

***LE PARIS DE LA MEMOIRE: TRACES OF THE
HOLOCAUST AND THE ALGERIAN WAR IN THE
CITY OF LIGHT***

by

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A thesis submitted to the
University of Birmingham
for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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July

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines contemporary literary and cinematic representations of Paris in relation to the dynamics of collective memory, arguing that the city emerges as a privileged site in which to explore critical questions of identity, memory and citizenship in France. In this comparative approach to representations of memories of the Holocaust and the Algerian War in France, I identify a shared lexicon of urban space simultaneously hiding and revealing traces of the past in the contemporary city. This study of memories and their urban and palimpsestic representations challenges the tendency to separate the disciplines of postcolonial and post-Holocaust studies, and in so doing contests the conceptual separation of metropolitan, European and colonial histories. As such, it contributes to a growing interdisciplinary field of French and Francophone studies that extends the object of study beyond the purely metropolitan. I draw on and engage with theoretical work in the fields of memory studies, postcolonial studies and post-Holocaust studies to consider how urban space opens up a legitimate new way of engaging with the overlaps and intersections between different memories without undermining the crucial element of difference. Underpinned by poststructuralist concerns, memory emerges here as an inherently constructed concept.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank everybody who has helped me in the preparation and completion of this thesis. I would especially like to thank my supervisors, Dr Berny Sèbe and Dr Kate Ince, for their insightful, encouraging, supportive and thorough supervision: I have learned so much from you both. The seed for this thesis was sown years ago (before I knew it) under the tutelage of Professor Max Silverman and the inspiring French department at the University of Leeds: many thanks for those early but crucial moments of inspiration in this field. I would also like to thank Professor Bill Schwarz for reading through an early draft of the introduction with brutal but invaluable advice. I am incredibly grateful to my partner, family and friends for always being there and lighting the way.

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INTRODUCTION

There is a moment in the landmark film *Nuit et brouillard* (Resnais and Cayrol 1955) when a panning shot films some indentations on a concrete ceiling. We are in the gas chambers at Auschwitz ten years after the liberation of the camps, and Cayrol's words, read without sentimentality by Michel Bouquet, tell us that 'le seul signe, mais il faut le savoir, c'est le plafond labouré par les ongles; même le béton se déchirait'. These scratch marks are the only sign or material trace that this space was once a gas chamber. They poignantly capture, and indeed mark, a person's final struggle. They are the only sign that distinguishes the space filmed in Resnais's present from 'un bloc ordinaire'. However, even if these traces are visible, 'il faut le savoir' – you would have to know that they were scratch marks: you would have to know, at least in part, the narrative which they themselves do not offer up freely. The scratch marks are visible traces of the past, then, which do not transparently or directly reflect the story of which they are a part.

This powerful cinematic moment provides a starting point for my exploration of how traces of the past are written into, and yet simultaneously erased from, representations of Paris in contemporary French film and fiction. As Resnais and Cayrol suggest in the film, a search for traces of the Holocaust in the calm and idyllic countryside of Poland in 1955 will not necessarily yield 'des cadavres qui s'écroulaient dès l'ouverture des portes'. Rather, a more complex interrogation of our engagement with traces, these material signs of the past, emerges in the image of the scratch marks. The scratch marks function metonymically and referentially, as a sign that stands in, inadequately yet necessarily in Derridean terms, for a history subject to erasure, and as such their relationship to the referent is far from clear or direct. As

Emma Wilson has argued (2005), throughout the film Resnais problematises the relationship between the image and its referentiality:¹

Resnais seeks to know or understand a relation between the unimaginable (the invisible, the unsayable) and the very matter that remains – the material remains, the relics and traces of past experience. His films work at the difficult junction between events that cannot be known, seen or felt (in their occurrence or in retrospect) and the matter, the images and objects, which seem conversely to offer material proof and evidence. (Wilson 2005: 93)

Wilson's analysis brings into play the paradox at the heart of the film; its self-consciousness about the 'truth value' of the images, which are themselves subject to the very processes of manipulation and editing that makes the film so powerful. Furthermore, the process of seeing, and the visibility of the traces, do not function in clear-cut ways. As Wilson suggests, rather than screening the reality *for* us, the film might more accurately be said to be screening it *from* us (Wilson 2005: 95).² Here, attention is drawn to the fluidity and insecurity of the categories of seeing and not seeing, visibility and invisibility. This apparent contradiction, produced by Resnais's film about the traces, is one that underpins my analysis of the five texts examined in this thesis. Each author or filmmaker engages in different ways with a remarkably similar set of considerations about the relationship between the past and the present as it emerges in the city of Paris, at the forefront of which lies a consistent concern with representation, referentiality and memory.

My approach takes inspiration from this rich and complex trope of scratch marks, addressing Paris as a representational space in which the traces of not one but

¹ In 'Material Remains: *Night and Fog*' (Wilson 2005) Wilson examines the film in the context of Resnais's wider oeuvre to explore the debates about the film's use of archival images and the self-referential nature of the film's attempt to show the unimaginable. She argues that there is a constant disjuncture set up between the visuals and the words that suggest the ungraspable nature of the reality, paradoxically pointing to the impossibility of the project.

² Such an observation would appear to be supported by Barbie Zelizer in her study of images of the liberation of camps and the formation of collective memory (2000). Referring precisely to the types of images used by Resnais, she comments that 'the mounds of corpses, gaping pits of bodies, and figures angled like matchsticks across the camera's field of vision have paralysed many to the point of critical inattention...they have provided only a thin veneer of knowledge about the camps and the atrocities that took place inside' (Zelizer 2000: 1).

two traumatic moments from France's past are both visible and invisible, 'mais il faut le savoir'. I examine how four contemporary authors and one film director use the city to explore memories of both the Holocaust and the Algerian War in France. Like Resnais filming in the gas chamber in the film's present, I argue that the authors and director under consideration here likewise suggest that you have to know how to look for and engage with traces of the past in the contemporary city. If it is possible not to know that the filmed space was in fact once a gas chamber, what are the implications for this in the contemporary space of Paris? What traces of darker histories and memories might lie just below the visible surface in the city of light? Whilst the representation of memory and the representation of urban space have both separately been objects of study for scholars of contemporary French film and fiction, there are no analyses that bring these two areas together to yield new insights. This is what I call the 'Paris de la mémoire': in these representations of memory there are no guarantees – it is also a 'pari de la mémoire'.

I consider a range of interrelated fields of enquiry that emerge in a sustained analysis of the representation of memory through the prism of urban space in five literary and cinematic texts produced in France from the 1980s onwards. Through close textual analysis of *Meurtres pour mémoire* (Daeninckx 1984); *Les Passagers du Roissy-Express* (Maspero & Frantz 1990); *Dora Bruder* (Modiano 1997); *La Seine était rouge* (Sebbar 1999) and *Caché* (Haneke 2005) I reflect on why the city emerges as a particularly productive way of engaging with post-Holocaust and postcolonial memories. I explore how each text uses the city to expose mechanisms that simultaneously hide and reveal, preserve and erase, traces of the past, and consider the implications of this for the conceptions of memory presented.

The trope of connections permeates my analysis of the works brought together in this thesis. Connections emerge between memories, cultures, identities and disciplines, contesting narratives of separation and opposition, and likewise suggesting dialogue and interaction between disparate elements as potentially productive and illuminating. Such connections are articulated through literary and cinematic devices, and as such are imaginative more than historical. Not only do Daeninckx, Maspero, Modiano, Sebbar and Haneke each represent memories in constant dialogue with one another, but equally I identify a shared lexicon of preservation, erasure, and reconstruction in the city, and a common focus on questions of authenticity, visibility, and legibility in relation to traces of the past.

Below, I explore this in more depth, setting out theoretical fields that inform my approach, and anticipating the potential problems that could arise in adopting such a comparative approach to memories. In addressing the question of connections, intersections and overlaps made possible by this study of representations of Paris, I do not suggest that one event or its memory should be viewed as *the same* as the other. Rather, I highlight the shared vocabulary of hiding and revealing, writing and over-writing, destruction and reconstruction, articulated in urban space across this corpus of works, in relation to memories of the Holocaust and the Algerian War. Equally, I draw attention to the ways in which the authors and director use the city to expose a sense of continuity, revealing the specific role of the French state in these two histories of violence.

In the chapters that follow I explore how two distinct histories of violence are depicted as embedded in the very fabric of the city, and reflect on how this troubles notions of borders and divisions, locating the horror of both the Holocaust and the Algerian War of Independence ‘over here’ as opposed to ‘over there’. One key

connection that I identify, then, is between the city, the French state, and these forms of violence. I draw attention to the ways in which the violent past cannot be kept separate from the postcolonial present in the city. The unexpected connections between places, traumatic events, memories, and times are consistently brought to our attention, presenting something strange and unfamiliar, the narrative of October 17th 1961 for example, or the deportation of young French Jewish children in the *rafles*, as unfolding right in the heart of familiar landmarks in Paris. It is this connection between the horror and the everyday, identified by Max Silverman as so central to the post-Holocaust aesthetic since Jean Cayrol (Silverman 2006), that is articulated through the space of the city, transforming spaces of protection, for example, into sites of overt state violence.

These unexpected connections serve to destabilise categories of victim and perpetrator, inside and outside, locating responsibility for the violence squarely within central Parisian space. My analysis confirms that there is nothing essential about these categories and what they stand for: meaning here, is multiple, shifting and in a constant process of becoming and renegotiation. Identity is, likewise, represented as a pluralistic site of contestation through representations of Paris that are contradictory, paradoxical even. These representations of the city as a contested site of oppression and resistance have political implications. Both space and memory are inextricable from questions of power. In keeping with its historical ambivalence as a seat of power and a site of revolutions, Paris is presented as a space with the power to regulate, control and oppress, and yet is simultaneously as a potential bastion of resistance.

