their malaise, a past trauma.

Bernard's step-mother, Hélène (Delphine Seyrig), with whom he lives, sells antique furniture from their apartment. In this way the characters, further confusing temporality, dwell in the past, but a past continually changing as furniture is bought to sell, and then sold from the apartment. Bernard says, "On ne sait jamais quand on se réveille si c'est du Second Empire ou du rustique normand." The characters take care not to harm the historical relics, and never know to whom these artifacts truly belong. Hélène says at the dinner table, "Soyez prudents, c'est du chine et il est vendu depuis hier." The furniture works as metaphor for the characters' relationship to their recent history as their enigmatic pasts drift in and out of the present through conversation. In fact, on the door a plate reads, "Hélène Aughain, meubles anciens", labeling the character as space where furniture is stored, further articulated by Roland de Smoke's remembrance of her apartment as an attic, an inhabitable room which we associate with useless keepsakes collecting dust, or perhaps even with hiding.[59] The changing furniture and the editing style render the apartment layout difficult to decipher; the same spatial confusion arises in Hélène's apartment as on the streets of Boulogne-sur-mer. The last shots of the film finally explain the apartment's structure; a wife looks in the apartment for her philanderer husband who visited Hélène, and works her way through each room in a logical manner. However, at this point the characters we previously saw quarrelling and reminiscing there are gone. Deleuze describes the characters' similarity to their surroundings: "Dans *Muriel,* la nouvelle Boulogne n'a pas de centre, pas plus que l'appartement aux meubles transitoires: aucune des personnes n'a de présent,

[59] Britton finds that the apartment is a metaphor for Hélène.

sauf peut-être la dernière qui ne trouve que du vide."[60] Hélène's apartment appears as a model of the surrounding city, the characters' voices resounding echoes of memory and loss in its unstable structure.

Along with Bernard's traumatic memory, there is Hélène's past, revisited when Alphonse (Jean-Pierre Kérien), a lover from before World War II, vacations at the apartment accompanied by his young girlfriend, Françoise (Nita Klein), whom he deceptively calls his niece. Both Hélène and Alphonse remember different versions of their romance and its conclusion, posing questions: Is the past different for each of us? Do we change the past by remembering it? Is one (or both) of the characters lying? (Alfonse has already lied about his "niece" Françoise.) The film's unique editing style contrasts the various narrative strands concerning memory—we are only given moments with Hélène and Alphonse at the apartment when there is a cut to a bed scene between Bernard and his real girlfriend Marie-Do at his studio. Minutes, or often times seconds later, we change scenes, continually leaving and returning to several of the characters in conversation. These are brief excerpts, and though Resnais' previous films reveal a mastery of the tracking shot, *Muriel* does not have a single one.

Although this montage approach could be very jilting, the soundtrack smoothes the harsher aspects of the cutting. One trademark of Resnais is to separate sound from image (which I will soon discuss in more detail). In *Muriel,* dialogue and sound from one setting often bleed into the next—hence we watch the next scene while we listen to the last. Although this technique is a banality of films and television today, it was an innovation that allows Resnais to portray the characters of *Muriel* as lost in the same memory chasm. Hans Werner Henze wrote the avant-

[60] Deleuze, 152.

garde songs to comment on the film's characters. However eventually Resnais asked Rita Streich to sing less comprehensible lyrics so as to not overshadow the images. The result of the thousand-plus-cuts, overhanging sound, and abstract vocal score, is a nothing less than a "glistening collage" depicting the confused process of the French remembering their perpetrator violence in Algeria.[61]

No Images of Torture?

Despite *Muriel*'s focus on memory, the film takes place entirely in the present; camera work insists on the now in short shots with no movement forwards or backwards. Furthermore the script contains no flashbacks. Instead the bulk of dialogue represents attempts (all failed) to reconstitute the past through words. Because the film takes place proceeding a soldier's term, and in Boulogne-sur-mer, there are no images of the torture and death that constitute the major trauma around which the plot revolves. Because the film only evokes Muriel through language, and because we have no indication of whom Muriel actually was before her capture and destruction, her presence persists as an absence, or as Greene poetically describes her, "a black hole."[62]

As the ambivalent Bruno Forestier in *Le Petit soldat* who photographs Veronica serves as an alter-ego for Godard, Bernard of *Muriel* can also be read as an *auteur* within a metafilm intent to expose the truth. Film is Bernard's hobby; he often carries a camera and film; as well as a tape recorder for capturing sound; and he rents a small studio where he works on his projects or a

[61] "The bits and pieces of the fractured lives of Hélène, Bernard, Alphonse, and the others are organized into a glistening collage." Monaco, 86.

[62] Greene, 48.

"collection de preuves." The studio may in fact be property of Vieux Jean, an older man who is usually wandering outside near the entrance. Notably, when Bernard views the super 8 footage that he filmed during his service, Vieux Jean serves as a witness, and thus assumes the role of Bernard's analyst; his age is appropriate for a man of learning, while his few pointed questions and statements help to bring to Bernard's feelings about Muriel's torture to his consciousness. In fact, Vieux Jean's oracular statement, "il y en a des choses qu'on ne s'en doute pas qu'on se met à creuser," generally describes the analysand's relationship to the unconscious while premoting the practice of penetrating the ego's defense.[63] In this way, not only does Vieux Jean witness Bernard's confession, his presence enables it. Furthermore, as an analyst Vieux Jean proves to respect confidentiality; at the end of the film when Hélène feels the need to contact Bernard's mysterious fiancé, Vieux Jean does not explain her brutal death, but simply says "Bernard m'a dit qu'il a connu une Muriel. Il ne faut pas la déranger." Suitable in the scene's analogy of Freudian analysis, language, the primary tool of psychoanalysis, serves as the gateway to the site of Bertrand's trauma.

Although Resnais could have depicted the gruesome death of Muriel in the film projection, he instead shows us images that look strikingly similar to footage that appeared on French television and in newsreels filmed by the SCA. Ropars describes the montage as : "une série de vue documentaires des plus anodines, semblables à celles que chaque soldat du contingent a pu ramener de son passage en Algérie, mais très proches aussi des actualités de

[63] Laplanche and Pontalis define *défense* as : « ensemble d'opérations dont la finalité est de réduire, de supprimer toute modification susceptible de mettre en danger l'intégrité et la constance de l'individu biopsychologique. Jean Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis, *Vocabulaire de la Psychanalyse* (Paris : Presse Universitaires de France,1967) 108.

l'époque sur les aspects officiels de la pacification…"[64] Often the soldiers look as if they are playing as boys, smiling and laughing, dancing and singing. In other images, the young French men speak to indigenous children (Image 1). During the screening, Vieux Jean and Bernard do not make eye contact, as practiced in traditional psychoanalysis. Instead, both stare at the screen on which Bernard projects happy soldiers, who serve as a metaphor for his ego's defense. These false images of the military abroad are obstacles that deceptively ensure the safety of Bernard's psyche. Nonetheless, Bernard refuses their enticement and confides his trauma.

In a grief-stricken voice, Bernard recounts the dark story of how he first encountered Muriel being tortured—until this point Muriel's true identity has only been glimpsed when Alphonse skims Bernard's journal. In fact, Hélène believes Muriel is Bernard's fiancée. Bernard's voiceover explains that he witnessed five soldiers, one of whom was Robert, who also resides now in Boulogne-sur-mer, strip and beat the woman to death. When Bernard asked who the woman was, he was told "Muriel," though he doubts this was her birth name. Bernard then joined the group and also hit Muriel. Although her death ultimately upset him, he confesses to sleeping well the night of her murder. Bernard's narration is strictly audial, (we do not even see Bernard begin speaking, the film moves directly from a scene of Alphonse and Hélène in a car to the 8mm footage of soldiers). Still, the choice of words visually suggests corporeality; he describes her mouth as "pleine d'écume," her body and hair with "sang partout," and "sa poitrine avec brûlures," all distinct images that capture the viewer's visual imagination.

---

[64] Claude Bailblé, Michel Marie, Marie-Claire Ropars, *Muriel : histoire d'une recherche* (Paris : Éditions Galilee, 1974) 315-316.

Furthermore, though Bernard also describes Muriel's cries, his monologue primarily transcribes the act of seeing. Bernard begins by professing, "J'y vois encore," as well as the shocking details of what he then saw. It is only once that Bernard admits to participation, "je me suis mis aussi," and the physical sensation, "les paumes de moi-même brulaient". Therefore, he remains primarily a visual witness. Additionally implying sight are Muriel's probing eyes that trouble Bernard when he asks in dumbfounded anguish, "pourquoi elle m'a regardé?" feeling an obligation to justice in her stare. In his journal, we see that Muriel's post-mortem gaze obsesses him: "je ne sais pas pourquoi, mais les yeux de Muriel n'étaient pas fermés." He reiterates this fact when telling the story to Vieux-Jean, demonstrating sight's symbolic value in his present quandary of guilt and blame. In this sequence, Resnais emphasizes the visual impact of a torture sequence and stresses the importance of sight, all while denying the spectator access to the ghastly spectacle. In this way the verbal imagery of the monologue competes with the documentary footage within the larger film, forcing our senses to contradict each other and collide.

This revelatory climax of the film (the true climax comes somewhat later when Bernard shoots Robert as punishment) makes a larger statement about government censure. The schism between the government-approved images of soldiers and the verbal description of torture and murder of an Algerian in sound, exposes the deception of the media. In the book *Muriel*: *histoire d'une recherché* from 1971, Claude Baiblé, Michel Marie, and Marie-Claire Ropars analyze the film in acts and scenes found in the original screenplay. In this in-depth study, Ropars finds the lack of images of Muriel articulate a pointed statement about the absence of images of the Algerian War in France:

> … il traduit la méconnaissance—puisqu'on ne voit rien—et permet la reconnaissance—parce qu'on apprend tout : à l'image de ce que fut, pendant la guerre d'Algérie, la connaissance qu'on put en avoir, entre les actualités visuelles, imposées par la censure, et les informations orales diffusées clandestinement.[65]

Ropars understands the scene as a teaching experience ("on apprend"). Not only do we learn what really occurs during the Algerian War, but simultaneously, through the dialectic of images and sound, we gain knowledge of the government censure's dissimulation.[66] It follows suit that a veteran's voice divulges the truth of warfare in Algeria. The oral testimonies of soldiers were a firsthand source about decolonization in Algeria that many times opposed newsreels. In this way, the documentary with a paradoxical narration is a paradigm for the larger oral testimony of veterans that contradicted the censored moving images at the root of the public's *méconnaissance*. Muriel's death becomes vivid through the viewers' imagination rather than from an image of the atrocity.

However, it is this precisely this absence of Algerians in *Muriel* that novelist and poet, Rachid Boudjedra, resents:

> *Muriel* n'est pas un film sur l'Algérie, mais un film où il est question d'Algérie comme une pensée gênante que chacun cherche à oublier. Comme le dit l'ami

[65] Ropars, 316.

[66] "… plus qu'une mise en abyme, est-ce un rapport dialectique qui relie le film de Bernard et celui de Resnais, chacun signalant l'insuffisance de l'autre." Ropars, 316.

> tortionnaire au protagoniste : "Tu veux raconter Muriel ? Muriel, ça ne se raconte pas."[67]

Benjamin Stora gave this statement new relevance in 1991 when he quoted it in his discussion of cinematic depictions of the Algerian War in *La gangrène et l'oubli*, invoking a long-standing debate on whether the New Wave was in fact *engagé.* The *ami tortionnaire* that Boudjedra refers to is none other than Robert, who when seeing Bernard upset asks whether he still is obsessed with Muriel. Although, Boudjedra correctly identifies a French sentiment of denial and dismissal in *Muriel*, he fails to acknowledge that Resnais could only achieve the anti-censure statement through this paradox of brutal language and banal images. Unlike Bernard, Robert aims to reintegrate into French society and actively looks for work; he would naturally rather forget the act of torture and murder. Nevertheless, the murder of Robert by Bernard critiques his disavowal, proving fatal consequences for his involvement in the interrogation. As Boudjedra states, *Muriel* is not about Algeria. Nevertheless, *Muriel* is about the popular French conception of the Algerian War in 1963, and how the memories of a veteran disrupt the government's agenda.

The separation between sound and image occurs once more when Bernard attempts to film a fight between Alphonse and Alphonse's brother-in-law, Erneste, who has come to take Alphonse back to his wife, Simone. Bernard fetches his camera and begins filming while he asks Françoise to use his tape recorder to capture the men's argument. By accident, she presses play and we hear the sound of a group of men's laughter while we watch the two middle-aged men hit

---

[67] Rachid Boudjedra, *Naissance du cinéma algérien (*Paris : Maspéro, 1971) 27.

and wrestle one-another. Bernard yells to stop the tape recorder, but begins sobbing immediately, indicating the recording's power over his psyche. It is the laughter playing without an appropriate accompanying image and Bernard's distressed reaction to a sound that usually conveys happiness that suggest the tape's sinister source: soldiers dominating a native woman in Algeria. To this extent, the recording acts as a flashback, more than the documentary footage because it verifies the act. The recording shocks and horrifies Bernard, as it replays the trauma scene. He reacts by leaving immediately to kill Robert. Celia Britton writes, "The tape recording—the only way in which the torture is as it were materially present in the film—thus provokes a series of events that leads to the narrative ending …"[68] Resnais does not show the audience the depravity of French soldiers laughing at Muriel's pain or nudity, nor the pain of the colonized Other to Boudjedra's regret. Instead, he asks us to visualize the scene in order to complete the narrative of emotions and sounds with the correct, albeit disturbing images of torture.

If Resnais had wanted to reject the seriousness of the conflict, would he pair images of happy, helpful, soldiers with a paradoxical text? If one considers the 8 mm footage self-censured, it is self-conscious and draws attention to the failure of the media in representing war. Conversely where Boudjedra finds the desire to forget Algeria, Ropars declares the film's mission "de raconter l'irracontable." Resnais' method of pairing harmless, familiar, images of soldiers with a horrifying narration does in fact *raconter* the atrocities abroad and their censorship.[69] The act of forgetting, erasing an event in the past so that it does not interfere with

---

[68] Britton, 39.

[69] Ropars, 316.

the present, is precisely the reverse of how Deleuze views the director: "Il n'y a pas d'auteur moins enfoui dans le passé. C'est un cinéma qui, à force d'esquiver le présent, empêche le passé de se dégrader en souvenir." [70] Certainly, Bernard's words and behavior show trauma's effect on his present condition. In fact, Bernard's gravest action in the film, shooting Robert, demonstrates the past's resurgence. Although there are no Algerians in the film, *Muriel* does not aim to forget the past, but to expose it in the light of the present.

Superego and Id: Bernard and Robert

Bernard also "s'est mis" "(à) donner des coups" to Muriel and makes no attempt to stop her brutal death, even if later, the aura of her gaze compels him to seek revenge. In fact, James Monaco suggests that if seeking justice, perhaps Bernard should have shot himself, for he is also blameworthy and sentenced to a life of hiding after the killing. However, if Robert and Bernard can be understood as aspects of the same veteran's ego, the id and the superego respectively, an element of self-punishment and suicide resides in Bernard's murder of Robert. In this way, one may interpret the two veterans and the audience as a paradigm of the three mental agencies, the id, the superego, and the ego, whose interaction determines human behavior according to Freud.

This view of the characters is historically grounded, for psychoanalysis found new popularity in the years surrounding *Muriel*'s premiere: a French translation of Ernest Jones biography of Freud in 1961 (five years after the original text was published), another the same year by Didier Anzeu, and then a series of radio shows, were followed by new Gallimard editions of Freudian texts in 1966 (meanwhile Jacques Lacan's *Écrits* became a best seller the same year). Furthermore, Jean Cayrol's interest in the methodology concerning his own trauma,

[70] Deleuze, 163.

indicates that one should consider a psychoanalytic structure in the film, as it reflects the post-Algerian War cultural climate in which both Cayrol and Resnais participated (it is not a coincidence that interest in psychoanalysis increased with the number of returning veterans). Although many analysts debate the division of the psychical agencies and their relationship, one can locate their definitions specific to France in the mid-60s, as found in *Le Dictionnaire de psychoanalyse* by Jean Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis, published in 1967. In this way, I base this reading of the ego, id and superego in *Muriel* as stemming from the French intellectual and artistic mileu who utilized the then current trend of psychoanalysis to interpret the Algerian War and its aftermath (this grouping would include Franz Fanon).

While Freud in the *The Ego and the Id* recognizes the dependency of these relationships and how the agencies merge, he continues to define them as separate entities. Demonstrating how Freud viewed the agencies as a complex system of dependency and independency, he writes:

> Thus we have said repeatedly that the ego is formed to a great extent out of identifications which take the place of abandoned cathexes by the id; that the first of these identifications always behave as a special agency in the ego and stand apart from the ego in the form of a super-ego, while later on, as it grows stronger, the ego may become more resistant to the influences of such identifications.[71]

In this way we see that while the ego is in part shaped by the id, it in instances, appears autonomous, complicating our understanding of the id, the super-ego and the ego. Therefore a discussion of Robert, Bernard and the viewing public as mental agencies is highly delicate; some would contest the interpretation of the characters as distinct agencies. Additionally, as Freud

[71] Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id* (New York: W.W. Norton and Hewitt, 1960) 48.

believed the ego encompassed the superego and originated from the id, the concept of the audience, a group which some might argue is wholly detached from film production, presents problems when interpreted as the ego. Nevertheless, one can locate these themes of ego, super-ego, and id within the text. Furthermore, as these themes also represent the *episteme* of the film, they serve our exploration of *Muriel ou le temps d'un retours*.

Although Bernard first sees five soldiers surrounding Muriel and discussing how they will question her, according to Bernard, it is Robert who permits himself to touch her: "et Robert s'est laissé et la tourner." His direct contact with Muriel represents an instinct not expressed by the rest of the troop that soon develops into one of the id's most powerful aspects, the death drive, which here aims at the Other's destruction, "et puis ça commencait, Robert l'a donnée des coups dans les hanches." Furthermore, the word *hanche* along with *coups*, which has innumerable sexual connotations, augments the implication of sexual assault, further suggested by the soldiers' stripping of Muriel. Bernard's use of the word *ça*, id in French, confuses Robert's autonomy. In fact, if we take the character Robert as representative of a general torturer's *ça*, the words *ça* and Robert can be interchanged in the monologue. The chaos of the torture scene in Bernard's account also resembles the id's disorganized state, the soldiers continue to torture Muriel, even when she is beyond speaking, because as Bernard states, "il faut en finir"—the soldiers have thus replaced the goal of forcing Muriel to speak with a new less distinct objective of killing her. In this way, Robert, the id, encourages the veterans, to follow a primal drive that neither relies on words nor seeks information.

In contrast, Bernard manifests elements of the superego, a term Jean Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis describe in *Le Vocabulaire de psychanalyse* (1967) as "semblable à un juge ou d'un

censeur."[72] Bernard fixates on the death of Muriel and blames the troops' actions on Robert, making character judgements when they meet, ("Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire le courage? Tu n'en saurait pas.") This further extends to a critical attitude about the French presence in Algeria when he angers at Alphonse, and generally towards others; Françoise, Alphonse's young girlfriend, and his step mother, Hélène.[73] As Robert represents the id, Bernard primarily emblematizes the law against him. Laplanche and Pontalis write: "alors le surmoi apparait principalement comme une instance qui incarne une loi et qu'on la transgresse."[74] Furthermore, the superego/Bernard represents an organizational mode lacking in the id/Robert. In an attempt to understand what occurred and assign the appropriate punishment to the instigator of the crime, Bernard writes and collects evidence, revisiting the traumatic event mentally as well as through sound and image.

However, despite the two visually opposed actors and their contradictory view of the event as something to forget (id) and as something to condemn (superego), during the torture of Muriel, a merging occurs. This explains the ambiguous language of Bernard's monologue concerning the torture. The frequent use of "on"—"on l'a tirée par les chevilles", "on arrachait les vêtements" for example, hints at responsibility while denying it, for the pronoun can signify in context I, you, he, she, we, or they. Ironically, Bernard as the judge, and arbiter of societal values, believes that by killing Robert he will in fact punish the id responsible for initiating

[72] Jean Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis, *Vocabulaire de la Psychanalyse* (Paris : Presse Universitaires de France, 1967) 471.

[73] Alphonse tells Hélène and Bernard that he lived in Algeria for 10 years, managing a café. We learn later that this is a lie.

[74] Laplanche and Pontalis, 472.

Muriel's murder. However this is false, for by shooting Robert, Bernard again succumbs to the id's death drive. The murder is an impulsive act dually motivated by the id/Robert.

Reading the two veteran characters as representative of opposed psychical agencies necessitates labeling their negotiating agency, the ego. However, unlike the superego and the id, there is not a character within the film that portrays the ego. Rather, the spectator fulfills this role if he/she chooses to commit to the narrative, by organizing the information and viewpoints offered by the two characters and placing these against a larger body of exterior knowledge. Again the definition by Laplanche and Pontalis is helpful: "le moi est dans une relation de dépendance tant à l'endroit des revendications du ça que des impératives du surmoi et des exigences de la réalité."[75] Although Bernard's confession monologue uses ambiguous subject pronouns, the tone of blame towards Robert/the id is clear. In this way, the involved spectator may in fact feel proud of Bernard for killing Robert. Yet, as the killing itself only proves the id's power over the super-ego, this sentiment proves to be a compromise which excuses and defends the id's behavior. On closer inspection of *Muriel ou un temps d'un retour,* Robert's murder does not offer a solution to French Algerian War guilt, but in fact only compounds the problem with a need to hide, thus repress, the war once more. Resnais' exposition of the desire and need to repress the Algerian War, as well as the psychological turmoil arising from attempts to confront perpetrator guilt, thereby challenges the national memory of France.

La Battaglia di Algeri

Pontecorvo filmed *La Battaglia di Algeri* several years after the first French film efforts to address the war and torture—8 years after *Muriel,* and 6 after *Le Petit soldat.* Pontecorvo was

[75] Laplanche and Pontalis, 241.

doubtlessly aware of these films, and his decision to direct a film about the terrorism of both the French army and the FLN followed stepping stones laid by French directors. Questions of duality, exteriority, and memory posed stylistically by the New Wave privileged placing the war in Switzerland (*Le Petit soldat*) and in the past (*Muriel*). Although both New Wave films' utilized this indirect approach to the Algerian War, their matter was still highly controversial at the epoch and constituted banning: A larger anti-torture, anti-war statement surfaces in *Le Petit soldat*, and the lack of war/torture footage in *Muriel* suggests the censorship to which it was subjected. Though there are levels of symbolism and *mise-en-abyme* seldom noticed,[76] *La Battaglia di Algeri* is a more direct film, which may be a consequence of Pontecorvo's Italian film heritage and Algerian financing—the FLN government financed Kasbah films, which produced the film and paid for 40% of its expenses. My study of *La Battaglia di Algeri* will begin by addressing the film's background, and revealing how an Italian came to direct a Maghrebi independence film. I have chosen to focus on the film's two most iconic elements: the depiction of torture (in the film's opening scene, which occurs *in media res* after the military tortured an Arab prisoner, as well as in a montage), and women and children as independence fighters and martyrs (the bombing of French cafés by Arab women, and in the film's finale of independence bliss). In conclusion, I will analyze the film's reception in France following its three releases (1966, 1979 and 2004) emphasizing the latter due to its proximity to the dissertation's main thrust, 2005-2007.

<u>Gilles Pontecorvo and a Kasbah production</u>

[76] See Nicolas Harrison, "Pontecorvo's 'Documentary' Aesthetics: *The Battle of Algiers* and the Battle of Algiers." *Interventions* 9.3 (2007): 389–404. Harrison interprets Colonel Mathieu as the author within the film, specifically citing the scene in which he shows a slide show of photographs to the soldiers.

La Battaglia di Algeri is in both French and Arabic, and portrays the war over the last French colony. However it cannot be considered a French production, a fact, like the director's Italian nationality that explains its general rejection by France. The film's director, Gillo Pontecorvo, was an Italian communist, who left the party in 1956 due to disagreements over Lenin's takeover of Romania. Pontecorvo had personal expertise in directing a film about the FLN, he had been a guerilla warrior for the Italian Resistance during World War II.[77] He shared his political formation with the co-screen-writer, Frank Solinas, with whom Pontecorvo collaborated on three other films. Both men were keenly interested in Algeria, and went to study the revolution there for several months before the French exodus.

After the Second World War, Pontecorvo directed seven documentaries. He embarked on his first narrative feature, *La grande strata azzura* in 1957. The film, starring Yves Montand, socially critiques capitalism; a local wholesaler exploits the fishermen, who bomb the ocean in order to net more and ensure an adequate income. Pontecorvo's second feature, *Kapò* (1959), is one of the first European fiction films to portray Nazi concentration camps. Exposing Holocaust horrors with an escape narrative similar to Robert Bresson's *Un Condamné à mort s'est échappé* (1956), a teen prisoner abandons her values and works as a guard (a *kapò*) in exchange for thicker clothes and better meals while planning her getaway. Yessif Saadi had seen *Kapo*, and the film influenced his decision to ask Pontecorvo to direct *La Battaglia di Algeri.* Although *Kapò* contains a light love story that the director later said he should have deleted, the film primarily reveals the Nazi brutality. Similar themes of power and violence would reappear in the director's co-Algerian feature.

---

[77] I found most of the information concerning Pontecorvo's background and how he came to direct the film in: David Forgacs, "Italians in Algiers," *Interventions* 9.3(2007): 350-364.

When Solinas and Pontecorvo travelled to Algeria, they were writing a completely different film about the war that emphasized French responsibility and violence. In *Parà*, their abandoned screenplay, a deserter, Paul Robin, who was to be played by Paul Newman, returns to Algeria as an international photographer hoping to capture a prize-winning image of the people's joy after the referendum. Instead, he shoots a more controversial photo when he witnesses an OAS member fire his gun and kill an indigenous woman. The screenplay then flashes back to 1957, and pictures Paul torturing an FLN member during his military service. To this extent, the screenplay *Parà* resembles Bernard's story at the center of *Muriel*: an ambivalent French onlooker views the military murder of a woman, symbolic of her country, and is haunted by the memory of perpetrating. *Parà* would have concluded with Paul celebrating independence with Algerians. However, rather than verbally alluding to a memory as in *Muriel*, the Pontecorvo/Solinas script depicts the murder of the Arab woman as well as a flashback of Paul committing torture. No distributor or producer would finance the controversial project, and so *Parà* remains a hypothetical film that would have shocked Europe.

In 1963, while Solinas and Pontecorvo were writing *Parà* and seeking production money for their militant script—Yacef Saadi, a FLN leader, sought a producer for a film version of his book, *Souvenirs de la Battaille d'Algers* : *September 1956- décembre 1957*, a journalistic transcript of the military's domination of the Kasbah that he had written in prison. Saadi had already outlined a film script with René Vautier, director of the pro-liberation shorts *Avoir 8 ans* and *L'Algérie en flammes*[78], and so he traveled with an assistant to Italy in search of a director. Although Saadi initially sought French support, his interest in Italy stemmed from his admiration

[78] In 1972 Vautier made his own Algerian War drama, *Avoir 20 ans dans les Aurès.*

of neo-realism. In fact, in one interview Saadi discusses how neo-realist films inspired him to make a similar feature about the Algerian struggle.[79] After independence, Saadi began his own production company, Kasbah films, with federal money, hoping to draw international attention and money to the new nation of Algeria. Before finding Pontecorvo Saadi approached Luchino Visconte, another director known for his association with the communist party, who turned down the project. Pontecorvo first proposed the script of *Parà* to Saadi, but Saadi preferred a feature centered on the indigenous people of Algeria rather than on a French soldier played by an American star. Still, the screenplay written by Saadi and Vautier proved too propagandistic for Pontecorvo. Eventually, both men compromised considerably before agreeing on the script for *La Battaglia di Algeri*; the result drew considerably on the men's previous screenplays.

Torture

The after-torture sequence

The first frame of *La Battaglia di Algeri* is a long shot of a thin Arab man trembling in a chair, clothed only in underwear. Two soldiers tidy torture equipment behind him (a large sink and a board) and one soldier rubs the suffering man's back with a towel and says in a friendly, if patronizing tone, "tu ne pouvais pas decider, eh?, ça pourrait être mieux pour toi." We then realize that the man's shaking is an after effect of waterboarding, the painful torture technique that convinced the prisoner to disclose the hiding place of Ali Lapointe, the last free FLN leader. The soldier appears relaxed and lights a cigarette before several more of his colleagues enter. He speaks of the shaking prisoner to other soldiers in the third person, "Il a enfin craché les mots.

[79] Telephone interview with Forgacs on May 3, 2006 cited in "Italians in Algiers".

Donne-lui du café." Sadly, the prisoner in this compromised position cannot grasp the tin cup, and so a soldier forces it to the shaking man's lips. Proving the soldier's limited sympathy for the suffering man, he pats him on the back while he pours. Then a soldier on each side of the tortured man grasps his respective arm to pull him to a standing position (the first of several torture victims in Christ-like postures). When their leader, Colonel Mathieu, enters he explains the plan. The soldiers will dress the Arab in French military apparel after which he will lead them to the coveted address. The soldiers quickly clothe him in camouflage attire before soft string based music accompanies the first close-up; we now see a tear rolling down the torture victim's cheek (Image 1). Trembling still, he yells "Non!" and runs to open the window shutters in hopes of escape. However, a soldier slaps him, and reminds him of what he might endure if he were to continue in this manner. This scene prefaces the credits that roll as the torture victim leads a brigrade past the alarmed citizens, and through the Kasbah accompanied by Ennio Morricone's pulsing, militaristic, score. Although the spectator does not witness the act of torture in this first sequence, the images relay the physical pain caused by torture. Furthermore, the actor portrays not only the manner in which torture debilitates and demeans its victims, but mental trauma as well. Yet, this first sequence also illustrates the effectiveness of torture, how it can be a useful tool for acquiring needed information. Additionally, the military is generally respectful, keeping an affable tone despite causing the prisoner deep anguish only moments earlier.

After following the prisoner in *para* disguise, Colonel Mathieu and company find Ali Lapointe hiding behind a wall with three of his associates; another man; a child, Petit Omar; and a woman, Zohra Drif. Lapointe and his friends remain silent, though a *para* explains that the military is surrounding the building, and that he should surrender now if he wishes to receive a fair trial. We await Lapointe's decision, to admit defeat or to remain silent and cause the

building's destruction. However, in a close-up of Lapointe, the film flashes back three years to 1954, indicated by a title—titles continue to list dates, and often precise times for the rest of the film, placing the importance on each moment of the battle, and increasing the audience's anxiety over the ticking bomb near Ali Lapointe. The same flashback concept that creates curiosity for what leads to the tense moment, while simultaneously anticipating the outcome of the film's nebulous present, exists in the film's address of torture. After viewing the post-torture trauma with slight melodrama (the close-up with the tear and sorrowful music), the viewer speculates on the actual practice, the fierceness of the torture and the ferocity of its participants. Despite the abject quality of torture, the audience awaits its portrayal and even anticipates this depiction as a matter of course.

By beginning the film in an after-torture sequence which then leads to the film's central figure and a flashback, Pontecorvo emphasizes torture's importance in the narrative, as an odious bond between the FLN and the *paras* that provides the French with information, and the FLN with vengeful motivation. Furthermore, though the flashback in this instance primarily serves to increase suspense, the prisoner's obvious psychological suffering indicates the post-traumatic definition of the term as well (this will be studied in detail in Chapter 2). In this way, the flashback of *La Battaglia di Algeri* posits the torture victim pictured only minutes earlier as an emblem of the collective trauma of indigenous Algerians suffering from the post-trauma of French military attacks on the Kasbah. This remains especially true in 1965, the year Pontecorvo filmed in Algeria with a local, non-professional, cast. Curfew, torture, and bombings were in the very recent past for these citizens, inspiring especially convincing performances. For these actors, the film signified a flashback: the cast relived the traumatic battle of Algiers and its glorious conclusion once again in the present. As Yessif Saadi said to *Le Monde*, "Je devais jouer au

cinéma des moments que j'avais vécus sept ans auparavant. La guerre, la prison, la torture, tout cela était encore frais dans ma mémoire."[80]

<u>Torture montage</u>

Pontecorvo at last depicts the atrocity of torture three-quarters through the film (or 1 hour and 34 minutes into the 2 hour and 6 minute film), further indicating torture's climatic role in *La Battaglia*. The sequence runs after the press convenes to question Colonel Mathieu on his interrogation technique, which he defends with credibility. However, a montage illustrating the cruelty of the practice then refutes the Colonel's argument. Ecclesiastic music (Bach's Mass in B minor) accompanies the montage, augmenting the Christian symbolism of the prisoners' martyrdom, also exhibited by the Christ-like postures of several victims clothed only in white underwear. During the montage we watch as French soldiers in camouflage waterboard, electrocute, and blowtorch Arab men in near nudity. While Pontecorvo often uses long shots to include the torturer and tortured, he intersperses close-ups illustrating the extreme pain visible in the victims' facial expressions. Countering their agony are several close-ups of French soldiers smoking that hint at their near indifference—cigarettes are a sign of luxury, an extravagance that the FLN condemned. The montage opens and closes with a feminine face watching (though the torture sequences are entirely male, and this face not likely a woman's), a tear rolling the cheek (Image 2). The close-up of the sorrowful torture witness, who most probably has undergone such

[80] Tewfik Hakem, « Yacef Saâdi, commandant et producteur » *Le Monde* 13 June 2004, 13 May 2011 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgibin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=e9417a0806e1c0cf583eb48aa73f59e2b79f76473e8eff99>.

brutality, is a graphic match with the close-up of the torture victim at the beginning of the film who leads the soldiers to Ali Lapointe. In this way, Pontecorvo reiterates the degradation of torture.

The torture montage is an emotional tour de force. Pontecorvo now pairs the same dramatic elements of the first sequence (the victim's shock, the sorrowful music, and the tear) with their cause. Furthermore, the film's general documentary approach augments the montage's realism causing more affect. Unlike the torture of *Le Petit soldat* which was presented in an absurdist, philosophical manner, the torture montage of *La Battaglia di Algeri* confronts a specific practice in a precise historical moment, with many victims who are visibly wounded, rather than one who shows no injury. Though this approach suggests the influence of Soviet montage rather than documentaries, the torture sequence's proximity to other scenes headed with dates and times and journalistic narration, infers the actuality of the torture sequence.

The fictional images of torture relay the gore of the practice, and the pain of its victims. However, the French soldiers do not appear unrestrained. In fact, the first sequence demonstrates that the soldiers of *La Battaglia* afflict their victims with specific goals, maintaining a degree of respect for them. Furthermore, though there are many accounts of French soldiers sexually abusing their prisoners (see my discussion of *L'Ennemi initime* in Chapter 3), Pontecorvo does not indicate such behavior. In this way, the images of torture in *La Battaglia di Algeri* differ greatly from the military behavior described by Bernard in *Muriel. La Battaglia di Algeri* illustrates the atrocity of the French military torture practice, but does not does not present the torturers as reckless or impulsive. Furthermore, by preceding the torture montage with Colonel Mathieu's explanation for its uses, Pontecorvo creates a torture dialectic. Nevertheless, the sheer

affect of the images of injured men accompanied by religious music demonstrates a pro-independence bias.

Women and Children

Fedaeeyat

In a series of sequences lasting nearly nine minutes, three Arab women disguise themselves as European, leave purses holding bombs at respective locations (two cafés and an airport), and depart before the explosions. A person willing to risk his/her life for faith or political convictions, such as a bomb runner, is called a *fedayee* (masculine form) in Arabic. Aiming for historical accuracy, Pontecorvo chose *fedaeeyat* (feminine plural form) to leave the bombs, as women were responsible for roughly two-thirds of the FLN bombings.[81] The three women of various ages (one a late teen, another in her late twenties, the third in her forties) invoke heroism. Despite remaining virtually voiceless, the women attend to their acts with seriousness and silence. Danièle Djamila and Amrane Minne note in their article, "Women at War: the Representation of Women in *the Battle of Algiers*," that though Pontecorvo chose to discuss more precisely the male guerillas in his film, women were extremely important to the FLN; in fact several with college educations managed correspondence with press, and other women transported information or arms in their Islamic clothing and veil—which Pontecorvo also depicts in the film.[82] Although Djamila and Minne feel that the film downplays the importance of women to the revolution in the film, scenes of women (the bombing of the cafés

[81] Danièle Djamila and Amrane Minne. Trans Alistair Clarke. "Women at war: The Representation of Women in *The Battle of Algiers*," *Interventions* 9:3 (2007): 347.

[82] Pontecorvo also shows armed men disguised by covering, feminine, apparel.

and the ending) rival with the torture sequences as the most memorable. Furthermore, the mute women in these scenes invoke the FLN's larger strategy of silence; their refusal to speak resembles their leader Lapointe and his associates hiding behind the wall.

Although this café bombing sequence honorably depicts women's nationalism, attention to their French victims complicates a simplistic reading. In particular, a close-up of a young boy eating ice cream before the bomb (Image 3), and the reverse shot of the female bomber (Image 4) contemplating the consequences of her actions before exiting, question the FLN's terrorist tactics. Interestingly the boy held greater importance in the original screenplay. Solinas and Pontecorvo intended to include the boy purchasing ice-cream with his parents, as well as a shot of his corpse after the explosion, but Kasbah Film, who read the script before production, demanded that all shots of the child be cut—Pontecorvo explains the FLN "did not want to appear like criminals."[83] What remains from Pontecorvo's negotiation with his producer is two shots of the boy eating ice cream at the café. In these moments the viewer glimpses the boy's fragility and mortality, while the reverse shots of the female bomber demonstrate the gravity of her decision.

Pontecorvo did not choose to portray the bomber's inner turmoil with a male *feedayee.* A feminine point of view enhances the ambiguous emotions any guerrilla committing a mortal act might experience. Because the woman appears so convincingly European in her disguise, and because she is of an appropriate age to have such a child, an element of filicide emerges in the act of bombing. While a male warrior contemplating a child's death might be understood as feeble and ineffective, a *fedaeeya*'s glance emphasizes her caring, maternal instinct

[83] Cavaglia, Francesca. "A child eating an ice-cream before the explosion: Notes on a Controversial scene in *The Battle of Algiers*." *P.O.V.: A Danish Journal of Film Studies* 20 (2005): 4.

demonstrating that her anger towards colonialism surpasses this primal feminine impulse.[84] The scene fueled much debate during the filming and editing (Kasbah films begged Pontocorvo to edit the shots even days before the Venice Film Festival where it won the Lion d'Or). Although cuts diminish the boy's minor part, moments before the explosion, his youthful image heightens the complexity of the female bomber's role.

<u>Petit Omar</u>

Although *Le Petit soldat* and *Muriel* have no child actors, the child is an important element in neo-realist pictures, perhaps explaining why Pontecorvo, notably influenced by Rosellini, chose to insert such an effective melodramatic symbol. In fact the French boy whose death is imminent is not the sole child death; Petit Omar (Mohammed Ben Kassen), who looks around ten and historically died at twelve, plays a prominent role in the film's plot. Early in the film's flashback Petit Omar runs a message to Ali Lapointe. However Lapointe is illiterate and depends on the child to read the message. The enthusiastic boy then proves his loyalty to the cause and Lapointe, who entrusts him with more responsibilities. Although Petit Omar speaks rarely, he represents Algeria's hopeful future. In this way, his presence behind the wall with Ali Lapointe intensifies the bombing. Moreover, the three accomplices, a child, a woman of child-bearing age, and a young man, resemble a family. To this extent, the accomplices, emblematic of the revolutionary family, accompany Lapointe in martyrdom. Although Petit Omar historically worked for the FLN and did die hiding from the French military with his mentor, cinematically his character serves to enhance the viewer's suspense during the long flashback. As the boy eating ice-cream indicates the inter-generational consequences of a terrorist act, the image of

[84] For a discussion on the importance of casting a male child, see Chapter 4's analysis of *Michou d'Auber*.

Petit Omar's youthful face behind the wall, weighs the silence of Ali Lapointe with the sacrifice of a child.

<u>The Finale</u>

Despite the film's generally even-handed approach to recent Algerian history, *La Battaglia di Algeri* sways towards a celebration of independence at its end, when it suddenly leaps forward to December 1960. The mass of Algerian people surprise the diegetic spectators, the journalists, as well as the film's public. Only seconds after we see Col. Mathieu congratulate the French military on their success at the end of 1957, we see an immense spontaneous protest in the street. Armed soldiers and police shoot protesters and use tanks to push the people back. Yet even violence does not quell the people's enthusiasm for independence. A voice-over that we realize later is a French journalist on the telephone comments that the Algerian people began the uprising suddenly without warning. As Nicholas Harrison explains the ending, "falls outside the film's main narrative arc."[85] Thus, he concludes that the celebration's relationship to the rest of the film is not obvious or plot driven. This finale acts as a coda: the French win the battle of Algiers that lasts for the majority of the film, but these 7 minutes push time forward, revealing that the people's will prevails, even after military domination.

Women preside over the film's final minutes, most especially through the sound of their cries. The females undulate wildly in the street, and the high-pitched vibrato scream asserts their cultural and sexual difference as well as their future victory. In this way, the indigenous women dominate the sound and demonstrate their tenacity; the sound recommences directly after the fire of machine guns. We hear a journalist's voice describe their voices : "Et ces cris

---

[85] Harrison, 400.

incomprehensibles sont encore entendus." Whereas the Algerian cast previously appeared as a chorus, they have now transformed into a ballet. Shots highlight women dancing with abandon in the streets. The final shot of the film depicts one woman waving a flag, who despite several attempts by police to push her back continues dancing forward (Image 5). In this way, though the narrative concentrates on male leaders, a nameless, indigenous woman plays a symbolic role as the embodiment of a new nation's independence and the perseverance that the battle against colonialism required.

Reception in France

Unlike *Le Petit soldat*, *La Battaglia di Algeri* was never censored by an official or national organization. The Pontecorvo film was made after the war, when the official censure lightened its treatment of political content. However, the film did not premiere widely in France because individual theaters refused to screen it—often *pied noir* and imperialist groups threatened cinema owners.[86] Not only were French movie theaters attempting to avoid scandal, French interest in the film at the epoch was low and reviews were negative. A film deemed unprofitable would not be worth risking an attack from the OAS. Furthermore, Patricia Caillé argues that the film culture of France in 1966, shaped largely by the New Wave, embraced the *auteur* theory and a new national film pride. Although Jacques Rivette praised Pontecorvo's concentration camp drama, *Kapo* (1961) in *Les Cahiers du Cinéma*, the Italian director had made only one other fiction film before *La Battaglia di Algeri.* Thus, Gillo Pontecorvo was an outsider to France and to the *auteur* system, despite the ironic fact that, like the French New Wave,

[86] Benjamin Stora "Still Fighting: *The Battle of Algiers*, Censorship, and the 'Memory Wars," *Interventions* 9.3 (2007): 365-370.

Pontecorvo's work shows the enormous influence of Italian neo-realism. However, because Pontecorvo uses elements of this style to portray the French military, French critics viewed his Italian nationality as an othering factor. After all, *La Battaglia di Algeri* does not take a colonizer's point of view, and as the closing scenes indicate, prefers the FLN. In this way, the Italian lens others France.

When the "radical" Italian understanding of French involvement in Algeria won the Lion d'or in Venice over two features by French *auteurs* (François Truffaut's *Farenheit 451* and Robert Bresson's *Au hazard Balthazar*), Truffaut publicly left the auditorium. Naturally, Jean Narboni's review in *Les Cahiers du Cinéma* (where Truffaut wrote before becoming a director) sides with the New Wave. Narboni suggests that the mediocre film won the Lion d'Or at the Venice festival only because of its controversy. He writes :

> Un certain nombre de menus incidents … entourent le film d'un halo bien injustifié de scandale et de subversion. Outre qu'ils discréditent la délégation française, ils eurent pour effet de contribuer, par un processus d'irritation réactionnelle bien connu, à l'attribution du Lion d'Or.[87]

Perhaps the "menus incidents" are OAS threats made to theaters, or the scandal of the press surrounding purported torture in papers such as *L'Humanité*. However, by mysteriously referring to historical matter as "menus", Narboni trivializes its importance. In fact, if Narboni insinuates the limited press exposure of French torture in this statement, he purports that the only significance of these "menus incidents" is to steal the Lion d'or from a French feature. Narboni further suggests his nationalist slant when criticizing the lack of *pied noir* characters in the film.

[87] Jean Narboni, « *La Bataille d'Alger* de Gillo Pontecorvo (Algérie),» *Les Cahiers du Cinéma* 183 (1966) :25.

In 1971, after much debate concerning films censored in the past, *La Battaglia di Algeri* was due for a second, more widespread release. Reviews this time around were more favorable, and Pontecorvo's *auteur* status improved as he released a new film, *Burn!*, shortly before the re-release of *La Battaglia*. The 1971 release of the film was part of a larger national discussion concerning the Algerian War and the unofficial banning that took place during the conflict. Caillé describes the new national mood:

> Thus expressing support for the film became a means to prove that 'a nation must take responsibility for its own history' and that the national community was a 'mature people' ('un peuple adulte') able to rise above the division and prejudices cause by this now resolved conflict…[88]

In anticipation of the 1971 release, *Positif* published a statement, "Pourquoi vous n'avez pas vu *La Bataille d'Alger*?" chronologically listing steps taken by anti-censure activists. However the magazine refused to promote *La Battaglia di Algeri* in the declaration explaining, "Nous n'entendons pas prendre position sur le film lui-même." Even though *Positif*'s document remained neutral, their discussion of *La Battaglia* required a defensive statement about the Algerian War's lessening relevance : "les problèmes de la guerre d'Algérie ont –avec le recul du temps—beaucoup perdu leur impact" In this way, the publication continued its rejection of *La Battaglia di Algeri*.

[88] Patricia Caillé, "The Illegitimate Legitimacy of *The Battle of Algiers* in French Film Culture," *Interventions* 9.3 (2007): 379.

In the spring of 2004, Cannes film festival screened *La Battaglia di Algeri* as part of a classics showcase. In September of the same year, the film hit French movie theaters for the third time, and Criterion globally released a 3 DVD set of and about the film. Finally, in November 2004, the renewed interest in *La Battaglia di Algeri* provoked its television premiere on *Arte*. What caused the new French fascination with a 48 year old film? Scholars such as Benjamin Stora and Patricia Caillé point to the Pentagon's screening of the film as a pedagogical measure to understanding guerrilla warfare in the wake of Iraq. True, torture, its use, and the military procedure against third-world guerilla tactics ignited a global debate provoked by the Iraq War, a war of which the French state vocally disapproved. However, in comparing the FLN to terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq, "all historical distinctions are elided to leave only one essential element: that in both cases the insurgents are Muslim."[89] Although Yacef Saadi admitted to benefitting from the Petagon's promotion of the film, he commented, « Il n'y avait aucune comparaison à faire entre une guerre de décolonisation et une opération de changement de régime ».[90] Thus, the film's new-found notoriety is also the result of a contemporary segregated view of Europeans and Muslims, incited not only by Middle Eastern conflicts, but by racism and economic disparity in France. An emergent understanding of the *banlieue* as a colony increased the 1966 film's

---

[89] Michael Chanan, "Outsiders: *Battle of Algiers* and political cinema," *Sight and Sound* 17:6 (2007): 39.

[90] Tewfik Hakem, « Yacef Saâdi, commandant et producteur » *Le Monde* June 13, 2004, May, 13, 2011 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgibin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=e9417a0806e1c0cf583eb48aa73f59e2b79f76473e8eff99>.

relevance, especially considering the large number of Algerian immigrants and descendents housed in the *cités.*[91]

Despite the French press' general dismissal of the film upon its original 1966 release, it only gained popularity and influence in subsequent years, as many lauded its blurring of documentary and fiction. Even though *Les Cahiers du Cinéma*'s original review of the film condemned its attempts at realism, by now the film was heralded by *Le Point* as "un document historique"[92] and by *Le monde* as objective; Florence Beaugé writes, "La Bataille d'Alger n'est pas un film de propagande. Il ne glorifie ni les uns ni les autres et montre les victimes de la violence des deux côtés."[93] Therefore, the film's rerelease required *Les Cahiers du Cinéma*'s attention, which resulted in a special ten-page dossier including several articles, and a still from the film on the September cover. "Quarante ans après" is a conversation between philosopher, Marie-José Mondzain, French-Tunisian writer, Abdelwahab Meddab and the journal editor Jean-Michel Frodon. The article, as the title suggests, recontextualizes the film in the present. Therefore, the commentary dwells on the film's relationship to future violence in Algeria, the Middle East, and the French *banlieue* rather than on the representation of decolonization. Meddab says, "Il y est devenu une référence politico-militaire. Et c'est bien en tant que référence

---

[91] Nicholas Bancel, Pascal Blanchard, Sandrine Lamaire, Oliver Barlett, *La Fracture Coloniale* (Paris : Éditions découvertes, 2005).

[92] « *La Bataille d'Algers*, » *Le point* 13 May 2004, 16 June 2011< http://www.lepoint.fr/archives/article.php/28602> .

[93] Florence Beaugé, "*La Bataille d'Alger*: Première sur le réseau hertzien » 31 Oct. 2004, 1 May 2011 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgibin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=210e2961570d150739cf9496ab551cae23120096ddd04e65>.

positive que le terrorisme est revenu en Algérie dans les années 1990."[94] He continues that the film legitimizes « sans réserve le terrorisme jusqu'à Ben Laden compris," [95] and when commenting on the sacrificial element in the Milk Bar bombing sequence, "A mes yeux, il montre que la logique terroriste reste la même."[96] In general the trio does not discuss the film's aesthetic qualities but rather its responsibility in inspiring terrorists. They neither discuss the film's original socio-political context nor the film's depiction of military torture, an actuality during the war. Meddab almost suggests the concept of *fracture coloniale* (that the *banlieues* resemble colonies), but says that the *banlieue* inherits *la tentation islamiste* from the film, rather than an unfortunate power dynamic.

Perhaps it is unsurprising that *Les Cahiers* would ask Jean-Luc Commoli to write a 2004 review of the film, as he was once co-editor of the journal with Jean Narboni, who wrote the first *Cahiers* review of the film 1966.[97] In this way, in spite of the 40 years (or rather 38) that passed, the journal remains consistent, unswervingly negative about the Italian film that competed with the New Wave in 1966. Unlike Jean Narboni, Jean-Luc Comolli was born in Algeria to *pied noir* parents in Phillippeville, which might explain his particular defense of the French characters. Although Comolli's article, "L'attente du prochain coup," primarily discusses, as the title suggests, how the film overly manipulates our expectations, he also comments on the scenes of

[94] "Quarante ans après: Conversation entre Marie-José Mondzain, Abdelzahab Meddab, and Jean-Michel Frodon, à propos de *La Bataille d'Alger* , revu d'aujourd'hui, » *Les cahiers du cinéma*, 593 (2004) : 68.

[95] « Quarante ans après », 68.

[96] « Quarante ans après », 67.

[97] Together they authored the Manifesto "Cinéma, Idéologie, et Critique" which put the magazine in Marxist terms and drew on psychoanalytic language in an auto-critique/Manifesto.

the women bombers and their cruel representation of the French. He does not mention the boy eating ice cream.

> Si les victims européennes (les 'méchants') sont individualisées, c'est sans doute pour conduire le spectateur à jouir davantage leur massacre. Mais il n'est pas indifférent que ces méchants » nous soient montrés, avant de mourir, en train de profiter (encore un peu) des menus plaisirs de la vie coloniale : alcool, tabac, cha-cha-cha et drague…[98]

Although Comolli does not reveal how he would prefer the film to depict the French community in Algiers, he finds their celebratory mood—a natural tone in cafés—too symbolic of colonial privilege. In fact, because the tone is natural to a café, Comolli is actually attacking the *mise-en-scène* and, because this is based on historical events, the facts of the bombings. Although some of the titles of articles in the 2004 issue ("Quelle Histoire" and "Quarante ans après") appear to describe a new reflexion on the film, Comolli's article keeps the tone of *Les Cahiers* clearly based on a past dialectic of *La Battaglia di Algeri* versus the French New Wave. The article's real innovation is to argue that the film encourages and teaches Islamic terrorism, as well as riots in the *banlieue*.

Conclusion

The lack of visible torture in *Muriel* and the torture sequences in *Le Petit soldat* and *La Battaglia di Algeri* all represent specific moments in the French film canon and cinematic psyche that reappear in the post-2005 treatment of the Algerian War. Therefore in this chapter's

[98] J.L. Comolli, « L'attente du prochain coups, » *Les Cahiers du cinéma* 593 (2004) : 71.

conclusion, I will preview some of the ways these twenty-first century films make reference to the seminal 60s features. Although the films were not seen widely in France, the *cinéphile* public was and continues to be aware of these works, demonstrated by the directors depicting the war-era who make intertextual references to the 60s films.

As the Algerian War drifts further away from the popular conscious, memory becomes a more important aspect in war depictions, augmented by the aging and death of those who remember the war as veterans and as media witnesses. *La Battaglia di Algeri* alters time to create suspense and provide resolution; the majority of the film is a flashback, and the ending takes place several years after the main events. However, as I mentioned when analyzing the film, this flashback can also be understood as a symptom of post-trauma, indicative of the suffering of the Kasbah community and the larger indigineous population. As I will discuss in Chapter 2, both *Caché* and *Mon colonel* utilize this same flashback device that serves to create suspense but simultaneously evokes a post-trauma of the war period.

In fact because of post-Vietnam war interest in PTSD, and a more recent surge in trauma studies, *Muriel ou le temps du retour* resonates loudly with the twenty-first century. The now widespread understanding of the difficulty of veterans to reenter society allows for a twenty-first century vulgarization of *Muriel*'s highly cerebral discussion of post-trauma. In fact, post-trauma becomes a primary theme of recent Algerian-war cinematic discourse: we witness soldiers fraught with the trauma of torturing in both *Mon colonel*, and *L'ennemi intime*. While the script of *La Trahison* does not allude to the main characters torturing, the unsaid practice and the lack of torture imagery recalls the coding practiced by the military and the censorship in France. In this way, *La Trahison* invokes Alain Resnais' banned feature.

2007 permits a mainstream study of the Algerian War that was not possible in 1960. However, like Godard's 1960 film, Florent Emilio Siri's *L'Ennemi intime* reverses the stereotype of Algerian-war torture, and in one scene an Arab tortures a French soldier. Though many factors delineate the scene's realism (the Arab is a harki, the soldier asks to be tortured and is drunk), the fundamental difference in their status and race disorients the spectator and poses the same questions about the absurdity of torture. Furthermore, the image of a French man tortured by an Arab sympathizes with France. *Le Petit soldat*'s attempt at objectivity and distance doubtlessly influenced the work of Mehdi Charef, who references Godard in his other films. Despite a stylistic tendency that aligns with neo-realism more than with the New Wave, *Cartouches gauloises* shares the same emphasis on duality and the mutuality of loss in war.[99]

While *La Battaglia di Algeri* is the only non-French production concerning the Algerian War that my dissertation addresses, it had an enormous effect on the French cinematic representation of the war. In part due to the film's style, *La Battaglia di Algeri* is often understood as a documentary; in fact, several twenty-first century French documentaries, *Les Porteuses de feu* (2008) and *L'Avocat de la terreur* (2007), utilize the scene in which the FLN *feyeedaat* dress as Europeans before bombing French establishments as verification of the historical acts. This blurring of documentary and fiction helped *La Battaglia di Algeri* to become symbolic of the war itself—any director approaching the Algerian War as subject matter must

[99] The dissertation's twenty-first century focus demands that I mention Claire Denis' *Beau Travail* (1999), a film Justin Vacari calls "a revisionist sequel" to *Le Petit Soldat*. In *Beau Travail*, Denis recasts Michel Subor as Bruno Forestier, who is now a senior military official in the 13th Brigade of the Foreign Legion in Djibouti. In this way *Beau Travail* proves *Le petit soldat*'s relevance at the end of the twentieth century, as a film of ambivalence and interrogation.

first study Pontecorvo's docu-drama. While *Mon colonel* pays homage to *La Battaglia* in a similar montage sequence, *La Trahison* refuses to reenact the torture for which the Algerian war has become known. This absence of torture in *La Trahison* reflects the visual enigma at the core of *Muriel.*

The children in the recent Algerian war films demonstrate an aging population's need to remember the war taking place during their childhoods—this cinematically causes affect through sentimentality, and nostalgia, and is paired with flashbacks in *Caché.* Aspects of neorealism found in *La Battaglia,* continue in Mehdi Charef's depiction of children in *Cartouches Gauloises* (2007); both Omar of the Pontecorvo film and Ali in Charef's, represent the nation's future. However, *Michou d'Auber* remains an anomaly in this dissertation, as the influence of the three 60s films discussed in depth is not initially apparent. Instead we more obviously recall another 60s film, *Le Viel homme et l'enfant* (1967), concerning the Second World War. Yet, it is this history of the Algerian war in cinema, principally the most famous film concerning the conflict with its emphasis on torture, and the intellectual New Wave films that *Michou* rejects. In order to make the Algerian war-era a family film that enforces integration, *Michou* utilizes the child figure not as representative of a new nation but of the ideal, integrated immigrant. In this way, the charming, innocent, child that utilizes his intelligence for independence in *La Battaglia di Algeri* appears as incapable and vunerable in *Michou d'Auber*, made suitable by French parents i.e., the French state.

Each of the directors I interviewed, Florent Emilio Siri, Laurent Herbiet, and Phillippe Faucon were each extremely aware of the history of the Algerian War in French cinema, and specifically of these three 60s films. Therefore, in subsequent chapters, I frequently refer to *Le*

Petit soldat, *Muriel*, and *La Battaglia di Algeri*, noting instances when directors reference the 60s films, or pose a similar scenario with a slightly, or strikingly, different approach. In this way, the dissertation grapples with the complexity of depicting the Algerian war, and how contemporary politics and progressions in visual representation alter the initial problems of depicting censorship, violence, and nationalism.

Le Petit soldat (1963) Dir. Jean-Luc Godard

A.1

The FLN pair planning their kidnap of Bruno on a boat.

A.2

The OAS-like pair anticipating their capture of Veronica.

A.3

After Veronica answers the door, the French pair to take her.

A.4

One of the French pair, running and controlling Veronica's movements.

Muriel ou le temps d'un retour (1963) Dir. Alain Resnais

B.1

From Bernard's super-8 footage of his required service in Algeria.

B.2

Robert

B.3

Bernard

B.4

La Battaglia di Algeri (1966) Dir. Gillo Pontecorvo

C.1

C.2

Both stills of the prisoner who leads the army to Ali Lapointe, and a prisoner who appears twice in the torture montage, display a tear falling down the right cheek.

C.3

C.4

C.5

CHAPTER 2 *Caché* and *Mon colonel* : The PTSD flashback

The plots of *Caché* and *Mon colonel* depend largely on the cinematic flashback to deliver missing narrative exposition. However, the flashback proffers more than narrative; additionally, it evokes the psychological flashback—repressed memories from the past that interrupt the present, a symptom of post-trauma stress disorder (PTSD). In *Caché* and *Mon colonel* flashbacks expose the once repressed memory of the Algerian war. This connection between cinematic and psychological flashback is not incidental, for in fact the etymology of the flashback derives from cinema. Maureen Turim writes:

> The term flashback was first used in its sense of narrative returns to the past in reference to film, rather than other forms of storytelling … It has now been adopted by psychology to refer to the spontaneous recall of a memory image, especially in the context of a war trauma, in which soldiers are said to have 'battlefield flashbacks.'[100]

This profound relationship between film-editing and the public perception of PTSD is especially relevant to a discussion of *Caché* (2005) and *Mon colonel* (2006); although the narrative present of the films suggests the films' release date, the Algerian war of forty-years past resurfaces within the films as a once (collectively) repressed memory.

In "Drawing Trauma; Visual Testimony in *Caché* and *J'ai huit ans*," Guy Austin borrows largely from Cathy Caruth to mobilize memory-trauma in the drawings of Michael Haneke's

[100] Mareen Turim, *Flashbacks in Film: Memory and History* (New York: Routledge, 1989) 5.

2005 film as well as a 1961 documentary short by Réné Vautier.[101] Though Austin's psychoanalytical approach to *Caché* is indispensable, his essay does not thoroughly probe the film's structure. The cinematic flashback alters the plot, and in both *Caché* and *Mon colonel* implies trauma, posing questions of verity and fantasy. The vast differences in film genres and styles must be considered to explicate how the flashback emblematizes PTSD in both films—*Caché* is an art film directed by an established Austrian auteur, while *Mon colonel* fits into the postmodern history film genre.[102] Therefore, the flashbacks of *Mon Colonel* are more overt than those of *Caché*: in *Caché* the protagonist has four spontaneous childhood flashbacks; in *Mon colonel* a present-day military detective reads four journal entries written in 1959 by a French soldier stationed in Algeria that are presented as flashbacks. Despite the films' structural differences, both discuss the post-trauma of the Algerian war by contrasting the past struggle for colonialism with a troubled present. The plots of the films center on a mystery, and through flashbacks, the audience searches the past for a contemporary criminal. Hence, the relationship between the Algerian-war era and the present is wrought with the effects of trauma, not excluding crime and blame.

---

[101] Guy Austin, "Drawing Trauma; Visual Testimony in *Caché* and *J'ai 8 ans*," *Screen; the journal of the Society for Education in Film and Television* 48.4 (2007).

[102] In *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to our Idea of History,* Robert Rosenstone describes the film *Walker* as a post-modern history film. He writes, "a good part of the film's truth stems from its unusual narrative strategies—strategies that challenge the 'realism' of both written history and the standard dramatic or documentary historical film. Strategies that expand the vocabulary in which history can speak. Strategies that, were we interested in labels, we might wish to name postmodern." Robert Rosenstone, *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to our Idea of History* (Boston: Harvard Universtity Press, 1998) 133.

Pioneering psychiatrist Pierre Janet (1859-1947) differentiates memory as narrative or traumatic. According to Janet, the *traumatic* memory fragments an overwhelming experience, so that only segments of the event are remembered. With the traumatic memory, amnesia often consumes the individual's ability to contextualize the shocking past with the present. By contrast, the more flexible *narrative* memory places the painful remembrances into a storyline, allowing one to regain a chronological view of events. The goal of post-traumatic rehabilitation is thus to give such a traumatic memory a narrative. Janet explains that "Narrative memory, a uniquely human capacity, consists of *mental constructs*, which people use to make sense of out of their experience."[103] In other words, the structure of narrative memory aids in understanding how and why the traumatic incident occurred. Thus narrative memory halts the dreams and flashbacks which replay the shocking event—an event so disturbing that it was incomprehensible when it happened. Both *Caché* and *Mon Colonel* rely on flashback narrative structures to explicate the Algerian-war era, thast has been nearly or completely forgotten by the characters in the present. Diegetically, the films' plots work as the narrative memory, rescuing the incomprehensible terror visible only in flashbacks with a clear contextualization: time, place, and order.

At the conclusion of *La Gangrène et l'oubli* (1991) Benjamin Stora adopts psychoanalytic terminology to explain France's cultural repression ("refoulement") of the Algerian war. However, Stora negates the possibility of a return of the repressed ("retour de refoulé"). Instead, he argues that France continues to repress and reignite suffering specific to the Algerian war in acts of racism. He writes, "Cette cicatrice narcissique se voit dans la volonté de

[103] E. Van Alphen, "Subjects of Discursivity,"*Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present* eds. Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, Leo Spitzer (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999) 36.

rejouer, répéter, faire revivre les années de guerre." Indeed, there are elements of repetition in *Caché* and *Mon colonel*, as in all prior Algerian-war films (films about war intrinsically *rejoue* and *répète* battle theatrically). However, the flashbacks of *Caché* and *Mon colonel* do more than repeat the past, they also break amnesia, or to use Stora's terminology these films puncture *la gangrène et l'oubli.*[104] Stora observes an amnesiac French society when he asks, "Les Français, dans leur majorité, refusent-ils de se souvenir?"[105] The films of 2005 suggest a cultural shift. Although Stora claims that France overcame the loss of Algeria through repression, the reflective films and literature about the Algerian war since 1991 (the year *La Gangrène et l'oubli* was published) attempt to place the post-trauma into a narrative, fracturing the repression. The use of the flashback in *Caché* and *Mon colonel* further queries amnesia and more generally, a national post-trauma associated with the Algerian War.[106]

---

[104] « Tout un ensemble subtil de mensonges et de refoulements organise la "mémoire algérienne". Et cette dénégration continue à ronger comme un cancer, comme une gangrène, les fondements mêmes de la société française. » Benjamin Stora, *La Gangrène et l'oubli* (Paris: Broché, 1991) 8.

[105] Stora, 269.

[106] The only previous Algerian-war film to use the flashback is *L'honneur d'un capitaine* (1982) by Pierre Schoendoeffer. However, flashbacks in this film are not traumatic memories. In this courtroom drama, war veterans defend their departed captain and remember his heroism in flashbacks at the stand. *Muriel ou le temps d'un* retour (1963) directed by Alain Resnais and written by Jean Cayrol shows a veteran traumatized by his past in the Algerian War. Instead of flashbacks, the veteran watches films he made with a super-8 camera during the war. Muriel, the woman he saw tortured and killed, still haunts his consciousness. The absence of images of Muriel in the film and her violent death, symbolize the censorship of the Algerian War. *Mon colonel* and *Caché* reverse *Muriel's* approach to addressing post-trauma and censorship by visually depicting the flashback and the traumatic event. Nevertheless, the events that traumatize Majid and Georges in *Caché* are contingent on the supposed murder of Majid's parents by

Mon colonel

The film *Mon colonel* is based on the 1999 novel of the same name written by *Humanité* journalist Frank Zamponi. Although several minor alterations between novel and script take place, the plot is generally similar. This is the first feature length film directed by Laurent Herbiet, who served as an assistant director and then screenwriter on several recent Alain Resnais films (*Coeurs*, *Les Herbes Folles*) as well as numerous television films and mini-series. After Herbiet directed *Mon colonel*, he directed a film for Canal + on De Gaulle's presidency during May 1968. Herbiet was especially interested in the Algerian War, because his father had served during the 50s. When he read the novel by Zamponi, he was searching for his first full-length film to direct, with Costa-Gavras as producer. Generally, the film received very favorable press from both specialized film magazines (*Cahiers du Cinéma, Positif*), and widely read newspapers (*Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*). In fact, critics directly addressed the film's subject matter, and congratulated the fine performance of a general by Olivier Gourmet, Héléna Villovitch of *Elle* writes, "Olivier Gourmet en colonel pervers, il est délectable !"[107] Jérôme Provençal finds that the film's realism trumps the problematic present (which he recognizes as 1993), "La construction du film est par trop schématique. Mais sa force de conviction est bien réelle. Si les scènes de 1993 souffrent d'une relative facticité (...) celles du passé bénéficient d'un rendu

---

Parisian police, and there are no images of this atrocity. In fact, the Paris massacre of October 17, 1961 is only very briefly mentioned. Elizabeth Cardonne-Arlyck argues that in this manner, *Caché* is similar to *Muriel* in that both films repress the primary source of trauma. Elizabeth Cardonne-Arlyck, "Espaces muets et intimité perverse; De *Muriel* (Resnais 1962) à *Caché* (Haneke, 2005)," *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies* 12.2 (2008): 265-275.

[107] Héléna Villovitch, "*Mon colonel,*" *Elle*, 2006.

réaliste optimal. »[108] Nevertheless, the film failed at the box office earning only 26,436 ticket sales in its first week and plummeting afterwards, proving the French public's disinterest in the cinematic investigation of the Algerian War. In this study, I will analyze the form of *Mon colonel* (letters to a father presented as flashbacks) to uncover a text similar to Freud's "Father I'm burning" dream, in which a father suffers from the post-trauma of suddenly losing a son and being incapable of preventing his untimely death. I will explore both the dream recounted by Freud, and Lacan's interpretation, which emphasizes the trauma of awakening, before investigating symbolic aspects in casting Charles Aznavour as the MIA soldier's vengeful father.

Plot Summary

At the beginning of the film, Colonel Duplan (Olivier Gourmet) is murdered. Duplan, a famed general during the Algerian war who implemented torture as a procedure for obtaining information, is found shot, shortly after he rebukes President De Gaulle and Algeria's independence decades after the war on national television.[109] A team of military detectives' only clues are the World War II era bullet that killed Duplan and several packets of photocopied journal entries that they receive during their search for the assassin. Lt. Galois (Cécile de France),

---

[108] Jérôme Provençal, "*Mon colonel* : La guerre d'Algérie fabrique les tortionnaires," *Le Monde,* 21 Nov. 2006, 16, May, 2011 < http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cinema/article/2006/11/14/mon-colonel-la-guerre-d-algerie-fabrique-de tortionnaires_834330_3476.html#ens_id=829487>.

[109] The character of Raoul Duplan is clearly based on General Jacques Massu, who implemented torture as a military procedure during the Algerian conflict. In 1972, while promoting his book, *La Vraie Bataille d'Alger*, Massu justified his decisions and criticized De Gaulle on national television.

a young and slim *gamine*, is in charge of reading the photocopies, and discovers the author to be Guy Rossi (Robinson Stévinin), a MIA lieutenant, who served under the famous colonel in 1954. The flashback device renders the journal entries set during the war in black and white. In contrast the film's present (or possibly the 80s), is coded in color.

The flashbacks show Rossi's introduction to Colonel Duplan, whose name indicates his straightforward approach.[110] One reason why Rossi enters the military after law school is because he idealizes his , who fought in the Resistance. Furthermore, he read that the French presence in Algeria was a "pacification." However, as Rossi becomes more entrusted to torture, his father's honor becomes compromised. Duplan believes that psychological warfare is logical and necessary in regaining control of Algeria. Throughout the film, Rossi oscillates between respecting Duplan as an authority figure and feeling outrage at his policies e.g. displaying the indigenous dead in the town as a warning, as well as torturing and killing suspects. Intercut shots in color exhibit Lt. Galois' frustration with the protagonist in the flashback as he becomes increasingly entrusted to commit torture and murder under the guise of "maintenant l'ordre". Journal entries show Duplan's anger at Rossi who becomes less reliable, implying though never stating that Duplan orders Rossi's execution. The last journal entry that Galois reads closes with "Papa je t'embrasse." Thus the probable assassin of Colonel Raoul Duplan is now revealed to Lt.

---

[110] The third definition of *plan* in *Le Nouveau Petit Robert,* édition 2002: "Projet élaboré, comportant une suite ordonnée d'opérations, de moyens, destinée à atteindre un but."

Galois and to the spectator. Lt. Galois and her captain then travel to a country home, where the father of Rossi (Charles Aznavour) instantly confesses. Rossi's father explains that Rossi mailed his journals in a box to his friend Eric, asking him to forward the box to his father if he did return to reclaim it. The friend only remembered Rossi's box decades later when viewing Duplan's controversial television appearance, and so many years later, he sent the journals to Rossi's father. When Rossi's grieving father finished reading the letters he approached Duplan and shot him with his own gun. After Rossi's father admits to the murder, he asks if the military representatives will arrest him. They inform him that the police will visit the following day.

The Wish Fulfillment of Letters

Sigmund Freud recounts a dream told by a patient—a father's dream of his recently deceased son—that resonates with the trauma of *Mon colonel*.[111] Freud uses this dream as an example of how even a dream in the guise of a horrific circumstance represents desire. Freud recounts the following: A father, sad and fatigued, who watched over the bed of his feverish

[111] It is necessary when comparing a film and a dream studied by Freud to mention Jean-Louis Baudry. "The apparatus theory" developed by Baudry reads the totality of the cinematic endeavor as an instinctual return to dreaming, and to the prebirth state of the womb: "The cinematic apparatus reproduces the psychical apparatus during sleep: separation from the outside world, inhibition of motoricity; in sleep, these conditions causing an overcathexis of representation can penetrate the system of perception as sensory stimuli; in cinema, the images perceived (very likely reinforced by the setup of the psychical apparatus) will be the same as that of the sensory images of dreams." Jean-Louis Baudry, "Ideological effects of the Basic Cinema Apparatus," *Film Quarterly*, 27:2 (1974-5): 21-4.

child until the child's death, leaves his son's corpse with an elderly griever, as candles burn around the body:

> After sleeping a few hours (in an adjacent room) the father dreamed that *the child stood near his bed clasping his arms and calling out reproachfully , "Father don't you see I'm burning?"* The father woke and noticed a bright light coming from the adjoining room. Rushing in, he found the old man asleep, and the covers and one arm of the beloved body burned by the fallen candle.[112]

The father transfers the impression of flickering light coming from the candles in the next room into his dream of fire. Although the image of the son burning is gruesome, it nonetheless applies to Freud's theory of wish fulfillment; rather than awaking instantaneously to put out the flames, the father keeps his son alive by dreaming of him speaking and walking. In these few moments, the father is able to continue sleeping (prolonging sleep is also an important element of wish fulfillment) while conceiving of the departed as still living.[113]

A similar pattern, perhaps most obviously, exists in *Mon colonel*, as the film's plot centers on a father's traumatic loss and his internal repetition due to his son's death. Therefore, it is fitting that the letters written by Rossi, which are explored cinematically through flashbacks and thus may be referred to as such, enable their reader to imagine their author/narrator as living.

---

[112] Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2005) 403.

[113] "The efficacy of the wish to continue to sleep is the most easily recognized in the waking dreams, which so transform the objective sensory stimulus as to render it compatible with the continuance of sleep; they interweave this stimulus with the dream in order to rob it of any claims it might make as a warning to the outer world." Freud, 449.

Rossi's father replicates his son's epistolary resurrection by transmitting his son's correspondence to the military. Moreover, the intercut shots of Lt. Galois who swiftly turns the photocopied pages with growing concern, suggest that in these moments she imagines Guy Rossi as a living being with choices.[114] Additionally, the MIA status does not announce his death. Rather, it suggests that Guy Rossi lives as a deserter or enemy of war. This adds suspense for the audience: Will Guy Rossi grace the screen in color as a retiree? Or is he Colonel Duplan's true assassin? In this way the spectator becomes the reader of letters (who was once Guy Rossi's father, and is currently Lt. Galois) embroiled in a narrative that represents Guy Rossi as a living presence. Guy Rossi's resurrection through flashbacks and letters also satisfies our wish fulfillment: the string of letters allows the film to continue, (as sleep for the dreamer), and we identify with Guy's anti-torture stance.

The striking resemblance between the fair, slight actors Cécile de France and Robinson Stévinin enhanced by the androgyny of military attire and short haircuts, creates contemporary reverberations in the flashbacks/letters. As Lt. Galois voice reading the letter fades to Lt. Rossi's, the characters' expressions of shock and sadness are alternated; a close-up of Guy Rossi in a dumbfounded expression is often followed by a reaction shot of the equally distressed Lt. Galois. When Rossi writes his final journal entry at his desk, Lt. Galois also reads sitting at a desk, as if she is situated across from the letters' author (Images 2 and 3). The mirroring becomes literal when Lt. Galois enters the Rossi home and studies a portrait of Guy in uniform; the rack focus

[114] The intercut shots of Galois encourage the spectator's surprise and distress. Although the black-and-white film signifies the past, the reader/spectator reacts as if Guy is alive.

concentrates on the reflection of Galois' face in the glass that protects the photo, and then exchanges her features sharpening the black-and-white image of Guy (Images 4 and 5). The sequence at the Rossi home draws to a close with a long sentimental glance between Rossi's father and Lt. Galois. The knowing eye contact communicates a mutual understanding, and further suggests her as Guy's reincarnation. Consequently, the narrative insists on the Algerian war's relevance to the current military, which strongly disapproves of past conduct in Algeria and now identifies with the once-considered rebel.[115]

The Trauma of Awakening

Although, the letters satisfy the reader's and spectator's wishes of prolonging Guy's life, at their conclusion they induce trauma. Cathy Caruth probes Lacan's analysis of the "Father, I'm burning" dream to stress the trauma of the *awakening*. Contrary to Freud's emphasis on the dream's ability to prolong sleep, Lacan focuses on how the dream disturbs and awakens the father. Caruth writes, "*awakening*, in Lacan's reading of the dream, *is itself the site of a trauma*, the trauma of the necessity and impossibility of responding to another's death."[116] The words the son speaks to his father, "Father, I'm burning," were possibly words the child uttered when experiencing the consuming heat before dying from a fever. The repetition of this phrase in the father's dream thus repeats the father's failure. The father's *awakening* similarly repeats the

[115] When interviewing Laurent Herbiet in June of 2009, he explained to me that he intended the casting and costuming of Lt. Rossi and Lt. Galois to have a mirror effect. Lt. Galois was not a character in the original script or in the novel *Mon colonel.* The director Costa-Gavras, who produced the film, invented the character when refining Herbiet's script.

[116] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996)100.

trauma of sudden loss; when the father sees his son dead again he must realize anew his failure. In this manner the awakening from the dream manifests the repetition of trauma, not unlike a flashback.

A similar metaphoric awakening occurs when Guy Rossi's father concludes reading the letters written by his son, and is suddenly startled by his son's absence (temporally suspended when reading his son's script). The father's immediate confession to the military outlines his thought process. It was after reading his son's letters—the cinematic flashbacks—that Guy's father visits Duplan and commits murder. Therefore, the true trauma for Guy's father lies in awaking from the dream-life of letters where his son was still alive. Thus, both the father of *Mon colonel* and the father in the dream, replay the desire to save the life of their child. Unfortunately, the realism of the flashback/dream/letter precludes the rescue's impossibility, or the child's death, increasing the shock of awakening. Does the narrative of *Mon colonel* allow for a post-death justice to relieve the father's guilt as well as the French public's moral qualms?

In *Mon colonel,* we never see a visual testimony of Guy Rossi's death. As such the viewer's identification with Guy's father continues—for neither the viewer nor the father witness Guy's death. In this manner, the film's images are limited to the reader—originally the father, subsequently Lt. Galois and the spectator—whose perception of the letters secures the agony of wish fulfillment. The shock when finishing the reading of the letters is an awakening; the absence of the corpse, in effect, shields the reader/spectator and allows Guy to retain his dignity.

Father as Nation

Guy Rossi's father is indeed a suitable judge who represents moral supremacy due to the

script's insistence on his past as a Resistance fighter; his confession monologue includes a comparison of justice in World War II and the Algerian war. When General Duplan first meets Guy Rossi, he questions him about his father's past service. Guy responds, "Buchenwald, la Résistance, Indochine." General Duplan adds, "j'étais là aussi." Colonel Duplan's service in World War II troubles the purity of the Resistance in *Mon colonel*, and it is never mentioned again. The film omits a comparison of the wars' torture and interrogation techniques, and instead dwells on their moral differences. Although Colonel Duplan and Guy Rossi's father both fought in two of the same wars, they cinematically represent opposed laws of ethics. Colonel Duplan's participation in the Algerian war and his role as an enforcer of psychological warfare distance him from the fight against Nazism, and from his adversary, the defender of Resistance morals, Père Rossi.

Furthermore, the casting of singer and actor Charles Aznavour as the patriarch of French ethics enhances the film's national uplift. Aznavour, discovered by Edith Piaf, is the most famous living singer in France, and is known as a national treasure. Nonetheless, Aznavour's parents were Armenian immigrants from Turkey, which complicates his Frenchness.[117] In an interview with *Le Monde* Aznavour said, "Je me sens pourtant indissociablement français et arménien. Comme d'autres se sentent basques ou bretons."[118] Located in a combative religious zone,

---

[117] Aznavour did not become an Armenian citizen until December of 2008, but only weeks later he was named the nation's ambassador to Switzerland.

David Itzkoff, "Armenia names Aznavour Ambassador to Switzerland," *NY Times* 13 Feb 2009, the NY Times Company, 20 June 2008 <http://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/svc/timespeople/bell.html>.

[118] Jean-Louis André, "Aznavour fidèle à ses racines, " *Le monde* 6 May 1988, Le monde diplomatique, 20 June 2008

Armenia was the first Christian state in 301 CE, though it is surrounded by Muslim neighbors Turkey and Iraq. Thus, Aznavour represents a negotiation that maintains French nationalism and liberalism. His Armenian sympathies and origin place him close to the Arab Other, though not dangerously close, while his musical and film legacy have made him a household name in France for generations.[119] The patriotic symbolism of Aznavour is literally charged with the ever-potent memory of the Resistance—Rossi's father shoots Duplan with World War II ammunition—conquering the destructive, negating force of the Algerian war.[120] The father in Freud's burning dream has no individual on which to blame his son's death, and thus becomes the guilty party. In contrast, *Mon colonel*'s narrative proffers General Duplan as a much-needed scapegoat. In this manner, the French Resistance (and its cinematic legacy) debilitates nefarious memories of the Algerian war.

<http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgibin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=367f2eedcfae6c5df8806bca299a747807 1f2b86f71e88c3>.

[119] In 2002, National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen won enough votes to enter the second stage of the presidential election. Aznavour publicly contested Le Pen, and on April 30 sang the Marseillaise at a demonstration. Le Pen was a former parachutist during the Algerian War, and the National Front's ideology derives from the colonial experience and warfare in Algeria. In this manner, Aznavour's casting speaks to his public political profile. "La France mobilisée pour un 1er Mai anti-Le Pen," *Le monde, recit du service France avec nos correspondants et la promotion 2002 (Presse Écrite) du CFJ* Feb. 5, 2002, Le monde diplomatique, 20 June 2008, <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgibin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID394aa5e3231230fd6854123e5317d0e4bd 130752b6a>.

[120] Although this article only briefly touches on the cinematic representation of the Resistance, Leah D. Hewitt's *Remembering the Occupation in French Film: National Identity in Post-War Europe* demonstrates to what extent French films encouraged patriotism and exaggerated the Resistance.

Conclusion of *Mon colonel*

Freud wrote about the burning dream nine years before his own daughter, Sophie, died. Lacan duplicated this foresight when reinvestigating the parent's traumatic dream several years before losing his own daughter, Caroline, in a car accident. Caruth explains that the "transmission" between the two writers did "not consist of a knowledge of death that could be seen, but as a transmission of an act of awakening."[121] It is this insistent need to *awaken* as well as to *repeat* that inspired the authors' prescient writing and is found throughout the tradition of psychoanalytic literature. The desire to reach the unconscious through writing passes through generations, and reaches a larger community posing questions about trauma. This process is in fact analogous to all endeavors that seek to understand loss, including films that interrogate past wars.

The incentive behind the French Algerian-war films of recent years derives from a desire to awaken the public from censorship and disinterest. This is part of what Benjamin Stora envisions as a larger recovery process:

> Après les guerres cruelles et les massacres épouvantables, vient le temps du silence et de l'oubli apparent. Les acteurs de la tragédie se taisent, préférant recommencer une vie, poursuivre un projet interrompu par le conflit, construire un avenir sans se retourner. Puis avec le temps, les souvenirs reviennent, des paroles

[121] Caruth, 111.

se font entendre. Ce processus fréquent dans les conflits mettant en jeu des populations civiles, s'observe maintenant pour la séquence de la décolonisation.[122]

The gap between Guy Rossi's disappearance in the Algerian war and the Colonel's murder represents the silent indifference that films such as *Mon colonel* now attempt to efface. Just as the father awoke too late to help his already dead child, the Algerian war's distance in time and space hinders a solution to the guilt and an ethical response to torture. However, if films are wish fulfillment as Christian Metz and Jean-Louis Baudry suggest, the return to the Algerian war in contemporary French cinema represents the desire to render the criminal actions of the conflict current and thus rectifiable.[123] The fictional, righteous father of France that awakens from the repetition of the Algerian war reflects a larger desire to eliminate France's military and colonial shame. In other words, *Mon colonel* attempts to expiate a traumatized France.[124]

<u>Caché</u>

---

[122]Stora, 97.

[123] "Avec ses images et ses sons veritable (extérieurs), le film romanesque contribue à nourrir d'une substance supplémentaire et importée le flux fantasmatique du sujet, à irriguer les figures de son désir, et il n'est pas douteux que le cinema classique soit entre autres choses une pratique d'assouvissement affectif. (Simplement, on n'oubliera pas qu'il est loin d'être le seul à jouer ce role très ancien, qui n'a rien de vil; toute *fiction*—"fantaisie" chez Freud—et même dans les arts communément jugés plus nobles, sert aussi à cela, qu'un vain moralisme soucieux de façade voudrait opposer à l' "art authentique"). Christian Metz, *Le significant imaginaire* (Paris: Christian Bourgois Editeur, 1977) 134.

[124] In *Mon colonel,* as in all contemporary Algerian-war films, torturing mentally harms the torturer, while the film does not investigate the post-trauma of the tortured. This concept will be further explored in Chapter 3.

Videos or Flashbacks?

Caché begins with a long shot of a Parisian bourgeois home on a gray afternoon (Image 1). A street sign reading "Rue des Iris" situates the home on the wealthier side of the 13th arrondissement and reminds the attentive viewer of a garden. Two dark green doors at each side of the home recede while a large bush of a lighter hue dominates the frame. The bush rests nearly a foot in front of the doors and overlaps their frames, thus complicating any coming and going. The bush is not a welcoming plant. Indeed it covers and obstructs the entrance with its protruding branches moving softly in the breeze. Additionally, a wire fence surrounds the left door, securing the entranceway from intruders.

The bush is not the only greenery; hanging plants and flowers at a nearby house are at the left corner of the frame. English ivy winds around the windows of the central home's third story, giving the home a sense of history, reminiscent of a traditional library. Gardeners refer to English ivy as a covering plant, and indeed this first shot indicates the covering within the pictured home. Tracing the bedroom window, the ivy shelters this place of hiding with the semblance of intellect. The ivy encases the roof protecting its secrets, and distinguishes it from the apartment buildings seen stretching above the roof. These apartment towers leave no room in the frame for a sky, which would appear in an aerial or extreme long shot. Consequently, there is no escape from the family home.

Two cars are parallel parked in front of the house, one black and finer, one smaller and silver with a dent in the side. Neither car draws attention to itself, and both appear typical in the Parisian quarter. The camera continues to stay static as credits in white are typed across the frame from left to white. Although the names of the cast and crew are difficult to read, the title of

the film *Caché* appears slightly larger, yet still hidden in its paleness amongst the surrounding words. Furthermore, the print of the film's signified—*Caché*—across the image of the home specifies where a secret is hidden; bourgeois tranquility.

The viewer suspects that once the titles are completed, the camera will move, and that the action will begin. However, the camera stays put, and no editing interferes. Finally a woman exits the front door and turns right with a suitcase—seconds later a bike rider glides by the home and out of the camera's view. Yet, the camera does not stray to follow either person. Consequently, the scene of contemporary bourgeois tranquility soon takes on an eerie and frustrating tone. After three minutes, the image is broken with sound. We hear two voices discuss the image we have been observing. These voices (one male, one female), without accompanying images, baffle the spectator—Where are the actors? Who are they? Finally an edit follows and we see a middle-aged man in a sweater walk out the same front door and across the street, apparently looking for clues or a camera. When he returns home and closes the door, the first long shot of the home is reintroduced. The woman's voice remarks that the cassette continues for two more hours, as the horizontal static lines of a video fast-forwarding cut the image of the home into pieces. Finally, the viewer realizes the steady image of the home was in fact, diegetically, a videocassette.

Just as the black-and-white film of the Algerian war defined the footage as past-tense in *Mon colonel*, the static-lines relegate the previous sequence to video, i.e. the past-tense in *Caché*. Both moments—the former by hand-written letters, the latter by the video camera, have been recorded. Their replay demands a reconsideration of events by the viewers and the film's characters. In this manner, the cassettes themselves are flashbacks, haunting moments that

intrude on the traumatized. Indeed, the cassettes, like a painful memory, represent the repressed. As my later explication of the flashbacks indicates, the cassettes reverse the act of spying by the protagonist as a child. This is to say, the educated *bobo* (bourgeois, bohemian) lifestyle that the protagonist's home exudes suggests he is unable to analyze his past behavior or examine its consequences.[125] Both the flashbacks and the videos surface as part of a man's repressed past, a past that captures and threatens him. The elaborate cover-up, like the childhood lies he once told his parents, is now embodied by his family home, covered and enclosed in upper middle-class French distinction.

Though the videos are of the recent past and the flashbacks occur forty years earlier, both obscure temporality for the spectator and the protagonist.[126] Thus the establishing shot over which the credits roll provides the context for the film's action (French bourgeois dissimulation), but is also a paradigm for the larger film's tenuous and often volatile relationship with the past. In this way, the street's name (Rue des Iris) locates the home, but also jests with the concept of vision. While Haneke reminds us to direct our attention to the images, he also dares us to differentiate between past and present, video and flashback. *Caché* blurs these categories before introducing a chronology. In this manner, the film replicates the protagonist's post-trauma within our own cinematic experience.

---

[125] *Bobo*, the term made by shortening the words *bohème* and *bourgeois*, was added to the Petit Robert in 1999. The definition is as follows, «membre d'une catégorie sociale aisée, jeune et cultivé, qui recherche des valeurs authentiques, la créativité.»

("member of a comfortable social class, young and cultivated, that strives for genuine values such as creativity.")

The term also implies politically correct, and can suggest hypocrisy.

[126] The surveillance videocassettes trigger flashbacks for Georges.

Considering the film's provocative insinuations, *Caché* did very well at the box-office selling 446, 422 tickets in the first month. Furthermore, the press that applauded the film rarely addressed the Paris Massacre, an element in the film's plot, or the inequality of Maghrebi immigrants in terms of education, and wealth, another theme fundamental in the film's plot and creation of suspense. Instead, critics in film magazines concentrated on the formal technique of mixing video-cassettes with the diegetic narrative. Yann Tobin of *Positif* writes, « *Caché* (...) est à bien des égards un objet paradoxal, l'aboutissement de ses (Michael Haneke's) recherches formelles et thématiques, en même temps que son film le plus accessible. »[127] Jean-Luc Doin writes, « Ce film splendide et vertigineux est riche de réflexions sur les blessures d'enfance à jamais béantes, la solitude face aux démons intérieurs, les ravages du secret dans un couple, la manière dont la culpabilité ronge un individu, la revanche du refoulé. »[128] Although Doin utilizes trauma vocabulary, he does not reflect on a larger national trauma indicated by the film, or mention the Paris Massacre. To this extent, American and English press and scholastic journals investigate the larger political messages suggested by the film's form with more depth.

This study of *Caché* begins by probing Michael Haneke's voice as an anti-Hollywood *auteur* in order to analyze the manner in which the perspective oscillates between flashbacks, video cassettes, and a diegetic present. I will next uncover how Georges, the film's protagonist, also appears as a spectator seated in the audience. As this chapter principally studies flashbacks, an effect of trauma, we will analyze the flashbacks individually, beginning with two that appear

---

[127] Yann Tobin, *Caché, Positif.* 536 (2005) :19-20.

[128] Jean-Luc Doin, « *Caché* : regard forcé sur les démons de l'enfance pour un homme filmé à son insu »,*Le Monde,* 16 May 2005, 17 May 2011 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/culture/article/2005/05/16/cache-regard-force-sur-les-demons-de-l-enfance-pour-un-homme-filme-a-son-insu_650298_3246.html>.

sporadically without context, and then investigating several flashbacks occurring in a traditional manner, the dream. In discussing the dream, we prepare for a larger discussion of fantasy and verity in traumatic memory, which the film also suggests. Before my concluding remarks, I will inquire into the broader political dimensions of the film and the cover-up of the Paris Massacre, October, 17, 1961, which *Caché* exposes.

Plot Summary

Caché's protagonist, Georges Laurent, hosts a literary talk show, not unlike the popular long-running *Apostrophe,*[129] and he is often read as emblematic of the contemporary identity politics of France.[130] Indeed, Georges hides his guilt and fear in an elegant bourgeois home he shares with his wife, Anne, and their teen son, Pierrot (Walid Afkir).[131] The film's plot is a search for the person who sends mundane surveillance videos—the first of which opens the film as previously described in detail. Georges secretly assumes the cassettes are from his childhood enemy, Majid (Georges Bénichou), who like himself is now middle-aged. When Majid was a boy his Algerian parents worked for Georges' family estate. When Majid's parents left to take part in a march for Algerian independence and never returned, they were presumed dead, as this was October 17, 1961, the date of the Paris Massacre. Georges' parents wanted to adopt the now orphaned boy, but their son, jealous, told lies about Majid to prevent this. Eventually, Georges' parents decided to leave Majid at an orphanage, negatively affecting his education and job

[129] Haneke obviously modeled the character Georges Laurent after the host Bernard Pivot. In addition to *Apostrophe* he hosted *Le bouillon de la culture*.

[130] Guy Austin interprets Georges as "emblematic of the *fracture coloniale*."

[131] When Georges' producer asks how Anne is, Georges explains that she has just finished publishing a book on globalization, further identifying the Laurent family as literary and politically liberal.

opportunities. Images of an Arab boy intercut the narrative, before his identity is revealed to be Majid or before we understand these images as Georges' flashbacks, creating a darker mystery rooted in Georges' childhood.

Although Georges believes Majid seeks revenge when he visits his apartment (the address is given in another cassette) at an H.L.M. (*habitation à loyer modéré*) and threatens him, the man appears bewildered. Georges finally tells his wife about Majid, after she questions him concerning another cassette placed at their door of Georges' first confrontation with Majid at his appartment. Later, when Pierrot, Georges' son, does not come home one night, he reports Majid and Majid's son (who appears to be in his late teens or early 20s) to the police. Consequently, the police force the Arab men to sleep in prison. However, Pierrot returns the next morning and says he was at a friend's. Finally, Majid asks Georges to come to his apartment again and slits his own throat before saying "Je voulais que tu sois présent." Georges is visibly shaken. The next day Majid's son confronts him at the university where he teaches and asks Georges what is like to have "un homme sur la conscience." Georges leaves work early and goes home to take a sleeping pill. We then see a dream sequence of Majid being forced by adults into a car, presumably destined for the orphanage.

The final shot of the film is Pierrot's high school at the end of the school day. In the left corner of the screen filled with teens, the sons of Georges and Majiid converse. The static yet distanced camera that faces the high school recalls all the videos Georges has received. Though the importance of the videos has faded as the narrative centerpiece, the question returns as this new French generation convenes. The cameraman's identity is never revealed.

Anti-mainstream

Although I simplify the film's plot above, it is anything but straightforward, largely because of the alternation between enigmatic flashbacks, surveillance videos, and the present. This interchange heightens suspense and disorients the spectator. In fact almost identical shots appear in videos and in the narrative present, with minor clues—fast-forwarding and rewinding images—to explicate their form.[132] The silence and static camera of the videos, found also in the present tense of the narrative and the flashbacks, only enhances this disorientation/suspense. *Caché* intentionally blurs the line between what is a surveillance video and what is the film's narrative and thus plays with the audience's expectations. Furthermore, Haneke films the entire production using high definition technology, making the difference between the two even less apparent.[133]

Haneke explains his disorienting approach as "anti-mainstream" in *Cinéaste*'s Winter issue of 2005:

---

[132] The use of videos in film is a theme in the oeuvre of Haneke, most notably in *Funny Games* and *Benny's Videos*, but also in the *Piano Teacher*. In all of these films rewinding and fast forwarding a video serves as a *mise-en-abyme*.

[133] Haneke's decision to film the entire production in video further poses the question of surveillance-video "auteur." Martine Beugnet writes, "The result of Haneke choosing to shoot the whole feature in High Definition format is not merely a surface play on the virtual and the actual aimed at building up suspense. It allows for the elaboration of a vision dominated by the numbing power of amnesia—a vision that is not only suited to the film's premises, but disturbingly characteristic of present-day aesthetics. As we penetrate the house and watch those who inhabit it, it is a universe of rarefied contrasts, soft edges and flattened perspective, a world governed by stasis and the need to relegate the 'contingent and the accidental—ahistorical in a word—to the exterior' that emerges."
Martine Beugnet, "Blind Spot," *Screen* 48.2 (2007) 230.
As Haneke, the film's director, uses video to film the narrative, he is the most logical suspect for the videos. This type of analysis envisions the entire film as a surveillance video.

> All my films constitute a reaction against mainstream cinema. Every serious form of art sees the receiver as a partner in the undertaking. In fact, that's one of the preconditions of humanistic thought. In cinema, this fact, which should be self-evident, has been overlooked and replaced by an emphasis on the commercial aspects of the medium.[134]

Haneke's style has long been considered a foil to the Hollywood norm. In fact, the first Haneke film to achieve international attention was *Funny Games,* a film which satirizes the main-stream audience's need for cinematic violence.[135] In this manner, the long shots and static camera of *Caché* can be interpreted as part of Haneke's anti-Hollywood cinema. However, the confusion between videos, flashbacks, and the present is also symptomatic of PTSD, as victims often have episodes in which they are disoriented between present and the past.

Indeed the main character, Georges, is representative of a national post-trauma surrounding the Algerian conflict: once we see him awake from a feverish nightmare of childhood agony, and he also suffers from flashbacks when drawings sent with the videos trigger memories of his childhood with Majiid. Furthermore, Georges actively represses the memory of Majid by not speaking about him to his wife even after he suspects him. Importantly, the repressed memory of 1961 is familial. When Georges questions his mother about her memory of Majid she has even forgotten his name. Her excuse, "Tu sais c'était un temps difficile," suggests

---

[134] Richard Portman, "Collective Guilt and Individual Responsibility: An interview with Michael Haneke" *Cineaste* 31.1 (2005): 50-51.

[135] In a doubly ironic gesture, Haneke remade *Funny Games* (1997), with box-office grossing actors, Naomi Watts and Michael Pitt. Still, his attempt to make a commercial film of the anti-commercial was a box-office failure.

that her memory loss is due to the shock of the Paris massacre and the stress of the decision to adopt.[136] Georges represses both the childhood incident and the vision of Majid's suicide by taking a sleeping pill. Nonetheless, his memory reemerges in a dream where he envisages Majid as a boy kicking and screaming while being forced to go to the orphanage. The film's disorienting form and style thus depicts Georges' post-traumatic experience.

According to *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Disorders*, "Acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were reoccurring", is a symptom of PTSD including "a sense of reliving the experiences, illusions, hallucinations, and dissociative flashback episodes".[137] The flashbacks, and the sense of experiencing a past event in the present, confound the subject's understanding of time. General disorientation describes the film's style, but the mélange of past and present more specifically relates to how flashbacks appear in *Caché*—particularly the first three flashbacks which appear without contextualization (Georges has not met the now middle-aged Majid, or divulged the story to his wife when these flashbacks occur).

The flashbacks in *Caché* typify Georges' post-trauma while organizing the plot. It is a matter of course that the first two flashbacks bewilder the spectator, and that the last two rely on the dream as a framing device to explain missing narrative exposition. Maureen Turim borrows the terminology of Roland Barthes' *S/Z* to label this type of organization of flashbacks as hermeneutic. She writes, "The hermeneutic code, or code of enigmas, is one way in which the

---

[136] This can be likened to the amnesia which often occurs after an extremely traumatic event, in which the amygdala is over-stimulated and cannot cognitively function.

[137] *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Disorders DSM IV TR 4th edition* (Washington D.C.: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2000) 463.

narrative organizes the exposition of events so as to keep interest invested in a posed question, the answer to which is delayed."[138] The enigmatic first three flashbacks postpone the revelation of Georges' childhood and steadily generate suspense. In this manner, like *Mon colonel,* the flashback device in *Caché* functions dually as a formal technique and as a signifier of a larger cultural trauma.