Connections: Temporal, Narrative and Disciplinary

Many critics have identified the political allegory at the end of *Nuit et brouillard* as pertaining, albeit with subtlety, to the French army during the Algerian War.³ The striking change in address to confront the viewer, ‘au moment où je vous parle...la guerre s’est assoupie, un œil toujours ouvert’, and the appeal to the present moment, ‘qui de nous veille de cet étrange observatoire pour nous avertir de la venue des nouveaux bourreaux? Ont-ils vraiment un autre visage que le nôtre?’, clearly invite historic intertexts. Indeed, Debarati Sanyal examines the various structural and aesthetic ways in which the film opens up ‘an aesthetics of complicity’ (Sanyal 2011: 153) to interact with other histories of violence and complicity in a colonial and postcolonial context. Such a sense of representational interconnections, indeed ‘reverberations’ (Rothberg 2009: 3) across these different memories is anchored, in my analysis, firmly in the space of the modern city. What Sanyal’s analysis highlights is the multiple ways in which *Nuit et brouillard* opens up a dialogue with different histories of violence in the emerging postcolonial world. Algeria was by no means the only colony that fought for its independence, and indeed the War of Indochina (1946-1954) is also contemporaneous with such histories of violence. However, it will not feature here. This is partly due to the corpus itself, chosen for its dual exploration of memory and/in Paris. This in turn highlights the very specific nature of the relationship between France and Algeria, which has left an indelible mark on French history, the national psyche and Parisian space in ways in which Cambodia, Vietnam

³ Virginia Bonner (2007) points out that the film’s subtlety was necessary as it was state sponsored and as such subject to censorship. She argues that despite this restriction on an overt political message, the film is precisely about political prisoners, aligning it more decisively with the interpretation that it is about France and Algeria. Bonner highlights the fact that Jean Cayrol was himself a political deportee, and that the *Nacht und Nebel* decree of the title not only refers to Hitler’s command that political prisoners disappear into the night and fog without a trace, but moreover foregrounds the specifically political nature of the film. Many scholars have noted its ‘universal’ tendency at the expense of the particular, but for Arnaud Desplechin, as for Bonner, this universal warning ‘is clearly addressing Europeans, and France, about what was happening in Algeria...we understand, from this point of view, why he doesn’t name the victims’ (Arnaud Desplechin 2010: 120).

and Laos have not. One key factor in this difference could be the limited presence of French settlers in Indochina, something that marked the colonial relationship with Algeria, with lasting implications at the moment of decolonization.

In her now seminal study *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Ross 1995), Kristin Ross uses the figure of disconnection to demonstrate how after the abrupt rupture of decolonization France abandoned the rhetoric of *l'Algérie française* to retrench itself culturally inside the Hexagon. The process of erasure of the narratives of colonialism and decolonization at precisely the moment when France embarked upon its post-war modernisation, effectively served to 'keep the two stories separate' (Ross 1995: 8).⁴ The narrative separation that she identifies is one that has tended to structure thinking about France and the violent war of decolonization, implying that metropolitan French history is somehow distinct from broader Francophone histories, which include colonialism and decolonization.

Michael Rothberg has likewise noted a tendency towards separation of the disciplines of post-Holocaust and postcolonial studies that has its roots in a fear that one memory might eclipse or erase another from view (Rothberg 2009: 3).⁵ This competitive memory model has tended to dominate public and academic discourse, understanding collective memory as 'a zero-sum struggle for pre-eminence', 'recognition' and 'victimhood' (Rothberg 2009: 3-5). Rothberg argues that the Holocaust's exclusive claim to uniqueness which, in the context of the early silence

⁴ This is corroborated by Raphaëlle Branche's historical account of the period immediately following *les accords d'Evian*, 'les Algériens ont peu à peu été moins présents dans le paysage social et économique français' (Branche 2005: 16). She notes how the free circulation between France and Algeria was limited and then blocked, by both sides, and draws a similar conclusion to Ross, stating 'Ainsi malgré un contexte de forte croissance économique et une participation notable des étrangers - au premier rang desquels les Algériens - à la richesse du pays dans les années 1960, les années qui suivent la fin de la guerre furent celles d'une progressive fermeture du territoire national aux Algériens ou, au moins, d'un espoir de marquer les nouveaux espaces d'appartenance' (ibid.: 16).

⁵ This is also noted by Max Silverman in 'Interconnected Histories: Holocaust and Empire in the Cultural Imaginary' (2008: 418).

on the nature of the Nazi genocide as a specifically Jewish genocide, served to reassert an understanding of the event's particularities, has come to hinder any possibility of drawing out inevitable connections and intersections with other events (Rothberg 2009: 7). Gwyneth Bodger has also noted an over-reliance on the 'trope of uniqueness' (Bodger 2004: 105) in approaches to the Holocaust that has traditionally undermined the potential for a comparative approach. In her attempt to put in parallel representations of the Holocaust and the atomic bomb, she argues that there is 'still a need for a cohesive critical framework with which to approach the trauma narrative as a genre which can encompass literary representations from any event' (ibid.: 105). Contributing to a relatively small but growing body of scholarship theorising a comparative approach to memories of the Holocaust and the Algerian War, this thesis provides just such a cohesive critical framework to post-Holocaust and postcolonial studies. I argue that one vital way in which intersections are made visible is through representations of Paris. It is this aspect that differentiates my comparative approach, to which I return below.

Both Rothberg and Silverman point out that despite this disciplinary compartmentalisation, at least in part with its roots in what Ross identifies as the unique and abrupt nature of decolonization leading to Algerian independence,⁶ there are in fact key instances in which theorists and cultural producers have explored connections between different forms of violence. Silverman's analysis of the interconnected histories of Holocaust and empire in the cultural imaginary (2008) is instructive for the approach adopted here, as he points out that such interconnections across modern forms of violence 'can be more clearly exposed in imaginative works (rather than historical or sociological works) because these blur the frontiers between

⁶ Which, as Todd Shepard has shown (2008), is inextricable from the unique nature of France's colonial rule of Algeria.

the literary imagination, memory and history’ (Silverman 2008: 417). Such an observation draws out the key characteristics of literary representation itself, and how unstable the boundaries between fiction, memory and history are. Across the corpus the authors repeatedly draw attention to, and play on, just such unstable and fluid divisions. Indeed, in my specific focus on representations of the city, it is not the historical connections or similarities between the different narratives of violence that interest me, but rather those connections which are precisely made possible *through* the representation of space. Silverman’s emphasis on the very structure of literary form and on the imaginative dimension to literature as particularly apposite for examining connections between forms of modern violence, foreshadows my own observation that both the structure of representation and the structure of memory itself have significant correlations: ‘Repetitions, substitutions and transformations – the very substance of the literary imagination – open up an alternative history (though one announced by Arendt and others) which challenges the compartmentalised narratives we habitually receive’ (Silverman 2008: 421).

What the disciplinary division conceals, it seems, is that overlaps between the two memories’ literary articulation have been, in fact, identifiable in the postwar period. Silverman looks to Hannah Arendt, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire (Silverman 2008; 2013) and Rothberg adds WEB Du Bois (Rothberg 2009) to the list of cultural and literary theorists already beginning to explore interconnections and overlaps between systems of oppression.⁷ The intersections emerging in these analyses are multiple; Silverman and Rothberg expose

⁷ Silverman’s recent publication *Palimpsestic Memory: The Holocaust and Colonialism in French and Francophone Fiction and Film* (Silverman 2013) develops this analysis more fully. He makes the point that ‘analogies, transfers, interconnections and intertextual borrowings particularly abound during the Algerian War of Independence’ (Silverman 2013: 15), and that such connections are inevitable (ibid.: 14). Moreover, central to his conception of palimpsestic memory are processes that demonstrate ‘the spatialization of time’ (ibid.: 4), such as the palimpsest.

theoretical works, including more recent research by Paul Gilroy (2013), which visualise intersections that inform my approach: intersections between fascism and colonialism, and anti-Semitism and colonial racism (Silverman 2008: 418).

However, as Rothberg has outlined (Rothberg 2009: 18), comparative approaches can be problematic if the crucial dimension of difference is not attended to. In looking for representational overlaps, there is of course a danger of conflating one memory with another. I seek to challenge existing analyses that, in a reapplication of Henry Rousso's framework for France's national, collective memory of Vichy and the narrative of collaboration (Rousso 1987), somewhat reductively present an 'Algeria syndrome' (Donadey 2001). This is problematic as it implies that an overarching structure can adequately account for the fragmented and heterogeneous constellation of national identities that is France, and furthermore it proposes to transpose an identical framework for memories of entirely distinct historical events. Whilst it may be possible to identify a shared focus on issues of victimhood, extreme racial violence, exclusion, and the role of the French state, the two events in question took shape in very different ways, under very different social, political and historical contexts. Despite locating this research within a growing trend challenging rigid compartmentalisation within French studies between post-Holocaust and postcolonial studies, a key feature of my own approach lies in allowing intersections, overlaps and imprints to emerge without conflating the two distinct memories, histories and narratives. Rather than an overarching explanatory framework, my approach posits that a sense of intersections, overlaps, echoes and imprints is made possible by representations of Paris. Rather than offering an interpretive template that flattens

these complex processes of remembering and forgetting, I seek to reveal multiple layers of palimpsestic memory in the city.⁸

On 17th October 2011 the fiftieth anniversary of the brutal police massacre of Algerians protesting in Paris against a state-enforced curfew during the Algerian War of Independence brought the dual focus of Parisian space and the question of memory to the fore in public discourse. This very specific manifestation of the war on metropolitan soil will be considered in the chapters that follow, but the flurry of commemorative activity that the anniversary provoked raises important broader questions about the commemoration and memory of the Algerian War in France. On 17th October 2012, François Hollande's *Présidence de la République* released a short *communiqué* confirming, 51 years after the event, that: 'le 17 octobre 1961, des Algériens qui manifestaient pour le droit à l'indépendance ont été tués lors d'une sanglante répression. La République reconnaît avec lucidité des faits. Cinquante et un ans après cette tragédie, je rends hommage à la mémoire des victimes'.⁹ The belated recognition of this massacre of peaceful protestors in the heart of Paris is symptomatic of the complex 'vectors' (Wood 1999) of memory of this event. We should be careful, however, about how we 'read the silences': silences can be strategic and political, such as the amnesties in France; they can reveal the emotional and linguistic difficulties in transmitting traumatic memories; they can be related to state cover-ups or they might signal a desire to move on. Silences are complex and merit scrutiny in their very lack. Likewise, the events of October 1961 took place in, and were to some

⁸ Central to Silverman's concept of 'palimpsestic memory' is just such a sense of a tension between preserving the differences whilst making connections, as he argues that it 'connects disparate elements through the play of similarity and difference' (Silverman 2013: 4).