Flashbacks 1 and 2: Disorientation between past, present, and video

After Anne calls Georges during his television show shoot, he rushes home to see the second video left on their doorstep. This time the video is found wrapped in a simple crayon drawing of a face with a bloody mouth. The video captures the Laurent home at night; as Georges watches, the television background mirrors the dark sky seen through the living room windows. This dark blue sky that signifies night, in both the video and the exterior narrative, destabilizes the spectator (Image 2). Before turning the television off, we see a close-up of the disturbing drawing from Georges' perspective. Then suddenly, for less than three seconds, we see a close-up shot of an Arab boy at ¾ angle (Image 3). He has bright fearful eyes and wipes red blood from his lips in the virtual darkness of sleeping hours. Usually, in film narratives, the implied time of day and its matching background help situate shots chronologically. However, here the repetition of the dark blue night sky blurs the difference between video and exterior narrative. This technique puzzles the viewer more when the twilight sky returns in the flashback shot of the boy-Majid. As the shot closely frames the boy's face, there are few secondary clues with which to temporally or spatially place the child. With only the same indigo background shown in the previous scene, the viewer might place the shameful boy's face in the narrative's

[138] Turim, 11.

present. For this viewer, the unknown boy wipes the blood off of his mouth directly after Georges turns the television off. This misunderstanding of the present sympathizes with Georges' disorientation, and is natural due to the film's extremely subjective style. Thus the film projects the post-traumatic experience of Georges' childhood onto the audience, who cannot assuredly distinguish past from present, or reality from video.

Guy Austin asserts that Georges' examination of the mysterious drawings triggers his flashbacks. Pierrot is sent the second drawing on a postcard at school, and hands it to his father in the car on the way home. The artist's style is now familiar; red ink streams from the mouth of a childish stick figure drawn in black charcoal. However, separating the shot of the postcard and the flashback is a 19 second shot of the Laurents' street, presumably taken from the master bedroom window at night. In this manner, the shot of the street temporally distances the image on the postcard—Pierrot showed Georges the postcard afterschool, now it is visibly night. These 19 seconds add the suspense of the videos' surveillance technique and thus distract the viewer from the previous shot's violence on paper. The presence of night also implies that the flashback—with no other introduction or explanation—occurs in sleep as a dream.

Like the first flashback, night marries the flashback to the narrative, as the stagnant view of night from the bedroom window and the sequence of Majid as a boy are similarly clothed in darkness. A handheld camera—perhaps none other than the camcorder of the surveillance videos—shakes slightly moving forward at a walking pace, while a cough is heard lightly in the background. Slowly, the camera turns to the right to expose the boy in a windowsill, coughing with his back to the camera. Feeling the presence of another, the boy rapidly turns around and displays the blood on his face and hands. At a quarter turn to the camera, he squints his eyes,

appearing both fragile and cheated. The silence of the footsteps, Majid's swift turn, and hiding place, entail a spying act by Georges— indeed if the camera represents Georges' point of view. In this manner, the camera signifies the child-Georges surveying Majid, in much the same manner that Georges later claims Majid spies on him with a video-camera.

Georges a fellow spectator

Haneke aligns the spectator's vision with Georges by presenting Georges as a diegetic spectator. Georges "a White, French talk-show host, both affluent and intelligent, prompts unproblematic identification in a western audience."[139] He continues to provide the western audience's primary point of view, even as his childhood becomes suspect. Additionally, Georges dominates the film, physically—he is in all but two scenes—and chronologically—his flashbacks determine the plot's structure. Therefore, the viewer has an extremely subjective understanding of events which is bound to Georges' psychology. Furthermore, the viewer's disorientation between past, present, and video mirrors his post-traumatic confusion.

When Georges and Anne watch videos at home, their television becomes the viewer's movie screen, for there is no metallic edge, wooden entertainment cabinet, or VHS player, framing the image. In these instances the fourth wall is broken, and Georges and Anne become part of the film audience. In fact *Caché*'s first shot (described earlier in detail) launches Georges as a fellow spectator. After the fast forward squiggles and the couple's voices break the static image of home, we at last understand that Georges and Anne have watched the video with us. In this way, the spectator has his/her first lesson in the film's language, which will be both useful

[139] Benjamin Ogrodnik, "Deep Cuts," *Film international* 37 (2009) 57.

and deceptive in future sequences: videos are signified by static shots.[140] The viewer also learns that the characters of the film may at times be watching with the audience, and that Georges is the primary point-of-view reference (we see the first shot of the narrative when he exits the home to find the cameraman).

The viewing experience Haneke establishes is similar to Deleuze's *l'image-temps* (time image): Georges observes and is subject to others' actions, and does not actively participate as characters do in the *image-mouvement* (action image). Deleuze's description of the *l'image-temps* written twenty years before *Caché* encapsulates Georges' predicament:

> Le personnage est devenu une sorte de *spectateur*. Il a beau bouger, courir, s'agiter, la situation dans laquelle il est débordé de toutes parts ses capacités motrices, et lui fait voir et entendre ce qui n'est plus justiciable en droit d'une réponse ou d'une action. Il *enregistre* plus qu'il ne réagit. Il est livré à une *vision*, poursuivi par elle ou la poursuivant, plutôt qu'engagé dans une action.[141] (Italics are my own.)[142]

Haneke introduces Georges as a viewer, and the plot witnesses his attempts at action (searching for the cameraman, threatening Majid, reporting Majid and his son to the police). Yet, his efforts

---

[140] Although both Georges and Anne watch the video with the audience in the first shot, the viewer follows Georges out of the apartment in his search for the camera. The camera's attention to Georges in the first diegetic shot, establishes his role as the protagonist and as the audience's primary point of entry.

[141] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: L'image-temps (*Paris: Les editions de minuit, 1985) 9.

[142] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time Image* Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 2001) 3.

are unsuccessful. In this way, he remains a witness/observer/viewer of events. Ironically, Georges continues to be a witness to the events that affect him the most: the videos, and the climatic suicide of Majid.[143]

Furthermore, Georges even remains a spectator in his flashbacks, where he watches the Arab boy. The first two flashbacks already detailed feature Majid as a child, closely framed, with the diegetic spectator (Georges) nowhere in sight. The boy-Majid remains an enigma in these shots, and the absence of Georges, our main character, adds to the spectator's disorientation. The lack of images of Georges in the flashbacks further defines his role as a passive spectator and witness rather than an action-oriented hero. He watches Majid, and Majid's nervous posture and eye-movement indicate an awareness of the Other's gaze. Despite the viewer's growing feelings of ambivalence towards Georges, the camera continues to take his viewpoint. In this manner, we witness and remember through Georges' eyes.

Flashbacks in Dreams

Although Haneke intercuts the first two flashbacks as uncontextualized images of Majid as a boy, he frames the last two flashbacks more typically as dreams.[144] Nightmares that repeat traumatic events are a symptom of PTSD, which is perhaps why Haneke employs such a "mainstream" flashback device in spite of his anti-Hollywood tendencies. In this third flashback,

---

[143] Majid says to Georges before slitting his throat, "je voulais que tu sois present."

[144] Although the editing sequence does not present the first two flashbacks as dreams, Georges tells his mother that he recently dreamed of Majid, before a dream sequence occurs. It is likely that this is simply a pretext for Georges to discuss Majid while avoiding the subject of the cassettes. However, it might allude to the dream-state of Georges when experiencing the flashback, or perhaps dreams that are not depicted in the film.

the audience glimpses Georges as a boy, easily recognizable with pale skin, brown hair, large eyes and a buttoned shirt that differs from Majid's working-class tank top. The editing sequence of the nightmare flashback runs as follows:

1. *An ax dives through a mound of feathers and into a cleanly cut tree stump. The rooster form is only briefly distinguishable.*

D.1

2. *A close-up of the Arab boy we have previously seen coughing blood. He swings the ax and bright blood splatters over the left side of his face and neck.*[145]

D.2

3. *A long shot of the rooster's body flopping about and the figure of Majid near cutting block. It is a clear sunny day outside of the dark shadow of the shed.*

D.3

4. *Georges watches, his back against the stone wall of the shed. His face at ¾ turn to the left to see the dying rooster. He then turns to center to look at Majid.*

D.4

5. *Majid's shadow moves from a left profile to center, allowing for eye contact between the boys'. His hands still wrap around the ax, the blade stuck in the tree stump.*

D.5

6. *Reverse shot of Georges, head pushed slightly forward. We hear the sound of the chicken still flapping its wings, and Georges turns again slightly to the left, to witness its death.*

D.6

7. *The chicken flapping its wings and moving slightly in the hay.*

D.7

8. *Georges turns his interest from the chicken (left) to the center. His eyes open wider.*

D.8

9. *Majid, whose face is erased by shadow, walks forward clutching the ax with both hands. His figure appears dark against the sunlit background outside of the shed, and the outline of the ax is visible.*

D.9

10. *The camera takes Majid's stance and moves closer to Georges who looks increasingly terrified. The adult, dreaming Georges is heard gasping.*

D.10

11. *This shot of Majid starts in a medium shot, until he moves closer and his face covers the screen. He lifts the ax above his head and opens his mouth widely.*

D.11

12. *Cut to black. A light flickers as the adult-Georges struggles to turn on the bedside lamp. He is sweating and breathing hard.*

D.12

The child, Georges, defines the dream sequence as a flashback; for after we identify Georges as a boy, we classify the sequence as his childhood memory. Furthermore, sleep frames the flashback sequence. When we see Georges awake from the shock of the nightmare we relegate the previous sequence to his dream world, a space wrought with childhood souvenirs. We recognize the rooster-killing Majid as the Arab child wiping blood from his face in previous intercut shots. Consequently, we understand that all of the previous images of the Arab boy depict Georges' inner struggle with his past.[146] Georges has not yet spoken of his childhood debacle to Anne, and the mysterious intercut images of Majid as a boy are thus far our only reference to Georges' childhood. The third flashback at last reveals the source of the intercut images and exposes them as Georges' flashbacks. In this way, the nightmare places Georges'

---

[146] Thus, his Freudian fears in the third flashback become a character trait that is developed in future fits of anger against Majid. Of course later, Majid tragically internalizes Georges' castration anxiety once symbolized by the beheaded rooster, by cutting his own throat. "George's adult anxiety is revealed in a dream about a boyhood castration anxiety involving Majid. The affect associated with the anxiety in the dream is realized with the headless chicken, as if anxiety, castration, and the inhuman all set the human aside and render it unable to dwell in itself." Ranjana Khanna, "From Rue Morge to Rue des Iris," *Screen* 48.2 (2007): 242.

As the Gallic rooster (le coq gaulois) is the national symbol of France, one may interpret the scene as French nationalist fear—immigrants empowered by labor in France threaten the French empire.

memories in the narrative, establishing an over-arching chronological order. As I will explain later in this chapter, the sequence also questions the veracity of Georges' oral version of events.

Flashback 4

After Georges lies down to sleep, the film cuts to Georges' final flashback. A long shot of several adults (perhaps assistance workers) force Majid into a car headed for an orphanage after Georges' parents walk back into the home. The camera in this scene films from a covered space, the shed of the previous flashback in which Majid slaughtered a rooster (Image 4). As the boy-Majid struggles and fights the adults who push him into the car, the camera remains static, like the surveillance videos. This scene can be interpreted as seen from the eyes of Georges, who already feels guilty, and is thus ***caché*** in the shed. In fact, in both flashbacks the camera's distance from the house and the shadows are similar. Therefore, in both instances the child, Georges, gazes from the same place, the wall opposite the shed's opening, where he is concealed by shadow.

This fourth flashback is a "flashback of revelation"—though we never solve the mystery of who made the surveillance cassettes, we witness the pinnacle of Georges' childhood fear and shame, a hidden view of Majid's forced departure to the orphanage. The passive observation stance of the camera in three of the flashbacks (the nightmare is the only flashback to use shot-reverse-shot) suggests that the video cassettes reverse Georges' childhood surveillance of Majid, perhaps as revenge. For example in the final flashback, the camera furtively stares at a family home, as did the camera in the film's three-minute establishing shot.[147] In this way, the opening

[147] The camera appears to be closer to the Laurent home in the opening shot, but the object of the camera's gaze, Georges' family home, and the camera's position, directly across from the front door, is strikingly similar. The

shot and closing flashback signify a circular espionage surrounding the family structure. Each flashback successively hints at young Georges' secret watch over Majid. However, the fourth flashback more overtly exposes Georges as a spy. The camera's distance from the boy-Majid's tormented departure signifies a hiding place. If Haneke had wished to demonstrate the young Majijd's agony, he would have inserted close-ups of Majid, capturing his expressions and rage. Instead, the shot uses distance and stillness to contrast the spectator's position in spying with the frantic banished child. The similarity in the surveillance camera's point of view and the young Georges' gaze over Majid in the flashbacks demonstrates repetition—while the trauma reoccurs internally via flashbacks, guilt and revenge replay this tragic moment externally. In this manner, the flashback of revelation exposes the circularity of surveillance.

Fantasy

Trembling with fear after witnessing Majid's suicide and hiding in a cinema, Georges at last returns to his bedroom in the evening. After he explains to Anne what he just witnessed, she calmly asks him what childhood actions might have influenced Majid's suicide. At first Georges responds defensively, but finally he relates the truth—as he understands it. His monologue concerning his childhood lies indicates a fantasy element at play in the previous flashbacks.[148]

---

camera's distance from the Laurent home in the opening shot, is likely as far away as the camera could be with a frontal view of the home on a Parisian street.

[148] Walker quotes the definition of Freudian fantasy written by Jean Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, 'Phantasy (or Fantasy)…is a distorted derivative of the memory of actual fortuitous events 'and 'an imaginary expression designed to conceal the reality from the instinctual dynamic.' She then quotes Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone before explaining her unique point of view, " 'Emphasis on the traumatic event as origin is misleading; what is

> J’ai raconté à maman qu’il crachait du sang. Il m’ont pas cru tu comprends? Le médecin l’a examiné et n’a rien trouvé. C’était un vrai imbécile notre médecin de famille. Après je lui ai dit que Papa voulait qu’il tue le coq. C’était une sale bête, méchant, nous attaquait tout le temps. Alors, il l’a fait. Il a coupé la tête. Le coq sautait. Majid était couvert du sang. Et je racontais qu’il a fait ça pour me faire peur.

Georges’ confession questions the content of the flashback sequences—if Majid’s illness was a lie, then was Georges’ flashback of Majid a pseudomemory? Why would Georges misremember Majid as coughing blood? Furthermore, the comment about the family doctor implies that perhaps Majid did in fact have a form of turberculosis or hemoptysis that the incompetent doctor could not detect. Georges’ flashback would substantiate this reading, except for the fact that he presents this information to Anne as one of the lies he told to his parents to circumvent the adoption. The film never verifies Majid’s childhood illness.

Furthermore, the same monologue indicates fantasy in the nightmare of the boy-Majid decapitating the rooster. When he recounts the incident to Anne, he focuses on facts displayed in his dream sequence: Majid cut-off the rooster’s head, the rooster jumped, Majid was covered with blood. However, the final sentence, “et je racontais qu’il a fait ça pour me faire peur,” is contradictory—while it is a fact that he told his parents, in retrospect he presents this statement

---

absent from this teleological narrative, in effect, is precisely the way the mind makes its own meanings’…my point is that fantasy and reality are inextricably—if mysteriously bonded. Following my reading of Freud’s theory, I posit that fantasy constructions, while assuredly internal phenomena, may indeed be responsive to the pressure of real events.” Janet Walker, *Trauma Cinema* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999) 9.

as a lie. This then confuses the verity of the sequence in which Majid beheads the rooster, and then approaches Georges with the ax. Majid's stare and grip of the ax corroborates Georges' "lie," for Majid purposefully scares the smaller, weaker boy with a gruesome slaughter.

This reading suggests the flashback sequences were his own false memory, invented to relieve his guilt. Fantasy is an element of memory that appears in the cases of many trauma victims. Janet Walker's study of incest and Holocaust cinema confronts our society's need for memory veracity. She writes:

> Whereas popular and legal venues tend to take an "it happened or it didn't" approach that rejects reports of traumatic experiences containing mistakes or amnesiac elements, contemporary psychological theories show that such memory features are a common consequence of traumatic experience itself. Forgetting and mistakes in memory may actually stand therefore, as a testament to the genuine nature of the event a person is trying to recall."[149]

Georges' words belie his flashbacks and indicate what Walker would term "the vicissitudes of memory," for a true memory is by definition, imperfect. In this way, Georges' ambiguous confession and contradictory flashbacks only reflect the authenticity his memory.[150] It is a

---

[149] Janet Walker, *Trauma Cinema: Documenting incest and the Holocaust* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005) 2.

[150] Haneke said in his interview with Richard Portman, "We don't know if Georges is telling the truth and we don't know if Majid is telling the truth. We don't really know which on the characters is lying—just as we don't know if real life." The contradictions in Georges' flashbacks and in his conversations with Anne aid in this ambiguity. Portman, 51.

distinct possibility that Georges' guilt alters his memory of events in his favor. Indeed, by remembering Majid as sick and frightening, Georges' protects himself from the culpability of lying. In this way, misremembering absolves Georges of Majid's traumatic departure, and subsequent life of limitations.

Furthermore, the theory of wish-fulfillment may be applied to both sequences: Georges refers to the second flashback of Majid coughing blood as a dream to his mother, and awakes from the third flashback of Majid, the butcher, as a nightmare. Not unlike the terrifying image of the burning son utilized in the analysis of *Mon colonel*, the bloody flashback images of Majid represent a desire despite their disturbing quality—a desire to deflect responsibility to Majid by rendering opportune lies convenient truths.

Sigmund Freud describes a similar wish fulfillment that circumvents culpability in his analysis of his own dream, recorded as "Irma's Injection" in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Before the dream, a friend of Freud's, whose first name was Otto, informed Freud that his former patient Irma had not recovered. In the dream, Freud fears that he has misdiagnosed Irma. Then it becomes clear that her symptoms are not due to his misdiagnosis but rather to an unclean injection given to her by Otto. In this manner, the dream relieves Freud from the responsibility of Irma's illness, and punishes Otto for his criticism. Furthermore, the dream confirms Freud's medical correctness. Both the ghastly illnesses of Irma and of Majid, provide the dreamer with an expedient by which to blame others. Like Irma's injection, the bloody coughing of Majid and his volatile approach with the ax replace a fear of wrongdoing with a sense of righteousness.

The flashbacks' plot function in *Caché* is hermeneutic; each flashback gives the viewer more clues to the boys' conflict, but only the final flashback reveals the pivotal moment in

Majid's future. This sequence also infers that Georges spies on Majid; consequently we interpret the videos' surveillance technique as a repetitive, vengeful process. However, penetrating deeper, the flashbacks reveal a secondary purpose of relating Georges' trauma, including a distortion of events. Walker describes effective trauma films as works that "figure the traumatic past as meaningful and yet as fragmentary, virtually unspeakable, and striated with fantasy constructions."[151] Indeed, *Caché* grapples with a past that is scarcely spoken, interrupts the present, and reveals the vicissitudes in the memory of the traumatized individual.

The politics of *Caché*

Although many critics consider *Caché* the most political of Michael Haneke's oeuvre, the director denies that the film judges France. In fact, Haneke conjectures that the plot would be convincing in any number of countries: "on pourrait trouver des zones ombres dans n'importe quel pays."[152] However, the film's politics problematize guilt. Haneke says that the Algerian War is not "indispensable à l'intrigue (de *Caché*), mais relier l'intrigue au politique empechait de limiter la culpabilité au plan personnel. »[153] This statement exposes Haneke's intentions for

---

[151] Janet Walker, "Traumatic Paradox: Documentary Films, Historical Fictions, and Cataclysmic Past Events," *Signs* 22.4 (1997): 809.

[152] Cieutat, Michel and Philippe Rouyer. "Entretien avec Michel Haneke: On ne montre pas la réalité juste son image manipulé." *Positif* 536 (2005): 21. Other similar comments made by Michael Haneke to *Cineaste,* "I don't want my film to be seen as specifically a French problem. It seems to me that, in every country, there are dark corners—dark stains where questions of collective guilt become important. I'm sure in the United States there are other parallel examples of dark stains on the collective unconscious. (*Laughs*) There's a reason why it's so important to me that this not be seen as a specifically French problem." Richard Porton, 50.

[153] Cieutat and Rouyer, 23.

ambiguity—the single mention of the Paris massacre places Georges' guilt into a national realm that exists outside of a very personal story. Many critics reiterate that Georges is emblematic of white France.[154] Yet the narrative focuses on an individual's strife, and his particular involvement in obstructing a second-generation Algerian's education as an ignorant child. *La Nuit noire,* directed by Alain Tasma premiered the same year as *Caché* to address the anniversary of the Paris Massacre. However, the purpose of *La nuit noire* is primarily pedagogical, and many characters offer different perspectives (an Algerian worker, his French teacher, a FLN member, his French girlfriend hiding him, a policeman and a television journalist). In contrast, *Caché* tells the unique story of one man's tangential relationship to the massacre, inviting a symbolic reading because of its singularity, and yet challenging such an allegory for the same reason.

The politics of the film—racism, discrimination, the Paris Massacre—indicate that Georges' suffers symptoms of a larger cultural culpability. However, Haneke presents the recent history of France and the cultural ramifications of decolonization simply as footnotes to the story of two middle-aged men who were childhood enemies. In fact, the Paris Massacre is only mentioned once. There is no statement about the *fracture coloniale*, we simply witness the

---

[154] The examples of this interpretation are numerous. However, Jennifer Szalai offers a simple metaphor: "Just as Georges has hidden certain elements of his past, France has hidden certain elements of her past." Jennifer Szalai, "Habits of Seeing: the unsettling films Michael Haneke," *Harper's Magazine* 315.1890 (2007): 74.
Paul Gilroy proffers an angrier response to the Georges = France equation: "can and should the child Georges be held to account in that way? This confusion is important. The relationship of the colonial past to the postcolonial present is perverted and confused by the idea that today's complacent and indifferent adults bear no more responsibility for the resignation, inertia, and poisonous choices than a conflicted six-year old." Paul Gilroy, "Shooting Crabs in a Barrel," *Screen* 48.2 (2007) 234.

difference in Georges and Majid's living conditions.[155] This ambiguity between what is a political allegory and what is an isolated narrative makes the discussion of *Caché* particularly enticing for critics and academics who aim to discover the films many possible metaphors.

---

[155] The *fracture coloniale* is a term devised by a group of authors in their book *La Fracture colonial: une crise française.* The term describes how the situation of immigrant communities contains elements of colonialism. Nicholas Bancel writes: Car il est aujourd'hui devenu difficile d'ignorer la « postcolonialité », tant elle porte des tensions extraordinairement fortes : l'extension, dans les quartiers, de la comparaison entre les situations de relégation (sociale, économique, culturelle, éducative, religieuse...) et la situation coloniale ; la législation sur la bonne manière de construire et de transmettre le « bilan globalement positif » de la colonisation ; les revendications mémorielles des « enfants de la colonisation » dans un contexte de « reprise en main » de l'histoire coloniale ; la montée du « sentiment d'insécurité » face aux immigrations postcoloniales et l'incompréhension des élites républicaines devant les identités « hors normes » qualifiées de « communautaristes » ; les dénonciations médiatiques d'un « racisme anti-blanc » au moment même où nous assistons à une crispation du modèle d'« intégration à la française » ; les phobies anti-islam exprimées lors du débat sur le voile ; le rejet de la France en Afrique francophone et les politiques de la francophonie ... Autant de signes qui font de la *fracture coloniale* une réalité multiforme impossible à ignorer.

It has become difficult today to ignore « postcoloniality », because it creates such extraordinarily strong conflicts : the extension, in the neighbohoods, of the comparison between the situations of relegation (social, economique, cultural, educative, religious…)and the colonial situation; the legislation concerning the right way to construct and and transmit riches the "in a globally positive" way; the memorial revendications by "children of colonization" in a context of "physically taking back" of colonial history; the augmentation of feeling "insecure" opposite post-colonial immigrants and the incomprehension of the elite republicans before "outside of the norm" identities qualified as "communists"; the denunciations by media of an "anti-white racism" at the same moment we see the model of "french integration" contract; the anti-Islam phobia expressed during the veil debate; the rejection of France in francophone Africa and the politics of francophonie… As many signs make the *coloniale fracture* a reality in many forms, that is impossible to ignore.

Therefore the videos of *Caché* that represent a reversal of spying at the micro-level, (Georges once spied on Majid, now he is being watched) can be interpreted at the macro-level as a statement about post-colonial France. The spectator guided by Haneke's "footnotes", understands Georges as symbolic of the French bourgeoisie, and as such, an oppressor of the immigrant working class. Benjamin Ogrodnik writes:

> In *Caché* the camera's lens is…turned into a weapon of resistance for the formerly colonized, mobilizing objectification against those who would objectify them and undermine their agency…the tapes moreover, recover the painful, hidden histories of oppression perpetrated by the French against the Algerian people.. [156]

Martine Beugnet also feels that the mysterious camera represents a post-colonial revenge, "the enigmatic gaze of the victim of historical amnesia initially comes to resemble the 'fixed and objectified framing of the oppressor."[157] This interpretation of the characters, and the camera, as symbolic of France's post-colonial guilt, anger, and revenge also extends to the film's flashbacks.

The reexamination of October 17, 1961, in *Caché* (or rather the events surrounding the day as no characters of *Caché* participated in the protest) was very timely in 2005, a year in which French media divulged details of the once hidden massacre. Haneke conceived of the

---

Nicolas, Bancel. « Introduction : La Fracture Coloniale, une crise française, » *La Fracture Coloniale : La société française au prisme de l'héritage colonial* eds. Nicolas Bancel, Pascal Blanchard, Sandrine LeMaire(Paris: La découverte, 2005) 10.

[156] Benjamin Ogrodnik, "Deep Cuts." *Film international.* 37 (2008) : 56-57.

[157] Martine Beugnet, "Blind Spot," *Screen* 48.2 (2007) 230.

film's primary surveillance theme post-9/11.[158] The espionage thriller concept was then reinforced by new media divulging the reality of the Paris Massacre. Haneke reveals his inspiration to *Cineaste*:

> I had been toying around with the idea of writing a script in which someone is confronted with his guilt for something he did in his childhood. I wanted to explore a character's reactions to this trauma. As chance would have it, around this time I saw a documentary broadcast on ARTE which dealt with the events precipitated by this demonstration in October 1961. After watching that broadcast, all of these different elements coalesced.[159]

Thus, after being outraged by the brutality of the Paris Massacre and the fact that it "could have been suppressed for forty years",[160] Haneke formulated a return of this repressed memory. The uncanny gaps in time that the audience experiences via Georges are not dissimilar to the media-exposure of the massacre: Jean-Michel Einaudi's *La Bataille de Paris: 17 Octobre,* 1961, was originally published in 1991, and revised in 2001 due to interest and new information. Subsequently, Einaudi's book was followed by the first acknowledgement of the massacre by a government official in 2001. The new socialist mayor of Paris, Bernard Delanöe commemorated the fateful day with a plaque. In his speech he said, "Dans le devoir de mémoire de Paris, aucun Parisien n'est de trop."[161] The noun *devoir* implies a task (homework is called a devoir) as well

---

[158]Cieulat and Rouyer, 21.

[159] Portman, 50.

[160] Portman, 50.

[161] The plaque reads : « à la mémoire de nombreux Algériens tués lors de la sanglante répression de la manifestation pacifique du 17 octobre 1961. » or in English, « in the memory of the numerous Algerians killed in the bloody

as an obligation. For the many Parisians who have forgotten this shameful moment in history, the memory of the massacre is a task. To this extent, *Caché* begins the *devoir de mémoire* of the Paris massacre that resurged in French media. Majid's nameless son voices a youthful resistance to forgetting the massacre and its consequences that resounded in the hundreds of banlieue youth rioting in the fall of 2005 only weeks after *Caché* premiered.

Conclusion

Both Georges Laurent of *Caché* and Guy Rossi of *Mon colonel* are perpetrators; whether it be lying to one's parents or torturing FLN members, both characters are responsible for an act that grievously affects another being. However, rather than paint these perpetrators as evil, the films present a nuanced reading. The perpetrating acts disturb the protagonist, and in the case of *Mon colonel* transgenerationally haunt the family and future military, until the perpetrators themselves portray a trauma that is not unlike that of their victims. The cinematic flashbacks represent post-trauma. Generally, the gap between the date of the flashbacks and the date of their reemergence reveals a repression of the Algerian-war era. In this manner, the films resolve that perpetrators are also victims, not suffering with the memory of being passively attacked, but of actively doing harm to others.

The plots of *Mon colonel* and *Caché* further complicate victim/perpetrator categorization. Both of the films' protagonists perpetrate yet both are also violated by others: Guy Rossi

---

repression of a peaceful protest on October 17, 1961.» Jean-Jacques Bozonnet et Christine Garin, « Les controverses politiques sur la guerre d'Algérie marquent la commémoration du 17 octobre 1961, » *Le Monde* 19 Oct. 2001, Le monde diplomatique, 20 June 2008.

internally debates his conduct and could argue Adolf Eichmann's defense on his own behalf.[162] When Guy's journal entry implies the Colonel ordered his murder, Guy becomes a fatality of the French military. Although Georges lies to his parents to circumvent Majid's adoption, his tender age in part excuses his behavior. As an adult he threatens Majid, but only in response to the surveillance threat on his household. In this manner, the protagonists of both films simultaneously traumatize and are traumatized. *Mon colonel* offers the audience a character to blame for Guy Rossi's less righteous actions, Colonel Duplan. This liberates Guy from his perpetrator status, but not from his guilt. *Caché* is a more ambiguous film that demonstrates the effects of Georges' actions as well as the post-trauma he must endure. In this manner, Georges remains dually victim and perpetrator as the result of post-colonial guilt.

In *Trauma and Triumph*, Bernard Giessen differentiates victim from perpetrator while admitting that these categories are often blurred:

> The agent who, by voluntary decision, risks producing the condition of the victim has to be distinguished from the victim, and both have to be distinguished from the position of the outside observer or the third party who evaluates the action and recognizes the condition of the victims, even if the victims should not be aware of it. This analytical separation between three positions might—like all structural

---

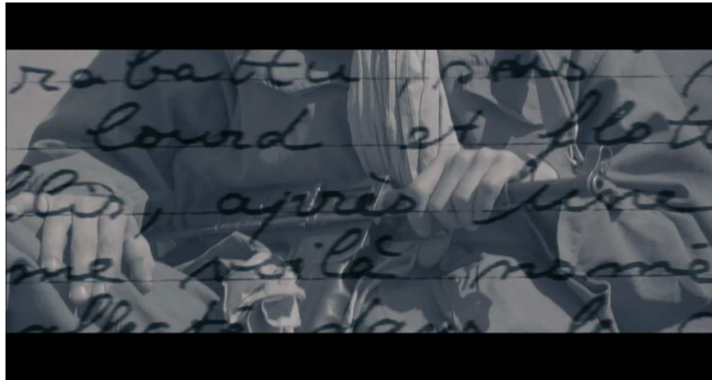
[162] Hannah Arendt followed Adolf Eichmann's trial for *the New Yorker*. She records Eichmann's claim: "he did as far as he could see, as a law abiding citizen. He did his *duty*, as he told the police and the court over and over again; he not only obeyed *orders*, he also *obeyed the law*." Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: the Banality of Evil* (New York: Viking Press, 1963)135.

> ideal types—be blurred in historical cases of victimization, but it cannot entirely be dispensed with.[163]

While there is a definite fissure between perpetrators and victims in *Caché* and *Mon colonel*, the films also blur such categorization. While *Mon colonel* and other recent Algerian-war films (see Chapter 3) only briefly examine the trauma of the tortured, they present French soldiers as victims of war who regret following orders. In these instances, cinema attempts to be the third party, reassessing the crimes of the Algerian war as such, but forgiving the French perpetrator who suffers as a victim. *Caché* remains exceptionally ambiguous; although the video-sender terrorizes Georges' household, the director withholds overt sympathy for the French bourgeoisie.

[163] Bertrand Giessen, *Triumph and Trauma* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2004) 46.

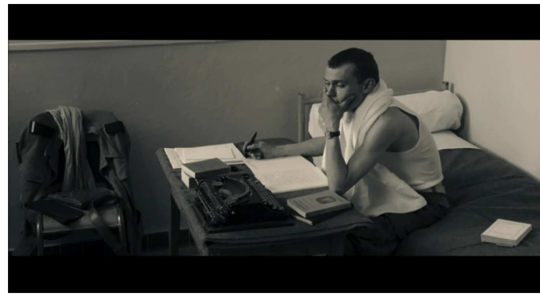
Mon colonel (2007) dir. Laurent Herbiet



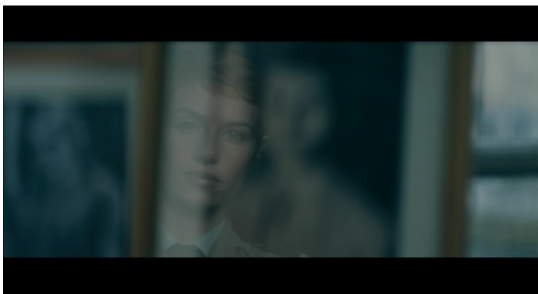
E.1

A close-up of the black handwriting on the photocopied white pages simultaneously dissolves into black-and-white film revealing Rossi in a Jeep with a captain in 1956. The image of Guy Rossi's torso in military garb holding a machine gun with the journal entry Lt.Galois' voice reads superimposed.

E.2


E.3

In these stills, we see not only the resemblance of the actors but the manner in which Herbiet further mirrors the actors through mise-en-scène and editing. These stills were taken from the same scene, in which Rossi writes about witnessing torture. Both shots of Guy writing and Lt. Galois reacting intercut the torture sequence.


E.4

E.5

Caché (2005) dir. Michael Haneke

D.13

D.14

D.15

D.16

Chapter 3 Victim or Perpetrator ?: *L'Ennemi intime* and *La Trahison*

Both *L'Ennemi intime* (2007) and *La Trahison* (2006) blur the very categories by which war is defined; victim, someone hurt by the act of another, and perpetrator, one who commits an act that negatively affects another. The films' styles differ dramatically: *L'Ennemi intime* recalls American war classics such as *Platoon* and *Private Ryan*,[164] while *La Trahison* breaks ground as an art-film set in war-torn Algeria. Yet both films portray the French military as dually victim and perpetrator. *L'Ennemi intime* focuses particularly on French soldiers and on the post-trauma caused by torturing—one character forces others to electrocute him at gunpoint. In this way, the French torturers' suffering compensates for their previous heinous behavior. *La Trahison* endlessly obscures victim/perpetrator categorization within a platoon—four Muslim soldiers who appear to be a loyal *appelés* (just as the French, many Algerians were drafted) are accused of conspiring to murder their French lieutenant. The camera and script focus on Taïeb, only enhancing the mystery of whether he is secretly an FLN member, or whether he will be executed unjustly. At the very end of the film we learn that Taïeb was indeed the chief organizer planning Lieutenant Roque's murder, but that he could not go through with the plan. The ambiguous camera does not choose sides, though the closing dialogue clearly sides with the young Arabs—Roque's last line states what the film has proven: that the *appelés* were trapped by the French military.

[164] Benjamin Stora says the violence in *L'Ennemi intime* is, «proche des films américans sur la guerre de Vietnam dans les années 80… » , Benjamin Stora, « La Guerre d'Algérie la mémoire par le cinéma,» *Les Guerres des Mémoires: La France et son histoire,* Dir. Pascal Blanchard and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson. (Paris: La découverte, 2008) 268.

L'Ennemi intime also investigates the tenuous relationship of the Arab soldier to the French military. Although the main characters of *L'Ennemi intime* are French, and the trauma these characters endure is the film's primary theme, the vacillating allegiance of Arabs intersects the experience of the French: a harki soldier in the platoon returns to the FLN during the war, and an Arab boy who seeks refuge in the French military we later discover is a *fellagha* (a FLN guerrilla soldier). Although there are several secondary Algerian stories, the trauma of the Algerian War on one young French idealist leaves the film with a nationalist residue not dissimilar to that of *Mon colonel* (Chapter 2). Although *La Trahison* is based on the autobiographical novel of a French veteran, the film alternates between the perspectives of a Lieutenant and an accused Muslim draftee, giving both points of view equal significance. The diptych constructs a very nuanced film—neither the Muslim soldier nor the French Lieutenant of *La Trahison* appear as victim or perpetrator: both are continually on the cusp of being both.[165]

L'Ennemi intime

The Algerian War of Independence was now, through broad media coverage of the 2005 riots, a contested February 2005 law that requested educators portray the positive role of the French presence in North Africa, and uncovered past torture crimes, rewritten as an epoch of

[165] I use the translation of the term *soldat musulman* because this is how the characters in *La trahison* refer to the Algerian soldiers in the film. It is complicated word choice, *arab* is a general term that denies aspects of their situation, and *soldat algérien* could be confused with pied-noir soldiers. Furthermore, there were many Algerian soldiers fighting for the FLN. *Harki* the term generally to describe indigenous Algerians working for the French military cannot be used specifically, because these Muslim soldiers were drafted—when asked if the soldiers are harkis Roque says "non, appellés." Language's inability to describe the native Algerian working for the French military further demonstrates the marginality of these men.

shame. For the twenty-first century public attempting to visualize this newly exposed history, there were few images with which available to reconstruct the French torturer. Although Jean-Luc Godard's censored second film, *Le Petit Soldat* (see Chapter 1), addressed torture during the Algerian War, the feature is set in Switzerland and shows the FLN torturing a French suspect, even while utilizing "French" techniques described in Henri Alleg's *La Question.*[166] Alain Resnais portrayed the post-trauma of a French veteran in *Muriel ou le temps d'un retours* (1963), but although we hear Bernard, the veteran, describe the torture in which he participated, the film shows no images of the acts. As discussed in Chapter 1, the absence of torture in *Muriel* is not benign, but mirrors and comments on the French government's censorship of television and newsreels.

The Italian-Algerian production, *La Battaglia di Algeri* (1966), was unique in depicting the French torture of Algerian prisoners. Several scenes from the film came to symbolize the war, including a montage of nearly nude FLN prisoners suffering electric shocks, water-boarding, and beatings at the hands of French soldiers. In fact, despite the controversy surrounding the film and the patriotic ban against it imposed by French movie theaters and spectators, these images remained for many years (and perhaps are still) the most closely associated with the Algerian War. Despite *Avoir 20 ans dans les Aurès* (1971) and *R.A.S.* (1973), two moderately successful

---

166 The journal/essay by Henri Alleg (Alleg was Henri Salem's pen name and *nom de guerre*) recounts how the French journalist was captured and tortured by the French military in Algeria. The book sold over 60,000 copies in its first two weeks, but was then banned and confiscated. However, the censure only increased the book's popularity; by the end of 1958, 162,000 French homes owned copies of *La Question* while the press had made the book's scandal popular knowledge. In this way, Alleg's diary of torture made the public aware of the French military's brutality in Algeria and ignited the anti-war movement.

French films set in battle that were critical of the French presence in Algeria, no French screen depictions of the military torturing during the eight-year conflict existed. Therefore, when the past crimes reemerged in the work of historians at the end of the twentieth century, media exposure necessitated a visual explanation of these gruesome acts.

The new century was ripe for a filmic reassessment of the Algerian War era. Years before Rachid Bouchereb's more volatile *Hors la loi* (2010), several films confronted the Paris Massacre of October 17, 1961, when French police killed as many as 200 Algerians marching peacefully through Paris: Michael Haneke's film, *Caché* (2005), (discussed in Chapter 2) references the massacre, while Alain Tasma's historical fiction feature *La nuit noire* (2005) details the events with a varied cast of French and Algerian characters. This wave of films reconsidering the era developed as Philippe Faucon chose to direct a film set during the war, and mounted one of the new millenium's first French productions filmed in Algeria, *La Trahison* (2005). Still Faucon's plot builds tension around the prospect and fear of torture, rather than its representation. Costa-Gavras' production *Mon colonel* (2006), directed by Laurent Herbiet, demonstrates another attempt to expose the military crimes of the Algerian War, and similarly uses nationalism to negotiate the horrors. However, this compromise did not permit images of the protagonist, Guy Rossi (Robinson Stevenin), or any other character, torturing. Instead, we merely see the evidence: an Algerian man hanging from his wrists, and later, the guilt suffered by the young soldier. *L'Ennemi intime* thus breaks new ground. It is the only French production to include not just one but several scenes of the French military torturing Arab FLN suspects during the Algerian War.

Previously, Siri directed several action films in which fit protagonists liberate themselves and the other captives after being tricked and captured: *Hostage* (2005) a Hollywood feature starring Bruce Willis, and *Le Nid de Guêpes* (2002) in which Laborie (Nadia Farès) of French special forces is trapped in a warehouse transporting an Albanian criminal. Siri also directed a video game with a similar plot, *Splinter Cell* (2002), based on a Tom Clancy novel. This dialectic of entrapment and escape also anchors his first historical film, *L'Ennemi intime.* Made with a modest budget of 8 million, Siri utilized the expertise he gained directing action films to achieve the artistry and grandeur of a big budget film at a much lesser expense.[167]

In *L'Ennemi intime* the French military tortures supposed FLN members, but rather than demonstrate the post-trauma of the surviving Algerians, or the mourning of the victims' deaths by their communities, the film focuses on the trauma of the French perpetrators. While France remembers the Algerian War with an ever-growing sense of shame, there are still those who are nostalgic for French Algeria—those who supported the Law of February 2005 and those who challenge Algeria's right to independence (notably on the political center and extreme right).[168] As Bernhard Giesen has noted, trauma studies traditionally investigate the experience of victims,[169] so there is scant literature researching the post trauma of French torturers during the

---

[167] Siri told me that the initial budget for *L'ennemi intime* was over 20 million, but that the producers were unable to find the funds. Bénoît Magimel, a French star, made the film because he was committed to the project, but received little financial compensation in return. Scenes with explosives were filmed in one take to reduce expense.

168 A book that follows such argumentation: Daniel Lefeuvre, *Pour en finir avec la repentance coloniale* (Paris : Éditions Flammarion, 2008).

169 Giesen writes, "There are relatively few scholarly treatments of the trauma of perpetrators who, by their own decision, dehumanized other subjects and, in doing so, not only perverted the sovereign subjectivity of the victims,

Algerian War, or earlier during the collaboration with the Vichy government.[170] However, *L'Ennemi intime* is based on a book and a television documentary of the same name, in which French veterans disclose the acts of torture they committed and the psychological consequences they suffered as a result. The plot of the fiction film, *L'Ennemi intime,* continues a rare investigation of the psychological effects of torturing on the French soldiers. This exploration of perpetrator guilt recalls the already mentioned *Muriel ou le temps d'un retours* (1963), albeit the style of *L'Ennemi intime* resembles an American Vietnam War film rather than a New Wave art house feature. While Siri's film does not deny the pain of torture, it is the torturer's suffering rather than that of the tortured that dominates the film. The camera objectifies the Arab victims while the French soldiers remain the subjects. In this way, the film posits the perpetrator as a victim, redefining the consequences of torture.

Although *L'Ennemi intime* faired better than *Caché* at the box office in the first week (the most popular recent movie studied in the dissertation), Siri's film did not have the international market of a Michael Haneke film, and never found distribution in the United States.[171] *L'Ennemi intime* garnered many comparisons to *Platoon*, but critics also acknowledged France's need to reinvestigate the Algerian War. Alan Spira of *Paris Match* compared the film with the more

---

but also challenged their won sacredness." Bernhard Giesen, *Triumph and Trauma* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2004) 109-110.

170 This is not to say that there are not recorded accounts of torturing during the Algerian War. As mentioned, General Paul Aussarresses and General Jacques Massu provided the most famous confessions of torture during the Algerian War. However, these accounts have not been analyzed, or studied as a national phenomenon.

[171] The star actors, Albert Dupontel and Bénoît Magimel obviously helped this short-lived premiere success.

popular, culturally-conscious *Les Indigènes*, « Dans la lignée d'*Indigènes*, ce film marie à la fois le spectaculaire, le politique et l'humain avec, comme but ultime, de remettre les pendules de l'Histoire à l'heure. »[172] Camille Brun of *MCinéma* found a trend in the France revisiting Algeria, « Siri et *L'Ennemi intime* participent pleinement au mouvement qui donnera toute son importante au conflit algérien dans la mémoire collective française. »[173] However, despite the seriousness of the subject matter, and perhaps because of its similarities to the American *Platoon*, the press did not generally view the film as an artistic success. Thomas Sotinel of *Le Monde* writes, « *L'Ennemi intime* s'affaisse sous le poids des conventions, »[174] and Jean-Michel Frodon in *Cahiers du Cinéma* also comments on the war-film formula, « Artifice de la convention scénaristique multipliée par artifice de la représentation. »[175] Generally speaking many echoed the Phillippe Rouyer of *Positif,* « Sans contester l'utilité d'un tel film, on reste donc sur sa faim. »[176]

In an attempt to narrativize the interviews of the documentary and the book, *L'Ennemi intime* by historian Patrick Rotman, Siri worked with author, to conceive and co-write a script about a platoon. The platoon is meant to symbolize the two million French men and half-million *harkis*

---

[172] Alan Spira, « *L'ennemi intime* de Florent Emilio Siri, » *Paris Match*, 4 Oct 2007, 18 May 2011, <http://www.parismatch.com/Culture-Match/Cinema/Actu/L-ennemi-intime-de-Florent-Emilio-Siri.-69709/>.

[173] Camille Brun, « L'*Ennemi intime*. » *MCinéma.com*, 2 October, 2007, 19 May, 2011 <http://www.cine81.com/fr/fiche_film.php?cc=1&cf=529>.

[174] Thomas Sotinel, "L'*Ennemi Intime* : La guerre d'Algérie éclate à l'écran, » *Le Monde*, 2 Oct 2007, 18 May 2011 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cinema/article/2007/10/02/l-ennemi-intime-la-guerre-d-algerie-eclate-a-l-ecran_962044_3476.html>.

[175] Jean-Michel Frodon, « *L'ennemi intime,* » *Les Cahiers du Cinéma,* 627 (2007) :34.

[176] Philippe Rouyer, "De A à Z: L'*Ennemi intime*, " *Positif*, 560 (2007) :42.

(Algerians working for the French military) who fought against Algerian independence. While historical accuracy concerned the scriptwriters, a perspective that defends the actions of the perpetrator undermines the verisimilar horror of torturing suspects. In fact, a close analysis of the film's torture sequences reveals an overriding theme of regret, as well as a justification of French torturers who were placed in difficult circumstances. Each of the three torture scenes in *L'Ennemi intime* serves a different purpose for our protagonist, Lieutenant Terrien (Benoît Magimel), an educated, idealistic, young man who was not drafted, but chose to go to war out of intellectual curiosity (much like Chris of *Platoon* or Guy Rossi of *Mon Colonel*). This kind of protagonist appeals to the audience who identifies with his outsider position in the military and sympathizes with his humanitarian politics. The aleatory plot, which consists of incidents that illustrate the French soldiers' inner conflict between morality and military loyalty, begins in 1959, a pivotal year in which France rapidly increased troop levels in Algeria. The main characters, Sergeant Dougnac and Lieutenant Terrien, change negatively due to their war experience; by the film's end they demonstrate symptoms of post-trauma. Although the film includes many battle scenes, including a napalm bombing [177] —character development emphasizes the effect of the torture procedure. In summary, *L'Ennemi intime* continues torture's function in degrading Algerian victims and diminishes, even when it acknowledges, the French military's responsibility.

Torture Sequence 1: Liberating the Victim

One night, Lt. Terrien is awoken by a drunk soldier playing a trumpet (the ominous horn otherwise plays "Taps" at funerals) and discovers what is happening in the canteen. Nighttime is

177 This is the first appearance of napalm bombing in an Algerian-war film.

particularly full of mayhem in *L'Ennemi intime*, when drunkenness and torture rule—torture *séances* or sessions did usually take place at night.[178] Terrien walks by soldiers gathered in the canteen, where the atmosphere seems more crazed than jovial. Exercising his authority, and indicating his disapproval of the canteen's mood, he turns down the loud stereo playing Dalida, (French-Egyptian sex symbol and chanteuse).[179] Terrien then sees Amar (Lounès Machene), an Arab youth he recently rescued after the FLN attacked the boy's village, breathing heavily near a closed door. Terrien notices a flickering light coming through the cracks around the door, as he approaches the door, the sound of moaning, which is part of the canteen's sound design, increases. When Terrien pushes the door open we see a trembling male prisoner in a wooden barrel full of water, attached to electrical wires. Two soldiers stand over the prisoner while a *harki* turns a wheel to generate the electricity. Angered, Terrien detaches the wires and dismisses the head soldier. Enraged, as Terrien exits the chamber he shoves over a table where soldiers are seated and turns off the music, stunning the soldiers and engulfing the canteen with total silence.

Contrasting with the drunken behavior of the soldiers, speaking loudly and playing cards within the cantine, the camera mirrors Terrien's sobriety throughout the sequence, facing him in a steady medium shot, as he walks past the soldiers in the canteen and dismantles the torture session in the chamber (Image 1). Notably, the soldiers in the torture chamber appear to be sober.

178 Marnia Lazreg explains that as *séance* is the term used for psychoanalytic sessions, the torture sessions can be used as a psychological release for the torturers. Marnia Lazreg, *Torture and the Twilight of Empire: From Algiers to Baghdad* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008)125.

[179] Some relevant lyrics heard in "Come prima", the Dalida song playing, are: "Et je reste prisonnière, prisonnière de tes bras, come prima," ("and I stay prisoner, prisoner in your arms, as before"). However, the rest of the lyrics present the imprisonment as a romantic, erotic, entanglement.

In fact, the two soldiers guiding the *séance* have specific goals in torturing the suspect: one says plainly to Terrien, "Il va parler maintenant" ("*He will speak now*"). So while the chamber is surrounded by revelry, within we witness an abstemious process, not unlike the torture in *La Battaglia di Algeri*; although the procedure is painful, it is necessary for acquiring specific information. In this scene, Terrien's actions underscore his humanitarianism, a trait most noticeable when he finds and saves Amar. The camera reinforces his clear-sighted compassion for the oppressed, in this case for the torture victim, solidifying Terrien's altruistic ideology. The camera movement and blocking also demonstrate Terrien's sovereignty over the platoon; his domination of the frame (he is in every shot) demonstrates how his presence controls the fate of the tortured as well as the torture squadron, and he even overpowers the soldiers' carousal.