⁹ Available at: <http://www.elysee.fr/communiqués-de-presse/article/17-octobre-1961/> [accessed: 02 May 2013].

extent precisely about, urban space. As I will explore in the following chapters, this massacre and the issues it raises are particularly *spatial* in nature.¹⁰

The dominant framework for interpretation of France's relationship with the Algerian War is that it is passing from a state of 'amnesia' to one of remembering (Manceron & Remaoun 1993; Cohen 2000; Hiddleston 2003; Schalk, Stora & Herring 2005).¹¹ I adopt a critical stance towards some of the prevailing terms for talking about memory of the Algerian War in France, as I demonstrate that memory and forgetting are not opposed. Each is, in fact, part of the other, suggesting that some of these discourses are not accurate or adequate for the complex phenomena they attempt to classify. Stora observes in *La Gangrène et l'oubli: la mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie*, that although 'aucun film n'évoquera donc directement la guerre d'Algérie pendant qu'elle se déroule...' in fact the war has been addressed in a number of French films produced since the Evian accords (Stora 1991: 41).¹² Stora makes the point that despite a total of thirty-one French films and fourteen Algerian films (Stora 1991: 248), discourses continue to imply that the war has been occulted in French collective memory. How, then, does this observation fit into the discourse of forgetting, so often associated with the Algerian War in France? If, by this 'period of amnesia', what is meant is that the subject remains outside public consciousness *despite* this evidence of activities of remembering and recording, then are these terms accurate or indeed suitable? The discourse of 'amnesia' implies a very specific mnemonic process, whereby the patient is not *capable* of remembering their

¹⁰ Dawn Fulton outlines the 'spatial paradox' of this event: that the protestors make a claim to a space that back home they are fighting to be free from. She highlights the way in which this moment foregrounds ideas about ruptures and redrawing borders, drawing attention to the irony that this is played out against the soon to be severed motherland (Fulton 2007: 33).

¹¹ Benjamin Stora has demonstrated that a significant number of novels take the Algerian War as their subject (1996), and while some would attest to the apparent 'long-lasting silence' (Beugnet 2007: 227) in French cinema of films dealing with France's 'dirty war', others seem to imply a more nuanced approach to the 'silence', revealing more complex processes.

¹² Godard's *Le Petit soldat* (1961) is the notable exception.

experience of the past. Stora's observations suggest a disavowal of that past, rather than the inability to remember. Indeed, as my reference to *Nuit et brouillard* illustrates, Stora's observation that no film dealt *directly* with the war as it happened perhaps indicates, in an echo of Silverman's point about the literary imagination, the privileged position of art and representation for engaging in more subtle ways with this war.

The concept of *la guerre sans nom* (Talbot 1981; Tavernier & Rotman 1992) effectively denied the conflict the status of war at the time, leaving in the place of a named war a series of euphemistic expressions: *les événements, les opérations de police, les opérations de maintien de l'ordre, les opérations de rétablissement de la paix civile, le drame algérien, l'entreprise de pacification* (Stora 1991: 13). This refusal to overtly acknowledge the war was reinforced by the political insistence on *l'Algérie française*, the idea that Algeria was an integral part of mainland France, and not considered a legitimate separate entity. Stora argues, with reference to recorded evidence of François Mitterrand speaking explicitly about avoiding the declaration of war, that to admit this is to crush the myth of *La République une et indivisible* (Stora 1991: 16), and to recognise Algeria as a separate country: 'ce serait admettre une 'autre histoire'' (Stora 1991: 18). In Ross's analysis, it is precisely this insistence on separation - the denial of the foundational importance of colonialism for modern French society, and the view of that period as somehow 'extraneous' and 'irrelevant' - that informs the mechanisms of exclusion that operate in modern France (Ross 1996: 196). Such a spatial legacy of exclusion, and current political questions about neo-racism, immigration and assimilation, are strikingly apparent in my emphasis on urban space as a key locus for exploring the relationship between memories (for memory is always plural in nature), the past, and the postcolonial present.

While postcolonial studies have been a fertile field of multidisciplinary research for Anglophone scholars since the late 1970s, in France such an examination of the social and political relationship between the colonial past and the present has only emerged more recently.¹³ This belated emergence of ‘postcolonialité’ has been the focus of Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel and Sandrine Lemaire who take the ‘refus d’intégrer le passé colonial’ (Blanchard, Bancel & Lemaire 2005: 8) as a starting point for their consideration of the myriad ways in which the modern republic is haunted by unresolved tensions from the colonial period,¹⁴ in works such as *La Fracture coloniale: la société au prisme de l’héritage colonial* (Bancel, Blanchard & Lemaire 2005).¹⁵ As Fiona Barclay points out (2011) in her study of postcolonial haunting and the structural, lingering importance of the colonial past in the postcolonial present, the work of these historians shows that contemporary France is not only shaped by its colonial past, but that it is ‘haunted in various forms by the legacy of its history in North Africa’ (Barclay 2011: xiv). Whilst the contribution of Bancel, Blanchard and Lemaire is significant in the French context, and its focus on contemporary immigration debates is clearly instructive, I would challenge the overarching framework of denial in favour of more (apparently) contradictory and complex processes. Equally, my study, whilst clearly rooted in contemporary social and political contexts, is more specifically concerned with *representations* of such processes in film and fiction, rather than proposing actual historical links.

¹³ The controversial *loi du 23 février 2005*, article 4 of which held that the positive role of French colonialism should be taught at school, also brought such debates about the colonial past and its legacy into the public sphere. Article 4 was later repealed, in the light of outrage from historians and intellectuals of the left.

¹⁴ The publication of *La Torture et l’armée pendant la guerre d’Algérie* by Raphaëlle Branche in 2001 provided a significant historical account bringing the questionable actions of the French army back into public debate, forty years after it had briefly become a controversial topic in Henri Alleg’s *La Question* (Alleg 1958). Robert Aldrich points to these contemporary revelations about torture as one crucial way in which ‘the spectre of colonialism haunts postcolonial France’ (Aldrich 2006: 14.1).

¹⁵ *Ruptures postcoloniales: les nouveaux visages de la société française* (Bancel, Bernault, Blanchard, Boubeker, Mbembe & Vergès 2012) is the latest publication from this group.

In suggesting a comparative framework for memories I contest the separation of metropolitan, European, and colonial histories, and in so doing I intend to contribute to debates about defining and delineating, or rather expanding, the object of French studies. Since Kristin Ross's analysis of 1996 and the paradigm shift represented by texts such as Hargreaves' and McKinney's *Post-Colonial Cultures in France* (1997), the field has tended to be termed, inclusively, under the collocation 'French and Francophone studies'. However, as Hargreaves suggests in a recent article,¹⁶ although the term has effectively reconfigured the 'research and teaching agenda in what used to be generally known as "Departments of French"', it is time to reconsider its appropriateness as a label (Hargreaves 2012: ix).¹⁷ Hargreaves concedes that the duality within the term itself, of French and Francophone, might be interpreted as reinforcing the very divide it seeks to bridge (ibid.: ix), and furthermore that it is rejected by many of the cultural practitioners that it attempts to encompass (ibid.: x). He posits Transcultural French Studies as an apposite and comprehensive term free from the ambiguities, divisions and hierarchies of the previous term.

Both David Murphy (2002) and Charles Forsdick (2005) have previously engaged with these questions of terminology, the parameters of French studies and their intersection with the postcolonial. Both point to the need for a non-hierarchical critical framework, which Forsdick conceives of as 'a more flexible approach to intersections and interdependencies' (Forsdick 2005: 529), reflecting a key characteristic of my own methodological approach. This sense of permeable national

¹⁶ See 'The Transculturation of French Studies: Past, Present, Future' (Hargreaves 2012) in *Bulletin of Francophone Postcolonial Studies*.

¹⁷ Charles Forsdick's earlier observations about the role of *Littérature-monde* in realigning the disciplinary boundaries of French studies are also instructive: 'Such debates relate not only to the forms of connection that link together the geographically disparate elements of the Francosphere, but also to the associations between politics and poetics that those negotiating these connections, especially those in the cross-disciplinary field of Francophone postcolonial studies, are invariably obliged to address (Forsdick 2010a: 91).

boundaries and porous disciplinary divides is manifest throughout my analysis of these works. I argue that one vital way in which this is articulated is through urban space itself. In *La Seine était rouge* (Sebbar 1999), for example, a variety of borderline subjectivities are presented: children from the ‘1.5 generation’ – just old enough to witness events but not quite able to feel part of it; second-generation immigrant children – fully fluent French citizens whose parents’ language they struggle to understand; the Harki policeman: one of Papon’s *calot bleus* – an Algerian fighting for the French; *porteurs de valises* – the French resistance network within metropolitan territory helping the FLN. Sebbar’s presentation of identities that do not correspond to any existing classification equally shows how fluid, and indeed *constructed*, identity is. National and cultural identities spill over various borders, suggesting the inadequacy of existing terms and confirming poststructuralist theorisations that emphasise the slippery and fluid nature of all identities. For Michael Bakhtin, culture cannot be conceived of as integral and bounded, but rather is produced along boundaries (Holquist 2002: 14) and in liminal spaces.

The Question of Memory

As Mieke Bal et al have pointed out, memory functions as a process of *linking* the past to both the present and the future (Bal, Crewe & Spitzer eds. 1999: xv). As I have outlined above, connections emerge between places, people, time-periods and concepts across this corpus of works, through various literary and cinematic devices that seek to challenge clear-cut boundaries between perceived opposites and reveal instead a more complex set of relationships. Under this analysis, memory and forgetting, the past and the present, are not to be understood in oppositional

frameworks, but rather as in constant dialogue with each other. The texts brought together here consistently and insistently present a challenge to such constructions of opposition, and are frequently shot through with images and tropes that foreground a sense of coexistence, such as the palimpsest, presenting urban space and memory under the signs of preservation and erasure *simultaneously*.

The emergence or resurgence of critical interest in the subject of memory in the field of the arts and humanities is well established (Berliner 2005; Erll 2008; Klein 2000; Olick 1999; Radstone 2000; Zelizer 1995),¹⁸ but as Lambek reminds us, not only does this object of study risk itself becoming naturalised (Lambek in Radstone & Hodgkin eds. 2005: 211), but moreover such a profusion of scholarship also reveals an incongruence in how different disciplines interpret and construct this subject.¹⁹ Following Radstone and Hodgkin, I too advance from the premise that it is precisely these ‘regimes’ of memory - its discursive and conceptual productions - that are worth exploring (Radstone & Hodgkin 2005: 3).

A key thread weaving throughout my study, and one equally suggested in the breakdown of oppositional frameworks, is the importance of the present moment for any engagement with the past. It has perhaps become hackneyed to say that any recollection of the past necessarily takes place in, and reveals as much about, the present. Maurice Halbwachs’s identification of the social frameworks of remembering (1925) not only implies that the question of collective agency is pivotal to our sense of the past, but furthermore it suggests that the past is collectively produced in the

¹⁸ This contemporary fascination, or indeed obsession, with memory is what anthropologist Joel Candau has termed *mnémotropisme* (1998).

¹⁹ Whilst common misconceptions about what memory is and how it works have been well documented in the field of memory studies, it is worth highlighting how popular or commonplace assumptions about can memory distort how this concept is understood in wider discourse. One common way of thinking about memories, as photographic ‘snapshots’ that are stored in our minds, ready to be retrieved in unchanged form at any time, is highly deceptive (Kirmayer in Antze & Lambek eds. 1996: 175-176). Lawrence J Kirmayer reminds us that memory is anything but this, it is ‘full of potholes [...] in need of repair...what is registered is highly selective and thoroughly transformed by interpretation and semantic encoding’ (ibid.: 176).

present, and as such is always a product of the present.²⁰ Halbwachs's observations about memory contain two key insights for my approach: the fact that the present is *not* separate from but central to any notion of the past, and the intricate enmeshing of individual and collective dimensions. It is through Halbwachs that we are first introduced to the idea of *la mémoire collective*: individuals in any given society necessarily have recourse to specific social frameworks in which to produce and interpret their memories, as they only exist in relation to these larger structures. Halbwachs's analysis suggests the continual interaction of individual and collective realms, demonstrating that rather than being opposed, or mutually exclusive, they in fact feed into one another.

How individual and collective memories interact is a structuring question throughout this thesis, as personal, familial and domestic narratives play out against a backdrop of broader, national, historical concerns. This interaction is manifested formally at a number of levels in the texts, most strikingly perhaps at the level of genre. The texts frequently resist easy categorisation, blurring boundaries between fiction, autobiography and historical research in Patrick Modiano's *Dora Bruder* (1997; 1999), for instance, and between travel report and autobiography in *Les Passagers du Roissy-Express* (Maspero 1990), which is an intermedial (text and image) account of the *banlieue* whose author François Maspero writes of a character François Maspero in the third-person, with photographer Anaïk Frantz. In *La Seine était rouge* (1999) Sebbar presents witness testimony about a historical event, October

²⁰ Halbwachs' *Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (1925) is frequently cited as a foundational text for what has come to be known as collective or cultural memory studies. See, for example, *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Erl, Nünning & Young 2008); 'Collective Memory: The Two Cultures' (Olick 2002) and 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity' (Assmann 1995) amongst many others. As Olick has pointed out, Halbwachs' critical contribution to the emerging field of memory studies has been shaped by the uneven way in which his work has been translated (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi & Levy eds. 2011: 139).

17th 1961, through an ekphrastically described fictional documentary. Michael Haneke's *Caché* (2005) appears to follow a thriller format, but its radically open ending and metatextual reframing of films within films, have led me to consider it as a theoretical object. Generic boundaries,²¹ then, are also fluid. Notions of inside and outside are once again challenged. Modiano's search for clues about Dora's life in Paris, before deportation, is superimposed on his first-person musings on his father and childhood. This spatial process of superimposition, anchored in their shared space of the city, projects self onto other, and blurs individual narratives, stories and memories, with larger historical narratives of the Holocaust. The search for personal details of the eponymous Dora, in Paris, is repeatedly thwarted, and reference to Serge Klarsfeld's monumental historical documentation of victims of the Holocaust serves to foreground the collective dimension. It is a dynamic that lends itself particularly well to the thriller genre, exploited by Daeninckx to investigate the connections between domestic crimes and broader historical crimes that implicate the state.

The concept of collective memory, however, is equally a problematic one. Marie-Claire Lavabre's research has demonstrated, for instance, the problems of assigning a homogeneity or common collective identity to all members of any such social or political group (Lavabre 1994; 1998; 2000).²² Indeed, this will be crucial to my analysis of the collected texts, as the very concepts and boundaries of (metropolitan or Francophone) 'French' or 'Algerian' memory are consistently interrogated. As Leïla Sebbar's fictional and semi-autobiographical writing frequently

²¹ Such fluid generic distinctions not only have implications for the intersection of the individual and the collective, but they also serve to challenge the received ideas about the subjective and objective nature of memory, historical research, fiction and film.

²² In an article published in 2000, Lavabre argues that the term memory persists, despite becoming too all encompassing and polysemic, although it largely resists any shared definition. She highlights the need to contextualise 'cette notion, de revenir à son histoire et à la chronologie de ses significations' (Lavabre 2000: 54).

reminds us, such national and cultural entities are not only characterised by multiplicity and diversity, but the borders between them are permeable in postcolonial configurations. Identity and notions of nationality are explored through the systems of signs that produce them, in all the chapters. The authors employ strategies that corroborate poststructuralist theories demonstrating that language, meaning and subjectivity are constructed and in flux, rather than innate or fixed. Any notion of the nation as a fixed category is thus untenable, and is embroiled with competing ideologies.

In recent years, Susannah Radstone has critiqued certain tendencies within collective memory studies (Radstone 2001; 2005a; 2007; 2008). On the one hand, she points out that the increasing dominance of trauma theory not only in memory studies but also across the humanities, in itself deserves close critical attention. She argues that its prominence, and the specific political and cultural contexts in which it has evolved, have hitherto largely been under-examined and that any theoretical turn that explodes across disciplines in this way needs due consideration of its inclusions and exclusions:

Though the rise of cultural movements and moods serves as the object of study for cultural and social studies, the ascendance of theories and ideas within the Humanities themselves is less commonly placed under such scrutiny. (Radstone 2007: 10)

Partly, she proposes a sort of Foucauldian archaeology of knowledge, investigating how disciplines are produced and governed by practices of inclusion and exclusion. She asks precisely how such ideas initially put forward by scholars in the field of post-Holocaust studies, such as Cathy Caruth (1995; 1996), Dori Laub (1991; 2005), and Shoshana Felman (1991), came to dominate without critical reflection on the ethical and political implications of this. Trauma theory's unquestioned prominence is problematic, as it relies too much on the issue of victimhood, undermining more

complex relations that do not relate victim and oppressor in an oppositional framework (Radstone 2001). She argues that trauma theorists such as Marianne Hirsch have tended to neglect that ‘identifications may straddle victimhood and perpetration’ (Radstone 2001: 59), and uses Freud’s reflections on the ultimate ambivalence central to all young negotiations of the super-ego. Her analysis reveals how Manichean divisions have dominated in trauma discourses, overlooking this central ambivalence. Her critique is instructive for my approach. Throughout the thesis such oppositional frameworks are repeatedly problematised, revealing blurred boundaries between the concepts of ‘victim’ and ‘perpetrator’. Rothberg also suggests that any attempt to draw neat lines between memories and identities is ultimately flawed, since ‘memories are not owned by groups - nor are groups “owned” by memories. Rather, the borders of memory and identity are jagged...’ (Rothberg 2009: 5). I return to this in chapter four, where I foreground precisely this blurring of conceptual boundaries in Sebbar’s novel, which represents a sustained critique of unified notions of nationhood and political struggle.

As Susannah Radstone has observed, ‘it is almost a truism to state that the past is mediated by, rather than directly reflected in personal memory’ (Radstone 2005: 135). She suggests that some interpretations of this are problematic, as they imply that the past is one element, distinct and separate from memory. She argues that it is the structures and institutions that govern memory’s mediation in the public sphere that deserve closer examination in the midst of the ‘memory turn’ in the arts and humanities. Her observations have important implications for my approach: it is precisely the process of mediation itself as depicted in the novels and film, rather than the past as a referent, that is the focus of my discussion. If memory is not separate from, but rather the process *through* which we engage with the past, then our

engagement with the past is structured, and indeed limited by, this representational process. In a sense, it dovetails with Derrida's assertion that 'il n'y a pas de hors-texte' (Derrida 1967: 227), as it interrogates the very space where text, representation, or memory begin,²³ and posits that the past, as a referent, is not available to us: it is through recreation that memory operates. It is the 're' of representation that is so pivotal to this discussion of memory, and all five texts examined here negotiate precisely the boundaries between fiction, film, truth, reality and imagination, as well as between the past and the present.

Richard Terdiman frames memory's connection to representation in the context of modernity, identifying a shared functioning of symbols, simulacra and surrogates standing in for 'some absent referent' (Terdiman 1996: 8). Terdiman's examination of Baudelaire's *Le Cygne* draws out the central importance of the sign in modernity, suggesting that Baudelaire's reflections on the processes of memory in the poem are fundamentally linked to his ongoing reflections on the semiotic (Terdiman 1996: ix; 109). Baudelaire's configuration of memory in the poem is not only one that 'recollects and restores' but rather demonstrates its very 'deficiency' through the process of recollection itself (ibid.: 108). This view of memory, although making an absent present through representation, in fact proves the 'inauthenticity of presentness' and emphasises instead a pervasive and irretrievable sense of loss (ibid.: 108). This encounter with loss, central to Baudelaire's account of memory, will emerge in various ways throughout the chapters that follow. Such a self-reflexive position in relation to the possibilities and limitations of art and memory, one that draws attention to the inevitable loss in the process, the 'potholes', is a central and recurring characteristic of the novels and film. Terdiman's analysis is a significant

²³ I will return to this pivotal notion of the frame and frames in later discussions, particularly with reference to *Caché* (Haneke 2006) in chapter 5.

precursor to this thesis: not only does this engagement with both memory and representation play out against the backdrop of the city (ibid.: 112-115), but moreover, in *Present Pasts: Modernity and the Memory Crisis*, the way in which a culture ‘performs’ recollection is revealed as both distinctive and indeed ‘diagnostic’ (ibid.: 3). In chapter four the idea of cultural performances of memory returns as the young protagonists of Sebbar’s novel attempt to engage with the city’s landmarks of memory.