The first torture sequence is pedagogical for Terrien: now the Lieutenant knows where and how suspects are tortured. Despite the brevity of the scene (it lasts only two minutes) and the sense of distance created by the camera (other than two brief close-ups of Terrien, the camera remains at a medium to long-shot distance) the spectator learns as well. However, Terrien's brave and humanitarian action in the short, removed, sequence lessens the shock of the French military torture. This is the first time we see the chamber, and although we will continue to associate the room with torture, we will also remember the room as the place where Terrien liberated the Arab. In this way, the positive message of the first sequence prepares the public for the more drunken and violent second torture scene.

Additionally, by disrupting the torture sequence, Terrien enhances his bond with the Arab boy, who now understands him as a link to justice. The audience takes Amar's cue; although we see the military acting unfavorably, within this chaos we have found a caring, reasonable French

soldier. In this way, the scene augments a metaphor present since Terrien's rescue of Amar: the boy represents the Algeria many colonists and French imperialists envisioned, a helpless and ignorant child, while Terrien, symbolic of France's *mission civilisatrice*, offers the aid and protection that Amar (Algeria) needs to survive. The next day, while Terrien makes notes on a map of Algeria, Amar brings him a cup of coffee. Terrien then assigns the child the job of coffee server and comforts him by saying, "On s'occupe de toi maintenant" ("*From now on we will take care of you*").

Torture Sequence 2: Torturing to death

The father/son relationship between Terrien and Amar makes Terrien's torturing in the second torture sequence particularly upsetting for Amar. However, for the audience the camera and plot relieve Terrien of some of his guilt. Earlier in the day on which the second torture scene takes place, the FLN shoots a captain with whom Terrien disagreed but still felt allegiance. This murder angers Terrien and he seeks revenge. The second torture sequence opens similarly to the first: Terrien looks out his window in the midnight hours to see a drunk soldier whining disjointed notes through a trumpet. But in contrast to the first torture scene, now when Terrien walks to the canteen the camera *follows* him, showing only the back of his head and upper back. Contrasting with the steady camera of the first torture sequence, the camera here sways from side-to-side, reflecting Terrien's altered state. Although the camera continues to center Terrien, emphasizing his importance, the view of his back as well as the camera's drunken swaying suggest that he is no longer in control of his actions (Image 2). Here, one is reminded that Siri directed a video game, *Splinter Cell* (2002), based on a Tom Clancy novel, for Terrien appears as an avatar as he moves through the canteen into the torture chamber. This photographic approach

helps to absolve Terrien from responsibility, for the spectator envisions another person or force dictating his movements.

However, when Terrien walks into the chamber, the camera turns to center on his face and shoulders. Upon entering he passes a nude man—only his upper body is shown—bloody from whipping, his wrists tied to the ceiling. He then stops at the room's centerpiece, a tub holding another nude suspect who is being shocked. (In the first torture scene, the victim wore pants, demonstrating the army's and the film's escalation of torture.) There are perhaps ten men in the room; several pairs of feet dangle from a loft (in the first sequence, only two bystanders were watching), and at least four other men contribute to the torture. Amar also enters the room in an attempt to save the victim from Terrien's drunken whim. The group involvement exemplifies a purely voyeuristic element; the soldiers sitting on the loft chant "Speak, speak" ("*Parle, parle*") but do not participate. This, augmented by the nudity of the torture victims, creates a sexualized environment in which the victim is demeaned first by nudity and then by torture.

In Marnia Lazreg's book *Twilight and Torture of Empire*: *From Algiers to Baghdad* there is a section entitled "Sexy-ing Torture." Here, Lazreg describes the erotic function of torture during the Algerian War.[180] Suspects were initially stripped and then systematically shocked on the nipples and genital areas. Rape was not uncommon.[181] She writes that in a torture chamber the French soldier, "either lets his fantasy loose by coercing his victim into sexual positions, and

180 Lazreg 143.

by touching him, or prefers to contain it, gazing, ogling, instead."[182] Terrien epitomizes this tension between ogling and touching the suspect. Initially, he stares wide-eyed and confused at the victim in the tub we know is before him, before joining the others to chant. However as tension mounts, he breaks free and grabs the tortured man's ears, pulling on the lobes violently (Image 3). In this moment, the group atmosphere overwhelms Terrien. Intoxicated, he at last succumbs to his desire to touch the suspect. He then takes the wire and shocks the suspect's chest (Image 4). Although electric shocking of the nipples was a common practice during the Algerian War, Terrien only shocks the area above the areolae.

Seconds later, a soldier yells "*Dans les couilles*!," crudely ordering the electrocution of the suspect's testicles. Before the suspect dies from pain, another soldier approaches with scissors and suggests that they cut the suspect's testes; castration was meant to rip the masculinity from the victim, destroying his ability to have children and feminizing him further.[183] However, Siri does not explore these torture techniques cinematically. They are only mentioned. In this manner, the film negotiates between the sex crime aspect of torture and French nationalism. The camera only insinuates the sexual nature of torture, while simultaneously soliciting the spectator's empathy for the French torturer/protagonist. Although Terrien places the electrodes on the victim's chest, there is no close-up of the hands and nipples that might expose the sexual nature of the technique. Furthermore, while the soldiers tell Terrien to shock the victim's testes, he takes no such action. Instead, he continues shocking the victim's chest even after the victim dies. Consequently, the scene protects Terrien from any homosexual

182 Lazreg, 134.

183 "When the militant is unshakable, making believe that he is going to be castrated might work." Lazreg, 135.

impulse of torture training. Furthermore, as I have already suggested, the acting and camera movement that mimics the effects of alcohol empathize with the Terrien's sudden turn to psychological warfare.

Lazreg discusses a childbirth metaphor that is common among torturers: the torture team works frantically together to induce labor on the suspect, and after much pain, he will at last utter the needed words. Additionally, we can use a sexual metaphor to characterize torture: the release of words from the prisoner serving as the optimal orgasm. The increasing speed of the generator and the escalating volume of the men's chants, which become more sexual throughout the sequence, simulate a climax. If in the first torture sequence Terrien denies the diegetically engaged soldiers and the non-diegetic audience the "birth" or "climax" by freeing the suspect, he demonstrates this primitive masculine release, by knocking over a table upon exiting the chamber. In the second torture sequence, the death of the victim denies the torturers a "birth", or satisfaction.

However, the manner in which Terrien tortures the suspect to death finally causes Amar to flee; angered and disgusted, he begs Terrien to stop electrocuting the suspect throughout the sequence. After the prisoner's death, Terrien calmly exits the building to smoke—continuing the sexual connation of the scene—whereupon he witnesses Amar escape over a chain link fence. At the end of the film, Amar, now an independence fighter, shoots Terrien, who is wandering in the wilderness by himself. Their relationship thus ends like the conflict between their countries will end, with the colonized rebelling and using violence to terminate colonial power. In fact, Terrien's hypocritical violent turn provokes Amar's decision to become a *fellagha*, and thus Terrien's decision to torture ultimately causes his own murder. Although Terrien and the group

murder a suspect, for the twenty-first century anti-torture public, the film provides a moral consequence, which is retrospectively deemed productive in the fight for independence.

Although the camera intensely frames Terrien at the shoulders in most shots of the second torture sequence, once he reaches the tub, the camera takes a 30 degree slant, capturing the viewpoint of the tortured looking up from below, half-submerged in the circular tub.[184] The camera remains focused on Terrien for the rest of this sequence and the spectator thereby becomes detached from the victim. While there are four intercut shots of the victim, they cannot be identified as reaction shots, for the tortured man's face is not centered. Instead, the camera photographs the victim from the side. His head leans back conveying weakness and pain, so that our only view of his face in these brief seconds is upside down at a ¾ turn. In this way, the camerawork of *L'Ennemi intime* reiterates the act of torture by keeping the victim an arbitrary and anonymous Other. The camera dehumanizes the victim, distorting his expression at this angle. Furthermore, the 30 degree angle, point of view shot captures and centers Terrien, continuing the domination of his image over the narrative. Additionally, the torture victim's face is given the most screen time (three seconds) after he has died, suggesting that his death is more important to the film than his life (Image 6). While *L'Ennemi intime* does not depict victims

184 An interesting comparison can be found in the most famous gang rape scene in cinema from *The Accused* (1988). *The Accused* also employs the victim's point of view to shoot the men raping her from the chest up. However, while both films utilize the point of view of the oppressed to illustrate the experience of torture/rape, the affect is clearly different. The camera's attention to the victim's facial expression in *The Accused* makes the viewer empathetic to her experience.

forced into sexual positions, the scene infers the sexual nature of torture, resulting in images that cinematically suggest a gangrape scenario. However, despite these implications, peer pressure and alcohol direct the actions of the perpetrator/protagonist, relieving him of full responsibility for his actions.

Although the dialogue does not reveal whether the victim whom is tortured to death is suspected for the murder of the French captain that occurred earlier that day, one can interpret the behavior of Terrien and the other soldiers, as a display of grief for the departed, Captain Berthaut. This is especially fitting because earlier in the film, when debating with Terrien, Captain Berthaut voices his belief in torture as a means of psychological warfare. Furthermore, in this dialogue Captain Berthaut predicts how the weight of the battle will cause the young humanitarian's sharp turn. He says, "*Vous allez changer comme nous avons tous*" ("You will change like we all have"). Therefore, when Terrien vengefully tortures the suspect for the murder of Berthaut, he pays tribute to the Captain's philosophy. He also proves the captain's wisdom: that torturing is a natural consequence of the war in Algeria, to which even the most opposed of French soldiers will eventually succumb. This subtle element of fatalism in the script corresponds to the camera work simulating Terrien's drunken state; both absolve the protagonist of responsibility for his actions. Furthermore, although Terrien tortures and consequently kills a prisoner, he has already proven his benevolence by rescuing the Arab boy, Amar, from his massacred village and into the relative safety of the platoon, and by freeing the suspect in the first torture sequence. Because of these instances of compassion, the drunken abuse appears as an anomoly, a lapse in Terrien's character due to the brutality of war.

Torture Sequence 3

In "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," Freud argues that inflicting pain on others is primary to masochism, which "is nothing more than an extension of sadism turned round upon the subject's own self…"[185] In the first and second torture sequences, we witness the sadism embedded in military procedure. The third sequence, however, enacts a reversal of activity to passivity, as the torture becomes reflexive. In this scene, Terrien stops a fellow officer, Sergeant Dougnac (Albert Dupontel), from torturing himself out of guilt. Again, Terrien sees a flickering light from his room and realizes that torture is taking place in the chamber. We then see Dougnac in the tub, lit from the ceiling, and a *harki* soldier, Saïd (Lounès Tzairt), spinning the electric generator. Saïd stops momentarily, and a close-up displays his extreme grief at torturing one of his superiors. Dougnac then points the gun at Saïd and tells him he will be shot if he does not continue. At this moment, Terrien walks into the room. Angered by the interruption, Dougnac threatens Terrien with the revolver and yells at him to leave immediately. But Terrien is not deterred by Dougnac's words or weapon. He stands majestically (Dougnac is low in the tub and Saïd sits at the generator) and stares steadily in a medium shot before saying, "*Donnez-moi votre arme*, *c'est un ordre*" ("Give me your gun, it's an order"). Dougnac starts to hand the gun to Terrien but then turns it on himself. Luckily, Terrien grabs Dougnac's hand in time, thwarting the suicide. As he takes the gun from Dougnac's hand, he slams it downwards, breaking Dougnac's upper lip. This action is the orgasm or birth of the sequence. The mounting tension ends abruptly and the goal of the torture—pain inflicted by another, however muted—is reached.

---

185 Sigmund Freud, "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, 24 volumes, ed. by James Strachey et al. (London: The Hogart Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1953-74) vol.7, 158.

In this third torture sequence, the torture victim, Dougnac, *chooses* to be victimized, demonstrating his agency in self-degradation. Fittingly, the apparatus views his self-torture with a respect that is withheld from the suspects. Although Dougnac sits in the same tub of water as the nameless Arab tortured to death, he chooses not to strip, wearing military green trousers. It is not clear where the electrodes are attached to his body. We only see the cords wrap around his shoulders and waist. In this way, several erotic aspects of the previous torture scene—nudity and verbal reference to the genitals—are absent. Although Dougnac is bare-chested and throws his head back in agony like the former victim did, the camera primarily photographs Dougnac from an upright position (Image 7). (An exception is when the camera captures Dougnac jutting his chest and pelvis upward in agony from a bird's eye view.) In this way, just as Terrien was protected from homosexual or perverse imagery in the second sequence, the sexual nature of masochism in Dougnac's self-torture, though present, remains unexplored.

The exchanges of dialogue between Dougnac, Saïd, and Terrien also allow for shot-reverse-shot close-ups of Dougnac. As in the other French films about the Algerian War that portray dialogue between a torturer and his victim, such as *Le Petit soldat* (1963) and *La Question* (1971), the victim is French; there is still no French cinematic representation of an Algerian independence fighter speaking during his torture, even though historically, discussions of literature and politics between FLN members and French soldiers took place during and in between *séances*. While the soldiers in the second torture sequence seem angry and excited about torturing an Algerian, when a French soldier tortures himself, it warrants humane treatment. In fact, Saïd is saddened to tears rather than enraged as he generates the electric current. The rising tension of the group in the second torture sequence is absent in the third, as there are only two men in the chamber with Dougnac, and they speak rather than chant. While the previous two

torture sequences conserved the eerie blue tint of the nighttime hours, here in the third, the chamber appears warmer and brighter in orange and yellow hues. This enhances the friendship and sobriety of the two men who aim to stop a fellow soldier from self-injury or suicide. Although we do not see Dougnac drinking in the scene, his slurred speech and behavior suggest alcohol abuse. This confirms that our main characters, Dougnac and Terrien do indeed commit heinous acts that are inconsistent with the model soldier they otherwise represent, but only after consuming alcohol. The message of the sequence speaks to multiple levels of the soldier's experience: Dougnac demonstrates how the acts of the French torturer lead to self-punishment, while the sovereign Terrien controls situations dangerous to other French men.

The sequence counters General Jacques Massu, the most famous self-torturer of the Algerian War, who advocated the interrogation procedure, but proved his objectivity by only employing torture techniques that he had first tried on himself. Evidently, Massu found electric shocks tolerable, for he wrote "the condition *sine qua non* of our action in Algeria requires us to admit these methods, as they are necessary and morally valuable in our souls and in our conscience."[186] Conversely, Dougnac's self-torture does not attempt objectivity, since it is driven by a drunken, suicidal impulse. By electrocuting himself, Dougnac demonstrates that he is familiar with torture techniques, implying that he has witnessed or even committed such acts. In this way, *L'Ennemi intime* presents a soldier not testing the torture practice, or arguing its worthiness, per Massu, but one who, already assessing the procedure as excruciating relies on the

---

186 "La condition *sine qua non* de notre action en Algérie est que ces méthodes soient admises, en nos âmes et consciences, comme nécessaires et moralement valables." Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *La Torture dans la République 1954-1962*. (Paris*:* Les Editions Minuit, 1972) 47.

instruments as means of self-punishment. Massu's description of torture as "morally valuable in our souls and in our conscience" has a dual meaning when applied to a soldier suffering from post-trauma like Dougnac. Here, torture represents both self-condemnation and self-edification. Yet Dougnac, unlike Terrien, never speaks about torture. Nor we do not see him in the torture chamber during Terrien's previous visits. Therefore, just as the plot absolves Terrien's torture casualty with instances of humanitarianism, despite Dougnac likely experience with torture, our lack of visual evidence against him, guards his character from a harsher judgment.

In any case, Dougnac in the tub embodies the French torturer's guilt, even if suffering from mere complicity in the torture operation. By entering the torture chamber, seating himself in the tub, and attaching the electrodes to his body, the soldier trades places with the Algerian torture victim. Furthermore, by choosing an Arab to generate the electric current, he racializes the exchange. Freud would say that Saïd is thereby forced into the role of an active subject inflicting pain.: "An extraneous person is once more sought as object; this person, in consequence of the alteration which has taken place in the instinctual aim, has to take over the role of the subject."[187] However, with his gun determining the Arab's movements, Dougnac controls the scenario. Although the film places the French sergeant in a passive, masochistic position, he holds the firearm—the phallus—and thus the scene demonstrates French dominance.

Furthermore, in this scene the camera does not focus on the human labor generating the electricity (Saïd), but rather on the masochistic sorrow and pain arranged and endured by

---

187 Sigmund Freud, "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, 24 volumes, ed. by James Strachey et al. (London: The Hogart Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1953-74) vol.14, 127.

Dougnac. This lack of attention to Algerian characters is central to the portrayal of torture throughout the film; the camera only briefly considers the two Algerians who suffer in the torture chamber, as accessories in a complicated French drama. Furthermore, the manner in which Dougnac is lit favorably in upright close-ups and dialogue complicates any comparison between the French sergeant and the dying, angled, Algerian suspect. This difference in facial photography also illustrates the level of pain endured by the Arab suspect, who is no longer able to support his head, demonstrating that the French soldier tortures himself with more restraint than an Other. Therefore, although the film posits an analogy between the pain endured by the French perpetrators and the suffering of their Algerian victims, it is the perpetrator's trauma that the film renders more valuable.

Spectator Guilt

The three torture sequences in *L'Ennemi intime* form an exculpatory argument for French torturers, while demonstrating how the post-trauma of torture complicity creates a need for punishment. In the first two sequences, the camera and plot clearly aim for the public's identification with Terrien. However, it is the third psychologically complex torture sequence that reveals the audience's position in watching a feature about the French army's torture practices. While Dougnac represents the French military's turn from active sadism to passive masochism in his self-torture, the public watching the sequences of torture also assumes a passive role. (Even if many films seek the viewer's participation, as in Barthes' writerly text, this feature exhibits the action-image or the readerly text.)[188]

188 Scholars debate whether film audiences are indeed passive, Richard A. Gerrig and Deborah A. Prentice convincingly argue that the audience frequently has conversational thoughts with a film, and or makes comments.

Dougnac craves punishment because he feels guilty for witnessing or participating in a torture *séance.* The audience of *L'Ennemi intime*, a French language, French production, has now equally viewed the same heinous behavior. Therefore, similar feelings of shame and culpability through national association are likely to invade the film's mostly French spectators. As guilt drives Dougnac to torture himself in an effort to absolve his sins, the consummation of the film, specifically the scenes of French abuse, likewise represents self-reprimand for the patriot. Even if the sympathetic camera angles, the role of alcohol, and the loss of a captain help to justify the torture practitioners' cruelty, the sequence remains highly disturbing, and French spectators who feel ashamed of their military's past policy, but are compelled to continue watching the film unconsciously commit self-harm. In this way, while *L'Ennemi intime* cinematically exposes the buried history of the French torture policy, the film also provides a way for French spectators to punish themselves for their national past.

Additionally, if we follow the thread of Catholic penitence in Dougnac's self-torture to the conclusion of the film, we find the concept of atonement: while Terrien dies at the hands of the Algerian boy he disillusioned, Dougnac, who feels guilty and attempts physical amends for his (and the French military's) behavior, survives. Narratively, it is guilt and self-torture that absolve Dougnac and make him suitable to reenter French society. In the last scene, we watch Dougnac desert the army by bus, while he refers to Terrien in a voice-over monologue: "Avec

---

However, as these thoughts and statements do not participate with the onscreen action, I still perceive the audience in a passive role. Richard A. Gerrig and Deborah A. Prentice, "Notes on Audience Response", *Post-Theory*: *Reconstructing Film Studies*. Ed. David Bordwell and Noel Carroll (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996) 388-407.

son idealism à la con, il ne serait jamais survecu, ce qu'il est devenu. (*With his stupid idealism, he never would have survived what he had become.*)" If Terrien could not have survived the torturer he had become, perhaps Dougnac's self-torture allowed him to expiate his guilt and endure the trauma of torture and warfare. The scenes of torture, along with the scrolling texts outlining the futility of the Algerian War that introduce and conclude the film, similarly provide an avenue for the French spectator, disgusted with France's comportment in the nation's last colonial war, to confront these past crimes as in a confession, and thereby atone for them.

Not that the veteran will go unscathed: while Dougnac survives the mayhem of the Algerian War and, as the retrospective voice-over suggests, reintegrates into French society, he is duly marked by post-trauma. Although Dougnac's last sentence only hypothetically concerns Terrien (*With his stupid idealism, he* ***would*** *never have survived what he had become*), it does reveal Dougnac's own post-traumatic death wish (already indicated when he turning the gun towards himself). In fact, Dougnac's desertion from the army, as well as his self-inflicted torture and suicide attempt, prove the severity of his guilt lay in an ideology as strong as Terrien's. Furthermore, although *L'Ennemi intime* proceeds in chronological order and takes place exclusively during war time, by concluding with the veteran's monologue and a historical scroll, the film declares the enduring trauma of the Algerian War on France, and more specifically, a national post-trauma from torturing. Dougnac at the end of the film, symbolic, of post-colonial France, will continue to be affected by his past military service, just as the repercussions of the Algerian War for Independence persist in France's current cultural crisis. (This is evinced in the rise of the National Front, an ultra-right-wing party started by Jean-Marie Le Pen, an Algerian War veteran; in the discrimination and unrest of second- and third-generation North African immigrants; and in the profound misunderstanding and disagreement in international relations

concerning Algeria). If *L'Ennemi intime* remains frequently compared to *Platoon*, visually and thematically, the film uniquely provides its public with a retrospective French explication and account of past war-crimes that apologizes for the behavior of veterans. Ultimately, Dougnac, defined primarily by self-punishment and atonement, resembles the French spectator, as both struggle to mitigate and integrate the military's past with life in contemporary France.

La Trahison

This study of *La Trahison* focuses on the how the film depicts the ambiguous feelings of national loyalty, felt both by a French Lieutenant and his harki. After giving my readers a background in the film (the director's past work, the film's press, and plot) I will give a close analysis of several sequences in the film: a pre-torture sequence in which contradictions in sound and image recall *Muriel*; the depiction of Arab women during an ID card photo shoot; and a specific sequence that demonstrates the exchange of looking at the Other that takes places throughout the film between French and Arab soldiers. I will lastly discuss issues of language in the film; though *harkis* speak French to their superior, they speak exclusively Arab to one another. The use of subtitles affords the spectator a unique place of objectivity.

La Trahison is based on the autobiographical novel of the same name written by Claude Sales in 2000. The narrator is an unnamed French Lieutenant, who describes his perception of an Algerian soldier, Taïeb, whom the military eventually arrests for conspiracy with the FLN. Although both the novel and the film build suspense around Taïeb's culpability, the film differs from the book as it does not favor the Lieutenant's point of view. Camera time is evenly divided between the two men, and there are additional scenes that the Lieutenant does not witness.

Director Philippe Faucon directs films about the banlieue and multi-cultural France, specifically pertaining to Maghrebis; *Samina* (2000), *Dans la vie* (2007), and is currently finishing a project about an Algerian man who falls in love with a French woman while working in France, despite ties to his family and wife in Algeria. Contemporary cultural interactions within a changing France are central to Faucon's oeuvre, and similar themes of displaced language and tradition are found in his first historical film, *La Trahison*, set and filmed in Algeria. Although the film is not a mainstream production, and defies the public's expectations of a war film, the press appreciated Faucon's artistry, and the ambiguous questions his film poses (in his *Première* review, Olivier de Bruyn complements Faucon by calling him "radical et inspiré."[189] Obviously, the elite film magazine critiques much preferred this feature to the mainstream *L'Ennemi intime*. *Les Cahiers du Cinéma* included a still from the film on the January 2006 cover, as well as an interview with the director and a review in which Frodon writes, "*La Trahison* n'est pas du tout un film minimaliste ni ascétique, il est plein de sentiments, de corps, d'images."[190] Pierre Eisenreich of *Positif* noted the historical impact of the film, « [*La Trahison*] ne nous libère pas du passé, au contraire. L'objectivité et la droiture de son regard marquent un pas courageux."[191] However, as an independent production without stars, *La Trahison* suffered from a fairly limited release with no international distribution.

Darkness obscures identity, and most of *La Trahison* takes place at night. The first scene begins as the platoon searches together holding flashlights, arriving at the entrance of a small

---

[189] Olivier de Bruyn, *Première*, 18, May 2010<http://www.premiere.fr/film/La-Trahison-270295/(affichage)/press>.

[190] Jean-Michel Frodon "Critique, *La Trahison* : Ce qui bouge dans les creux de l'histoire, » *Les Cahiers du Cinéma,* 608(2006) :21-24

[191] Pierre Eisenriech, "*La Trahison*", Positif, 540 (2006):26-27.

village to find a turbaned man holding a rifle. National/cultural identity is less distinguishable in the midnight hours, but with difficulty the audience identifies a French soldier and an Algerian villager with the gun. The screen then flashes to black, with written words that inform of us our setting: "Algérie, 1960, le 5 ou 6 mars." "Ou" implies that the film is a personal account, and possibly a journal. The written dates on a black screen work as chapter headings throughout the rest of the film, evoking a military journal of Lieutenant Roque, or a journal that Taïeb might keep tracking the Lieutenant.

Flashlights shine on the number 33, sloppily painted in large strokes on the front of a small hut. As the troop approaches the Algerian villager, Lieutenant Roque (Vincent Martinez) yells, "Lâche ton arme! Lève tes mains!" Two French soldiers check the silent Algerian man, whose face is lit under the number painted on his home. This opening sequence introduces the film's primary themes; the darkness of night represents the ambiguous plight of indigenous soldiers working for France, as well as the French military battling against guerrillas.

The next day another Lieutenant comes to the camp to speak with Roque about a battle that took place the night before. As his jeep approaches, Algerian women in colorful headscarves stare ahead. The Lieutenant explains to Roque from his jeep that a *harki* defected to collaborate with the FLN but then returned to the French military with secret information. Roque immediately arranges a meeting with his four Muslim soldiers (the term used throughout the film to describe the Algerian draftees working for France), whom he explains are not *harkis* but *appelés*. When Roque tells them about the *harki* turned *fellagha*, Taïeb (Ahmed Berrhama) speaks, "Donne-moi ton arme, et je vais le tuer." He explains, « Il n'est ni avec les fellaghas, ni

avec les Français. Il a trahi les uns et les autres. » Another Muslim soldier recalls what the defected *harki* said to him in their last conversation :

> Le jour avant il m'a dit, j'ai fait la guerre pour la France en Italie, Marseilles et Lyon. J'ai fait la guerre de l'Indochine. J'ai été blessé trois fois. La France a été ingrate avec nous, et les Algériens ne doivent plus donner leur sang pour elle. Alors pourquoi il reste pas avec les fellaghas?

Although the use of third person protects the soldier from sounding pro-liberation, the quotation states the larger problem for Algerians fighting for France and may reflect the thought process of all the Muslim soldiers.

Although the Muslims speak exclusively in French with Roque, they communicate amongst themselves in Arabic. Subtitles translate their conversations in Arabic throughout the film.[192] The Muslim soldiers conclude here that the aforementioned harki is a traitor, though with whom they sympathize is vague. During the day—"7 mars, vers 8 h section Pélissier"—the platoon enters another village to search for *fellaghas* and hidden arms. The women and children line up in front of the military. Here the military dependence on Algerian soldiers is apparent; the villagers claim to speak no French, and the French soldiers do not speak Arabic. Without translators communication is impossible, though communication can never be verified by the military leaders.[193]

---

[192] In the novel *La Trahison*, the narrator never indicates that the soldiers speak in Arabic. In this study, I will quote the French subtitles, which were understood by the French target audience.

[193] The narrator of the novel *La Trahison* never discusses the *appelés* speaking Arabic among themselves. The tension caused by the language barrier is unique to the film.

Taïeb follows Roque's orders and asks the women individually where their husbands are. Each responds with "Je ne sais pas," or "Il cherche du travail," which is the recurrent response in another scene of questioning. Roque realizes the absurdity of the situation. Frustrated, he says "elles s'en fouent de nous," and orders the husbandless families to leave their dwellings immediately. At "12h" the military begins torching the villagers' shacks as a threat to the *fellaghas* they believe hide weapons there. Shot-reverse-shot counters the villagers walking away with their belongings tied to donkeys and carts, and their homes in flames. Roque looks at smoke rising from a distance.

The next day, in an office meeting, Captain Franchet (Patrick Descamps) notifies Roque that all of his Muslim soldiers are conspiring with the FLN for his assassination. Roque does not want to believe the Captain, but cannot deny the Captain's evidence, a journal provided by the recently returned soldier who had worked briefly with the FLN—with time headings not unlike the film's journalistic chapter headings—which list Roque's schedule in precise detail. Annoyed, Roque agrees to look for more evidence and to act normally until he acquires more information.

The abundance of night scenes and pensive looks makes the film a uniquely less-violent war picture.[194] In fact, there is only one battle scene in the entire film. A long shot with a panning camera captures *fellaghas* and the French platoon staring at each other through the barrel of their shot guns and exchanging insults in Arabic. A *harki* yells at the *fellaghas* (translated from Arabic in French subtitles), "La France vous garantit la vie!" A *fellagha* yells back, "La France profite de votre misère de vous utiliser. Vous lui vendez de sang et celui de vos frères." Both sides exchange the word "traître" until a guerrilla's gunfire breaks the conversation. When a

[194] The novel has only one scene post-combat and never describes combat in any detail.

French soldier is mortally wounded another French soldier responds by throwing a hand grenade. The French platoon runs down a hill, we hear the sounds of a helicopter in the distance.

Although the grenade kills three *fellaghas*, which the French military display publicly—a policy of the Algerian War also found in *Mon colonel* and *L'Ennemi intime*—Roque is nonetheless angered by the death of a French soldier whom he knew well.[195] He yells angrily at the exiled Algerian villagers that haphazardly block his entrance when returning to the camp, and the Muslim soldiers take notice. In the early evening, while sharing a jeep with Taïeb, Ali, another Algerian draftee, asks him what he thinks of Roque. Taïeb only says "plus tard," intensifying the mystery of his true feelings. Ali then asks Taïeb if he has spoken to Ahmed. Taïeb tells him that Ahmed will do what one tells him to do, with no further indication of who is giving Ahmed orders or what those might be.

During the day, two prisoners are made to wear paper sacks with eyeholes to anonymously identify a man out of a larger group of indigenous men. The next sequence foretells the chosen man's future. In shot-reverse-shot, a French soldier questions and a *harki* translator threatens the suspect, while two other French soldiers set up an electric generator. The last shot shows the suspect at a diagonal, a thin man in a white tank undershirt strewn across a wooden board in a medium shot, his hands and presumably feet buckled to the board. However, we do not see his torture in the following shot. Instead, we see an unknown soldier calmly looking forward (presumably reading) near a window in another room. Within seconds the echoes and agony of the prisoner screaming in pain disturb his meditation. The soldier grimaces

[195] An Algerian woman approaches Taïeb after the bodies are displayed. She is disgusted, and tells him that he is killing his brothers before spitting at him.

and then turns to move the arm of a record player, which then commences to play lyrical classical music. We then see the turbaned translator exiting the torture chamber and walking down the hall. The turban the translator wears ties the pre-torture to the next sequence. As the platoon walks through an Algerian village, a villager in an identical white turban crosses their path.

Later in the film, Roque seizes an opportunity to search the Muslim soldiers' quarters for evidence when they break their fast at sundown during Ramadan. As he hurriedly rummages through their belongings he finds a conversion flyer written in French, «Mulsulmans qui servez les COLONIALISTES vous TRAHISSEZ VOS FRERES.»[196] Roque takes the flyer and exits before they return. Roque later returns to the captain's office, who is now accompanied by another high-ranking officer. They promise Roque that they will use discretion when capturing the Muslim soldiers the following day. The next day Roque receives a phone call. When a big black truck arrives, Roque goes to speak to each of the four soldiers individually. He tells each of them methodically, "Il y a des papiers à signer." The first to enter the truck is Taïeb. Soldiers take both of his hands and cover his mouth as they simultaneously pull him into the truck. Roque watches from a distance (as he viewed the village on fire) as each is captured. He then walks beside the truck as the driver waves.

Roque returns to Captain Fauchet's office, presumably after the military has questioned their new prisoners. The Captain discloses the details of their interrogation, and explains that no torture was necessary. Taïeb immediately confessed to organizing the others, and making two previous attempts at murdering Roque that were halted due to his inability to kill his Lieutenant.

---

[196] The capitalization of certain words is taken directly from the flyer, which is as cited, in French.

The Captain offers Roque a cigarette, but he declines with a look of disgust. The Captain is disappointed and surprised that Roque had not suspected the operation. He asks, "Comment tu basculais?" Roque responds, « C'est moi qui a caché les contradictions. On les a piégés, on les a mis dans une situation qui n'a pas de support. »

The next shot follows the Muslim soldiers walking hand-cuffed in pairs, forced to enter the black truck once again. The camera then looks through the truck's back opening to view Roque in the shade of the building's arch. As Taïeb enters the truck he turns around and yells, "Vive l'indépendance honnêtement! Vive l'Algérie!" In the last shot we witness his downcast face in the sunlight, silent in the moving truck.

To (show) torture or not

The absence of a torture sequence in *La Trahison* separates it from the majority of films that take place in Algeria during a war that became known for the French interrogation technique. There is no torture montage referencing *La Battaglia di Algeri* as there is in *Mon colonel*, nor are there the short, gruesome sequences found in *L'Ennemi intime*. However, while the eight shots of the film in the torture chamber take place pre-torture, these shots imply the inevitable.[197] Furthermore, the torture audible in the following shot of a soldier reading in a distanced room forces the viewer to conceptualize the torture taking place, an internal exercise with no visual cues.[198] In these shots, the soldier's reaction, annoyed but unconcerned, contradicts the intensity

---

[197] There is no such scene in the novel *La Trahison*, although torture is mentioned as something that occurs at the post.

[198] Another scene which uses the same technique occurs after the battle sequence. Taïeb and Ahmed watch as a French soldier forces a turbaned man in a striped tunic out of the cave in which he is hiding. The next shot shows

of the imagined torture. The chamber is close visually as the viewer has seen it in the preceding shot, and close physically, in the same building. Nonetheless, the torture chamber represents another frame of mind; the paradox between the two spaces (the torture chamber and the soldier's room) heighten the film's objectivity and dramatic irony, while simultaneously restricting the spectator's view.

Perhaps the most ironic touch is the recording of Beethoven's "Turkish March," Opus 76, that the soldier plays to drown out the shrieks of the tortured party.[199] Beethoven, emblematic of Europe and the Romantic era, composed in the Turkish style as had his predecessor Mozart, who had been influenced by the Janissary (Turkish military) bands of the époque.[200] A swift 2/4 time and the abundant use of cymbals orientalizes the classical music, and both composers' marches

---

Taïeb and Ahmed turning away as a gunshot is heard. We then see the feet of the soldier kicking the striped tunic to confirm the man's death. Both scenes do not show the moment of violence, but imply it through the preceding shot, sound, and the characters' reaction to the sound of violence.

[199] This gesture of moving the record player arm to play music which comments ironically on the prisoners' situation, is also found in Jules Dassin's *Brute Force* (1947) and Stephen Speilberg's *Schindler's List* (1993).

[200] Beethoven first composed "The Turkish March" in 1809, but in 1811 he was commissioned to provide incidental music to August von Kotzebue's Prologue (König Stephan) and Epilogue (Die Ruinen von Athen), which were to be performed at the opening of the new imperial theater in Pest in 1812. The goddess Minerva awakes after sleeping for 2,000 years to find Athens occupied by Turks. "Culture and reason have disappeared from what was the ancient Greek world, but these human qualities have been preserved in Pest by the enlightened Emperor Franz." Ludwig Van Beethoven, "The Ruins of Athens," April 30, 2010, http://www.classicalarchives.com/work/4270.html#tvf=tracks&tv=about.

were popular throughout Europe.[201] The French traded with and investigated Algeria during Beethoven's career, officially colonizing in 1830 three years after his death. Elements of Occidental superiority and oriental difference found in the march also abound in the work of contemporary French authors Ernest Renan, Alphonse de Lamartine, and Chateaubriand, demonstrating the ideology of *la mission civilisatrice*.[202] By placing music from the colonization era over the military torture of an Algerian during the war of independence, Faucon poses larger historical questions with subtlety. This musical interpretation of the Arab by a European is light

---

[201] "Despite the popularity of the Beethoven march, there is not a great deal of writing about the piece, since the incidental music to "Ruins of Athens" is considered a minor work. The piece is usually discussed as part of the general topic of Janissary music. This music, of which the Beethoven march and Mozart's "Rondo alla Turca" are the most famous examples, tells us a good deal about the Viennese view of the Turks circa 1800. Turkish music was generally understood to be noisy. In Mozart's opera "The Abduction from the Seraglio," it's very easy to tell the Turks from the Europeans, simply because of the percussion instruments that are usually used in the music for the former. This quality would certainly account for the pianist using it in the film to cover the sounds of torture. You can also see how this in itself unimportant music plays a prominent role in the study of musical "otherness."" From correspondence with Richard Burke, a Beethoven scholar on April 28, 2010.

[202] Edward Said discusses these French authors' recorded travels to the East in *Orientalism*. His analysis of Chateaubriand's *Itinéraire de Paris à Jerusalem*—written in 1811, the same year "The Ruins of Athens" premiered—also criticizes Muslims. He writes "To such a precociously constituted figure as Chateaubriand, the Orient was a decrepit canvas awaiting his restorative efforts. The Oriental Arab was "civilized man fallen again into a savage state": no wonder, then, that as he watched Arabs trying to speak French, Chateaubriand felt like Robinson Crusoe thrilled by hearing his parrot speak for the first time….Everywhere, one encountered Orientals, Arabs whose civilization, religion, and manners were so low, barbaric and antithetical as to merit reconquest." Said quotes Chateaubriand's interpretation of the Koran as a book that contains "ni principe de civilisation, ni précepte qui puisse élever le caractère. » ." Edward Said, *Orientalism,* (New York : Vintage Books, 1978) 171-2.

and jovial, and the act of playing the record derides the tortured man's mortality, precisely as the French did at in the era in which the march was composed. Furthermore, the recording symbolizes how the government censored media and selected images of Algerians to soothe the French public—distracting the French public from the actuality of warfare.[203]

The lack of images recalls *Muriel ou le temps d'un retours,* a film that implies the atrocity of torture, particularly its post-traumatic effects, without images of the act. Bernard (Jean-Baptiste Thiérrée) plays super-8 footage of the war he filmed while on duty—a montage of soldiers smiling and laughing and helping Algerians. However, his final confession, made while projecting the film for a friend, belies the images: he witnessed the torture and murder of a young Algerian woman by another soldier, Robert, and did nothing to stop the abuse. The paradox of words and images makes the crime more heinous, and represents the censorship of the Algerian War. Media replaced the torture and death of warfare with images not unlike those filmed by Bernard of a helpful, group of young men. As in *Muriel*, this contradiction of image and sound, of image and conceptualized torture, demonstrates the depth of media lies during the war that both films arguably attempt to correct. Furthermore, the soldier's movement, placing the needle on the record, suggests the active role of the military and media in covering the truth of war with more appealing pictures of French superiority.

---

[203] *L'Ennemi intime* shows such a newsreel when Terrien goes back to France on leave time. He goes to the movies, and watches the footage of Algeria, where smiling Algerians in turbans accept food from French soldiers who are building a railroad. The newsreel refers to the war as *la pacification.*

As a native working for the French military, the translator in the pre-torture sequence shares his precarious situation with the Algerian draftees, who also often serve as translators.[204] If his purpose is to translate the French interrogation, he decides instead to warn the FLN suspect, "Tu veux mourir pour les autres? Pour rien? Y aura jamais l'indépendence." The French soldiers will never know exactly what the harki says. Yet the harki aims to convince the FLN suspect that his cause is worthless, perhaps to help the French army, or perhaps to save the suspect's life. The shots of the translator are close-ups yet the light emanating from the covered window falls most directly on his white turban, which as the dominant, defines the translator more than his facial characteristics which remain in shadow. In this manner, the Arabic language and the turban represent the *harki*'s role and mask his individuality. He is culturally Arab and speaks a language unknown by the French, yet he works for the French to defeat his own likeness. This is exhibited also by the turban match of the next scene, in which we see an Algerian villager wearing a white turban exactly as the translator in the last frame walks by the platoon.[205] When the translator

---

[204] The translator as other torturers desires only to hear names, and perhaps specific names. Pierre Vidal-Naquet writes, "Le tortionnaire reconnaît dans sa victime un homme puisqu'il entend l'obliger à parler mais la parole de la victime ne doit être que ce qu'attend le bourreau. Celui-ci ne demande à la victime de parler que pour lui confisquer cette parole." Vidal-Naquet, 8.

[205] The emphasis on the turban here also reflects the debate on "le voile" in France. Chirac signed the law banning religious symbols at schools, including the *hijib* or headscarf in September of 2004.

leaves the torture chamber and walks by the record playing "The Turkish March," the function of his role is complete, he is marching for France within their stereotype of an Arab.[206]

Although the pre-torture sequence appears exterior to the characters and plot, its placement—roughly the middle of the film, after Captain Franchet has told Roque of the Muslim soldiers' conspiracy—intensifies Roque's dilemma for the public. Without ever stating this fear, torture is part of Roque's approximation, for he is aware that the *appelés* will be tortured if more evidence is procured. In this way, the question of torture is part of Roque's ambivalence. Torture is also a factor for Muslim soldiers. They do realize their grim destiny if they commit a crime and are caught by the French military (though whether they are conspiring is still unclear). The torture chamber sequence contextualizes their dilemma—whether to remain loyal to an army that inflicts such torture on their countrymen, or rebel and possibly be tortured as a result. When the torture chamber appears during the rising action, the audience is increasingly invested in the Muslim characters, especially in Taïeb, whose strong presence is enhanced with abundant camera time. By inserting the idea of torture, and its hidden but frightening effects, Faucon introduces the viewer to a possible consequence on the conspirator's scale: avoid being tortured by joining the French military and perhaps being forced to torture "your brothers," or work towards the liberation of Algeria by using the French military as a means for espionage, risking torture and death if found guilty.

---

[206] Several scenes later, we see this harki translator—who is not part of the main group of *appellés*—walking alone up a hill path. He walks faster but cannot escape two guerrillas who attack and stab him, for his work with the French military.

This difficult relationship to torture reflects the multitude of possible treasons in the film that Delphine Robic-Diaz and Alain Ruscio enumerate in their article on post-colonial artistic production:

> *La Trahison* de Philippe Faucon… offre un véritable nuancier des trahisons possibles dans un contexte de guerre civile: trahison du lieutenant français envers les musulmans de sa section qu'il livre au service du contre-espionnage, trahison de ces hommes envers leur lieutenant qu'ils projetaient sans doute d'assassiner avec le reste de la troupe, trahison de la France envers les incorporés algériens abandonnés aux mains des fellaghas, trahison des harkis envers la cause nationaliste algérienne…[207]

A war of decolonization is simultaneously a civil war, and Robic-Diaz and Ruscio here remind us that the ambiguity depicted in *La Trahison* comments on such circumstances. By stating the *trahison* first in the film's specific context—the Lieutenant against his Muslim soldiers, the Muslim soldiers against their Lieutenant—and then reinforcing the larger national disloyalty, the authors indicate the multitude of consequences. The alternation between the Muslim soldiers and the Lieutenant reflects how the camera and script fluctuate between perspectives.

This further demonstrates how each side—the Lieutenant and Taïeb with the other Muslim soldiers—can be viewed as both victim and perpetrator by each other. For example the Muslim soldiers view themselves as perpetrators and Roque as the victim, while Roque perceives

---

[207] Delphine Robic-Diaz and Alain Ruscio, "Cinéma, chanson, littérature post-coloniaux: continuité ou rupture?" *Culture post-coloniale 1961-2006* : *Traces et mémoires coloniales en France,* Ed. Pascal Blanchard and Nicholas Bancel, (Paris : Editions Autrement, 2005)191.

himself as the perpetrator when cooperating with Captain Franchet. In fact, despite the conspiracy for his murder, Roque ultimately views the French military as responsible for their conspiracy in the first place. As *L'Ennemi intime* asserts, the act of torturing severely affected French soldiers and often resulted in a post trauma. Roque not only hesitates out of concern for the Muslim soldiers, but to avoid future guilt for their punishment.

Women in *La Trahison*

While all the named characters of *La Trahison* are male members of the French military, many native women populate scenes of villages and the military primarily question women that then claim ignorance of their husbands' whereabouts. These shots of women do not reflect the male gaze. Rather the dialogue-free shots of women posit a documentary element: the women (non-professional actors) do not connote the typical *to-be-looked-at-ness* of a Western film in their traditional attire, varied ages and shapes, while grinding couscous, sweeping, cooking.[208] If the male is the bearer of the look in these instances, the confrontational stare of the women at the French military does not connote passivity. Indeed, the direct nature of the women's return gaze poses questions to the audience about the nature of photography, whose containment and intrusion mirrors that of colonization.

---

[208] "*To-be-looked-at-ness*" is a term Laura Mulvey invented in "Visual Pleasure in Narrative Cinema" to describe how women were dressed and posed for the pleasure of the heterosexual male viewer. Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure in Narrative Cinema," *Screen* (16.3 Autumn 1975) 6-18.

Malek Alloula describes the objectified woman's gaze back at photographers found in colonial postcards of the "harem."[209] While the identification photos in *La Traison* do not convey the harem fantasy, the returned gaze found in the cinematic portraits recalls Alloul's description.:

> This womanly gaze is a little like the eye of a camera, like the photographic lens that takes aim at everything. The photographer makes no mistake about it: he knows this gaze well; it resembles his own... Thrust in the presence of a veiled woman, the photographer feels photographed; having himself become an object-to-be-seen, he loses initiative; *he is dispossessed of his own gaze.*[210]

Through her stare, the indigenous woman transgresses her objectification in the photo and becomes a subject. In these moments, the female gaze diegetically dispossesses the photographer of his voyeurism and makes the spectator's position equally uncomfortable. The documentary element of the film—non-professional actors, traditional clothing and head scarves—forces questions of difference, and cultural voyeurism. In this manner, the cinematographer of the *La Trahison* who takes an identical stance, watching and recording the Other woman, simultaneously reveals the reversal of his act by showing the indigenous woman as a subject.

The novel *La Trahison* describes the military post as infringing on a village so that the villagers and the military are obliged to see each other when coming and going. This appears to be the case in the first scene at the military post when Roque discusses the *harki* turned *fellagha*

---

[209] Alloula proves that many of the women were in fact not harem women, but rather women desperate financially; some prostitutes and orphans.

[210] Malek Alloul, *The Colonial Harem*, trans. by Myrna and Wlad Godzich, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986) 14.

with another Lieutenant in his jeep. A long shot exposes an elderly woman sweeping the entranceway who notices the jeep. Then in a medium shot we see three elderly women sitting, staring ahead at the jeep, mouths closed. Whether the Algerian women in this scene are spying for the FLN is unclear, but the unsaid builds the film's suspense. Later when a village gathers for questioning and Taïeb serves as translator for Roque, the women react in a similar fashion. They, grouped with their children, stare obstinately at the men and give short predictable answers that do not incriminate their families, but offer little information. In this way the women act as a chorus for Taïeb, the ambiguity of their stare reinforcing the uncertainty of the Muslim soldier's position.

Every woman in *La Trahison* wears a head scarf or *hijab*, a controversial piece of clothing in contemporary France that was finally outlawed from schools in 2004.[211] In one scene, the French military obliges all the colonized citizens to sit for identification card photos. All of the Arabs are degraded by the security process, individuals are told to sit and stare ahead as the camera frames them. Several close-ups capture Algerians waiting, observing the photo process, aware that military vigilance prohibits their escape (Images 1 and 2). The villagers look at the photographer who is only 20 degrees to their right, making their stares especially close to a confrontation with the camera (Image 3). One woman waiting in a deep blue *hijib*, whose mouth and nose are covered in a face-veil, or a *niquāb*, does make eye-contact with the camera; she will be especially demeaned by the facial disrobing[212] (Image 4). This photo session, the military's

[211] A broad discussion of this issue can be found in John Bowen, *Why the French do not like head scarves: Islam, the State, and Public Space* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

[212] It is the photographers/soldiers order to insist on a full view of the female face. On October 6, 2010, the senate banned *le port du voile intégrale,* which includes the *burqa* and the *niquāb.* The law sites these aspects

insensitivity towards the local culture, and the objectification of the colonized, particularly affronts females.

Of course before Alloual, Franz Fanon observed the European view of the *hijab* as a fetishistic tease and the French need to *dévoilé* the Arab women, as the desire to see them fully.[213] However, here a fellow Muslim, Ahmed, bound to military duty, voices the French concern, and timidly tells the women to arrange their scarves and render their faces more visible. In the documentary of the filming of *La Trahison*, Philippe Faucon reminds his actors of this incident. He explains that the photo session increases their characters' doubt in the French

---

of feminine Islamic clothing as threatening to national security, because they cover the face. Le monde writes, "Le chef de file des députés de la majorité, Jean-François Copé, l'un des principaux soutiens de cette interdiction, s'est félicité de cette décision, vantant *'une réponse ferme adressée à tous les extrémistes qui veulent tester la République et un signal fort envoyé à toutes les femmes qui se battent pour leur dignité.'"* *"Depuis de longs mois, a-t-il ajouté, avec mes amis députés, je me bats pour défendre une valeur fondamentale de la République. Ne pas se masquer le visage dans l'espace public est une condition du vivre ensemble et un gage de sécurité. »* « Le Conseil constitutionnel valide l'interdiction du port du voile intégral » *Le Monde,* http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2010/10/07/le-conseil-constitutionnel-valide-l-interdiction-du-port-du-voile-integral_1421955_823448.html , October, 7, 2010, *Le monde diplomatique*, October 27, 2010.