Freud’s writing on memory is particularly striking in the context of the challenge to binary oppositions that permeates my analyses, as he identifies forgetting not in contradiction to remembering, but rather as a central and indeed revealing part of it. Not only does Freud argue that the patient’s forgetting is a sort of learned habit, indeed a sort of memory (Freud 1898b; 1901b), but moreover he reinterprets silence, and indeed apparent gaps in memory as a ‘significant manifestation of the memory function itself’ (Terdiman 1996: 250). This insight informs textual analyses in many of the chapters, and echoes Jim House’s and Neil MacMaster’s research on the different types of silence generated by the events of October 17th 1961 in Paris (House and MacMaster 2006).²⁴ Silence, and the *points de suspension* that represent it textually, will be a crucial part of the fictional documentary film of witness testimony in *La Seine était rouge* (Sebbar 1999).

In *Studies in Hysteria* (Freud & Breuer 1895) Freud argues that the symptoms of hysterics were in fact displaced representations of traumatic moments from

²⁴ Jens Brockmeier suggests that the dialectic of remembering and forgetting has traditionally been ignored by psychological memory research (Brockmeier 2002: 36). Brockmeier traces the ‘cultural geographies’ (ibid.: 17) of remembering and forgetting, demonstrating how each category has been culturally constructed in opposition to the other, with remembering playing the part of the hero, and forgetting the role of the villain (ibid.: 15). He goes on to argue for a vision that allows for more complexity in the interplay between memory and forgetting, where what is at stake is ‘not two distinct entities or operations, but one cultural fabric in which remembering and forgetting are to be reconfigured as two inextricably interrelated aspects’ (ibid.: 21).

childhood. What hysterics suffered from was the return of repressed memories, too traumatic to process at the time. The goal of psychoanalytic therapy is to bring into consciousness what has been subconsciously repressed, so as to free the patient from the repetitive and distorted return of traumatic moments (Freud 1989). So for Freud, it is precisely what is forgotten, left out and repressed that is the most important. He interrogates the absences, the analytic silences, and looks at the process of forgetting as an active force, just as remembering is. Rather than seeing forgetting as blank memory holes, for Freud then, such blank spaces, gaps, and silences are themselves revealing. Andreas Huyssen has argued that Berlin, as a historical text, remains marked as much by absences as by the visible presence of its past (Huyssen 2003: 52). In the third chapter, I explore Modiano's notion of the 'sensation de vide' he experiences in the spaces the Bruders once passed through. In final chapter, I likewise examine how Haneke uses the hidden as a site of *revelation*.

Jim House (with Neil MacMaster 2006) warns that the study of memory should not 'conflate silence (non-verbalisation) with forgetting' (House and MacMaster 2006: 191). For him, such an approach to memory can run the risk of valuing memory only from within the 'public realm'. I propose an approach that attempts to articulate a complex set of processes relating to silence and expression. It calls for an examination of the way in which personal and familial histories and narratives intersect with official and public commemorations and other forms of remembering, proposing to look at the tensions, contradictions and gaps that are the very fabric of both remembering and forgetting.

The concept of screen memories (Freud 1899) is foundational here, not only in terms of the issue of repression, but also in terms of how different memories relate *to each other*. The German word, *Deckerinnerungen*, literally means 'cover memories'

and in this short essay Freud raises a number of pertinent issues about repression and, perhaps more significantly, displacement. Here the idea of what lies beneath the surface appearance of things, what *seems* important or traumatic, and what is remembered or indeed left out, is challenged and reshaped: ‘further investigation of these banal childhood memories has taught me that they can arise in other ways too, and that an unsuspected wealth of meaning usually lies hidden behind their apparent harmlessness’ (Freud 1899a: 8). It is through the concepts of repression and displacement that Freud explains the fragmentary, apparently banal memories we retain from childhood, and why the psyche ‘suppresses what is significant, but retains what is of no consequence’ (ibid.: 6). Essentially, what is ‘objectionable’ (ibid.: 7) in the memory is screened out, displaced or substituted for something acceptable, mundane even. It is significant, in the context of this comparative study of distinct memories, that the key to the value of the memory lies not in its own content, but rather in its relation to something else, something repressed (ibid.: 19), something unseen and indeed ‘off-screen’, to pre-empt my analysis in chapter five. It is this sense of the relational and the key element of displacement that Michael Rothberg draws on in theorizing the multidirectional nature of all memory, with specific analysis of how the moment of decolonization in France necessarily inflected the articulation of Holocaust memory (Rothberg 2009). His challenge to the dominance of competitive memory models in the field of collective memory draws on how some critics have used screen memories to imply that one memory screens the other right out (Rothberg 2009: 12). By contrast, he picks up on Miriam Hansen’s formulation that precisely emphasises displacement, rather than total obfuscation or silencing, as a more productive model for examining the connections between different memories (ibid.: 12).

The other important strand to Freud's argument in 'Screen Memories' is the idea that we project onto certain childhood memories desires, fears or fantasies not from the time itself but from the point of first recollecting the moment. Freud concludes that it is 'questionable whether we have any conscious memories *from* childhood: perhaps we only have memories *of* childhood' (Freud 2003: 21). For Freud, this process he exposes in screen memories is characteristic of memory more broadly. He reminds us that the recollection of the past necessarily traverses the context of the present:

at these times of arousal the memories of childhood did not *emerge*, as one is accustomed to saying, but were *formed*, and a number of motives that were far removed from the aim of historical fidelity had a hand in influencing both the formation and the selection of the memories. (Freud 2003: 21)

Freud, then, also draws attention to the process of remembering not as one of simple recall or recreation, but rather an active process of *creation*. Here, memory does not preserve, but it creates. This is echoed in the words of director Alain Resnais, when he says that 'I've always refused the word "memory" *à propos* my work. I would use the word imagination' (Colombat, 1993: 121). Memory is here explicitly connected to the realm of the imaginary, pointing to the necessary use of imagination involved each time we remember. Perhaps this goes some way towards arguing for the viability of art in the realm of history and memory, and breaks down part of the apparent opposition between individual, private memory, and public, collective memory, as both must necessarily enter into the realm of creation and the imaginary.

In 'Freud and the Scene of Writing' (1972) Derrida considers the implications of the ways in which Freud has represented the psyche, and more specifically memory, through the imagery of writing apparatus. From *A Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1895) to 'A Note upon the 'Mystic Writing-pad'' (1925) he highlights

the use of metaphors of scratching, engraving and printing in Freud's writing, portraying the mind as a landscape of writing, text and script (Derrida & Mehlman 1972: 77; 85). The concept of the 'memory trace' is central to both Freud and Derrida, and Derrida develops the image of a child's *Wunderblock*, a toy that inscribes marks onto a wax plate, and when the child lifts the cover sheet, the marks 'magically' disappear. This calls to mind the image of the ancient palimpsest. One of the starting points for this thesis was the idea of the city as a sort of palimpsest, where different histories, memories and narratives overlap and intersect. The traces of the previous markings remain, and become superimposed upon each other. The word's original use is clearly related to the idea of writing, or leaving marks, on a manuscript or scroll, probably parchment, and derives from Greek, *palin* meaning 'again' and *psestos* meaning 'to rub smooth'.²⁵ It denotes the process of scraping off the original text and leaving a new set of marks, but it connotes the fact that there are traces of what was there before underneath what has been reconstructed.²⁶

Another apparent dichotomy that has generated debate in the field of memory studies and beyond concerns the nature of the relationship between history and memory. Recent debates on historiography and postmodern challenges to 'grand-narratives' and 'meta-narratives',²⁷ have contested traditional conceptions of memory as subjective and history as objective. Increasingly, as the blurring of generic boundaries attests, clear schisms between the two are no longer conceptually possible. During the 1980s and 1990s, historians turned ever more to the question of memory,

²⁵ See *Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus* (2000: 847).

²⁶ Because of this powerful imagery the word has come to be used in a number of disciplines, including architecture, archaeology and urban studies, but also in significant ways in memory research. Walter Benjamin's defining work on the modernisation, and Haussmannisation, of Paris, depicts the city as a palimpsest, with traces of the past detectable in the present. More recently, Andreas Huyssen uses the term to examine contemporary 'sites' of cultural memory construction (Huyssen 2003).

²⁷ Jean-François Lyotard outlines his mistrust of these larger explanatory frameworks in *La Condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir* (Lyotard 1979).

and broader disciplinary and scholarly issues of historiography (LaCapra 1998; Friedlander 1993; Wood 1994; Young 1993). Between 1984 and 1992 Pierre Nora edited seven volumes of his landmark account of *Les Lieux de mémoire*, not exclusively spatial but rather diverse phenomena: spaces, monuments, anniversaries, events, songs, literature and art are explored as symbols which have generated notions of French identity. Terdiman's identification of loss as the central feature of Baudelaire's reflection on memory is palpable also in Nora's historical analysis of memory, in which the present moment, whilst characterised by a heightened interest, indeed obsession, with memory, reveals conversely its complete disappearance. These *lieux de mémoire*, then, where a sense of national identity is produced, emerge only in memory's absence: 'il y a des lieux de mémoire parce qu'il n'y a plus de milieux de mémoire' (Nora 1989: xvii). For Nora, spontaneous, natural or organic memory does not exist anymore, and in its place are processes of commemoration, archives, and anniversaries to mark a relation to the past, whose natural relation has been lost. *Lieux de mémoire* represent the modern, artificial relationship of a culture to its past.

For Nora, memory has been lost to the processes by which history attempts to engage with, record, categorise and know the past. Memory, in Nora's analysis, has been subsumed by historical investigation, and the historiographical examination of that investigation (ibid.: xxvi). These processes have refracted us further and further from any lived or real experience of the past itself. For Nora everything is memory, and nothing is memory, *simultaneously*. Whilst his vast catalogue of these symbols of national culture is foundational in its theoretical distinction between history and memory (and subsequent identification of their conflation as problematic) and in its clear and fundamental emphasis on the intricate relationship between national identity, cultural production, the symbolic realm, and commemoration, many critics

have highlighted the almost complete omission, indeed erasure of colonial histories from this exploration of the nation (see, for instance, Cohen in Smith ed. 2003: 129; Derderrian 2002: 28; Forsdick 2010: 176; Hargreaves 2005: 1).²⁸ This blind spot is both alarming and revealing. What it reinforces, however, is precisely the type of disentanglement of national identity from the colonial period identified as distinctive and symptomatic by critics such as Ross. Moreover, his distinction between memory and history is somewhat problematic, and it is precisely these categories and their delineations that are explored through writing and film in the following chapters. Equally, the processes of history for engaging with, categorising and recording the past, the historical investigation that Nora is so wary of, are themselves worth examining: there can be no memory ‘outside’ them, just as, for Derrida, there is nothing outside the text.

Crucially for my analysis, Nora uses a spatial figure to invoke these locations, sites, or spaces ‘où se cristallise et se réfugie la mémoire’ (Nora 1989: xvii). The *lieux* of the title refers to more than the spatial, but: ‘malgré cette extension, le choix du terme “lieux” met l’accent sur le topographique, *le lien de la mémoire et de l’espace*, la prédilection de la mémoire à s’incarner dans des lieux, des représentations de lieux, ou des discours sur les lieux’ (Petitier 1989: 103). In the final section I consider this link, between memory and space, which marks my approach to these texts as unique.

Representations of Paris: City as Palimpsest

²⁸ An omission that is all the more worrying since Nora published *Les Français d’Algérie* in 1961.

My analysis of memory in the city is informed by urban and spatial analyses that foreground space, and our use of it, as a productive site for analysing social, political and historical phenomena. It is urban space that ties all aspects of this thesis together.

As Doreen Massey explains:

the imagination of space as a surface on which we are placed, the turning of space into time, the sharp separation of local space from the space out there; these are all ways of taming the challenge that the inherent spatiality of the world presents. Most often, they are unthought. (Massey 2005: 7)

Her identification of space as a ‘product of interrelations’ and as a ‘sphere of coexisting heterogeneity’ (ibid.: 9) is striking in the context of my comparative approach to memory in French culture. She challenges the dominance of the temporal over the spatial as both object and tool of political, social and cultural analysis.

Massey, like David Harvey and Edward Soja, was heavily influenced by Henri Lefebvre’s foundational positing how space is not neutral or given, but rather is politically charged and socially produced, and should as such be thought of in terms of Marxist and Gramscian critiques of power relations.²⁹

In his lecture ‘Des espaces autres’ (1967) Michel Foucault suggests that the central preoccupation of the 19th century, with questions of history and the temporal, has radically shifted in the current epoch of simultaneity and juxtaposition, to questions of space. Foucault points out that this question of space is far from new, however, and that it is precisely the ‘entrecroisement fatal’ between space and time that is significant (Foucault 2004: 12). In Kristin Ross’s analysis of the very spatial nature of the Paris Commune of 1871, she makes the point that:

²⁹ In *La Production de l’espace* (Lefebvre 1974), Lefebvre brings attention to the ways in which social space is a means of social control, domination and power because it is the means of *production*. Space, in Lefebvre’s analysis, is both abstract and concrete: it is instrumental and it embodies social relationships. Crucially, for my analysis, he points to the ways in which space becomes naturalised, or how its very production is concealed.

Our tendency is to think of space as an abstract, metaphysical context, as the container for our lives rather than the structures we help create. The difficulty is also one of vocabulary, for while words like ‘historical’ and ‘political’ convey a dynamic of intentionality, vitality and human motivation, ‘spatial’, on the other hand, connotes stasis, neutrality and passivity. (Ross 2008: 8)

In line with Ross, I also show that space is ‘always political and strategic’ (ibid.: 9).

Indeed, this demonstrates why the city is such a productive way of engaging with memory as memory too is always political: what is at stake in questions of who remembers and what gets remembered is, of course, an issue of power (even if, as Rothberg and Radstone remind us, the lines between memory and identity are not at all clear). Ross’s analysis equally illustrates one of the ways in which the spatial and historical intertwine, as she argues that space ‘is characterised, among other things, by the difference in age of the elements that form it – the sum of successive modernizations’ (ibid.: 9). In this image, space – be it the specific sites of certain buildings or broader spaces such as cities – cannot be thought of as ‘pure’ in the sense that it always contains in it traces of what came before. This idea of urban space as palimpsestic – as containing multiple layers from distinct moments in history – is one reason why it is so compelling for my comparative approach to memories.

Equally, my focus on the articulation of memories in and through space allows for an exploration of the notion of the monumental, so crucial to Nora’s concept of *lieux de mémoire*. Written into cities are public narratives of history, captured in symbolic constructions, serving to communicate a sense of collective, often national, identity. Indeed, as Peter Carrier has argued, the function of monuments is ‘the cohesion of social groups via the cultivation of collective memories’ (Carrier 2006: 16). State authorities have used symbolic constructions in urban space for political legitimisation for centuries, and in revolutionary times, it is precisely those monuments that are destroyed or re-appropriated in the contestation of political power

and hegemonic rule. Carrier also shows, however, how ineffective monuments are: ‘they appeal to mass support while at the same time preventing genuinely plural participation in them, due to their inherently centralising symbolic function’ (Carrier 2006: 16). They are political instruments serving ideological purposes, but depend on the public for their interpretation. Across the works collected here the monumental serves as a backdrop to show how official narratives and practices of commemoration are written into the city, and repeatedly they are depicted as empty signifiers that do not mean anything to the current citizens.

I suggest that in each of the texts under consideration, the spatial emerges as more than a backdrop or container for the narratives exploring memory. Across the corpus urban space is used to explore the intersection between self and other, individual and collective, preservation and erasure. In the first chapter, I explore how Didier Daeninckx uses spatial motifs of burial and excavation in the city in his crime thriller *Meurtres pour mémoire* (1984), about the links between October 1961 and the Holocaust. In existing scholarship these links have been considered primarily through the character of Veillut or Papon (Rothberg 2009) or through drawing attention to how the genre itself lends itself to exposing connections between crimes (Gorrara 2000). Whilst these analyses are instructive, I argue that the ‘multidirectionality’ of memory and the connections that emerge between memories are specifically represented through urban space. It is urban space that is the privileged site for exposing connections between time periods and state complicity in all crimes. Daeninckx, like Maspero and Modiano, draws attention to the site of Drancy, the Parisian internment camp, troubling categories of inside and outside by locating the Holocaust within Parisian space. It is through Drancy that a continuity is explored, revealing unexpected connections between the modernist architecture that dealt with

the sprawling population on the outskirts of the city, genocide, and the current situation for immigrants living the *banlieue* in postcolonial France.

In chapter two, I turn to François Maspero's representation of urban and suburban space in *Les Passagers du Roissy-Express* (Maspero & Frantz 1990). Interstitial spaces pervade this auto-ethnographic travelogue of *la banlieue*, in which traces of the past are simultaneously erased, preserved, and transformed. Maspero's generically ambiguous hybrid text constitutes a challenge to disciplinary boundaries and indeed the epistemological enquiry of French studies. It is through urban and suburban space that Maspero depicts more fluid conceptions of the relationship between the past and present, in a striking sense of political continuity that is chiefly explored through the specific site of Drancy, la cité de la Muette. This site also provides rich material for Maspero's exploration of the nuanced ways in which the past and present are interrelated.

My reading of Patrick Modiano's *Dora Bruder* (1997; 1999) posits that the text opens up the possibility of connections through the device of superimposition. Time periods blur and become indistinct but are anchored through their spatial coordinates in Paris. The 1960s of his childhood blurs with the present moment of searching for Dora and the imagined moment of her deportation. Whilst many scholars have noted Modiano's use of space and particularly Paris across his œuvre, there remains no comprehensive study of the specific ways in which space is used to articulate memory in *Dora Bruder*. Equally, whilst the text has been widely studied as a post-Holocaust text, it has not yet received attention in the context of a comparative approach to memories. The collage of 'Parises' that emerges is depicted as an archive, in which traces of the past are both stored and destroyed, and tightly regulated by the state. Such an emphasis on traces in the city reveals the metatextual nature of

Modiano's project, which is concerned with questions about writing, representation, memory and meaning production more broadly. *Dora Bruder* is also difficult to categorise generically, and I argue that this ambiguity is a productive site for analysis and in fact reveals something about the interrelated projects of memory, fiction, autobiography, history, representation and imagination.

In chapter four, I examine how Leïla Sebbar uses urban and suburban space to problematise the very concept of collective memory and national identity in *La Seine était rouge* (1999). Whilst some scholarship has addressed the interconnections between memories in the text (Barclay 2011; Fulton 2007; Rothberg 2009) and indeed noted the palimpsestic representation of memory in the city (Fulton 2007), in my analysis the full implications of the intertwining of the spatial and temporal are investigated. Through a sustained analysis of the ekphrastic rendering of a fictional documentary film in the text, producing a sense of intermediality and cross-fertilization of form, questions arise about the boundaries and frames of the text itself and of memory, fiction, film and imagination. The way in which the text itself transcends boundaries, I suggest, reflects the persistent challenge to bounded notions of nation and subjectivity that Sebbar presents.

Whilst there are a plethora of studies addressing the question of memory in Haneke's thriller *Caché* (2005), in chapter five I argue that one vital way in which memory is represented in the film is through urban space. The shock that is produced between the opening and followings shots, on the realisation that outside is in fact inside and that neither category is secure, is specifically achieved through the overlaying of visual and sonic layers of film in the street scene. Indeed, it is the street that offers up flashes of the past: these clues to memory, dream or imagination are quite distinctively embedded in the central Parisian street space. Paris, in Haneke's

analysis, comes to function at once as any and every European metropolis, pointing to broader, comparative histories of violence, and yet quite specifically points to the unique history and memory of 17th October 1961.