[213] Fanon writes, « L'attitude dominante nous paraît être un exoticisme romantique, fortement teinté de sensualité. Et d'abord le voile dissimule une beauté…Dévoiler cette femme, c'est mettre en évidence la beauté, c'est mettre à nu son secret, briser sa résistance, la faire disponible pour l'aventure. Cacher le visage, c'est aussi dissimuler un secret, c'est faire exister un monde du mystère et du caché. Confusément, l'Européen vit à un niveau fort complexe sa relation avec la femme algérienne. Volonté de mettre cette femme à portée de soi, d'en faire un éventuel objet de possession. » *L'an V de la révolution algérienne (*Paris : La Découverte, 2001)25-26.

military and inspires them to join the FLN. He speaks to all of the actors (though he uses *tu*) before filming their break of Ramadan fasting at sunset:

> Tu commences à douter. C'est-à-dire, il y a la guerre, les femmes accueillantes, tu fais défaire la voile pour les photographier, les gens que vous faites partir de leur village pour les amener dans la bidonville, que vous commencez d'avoir un peu mal, d'avoir de doute. [214]

The Muslim soldiers do not want to make Algerians French or give the Muslim women sexual equality. The order to unveil the Algerian women for the photographs further denies the Muslim soldiers' their cultural upbringing and breeds resentment that will result in desertion. It is the accumulation of disrespect and racism that prompts the Muslim soldiers' to conspire with the FLN.

For an Algerian draftee, women in scarves evoke family and community, and subsequently feelings of shame. As night falls Ali discusses his conflict with Taïeb. He speaks of a woman he forced to leave her village: "Cette femme qu'elle m'a regardée. Jamais j'oublierai son regard! J'ai vu celui de ma mère!" The gaze of an unknown woman that recalls the gaze of his mother is reminiscent of the remembered gaze of Muriel in Alain Resnais' film.[215] Suzanne Gauch writes, "In Resnais' film…the armed man himself speaks in order to say that the gaze of

---

[214] This comment is made in *Un tournage à Boussaâda, a supplement on the DVD of La Trahison about the making of the film.*

[215] "Together, Muriel's unseen gaze and body disperse the point upon which seeing and hearing, understanding and knowing once converged." Suzanne Gauch, "*Muriel* or the Disappearing Text of the Algerian War," *L'Esprit créateur* (41. 4 2001) 56.

an anonymous Arab woman foretold his imminent decline." The women's stares motivate the men to kill for their revenge: the gaze of Muriel haunts Bernard until he kills the veteran who killed her in war, and the gaze of this unknown woman inspires Ali to conspire for the murder of Lieutenant Roque. Ali internalizes the gaze of the woman until it surfaces as his superego, scorning his actions. In this manner, the enemy, already representative of the *appelé*'s origins, becomes part of himself and the war of decolonization becomes an interior civil war.

The Specular Text

Warfare in *La Trahison* depends on the act of looking. The platoon looks for guerillas, defensively and offensively, and then looks for weapons in the villages. Additionally, as I have just described, the villagers return the near-constant surveillance by the French military with silent stares. As we watch the soldiers search for traces of the FLN, a meta-narrative of looking develops, for additionally Roque studies the *appelés* for clues to the Captain's claim, and Taïeb anticipates the ideal moment to commit murder. Each explores the other's intentions in side long glances and intense eye-contact. Nick Browne's term "specular text" describes how the regard builds meaning in *La Trahison*:

> Because the significant relations have to do with seeing—both in the ways the characters "see" each other and the way those relations are shown to the spectator—and because their complexity and coherence can be considered as a matter of "point of view," I call the object of this study the "specular text."[216]

[216] Nick Browne, "The Spectator in-the-text: the Rhetoric of *Stagecoach*." *Film Quarterly* 29. 2 (1975-1976): 27.

While at times the camera adopts the point of view of Taïeb, and others that of Roque, it also exhibits a view unseen by the characters. Therefore, the viewer's "position" is not based solely on the point of view shots, on the larger sequencing, and sympathy for the *appelés* situation.

One scene in which "the specular text" is particularly apparent occurs after a French soldier has thrown a bucket of water at Ali. The French and Muslim soldiers are divided into two clusters with a wire fence between them, exchanging hateful glances. In the first shot, we see a French soldier string barbed wire across the bottom of a fence while looking up. In the next shot we see his focus, the Muslim soldiers, three of which have their backs to us, clustered together while stringing together another part of the fence (Image 5). Ahmed is the only Muslim soldier whose face is seen. He looks to his left at what we understand to be the French soldier and says in Arabic to Taïeb, "Ils ne nous voient pas comme eux. Leurs regards le disent." Taïeb whose full back is to the viewer, then turns slightly to the right to investigate the French soldiers.

The third shot mirrors the second in its arrangement and blocking (including eye-movement). Two French soldiers face a central figure whose back is to the camera (Image 6). The man to his right says as he glances to his left, "Vous avez vu, même devant nous, ils ne se gênent même plus pour parler en arabe." The central man then turns to his left to look at the Muslim soldiers. The symbolism of the fence is apparent; the military has assigned the soldiers to construct a divider between religions and ethnicities. If the shots seem too overtly duplicated in framing and glances, verbally the Muslim soldiers remain the object of the French gaze—Ahmed says *leurs regards le disent*, the French soldier says, *vous avez vu* to the other French soldiers. Finally the camera gives more time to the angst ridden Muslim characters.

To an extent, this scene is not dissimilar from the scene from John Ford's *Stagecoach* (1939) that Browne analyzes to prove his theory. The scene is a quarrel of glances between Lucy, the proper wife of a military officer, and Dallas, a prostitute. While the camera dominates Lucy's point of view, and although society values Lucy more, sympathy for Dallas prevails. Browne writes,

> Our "position" as spectator then is very different from the previous senses of "position"; it is defined neither in terms of orientation within the constructed geography of the fiction for in terms of social position of the viewing character. On the contrary, our point of view on the sequence is tied more closely to our attitude of approval or disapproval and is very different from any literal view in angle of character's point of view.[217]

In the sequence from *La Trahison* I have just described, the views of the Muslim soldiers from the French soldiers' perspective do not cause the spectator to feel negatively about the Arabs, or to feel more aligned with the French. The views of the French soldiers from the Muslim soldiers' perspective also do not cause the spectator to identify with the Muslims' anger. Yet, as the film reveals information concerning the Muslim soldiers' hardship, the viewer leans towards the underdog, the brunt of society, not unlike the viewer's sympathy for Dallas in *Stagecoach*. The looking between parties, the antagonism exchanged through looking, is stronger than the characters' words or actions and effectively relates the racial tension rising within the military.

The next sequence begins with the back of Roque's head; he then turns to his left and then to his right, surveying his platoon from an elevated space (Image 7). This shot of the head of

[217] Browne, 36.

Roque (the Lieutenant of the platoon, who has power over all of the French and Muslim soldiers) directly after the battle of glances places him in the camera's position. Not incidentally, his movements mirror the soldiers': he looks to the right (as the French soldiers did) and then to the left (as the Muslim soldiers did) demonstrating the prevalence of looking in every echelon of the military. Looking for the hidden meaning in the look of the Other emerges as a primary theme of *La Trahison* that we find in the all the exchanges between the French Other and the Muslim Other (Taïeb and Roque, the French soldiers and the Muslim soldiers within the French military, the village and the platoon). The look materializes as a way for the characters to confirm difference, that instead proves their similarity.

Bilingualism

> *Les deux univers symbolisés, portés par les deux langues, sont en conflit* : ce sont ceux du colonisateur et du colonisé. En outre, la langue maternelle du colonisé, celle qui est nourrie de ses sensations, ses passions et ses rêves, celle dans laquelle se libèrent sa tendresse et ses étonnements, celle enfin qui recèle la plus grande charge affective, celle-là précisément est *la moins valorisée.*[218]

La Trahison uniquely depicts the linguistic drama at the heart of the harki's battle. Their rapports are divided linguistically; they speak French as an official language with their Lieutenant, but in friendship they speak Arabic. This increases tension between the French and the Muslim soldiers of the French military; although, the military depends on the Muslim soldiers to communicate with villagers, they are threatened by the foreign language of the enemy. As the quotation above from Albert Memmi indicates, French symbolizes "the colonizer" for the

[218] Albert Memmi, *Portrait du colonisé, précédé de portrait du colonisateur* (Paris : Gallimard) 126.

colonized, hence the Muslims soldiers' reticence to speak it. In fact, any emotional exchange is in their maternal language, despite their fluency in French. The French soldier believes that his presence should enforce the official language when he exclaims (as already cited) that the Muslim soldiers speak Arabic "même devant nous." However, the Muslim soldiers transgress the language hierarchy of colonial Algeria by speaking in their secret code at the base. The French soldiers' ignorance of Arabic, and the Muslim soldiers' bilingualism, portends the ultimate violation of French dominance, the conspiracy to murder the Lieutenant amongst the Arab-speaking.

The film demonstrates the characters' linguistic transgression in subtitles. *Harkis* also function as translators for the French military in *L'Ennemi intime*. However, when they speak to a villager and translate the words into French, no subtitles are given. In this manner, Siri presents the translation given in the dominant language as the truth, and does not pose questions of loyalty or interpretation. Alternately, in *La Trahison* Faucon frequently adds French subtitles to the Arabic dialogue, often times in addition to the Muslim soldier's oral translation.[219] The spectator then searches for similarities and differences in the interpretation given to the audience and that offered to Lt. Roque. The subtitles in these sequences warn of perjury, and underscore the larger question of colonial bilingualism, all while including the audience in the Arabic dialogue from which the French characters are excluded. This increases the public's bond with the *appelés*.

---

[219] There are several scenes where Muslim soldiers are used to speak to an assembly of villagers. No subtitles are included the first time, when a Muslim soldier who is not part of the main group translates. In the second of such instances, Taïeb speaks and subtitles are given. The subtitles are nearly identical to what he tells the Lieutenant.

As the public increasingly suspects him, Taïeb's translations falter from the original spoken Arabic. In one instance, Taïeb squats in an alley, speaking with a man who faces the audience. The man says (translated in French subtitles), "Ta place n'est pas avec eux. On passera toujours après vous. Ils vous trompent." However when Taïeb hears Roque and the sous-lieutant coming closer, he abruptly ends the conversation with "Garde confiance en Dieu." A few minutes later, when Roque asks what the seated man said, Taïeb responds, "Il cherche du travail, il n'en trouve pas." The cliché phrase the village women utter as an excuse for their husbands' absence, now exculpates Taïeb. Although, Taïeb's motives remain a mystery at this point in the film, he turns his head from the Arab man when he insults him and towards the camera, depicting an awkwardness that becomes sinister when he deceives Roque. Both embarrassment and conspiracy factor into Taïeb's reasons for lying, for by lying Taïeb not only protects the man warning him but himself if he decides to heed such advice.

The French ignorance of Arabic helps to deny the public sentiment, whereas the Muslim soldiers, considered traitors by their ex-communities, have no protection from the verbal attacks of the villagers. When the villagers complain about waiting for identification cards, or when an old woman screams at a *harki* in the street, the Muslim soldiers feel guilt and disgust, while the French do not understand. As demonstrated by the harki described in the pre-torture sequence who is later killed by *fellaghas*, the FLN views the bilingualism that is a commodity for the French military as an arm to be detonated. The battle of languages within each of the Muslim soldiers is a symptom of colonialism that each confronts in the war of liberation.

Ironically, the audience understands this linguistic rebellion against French, featured as part of the larger movement for liberation, through *French* subtitles. To this extent the French

viewer experiences the bilingualism of the Muslim soldiers. The colonizer's language oppresses the colonized in its military authority but in turn the Muslim soldiers use it as a means by which to manipulate, and destroy such privilege. The French subtitles likewise corrupt the narrative offered in spoken French with the layers of language bewildering the bilingual characters. In this way, *La Trahison* represents the French language as domination as well as a means to understand and overturn such power.

CONCLUSION

The filming locations of *La Trahison* and *L'Ennemi intime* indicate their national sympathies. The shoot of *La Trahison* preceded *Mon colonel*'s by nearly three years, and was one of the first French films to be shot in Algeria after the decade of civil war that has become known as *les années noires*. The filming in Algeria, as well as the use of Algerian citizens as extras, non-professional actors, and crew, demonstrate the film's overarching support of the nation, which is also found in the film text when Roque's last comment declares the French military trapped their Muslim soldiers.[220] By filming in Algeria in 2004, Faucon revisits and resituates the anguish of the Muslim soldier in the French military, presenting a new understanding of the war with geography as its basis.

Although Siri went to pains to guarantee the Moroccan landscape resembled mountains in Algeria, *L'Ennemi intime* was filmed entirely in a country with antipathy towards Algeria that

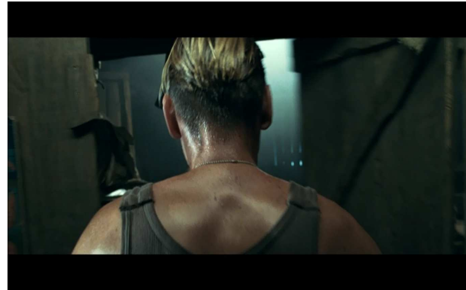
[220] Philippe Faucon explained to me in the summer of 2009 that casting extras in Algeria was difficult, that the women were fearful of their representation in a French film. The process took months. He also explained that the Algerian crew was very enthusiastic, but had very little experience as the film industry had been shut-down during the recent war.

was never involved in their decolonization. Furthermore a French crew shot *L'Ennemi intime* with French actors, loosening the film's grip on its documentary origins—even the Algerian actors, Mohammed Fellag (Idir Danoun), Lounès Tazairt (Saïd), and Abdelhafid Metalsi (Rachid) are French citizens that star primarily in French films. While landscape shots in *L'Ennemi intime* show the desert and mountains of North Africa as a lethal trial for the European, the film's imperfect geographical setting denies Algeria its war of decolonization. The film becomes less specific despite the scrolls with dates and numbers, and as the plot and framing indicate, the film focuses on the suffering of the French military in Algeria rather than the land or people who were colonized. In this manner, *L'Ennemi intime* maintains its French nationalism even while filming abroad, and the apology for French torturers remains a statement by and for France.

However, despite the directors' decisions concerning filming locations and cast, neither film presents an extremist nationalist slant. While *L'Ennemi intime* clearly sympathizes with the French torturer, the film also exposes the unwarranted torture of Algerian suspects. In fact, if *L'Ennemi intime* appears as a nationalistic defense of French actions abroad, Terrien's death at the hands of the Arab teenager who saw him torture his countryman to death can also be read as a moral judgment against the French presence in Algeria. While *La Trahison* presents the complicated situation of the Muslim *appelé* or *harki*, it does not deny his attempt to cut the throat of a sympathetic French Lieutenant. In this way, the meanings of victim and perpetrator become as slippery as French and Algerian sympathies during the war.

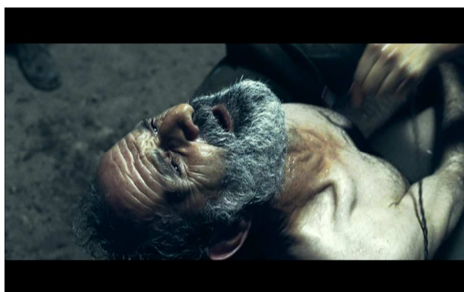
L'Ennemi intime (2007) dir. Florent Emilio Siri

F.1


F. 2

F.3

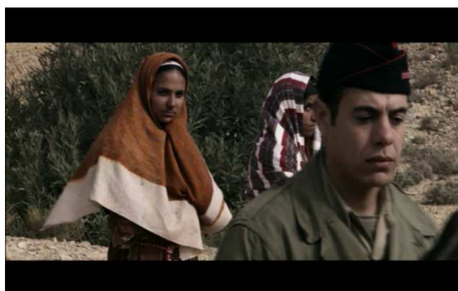
F.4, F.5


F.6

F.7

La Trahison (2004) Philippe Faucon

G.1


G.2

G.3

G.4

G.5

G.6

G.7

Chapter 4. The Child Immigrant and the Child Witness: *Michou d'Auber* and *Cartouches gauloises*

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 1, children are an important aspect of mise-en-scène in *La Bataglia d'Algeri*; the Italian director was notably influenced by neorealism, and fought to keep the shot of a boy buying ice cream before a bombing, as well as images of children in reaction shots and debris. Furthermore, the youth of Omar (10 years-old), a supporting character who aids Ali La Pointe, emphasizes the martyrdom of the activists. However, films concerning the Algerian War in the decade proceeding Portocorvo's masterpiece, the most prolific period of films about the war before 2005, exclude children. Post-2005, speaking children with considerable screen time become significant; in *Caché* the primary characters are seen as children through flashbacks, in *L'Ennemi intime* a child's actions significantly affect the plot, and both *Michou d'Auber* and *Les Cartouches gauloises* present children as main characters. Furthermore, because the father of a young soldier seeks revenge in *Mon colonel*, we read the soldier, though in his 20s, as a child of France.

The titles, *Les Cartouches gauloises* (2007) and *Michou d'Auber* (2007), draw attention to their young subjects; the first name *Michou* automatically implies a child because of the affectionate suffix of Michel (I will explore the name later in detail), while *Les Cartouches gauloises* refers to the Francophone children as gun cartridges, a metaphor for the violence they witness and interiorize, the title also recalls the cigarette brand Gauloises, a vice like war that children do not yet understand. In these films the concept of the child, his innocence and need,

anchors the film in affect, and nostalgia. As we reminiscence on our own youths, we identify and sympathize with these child characters.

Both films concentrate on the situation of a boy during the Algerian War, though one is in France, the other in Algeria. Accordingly, the films differ dramatically in their nationalism—in *Cartouches gauloises* Algerian flags fly the day liberation is announced, and in *Michou d'Auber* a French flag waves in the wind on the television before President De Gaulle's address. The war-torn Oran, Algeria of *Cartouches gauloises* contrasts paradoxically with the quiet farm community of Berry, France; blood, explosions, and fear in *Cartouches* equal school, Citroens, and pork in *Michou*. To this extent the films' genres reflect their setting; daily living in war-torn Algeria provides an ideal backdrop for a neo-neorealist picture, while a family comedy prefers the rural life of Berry, France. The child's point of view surfaces more frequently in Mehdi Charef's film, as his innocent perspective of the brutal past demonstrates the inhumanity and absurdity of violence. Thomas Gilou's film also thrives on the audience's sympathy for a child. However, it is the adult perspective of the child and, more particularly, the metamorphosis of his foster father's would view that dominates the picture.

Michou d'Auber

My analysis of *Michou d'Auber* will demonstrate its concurrence to the presidential campaign of Nicholas Sarkozy, as both emphasize the necessary integration of immigrants. However, I will begin by explaining the reaction in the press to the feature and the magnitude of its star actors. Aspects of the *mise-en-scène* such as casting, costume, and props develop the larger ideology of the picture. After studying these elements, I will deconstruct the adoption that almost takes place in the film, including the boy's name change and quasi-religious conversion. I

will close this study of *Michou d'Auber* by reviewing the end of the ministry of immigration and national identity in December of 2010, and how this closure historicizes the comedy by Thomas Gilou.

Michou d'Auber premiered in February 2007 with two box office guarantees, Nathalie Baye and Gérard Depardieu, months before Nicholas Sarkozy was elected President of France.[221] However, the film made less money than anticipated, with only 842, 519 places sold in the first month, contrasting sharply with Gilou's last fiction feature, *La Vérité si je mens 2* (2001), which sold 7, 011, 181 places in its debut month. Reviews of the film were mixed, noting the film's clichés and nostalgia, but generally recommending the picture. "Fréderic Strauss of *Télérama* writes, « Nous voilà dans la jolie France du début des années 60, au temps des jours heureux. Enfin, presque : sous le charme rétro et rassurant du décor, ça grince. »[222] *Le Figaro* described the film as « particulairement touchant, » but admitted that « l'environnement du film est parfois manichéen et caricatural. »[223] The *Inrockuptibles* a more critical source, found the film's attack of racism superficial: « 'je ne suis pas raciste, la preuve : mon meilleur ami est arabe'…Simple

---

[221] *Michou d'Auber* premiered on February 28, 2007. Nicholas Sarkozy assumed the office of the *Président de la République de France* on May 16, 2007. Gérard Depardieu and Nathalie Baye most famously played a couple in the historical drama *Le Retour de Martin Guerre* (1982). In 2007, they were two of the highest grossing French actors.

[222] Frederic Strauss, "*Michou d'Auber*," *Télérama,* April 12, 2008, Feb.16,2011 <http://television.telerama.fr/tele/films/michou-d-auber,7088896.php>

[223] Clara Gilot, "*Michou d'Auber*," Oct. 15, 2007, Feb. 16, 2011 <http://www.lefigaro.fr/lefigaromagazine/2007/02/23/01006-20070223ARTMAG90539-michou_d_auber.php>

mensonge – plus commercialisable, sans doute, qu'une vérité trouble – mis en relief par le portrait désuet que *Michou d'Auber* nous brosse de la France d'autrefois. »[224]

While the film, centering on a comic friendship between a man and an estranged boy, recalls *The Kid* (1921), themes specific to France in 2007 concerning immigration and assimilation abound. In fact, the film and Sarkozy's campaign share a similar ideology surrounding immigration and national identity: Muslim immigrants can achieve Frenchness. However, to do so, they must forget their heritage (family, religion, language) and solely identify with the French nation, which will in turn provide them with a superior citizenship.

The project seemed an obvious choice for director Thomas Gilou, known for comedies with racial motifs. In Gilou's first sucessful production, *Black Mic-Mac* (1986), an African community tricks the state functionary when he attempts to force them out of their building. In an even more popular Gilou film, *La Verité si je mens* (1997), Eddie (Richard Anconina) is mistaken for a Jew, and then passes intentionally as Hasidic to earn money in the textile industry. Both were popular enough to yield sequels (*Black Mic-Mac 2* (1988) *La Verité si je mens 2* (2001).[225] The humor in these Gilou films relies on racial stereotypes (African superstition, Jewish greed), but the plots sympathize with the minority group and conclude by demonstrating a bond of friendship between groups at ethnic odds. While *Michou d'Auber* grapples with similar Gilou themes of passing, racism, and then equality, its universalism also compounds with nostalgia for the early 60s.

---

[224] *Les Inrockuptibles*, Feb.28,2007, Feb. 26,2011< http://www.lesinrocks.com/cine/cinema-article/article/michou-dauber/>

[225] His film *Raï* (1995) follows a multicultural gang in the *banlieue* and predates *La Haine* by seven months.

In plot and mood, *Michou d'Auber* resembles *Le Vieil homme et l'enfant* (1967), a family film that places *The Kid*'s premise into a context of war and racism.[226] However, while *Le Vieil homme et l'enfant* utilizes World War II and anti-Semitism as its backdrop, *Michou* is set during the Algerian War; a childless woman, Gisèle (Nathalie Baye) becomes the foster mother of a boy with Kabyl origins (Samy Ségur) but hides the child's ethnicity from her veteran husband, Georges (Gérard Depardieu), who served in Indochina. Kabyls consider themselves the largest indigenous group of Algeria, predating and, differing from the Arabs, and in this era, the majority of Algerian immigrants in France were Kabyl. Michou as Kabyl is Maghrebi but not Arab, a word that instigates many negative stereotypes. The film plays with this difference and similarity: racist characters call Michou an Arab, but several times the script reminds us that he is in fact Kabyl. By bleaching his hair and changing his name the child passes as French, and through diligent study of French and consistent church choir attendance, he integrates. Finally, the couple enamored of the child—once named Messaoud now called Michou—seeks to adopt him even though Georges has discovered Michou's heritage. Georges' anti-immigrant stance is now universalist, and he openly admits to his own checkered background (Jewish and Arab). However, the boy's biological father, Akli (Fellag), returns to reclaim his son before the adoption takes place. The film closes with intertitles: "Georges est mort en 1998 à Charenton-

[226] In both films, the minority boy attempts to pass as French. He is taught to pray and act Catholic in both films and hide his circumcision. The plots are also similar; the foster father, who is more accurately the age of a grand-father, is racist, and so the child's ethnicity is kept a secret, though the two become attached regardless. The main difference in the films is their historical placement: the boy is Jewish and hiding in *Le Vieil homme*, and the boy is Kabyl in *Michou d'Auber.* Still, both films focus on events of decades past; *Le Vieil homme* of 1967 concerns events of '43-44, while *Michou* made in 2007 is set in 1961-62.

Du-Cher. Gisèle vit encore à son Berry natale. Akli a été enterré en Algérie en 1995. Messaoud vit aujourd'hui à Paris."

***Intégration* and Sarkozy in 2007**

There is one scene in *Michou d'Auber* of a Muslim community,[227] but the film does not address the possibility of the integration of the Muslim community as a group, which would threaten and polarize a mainstream audience. In contemporary French, speakers use the term *intégration* to describe how an immigrant or a group of immigrants are incorporated into the larger French society.[228] However, this film explores the plight of a lone child seeking

---

[227] The Muslims reside together in an apartment building and purchase sheep from Georges for *Id al-kabir:,* an important Muslim holiday on which Muslims celebrate Abraham's decision to sacrifice a ram instead of his son, after hearing God's command. The holiday, or festival, lasts two days. Traditionally families sacrifice lambs on this day, a complicated act for French immigrants with urban residency. Anne-Marie Brisebarre writes:
"The Pastoral Alliance, a professional association to which many French sheep-farmers belong, acknowledged in its Bulletin for January 1990 that the direct sale of sheep to Muslims is a 'sure and durable outlet' capable of 'sustaining the French sheep production in the years to come.' If such sales of live sheep are authorized, it is at the moment of slaughter that secular French norms impose a legal problem. ..even ritual slaughter of animals intended for human consumption is a technical action which must be carried out by a professional in the place reserved for animal deaths, the slaughterhouse. Family slaughter for '*Id al-kabir* is categorized as illegal."
Anne Marie Brisbarre, "The sacrifice of '*Id al-kabir*: Islam in the French suburbs," *Anthropology Today*, 9.1 (1993): 9. Georges, though profiting from the sale of sheep, obviously looks down on the Muslim slaughtering of lambs in bathtubs, as he makes clear to Michou in several declarations.

[228] The fourth definition of *intégration* from *Le Nouveau Petit Robert*, édition 2002. Although today we associate the word *intégration* most consistently with immigrants and their children, this was not always the case; in *la loi d'orientation* from 1989, there is neither mention of second-generation immigrants nor the school's role in reducing

Frenchness (rather than group), which is in fact an endearing aspect of a more important drama—a retired colonel becomes more liberal as a consequence of Frenchifying an Arab boy. Thus, Michou's integration is primarily important because it alters a French man's view of the world.

It is only after Michou demonstrates his emotional attachment to Frenchness and Catholicism that Georges and Gisèle consider adoption. Jean Pierre Obin and Annette Obin-Coulin explain that this kind of identification with the new nation is an element of *intégration*. They write:

> La première plus objective, en partie volontaire, recouvre la participation à des structures contraignantes (activités professionnelles, institutions sociales et politiques…) et l'adoption de normes communes (modèle familial, langues, comportements sociaux…) ; la seconde, plus subjective, voire affective, prend la forme du développement d'un sentiment d'appartenance à une même communauté.[229]

---

discrimination. Instead the law applies the term *intégration* to the needs of handicapped, blind, and deaf students. Jean-Pierre Obin and Annette Obin-Coulon, *Immigration et intégration* (Paris : Hachette Éducation, 1999)10. In *Michou d'Auber,* Paul, a mentally handicapped worker lives and works on the property of Gisèle and Georges. Although Paul is an adult, his impediment makes him an appropriate friend for the much younger Michou. Furthermore, his acceptance by Georges and Gisèle demonstrates their kindness towards a group facing discrimination and foretells their attachment to Michou. Paul's inclusion in the work environment of the farm and his friendship with Michou demonstrate this obsolete definition of *intégration,* while edging the film further toward its broader universal aim.

[229] Obin, 10.

Michou succeeds in both areas. He proves his desire to be French by excelling at school and taking responsibility at church (institutions), and in this manner fully adopts the French way of life—except that he does not eat pork. Although the truth of an immigrant's sentiment towards the new land is "subjective," Michou's association with France is straightforward. When Michou kneels and prays alone, we witness his devout faith; when he shuns his biological father by declaring, "Je m'appelle Michou, Je suis français et catholique," we witness the completion of the assimilation process.

It is not surprising that a mainstream film about immigration and national identity corresponds with a winning political campaign of the same year that dealt with the same issues.[230] In fact, Michou embodies what Sarkozy might claim is the ideal French citizen. Gérard Noiriel defines the optimal French person in accordance with the 2007 campaign:

> c'est donc celui qui est venu d'ailleurs, qui a gardé dans sa physionomie quelque chose de ses origines, qui nous a donné un peu de son sang, mais qui a fait l'effort d'assimiler les « valeurs républicaines » et s'est dévoué corps et âme pour défendre sa nouvelle patrie.[231]

Messaoud/Michou matches this description: he comes to the country household with an obvious biological difference, but attempts to become French, as well as to appear so. Michou's time in

---

[230] There were echoes of Balladur's 1993 presidential campaign in Sarkozy's of 2007. Sarkozy had worked very closely with Balladur whose "premiership was in some ways, on privatizations and immigration/nationality, a reprise of the 1986 government." We see a steady increase in the importance of these themes in French politics since the 1980s. John Gaffney, *Political Leadership in France* (London: Macmillan, 2010)167.

[231] Gérard Noiriel, *A quoi sert l'identité nationale?* (Paris: Agone, 2007) 91.

the rural household serves as an apprenticeship in Frenchness; he learns to respect the national symbols listed in the second article of the Constitution: the national anthem and the French flag, as well as the French language.[232] Georges reminds a contemporary viewer of the French volunteer in a "parrainage républicain" (an institution that Eric Besson, as Minister of Immigration and National Identity proposed in which each new immigrant is assigned a French citizen to help him/her integrate into French society); he teaches Michou to salute President De Gaulle when watching his national address on television, which commences with a waving flag accompanied by the national anthem.[233]

Although Michou was born in France, it is in the French country home that he develops an awareness of and attachment to these signifiers to the point that he self-identifies with them. Noiriel implies that Sarkozy's optimal citizen would defend his country with his life, and Michou's patriotic stance when meeting his biological father again reflects the military background that Georges enforces. Ironically, this perfect, second-generation citizen sounds like Sarkozy's self-description: "Français au sang mêlé, qui doit tout à la France."[234] Although Michou does not have *le sang mêlé* from a French biological parent as does Sarkozy, his foster

[232] The French government made a law that it was necessary to sing the *La Marseillaise* at least one time a year in French classrooms. "Identité nationale : les mesures envisagées par le gouvernement " *Le Monde*, Feb. 8. 2010, Le Monde Diplomatique, Nov. 24, 2010 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgibin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=b13891cab1b015519bb94bed3b00dfc140a47baf51a6974d>.

[233] "Identité nationale : les mesures envisagées par le gouvernement " *Le Monde*, Feb. 8. 2010, Le Monde Diplomatique, Nov. 24, 2010 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=b13891cab1b015519bb94bed3b00dfc140a47baf51a6974d>

[234] Noiriel, 91.

parents serve as surrogates, providing the necessary education in habits and values that will ensure his assimilation. While Gisèle certainly provides the maternal first steps that will ensure his passing, Georges proves more pivotal in teaching and authorizing Frenchness.

Gérard Depardieu = France

Thomas Gilou appropriately cast Gérard Depardieu as Georges, the film's arbiter of Frenchness.[235] The actor, at this stage in his career, stands as a national symbol; he is the most famous French actor globally and was made a Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur.[236] Historical roles that helped to make Depardieu a star include *Danton* and *Cyrano de Bergerac*. While his roles often display large personalities, in 2007, his celebrity is even larger. Next to the hefty, loud actor, the child appears more petite and fragile—such casting draws on the visual comedy of opposites found in *Le Vieil homme et l'enfant* (Michel Simon and Alain Cohen)(Image 1). [237]

---

[235] On the DVD there is accompanying footage of Thomas Gilou being interviewed for the premiere. He explains that he met Depardieu's wife and begged her to meet Gérard because he knew he was perfect for the role of Georges. Depardieu then backed the project financially, and paid Gilou and co-writer Hattou to write the script. The credits list Depardieu as co-producer. Depardieu's relationship to the project might explain his character's importance in the script.

[236] "Gérard Depardieu, Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur" *Le Monde,* January 3,1996, Le Monde Diplomatique, Nov. 11, 2010,
<http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgibin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=35d2ccca93b9696e4e23a6d3b71184fd095b802850bcae92>

[237]Tom Rothfield discusses the law of opposites in antique comedies, but gives a cinematic example. "Worth pointing out the *visual* aspect of all things in comedy. Here too opposites play their part as well. This is particularly obvious in the movies. Consider for example two actors appearing on camera: a very fat actor standing beside a very

While Georges does not make racist remarks that would undermine the affability of his character, he does make statements against notorious communists (Ho Chih Minh, the FLN–Front Libération Nationale) and meets regularly with a group of French veterans, some of whom are members of the fiercely imperialist OAS (Organization de l'Armée Secrète).[238] While the film exhibits Michou's conversion and integration into French society, more central to the plot is Georges' departure from these extreme right friendships and politics to a broader, more humanitarian belief in the possibility of integration. Michou serves as a conduit for this ideological transformation. In fact, the climax of the film does not concern Michou's education or religiosity, but rather Georges' confrontation with the community— in this scene he proclaims, "Nous sommes tous étrangers," and "nous sommes tous les mêmes."[239]

When Gisèle quietly announces to Michou the couple's decision to adopt, Georges stresses his desire to share his family name, demonstrating his ownership over the French signifier. Although Michou's biological parents are indigenous Algerians, he believes himself to be French at the beginning of the film because he was born in France (this would no longer be the case in 2005, at which point second-generation children must have turned eighteen before

---

lean one, dominating him- *vis à vis* – Laurel and Hardy. How amusing that they appear to be opposites on sight alone, even before dialogue and plot come into it. Tom Rothfield, *Classical Comedy: amoury of laughter, democracy's bastion of defence, Introduction to a law of Opposites* (Boston: University Press of America, 1999) xxvii.

[238] The OAS sought to keep the French colonies. Interestingly, Depardieu makes racist remarks and kills Arabs as an OAS member in the first film of the double feature about Mesrine, *L'instinct de la mort* (2008).

[239] In this sequence, Georges confesses his own secret that he is both Jewish and Muslim, though the film does not address this further.

naturalization, and currently a more stringent policy is being debated). Nonetheless, the adoption offer by a French family signifies the ultimate prize in Frenchness, and means that Michou is at last worthy of France. To this extent, the adoption offered by Georges represents citizenship.

Gérard Depardieu symbolizes the nation: patriotic and large, he offers the very small, helpless immigrant an opportunity to become a citizen. Furthermore, Michou as a child illustrates a foreigner's ignorance of language and culture (as well as adaptability). The frequent images of Georges and Gisèle holding the child's hand (Images 2) exhibit the immigrant's dependence on the powerful French state, a force that can both intimidate (when stealing petty cash) and protect (Georges comes to Michou's rescue when he gets in a fist fight at school). Thus, Michou's route towards integration is a path towards parental approval; as Michou becomes more versatile in the French lifestyle (school, church), his foster father becomes more devoted and finally considers adopting him, despite his Maghrebi origins.[240] Thus, the film articulates a simple equation: progress in French plus Catholic conversion equals state approval, i.e., integration equals a future in the French middle class. Gérard Depardieu's grandeur demonstrates to the audience how much Michou can gain through submissiveness (protection, status), as do the family home's relative comforts. In this way, Michou is indebted to Georges (i.e., the Republic of France) just as Sarkozy claims that he, a citizen of mixed blood, owes France everything.

---

[240] This leads Georges' acceptance of the differences of others, as well as his own Jewish/Muslim ancestry, which he had previously hidden. Although Georges confesses his family background to the bar patrons, he never demonstrates any Muslim or Jewish belief in his life. Instead, we see frequent elements of Catholicism at work in his home. His confession does not seem to alter his dismissal of his family background.

Georges is the disguised protagonist with whom the audience identifies, and his altered (now center-right) acceptance of immigrants provides the film with an explicit morale. Current debates between Nicholas Sarkozy's party, the UMP (Union pour un Mouvement Populaire), and Le Pen's extreme-right party, the Front National, argue whether it is indeed possible for Muslim immigrants to integrate. The center-right believes immigrants should become French and act accordingly, as my previous discussion of Sarkozy's campaign demonstrates; the extreme-right finds Muslim immigrants incapable of Frenchness and a threat to national identity. It is this extreme-right attitude held by the OAS members (one of whom Georges names as a Nazi collaborator[241]) and shared minimally by Georges, before becoming attached to Michou, that challenges the belief that a boy of North African, Muslim heritage is capable of Frenchness. In this way, the film places the integration discourse specific to the year of its premiere in a historical setting. Ultimately, *Michou d'Auber* sides with the winning candidate, Nicholas Sarkozy and dismisses the National Front.[242] Thus, *Michou d'Auber* reflects Sarkozy's national-

---

[241] Viguier (Chick Ortega) supplies the film with a villain. Therefore, it is fitting that Georges introduces him as a former Nazi collaborator. Viguier appears to be the ringleader of the OAS group of veterans. When the group finds Michou in the street at night after he has met his brother Abdel, Viguier is vocal, and prompts the others to check for Michou's circumcision (a Muslim rite of passage). They then brush his bottom with the same paint they used for grafittiing the town. Viguier and Georges engage in a drunken brawl after Viguier affirms Gisèle's adultery, and makes discriminatory remarks concerning Michou's heritage. The character's primary function is to foil Georges as a racist. Viguier's past as a collaborator is part of a larger theme of Resistance anchored by the images of Charles de Gaulle.

[242] Although the UMP and the National Front do differ on the capability of Muslim immigrants to integrate, there is significant crossover in terms of voting. In fact, Nicholas Sarkozy capitalizes on the parties' similarities, and strives to keep the xenophobic votes. Famous comments made by Sarkozy during the riots in 2005 in which he calls the

identity campaign agenda: the second-generation citizen (Michou) forgets his Muslim past, and excels in French history and language, while the French voter (Georges) who might have previously backed the National Front sways to support the integration of Muslims in France, a principle of the UMP party.

Appearance

Décolorant

To become French, one must appear French, which is especially difficult for Michou because of his North African traits. Initially, Gisèle aims to visually transform Michou to shield the image of the French family, as well as to defend herself from her husband's possible anger if he were to discover Michou's true origins—the child's protection is secondary. Gisèle uses a beauty approach, and bleaches Michou's dark curly hair with a product purchased from a women's salon. Because she cannot alter the child's skin tone, a change in hair color is the most drastic way Gisèle can alter his genetic inheritance. The word for bleach in French is *décolorant*, and indeed Gisèle aims to annihilate any biological color. Bleach does not deposit color into the hair shaft, but penetrates the shaft and destroys the color molecules (disulfide bonds) that are already there. Thus the bleach does not alter color, but destroys it, and in this way the hair becomes lighter.

---

banlieue residents "*racaille*"("scum") certainly influenced right-wing voters. Gaffney writes, "Not only did Sarkozy 'steal' some of Le Pen's discourse, Le Pen's 2002 'success' ensured his 2007 failure." (Gaffney, 199.) Sarkozy confidently balanced his campaign with measured anti-immigrant sentiment. Sarkozy's integration policy remains close to that of the National Front, because it does not endorse multiculturalism.

Here, the bleaching process operates as an analogy for demolishing Michou's personal history as well as Michou's ancestry, a course of action both foster parents stress is necessary: when Michou mentions his biological family and the Arabic meaning of his birth name (happiness and luck), Gisèle tells him harshly to forget his family, and only a few hours later when Michou speaks of his dad, Georges becomes jealous, and tells him that it if he wants to be friends, he must forget his biological father. He adds, "C'était avant, et maintenant est maintenant," suggesting again that Michou's Muslim past cannot coexist with a French family. These moments happen very early in the film, because, like the bleach destroying color molecules, Michou's memory of Muslim life and family must be eradicated in order to pave the way for his new French identity.

The spectator in turn acts as a bleaching agent: we see very little of Michou's pre-adoption life and only briefly meet his father, who warns him to act French ("Il faut faire tout comme les petits Français.") before leaving him and his brother, Abdel, at the orphanage. Therefore, as the blond Michou willingly forgets his nuclear family and cultural background, the audience does as well, mimicking Michou's obedience by visualizing him only in the French family. Georges and Gisèle offer French culture as a reward for abandoning Muslim heritage. As Islamic culture appears only as an irrelevant distraction to Frenchness, the audience partakes with Michou in the cultural nostalgia of a French bygone era—the early 60s. Michou's hair appears more Caucasian, not because of its similarity to European hair color, but because of its *lack* of color, its absence of geographic or ancestral distinction.

While the bleach soaks into Michou's hair, he wears a shower cap; then after washing out the bleach, he wears a towel over his head. In this way the process is hidden from the viewer, and Michou's newly bleached hair surprises both the spectator and Georges (Image 4). It is during

this covered metamorphosis that Gisèle teaches Michou to cross himself as a Catholic and not to repeat the word *Allah*. Michou is especially fragile in this moment, as his roots —deemed unsightly and unworthy of discussion—are still wet from the color molecule destruction. It is precisely after weakening and erasing his roots that Gisèle searches for a new Christian name to replace Messaoud. The bleaching evokes a baptism ritual, or more precisely given the film's emphasis on Catholicism, a christening, in which the bleach functions as the holy water that is poured over Michou's baby head before he is given a Christian name.

French Clothing

After bleaching Michou's hair, Gisèle gives Michou new clothing to wear. When Gisèle meets Michou at the orphanage, he wears an outfit (shorts, jacket, shirt, and sweater) of varying shades of brown (Image 2). Gisèle does not voice why she finds this clothing unacceptable, but is enthusiastic when she realizes that the clothing her last child pensioner, Pierrot, outgrew is Michou's size. The woman arranging Michou's foster care at the adoption agency suggests that Gisèle is reluctant to care for an Arab boy because of her previous attachment to the French Pierrot.

The tones of the clothing are subtle, yet the white, blue, and red of the new ensemble indicates that they once belonged to a French boy, and that Michou is now in a French household. The discarded brown clothing symbolizes the filth of the shanty town and the accompanying poverty, while the various shades of brown enhance the natural skin tone of the maghrebi boy. Although Michou wears a light khaki several times throughout the rest of the film, he primarily wears restrained shades of blue, white, and red, reconfirming the film's patriotic message

(Images 4 and 9).[243] Furthermore, because the clothing into which Michou changes during the symbolic baptism belonged to a boy named Pierrot, a pantomime aspect of the clothing develops, so that rather than dressing French, the Algerian boy performs in a French costume.

Although Michou does not literally wear white clothing or paint his face white, he does aim to look like a blond European, thereby suggesting a paler skin tone. Like Picasso's 1925 painting, "Paul as Pierrot"[244] (Image 5), we now see "Messaoud as Pierrot," which effectively is Michou. Although the naturalness of youth is offset by the artificiality of white clown wear—or in Michou's case, white, middle-class, European-wear—both boys' expressions convey confident ease. Yet, this attempt towards blondness fails to look natural, and the result is as fake and clownish as the white paint or powder of a pantomime (Georges says that he looks like "Un oiseau avec une drôle de tête."). While Michou is never melancholic as the sad Pierrot, he conjures up a Pierrot in his "white" costume and his clumsy naivety.

Catholic clothing

Catholic apparel is a distinct element of the *mise-en-scène* that grounds the film in traditional values and destroys Michou's Islamic roots. While Gisèle wears a small cross throughout the film, Michou is seen several times in a robe as a choir member, the first time while singing at the church, the second during the services for a neighbor's son.[245] It is during

[243] Three exceptions to this are: when Michou wears a black and white robe to a funeral service, when he appears in beige pajamas to meet his brother, Abdel, on the street, and when he wears a typical khaki farm jacket.

[244] Godard's intercuts a shot of this Picassco painting in *Pierrot le fou.*

[245] Furthermore, a cross hangs in Michou's room. A similar cross hangs in the Jewish Claude's room in *Le Vieil homme et l'enfant* and above the bed of Paulette in *Jeux interdits.*

Michou's performance at the church that Georges comes to beg Gisèle's forgiveness—they recently fought after he discovered her adulterous affair with Michou's French teacher, and she is also bitter because of his affair with a young shop keeper. During the choir performance, Georges takes Gisèle's hand before convincing her to forgive him and begin anew. The scene recalls a marriage, and in this scenario Michou evokes a priest figure.

Georges enters the church during the performance and walks down the aisle to music. When he finds Gisèle, she wears a pastel chiffon scarf around her head, suggesting a veil. A shot of Michou looking down at the couple intercuts their interactions (he is on the church stage), while the next shot of the couple's hands emphasizes their wedding rings. When Georges first attempts to hold Gisèle's hand, she struggles free, but fortunately, Georges has Michou's *kteb,* a lucky leather charm Michou's father gave him at the orphanage for good fortune.[246] He grasps the piece of leather, and the next shot displays the two hands joined. Naturally, the Catholic Church, against divorce and in favor of propagation, is the site of this reconciliation. Michou's robe symbolizes the strength of his conversion from Islam, and in this dress, we interpret Michou as a church agent responsible for the reconstruction of the Catholic family. The wedding atmosphere of the scene negates the charm's Algerian and superstitious residue, and instead creates a moment of male bonding as the camera cuts from Georges' fist holding the charm, to Michou (Image 8). Now Michou transfers the power of the *kteb*, given to him by his biological father, to his new French father, who uses the charm to reunite the French family.

---

[246] Previously, Michou used the piece of leather to cure Georges from a feverish fit of PTSD, in which he imagined he was being shot at in the jungle. The word *kteb* literally means little book in the Algerian dialect of Arabic, but the charm only appears to be leather.

Michou first wears a robe at the funeral of a neighbor's son who died as a soldier in the Algerian War (Image 6). Michou does not sing during the ceremony, but participates in the procession by carrying a large cross with a group of boys who wear black and white robes (different from the festive red and white of the choir performance). At the funeral, Michou occupies a unique position that could easily lead to accusation and animosity: his family originates from the country where the deceased was killed. Furthermore, upon leaving Michou at the orphanage, his father voices hope for the liberation of Algeria, the cause for which the soldier was died**.**

However, Michou's circumstances do not make him blameworthy. Michou's identical dress in a choir robe visually verifies his assimilation. The word *assimilation* designates both finding something alike that is in fact different and the act of making something equal through integration.[247] While observing the shots of Michou next to other choir boys, we mirror the diegetic congregation who cannot distinguish Michou's racial difference in his camouflage of bleached hair and a choir robe (Image 6). Furthermore, the boys singing at the church are of similar ages and heights, and stand in a line that obscures their uniqueness—they are seen as a group not as individuals. Michou's visual assimilation in choir robes is also religious, for his Islamic association dissipates in the Catholic environment. In fact, Michou's distinguishing characteristic at the funeral is the large cross he carries. In this manner, the cross and the robe enhance his exoneration from the blame of the soldier's death and prove his allegiance to France.

Lack of Feminine Islamic Clothing

[247] *Le Nouveau Petit Robert*, édition 2002

Michou d'Auber would be highly complicated if Michou were female: although the costumes include clergy wear, the film generally excludes Islamic clothing.[248] The universalist concept that appears in the script several times, "nous sommes tous les mêmes" would be challenged by feminine dress indicating difference. In fact, the viewer reads Michou's male traits (or rather lack of feminine traits) as neuter,[249] and neuter-male child state avoids the highly controversial subject of feminine Muslim clothing.[250] The lack of images of Michou's mother

---

[248] Historically, Islamic feminine clothing for Algerians covered less and was more colorful in the 1960s. Although several women featured during the *Id al-kabir* scene dress in colorful clothing with head scarves and one with facial tattoos, they appear more festive than austere when offering Michou traditional cake.

Bronwyn Winters traces the increase of burqa-wearing after the Six Days War in 1967. *Hijab and the Republic: Uncovering the French Headscarf Debate* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008).

[249] Judith Butler summarizes Simone de Beauvoir's understanding of gender-neutral in *Gender Trouble*, "Others following Beauvoir, would argue that only the feminine gender is marked, that the universal person and the masculine gender are conflated, thereby defining women in terms of sex and extolling men as the bearers of a body-transcendent universal personhood." Beauvoir's observation is in *Michou d'Auber,* where a male child represents the ideal immigrant. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 1990) 15-16.

[250]October 6, 2010, the senate banned *le port du voile intégrale,* which includes the *burqa* (clothing covering the entire head and body) and the *niquāb* (cloth covering the nose and mouth). The law sites these aspects of feminine Islamic clothing as threatening to national security, because they cover the face. *Le monde* writes :

Le chef de file des députés de la majorité, Jean-François Copé, l'un des principaux soutiens de cette interdiction, s'est félicité de cette décision, vantant *"une réponse ferme adressée à tous les extrémistes qui veulent tester la République et un signal fort envoyé à toutes les femmes qui se battent pour leur dignité". "Depuis de longs mois,* a-t-il ajouté, *avec mes amis députés, je me bats pour défendre une valeur fondamentale de la République. Ne pas se masquer le visage dans l'espace public est une condition du vivre ensemble et un gage de sécurité."* " Le Conseil constitutionnel valide l'interdiction du port du voile intégral " *Le Monde,*

and stepmother further dismisses the issue and keeps Michou's family background more French in appearance—we only meet his father wearing a suit and tie.[251] Yet, while the film does not address the politicized veil or burqa, Michou's change into the "French" Pierrot-clothing demonstrates an attempt to visually assimilate, consistent with the center-right's position towards integration. Additionally, the difference between Michou's secular and religious clothing depicts strong boundaries between church and school, a primary function of *laïcité* (the lack of religion in French government or state programs) in the last two decades. Therefore, although the film superficially ignores the national veil/burqa debate, the importance of clothing to the character's integration indicates an anti-Muslim dress sentiment that can be extrapolated to address *le port de voile*.

Name change

On the orphan's first day at the country home, Gisèle verbally erases Michou's past by changing his name. Gisèle chooses Michel, but only once calls the boy this before altering the

---

http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2010/10/07/le-conseil-constitutionnel-valide-l-interdiction-du-port-du-voile-integral_1421955_823448.html, October, 7, 2010, *Le monde diplomatique*, October 27, 2010.