Across the works selected, the representational space of Paris emerges as a privileged site in which to address complex but pertinent questions about collective memories and national identities. Moreover, representations of urban space here open up the possibility of exploring the nuanced overlaps and connections between memories of the Holocaust and the Algerian War in France, whilst remaining attentive to difference and specificity. The prism of the city offers a unique way of approaching the entanglement of questions about memory, history, power, citizenship and identity in the modern French Republic. Underpinning this thesis is a consistent concern with the ways in which memories and identities are depicted as constructed: repeatedly attention is brought to the *processes* of recording and representing the past and experience more broadly, engaging with broader, metatextual questions about the nature of writing, image production and representation.

CHAPTER ONE

EXCAVATING DAENINCKX'S PALIMPSESTIC URBAN MYSTERIES:

URBAN SPACE AS VITAL CLUE

In Didier Daeninckx's detective novel *Meurtres pour mémoire* (1984) two fictional family murders are woven into the representations of two historical moments.

Through the character of Inspecteur Cadin, Daeninckx reveals multitudinous links, between the family murders, and between the events of 17th October 1961 and the deportation of Jews during the Holocaust. In so doing he equally exposes connections between personal and collective dimensions, historical and fictional forms, and the past and present. Both Roger and Bernard Thiraud are historians finding out about the past. For both characters it is knowledge and seeing (the trope of visibility will be a central one throughout this thesis) that leads to their murders. Police archives are represented as closely guarded, and knowledge of the past is tightly regulated by the state. Indeed, it is institutional structures that are exposed as inextricable from the various crimes and their consequent concealment. In the introduction, I showed that my examination of the ways in which memories of the Holocaust and the Algerian War of Independence intersect in the city is underpinned by recent developments in the field of memory studies, particularly Michael Rothberg's concept of 'multidirectional memory' (Rothberg 2009). In this chapter, one aspect of my argument is that in Daeninckx's novel it is precisely *through* urban space that the fundamental multidirectionality of memories is exposed. I demonstrate that Daeninckx's representations of Parisian space incriminate the French state and

problematise categories of victim and perpetrator, so crucial to detective and indeed historical narratives.

Meurtres pour mémoire has widely been read in terms of questions of genre,³⁰ and there is a significant body of scholarship that testifies to the recent upsurge of academic interest in French detective fiction (Hardwick 2009: 9). These critics consider Daeninckx, amongst others, in the (specifically) French context in which this popular detective fiction genre is used to explore and expose difficult episodes from the past, and as a vehicle for social critique.³¹ In existing scholarship, the figure of Maurice Papon is frequently highlighted as the point of connection between the two distinct memories of the Holocaust and the Algerian War, both in the literary text and in historical investigations (Forsdick 2001; Golsan 1998; Jones 2006; Rothberg 2009). Some of these approaches touch on the question of representations of the city, but there remains no coherent overview foregrounding the varied and specific ways in which the city is portrayed, and how Daeninckx's presentation of memory emerges through this. My approach shifts the focus away from the well-established field of research on genre and the Papon trial to examine the text anew, from the angle of urban spatiality.

This chapter will reinforce the value of a spatial reading of the text and demonstrate why the spatial is a particularly productive way to engage with the question of memory. Many scholars have used Foucault's 1967 lecture 'Des espaces autres' to proclaim a contemporary, postmodern shift from a cultural fascination with

³⁰ See for example; Belhadjin 2010; Gorrara 2000, 2004, 2005, 2009; Hamilton 2000; Fraser 2005; Forsdick 2001; Peltier 2000; Ross 2010.

³¹ See Gorrara (2003) for an exploration of the nuanced generic histories and interrelationship of American hard-boiled detective fiction and French roman noir. She highlights the way the process of transposition to France led to a change in function, as French authors used it to critique and unravel repressed crimes from the recent past (Gorrara 2003). Louise Hardwick locates this sense of 'interplay' between the development of Anglophone and Francophone crime fiction as important in terms of a broader theoretical cross-fertilization and the issues of generic boundaries and limitations (Hardwick (ed) 2009: 5-7).

the temporal, to that of the spatial (see for instance Silverman 1999: 72, Soja 1989:10). Whilst the 'spatial turn' does point to space as a privileged category for social, cultural, political, ideological and historical analysis, my approach is not concerned with space rather than time, but with the specific way in which time and space are explored in memory and the city. The city provides a useful prism through which to analyse the dynamics of collective traumatic memories as it is a nexus for different communities, narratives and subjectivities, as outlined in the introduction. Many configurations of memory are inherently spatial, such as buried or repressed memory, screen memories and multidirectional memory. In Radstone and Schwarz's recent response to the contemporary salience of memory, they define their approach as 'mapping memory' (Radstone and Schwarz eds. 2010: 1). Under this geographical motif the tensions and dislocations they identify as constituting memory's form and field of inquiry are designated as 'faultlines' (ibid.: 7). Doreen Massey invites us to re-orientate our collective imagination of what space is, challenging the tendency to conceive it as surface, positing instead that space might more productively be read as a convergence of histories (Massey 2005: 4). This, she points out, has important implications for the relationship between time and space.

The novel raises questions about the place (literally) of a very specific moment during the Algerian War in French national memory and consciousness. The brutal police oppression of Algerians in Paris, peacefully protesting against a curfew to circulate freely in the city at night, in which hundreds of Algerian immigrants were beaten or shot to death, initially left few traces of its occurrence. Media censorship, restricted access to police archives for historians and obfuscation of the facts by the police have meant that this extraordinary moment of 'state terror' (House and MacMaster 2006), which saw 11,000 Algerians rounded up and taken in buses to

sports stadiums and sent to prison camps (Einaudi 1991: 80), has a complex historiography. Rothberg argues that the Holocaust and 17th October ‘have served as vehicles of remembrance for each other’ (Rothberg 2009: 229), and in this chapter I demonstrate that the two sets of narratives and memories call across to one another through Daeninckx’s depiction of spaces in Paris. This pivotal moment not only elicits questions about repressed memories, the difficult notion of any cohesive, collective memory, and the role of Papon and the state in two brutal, racially driven persecutions, but it also brings the city of Paris into focus in complex and dynamic ways.

It is vital not to conflate the long and traumatic war of Algerian independence (that was mostly fought in Algeria) with either the violence of colonialism itself, or this one specific materialization of the war on metropolitan soil. It might be said that this ‘day without a name’ (Cole 2003: 25) comes to stand almost metonymically for the ways that *la guerre sans nom* ‘spilled’ over into the *métropole*, manifesting in the centre of the city of light some of the violent strategies that had been at the heart of French colonialism for years. However, the very substance of metonymy is partiality and when we take a part to stand for a whole it is not only incomplete, but it may also be an inaccurate reflection of the broader picture. This issue of metonymy has important implications for understandings of representation, memory and historiography. I suggest the central role of literary and imaginative spaces in producing theorizations of memory through devices such as symbolism and metonymy. I propose a specific and focused analysis of the ways in which memories of that traumatic moment of decolonization in the metropolis are played out as part of the literary, historical and cultural imaginary of the city.

As Joshua Cole points out, 17th October 1961 is exceptional precisely because it took place in the heart of Paris (Cole 2003: 25). Location is not secondary here.³² Without recourse to the polar oppositions that dominated early postcolonial thought, and recreated the very reductive duality that the discipline now seeks to dismantle – between metropolitan centre and peripheral colony – such a spatial analysis does, however, invite a critical consideration of the question of spatial boundaries and divisions. The configurations of the binary concepts of centre/margins and self/other, which were the essence of the colonial project itself, based on a power hierarchy between colonizer and colonized, present a trap for the postcolonial scholar, as they imply and essentially only perpetuate that such oppositions are fixed or that these categories exist at all. Increasingly, postcolonial studies calls for tropes that cut through these binaries, with figures that imply an entirely new spatial configuration, which consists in fragmentation, multiplicity and the space ‘between’.³³

The troubled vectors (Wood 1999) of memories of the event in France have been widely researched in recent years (Einaudi 1991; Stora 1991; Branche 2001; Lecour Grandmaison 2001; Cole 2003; House & MacMaster 2006; Jones 2006) with various focal points.³⁴ Much of this research initially focused on the number of dead and government responsibility for their deaths (Cole 2003: 25).³⁵ Cole argues that

³² As Catherine Dana’s analysis makes clear, ‘cette date marque un événement particulier à plusieurs titres: d’abord, il a eu lieu à Paris et transporte ouvertement la guerre d’Algérie (1954-1962) sur le sol métropolitain’ (Dana 2004 : 13). In the text, this is also clearly stated: ‘La guerre qui pour la grande majorité des Français avait la seule réalité d’une suite de communiqués, tour à tour euphoriques ou creux, cette guerre prenait corps au centre de Paris’ (Daeninckx 1984: 28).

³³ Homi K Bhabha’s concepts of hybridity and third space are salient examples of this (Bhabha 1994).

³⁴ House and MacMaster point out in the introduction to their own approach that it is reductive to read the events of the protest without consideration of the broader contextual frame that contains it: the Algerian War (2006: 2). The question of the name given to the protest, ‘17th October 1961’, is also misleading, they argue. This specific date in history signifies one, explosive and important moment, but somehow fails to account for the complexity of a ‘longer and deeper crisis’ (ibid.: 14) of which it is part.

³⁵ Cole reminds us that it was not until 1997 that the key debate over numbers shifted to a focus on Maurice Papon’s trial for crimes against humanity. At the heart of the trial was the central connection between the two different ‘crimes against humanity’, the trial of the state system itself and the trial of ‘official’ history. Cole makes the link that it is Jean-Luc Einaudi’s testimony in the trial that forced

whilst Papon used the uncertainty about the exact number of deaths to elicit uncertainty about the event itself, media attention on the issue of numbers ‘has prevented any meaningful assessment of overall responsibility’ (Cole 2003: 25). A key factor in the development of academic research into 17th October 1961 is the issue of available or restricted access to state archives (House and MacMaster 2006: 6), an issue with which Daeninckx engages in the novel.