For a broader discussion of this issue see *Hijab and the Republic: Uncovering the French Headscarf Debate* cited in footnote 24, or John Bowen, *Why the French do not like head scarves: Islam, the State, and Public Space* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

[251] We see his father twice when leaves him at the orphanage and later reclaims him. Although his father speaks about his mother's illness, death, and about his remarriage, the film provides no images of Michou's father's wives.

ending with “chou”—*chou* meaning cabbage, is also a term of endearment, and additionally means cute or sweet. The boy prefers his new name with the affectionate, infantilizing suffix, proving his subservience and his eagerness to fill the child role for his new parents. By agreeing to the name Michou, the immigrant child accepts the French language environment and the patrimony that will lead to his societal acceptance.

One can make the analogy to the colonization process, in which colonizers’ rename communities in their own national language: the French confiscated Algerian communal land in 1830 and renamed several hundred Algerian cities with French names.[252] The developing mind of the child also resembles the vast unfarmed land of Algeria as imagined by the French that colonized it, the potential of the undeveloped in need of a civilizing force. The same French ownership inherent in the act of renaming the tribal communal land appears in Gisèle’s decision to give the Arab boy a French name. In this way, Michou becomes a possession, and specifically a French one. Additionally, by naming the child she becomes accountable for his integration, which here also implies a religious conversion.

Michou’s biological father explains before leaving him at the orphanage that his birth name, Messaoud, has been passed through generations in the family, and means lucky (*chanceux*) in Arabic. The new name, Michou, contradicts the former Islamic one, as it has no ancestral precedent, and traditionally signifies the saint of warring rather than luck.[253] However, the

---

[252] John Douglas Reudy, *Modern Algeria: the origins and developments of a nation* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005) 289.

[253] Although, the name Michel/Michael is Christian, and may signify the child’s conversion by the couple, the archangel also appears in Judaism and Islam, making it a suitable name for a child whose religion is in flux. In the

affection of the suffix *chou* demonstrates his fortune in finding such an affectionate foster family, the inverse of his brother Abdel's unfortunate situation.[254] Even after Georges discovers Michou's Algerian background, and after Michou's natural hair color returns, the couple refers to him as Michou. In fact, when Georges last meets the boy after he returns to the banlieue of Paris with his family, he yells his French first name ("Michou!") to beckon him outdoors.

The bi-nomenclature might cause a child discomfort, emblematic of the two cultural individuals he must now incorporate. As he has two fathers who each refer to him with a different name, he must be both the French Michou and Algerian Messaoud accordingly.[255] The last of the four occasions on which the character is referred to by his birth name occurs in the ending titles: "Messaoud vit encore à Paris." This sentence indicates that the character has now passed to adulthood and has returned to his birth name. There is no image of Michou as the adult

---

Bible there are four references to Michael, three of which refer to battles. Michael is one of the principal angels; his name was the war-cry of the good angels in the battle fought in heaven against the enemy and his followers. In Book of Revelations 12:7 : "And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war."

[254]Unfortunately, because Michou is the focus of this chapter I was not able to fully discuss Michou's brother Abdel, who poses an interesting contrast as a child who does not choose to assimilate. Abdel is also sent to live on a farm, but his foster family sends him to a shack above a chicken coup. Abdel then runs away and spends the rest of the movie wandering as a homeless boy, occasionally visiting Michou and begging him to leave with him in search of their father. Michou gives him his pocket money, but does not want to leave his school or foster parents. I hope to later contrast the two brothers in depth.

[255] This tension climaxes when Michou's father comes to reclaim his son. In this scene, each man calls the boy a different name.

Messaoud. Thus for the French public, the second-generation immigrant remains only as he is accepted by the couple, as a youth with integration potential and an infantilizing nickname.

Gisèle and Georges do not initially offer Michou their last name, Duvali. Still, Michou cannot keep his biological family name, which would alert everyone to his origins. Instead, Gisèle and Michou's school teacher, Jacques, create the fictitious name, d'Auber, based on the banlieue north of Paris, Aubervilliers, where Michou lived with his father. Although it may be presumed that Michou has a family name, no character utters it.[256] In this way, an imaginary French heritage easily fills the void. The name Michou d'Auber suggests that Michou comes from a village called Auber, but such a place does not exist. While Jacques and Gisèle find d'Aubervilliers too obvious, the name is further unsatisfactory because of the impoverished highly immigrant composition of the district which would reveal Michou's ancestry. Although the French government did not control the nobiliary particle "de" after the revolution, today it still implies wealth and genetic proximity to French royalty. Thus the "de" adds an ironic element to the naming of the French-Algerian orphan. Like the artificial blond hair that clashes with his olive skin, the situation of a second-generation immigrant from the banlieue conflicts with a noble indicator. The family name symbolizes a bond: in a picnic sequence during which the couple announces to Michou their intention to adopt him, Georges beams that Michou will share their last name, Duvali. At last, after forgetting his true name and then using an imaginary

[256] When Michou's father comes to their home, he asks for Georges Duvali. When Georges asks who he is, Michou's father responds "le père du petit Messaoud." In this way, Georges and Gisèle have an ancestry, and Michou's last name remains exterior to the script. Yet if the viewer notices the co-scriptwriter's first name *Messaoud*, and becomes aware of the autobiographical nature of the film, she might place the scriptwriter's last name *Hattou* with the boy character.

one, Michou has won his right to a French *nom*. Nevertheless, the sharing of the family name never comes to pass. Thus, Michou never officially enters the French family and will be considered a second-generation immigrant despite his integration, largely because of this Arabic signifier.[257]

Catholicism vs. Islam

As demonstrated above, Catholicism emerges as a leitmotif in *Michou d'Auber*: the couple that commits adultery is forgiven, and the church not only aids in Michou's passing as French, but is in large part responsible for his assimilation.[258] When Gisèle goes to the choir director to ask if Michou can participate,[259] she recalls how the Catholic Church helped hide

---

[257] While we cannot compare Michou's situation to slavery, the act of renaming which erases his first language and ancestry is not unlike the first African slaves who were given new first names by their master, and often times their master's last name. White society considered slaves childlike, incapable of speaking or deciding for themselves. While Gisèle does not buy Michou, a financial exchange does take place; and Michou provides the household with state income. Furthermore, while Michou speaks fluent French with only a very slight accent, he must learn "proper" French in school, where he initially reveals his ignorance by not being able to notate properly.

[259] As the film has several scenes that take place in the church, and several in which Michou sings in the choir, catholic repertoire becomes part of the film soundtrack. When the Priest asks Michou whether he can sing, the boy does not sing religious music, but instead chooses to sing Little Richard's "Tutti Frutti" while doing the twist. The American 50s song appears even more infantile and humorous set in a French language film. The moment is an obvious attempt at humor, as the song does not coincide with the church setting or with Michou's background. However, it enables the narrative to avoid Islam, and protects the target mainstream audience from foreign influences by appearing secular. Islamic music uses foreign instruments and registers (as well as Arabic) which might make a French audience uncomfortable.

Jewish children during the Holocaust,[260] implying that the church is a force against discrimination and can become a refuge from the town's racism by allowing Michou to attend. Children do yell racist insults at Michou, but they do not do this in the church setting. The OAS veteran friends of Georges chase Michou, strip and paint him, but these characters, including the collaborator Viguier, do not attend church. Instead they congregate at a less sacred setting, the neighborhood bar.

Gisèle introduces Michou to Catholicism at the beginning of the movie, and soon Michou uses Christian prayer to manage stress. When Georges and Gisèle fight, the camera captures Michou kneeling at his bed and praying for the couple to reconcile with his palms touching (Image 9). This is a specifically Christian gesture proving Michou's conversion—the bed prohibits Michou from prostrating, and Muslims do not place their palms together.[261] Generally, the film presents Islam as an afterthought, just as Michou's Muslim family is given little screen time or explanation. In fact, there are few references to Michou's previous understanding of God: Michou says "Allah?" and looks confused when the priest inquires to his religious belief and when Gisèle teaches him about his new savior. This confused response provides comic relief.

[260] Although the Church took a stance of no involvement during World War II, isolated cases of congregations that hid children did surface. This is another instance in which the film invokes Resistance nostalgia to ennoble the main characters we associate with the movement. In this way, the film provides national uplift despite the racist behavior of some French men.

[261] Although Muslims pray Salah (صلاة) five times daily, the believer bows to the ground three times in the direction of Mecca, which here would be impossible because of the bed. Furthermore, Muslims do not traditionally pray with the palms touching, but place hands on their knees or the ground when praying, possibly cupping the hands as if offering something at the end of a prayer.

The most common reference to Islam in the film is the Muslim abstention from pork, which also provides cultural comedy.[262] The farm setting is not incidental; because the farm raises pigs, eating pork and butchering pigs is regional. When Gisèle gives Michou some chicken to eat instead of the pork chops, Georges insists that the child eat pork as well. Georges' disciplining tone and Michou's excessive fear make for comedic tension when he spits out the pork. A similar occasion transpires when Georges insists Michou aid in the butchering of a pig. Although Michou commits the faux-pas of saying *Allah* instead of God on the several occasions mentioned, after winning best in class and converting to Catholicism, he only remains connected to Islam only through his fear of pork, which balances the morose moments of the family film with humor.[263] *Michou d'Auber*'s comedic insistence on pork keeps any dialogue of religions superficial; the film presents the difference between faiths as the difference between people who eat pork and those who have a childish, silly fear of it.

During choir, Michou learns to convert as a part of a larger integration based on mimicking others. Previously, Michou learned to cross himself by imitating the hand movements of Gisèle. At choir practice, the priest notices Michou's weak singing and asks him to be silent but to move his lips as if he were singing with the others, suggesting that it is not important if one acts as a Christian, as long as one appears to do so. Michou obeys the priest and lip-synchs

[262] *Il reste du jambon* (Dir. Anne Depetrini, 2010) is another film that uses the Muslim abstention from pork as a comic device that glides over religious differences. The film follows the story of a marriage between a female French television host and a male Arab surgeon.

[263] As I have already mentioned, Michou and Georges visit a Muslim community on the Eid al-Adha to sell lambs. Although this is a Muslim holiday, there is no discussion or explanation of the holiday's religious significance.

with the other French choir members. The priest also explains to Michou the most important saint for an Muslim convert: « Ce que tu dois savoir est que Saint Augustin était un saint berbère, tu peux dire Kabyl, et qu'il a converti au Christianisme. » Here, the priest reminds the audience of Michou's Kabyl background which is less cumbersome than an Arab for France because of the Kabyl culture's secularism. Therefore, because Michou holds no attachment to extremist Islam, a common Western stereotype of Muslims, he is more capable of becoming Catholic and French. Furthermore, the priest provides Michou with an appropriate example, for Jesus, as a Jew, does not suffice for a Muslim. The priest's statement comforts Michou and reasserts that the Catholic Church is a place of refuge, a place where even Kabyl people are welcome if they mouth the proper words.

Despite the metaphorical baptism early in the film, and despite Michou's church attendance, or perhaps because of these instances, the film does not make overt reference to a religious conversion—in fact, because Michou appears to have few Islamic beliefs, such a conversion appears less necessary than an awakening. The film does not present Islam as a threat to the Catholicism so carefully presented as an aspect of Frenchness. However, unlike the pork jokes and Michou's "Allah?" looks, Michou's quickly found devotion to Jesus is solemn; sweeping string music and low-lighting accompany Michou praying with palms touching at his bed, and the scenes at the church and at the funeral only increase the affect of his piety.

Catholicism's final blow to Islam occurs when Michou's biological father returns to reclaim him. When he calls his son by his Arabic birth name, Messaoud, the boy says, "Je ne suis pas Messaoud. Je suis Michou d'Auber. Je suis français et catholique." As previously mentioned, Michou claims he is French at the beginning of the film because he was born in France. However,

a change has occurred, and now he does not identify his Messaoud-past as French. This is because this name is Arabic and Islamic, rather than French and Catholic. Michou associates the word *français* with *catholique*, indicating that because he was not previously Catholic, he was not French. While Catholicism and French nationalism work together to form a new identity for Michou, they directly counter his Islamic heritage. Thus, as a French and Catholic boy, Michou can no longer accept his biology (father), ancestors (name), and geography (Algeria). He reacts with anger, and insists on his new cultural identity. Although in a short sequence Georges reconciles the boy to his destiny, there is no transition between the way of life at the farm, and the lifestyle within the banlieue immigrant community, or Algeria, where Michou and his family ultimately live. As we learn that Messaoud is in part responsible for the story in the credits, and lives as an adult in Paris, we may envision his life as a French Catholic despite the return of his Arabic name.

Education

Lettre aux éducateurs

The first September after Nicholas Sarkozy's election, he submitted "une lettre aux éducateurs" to coincide with the *rentrée.* Although the document contains many generalizations about education and its importance, one additionally finds themes of Sarkozy's campaign and presidency that are not incidental to *Michou d'Auber:*

> La famille joue bien sûr un rôle essentiel dans la transmission de l'identité nationale. Mais c'est l'école qui est le creuset. En parlant de l'école je ne pense pas seulement à l'instruction civique dont l'enseignement doit retrouver une place de premier plan à l'école primaire, au collège et au lycée. Je ne pense pas

> seulement à la transmission de valeurs morales comme les droits de l'Homme, l'égalité de l'homme et de la femme ou la laïcité qui sont au coeur de notre identité. Je pense à cette tradition française de la pensée claire, à ce penchant si français pour la raison universelle qui est dans notre philosophie, dans notre science, mais qui est aussi dans notre langue, dans notre littérature, dans notre art.[264]

By stressing the family's dissemination of national identity to the student, Sarkozy implies the immigrants' handicap. For immigrant students who do not have a patriotic foster family like Michou, the school is ultimately responsible for teaching nationalism.

Thus Sarkozy posits that the first responsibility of schools is to form good French citizens, including immigrant children whose families are disadvantaged in teaching Frenchness. Sarkozy refers to *valeurs républicaines* as morals, and emphasizes the school's role in teaching citizenship.[265] In this manner, the study of French language, literature, and philosophy serves the goal of teaching French morality that thereby shapes children of all backgrounds into devoted French people. Although the school and the education Michou receives generally parallels Sarkozy's description of the ideal school, the equality between men and women cannot be

---

[264] Nicholas Sarkozy, *La lettre aux éducateurs,* (Réalisation Documentation française, impression Journaux officiels, 2007)15-16.

[265] The Minister of Education's website makes a similar statement. The first page opens with heading: "Valeurs républicaines et éducation à la citoyenneté: Une mission fondamentale de l'école. " Afterwards is a quotation from the orientation law of 2005 : " Outre la transmission des connaissances, la Nation fixe comme mission première à l'école de faire partager aux élèves les valeurs de la République. Le droit à l'éducation est garanti à chacun afin de lui permettre [...] d'exercer sa citoyenneté. " (loi d'orientation et de programme pour l'avenir de l'École du 23 avril 2005 - art.2). *Éduschol,* Nov. 19, 2010 <http://eduscol.education.fr/pid23131/orientation.html>.

addressed on an insular level; Michou's school is boys' only (a law in 1959 required mixed schools, but it took several years for the law to be enforced, a historical fact that conveniently maintains Michou's pure and neuter identity). Although the "Droits des Hommes et des Citoyens" (a document similar to the U.S. Bill of Rights) defines equality (between people of various nationalities, sexualities, and religions rather than between men and women), these rights do not appear in our limited view of the curriculum.[266] Nevertheless, Michou's ethnic difference and the ways in which it challenges the rural right wing ideology surface as part of the learning environment. Furthermore, the teacher's acknowledgement of Michou's progress demonstrates the lack of racial discrimination at school.

Language: *Secousse* or Couscous

When Michou fails his dictation, a common exercise in French schools, by writing couscous instead of *secousse*, the teacher, Jacques announces this mistake to the class. Although earlier in the film the school teacher helps hide Michou's origins by penning his last name, here he alerts other students to Michou's relationship to North African culture. Yet when students begin chastising Michou for the telling mistake, Jacques orders them to quit interrupting. In this way, the school atmosphere is the site of a negotiation; the teacher openly criticizes Michou's difference which provokes the class, but then he monitors the outburst. The film presents this moment of lingual confusion as a laughable step in integration**.**

However the dictation error can be viewed as a metaphor for language acquisition: Michou mistakes the French *secousse* for an ancient Arabic word, كسكس(couscous is pronounced

[266] We only see Michou study the war of Indochina with Georges, and a dictation exercise in which he writes about the geographical beauty of Berry.

the same in French and Arabic).[267] Michou understands Arabic on several occasions, but he almost exclusively speaks French, demonstrating that Arabic is his *langue maternelle* despite his ambivalent feelings towards it.[268] It appears natural that he reverts to his cultural, lingual background and hears Arabic when pressured to prove his ability in French.[269] The script uses the words *secousse* and *couscous* because of their obvious rhymes, and because, as in the pork instances, food serves as the most accessible and non-offensive way to assert Michou's cultural difference. However, *secousse*, which means a shake and can also define a psychological shock, could describe an immigrant's emotional state in the French school system, a condition that often provokes a lingual regression. Furthermore, the fact that the word he hears concerns a meal, a source of comfort usually provided by the mother, further suggests his longing for what was once maternal, including the mother tongue. We imagine that when Michou hears the professor speaking French, he summons the repressed language and past family gatherings associated with couscous as a comforting exit strategy. Mehdi Charef also uses a dictation exercise to

---

[268] Michou only speaks several short sentences in Arabic. When he visits the Algerian community with Georges to sell sheep, he explains his situation to an Algerian woman before receiving cake. He combines sentences in French and Arabic, several subtitles are given. Although Michou identifies himself as Kabyl, he does not speak the Kabyle language.

[269] Robert Berthlier defends bilingual education for immigrant children : "Cette langue maternelle, porteuse d'affect et de culture, est fondamentale car elle apparaît aussi organisatrice des facultés intellectuelles, dans la mesure où ce sont son acquisition et sa maîtrise qui vont permettre la mise en place des capacités cognitives rendant possible, entre autres, une scolarité satisfaisante." Robert Berthelier, *Enfants de Migrants à l'école française* (Paris : L'Harmattan, 2006) 60.

demonstrate the Maghrebi students' confusion in *Le Thé au harem d'Archimède* (1984). The title itself is what an Arab student writes on the board when hearing "le théorème d'Archimède." However, the humiliated student drops out of high school and leaves the banlieue, returning several years later rich, possibly involved in illegal activities. On the contrary, Thomas Gilou's family film promotes integration and does not question the linguistic roots of cultural separation.

Furthermore, the film does not insist on Michou's Arabic, which would brand him an *étranger* and undermine his integration. Although Michou still stumbles at this stage of assimilation, by the end of the film he refuses to respond to his Arabic name, testifying to his Frenchness. In this manner, the school environment teaches Michou that to pass as French, he must hide his bilingualism, in addition to his hair color, circumcision, and knowledge of Islam.[270] Franz Fanon's description of the *Antilles Negro* from *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* (*Black Skin, White Masks*) illustrates Michou's situation:

> Parler une langue, c'est assumer un monde, une culture. L'Antillais qui veut être blanc le sera d'autant plus qu'il aura fait sien l'instrument culturel qu'est le langage…Nous retrouvons chez les Antillais entrant dans le cadre de notre

[270] When Michou accompanies Georges to sell the sheep to the Algerian community, a religious man recognizing Michou's Arab traits, wishes the boy a good holiday in Arabic, and kisses him on the forehead. Georges runs to his rescue and tells the man; "C'est mon fils. Arrête de lui parler en arabe. Il ne comprend pas." Georges can identify Michou as his son because of his supposed ignorance of Arabic; if Michou were to speak one word in Arabic, Georges would not be able to claim him as his child. In this manner, Michou must refuse to speak Arabic in order to protect his home and status.

> description une recherche des subtilités, des raretés du langage—autant de moyens de se prouver à eux-mêmes une adéquation à la culture.[271]

Michou verifies his Frenchness (Fanon's whiteness) by winning respect and help from the ultimate male judges who reward his mastery of the French language with French signs, e.g. certificate of excellence, or adoption offer. A law was recently passed that second-generation immigrants born in France must demonstrate their knowledge of a « une charte des droits et des devoirs »—« *une sorte de contrat commun (…) établissant des principes à la fois moraux et politiques qui constituerait un ensemble de règles et de droits* » before becoming citizens.[272] Furthermore, the "contrat d'acceuil et d'immigration" (the welcome and immigration contract is a government integration program in which new immigrants are legally bound) was changed in

---

[271] Franz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs,* Paris: Éditions de seuil (1952) 30.

[272] " Eric Besson veut créer une charte des droits et des devoirs " *Le monde,* Jan. 16, 2010, Le Monde Diplomatique, Nov. 24, 2010 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2010/01/16/eric-besson-veut-creer-une-charte-des-droits-et-des-devoirs_1292472_823448.html>. Additionally, M. Sarkozy would not like the acquisition of French nationality at the age of 18 for a minor delinquent born in France to two foreign parents to be a right. A law voted on in 1993 for in favor of this right in 1993, comforted the left majority in 1998. Philippe Bernard et Arnaud Leparmentier, " M. Sarkozy veut durcir la répression contre les délinquants d'origine étrangère "*Le Monde*, July, 30,2010, Le Monde Diplomatique, Nov. 24, 2010, <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgibin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=b13891cab1b015519bb94bed3b00dfc140a47baf51a6974d>.

January of 2010 to require more advanced French programs. These new laws indicate again Michou's exemplary behavior; if Michou lived in contemporary France, his superior study and education would result in his naturalization at eighteen.[273]

Conclusion: The Ministry of Immigration and National Identity

On May 8, 2007, Nicholas Sarkozy promised that, if elected, he would create a new Ministry of Immigration and National Identity.[274] In a 2006 poll by *Le Monde*, Sarkozy was voted the most credible candidate concerning immigration.[275] Consequently, after the announcement of the new ministry, he gained a considerable lead over his adversary, Segolène Royal.[276] By placing the words *immigration* and *identité nationale* together under the same title, Sarkozy opposed the concepts while simultaneously conjoining them, inciting provocative questions: How can we maintain our national identity with immigration? How can we keep immigration from harming our national identity? By emphasizing the importance of protecting national identity, Sarkozy influenced a centrist-right vote that felt marginalized by the extremity of the National Front.

Michou d'Auber poses the same questions as the opposition between "national identity" and "immigration," but responds enthusiastically, "through assimilation!" Arab characters who

---

[273] " Identité nationale : les mesures envisagées par le gouvernement " *Le Monde*, Feb. 8. 2010, Le Monde Diplomatique, Nov. 24, 2010 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=b13891cab1b015519bb94bed3b00dfc140a47baf51a6974d>.

[274] Noiriel, 81.

[275] Noiriel, 82.

[276] Noiriel, 81.

do not choose to integrate (Michou's brother and father) return to the *bled* (their homeland), and pose no cultural threat to France.[277] The character of Michou then positions the French audience in a relatively balanced position, considering the right-leaning politics of Europe in 2007. As a sympathetic audience member, we do not identify with the ultra right, OAS/collaborator characters, nor with the radical left; we love an immigrant, but only a submissive, neuter, child immigrant who acts thoroughly French. In this way, *Michou d'Auber* reconciles the president's terms, endorsing the promise of the Ministry of Immigration and National Identity.

However, in November of 2010, Nicholas Sarkozy dismantled this ministry which he had publicized during his campaign and administration. Negative media surrounding the expulsion of Rom communities in August, viewed as part of the debate on national identity,[278] as well as national protests concerning pension age undermined the already diminishing popularity of the president. The demise of the Ministry of Immigration and National Identity labeled by *Le Monde* as "la fin d'une symbole"[279] now frames *Michou d'Auber* historically. The legitimization of

---

[277] It was a common hope under the immigration policies of the 60s was that the North Africans would work and live in France temporarily.

[278] " Il y a une redoutable cohérence entre le débat sur l'identité nationale, la " bouc-émissarisation " des Roms et des gens du voyage et la volonté de déchoir de leur nationalité des citoyens français. Dans chacun de ces moments, un même récit a été raconté : il y a au sein de notre société des personnes aux origines " extérieures " qui posent problème et ces personnes n'appartiennent pas à la nation. " Dominique Sopo, "Pour une conception politique de la nation : La République exclut tout choix ethnique " *Le Monde,* August, 8, 2010, Le Monde Diplomatique, Nov. 24, 2010 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=2cda9c24bebbad1acb310090e9b5f9644b21827a95a38274>.

[279] Elise Vincent, " La fin du ministère de l'immigration, tout un symbole, " *Le monde,* Nov. 17, 2010, Le Monde Diplomatique, Nov. 22, 2010,

laïcité and of *intégration* places the film firmly at the beginning of the Sarkozy presidency, before public disillusionment with Administration policies against non-integrated immigrants.

Furthermore, the film's setting, during the Algerian War but not in Algeria, with a French-Algerian boy also invokes Sarkozy's early administration. The anti-repentance sentiment present in his visits to Algeria as Interior Minister as well as in the first year of his presidency, states the irrelevance of France apologizing now for the past—Sarkozy called French repentance a form of self-hate.[280] Similarly, *Michou d'Auber* does not respond to the Algerian request for French repentance with an apology, but by providing a model for Algerians who choose to integrate in France, proffering the character Michou as a historical example. France does not appear responsible for the war in the film (in fact the only war casualty of the film is a French soldier), and colonization remains in the nostalgic realm of memorabilia (war medals, photographs, and a carved elephant tusk from Georges' military service in the colonies line the living room walls of the Duvali home). Thus, the France of *Michou d'Auber* has no need to apologize, but instead demands gratitude for assimilating Algerians.

Cartouches gauloises

In this speech made on Sarkozy's first presidential visit to Algeria, the newly elected French president alluded to the equality of war loss while denying the public an apology.

<http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgibin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=9ad09a3fd8f121d2f22ebc57405fbc250e5c7edf2c906acc>.

[280] Dominique Dhombres, "La Constance dans le refus de la repentance, " Dec. 6, 2007, *Le Monde Diplomatique,* Nov.22, 2010, <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgibin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=708a7e996459dc0447d225cef5639217951694687f85a00e>.

> Il est aussi juste de dire qu'à l'intérieur de ce système il y avait beaucoup d'hommes et de femmes qui ont aimé l'Algérie, avant de devoir la quitter. Oui, des crimes terribles ont été commis tout au long de la guerre d'indépendance, qui a fait d'innombrables victimes des deux côtés.[281]

Like Nicholas Sarkozy's anti-repentance statement, *Cartouches gauloises* emphasizes that warfare traumatized both the French and Algerians. The main character, Ali, an Arab boy who attends a French school and also works as a newspaper and a grocer boy, makes frequent contact with French adults and children while remaining involved in his own Arab family that supports the FLN. Through Ali's eyes we access both sides of the conflict, as well as those rejected by both camps (harkis and prostitutes with French clientele). To situate my interpretation, I will begin by reviewing Mehdi Charef's work as a director and author, known primarily for his first film *Le Thé au harem d'Archimède*. My study of *Cartouches gauloises* will then reveal how the film depicts both French and Algerian losses through a child's eyes, incorporating many elements of Italian neo-realism. Michael Rothberg's term "traumatic realism" appropriately describes Charef's 2007 film. I will conclude by explaining how the film's overt and excessive violence conveys the daily trauma of living in warfare.

While *Cartouches gauloises* has an Algerian nationalist thrust—the camera takes an Arab child's perspective and depicts the people's joy with flags and music after independence is

---

281 " Condamnation par Sarkozy du système colonial : 'Ce n'est pas assez' dit Zerhouni " *Le matin DZ,* Dec 4, 2007, Feb.16, 2011, <http://www.lematindz.net/news/condamnation-par-sarkozy-du-systeme-colonial-ce-nest-pas-assez-d.html>

declared —the film equally devotes screen time to French characters who confess their sorrow (a senior pied-noir couple, a train station manager, a projectionist at the local cinema, boys who play with Ali). By demonstrating the pain of these French characters and their friendships with the Arab child, *Cartouches gauloises* portrays a very convulated French Algeria in which the inevitable decolonization destroys many interracial bonds. Jean-Pierre Lledo's, *L'Algérie: Les Histoires à ne pas dire* (2008) conveys a similar view of French Algeria, idealizing the mixed communities. In his documentary, Lledo traces the friendships of his own pied-noir parents with Jewish and Muslim inhabitants of the same building, and demonstrates how the war of independence destroyed these and many other cross-cultural partnerships. Lledo's film, nostalgic for French-Algeria, enhances the regret for Algerian Independence by detailing the bloodshed of European citizens in the massacre of Oran (Benjamin Stora states as many 300 died, however sources vary on the number of mortalities. The event was planned by the FLN as a reaction against the OAS.)[282]

This insistence on the plight of the exiled pied-noirs and the view of French-Algeria as one of mixed friendships is, historical accuracy aside, reactionary in 2007, as the media had recently been more judgmental of the French presence, reporting on the torture committed by the French army during the war that they had previously denied (the military opened files concerning

[282] The toll from July 5 was high. According to the figures given by Doctor Mostefa Naït, director of the hospital complex in Oran, 95 people including 20 Europeans were killed (13 stabbed to death). In addition, 161 were wounded. The Europeans told of scenes of torture, pillaging, and above all of abduction. On May 8, 1963, the secretary of Algerian affairs declared at the National Assembly that 3,080 people had been listed as abducted or missing: 18 were found, 868 freed, and 257 killed (throughout Algeria, but especially in Oranie).

Benjamin Stora, *Algeria, 1830-2000: a short history* 105-106

the Algerian War to the public in 1999, Paul Aussaresses non-apolegetic confession of torture was published in 2001, and General Jacques Massu death was publicized in 2002.) While Charef does not always depict the French military favorably, some officers do provide the main character with a medical check-up and appear concerned for his welfare. Furthermore, *Cartouches gauloises* considers other French characters and their trauma in depth. While Charef's film does not idealize French Algeria like *Le Coup de sirocco* (1979), or evoke imperialist nostalgia like *Indochine* (1992), the Arab child protagonist offers a nuanced point of view that universalizes the atrocity of war. However, because the child is Arab with familial ties to the FLN, Algerian nationalism resounds. Furthermore, although Charef sets *Cartouches gauloises* in his hometown of Oran, and concludes the film on the day independence is announced, July 5, 1962, he fails to mention the mass murder that occurred simultaneously, a central event in *Les Histoires à pas dire*. Instead, Charef chooses to end the film on a celebratory note, concluding the story of an Arab boy with the imminent return of his *fellagha* father.

<u>A French or an Algerian director? A French or Algerian Film</u>

Mehdi Charef's unusual bi-national background allows him to empathize with both French and Arab characters. When Mehdi Charef was born in 1952, Algeria was French (in 1848 Algeria was annexed as a part of France, *l'Algérie-Française*, although it was formerly a French colony). To this extent duality complicates Charef's national identity: he was both born in France and in Algeria. Charef and his family left several years after the war of independence to live in Nanterre, France. Therefore, although Charef spent significant childhood years in Algeria, his

films and novels are produced for a French population in France. Nevertheless, several of his literary narratives are set in Algeria and his works usually portray Maghrebin characters.[283]

Charef's most lauded work is his first film, *Le Thé au harem d'Archimède*. *Le Thé* established the novelist as a director, but because *Le Thé* was the first feature length film set in the banlieue by a Maghrebi director, the film also established Charef's status as a *beur* director. *Beur*, the term most often attached to Charef's oeuvre, is slang for second generation Maghrebian immigrants in France. The word first introduced in the 80s, uses *verlan*—a French speech style, particularly popular in the banlieue, of reversing phonetic syllables—to say *arabe*.[284] Media soon seized the term as shorthand for this group, increasing the term's popularity. Today, the term *beur* in literature and film defines narratives that confront the social and financial difficulties of Maghrebis in France, particularly second and third generation immigrants. Usually immigrants author these works, expanding on certain autobiographical details. At the époque, *Le Thé au harem d'Archimède* uniquely fit this description in cinema; in fact Michel Frodon describes *Le Thé* as "fondateur de la culture beurre."[285] The film, which was first a semi-autobiographical novel of the same title, depicts a young man (Majid, played by Kader Boukhanef) who is unable to find work—or even an internship—after high school due to racism. Consequently, Majid becomes a petty thief with his partner in crime, a French friend Pat (Rémi Martin), also in late adolescence, who lives in the same HLM (project). The film poses identity questions: Majid differs from his friends as an Arab, but also isolates himself from his

[283] The films *Le thé au harem d'Archimède* (1984)*, Marie-Line* (2000), and *Miss Mona* (1989).

[284] Many third generation immigrants use verlan on the already verlan term to call themselves, *rebeu.*

[285] Michel Frodon, " Le cinéma n'existe pas, " *Quantara 30*, 1989-1999.

family, who cannot understand his current cultural environment—exemplifying the alienation of the second-generation immigrant in France.

Charef's subsequent films show cinematic interest in other minorities: transsexuals (*Miss Mona*), the homeless and drug addicted (*Camomille*), female prisoners (*Les Juliettes*). However, Charef's Algerian origins and a recurrent interest in North African immigrants label him a *beur* director. Fabrice Venturini aims to defend Charef from such easy categorization despite using *beur* in the title of his work on the cinéaste, *Mehdi Charef: conscience ésthétique de la génération beur.* He explains that the classification of *cinéma beur* is very limited and that Charef's work evokes much more than this grouping suggests:

> Son parcours, sa production, sa "vision" du cinéma ont fait de lui plus qu'un référant : une conscience….Cependant, son œuvre est faite de bien d'autres choses que la simple retranscription d'un questionnement identitaire propre à ce que l'on a appelé, plus ou moins complaisamment, la génération beur. Son tissu narratif, au fil des films, offre en effet une étrange mosaïque où l'image rencontre l'image, engendrant autant d'actualisations iconiques : Marilyn Monroe, Humphrey Bogart, Giuletta Masina, Jean Seberg cohabitent aussi.[286]

Here Venturini describes the intertextual nature of Charef's work poetically as a mosaic. The icons (references to them are found in Charef's films) of this variegation originate from Hollywood (Monroe, Bogart) or European art films (Masina and Seberg—Charef alludes to *A bout de souffle*). Therefore, as Venturini sees it, Charef moves beyond the identity politics inherent in the word *beur* largely because of his allusions to the film history of the global west. It

[286] Fabrice Venturini, *Mehdi Charef: La conscience d'une génération beur.* Paris : Séguier (2005) 16.

is the references to the famous actor and actresses that prove the director's knowledge and adhere to a larger French public.

Sonia Lee similarly finds the cinema of Charef *intégré* because of its homage to the French New Wave; she describes *Le Thé* as a contemporary *banlieue* reworking of Truffaut's *400 cents coups.* "Il me semble évident que Charef s'est inspiré du film de Truffaut et qu'il a trouvé dans le grand réalisateur de la Nouvelle Vague non seulement un maître à filmer mais, une sensibilité proche à la sienne, qui lui a permis de trouver place dans le cinéma français." [287] In this way, Lee imagines that inspiration from Truffaut and the New Wave is responsible for the artistic success of Charef's film, which as Venturini implies, extends beyond the immigrant public parameters into a higher art because of its French influences.

Although Roy Armes discusses Charef's film *Miss Mona* (1989) in his book *Post-colonial images: Studies in North African film*, it can be little debated that the film, which shows the difficulties of a recent Algerian immigrant who befriends an aging drag queen in Paris, is French and discusses minority groups in France as well as French immigration policy. While Armes considers this film North African because of the director's origins, he begins his article by distinguishing between North African filmmakers who view Europe as the Other, and defining a newer group of cineastes:

> On the other hand, there is the work of those filmmakers, of North African origin or born in Europe of Maghrebian parents, who operate broadly within the cultural and production context of the immigrant in Europe…Since the mid-1980s the

[287] Sonia Lee, "Mehdi Charef et le cinéma de l'intégration, " *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies,* 8.2 (2004)190.

> perspective has changed, however, with new directors—such as Abdelkrim Bahloul, Rachid Bouchareb, and Mehdi Charef—coming from within the immigrant community. Their first features –*Mint Tea* (1984) *Bâton Rouge* (1985) and *Tea at Achimede's Harem* (1985) respectively –are key works of a new kind of immigrant cinema.[288]

By identifying these directors as French immigrants, instead of *beur*, Armes is able to encompass more than the French-Arab directors. However, by grouping these three directors of North African background and French citizenship, he is essentially giving *beur* cinema a different title. Yet even when categorizing Charef as a *beur* or immigrant director because of his heritage, or his work as *beur* because of its recurrent interest in Maghreb, we must remember that *beur* is a French construct that describes French citizens, albeit of North African descent. If the term of choice is immigrant cinema, then Charef is still an immigrant in France, making the film ultimately a French film despite its more particular subset.

Nonetheless, I term *Cartouches gauloises* a Franco-Algerian production. A significant percentage of the cast is Algerian and the film takes place in Algeria, where over half of it was filmed. This is the second film by Charef that was filmed in North Africa; in 2001, 16 years after *Le Thé*, Charef filmed *La Fille de Keltoum* in Tunisia,[289] though the narrative is set in the mountainous area of rural Algeria amongst the Berber people. The unsettling images combined

---

[288] Roy Armes, *Post-colonial images: Studies in North African film,* Bloomington (2005): 125.

[289] Kabyl culture and mountainous landscapes feature predominantly in the story of a young woman who was adopted by a Swiss couple at birth and now searches for her biological mother in Algeria. To this extent, *La fille de Keltoum* inverts the immigrant experience Charef had previously depicted (his own) by showing a European's attempts to integrate into Algerian culture, rather than the reverse.

with the controversy surrounding the Algerian War make the nationality of Charef's second feature more questionable. K.G. Productions has produced all of Mehdi Charef's films and continued this support with *Cartouches gauloises.* The collaboration has existed since K.G. founder Costa-Gavras read Charef's novel *Le Thé au harem d'Archimède* and then approached him to direct a film version.[290] Subsequently, each of Charef's films has premiered in France, criteria for the *Césars*, the French academy awards (for which *Le Thé* won *Meillure Première Oeuvre*). Nevertheless, various groups financed *Cartouches gauloises*, including the Algerian FDATIC (Fondation de l'Art et de l'Industrie Cinématographique), a government committee that "awards subsidies in order to stimulate the film economy".[291] This source, though probably minor, along with a current of Algerian nationalism that pervades the film characterize *Cartouches gauloises* as Franco-Algerian.

Cartouches gauloises focuses on the observations of a 10-year-old boy, Ali (Charef was also 10 in 1962). Several French boys from school are his friends, and they frequently play soccer together with neighboring teams of Arab boys.[292] Ali's best friend is the French Nico. Their games frequently intersect with surrounding warfare (shooting interrupts the boys picking bamboo for their clubhouse roof, a neighborhood girl asks for their help after fellaghas murder

---

[290] Costa-Gavras and Michèle Gavras were particularly helpful, Gavras filmed *Z* (1969) in Algeria and had maintained connections with the Algerian government. (Additionally, K.G. Productions oversaw the filming of *Mon colonel* earlier that year.)

[291] Viola Shafik, *Arab Cinema, History and Cultural Identity, New Revised Edition,* Cairo: American University in Cairo Press (2007): 32.

[292] Interestingly, Ali's French friends are named, while the Algerian boys that he plays with are not named, signifying their lesser importance to the narrative.

her parents in broad daylight, a French helicopter throws Ali's cousin's body out to land in the middle of the boys' soccer match). Nico and Ali repeat phrases they have heard uttered by adults and insult each other's backgrounds in spite of their bond. They secretly fear the inevitable; Nico will be forced to live in France with his family. After the departure of Nico's family, Ali finds a soccer ball in Nico's abandoned house and realizes the boy left it for his friend as a memento. The film ends with Ali smiling for the birth of independent Algeria. Previously, when delivering papers at the army base, Ali saw his father, weary from torture and imprisoned. Ali and his mother also witness the French military murder his uncle, in the family village. Thus our main character, Ali, whose best friend is Nico, the middle-class French boy, and who has befriended many Europeans as a paperboy and basket-carrier at the market, must negotiate between his attachments to pied-noirs, and his family who desperately desire independence.

While the film starring many first-time actors had a budget much smaller than *Michou d'Auber*, it did infinitely worse at the box office (30,817 tickets sold in the first two weeks). While such an independent film dictates a smaller viewership, the reaction of the press is also part of the equation. The *Cahiers du cinéma* did not review the film, and the other left press publications were critical of Charef's style, as well as the pacing of violence—*Les Inrockuptibles* was an exception reviewing the film very favorably. As my dissertation suggests, though the Algerian War is a popular subject in contemporary French cinema, the public is less enthusiastic than the filmmakers. In fact, after the financial failures of both *Mon colonel* and *Cartouches gauloises*, co-producer Mohamed Salem Brahimi told me he would never again make a film about the Algerian War, because "les Français ne veulent pas le voir".

Although this is the first Charef film to address the Algerian War, several of his novels are set in Algeria during the revolution. His novel *Le Harki de Meriem* recounts a non-political harki's experience as an outsider during the war, as well as anger towards his family in both France and Algeria in the decades proceeding the war. In Charef's 2006 autobiographical novel, *À Bras, le Coeur,* the narrator describes his childhood as a boy during the revolution and his family's decision after the war to join his father working in France. This literary exploration of Algerian history and childhood memory prepared Charef to write and direct an autobiographical film that shares many similar details with *A Bras, le coeur*. The resulting film, *Cartouches gauloises*, is a unique cinematic depiction of the Algerian War—it is the sole to depict a child witness as the protagonist. Furthermore, the child witness serves as a device to display both Algerian and French losses. One finds a very similar portrayal of the war in *À bras, le Coeur*, of which Hélène Jacommard observes:

> Notre hypothèse est que Charef est l'un des rares auteurs à parvenir à s'éléver au-dessus des lignes de fracture provoquées par La Guerre de l'Algérie, à prendre en compte les souffrances de toutes les parties en présence et, finalement, à suggérer une forme de réconciliation entre la France et l'Algérie contemporaines.[293]

Although elements of the anxious new citizens' nationalism transpire into the film's style, the concern with the French characters and the equal screen time they are given balance the joyful ending in independence with sympathy for the French departing. In this way, Charef's work

[293] Hélène Jacommard, " Éclats ou écarts de mémoire ? La guerre d'indépendance algérienne dans l'œuvre écrite de Mehdi Charef, " *Nottingham French Studies* 48.1 (2009): 94.

maintains an Arab perspective, but reconciles this view by also revealing the distress caused by the French exodus.

CHILDREN

Two years before *Cartouches gauloises,* Charef directed a short film called "Tanza" for *All the Invisible Children*, a feature produced for awareness by Unicef, that comprised seven short films by various directors—most notably Spike Lee and Emil Kustirica. Although Charef's cinematic oeuvre had already shown an interest in adolescents, his short *Tanza* stars even younger actors. Tanza, the boy after whom the film is named, fights in a civil war in an unnamed country in Africa with machine guns and explosives. Charef's involvement in the project cemented his interest in children as protagonists, and as the subjects of warfare in particular. While *Tanza* had particular contemporary relevance to violence in Ghana the film also carried personal significance for Mehdi Charef who spent formative years in revolutionary Algeria. This interest in children overlapped with the filmmaker's cinematic return to North Africa: as mentioned in 2001 he filmed *La Fille de Keltoum* in Tunisia. Algeria was still dangerous during this time period: civil warfare throughout the 90s labled the decade the dark years, but the nation was safer with a more secure government by 2006. Finally, Charef was able to address his childhood memory of Algerian history by filming in his hometown, Oran, with child actors.

Like *Michou d'Auber*, or any films for adults with child protagonists, *Cartouches gauloises* utilizes the child as a symbol of innocence, and allows the viewers to reminiscence on their own proper experience as a more vunerable being. The nostalgia is doubled when the film, as the two I discuss in this chapter, involves an exacting historical setting that is less than abstract for the middle-aged viewer—in its year of release, many viewers in their 50s and 60s

could recall news images of Algeria in the weeks before and after the revolution. Yet despite the inherent nostalgia of a film for adults starring children, *Cartouches gauloises* differs from what Phil Powrie calls a wave of contemporary French films with a child protagonists: *La Ponette* (1996), *Les Diables* (2002), *Être et Avoir* (2002), *Les Choristes* (2004). While *Cartouches gauloises* does, as Phil Powrie suggests, "look nostalgically backwards at childhood," the scenes of Ali working in a market or as a paper boy deny Powrie's sentence's conclusion, that these films depict childhood "as a moment of purity and freedom from the materialistic."[294] Although Ali seems carefree for moments at the clubhouse with Nico or when playing soccer, we see the financial burden of the household fall directly on his tiny shoulders when he works at the market and continues delivering papers to dangerous areas—Ali hides in a café bathroom seconds before it is bombed by the FLN, delivers papers to the French military at a base where he sees tortured prisoners (including his own father), and sees the police shoot a man at the market. In these moments, the boy's frame seems more skinny than slim—enhanced by a oversized tank top with large holes and short shorts (Image 1). It becomes clear that Ali risks his safety to provide for his single parent household.

Cartouches gauloises is even further from what Karen Lury asserts in *The Child in Film: Tears, Fears and Fairytales. In one chapter, Lury analyzes films that she contextualizes as war films for adults with child protagonists: Pan's Labyrinth*, *Tin Drum,* and *Spirit of the Beehive*, though she also includes Chris Marker's *La Jetée.* However, the neo-realist edged film by Charef cannot be grouped with these fantastic features. Lury does not define the fairy tale genre before writing :

[294] Phil Powrie, "Unfamiliar Places: 'Heterospection' and Recent French Films on Children,"Screen: 46.3(2005): 343.

> the films present us with a children's story within a fairy tale framework, apparently simplifying the narrative and reducing the need for context or explanation. Yet the seductive, nightmarish, fairy tale world (realised through the images) complicates our response to the events.

While the films Lury chooses for the chapter contain extraordinary images that symbolize both the imagination and the distorted memory of a child during wartimes, there are other war films with child protagonists that instead attempt to render a memory–or a historical time period—accurately (*Au Revoir les enfants, Empire of the Sun*). *Cartouches gauloises* more readily can be placed in this subset that recalls neo-realism, a genre where children appear frequently, specifically in the films of Vittorio de Sica—*I bambini ci guardano*, *Sciuscia* and *Ladri di bicilette*—and Roberto Rossellini *Romà città aperta*, the Neapolitan Episode of *Paisan*, and *Germania anno zero*. In Rossellini's war triology and in *Sciuscia* and *Ladri di bicilette*, boys struggle financially, physically labor to support their families, and sometimes even steal. The realist poverty-stricken urban war/post-war scenario is much closer to *Cartouches gauloises*.

Charef directly references another feature about impoverished boys, Luis Buñuel's *Los Olvidados* (1950). When Ali stops by the movie theater, the friendly projectionist lets him watch his favorite feature at the booth. The selection is *Los Olvidados* (1950), a film that begins by stating:

> *Almost every capital, like New York, Paris, London, hides behind its wealth, poverty-stricken homes where poorly-fed children, deprived of health or school,*

> *are doomed to criminality. Society tries to provide a cure…The day will come when children rights are respected.*[295]

Although Ali and his pied-noir friends are only deprived of school in the last weeks before independence, and although the French military provide Ali with a physician's check-up, Ali is certainly a poorly fed child, which perhaps explains his interest in the film. Furthermore, both the chaotic society of Mexico City and the crumbling infrastructure of Oran accept and promote child labor (as stated Ali works, and in Los Olvidados children work for street musicians and at carnival rides). In the scene that Ali watches, an abandoned boy begins working for a blind street musician for room and board and then befriends a local girl by giving her a tooth for good luck. Ali recites Spanish dialogue from memory as the editing alternates between shots of Ali and the Buñuel film.

This scene of Los Olvidados stands out as one of the more hopeful in a generally grim film (during the plot one boy kills several others). The scene in which an abandoned boy finds a new home (before the arrangement becomes abusive) and a pretty female friend suggests the possibility of good luck as a way of controlling misfortune. In this way, the editing, alongside Ali's smile and enthusiastic recitation, transfer the optimism of the sequence from Los Olvidados on to Cartouches gauloises. However, for those who know the conclusion of Los Olvidados and for others knowledgable in Algerian history, specifically the massacre in Oran directly proceeding Algerian independence, this optimism is doomed. We assume that Ali also has seen the Buñel picture in its entirety, and realizes the happiness on screen is ill-fated, just as he knows that violence is occurring exterior to the calm theater. Yet in this moment, cinema and a

---

[295] Although *Los Olvidados* in Spanish and premiered in Mexico, these English subtitles appear on the Films Sans Frontières Edition.

specifically cheerful scene dually distract both (Ali) and the viewer (the public) from the pain central to both pictures concerning children in difficult circumstances. This is the only scene we see Ali watch, and perhaps he only watches this scene—his memorization proves he has watched the scene repeatedly. Ali, aware of the larger film's macabre tone and darker statement about humanity, chooses to take refuge in this positive moment.

In 1950 when Buñel made Los Olivados, the Spanish director was well acquainted with neorealism and its popularity. In this feature about boy thieves, Buñel both pays tribute to neorealism—the prologue also states that the story is "real"—and severely transgresses it by adding surrealist gestures. Like Buñel, Charef's work demonstrates a debt to post-war Italian film: Many non-actors, including children, depict the social reality of war-torn Algeria, and he films primarily outdoors. Although Charef does not augment neorealism with surrealism as does Buñel, his feature is historical and in Africa, very different from the neorealists commentary on what was the very recent history of Europe.

The child witness: Neorealism

Terming *Cartouches gauloises* as neorealist elucidates Ali's role in the film. Both Michou of *Michou d'Auber* and Ali of *Cartouches gauloises* are unable to change the course of events; they are children with very little agency: Ali can neither fight as a soldier nor stop war and Michou cannot decide where he lives. But despite the characters' lack of agency and near identical ages (9-10 years), the two differ dramatically, as do their respective films. In *Michou d'Auber*, adults remedy Michou's impotence and act *on* the child for his betterment; Michou does not pick out his clothes or bleach his hair, his foster mother does this for him. Furthermore, the foster parents take Michou to school, to church, and become responsible for his integration and Frenchness. Ali, on the otherhand, is independent. Though he has a mother, she remains

domestic, appearing only once outside of the home with her family in a neighboring village. Though one time Ali proves his need to be nurtured by laying his head on his mother's lap as she tells a story, he enters and leaves their home as he pleases. Nevertheless, while Ali is the family's breadwinner and delivers papers, his work does little to affect the headlines.[296]

Although adults do not act on or for Ali, his freedom does not provide him with agency. Instead, it does allow him to witness the actions of adults and their impact. When Gilles Deleuze describes the protagonist's lack of agency in *L'Image temps* (as discussed in my analysis of *Caché*, Chapter 1), he addresses the child witness of neorealist films: "The role of the child in neo-realism has been pointed out, notably in De Sica (and later in France with Truffaut); this is because, in the adult world, the child is affected by a certain motor, helplessness, but one which makes him all the more capable of seeing and hearing."[297] As *Cartouches Galoises* resembles neorealism in its subject and setting (a war-torn urban area), the child protagonist's *helplessness* –inability to affect his surrounding environment—also makes him an ideal viewpoint for the audience. Most sequences begin by a centering Ali. A subsequent shot will then show his point of view. In this way, the film remains entirely from Ali's perspective—he is in every scene.

Additionally, in many shots Ali peers through windows and doors, further mirroring the public looking through the square screen. These instances are numerous, but the most notable

---

[296] One scene in *Cartouches Gauloises* questions Ali's lack of agency. At the market, the French military check all Arab men for arms. Ali watches as the captain yells at the lieutenants while Ali stands still and watches with wide eyes. When Ali sees an Arab man secretly holding a small hand gun he does nothing. However, when the man points the revolver out towards a soldier, Ali grabs the gun's front and pushes it downwards. In this instance, Ali may have affected the general outcome with his physical suggestion.

[297] Deleuze, 3.

occurrences are when: Ali looks through a window to see a French soldier threatening to rape a young girl; through an opening in a town wall Ali sees a woman shot for hiding FLN members; in the doorway of a jail cell at the French military base Ali sees his father and another FLN prisoner exhausted with bloody faces. Later, I will detail how he looks through a window at a murdered *colon* family. These window openings allow Ali to see, but with an element of separation (the wall). He views these horrific events, but as a child witness, does not have a participatory role. Furthermore, Ali's lack of speech, like many other Charef characters[298], allots him this position of witnessing rather than acting—the boy talks rarely while pied-noir characters confess their fears about the future of Algeria. Ali's disinterest in a speaking becomes a character trait, and explicates his fascination with cinema, where he is but a passive spectator. In the midst of the film's various characters and abundant violence, Ali remains the viewer's reference point, as he mirrors the public—we are both silent spectators of the Algerian War.

Ali's employment further facilitates this role as witness. Through the eyes of an Arab paper and grocery boy, the audience accesses territory usually forbidden to Arab men and women: the French military base containing tortured suspects, a French café bombed in our presence, a bordello where French and Algerian prostitutes consort with French soldiers, the train station where pied-noirs flee and the station manager confesses his fears, the homes of an elderly pied-noir couple refusing to leave their homeland. In these scenes, we sympathize with the French characters who do not like being forced out (the couple, the station manager), and in others we become angry at the French presence (when we see the French military torture and

[298] Majid of *Le Thé au harem d'Archimède* and Rallia of *La Fille de Keltoum* also observe much more than they engage in conversation.

kill). The variety of events we witness through Ali's wandering profession represent the range of violence and sorrow within the French community.

Ali's more playful travels with Nico in search of soccer games also support the French. As Nico is also a child, we are instantly aware of his ignorance and innocence made more apparent in the boys' dialogues of blame and confusion. Nico frequently condemns Ali's father, who is rumored to be a terrorist, while Ali denies the allegation saying his father works in France. Later Ali tells Nico that when he leaves from France his house will be inhabited by goats. These debates with Nico that usually end with the boys chasing each other, are the only scenes in which Ali seems verbal. Once, when Nico tells Ali that if he goes to France he will walk on a sky-scraper (it is clear neither boy knows what the word means), Ali says "Tu ne partiras jamais n'est-ce pas?" Nico says "Non." Both boys are ignorant of the extremity of war and the reality that will tear their friendship apart—for safety Nico's family will be forced to leave Algeria.

Ali is with Nico when they witness the bloody aftermath of a *fellagha* attack on a French household. When the boys are cutting bamboo to make a roof for their clubhouse, Julie (Aurore Labrugère), who knows Nico, approaches the boys in the nude—evidently, *fellaghas* broke into her home while she was showering (Image 2). Nico gives her his shirt—he has on two—and the boys gallantly chaperone her home, watching closely to see if the guerillas have left. From a second story window in the home, the camera takes the boys' perspective to reveal four adults bludgeoned on the red cushions of white lawn furniture in a backyard terrace (Image 3). The murdered family's status is clear in the luxurious home and clarifies the FLN revenge: the colons' blood is on their white furniture. However, Julie's nudity alluded to but covered by the greenery of the bamboo, demonstrates the meaningless of Western possessions after the bloodshed, and symbolizes the child's wholesome tie to nature. Here the child's youth affects the

audience and the violence she survives induces sympathy for blameless French children orphaned by the revolution.

"Bambino"

At the end of the shot of the murder, the camera lowers to a record player that finishes a 45" of "Bambino" before stopping. In a close-up, the player begins "Bambino" again (Image 4). The player's arm stopping, lifting, and then beginning again, reminds us that Julie's family were surprised by the *fellaghas* and unknowlingly chose this joyful tune for their death. The children resemble the record player, their helplessness activating what Deleuze would term their motor, rendering their ability to see and hear more acute. Like the arm pausing on the left side before playing again, the sequence at Julie's home represents a pause—there is a very little action, and no dialogue. The children also resemble the record player in their repetitiveness, as the arm lifts and places its needle on the vinyl again, the children will similarly continue to play. In fact, directly after this sequence, the editing cuts to Nico and Ali shouting energetically, as they kick the soccer ball, the boy's favorite game seen in several other sequences.

The version of "Bambino" spinning, sung by the Algerian musician Lili Boniche, augments the irony; the *colons* are entertained in Arabic, a language dismissed in government and education after colonization, while Arabs murder them.[299] Although Boniche's recording is in Arabic, the song is an Italian composition made very popular in by Claudio Villa (1956) and then in French by Dalida (1956), and in English by Dean Martin (1957). The rhythm of the song does not differ from these versions, and so although the beat could be interpreted as North African this is merely incidental. Lili Boniche, known as the "Jewish crooner of the casbah," was

[299] Although Lili Boniche sang in Arabic, as a Jew, he was less problematic than an Arab performer for the French public.

well-versed in Arab-Andalousan music, but specialized in combining Western and North African styles, making "modern Algerian" music.[300] In this way, the sung Arabic serves to slightly exoticize the minor chords of the "Bambino" chorus and almost Latin beat, but does not threaten the Western song structure or instrumentation.[301] Like the wineries of colonial Algeria, the grapes are regional and the workers are mostly indigenous, but the product is made for French taste and consumption. Essentially, for the French listener, this is a Arabic cover of a Dalida hit that was always slightly exotic, considering the bombshell's well-known Egyptian and Italian heritage (in 1954 Dalida was Miss Egypt).

"Bambino" (repeated in the song's chorus) means child in Italian and draws our attention to the boys' youth. While the lyrics explain that children cannot "handle love,"[302] the lyrics paired with this disturbing image suggest that it is warfare rather than love that the children lack the faculties to comprehend. The lyrics apply to Ali more specifically. Like the *bambino* playing the mandolin, Ali as a paper and grocery delivery boy also "wanders the streets."Ali is the only one of the children who will understand the song's lyrics, as he is the only Arabic speaker. In this respect, the song seems destined to play for him in this otherwise silent moment. While record players are still used in the 21st century, now they are more common to DJs than family homes, and thus the machine represents a past era. However, while both the song and the machine evoke

[300] Lilliane Provost and Isabelle de Courtilles, *Les Racines de musique noire,* Paris : Harmattan (2008): 307.

[301] Latin rhythms were very stylish in this time period. In *La Battaglia d'Algeri* , a bomb explodes across the street from the Milk Bar while the Belgian Latin band Chakacha's "Rebekka" plays. After observing the shattered café, the public begin to dance again to the song playing eerily behind the image of destruction. Then, the Milk Bar also explodes. Although *La Battaglia d'Algeri* lacks the current of nostalgia present in *Cartouches Gauloises*¸ the effect of happy, ethnic, music against the images of corpses is similar.

[302] Translation of the Si Bonishe's lyrics by George Murer.

nostalgia, the murder of Julie's family, a violent act of decolonization, problematizes the past revisited.

The French version of the same song embraces a less complicated return to the past in the opening credit sequence of *Michou d'Auber*. Each credit is partnered with a vintage black and white photo taken directly from the true story that the film was based on; these photos are from the collection of the screenwriter Messaoud Hattou's one time foster mother, Gisèle Duvali. Uniformed French military, most notably the true Georges Duvali, pose with elephants and monuments in Indochina and Morrocco, where the narrative explains he served as colonel (*Michou d'Auber* Images 10 and 11). Although several photos with a child and his presumed family do not suggest a geographical location, the majority of photos glorify the last years of the French Empire with geographic and cultural signifiers. These images are not complicated by ingenious people or warfare. "Bambino," sung by Dalida against the photo sequence, reminds the audience that the upcoming feature, *Michou d'Auber*, is about a child, but more importantly the song heightens the photos' historical quality—the viewer correctly associates the melody with the film's time setting. In this way the catchy tune and the smiling faces in the photos coalesce to portray the French presence abroad as a touristic family adventure. This cultural understanding of "Bambino" becomes ironic in *Cartouches gauloises* by pairing the European song in Arabic with the image of corpses.[303] In both films, the song evokes the specific time period of its popularity while the lyrics modify an indigenous boy. "Bambino" causes the viewer in both films

[303] Linda Hutcheon argues that postmodern works often questions nostalgia with irony. Hutcheon, Linda. "Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern." *Methods for the Study of Literature as Cultural Memory*. Vol.6 of the Proceedings of the XVth Congress of the International Compartive Literature Association "Literature as Cultural Memor" Leiden 16-22 August 1997.

to recall the popular trends of the late 50s and early 60s, but *Cartouches gauloises* sabotages any idealization of the époque by further contextualizing the song with the bloodshed of the Algerian War.

Sympathy for Arabs

Ali is an exceptional Arab of French-Algeria: He socializes with French boys, attends a French school, and daily interacts with French people through work. Nonetheless, the script emphasizes his Arab ethnicity. This difference allows him to witness not only violence committed towards the French but also violence committed by the French military towards Arabs, as well as to participate in Islamic cultural traditions.[304] While Ali has relationships with French people, other than Nico, these relationships have financial exchange as their basis. On the other hand, the Arabs Ali's knows represent his extended family.

We first meet Ali's uncle, when he finds Ali in the street delivering groceries. He then steals the boy's money for the FLN. Although this action does not win our approval, after a French soldier shoots the uncle we consider the death unjust and sympathize with his family for their loss. The murder sequence occurs outside of the main city and in the village where Ali's numerous family members dwell. Ali's mom, Aïcha (Zahia Said), and Ali run towards the commotion of the small walled community. The military literally drag Arab men from their shacks and force them into a large truck (not unlike the military vehicle that drives off with the harki suspects at the end of *La Trahison*). Simultaneously, women, children, and elderly men cry in Arabic for the suspects to be released. At last a soldier attempts to walk Ali's uncle into the truck, struggling to keep him captive by holding his hands behind his back. However, the uncle

[304] Ali refers to his circumcision in the film, a ritual celebration at the onset of adolescence in Muslim culture.

manages to break free and runs a few steps before a soldier shoots him in the back. The uncle then falls with his back to the camera, his arms stretched outright before collapsing (Image 5).

While the military's murder of Ali's uncle appears to be a warning to other prisoners, we know of his involvement with the FLN, which could mean he is responsible for murders as gruesome as that of Julie's family. Yet the soldier choosing to shoot the back of the body from this angle (shooting from behind associated with surprise and deceit) and the camera's similar viewpoint of the instantaneous death, portray the military's actions as cruel and unjustified. Furthermore, the victim's arms stretched horizontally signify surrender enhancing his defenselessness—often this gesture signifies a lack of arms.[305] This posture connotes cruxification which is how the bystanders view of his death—Aïcha yells in Arabic "un martyr!" after he falls.

The village inhabitants begging for the captives to be set free cause more affect in the scene. As the Arabs shout for independence, French soldiers shove them back, corralling them away from the truck holding the suspects (Image 6). Several shots show Aïcha, next to her father, and in one shot we see Ali pushing against the soldiers, trying desperately to break through their arms, while yelling for independence. Ali's presence serves to remind the viewer of their point of reference in the chaotic scene, and of the appropriate emotion, anger. Directly after the uncle falls to the earth, the camera reveals Aïcha's reaction; her shock and grief increase our disgust at the military behavior (Image 7).

The soldiers then drag the corpse into the vehicle with the other living prisoners while Aïcha continues to scream, begging for her brother's body. As the truck pulls away, Aïcha and

---

[305] Mehdi Charef describes a similar situation in *À bras, le cœur.* The protagonist's uncle is shot holding his arms out, indicating that he is killed even though he is not bearing arms.

Ali run into the street, chasing the truck while yelling and sobbing in Arabic. A camera placed in the truck takes the French captain's viewpoint, we see his arm and back in the left of the frame, while the frustrated mother and son yell and race torwards him with venom (Image 9). Arabic music featuring an emotive female vocalist accompanies the shot of Ali and Aïcha running in rage. The non-diegetic North African music heightens the scene's emotion and nationalism by culturally relating to the pro-Independence family.

The crowd forced to the sidelines by the occupying military, as well as Aïcha's emotional run after the truck holding a loved one, invoke a scene from *Romà: cittá apertura* (1945) the first of Rossellini's war series (Images 8 and 10). In *Romà* after Pina's fiancé, Manfriedo, a Resistance fighter, is taken captive by the Nazis and forced into a truck, Pina breaks from the crowd and runs after the vehicle (Image 9). She is then suddenly shot and killed, while the truck continues moving forward. In both *Cartouches gauloises* and *Roma*, the foreign military oppresses the indigenous proletariat and captures or kills a man fighting for the occupied nation. The woman running after the vehicle bravely rebels against tyranny, representing a national maternal force.

Marcus Millicent explains that "the topos of the female body politic, which makes of female characters personification allegories for the course of the nation, goes at least as far back as Dante's anguished lament."[306] He then argues that Pina, who is both a mother and pregnant when shot, represents a national mother in Italian culture; Anna Magnana playing Pina starred as

[306] Marcus Millicent, "Pina's Pregnancy, Traumatic Realism, and the After-Life of *Open City*," *Italica* 85.4 (2008): 428. Muriel of *Muriel ou un temps d'un retours* can also be read as a representation of Algeria, killed metaphorically by France.

a mother in later Italian films, and the scene described appeared on a stamp. While Aïcha does not carry such significance in Algeria, she does represent the national mother in *Cartouches gauloises*. Not only is she our protagonist's mother, she counters the French presence with Algerian customs; she follows Islamic prayer and wears a veil, she first shows Ali the new nation's flag, and grieves most righteously the death of her brother, who fights for Independence. However, unlike *Roma*'s Pina, Aïcha does not die, but lives to celebrate Independence with joy. Pina's son Marcello also fights against Nazis, and runs to his mother hysterically when she falls from the shot, proving his solidarity (the boy is then removed kicking and screaming while a priest kneels with Pina's corpse invoking the Pietà). In *Cartouches gauloises*, Ali also supports his mother as partner in rebellion, and continues running after the truck for several seconds after Aïcha has already stopped from exhaustion. This is the only point in the film in which Ali appears to be more than a shocked or interested onlooker. Although his agency limits his actions and its effects, here anger compels him to expression and movement in conjunction with his mother.

By placing the French soldiers in the same position as the Nazis of *Romà*, and the Arabs in the same roles as the Resistance fighters in the Italian film, Charef makes a similar analogy of cruelty, evil, and righteousness. The intertextual reference to *Romà: cittá aperture* and the soft traditional Arab music enhance the nationalism of the confrontation.[307] The scene demonstrates the atrocity of warfare and depicts the loss of a FLN member as a dramatic family death. Although the film also shows the loss of a French family to guerilla murder, and enhances our

[307] The composer Armand Amar created several motifs. Arab tinted music enhances scenes when Ali is alone or with his family, scenes in which he plays with French boys have a more Western piano melody with a sorrowful undertone—in many of several of these scenes French parents take their sons to leave for France.

sympathy for the pied-noirs with confused child characters, the film emphasizes the emotion of the Arab family. By watching the French military kill an Arab—we only see the aftermath of the murder of the French—and by identifying with the family of the deceased and their larger agenda for Independence, the film shifts towards Algerian nationalism. This deviation is undeniable at the ending of the film; independence is a celebration with music and games rather than a defeat. Although short sequences imply the fear and possible casualties of *harkis* and Algerian prostitutes after Independence, the narrative does not dwell on these minorities. Instead, the many times macabre film ends in a celebration, and with the imminent return of Ali's father. Any discussion of the massacre of Oran would destroy the film's structure, which ends optimistically with Algerian Independence.

Traumatic Realism

While the film reveals the pain and sorrow of French settlers and pied-noir citizens, we view the French loss from the Arab child's perspective and it is his quotidian life during the revolution that the film illustrates. The violence Ali witnesses, simultaneously extraordinary and banal, was difficult for the even the left French press, normally positive concerning Mehdi Charef, to interpret: Renault Gilles of *Libération* writes, "c'est tout un monde qui s'effondre autour de lui … A ce rythme, chaque situation pèse des tonnes," while Thomas Soutinel in *Le Monde* describes the film as a "succession de drames et d'horreurs."[308] This constant violence that Gilles and Soutinel feel ruins the pacing *Cartouches gauloises* adheres to Michael

---

[308] Renault Gilles, "*Cartouches Gauloises,* tir mal ajusté," *Libération,* Aug. 8, 2008, Feb.17, 2011,

<http://www.liberation.fr/culture/0101108653-cartouches-gauloises-tir-mal-ajuste>

Thomas Soutinel, "*Catrouches Gauloises*," *Le monde.* Jul.7, 2007, Feb. 17, 2011,

<http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cinema/article/2007/08/07/cartouches-gauloises_942600_3476.html#ens_id=734094>

Rothberg's term traumatic realism, coined to describe a type of Holocaust literature. Rothberg explains:

> By focusing attention on the intersection of the everyday and the extreme in the experience and writing of Holocaust survivors, traumatic realism provides an aesthetic and cognitive solution to the conflicting demands inherent in representing and understanding genocide. Traumatic realism mediates between the realist and antirealist positions in Holocaust studies and marks the necessity of considering how ordinary and extraordinary aspects of genocide intersect and coexist.[309]

The realist and antirealist positions in Holocaust studies to which Rothberg refers are respectively the views that the Holocaust can be understood as deriving from an aspect of human nature (Hannah Arendt "evil is banal"), and that it is a calamity that can only comprehended if it is experienced (as in the writing of Elie Wiesel). *Cartouches gauloises* represents the ordinary in the repetitive settings of Ali's work and play life. Several times we see Ali work at the market and make his paper runs and in this way we learn the general layout of the town. Therefore, the bomb explosion at the café, the shooting by the French military at the market, the torn down bordello, the tortured prisoners at the army base, are all extraordinary moments but within the usual. In this way, the density of violence establishes murder as part of Oran's general landscape, and thus an aspect of Ali's everyday experience of work and play there.

[309] Michael Rothberg, *Traumatic Realism the demands of Holocaust Representation*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (2000): 9.

Rothberg finds traumatic realism narrativizes this trauma and finds "new forms of 'documentary' and 'referential' discourse out of that very traumatic void."[310] As implied when discussing the influence of neorealism on *Cartouches gauloises*, documentary elements abound in the film—the exacting geographical location, the attention to historic details in the mise-en-scène, and the revolution, which actually occurred. These documentary tendencies in traumatic realism serve a pedagogical purpose, attempting through narrative to teach what is unknowable, bridging the divide between realist and anti-realist. Film augments this teaching goal; by visually simulating warfare, traumatic realist films attempt to give the viewer a sensory experience of war.

As in Michael Rothberg's discussion of Ruth Klüger's *Still Alive*, in which Klüger recounts her everyday experience as a youth deported and in concentration camps, Charef utilizes the child witness to communicate traumatic realism. This enhances the pedagogical aim of the text by looking through the child's eyes we learn alongside the young protagonist. As already discussed, Ali's work and child status facilitate his vision of loss and regret on both sides of the war that thereby negotiates the damage. The assumed innocence of the child softens his cultural identity—he is more of a child than an Arab, and his bilingual abilities indicate a half-Frenchness. Therefore, although *Cartouches gauloises* ends with a generally pro-revolution sentiment, the child's point of view in a traumatic realist work reconciles the Algerian nationalism with France. As the film's funding and the director's bi-nationality suggest, the film celebrates the victory of Independence, but recognizes the losses of both nations. In this way, *Cartouches gauloises* extends themes found in *La Battaglia di Algeri* another film closely tied to neorealism. Although we see both the FLN and the French military exert calculated violence against one another, we conclude with a celebration the new nation.

[310] Rothberg, 96.

Conclusion

The child device in the Algerian-war film signifies a new cultural understanding of the époque, an understanding built largely by doubling nostalgia. It also represents the passage of time. Films concerning the Algerian War in the 1970s—the most prolific Algerian-War film period before 2005—focus on the experiences of military (*Avoir vingt ans dans les Aurès, R.A.S.*) as many were made by men who served during the war. More recent films about the war necessitate flashbacks and children to evoke the era. In this way, the child-Algerian-war film demonstrates the thought process required of many filmmakers and audience members to discuss the war, remembering their childhood, sometimes with shock. (A film I plan to address in the future is *Un balcon sur la mer* (Nicole Garcia, 2010), which like *Caché* relies on children in flashbacks to present the war period.) Furthermore, affect caused by the tender child protagonist facilitates such a dialogue: The youth is blameless, and primarily a child, rather than the Other.

Both films conclude with the return of the father. Invoking the use of the latin root *pater* in words like *patri* and *patriot*, it is the *pères* of these films that overtly symbolize their nation. The beating and imprisonment of Ali's father represent the sacrifice and resilience of indigenous Algerians fighting for independence, while the two fathers of *Michou d'Auber*, the biological who wishes to return with his sons to the *bled* after independence, and the adopted father, who fought in the military against decolonization, also represent their proper countries. In fact, *Michou*'s conclusion hinges on the child's decision between the two fathers, ultimately indicating his choice between Algeria and France. While the men force his departure with his biological family, the film ends with Georges and Michou reunited. Georges drives to Paris, picks up Michou and they go to the sea, playing along the beach together. By ending the film here, Gilou proves despite biological ties to Algeria and the Kabyl people, Michou's *patrie* is

France—this is solidified in the closing intertitles that tell us that "Messaoud vit aujourd'hui à Paris."

Contrary to Gérard Depardieu, who as the French father takes the majority of screen time in *Michou d'Auber*, we seldom see Ali's father in *Cartouches gauloises.* However, the father's departure and imminent return frame the film, demonstrating his importance to Ali's story. Furthermore, the boys' arguments concerning Ali's father's involvement with the FLN add intrigue to the unnamed, dialogue-free, character. In this way, Ali's father's absence exerts over the narrative a force equal to Michou's omnipresent foster father. Ali's happiness for Algerian Independence is largely due to his father's homecoming; in anticipation, Ali does not mourn the departure of his French friends. In the concluding sequence, an Algerian flag waves near the football goal while Ali plays. When Ali hears a crowd rejoicing, he turns toward the sound and yells, "Papa!" in Arabic before running towards the sound. This ending is the most nationalistic sequence in the film, as the word papa in Arabic, آب, here signifies both father and country. Therefore, *patri*otic conclusions embody the film's larger nationalist message implied throughout *Michou* though restrained in most of *Cartouches* by empathy for French characters.

While the father is an obvious symbol of nation, the boy symbolizes reconciliation between cultures and countries. The films lessen the Other's difference; Michou assimilates through appearance, religion, and language, and Ali possesses half-French traits in bilingualism, friendships, and past-times—French boys and Arab boys both appear equally obsessed by soccer. Like the Mediterranean Sea, the boys in their natural innocence posit the audience between Algeria and France. Yet finally, these reunions (or imminent reunions) empower the boys' nationality and mute questions of disloyalty. In both instances, the ending brings the nationalist

ideology developing within the text to its logical conclusion, reaffirming the boy's bond to the nation, be it an adopted or an emerging one.

Michou d'Auber

H.1

H.2

H.3

H.4

H. 5

H.6

H.7

H.8,

H.9

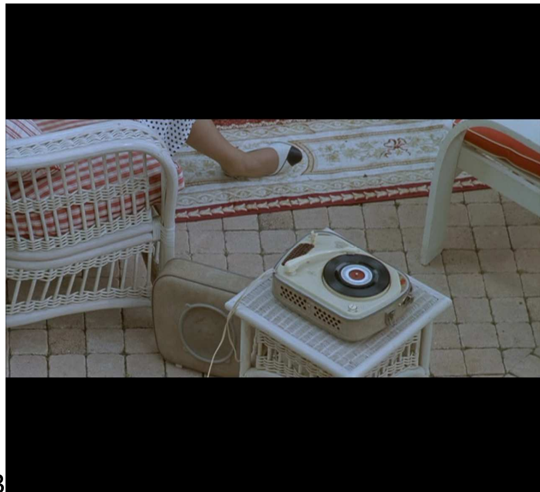
H.10

Cartouches gauloises

I.1

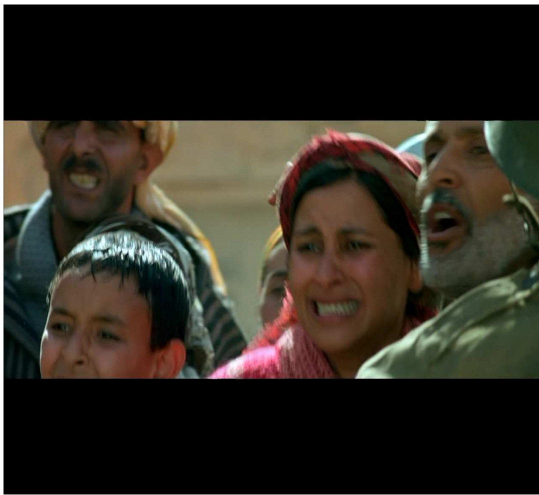
I.2

I.3


I.4

I.5

I.6


I.7

I.8

I.9

I.10

Conclusion.

In 2005, the memory of the Algerian war still impacted French politics. In fact, attempts to reshape collective memory, such as Article 4 of the 2005 law, which asked teachers to impart a more favorable view of the French presence in North Africa, as well as the law's surrounding controversy, only demonstrate how powerful the symbol of Algeria remained in France, 43 years after winning the war's conclusion. The six films made between 2005-2007 discussed in this dissertation represent a specific, historical moment as they are defined by a need to reinvestigate and reinterpret the Algerian-war era. In this way, the films contribute to a larger national current, attempting to understand and reconfigure the once censored past. Yet while the films discussed confront the history of the Algerian-war era four decades later, they also negotiate shameful details, exposing the political present's tenuous relationship to the end of *l'Algérie française*. Further evoking contemporary France's mixed emotions over the loss of Algeria, the public met these often times ambivalent narratives set during the Algerian-war era with disdain and indifference. In *Caché*, the most critically successful of the above mentioned films, repercussions of the war (or specifically the Paris massacre) remain a hidden, hypothetical, question. Yet despite *Caché*'s international success, it did poorly in France, selling but 422, 206 tickets in its first month (nevertheless this box office figure is higher than all of the other films discussed in this dissertation, excluding *Michou*).[311] In fact *Michou d'Auber,* whose French public was double

[311] Interestingly, Michael Haneke's next film, *Das weiße Band - Eine deutsche Kindergeschichte* (2009),which took place in a small town in Germany before World War, sold more than 100,000 tickets than *Caché* during its first month in France. *La Pianiste* (2001) starring Isabelle Huppert and set in contemporary Switzerland, sold roughly 200,000 more tickets than *Caché* during its first month.

Caché's, failed financially, despite centering on the very current subject of integration.[312] Although seven fiction films concerning the Algerian war premiered within a concise three-year period (2005-2007), matching the Algerian-war fiction film production of the 70s, the post-68 decade's reception of the films indicates a much larger public interest, perhaps incited by an anti-censorship sentiment.[313] Thirty some years later, the early twenty-first century appears disinterested in correcting media and government betrayal: if the films attempt to expose the atrocities committed during Algerian-war to the public, the box office figures show little response. This imbalance between the relatively high number of early twenty-first century productions about the Algerian war and extremely low number of attendees indicates France's continued indifference to a discussion of the eight-year war and its surrounding violence.

However, the French public's disinterest is an echo of the films' resounding ambivalence, for the same uncertainty prevails in the fiction films' narratives, namely in the manner that they negotiate French military torture with nationalism. After its third re-release in 2004, a new public awareness of *La Battaglia di Algeri* demanded a (re) presentation of torture, though contemporary culture also required mitigation. *L'ennemi intime* uses camera angles to demonstrate the inebriated state of the torturer, and then frames his act of torturing an Arab to death, with two other scenes in which he liberates the torture victim. In this way, the torture in

---

[312] Although Gérard Depardieu and Nathalie Baye had a slightly higher box-office draw the year *Michou d'Auber* was released, the starring couple of *Caché,* Daniel Auteil and Juliette Binoche are among the most popular French actors.

[313] Patricia Caillé, "The Illegitimate Legitimacy of *The Battle of Algiers* in French Film Culture," *Interventions* 9.3 (2007): 371-388.

which he participates appears as a drunken anomaly contrary to his humanitarian values. The protagonist of *Mon colonel* also tortures, but finds his actions so distasteful that the audience empathizes with him. Although the film vilifies the colonel who orders these acts, Guy Rossi, the young soldier, balances the depiction of the French military as a sympathetic protagonist. Guy, anti-torture, represents the ethics of today's France symbolized by the modern military detective, Lt. Galois, who reads his letters with compassion. Although *Mon colonel* critiques the military's behavior in Algeria during the war, the film remains highly patriotic, promoting the current military as well as invoking a Resistance veteran, played by Charles Aznavour, as the arbiter of justice, who kills the maligned colonel. In this way, both *L'Ennemi intime* and *Mon colonel* present the military as a conflicted, but compassionate young man, who originally seeks to help the indigenous people, and who only falls to the depths of torture through the less benign influences of alcohol and peer/superior pressure.

The recent films set in the Algerian war that ignore *La Battaglia*'s example, *La Trahison* and *Cartouches gauloises*, utilize *Muriel* as their model instead, playing with the viewer's expectations. In this way the lack of torture becomes as profound as any images that might portray it. Both filmed in Algeria, they are the least apologetic of the 2005-2007 grouping, ending with Algerian nationalism rather than French; in *La Trahison* Taieb closes the film by shouting "Vive l'Algérie" in French and Arabic, *Cartouches gauloises* ends with the boy Ali, running from an Algerian flag to his father in the distance, who also reads as a metaphor for the new nation. Yet, both films spend equal time with Algerian and French characters, and demonstrate the conflicted emotions of the French concerning the revolution. *La Trahison* depicts a French troop with a *harki* faction, and *Cartouches gauloises*, an Arab paper boy with

French friends. Therefore, both negotiate giving equal screen time to French and Arab characters, portraying strong interracial relationships between them that the tension of war destroys.

Despite an Algerian-war era setting, the political climate of the early twenty-first century extends into each of these features. Perhaps this is most obvious in *Michou d'Auber* which mirrors the emphasis placed on immigrant integration during the presidential campaign of Nicholas Sarkozy. The racially parallel suffering in *Cartouches gauloises* invokes Sarkozy's speech concerning the equality of losses of both France and Algeria during the war. However in the larger scope, films concerning the conflict in the new century suggest that the racial bias of the war epoch, and the struggle between loyalty to France and Algeria relates to contemporary France. *Caché* illustrates this by intertwining flashbacks, videos, and the diegetic present; there are consequences for the Paris massacre, largely related to guilt. The flashbacks in this film, as well as in *Mon colonel* evoke a post-trauma of the Algerian war in contemporary France.

Hors-la-loi

Yet, while we find post-trauma and negotiations of nationalism and torture in these six features dating from 2005-2007, the militant, anti-French tone of *Hors-la-loi* (2010) demonstrates a shift in French cinema's approach to the history of the Algerian war. In fact, Rachid Bouchareb's 2010 film builds on the negotiations and transgressions found in the 2005-2007 period, creating the most direct work of the French films concerning the Algerian war. Furthermore, the film's reception at Cannes film festival in 2010 demonstrates how the cinematic portrayal of the conflict continues to cause tension and division. Thus, to better situate this cinematic discourse, to conclude I will contrast the 2005-2007 features with this notorious 2010 feature.

At the Cannes film festival, a group comprised largely of veterans, *harkis,* and *pied-noirs* protested *Hors-la-loi*'s screening. They were particularly opposed to the French funding of *Hors-la-loi* and to a scene of the pre-war massacre in Sétif that they claimed did not depict the reality of the Arab execution of Europeans. Some demonstrators even wore tee-shirts declaring the film's historical mistakes in cinematic terms, "*Hors-la-loi* à Cannes : les cris des pieds-noirs coupés au montage."[314] David Lisnard, assistant to the Mayor, and in charge of the city's festivals, appeared conflicted between his duties as arts festival promoter and politician, "Le Festival doit conserver sa liberté d'expression. Mais il n'est pas bon d'offenser la mémoire de certains ! »[315] After the film ended, several hundred protestors rallied at the *hôtel de ville* to honor French victims of the Algerian war.

Hors-la-loi follows three Algerian brothers, from their childhood when French officials confiscate their family property, through their founding role in the FLN, concluding with the Paris Massacre in which one brother dies. Though a big budget film about the FLN might seem difficult to market in Sarkozy's France, the enormous success of Bouchareb's *Indigènes* four years earlier deceptively indicated the French public's interest in the plight of Algerians. *Indigènes* portrays an Algerian unit fighting valiantly against Nazis despite racist mistreatment by the French military. The film swept the Césars in 2006, winning a total of 9 awards including

---

[314] Samuel Blumenfeld, Clara Georges and Michel Guerrin, « *Hors-la-loi* a transformé Cannes la festivalière en village sécurisé, » *Le Monde* 22 May 2010, 1 June 2011 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=03bb6e98a42459abe8a0b7d96966a8729e513f92dfe6c73d>.

[315] Blumenfeld.

best director and best screenplay. Jamel Debbouze, at the time the highest paid French actor,[316] and the other starring actors, Sami Naceri, Roschdy Zem, Sami Bouajila, shared the prize for best actor at Cannes while the committee honored Bouchareb with the François Chalais award, a prize given to political films. Although the cast of Bouchareb's 2010 film is remarkably similar, and the style equally Spielbergian and epic, *Hors-la-loi* failed to win any awards. Perhaps viewers were guided by the films' titles and their political meanings. The word *indigènes* refers to the colonial process (indigenous people have been conquered) and implies racial difference. Yet while *Indigènes*' narrative works against prejudice, its title does not overtly confront the established order. On the other hand, the phrase *hors-la-loi* candidly describes the characters' pursuit of illegal activity. With only the vaguest knowledge that the film portrays the FLN, one assumes the film's militant stance.

The films differed enormously at the box office: in their first month, *Indigènes* sold 2, 276, 360 tickets, while *Hors-la-loi* sold but 381,106. Although the French public sympathized with Algerian soldiers mistreated by the French military in *Indigènes*, in the film French and Algerian characters both shared a popular cinematic enemy, the Nazi party. However, *Hors-la-loi* paid homage to the FLN, and the Algerian protesters who died at the hands of police in the Paris Massacre of October 17, 1961. Although the film depicts several white, French citizens helping the Arab brothers, they all work with the FLN against the French state. More specifically we witness the FLN killing French police in retaliation. Although Bouchareb blurs the line between Nazi and police with a character resembling Maurice Papon, a former Vichy official and the head of the French police at the time of the Paris massacre, the effect of watching an Arab

---

[316] Edward Baron Turk, *French Theatre Today: The View From Paris, New York, and Avignon* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2011) 224.

kill a French policeman in 1961 does not provide the national uplift of a battle scene in which Algerians in military garb kill Nazis. Therefore, although the film's artistic accomplishment is debatable—several critics claim the film is too weak to be deemed offensive—the failure of *Hors-la-loi* in even its premiere week compared with *Indigènes*, represents a continuum of the Sarkozy-era disinterest in the Algerian war, the result of animosity and/or guilt.[317]

Hors-la-loi, premiering three years after the year in which my dissertation corpus concludes, reveals changes in the portrayal of the Algerian war era. None of the French films made before *Hors-la-loi* devote the majority of screen time to FLN activists, or even to Algerian characters. Instead, the films in my corpus most sympathetic to Algerian independence divide screen time evenly between Algerian characters and French characters who are conflicted: *La Trahison* vacillates between Taieb's point of view and his French lieutenant's, and though *Cartouches gauloises* portrays an Arab child's perspective of the war, through his eyes we observe French losses as well. While *Mon colonel* presents a disgust with the French military's activity during the war, the film excludes a *harki* or FLN character from the narrative. By focusing an entire film on the foundation of the FLN and on Algerian characters working against colonialism with terrorist tactics, Bouchareb asserts their place in French cinema. Hollywood's epic tropes, such as a family of brothers and their immigration, further demands that the Algerian

---

[317] « *Hors-la-loi* , » *Le Figaro* 21 Sept 2010, 16 June 2011 <http://www.lefigaro.fr/cinema/2010/09/20/03002-20100920ARTFIG00740-hors-la-loi.php>., Yannick Vely, «*Hors la loi* : un film important et décevant », *Paris Match* 23 Sept 2010, 16 June, 2011 <http://www.parismatch.com/Culture-Match/Cinema/Actu/Hors-la-loi-un-film-important-et-decevant-213953/>.

revolution and Algerian immigrants be considered not only a part of mainstream French culture, but of world cinema.[318]

If Haneke's anti-Hollywood style favored hiding the Paris Massacre, the momentum caused by media coverage that historicized the event prepared the public for a biased presentation of the Paris Massacre in gory detail (the final 20 minutes of *Hors-la-loi* portray the protest and the proceeding slaughter). The secret *caché* in Michael Haneke's film is not just the video-sender but the Paris Massacre itself, which the director buries deep within a mystery, mentioning it but once and very briefly. Haneke's film considered the effects of the massacre and its cover-up, preparing the public for the forthright approach of Bouchareb, who forces the question of the massacre, and a sentimental response. While the historian Jean-Luc Einaudi revealed the details of the massacre in 1999, and the mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanöe, commemorated its victims with a plaque in 2001, the once hidden Paris massacre continued to reach French consciousness in the following years. *Caché* and *La Nuit Noire: 17 Octobre, 1961* (a television film) premiered in 2005, and in 2007, the massacre's architect, Maurice Papon the head of the police in 1961, died, inciting citizens to rename the Gennevilliers *métro* station "17 octobre 1961" in honor of those who participated in the protest. Thus, the media and the population encouraged each other to remember the event and place it in a contemporary context, climaxing cinematically in the most contested portrayal, *Hors-la-loi*.

The protest of *Hors-la-loi* at Cannes begs the question, would France produce a film that depicts Algerians in France killing French police and planting bombs? Is

[318] Despite the Spielbergian style, the narrative that follows brothers through their integration and organization most obviously recalls Sergio Leone's *Once upon a time in America* (1984).

Hors-la-loi a French film? Pontecorvo's Italian nationality permitted *La Battaglia di Algeri* to other the French military, and Michael Haneke's Austrian nationality similarly provides *Caché* with a distanced statement concerning France. However, Bouchareb's *beur* identity and cross-national funding pose many of the same questions as *Cartouches gauloises*. Though private French companies primarily financed *Hors-la-loi*, the credits also list AARC (Agence Algérienne pour le Rayonnement Culturel) as a co-producer. Because of this, the film could compete at Cannes and at the Academy Awards as a foreign, Algerian, feature.[319] Rachid Bouchareb has dual citizenship; he was born near Paris, France but his parents are Algerian. *Hors-la-loi*, a primarily French production with Algerian immigrant protagonists played by *beurs* that voices anger over France's mistreatment of Algerians, represents a progression made largely by independent, fiction, features in the years 2005-2007, compiled with the marketing hope of an Algerian narrative following the success of *Indigènes.* In fact *Hors-la-loi* mirrors the problems of French soccer teams voiced recently by national coach Laurent Blanc. As many players of African and North African descent train in France and then choose to play for the teams of their countries of heritage; Bouchareb, educated in France, funded largely by France, refuted the hexagon in a film that came to globally represent Algeria.[320]

---

[319] The César committee did not nominate *Hors-la-loi*.

[320] From *Mediapart*'s interview :

Erick Mombaerts: Est-ce qu'on s'attelle au problème et on limite l'entrée du nombre de gamins qui peuvent changer de nationalité?

Laurent Blanc: Moi j'y suis tout à fait favorable.

François Blaquart: On peut s'organiser, en non-dit, sur une espèce de quota. Mais il ne faut pas que ce soit dit.

Appendix:

A continuation of the project: The Algerian War in French films 2008-2010

While 2005 marks an important year in which the Algerian-war era resurfaced in French politics (Article 4 of the February law, as well as the instigation of the *état d'urgence*) and in French fiction films (*La nuit noire, Caché,* and *La Trahison*), 2007 as a closing year now appears arbitrary and confining. The inclusion of *Hors-la-loi* is imperative in a continuation of this project, as the ambivalence and negotiation found in the previous films finds new dimensions of dissent and Algerian nationalism in this 2010 feature. Also the highly successful double feature chronicling the life of bank robber, Jacques Mesrine, *L'ennemi no.1*: *Mesrine* and *L'instinct de la mort* deserves attention. The first Mesrine film begins with the titled character serving as a soldier ordered to kill a FLN subject in an Algerian prison. In its sequel, Mesrine murders an extreme right-wing journalist in a cave, claiming to reenact what he learned during his military service in Algeria. In this way Mesrine, who first murders in the name of France, rectifies his past by repeating his crimes in the name of the national left. Mesrine's turn also keeps the 2008 audience, aware of French military behavior during the Algerian war, sympathetic to the

---

Erick Mombaerts: Donc il faut 30% ? (...) Il y a bien des clubs comme Lyon qui le font dans leur centre de formation.

Fabrice Arfi, Mathilde Mathieu, and Michaël Hajdenberg. "Quotas dans le foot: la vérité au mot près." *Mediapart* 30 April 2011, 6 June 2011 <http://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/290411/quotas-dans-le-foot-la-verite-au-mot-pres>.

protagonist, whose war crimes are no longer acceptable. The director, Jean-François Richet, and screenwriter, Abdel Raouf Dafri, adapted Jacques Mesrine's autobiography to feature the Algerian war in the first scene and references it in countless others (one reason Mesrine turns to crime is because he is unable to earn an income after the war, later he works for an OAS member). The politics of the film are historicized, but as is the case in all the films discussed earlier, it also evokes opinions contemporary to its filming. The rising anti-Islam sentiment and the growing National Front of 2008 are present in the depictions of Mesrine's racist exchanges with the OAS and in the film's attempt to hold France accountable for the mistreatment of indigenous Algerians, by having Mesrine murder the right-wing journalist. Thus the film complicates the glamorization of a bank robber with French history and its embedded racism against Arabs.[321]

Nicole Garcia, the *pied-noir* actress who starred in numerous pictures about the Algerian war including, *Élise ou la vraie vie* (1970), *La Question* (1977), and *Un Capitaine d'honneur* (1982), directed her own film depicting the war in flashbacks, *Un Balcon sur la mer*, in 2010. The flashback perspective, especially useful in portraying a period 40 some years past, here serves to depict the French exodus in which childhood friends are torn apart. The minor popularity of the film (972, 219 tickets in the first month, more than any of the films' discussed), and the lack of controversy surrounding it, can be attributed to the film's concentration on a French perspective and the turmoil of *pied-noirs* forced to leave Algeria rather than any indigenous sentiment. *Un Balcon sur la mer* contains elements of nostalgia for French-Algeria,

[321] The Mesrine films, Jacques Audiard's *Un prophète* (2009), and *Carlos* (2010) by Olivier Assayas, all films of epic- lengths with male criminals as protagonists, represent a trend in French cinema.

yet unlike *Un Coup de airocco* (1979), violence interrupts the sweetness of such sentimentality. Similar to other twenty-first century Algerian-war films, *Un Balcon sur la mer*, does not deny the atrocity of the war, and struggles with the responsibility of France in the warfare.

I plan to include these four features, the two Mesrine films, *Un Balcon sur la mer*, and *Hors-la-loi*, in an extension of this study. The films in 2008 and 2010 demonstrate the subject's continued vitality and progression. The Algerian War becomes increasingly accessible in mainstream French films, though its indirect presentation proves thus far more financially viable than a direct depiction of the events with Arab/Kabyle characters. While the political climate of France is continuously transforming, the general mood of the centrist right in the election year leans steadily in the direction of the National Front, as the extreme party gains support (many consider the new head, Jean-Marie Le Pen's daughter, Marine, less fascist than her father. Furthermore, the Socialist party lacks a strong candidate; in May Daniel Strauss-Kahn was arrested for sexual assault in New York, and no other strong candidate has come forth, leaving Sarkozy in the lead. As the Algerian War and the often related topic of immigration divide the French populace, we can speculate on how cinema might portray the Algerian War during the next presidential term.

France currently produces a disparate variety of historical films; those confronting the colonial period, and those immersed in nostalgia for it. In 2010 we find examples of the anti-colonial in *La Venus oire* by Abdellatif Kechiche (the story of a South African woman whose genitalia the *Musée de l'homme* displayed until 1978), and *White material* by Claire Denis (in this film, Africans destroy a coffee plantation which thrives on a colonial legacy). The already mentioned *Un balcon sur la mer*, is the only film dominated by colonial nostalgia for Algeria,

however one finds a current longing for the past in the emerging historical films; Daniel Auteuil's remake of a Marcel Pagnol novel *La Fille de puisatier* and Jacques De Guay's *Les Femmes au 6e étage*, about Spanish maids befriending the French man they serve in the 60s.

Nevertheless, the enormous success of *Des hommes et des dieux* (2010) by Xavier Beauvois, concerning French, Trappist, monks who were murdered during Algeria's civil war, indicates a renewed interest in French-Algeria relations—2, 114, 868 tickets were sold in its first month and it won three César awards including *meilleur film*. The feature depicting historical events, represents France as biblical pacifists, a veritable portrayal of the monks who sacrificed their lives to aid the Algerian community, but one that contrasts sharply with the twenty-first century media revelation of the French atrocities during the Algerian war. In this way, *Des hommes et des dieux* provides France with a new vision of French involvement in Algeria, one displaced from the revolutionary war. Still, elements of paternalism found in the film recall what could be termed positive aspects of colonialism—the monks aid the community with healthcare and food, an echo of the law of 2005.

The critical and financial success of Beauvois' feature displays the desire for new images of the French in Algeria. Themes of anti-violence anchor all of the depictions of the Algerian war in my corpus, yet recorded facts require a reference to the French military's brutality. *Les années noires*, the setting of *Des hommes et des dieux,* allows for a different image of French men in Algeria: they live together as a unit's soldiers, yet they read and sing instead of practicing war. The monk/doctor attends to the Algerian community, similar to many SCA newsreels. Though the film is largely non-violent, the crux of the film rests on the monks' decision to remain in Algeria in spite of the knowledge that they could be murdered, which happens later at

the hands of extremist Islamists. I predict that in the coming years, French films will follow the example laid by *Des dieux et des hommes* proffering a cinematic exit from the revolutionary war, and the guilt associated with it.

Bibliography

Alion, Yves. "Mémoires d'un sombre guerre." *l'Avant Cinéma* Nov. (2001): 123-128.

Alleg, Henri. *La question*. Paris: Éditions de minuit, 1958.

Allen, Robert C. and Douglas Gomery eds. *Film History: Theory and Practice.* Boston: McGraw Hill, 1985.

Alloula, Malek. *The Colonial Harem (Theory and History of Literature, Vol 21).* Trans. by Myrna Godzick and Wlad Godzich. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

André, Jean-Louis. "Aznavour fidèle à ses racines," *Le monde* 6 May 1988. 11 June 2009 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgibin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=367f2eedcfae6c5df8806bca299a7478071f2b86f71e88c3>.

Altman, Carol S. *Enfance… inspiration littéraire et cinématographique.* Birmingham : Summa Publications Inc., 2006.

Arend, Elizabeth et al., eds. *Histoires inventées: La représentation du passé et de l'histoire dans les littératures française et francophones*. Frankfort: Peter Lang, 2008.

Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the banality of evil.* London: Penguin Books, 1977.

Arfi, Fabrice, Mathilde Mathieu, and Michaël Hajdenberg. "Quotas dans le foot: la vérité au mot près." *Mediapart* 30 April 2011. 6 June 2011 <http://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/290411/quotas-dans-le-foot-la-verite-au-mot-pres>.

Armes, Roy. "Resnais and Reality." *Films and Filming.* 16:8 (1970) : 125-140

Assoumis, Hassan. *L'école de la République face aux jeunes mulsulmans* : *la fausse note.* Paris : Harmattan, 2007.

Armes, Roy. *Post-colonial Images* : *Studies in North African film.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005.

Austin, Guy. "Representing the Algerian War in Algerian Cinema: *Le Vent des Aurès*." *French Studies: A Quarterly Review* 61.2 (2007): 159-180.

Austin, Guy. "Seeing and Listening form the site of trauma: The Algerian War in Contemporary French Film." *Yale French Studies* 115 (2009): 115-125.

Austin, Guy. "Drawing Trauma, Visual Testimony in *Caché* and *J'ai 8 ans*." Screen: the Journal of the Society in Film and Television 48.4 (2007): 529-536.

Austin, James. "Destroying the Banlieue: Reconfigurations of Suburban Space in French Film." *Yale French Studies* 115 (2009): 80-93.

Aussaresses, Paul. *Services spéciaux Algérie 1955-1957 : Mon témoignage sur la torture.* Paris : Perrin, 2001.

Ayo, Coly. "Memory, History, Forgetting: a review of Rachid Bouchareb's *Indigènes* (2006)" *Transition 98* (2008): 150-155.

Bailblé, Claude, Michel Marié, Marie-Claire Ropars. *Muriel : histoire d'une recherche.* Paris : Éditions Galilee, 1974.

Bal, Mieke, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer eds. *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present.* Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999.

Bauberot, Jean. *l'Histoire de la laïcité en France.* Paris: Broché, 2010.

Bancel, Nicolas and Pascal Blanchard, Sandrine Le Maire eds. *La Fracture Coloniale : La société française au prisme de l'héritage colonial***.** Paris: La découverte, 2005.

Baudry, Jean-Louis. *L'effet cinéma.* Paris: Alabatros, 1978.

Beaugé, Florence. "*La Bataille d'Alger*: Première sur le réseau hertzien » 31 Oct. 2004. 1 May, 2011 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=210e2961570d150739cf9496ab551cae23120096ddd04e65>.

Benayoun, Robert. *Alain Resnais*: *Arpenteur de l'imaginaire.* Paris : Stock/Ramsey, 2008.

Bensmaia, Reda. "The Phantom Mediators: Reflections on the Nature of the Violence in Algeria." *Diacritics* 27.2 (1997): 88-100.

Bensaci-Lancou, Fatima and Abderahmen Moumen. *Les Harkis.* Paris: Le Cavalier Bleu, 2005.

Berthelier, Robert. *Enfants de Migrants à l'école française.* Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006.

Beugnet, Martine. "Blind Spot." *Screen; the journal of the Society for Education in Film and Television* 48.2 (2007): 227-231.

Bhabba, Homi. “Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences.” *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader.* Eds. Bill Ashcroft *et al* New York : Routledge, 1995.

Billard, Pierre. “*Muriel* (article d’ensemble et débat).” *Cinéma.* 80 (1963) : 32-36.

Blanchard, Pascale and Nicholas Bancel eds. *Culture post-coloniale* : *1961-2006 traces et mémoires coloniales en France.* Paris: Editions Autrement, 2005.

Blanchard, Pascale and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson eds. *Les guerres des mémoires* : *La France et son histoire.* Paris : La Découverte, 2008.

Bleuer, Dominique. « Les ‘Meufs Rebeus’ ou la représentation des femmes maghrebines dans le cinéma français hip-hop. » *L’esprit créateur* 42.1 (2002) 84-95.

Bloom, Peter. “The Cinema of Political Allegory” *SAIS Review* 20.1 (2000): 241-253.

Blumenfeld, Samuel and Clara Georges and Michel Guerrin. « *Hors-la-loi* a transformé Cannes la festivalière en village sécurisé. » *Le Monde* 22 May 2010. 1 June 2011 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=03bb6e98a42459abe8a0b7d96966a8729e513f92dfe6c73d>.

Boljkovac, Nadine. “Intimacy and Prophecy: Marker and Renais’s Memories.” *Anamesia*: *Private and Public Memory in Modern French Culture.* Ed. Peter Collier. New York: Peter Lang (2009):257-269.

Bonner, Virginia. “The New Executioners : The Spectre of Algeria in Alain Resnais’s *Night and Fog*.” *Scope* Issue 13 (2010) <http://www.scope.nottingham.ac.uk/article.php?issue=13&id=1094>.

Boudjedra, Rachid. *Naissance du cinéma algérien.* Paris : Maspéro, 1971.

Bounoure, Gaston. *Alain Resnais* : *propos d’Alain Resnais* ; *points de vue, filmographie, bibliographie, documents iconographiques.* Paris : Seghers, 1974.

Bouquet, Stephane. “Resnais, après la guerre.” *Cahiers du Cinema* 531 (1999): 10.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language et pouvoir symbolique.* Paris: Editions de Seuil, 2001.

Bowen, John. *Why the French don’t like Headscarves: Islam, the State, and Public Space*. Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Branche, Raphaelle. *La torture et l’armée pendant la guerre d’Algérie 1945-1962.* Paris : Gallimard, 2001.

Branscombe, Nyla R. and Bertan Doosje Eds. *Collective Guilt: International Perspectives.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Branscombe, Nyla R. and Michael J. A. Wohl. "Forgiveness and Collective Guilt Assignment to Historical Perpetrator Groups Depend on Level of Social Category Inclusiveness." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 88.2 (2008): 288-302.

Briton, Celia. "Broken Images in Resnais's Muriel". *French Cultural Studies*: 1.1 (1990): 37-46.

Brody, Richard. *Everything is Cinema: The Working Life of Jean-Luc Godard.* New York: Metropolitian Books, 2008.

Brosman, Catharine Savage. "Torture and Terrorism: Jules Roy answers General Massu." *The French Review* 59.5 (1986): 723-729.

Browne, Nick. "The Spectator in-the-text: the Rhetoric of *Stagecoach.*" *Film Quarterly* 29. 2 (1975-1976): 26-38.

Brun, Camille. « L'*Ennemi intime*. » *MCinéma.com*, 2 October, 2007, 19 May, 2011 <http://www.cine81.com/fr/fiche_film.php?cc=1&cf=529>.

Buchsbaum, Jonathan. "'Exception Culturelle is Dead.' Long live Cultural Diversity: French Cinema and the New Resistance." *Framework* 47.1 (2006):5-21.

Bullman, Richard and Doris Brothers. *The Shattered Self*: *A psychoanalytic study of trauma.* Hillsdale: The Analytic Press, 1988.

Caillé, Patricia. "The Illegitimate Legitimacy of *The Battle of Algiers* in French Film Culture." *Interventions* 9.3 (2007): 371-388.

Cardonne-Arlyck, Elisabeth. "Espaces muets et intimité perverse: de *Muriel* (Resnais, 1962) à *Caché* (Haneke, 2005)." *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies* 12.2 (2008): 265-275.

Carroll, David. *Albert Camus*, *The Algerian: Colonialism, Terrorism, Justice.* New York City: Columbia UP, 2007.

Caruth, Cathy. *Trauma, Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1995.

Caruth, Cathy. Unclaimed Experience: *Trauma, Narrative, and History.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1996.

Cavaglia, Francesca. "A child eating an ice-cream before the explosion: Notes on a Controversial scene in *The Battle of Algiers*." *P.O.V.: A Danish Journal of Film Studies* 20 (2005): 4-19.

Cayrol, Jean. "*Muriel*: Une histoire qui court les rues…" *Les Cahiers de la Cinémathèque.* Spring (1976) : 166-117.

Chanan, Michael. "Outsiders: *Battle of Algiers* and Political Cinema." *Sight and Sound* 17.6 (2007): 38.

Charef, Mehdi. *Le Harki de Meriem.* Paris : Mercure de France, 1989.

Charef, Mehdi. *La maison d'Alexina.* Paris : Mercure de France, 1999.

Charef, Mehdi. *À bras le cœur.* Paris : Mercure de France, 2006.

Cheng, Anne Anlin. *The Melancholy of Race.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Chirac, Jacques. "Discours de M. Chirac Président de la République à l'occasion de la journée d'hommage national de Harkis. » Sept. 25, 2001 *assemblé nationale.fr* Sept.2005<http://www.elysée.fr/elysee/francais/interventions/discours_et_declarations/2001/septembre/discours_de_m_jacques_chiract_president_de_la_republique_a_l_occasion_de_la_journee_d_hommage_national_aux_harikis.3588.html>

Cieutat, Michel. "Entretien avec Michel Haneke: On ne montre pas la réalité juste son image manipulé." *Positif* 536 (2005): 21-25.

« Cinquante ans après, Algériens et Français s'opposent toujours sur la « bataille d'Alger.» *Le Monde* 9 Jan. 2007. May 13,2011 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=aa01dfd10f7e00735a6d63be62da74cd2e6220b1d7989696>.

Clark, David M. and Anke Ehlers, Ceri Evans, Gillian Mezey. "Intrusive Memories in Perpetrators of Violent Crime: Emotions and Cognitions." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 75. 2 (2007): 134-144.

Coates, Linda and Allan Wade. "Telling it Like it isn't: Obscuring Perpetraror Responsibility for Violent Crimes." *Discourse Society* 15 (2004): 499-526.

Cohen, William B. "The Algerian War and French Memory." *Contemporary European History.* Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Colas, Dominique. *Citoyenneté et nationalité*. Paris: Gallimard, 2004.

Comité du Défense du Cinéma. «Pourquoi vous n'avez pas vu *La Bataille d'Alger.* »

Positif. 118 (1970) :73-78.

Conroy, John. *Unspeakable Acts, Ordinary People : The Dynamics of TortMure.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000.

Courtade, Francis. *Les maledictions du cinéma français : Une histoire du cinéma français parlant* (*1928-1978*). Paris : Éditions Alain Moreau, 1978.

Costantini, Dino. *Mission Civilisatrice, le rôle de l'histoire coloniale dans la construction de l'identité politique française*. Paris: Editions la découverte, 2008.

Coquio, Catherine. *Retours du colonial? Disculpation et réhabilatation de l'histoire coloniale*. Nantes: l'Atalante, 2008.

Cousins, Mark. "After the end: word of mouth and *Caché.*" *Screen: the journal of the Society in Film and Television* 48.2 (2007): 223-226.

Croombs, Matthew. "Algeria deferred: the logic of trauma in *Muriel* and *Caché.*" *Scope.* 16, Jan, 2010. 13 May, 2011 <http://www.scope.nottingham.ac.uk/article.php?issue=16&id=1169§ion=article&q=muriel>.

Dallet, Sylvie. *Guerres Révolutionnaires*: *Histoire et cinéma.* Paris : L'harmattan, 1984.

Danan, Martine. "From a "prenational" to a "postnational" French cinema. » *Film History* 8.1 (1996): 72-84.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Cinéma: L'image temps*. Paris : Les Editions de Minuit, 1985.

Delye, Hélène. « *Les porteuses de feu.* » *Le Monde.* 20 Jan. 2007, 13 May, 2011. <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgibin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=88a36ebc072d1ae82900eda2d66b05ca153d3e6163c43e77>.

Demeu, Jacques. « Le cinéma algérien et *La Bataille d'Algers*. » *Positif.* 79 (1966) :124-128.

Demiati, Nasser. *Éduquer ou civiliser la banlieue? : lettre ouverte au président de la République à propos de l'éducation du peuple.* Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009.

Denis, Sébastion. *Le Cinéma et La Guerre d'Algérie* : *La propagande à l'écran* (*1954-1962*). Paris : Nouveau Monde Éditions, 2009.

Derderian, Richard L. "Algeria as a lieu de memoire: Ethnic Minority Memory and National Identity in Contemporary France." *Radical History Review* 83 (2002): 67-90.

Derrida, Jacques and Belay, Boris. “Taking a Stand for Algeria*.” College Literature.* 30.1 (2003): 115-123.

Dhoukar, Hedi. « (Vingt-cinq) 25 cineastes plus ou moins beurs. »*CinemAction* 56 (1990): 186-191.

Dhoukar, Hedi. « Mehdi Charef: l'idee de retour me fait peur. » *CinemAction* 56 (1990): 169-171.

Djamila, Danièle and Amrane Minne. Trans Alistair Clarke. “Women at war: The Representation of Women in *The Battle of Algiers.*” *Interventions* 9:3 (2007): 340-9.

Dine, Philip. *Images of the Algerian War: 1954-1992*. London: Oxford Press, 1993.

Diorio, Sam. “Total Cinema: *Chronique d’un été* and the End of Bazinian Film Theory. » *Screen: the journal of Society for Education in Film and Television.*48.1 (2007): 25-43.

Jean-Luc Doin, « *Caché* : regard forcé sur les démons de l'enfance pour un homme filmé à son insu »,*Le Monde,* 16 May 2005, 17 May 2011 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/culture/article/2005/05/16/cache-regard-force-sur-les-demons-de-l-enfance-pour-un-homme-filme-a-son-insu_650298_3246.html>.

Douglas, Allen. “From the Algerian War to the Armenian Massacres: Memory, Trauma, and Medicine in *Petit Polio* of Farid Boudjellal.” *International journal of comic art* 10.2 (2008): 282-307.

Eades, Caroline. *Le cinema post-colonial français*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2006.

Einaudi, Jean-Luc. *La ferme Ameziane : enquête sur un centre de torture pendant la guerre d’Algérie,* L’Harmattan, 1991.

Einaudi, Jean-Luc. *17 octobre, 1961*. Paris :Hachette, 2011.

Eisenriech, Pierre. “*La Trahison.*” *Positif* 540 (2006): 26-27.

Epstein, Seymour and George Saltz. “Thematic Hostility and Guilt Responses as Related to Self-reported Hostility, Guilt, and Conflict.” *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology.* 1963, Voil. 67, No. 5, 469-479.

Eric, Savarese. *Algérie* : *La guerre des mémoires*. Paris : Non Lieu, 2007.

Etcherelli, Claire. *Élise ou la vraie vie*. Paris: Denoël, 1967.

Evans, Martin. *The memory of Resistance: French Opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)*. New York: Berg, 1997.

Fanon, Franz. *Les damnés de la terre*. Paris: Gallimard, 1991.

Fanon, Franz. *L'an V de la revolution algérienne*. Paris: F. Maspero, 1966.

Fanon, Franz. *Peau noire, masques blanches.* Paris : Points Essais, 1971.

Flood, Christopher. "The politics of counter-memory on the French extreme right." *Journal of European Studies.* 35.2 (2005): 221-237.

Forgacs, David. "Italians in Algiers." *Interventions* 9.3(2007): 350.

Freud, Sigmund. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1989.

Freud, Sigmund. *The Interpretation of Dreams.* New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2005.

Freud, Sigmund. *Moses and Monotheism.* New York: Vintage Books, 1937.

Foucault, Michel. *Surveiller et Punir: la naissance de la prison*. Paris: Gallimard, 1975.

Foucault, Michel. *The Essential works of Foucault*. New York: New Press, 2003.

Frodon, Jean-Michel. « Quarante ans après : Conversation avec Marie-José Mondzain, Abdelwahab Maddeb et Jean-Michel Frodon, à propos de 'La Bataille d'Alger' revu aujourd'hui. » *Cahiers du Cinéma* 593 (2004): 66-69.

Frodon, Jean-Michel,"Critique, *La Trahison* : Ce qui bouge dans les creux de l'histoire.» *Les Cahiers du Cinéma,* 608 (2006) : 21-24.

Frodon, Jean-Michel. « S'inscrire dans un lieu, s'approcher des visages', Philippe Faucon." *Cahiers du Cinéma* 608 (2006): 26-27.

Frodon, Jean-Michel. « *L'ennemi intime.* » *Les Cahiers du Cinéma,* 627 (2007) :34.

Frölich, Margrit. « Perpetrator Research through the Camera Lens : Nazis and Their Crimes in the Films of Romuald Karakar. » *Das Böse im Blick: Die Gegenwart des National sozialismus im Film,* ed. Margrit Frölich, Christian Schneider, and Karsten Visarius.Munich: edition text und kritik, 2007.

Fysh, Peter. And Wolfreys, Jim. *The Politics of Racism in France*. London: Macmillian Press, 1998.

Gaffney, John. *Political Leadership in France.* London: Macmillan, 2010.

Gauch, Suzanne. "*Muriel* or the disappearing text of the Algerian war." *L'esprit créateur.*41.4 (2001): 47-57.

Giavarini, Laurence. "Quelle histoire?". *Cahiers du Cinéma*: 593. (2004) : 72-74.

Giesen, Bernard. *Triumph and Trauma.* London: Paradigm Publisers, 2004.

Giesen, Bernard. "From Denial to Confessions of Guilt: The German Case." *Remembering the Holocaust a Debate.* Ed. Jeffrey Alexander and Martin Jay. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Giles, Dennis. "Godard and ideology." *Film Reader* 2 (1977): 169-79.

Giroy, Paul. "Shooting Crabs in a Barrel." *Screen: the Journal of the Society for Education in Film and Television* 48.2 (2007): 233-235.

Goldstein, Ruth M. and Edith Zornow. *The Screen Image of Youth: Movies About Children and Adolescents.* London: The Scarecrow Press, 1980.

Graebner, Seth. "Remembering 17 October 1961 and the Novels of Rachid Boudjedra" *Research in African Literatures* 36. 4 (2005): 172-197.

Greene, Naomi. *Landscapes of Loss: The National Past in Post-war French Cinema.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Grossvogel, D. I. "Haneke: The Coercing Vision." *Film Quarterly* 60.4 (2007): 36-42.

Guene, Faïza. *Kiffe kiffe demain*. Paris: Hachette, 2004.

Guibert, Pierre. « Notes de lecture : *Muriel ou Le temps d'une recherche*. » *Les Cahiers de la Cinémathèque.* Spring (1976) :123.

Hakim, Tewfik. « Yacef Saâdi, commandant et producteur » *Le Monde* June 13, 2004. May, 13, 2011 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgibin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=e9417a0806e1c0cf583eb48aa73f59e2b79f76473e8eff99>.

Hargreaves, Alec ed. *Memory, Empire, and postcolonialism: legacies of postcolonialism.* Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005.

Hargreaves, Alec. "*Indigènes*: A Sign of the Times." *Research in African Literatures* 38.4 (2007): 204-216.

Harrison, Nicholas. "Pontecorvo's 'Documentary Aesthetics: *The Battle of Algiers*." *Interventions* 9.3 (2007): 389–404.

Hattou, Messaoud. and Gilou, Thomas. *Michou d'Auber*. Paris: Intervista, 2007.

Hutcheon, Linda. "Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern." *Methods for the Study of Literature as Cultural Memory. Vol.6 of the Proceedings of the XVth Congress of the International Compartive Literature Association "Literature as Cultural Memor"* Leiden 16-22 August 1997.

"Infortunes de la liberté." *Positif.* 36 (1960) : 61-63.

Ivekovic, Rada. "French Suburbia 2005: The Return of the Political Unrecognized." Dec. 3, 2005 *Women's World* Jan. 29, 2008 <http://wworld.org/crisis/crisis.asp?ID=512>.

Hewitt, Leah D. *Remembering the Occupation in French Film: National Identity in Post-War Europe.* New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2008.

Higgins, Lynn A., *New novel, new wave, new politics; fiction and the representation of history in postwar France.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996.

Hiddleston, Jane. "Cultural Memory and Amnesia: The Algerian War and 'Second Generation' Immigrant Literature in France." *Journal of Romance Studies.* 3.1 (2003): 59-74.

« *Hors-la-loi* , » *Le Figaro* 21 Sept 2010, 16 June 2011 <http://www.lefigaro.fr/cinema/2010/09/20/03002-20100920ARTFIG00740-hors-la-loi.php>.

House, Jim. "Leaving Silence Behind? Algerians and the Memories of Repression by French Security Forces in Paris in 1961."*Memories of Mass Repression: Narrating life stories in the aftermath of atrocity.* Ed. Nancy Adler, Selma Leydesdorff, Leyla Neyzi. New Brunswick: Transaction Publisers, 2009.

Ishaghpour, Youssef. *D'une image à l'autre.* Paris : Denoël/Gonthier, 1982.

Jaccomard, Hélène. "Eclats et écarts de mémoire: La guerre d'indépendance algerienne l'œuvre écrite de Mehdi Charef. » *Nottingham French Studies* 48.1 (2009): 94-109.

Jarreau, Patrick. « La direction des opérations spéciales du Pentagone organise une projection de *La Bataille d'Alger* »*Le Monde.* 9 Sept., 2009. 1 May 2011 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=134d6d728b16936f1decfb7c2edf33b4dca7133c5b6d1bea>.

Jaspers, Karl. *The Question of German Guilt.* New York: Fordham University Press, 2001.
Jauffret, Jean-Charles. *Soldats en Algérie, 1954-1962 : expériences contrastées des Hommes du contingent,* Paris, Autrement, 2000.

Jauffret, Jean-Charles and Maurice Vaïse.(ed.) *Militaires et guérillas dans la guerre d'Algérie.* Bruxelles : Complexe, 2001.

Johansson, Anders. "Adorno and the Guilt of Thinking." *Territories of Evil.* Ed. Nancy Bilas. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008: 171-188.

Keitz, Ursula von. "Between Dramatization and Epicization: The Portrayl of Nazi Crimes in Exemplary German Films from the late 1940s-1970s." *New German Critique* 34.3(2007):45-60.

Khanna, Ranjana. "From Rue Morgue to Rue des Iris." *Screen; the journal of the Society for Education in Film and Television* 48.2 (2007): 237-244

Krantz, Charles. "Teaching *Night and Fog*: History and Historiography." *Film & History* 15.1 (1985): 2-15.

Kuntzel, Thierry. «Le travail du film.» *Communications* 23 (1975): 136-189.

Lacapra, Dominick.*History and its Limits : Human, Animal, Violence.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009.

"La France mobilisée pour un 1er Mai anti-Le Pen," *Le monde, récit du service France avec nos correspondants et la promotion 2002 (Presse Écrite) du CFJ* Feb. 5, 2002<http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgibin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID394aa5e3231230fd6854123e5317d0e4bd130752b6a>.

Lane, Jeremy F. "Ferhat Abbas, Vichy's National Revolution, and the Memory of the Royaume arabe." *L'Esprit Créateur,* 47.1 (2007): 19-31.

Laplanche, Jean and J.B. Pontalis. *Vocabulaire de la Psychanalyse.* Paris : Presse Universitaires de France, 1967.

Laronde, Michel "'Effets d'Histoire'. Représenter l'Histoire coloniale forclose." *International Journal of Francophone Studies*; 10.1/2 (2007) » 139-155.

Latil, Loredana. « Nuit et Brouillard », *50 films qui ont fait scandale.* Paris : CERF (2002) :61-63.

Lazreg, Marnia. *The Eloquence of Silence, Algerian Women in Question.* New York: Routledge, 1994.

Lazreg, Marnia. *Torture and the Twilight of Empire.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.

Lebeau, Vicky. *Childhood and cinema.* London: Reaction Books, 2008.

Lee, Sonia. "Mehdi Charef et le cinéma d'intégration." *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies.* 185-191

Legrand, Gérard. "*Le Petit Soldat*." *Postif.* 53 (1963) : 89-90.

"L'état d'urgence," *Le Monde*, Jan. 1, 1991. http://abonnes.lemonde.fr:80/cgi bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=d0b1e1f14b72b15ef19b64a3ec03393466ce7 75b35511

Lefeuvre, Daniel. *Pour en finir avec la repentance coloniale.* Paris : Champs actuel, 2008.

Lequeret, Elizabeth. "Des Menaces de l'OAS; Marc Sator." *Cahiers du Cinéma* 495 (2004): 25.

Liogier, Hélène. « 1960 ; vue d'Espagne, la nouvelle vague est fasciste. » *1895 : Bulletin de l'Association française de recherche sur l'histoire du cinéma.* 26 (1998) :133-155.

Lury, Karen. *The Child in Film: Tears, Fears and Fairytales.* London: IB Tauris, 2010.

MacCabe, Colin. *Godard: images, sounds and politics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980.

Maillard, Dominque. "The Muslims in France and the French Model of Integration." *Mediterranean Quarterly* 16.1, (2005): 62-78.

Manceron, François GèzeGilles. L'éloge de la colonisation est de retour. *Le Monde.* Nov. 11, 2010. May 1, 2011 < http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=bea6ee480513646908ab9028b5c4f11255830257614d31aa>.

Mandouze, André ed. *La Révolution algérienne par texts.* Paris : Cahiers Libres, 1961.

Mangia, Ana. "La langue de banlieue de Mehdi Charef : *Le thé au harem d'Archi Amhed.* » *Ponts* 7 (2007): 73-87.

Maran, Rita. *Torture, the Role of Ideology in the French-Algerian War.* London: Praeger, 1989.

Marder, Elissa. « La hontise, confusion, contagion et revenants. » *Lire, écrire, la honte.* Ed.Bruno Cahouat. Lyon : Passages Lyon, 2007.

Marker, Cynthia. "Self censorship and Chris Marker's *Le Joli Mai.*" *French Cultural Studies* 12:23(2001):23-41.

Marx-Scouras, Danielle. « *Thé au harem d'Archimède*: Un peu de couleur dans la Grisaille. » *LittéRéalité*: 12.1 (2000): 61-64.

Mauss-Copeaux, Claire. *Appelés en Algérie : La parole confisqué.* Paris : Broché, 2002.

Mayle, François and Benjamin Stora. *Mitterand et la guerre d'Algérie.* Paris : Broché, 2010.

Mecchia, Giuseppina. "The Children Are Still Watching Us*, Caché/Hidden* in the folds of time." *Studies in French Cinema* 7.2 (2007): 131-138.

Meillard, Dominique, "The Muslims in France and the French Model of Integration." *Mediterranean Quarterly*16.1 (2005): 62-78.

Memmi, Albert. *Le colonisé précedé par le portrait du colonisateur.* Paris : Editions Buchet/Chastel, 1957.

Metz, Christian. *Le Signifiant Imaginaire.* Paris : Christian Bourgois Éditeur, 1984.

Michalon, Thierry. Ed. *Entre assimilation et émancipation*: *L'outre-mer français dans l'impasse ?* Paris : Les Perséides, 2006.

Michel, Marie. *La Nouvelle Vague* : *Une école artistique.* Paris : Armand-Colin, 2007.

Millicent, Marcus. « Pina's Pregnancy, Traumatic Realism, and the After-Life of *Open City.*" *Italica* 85.4 (2008): 426-439.

Mingalon, Jean Louis. « Télévision Algéries: ARTE, 20 h 40 Le conflit au jour le jour. » *Le Monde.*7 Nov. 1993. 1 May 2011< http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=3e7a54d516b1db9fd0f7b6318e48bcedd3fab8c86ddbeff5>.

Minne, Danièle Djamila Amrane. trans by Alistair Clark. "Women at War, the Representation of Women in *The Battle of Algiers.*" *Interventions* 9.3 (2007): 340-9.

Morrissey, Lee. "Derrida, Algeria, and Structure, Sign, and Play." *Postmodern Culture* 9.2, (1999): 25-37.

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure in Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16.3 (1975) 6-18.

Narboni, Jean. « *La Bataille d'Alger.* » *Les Cahiers du Cinéma.* 183 (1966) :25-26.

Nichols, Lewis "In and Out of Books," *New York Times*. 25 Jan 1959. BR8.

Noiriel, Gérard. *A quoi sert l'identité nationale?* Paris : Agone, 2007.

Noiriel, Gérard. *Immigration, anti-sémitisme, et racisme en France* (*XIXe-XXe siècle*) *Discours publics, humiliations privées.* Paris : Fayard, 2007.

Norindr, Panivong. "Incorporating Soldiers in the Space of the French Nation: Rachid Bouchareb's *Indigènes.*" *Yale French Studies,* 115 (2009): 126-140.

Obin, Jean-Pierre and Annette Obin-Coulon. *Immigration et intégration.* Paris : Hachette Éducation, 1999.

O'Brien, Alyssa J. "Manipulating Visual Pleasure in *Muriel*." *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 17.1 (2005): 49-61.

Oms, Marcel. "La Mauvaise Mémoire." *Les Cahiers de la Cinémathèque.* Spring (1976) :118-122

Oscherwitz, Dayna. *Past Forward: French Cinema and the Post-Colonial Heritage.* Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2010.

O'Shaughnessy, Martin. "French Cinema and the Political." *Studies in French Cinema* 10.1 (2010): 39-58.

Parra, Daniele. « Entretien avec Mehdi Charef. » *Revue du Cinema* 438 (1988): 20-24.

Péju, Marcel. *Le procès du réseau Jeanson*. Paris : Découverte, 2002.

Pena-Ruiz, Henri. *Qu'est-ce que la laïcité* ? Paris : Gallimard, 2003.

Planchais, Jean. « Une opinion informée mais largement indifférente. » *Le Monde*, 12 March 2000. 1 May 2011 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=dea54e0bb36b7f99cec003d29f0b61e65d7e1bb5f6d9c708>.

Porch, Douglas. *The French Foreign Legion.* New York: Harper Collins, 1991.

Powrie, Phil. "Unfamiliar Places: 'heterospection' and recent French films on children." *Screen* 48:3 (2005): 341-351.

Prédal, René. *Alain Resnais.* Paris: Minard, 1968.

Price, Stuart. "American mentality? Trauma, imperialism, and the authentic veteran in mainstream Hollywood narrative." *Journal of Media Practice* 6.2 (2005): 83-91.

Prochaska, David. "That Was Then, This Is Now: *The Battle of Algiers* and After." *Radical History Review* 85 (2003): 133-149.

Prochaska David. "The Return of the Repressed: War, Trauma, Memory in Algeria and Beyond.".*Algeria and France, 1800-2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia*. Ed. Patricia M. E. Lorcin and Henri Alleg. Syracuse, NY:Syracuse UP (2006):257-276.

Provençal, Jérôme "*Mon colonel* : La guerre d'Algérie fabrique les tortionnaires," *Le Monde,* 21 Nov. 2006, 16, May, 2011 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cinema/article/2006/11/14/mon-colonel-la-guerre-d-algerie-fabrique-de tortionnaires_834330_3476.html#ens_id=829487>.

Randall, Karen and Sean Redmond eds. *The War Body on Screen.* London: Continuum, 2008.

Reek, Laura. "Forgetting and Remembering the Harkis: Mehdi Charef's *Le harki de Meriem.*" *Romance Quarterly* 53.1 (2006) 49-61.

Rees-Roberts, Nick. *French Queer Cinema.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008.

Reid, Donald. "Re-viewing *The Battle of Algiers* with Germaine Tillion" *History Workshop Journal Issue* 60 (2005): 93-115.

Ricoeur, Paul. *La memoire*, *l'histoire, et l'oubli.* Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2000.

Rosaldo, Renato. "Imperialist Nostalgia." *Representations*, No. 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring, 1989): 107-122

Rosello, Mireille. « *Marie-Line* de Mehdi Charef : *Joe Dassin* en banlieue. » *L'esprit créateur* 42.1 (2002) : 71-83.

Rothberg, Michael. *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

Rothberg, Michael. "The Work of testimony in the age of decolonization: *Chronicle d'un été*, cinéma vérité, and the emergence of the holocaust survivor." *PMLA*. 119.5 (2004): 1231-1246.

Rotman Patrick et Bertrand Tavernier. *La guerre sans nom : les appelés d'Algérie (1954-*

1962) Paris : Le seuil, 1962.
Rotman , Patrick. *L'ennemi intime,* Le seuil, 2002
Roussel, Vincent. *Jacques de Bollardière : de l'armée à la non-violence,* Desclée de Brouwer, 1997

Rousso, Henry. *Le Syndrome Vichy*. Paris: Seuil, 1987.

Rouyer, Philippe. "De A à Z: L'*Ennemi intime.*" *Positif.* 560 (2007) :42.

Roy, Olivier. *La laïcité face à l'Islam.* Paris : Hachette, 2004.

Saâid, Yacef. *Souvenirs de la Bataille d'Alger* : *September 1956- décembre 1957.* Paris : Julliard, 1962.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism.* New York :Vintage Books, 1979.

Said, Edward. " The dictatorship of truth: An interview with Gillo Pontecorvo" *Cineaste* 25.2 (2000): 24-25.

Sales, Claude. *La Trahison.* Paris: Seuil, 1999.

Sarkozy, Nicholas. *Lettre aux Educateurs.* Paris : Réalisation Documentation française, 2007.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Colonialisme et Néocolonialisme*. Paris: Gallimard, 1964.

Schnapper, Dominique. *Qu'est-ce que la citoyenneté?* Paris : Gallimard, 2003.

Sebbar, Leila. *La Seine était rouge*. Paris: Thierry Magnier, 2003.

Seshadri, Kalpana Rahita. "Spectacle of the Hidden: Michael Haneke's *Caché*." *Nottingham French Studies* 46.3 (2007): 32-48.

Sessa, Jacqueline. « Le 'Beur' dans les romans de Mehdi Charef et d'Azouz Begag. » *New Comparison: A Journal of Comparative and General Literary Studies*: 10. (1990 Autumn): 60-71.

Shafik, Viola. *Arab cinema: history and cultural identity—New revised edition.* Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2007.

Shepard, Tom. *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006.

Sobchack, Vivian. *The Persistance of History: cinema, television, and the modern event.* New York: Routledge, 1996.

Sotinel, Thomas ."L'*Ennemi Intime* : La guerre d'Algérie éclate à l'écran. » *Le Monde*, 2 Oct 2007, 18 May 2011 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cinema/article/2007/10/02/l-ennemi-intime-la-guerre-d-algerie-eclate-a-l-ecran_962044_3476.html>.

Spira, Alain « *L'ennemi intime* de Florent Emilio Siri, » *Paris Match*, 4 Oct 2007, 18 May 2011, <http://www.parismatch.com/Culture-Match/Cinema/Actu/L-ennemi-intime-de-Florent-Emilio-Siri.-69709/>.

Stora, Benjamin. *La gangrène et l'oublie*, Paris: La découverte, 1991.

Stora, Benjamin. *Imaginaires de guerre : Les images dans les guerres d'Algérie et du Viêtnam.* Paris: La découverte, 1997.

Stora, Benjamin. *Appelés en guerre d'Algérie.* Paris : Découvertes 2003.

Stora, Benjamin. *Histoire de l'Algérie coloniale. (1830-1954.)* Paris: Repères, 2004.

Stora, Benjamin. *La Guerre des Mémoires : La France face à son passé colonial, entretiens avec Thierry Leclère*. Paris: l'Aube, 2007.

Stora, Benjamin. "Still Fighting, *The Battle of Algiers,* Censorship and the 'Memory Wars.'" trans by Mary Stevens. *Interventions* 9.3 (2007): 365-70.

Stovall, Tyler. and Van der Abbeele, Georges. *French Civilization and its Discontents: nationalism, colonialism, and race.* New York: Lexington, 2003.

Suleiman, Susan. "Choosing your past: Jean-Paul Sartre and the Liberation." *Contemporary French Civilization.* 23:2 (1999): 392-408.

Szalai, Jennifer. "Habits of Seeing: The unsettling films of Michael Haneke." *Harper's* Nov. 2007: 68-75.

Terdiman, Richard. *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Taïeb, Éric. *Immigrés*: *l'effet générations Réjet, assimilation, intégration d'hier à aujourd 'hui.* Paris : Les Editions Ouvrières, 1998.

Telali, Saliha. *Les enfants des harkis* : *Entre silence et assimilation subie.* Paris : L'harmatton, 2009.

Theweleit, Klaus. *Male Fantasies. Vol.1 Women, Floods, Bodies, History.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

Thomas, Dominic. “Africa/France: Contesting Space.” *Yale French Studies* 115 (2009): 141-153.

Tincq, Henri. “Conscience Chrétienne et Torture en Algérie. » *Le Monde.* .” 12 August 2000. 1 May 2011 <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=3be1a6fc0c5336aafad9318f446f272a17ef331d4452f0e2>.

Yann Tobin, *Caché, Positif.* 536 (2005) :19-20.

Trinquier, Robert. *La guerre moderne.* Paris : Economica, 1961.

Ulman, Richard and Doris Brothers. *The Shattered Self: A Psychoanalytic Study of Trauma*. Hillsdale: The Analytic Press, 1988.

Vann, Michael G.”The Colonial Casbah on the Silver Screen: Using *Pépé le Moko* and *The Battle of Algiers* to Teach Colonialism, Race, and Globalization in French History.” *Radical History Review* 83 (2002): 186-192.

Vely, Yannick. «*Hors la loi* : un film important et décevant. » *Paris Match* 23 Sept 2010. 16 June, 2011 <http://www.parismatch.com/Culture-Match/Cinema/Actu/Hors-la-loi-un-film-important-et-decevant-213953/>.

Venturini, Fabrice. *Mehdi Charef: Conscience esthétique de la génération beur.* Paris: Séguier, 2005.

Vicari, Justin. “*Le Petit Soldat* and its revisionist sequel, *Beau Travail.*” *Jump Cut,* 50 (2008), 19 May 2011, <http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc50.2008/PetitSoldatDenis/text.html>

Vidal-Naquet, Pierre. *Les crimes de l’armée française,* Maspéro, 1975.

Héléna Villovitch, “*Mon colonel,*” *Elle*, 2006.

Vittori, Jean-Pierre. *On a torturé en Algérie. Témoinages receuillis par Jean-Pièrre Vittori.* Paris : Editions Ramsay, 2000.

Vittori, Jean-Pierre. *La vraie histoire des appelés d’Algérie,* Paris : Ramsay, 2001

Wilson, Emma. *Cinema’s Missing Children.* London: Wallflower Press, 2003.

Wilson, Emma. “Children, emotion and viewing in contemporary European film.” *Screen* 46.3 (2005): 32-52.

Wilson, Peter H. (Peter Hamish). “Defining Military Culture.”*The Journal of Military*

History 72.1 (2008): 11-41.

Wood, Nancy. “Memory on Trial in Contemporary France: The Case of Maurice Papon.” *History & Memory* 11.1 (1999): 41-76.

Yacowar, Maurice. “*Caché* and the private/public secret.” *Queen’s Quarterly* 113.2 (2006): 224-230.

Ylä-Kotola Mauri. “The Philosophical Foundations of the film work of Jean-Luc Godard.” Sam Inken ed., Mediapolis: Aspects of Texts, Hyper-texts, and Multimedial Communication. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999,149.

Yosef, Raz. « Spectacles of Pain: War, Masculinity and the Masochistic Fantasy in Amos Gitai’s *Kippur.*” *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 24.1 (2005): 29-66.

Zack, Lizabeth. “Who Fought the Algerian War? Political Identity and Conflict in French-Ruled Algeria.” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society,*16.1 (2002): 55-97.

Zamponi, Francis. *Mon Colonel*. Paris: Actes Sud, 1999.

Filmography
(in chronological order)

The Kid. Dir. Charlie Chaplin. Charlie Chaplin Productions, 1921.

Pépé le moko. Dir. Julien Duvivier. Paris Productions, 1937.

Brute Force. Dir. Jules Dassin. Mark Hellinger Productions, 1947.

Afrique 50. Dir. René Vautrier. Ligue Français de l'Enseignement, 1950.

Les Jeux interdits. Dir. Réné Clement. Silver Films, 1952.

Les Statues meurent Aussi. Dir. Alain Resnais and Chris Marker. Présence Africaine, 1953.

Rendez-vous des quais. Dir. Paul Carpita.Films de Soleil, 1953. (released 1989)

Bel-ami. Dir. Louis Daquin. Kleber Film, 1955.

Nuit et brouillard. Dir. Alain Resnais. Argos Films, 1955.

Toute la mémoire du monde. Dir. Alain Resnais. Films de la Pleiade, 1956.

Patrouille de choc. (original title *Patrouille sans espoir.*) Dir. Claude Bernard-Aubert. Films Ajax, 1957.

Les Suspects. Dir. Jean Dréville. 1957

Algérie en flammes. Dir. René Vautier. 1958.

5-8 2-B. Dir. Guy Chalon. 1959

S.P. 89098. Dir. Philippe Durand. 1959.

Sergeant X. Dir. Bernard Borderie. Les Films Marceau, 1959.

Hiroshima mon amour. Dir. Alain Resnais, Argos Films, 1959.

Murembong. Dir. Jean-Claude Bonnadot, 1960. (released in 1964.)

Les Distractions. Dir. Jacques Dupont. CEI Com, 1960.

À bout de souffle. Dir. Jean-Luc Godard. Productions de Georges Beauregard, 1960.

Le Retour. Dir. Daniel Goldenberg. 1961.

J'ai huit ans. Dir. René Vautrier, Olga Baïdar-Poliakoff, Yann LeMasson. 1961.

L'Année dernière à Marienbad. Dir. Alain Resnais, Cocinor, 1961.

Kapò. Dir. Gilles Portecorvo. Cineriz, 1961.

Parfois le dimanche. Dir. Ado Kyro. 1961

Demain l'amour. Dir. Paul Carpita. 1962.

Fille de la route. Dir. Louis Terme. 1962.

Cléo de 5 à 7. Dir. Agnès Varda. Criterion Collection, 1961.

Octobre à Paris. Dir. Jacques Panijel. 1962.

La Rivière du hibou. Dir. Robert Enrico. Film Artic, 1962.

La Quill. Dir. Jean Herman. 1962.

Tu ne tueras point. Dir. Claude Autant-Lara. Gold Film, 1962.

Les Oliviers de la justice. Dir. James Blue. Société Algerienne, 1962.

Les Honneurs de la guerre. Dir. Jean Dewever. AKO Films, 1962.

Le Combat dans l'île. Dir. Alain Cavalier. Les Nouvelles Éditions de Films, 1962.

Le Petit soldat. Dir. Jean-Luc Godard. Les Films Impéria, 1960. (released in 1963.)

27 mois après. Dir. Jean-Claude Bourlat. 1963.

Adieu Phillipine. Dir. Jacques Rozier. Rome Paris Films, 1963.

La Belle vie. Dir. Robert Enrico. Les Films du Centaure, 1958. (released in 1963).

Muriel ou le temps d'un retour. Dir. Alain Renais. Koch Lober Films, 1964.

Les Parapluies de Cherbourg. Dir. Jacques Demy. Parc Film, 1964.

L'Insoumis. Dir. Alain Cavalier. Cité Film, 1964.

Pierrot le fou. Dir. Jean-Luc Godard. Films de Georges Beauregard, 1965.

La Battaglia di Algeri. Dir. Gillo Portecorvo. Rialo Pictures, 1965.

Les Centurions. Dir. Mark Robson. Red Lion, 1966.

Le Vent des Aurès. Dir. Mohammed Lakdar-hamina. Office National pour le Commerce et l'Industrie Cinématographique, 1966

Le Joli Mai. Dir. Chris Marker. Sofracima, 1966.

Loin de Vietnam. Société pour le lancement de œuvres nouvelles, 1967.

Le Viel homme et l'enfant. Dir. Claude Berri. P.A.C., 1967.

Z. Dir. Costa-Gavras. Office National pour le Commerce et l'Industrie Cinématographique, 1969.

Burn ! Dir. Gilles Pontecorvo. Europee Associate SAS, 1969.

Le Pistonnné. Dir. Claude Berri. Renn Productions, 1970.

Elise ou la vraie vie. Dir. Michel Drach. Office National pour le Commerce et l'Industrie Cinématographique, 1970.

L'Enfant Sauvage. Dir. François Truffaut. Les Films du Carrosse, 1970.

Avoir vingt ans dans les Aurès. Dir. Réné Vautier. UPCB, 1971.

Le Chagrin et la pitié. Dir. Marcel Ophüls. Télévision Rencontre, 1972.

R.A.S. Dir. Yves Boisset. Productions de Tana, 1973.

Le Complot. Dir. René Gainville, Productions Simone Allouche, 1973.

La Guerre d'Algérie. Dir. Yves Courrière et Monnier. Reggane Productions, 1973.

La Chronique des années de braise. Dir. Mohammed Lakhdar-hamina. Office National pour le Commerce et l'Industrie Cinématographique, 1975.

La Question. Dir. Laurent Heyneman. Little Bear, 1977.

La Crabe-tambour. Dir. Pierre Schoendoerffer. AMLF, 1977.

Diabolo Menthe. Dir. Diane Kurys. Films d'Alma, 1977.

Le Coup de sirocco. Dir. Alexandre Arcady. Alexandre Films, 1979.

Certaines nouvelles. Dir. Jacques Davilia. Dovidis, 1980.

L'Honneur d'un capitaine. Dir. Piere Schoendoerffer. Bela Productions, 1982.

Les Sacrifiés. Dir. Okacha Touita, 1982.

Liberté la nuit. Dir. Philippe Garrel. Institut National de la Communication Audiovisuelle, 1983.

Le Thé au harem d'Archimède. Dir. Mehdi Charef. K.G., 1985.

Combien je vous aime. Dir. Azzedine Meddouri. 1985.

Les Folles années du twist. Dir. Mammoud Zemmouri. 1986.

Black Mic Mac. Dir. Thomas Gilou. Chrysalide Films, 1986.

Au revoir les enfants. Dir. Louis Malle. Nouvelles Editions de Films, 1987.

Miss Mona. Dir. Mehdi Charef. K.G. Productions, 1987.

Camomille. Dir. Mehdi Charef, K.G. Productions, 1988.

Cher Frangin. Dir. Gerard Mordillat. Stéphan Films, 1988.

The Accused. Dir. Jonathan Kaplan. Paramount Pictures, 1988.

Outremer. Dir. Brigitte Roüen. Canal +. 1990.

L'Été de tous les chagrins. Dir. Serge Moati. TF1, 1990.

Jacquot de Nantes. Dir. Agnès Varda. Canal +, 1991.

La Guerre sans nom. Dir. Bernard Tavernier. GMT Productions, 1991.

Le Vent de la Toussaint. Dir. Gilles Béhat. Canal, 1991.

La Rage de vivre : « *Le cinéma beur en France* ». Dir. Jochan Wolf, 1991.

Au Pays de Juliets. Dir. Mehdi Charef, 1992.

Benny's Video. Dir. Michael Haneke. Bernard Lang, 1992.

Des Années déchirées. Dir. Rachid Bouchareb, 1993.

Les Yeux de Cécile. Dir. Jean-Pierre Denis, 1993.

Les Roseaux savages. Dir. André Téchiné. Ima Films, 1994.

Rai! Dir. Thomas Gilou. M6 Productions, 1995.

Maciando nel buio. Dir. Massismo Spanno. France-12, 1996.

Funny Games. Dir. Michael Haneke. Austrian Film Institute, 1997.

La Vérité si je mens. Dir. Thomas Gilou. Canal +, 1997.

Vivre au paradis. Dir. Bourlem Guerdjou. 3B Productions, 1998.

Le Gône de chaâba. Dir. Christopher Ruggia. Films Christiani. 1998.

Les Etrangers. Dir. Philippe Faucon. La Septe Arte, 1999.

Marie-Line. Dir. Mehdi Charef. Canal +, 2000.

Code inconnu: Récit incomplet de divers voyages. Dir. Michael Haneke. *Bavaria* Film, 2000.

17 octobre 1961: dissimulation d'un massacre. Dir. Daniel Kupferstein. 2001.

La Fille de Keltoum. Dir. Mehdi Charef, 2001.

Samia. Dir. Philippe Faucon. Canal +, 2001.

La Pianiste. Dir. Michael Haneke. Arte, 2001.

La Fille de Keltoum. Dir. Mehdi Charef. Canal Horizons, 2001.

La Vérité si je mens ! 2. Dir. Thomas Gilou. M6 Métropole Télévision, 2001.

Nid de guêpes. Dir. Florent Emil Siri. Canal +, 2002.

L'Adieu. Dir. François Luciani. K'len Productions, 2003.

Une autre guerre d'Algérie. Dir. Zaoui. 2003.

Un rêve algérien. Dir. Jean-Pierre Lledo. 2003.

C'était pas la guerre. Dir. Alexdrine Brisson. 2003.

La Nuit noire: 17 octobre 1961. Dir. Alain Tasmain. Canal+, 2005.

Hostage. Dir. Emil Florent Siri, 2005.

La Trahison. Dir. Philip Faucon. Kinok Films, 2005.

Caché. Dir.Michael Haneke. Les Films de Losange, 2005.

Les Indigènes. Dir. Rachid Bouchareb. Tesselit Productions, 2006.

Harkis. Dir. Alain Tasma. Canal+, 2006.

Cartouches gauloises. Mendi Charef. Pathé Distribution, 2006.

Mon colonel. Dir. Laurent Herbiet. Pathé Distribution, 2006.

La Chine est encore loin. Dir. Malik Bensmaïl. Tadrart Films, 2007.

Michou d'Auber. Dir. Thomas Gilou. Europa Corp., 2007.

All the Invisible Children (2005) (segment "Tanza") Dir. Medi Charef. MK Film Productions, 2007.

Dans la vie. Dir. Philippe Faucon, 2007.

L'Advocat de la terreur. Dir. Barbaret Schroeder. Les films du Losange, 2007.

L'Ennemi intime. Dir. Florent Emilio Siri. Les films du Kiosque, 2007.

Funny Games U.S. Dir. Michael Haneke. 2007.

Algérie, histoires à ne pas dire. Dir. Jean-Pierre Lledo. 1001 Productions, 2008.

Entre les murs. Dir. Laurent Cantet. Haut et Court, 2008.

Les Porteuses de Feu. Dir. Faouzia Fekiri. France 3, 2008.

L'Instinct de mort. Dir. Jean François Richet. La Petite Reine, 2008.

L'Ennemi public no.1. Dir. Jean François Richet. La Petite Reine, 2008.

Les Plages d'Agnès. Dir. Agnès Varda. Ciné-Tamaris, 2008.

Française. Dir. Souad El-Bouhati. 2M, 2008.

Neuilly, sa mère ! Dir. Gabriel Lafarrière. Miroir Magique!, 2009.

Das weisse Band - Eine deutsche Kindergeschichte. Dir. Michael Haneke, 2009.

Adieu de Gaulle, Adieu. Dir. Laurent Herbiet. Canal +, 2009.

White Material. Dir. Claire Denis. Why Not Productions, 2009.

Un prophète. Dir. Jacques Audiard. Why not productions, 2009.

Hors-la-loi. Dir. Rachid Bouchereb. Tessalit Productions, 2010.

Carlos. Dir. Olivier Assayas. Why not productions, 2010.

Vénus Noire. Dir. Abdellatif Kechiche. MK2 Productions, 2010.

Un balcon sur la mer. Dir. Nicole Garcia. Europa Corp., 2010

Il reste du jambon. Dir. Anne Depetrini. 4 Mecs à Lunettes Production, 2010.

Des hommes et des dieux. Dir. Xavier Beauvois. Why not productions, 2010.

Ici, on noie les Algériens. Dir. Yasmina Adi. Agat Films et Cie, 2010.