This chapter’s structure is guided by different aspects of urban spatial representation, each subsection dealing with one aspect that is differently interwoven with the central questions about cultural memory. The first section proposes that the city functions in a pivotal way in the text, and as in Lefebvre’s critique of capitalism’s tendency to treat space as a neutral background to its processes (Lefebvre 1974), I explore here the ways in which the city is more than just the scene of the crime. The Paris that emerges here is one of restricted access to state archives, and one whose streets and buildings hide traces of a dark and sinister past. Paris is not just the backdrop for racial oppression, but is implicated in the production of the circumstances of such social division. Then, through an exploration of the spatial trope of burial and excavation to reveal the hidden histories and narratives of space, the city streets will emerge as a contested site, pointing to the political nature of such public space and to the potential for both oppression and subversion they represent. It will consider the city streets as sites or ‘realms’ of memory, exploring Nora’s specific conception of this, as well as a more literal play on the spatial nature of *lieux de mémoire*. In an attempt to move beyond the trap of fixed binaries,³⁶ I posit

Prime Minister Lionel Jospin to admit that the official version of events should not go unchallenged (Cole 2003: 27). The context of the Papon trial, as Rothberg points out, has been an important one for approaching 17th October 1961 and its representations since 1997 (Rothberg 2009: 286).

³⁶ As Jane Jacobs has demonstrated, European constructions of self/other, core/periphery and inside/outside were integral to the ‘architecture of power’ (Jacobs 1996: 13) that was structural to colonialism.

Daeninckx's cityscape as a fragmented postcolonial city. Memory also emerges as fragmented, and as such constitutes a challenge to totalizing frameworks of history.

Finally, in considering the central motifs of connections, associations and networks, the very substance of literary and cinematic production, and of multidirectional memory itself, I argue that such interconnectedness emerges in and *through* space. Existing scholarship has tended to undermine the pivotal role assigned to space and place in the text. In my analysis it is the site of Drancy that is the connective thread between the different narratives.³⁷

The Scene of the Crime?

Paris occupies a complex and contradictory place in *Meurtres pour mémoire* (hereafter *MM*), revealing a set of tensions that engage productively with the question of memory. This section will draw on analyses that foreground the urban in noir fiction, and its corollary genre the *néo-polar* (Goulet 2007; Ross 1992; 2010), to explore how the city is represented and functions in the text beyond being the setting for the detective work and the scene of the crime. It engages with what Kristin Ross has called, after Henri Lefebvre, 'social space' (Ross 1987), taking space as a primary object for ideological, historical, social and political analysis (Ross 1987: 104). Space, under these analyses, is not just a container for our lives, but rather should be seen as socially constructed. Ross points out that there is a tendency, in both literary and cultural studies, and more directly political fields such as Marxist theory, to conceive of space as an abstract, metaphysical context (ibid.: 104), and, even more dangerous for Roland Barthes, natural. Just as Barthes uncovers the mechanisms of ideology in

³⁷ Both Maspero and Modiano also use the Parisian site of Drancy to explore notions of French complicity and continuity, issues to which I return in subsequent chapters.

cultural artefacts and practices (Barthes 1957) that generate various levels of meaning, and exposes them as being all the more dangerous when left unchallenged, because they *appear* natural, I argue that such questions of naturalization and visibility are applicable to questions of space and memory. Following Ross, I argue then that in *MM* urban space is not just a passive container for the narratives, nor does it connote neutrality and stasis. Rather, Daeninckx depicts the city as a primary element in the crimes committed, raising serious questions about state complicity, and moving the question of space from the background to the foreground.³⁸

The scene of the crime is an important element in both the narratives of the crimes themselves, the subsequent police investigation that forms the story, and in any historical account of the events in question. In the novel specific places in Paris are continually referred to both during the first crime that takes place during the protest of October 1961, and in the investigation of the mystery. Many scholars in the field of the crime fiction genre (such as Gorrara 2005) draw on Tzvetan Todorov's typology of detective fiction (1966), to demonstrate the double-layered nature of the narrative structure, which tells both the story of the crime and the story of the investigation. This archaeological structure has a temporal implication,³⁹ and links the crime of the past with its discovery in the present in Daeninkcx's novel. Like the act of remembering more broadly, such a representation of the past necessarily takes place from the contextual and interpretive frame of the present.⁴⁰ The past and present are not completely separate from, or opposed to, each other, but intersect in more

³⁸ This echoes the overt denunciation of the state in Modiano's *Dora Bruder*, which I explore in more detail in chapter three.

³⁹ Bill Schwarz argues that issues of temporality, so often overlooked in memory research, are in fact the key to understanding modern memory (Schwarz 2010: 42).

⁴⁰ Gorrara's reference to Todorov in her consideration of the selective nature of memory is instructive. She reminds us that for Todorov all memory is inherently selective, as each act of memory is not only mediated and representational, but is also only ever partially created. She cites Todorov's notion that the very act of memory is located at the intersection between preserving the past, and forgetting all those other moments we might have remembered (Gorrara 2005: 132).

complex and fluid ways. The present moment of writing and investigation will prove to be just as important as the moment of the crime being investigated.

The action in chapters one and two of the novel is demarcated from that of chapter three onwards by the third-person narration, which starts at this point. The first-person narration captures the points of view of Algerians protesting, Roger Thiraud's account of the events, and his murder. The description of city space dominates the opening pages. The naming of specific and real places in Paris is partly attributable to the genre: location in detective fiction in general, and the urban setting of noir fiction, is an integral part of the generic template. Place was equally crucial to the organisation of the protest. These places recur with such precise detail and to such an extent as to produce the effect of mapping 'real' Parisian space in our minds:

Lounès l'attendait plus haut, au coin du passage Albinel. Il lui fallait traverser le canal Saint-Denis et longer les cabanes de bois et de tôle qui avaient envahi les berges. Le pont faisait une bosse, et par temps clair, on voyait le Sacré Cœur en entier, derrière l'énorme cheminée en brique rouge de Saint-Gobain. (Daeninckx 1984: 12)

Here, the novel's key motifs are subtly introduced, and significantly all of them emerge through space: the foregrounding of the spatial itself, the image of the intersection or street-corner and that of the bridge, the significance of street names, the history of Paris and the themes of visibility and burial. In fine weather, we are told, it is possible to see the whole of the Sacré Cœur behind the red-brick chimney stack of Saint Gobain. Here, the question of seeing is hinted at, as visibility of the Sacré Cœur might potentially be obscured by mist or fog, and even on a clear day there is no possibility of seeing the famous Paris landmark in its entirety, as it is located behind the factory chimneys of Saint Gobain. This brings into play the concept of positionality, and therefore subjectivity, that is part of any evocation of location and perspective. From this position in Paris, on the outskirts, Saïd can see

this symbolic historic French landmark that is itself positioned at the summit of the butte Montmartre, the highest point in Paris.⁴¹

The cathedral as it is now is the most recent of several churches built on a Gallo-Roman cemetery. Here the seeds are sown for what will become crucial threads as the novel develops, bringing into focus a complex set of overlapping motifs and images that demonstrate the fertile history of the landscape from which present-day Paris emerges. The Saint Gobain factory is the site of an old French multinational corporation, originally a manufacturer of mirrors. There are clear associations with industrial and capitalist urban expansion, and the function of the factory evokes the ‘hall of mirrors’ play with reality (Jameson 1991) that characterises much postmodern analysis. The bridge that is referred to is the first of a set of symbolic devices that serve to reinforce the overarching theme of making connections, between different memories, between the past and the present, between the extreme and the everyday, and between the familiar and the unfamiliar.⁴²

Saïd is depicted through the prism of ‘play’, ‘...il s’amusait à bouger la tête pour placer la basilique sur les collines de soufre entreposées dans l’enceinte de l’usine’ (Daeninckx 1984: 12). Sometimes he has to duck his head right down to get the right effect, but the idea of seeing, the importance of positionality, perspectives and framing, and the almost optical illusion Saïd can create of the view of the basilica, have important implications for constructions of memory and identity. These spatial devices resonate with the poststructuralist view that ‘reality’ is to be viewed as

⁴¹ David Harvey provides a history of this site and its national and symbolic importance ‘Monument and Myth’ *Annals of the Association of Modern Geographers*, 69 (1979) 362-381.

⁴² Both the historian and the detective are required to make connections, to join up the disparate threads to create a fuller picture. Sometimes this process requires us to make connections that we have not seen before, or that we would not expect to ‘see’ together. Tied into the question of familial links, pregnancy (Bernard never met his father and his mother was pregnant when Roger died), and children (Bernard’s thesis is about the history of childhood) is a clear emphasis on the intergenerational transmission of memories, inextricable from the central concerns of mediation. Children and family relations are likewise crucial to Modiano’s, Sebbar’s and Haneke’s engagement with memory in the city.

constructed. The context for this scene also calls to mind an evocative image later developed in Matthieu Kassovitz's 1995 film *La Haine*.⁴³

In the context of Daeninckx's novel, the characters are preparing for the planned peaceful protest of October 1961 and they are acutely aware of their overt (racialised and spatialised) exclusion from the centre in the form of an imposed curfew. Recalling the last occurrence of a curfew in Paris, which was for the Jews during World War Two,⁴⁴ and therefore providing the first (not literary but) historical connection between the different layers of history,⁴⁵ these characters of first-generation Algerian origin wonder hopefully if on this night Paris will belong to them. The poster for Jacques Rivette's film *Paris nous appartient* (1960) (ibid.: 15) serves a number of purposes. As in *La Haine*, it superimposes the Paris of the popular cultural imaginary, the city of light and love associated with revolutionary, bohemian, Republican values, onto the lived experience of social exclusion for the immigrant community. The revelation of this *décalage* will occur in the following pages, and the dramatic build up to it is increased through this signposting. The poster is a sign for a

⁴³ *La Haine* (Kassovitz 1995) has proved to be a rich object of study for urban spatial analyses (see for instance Derderian 2002; Tarr 1997; 2005). Questions of positionality arise as the characters are placed looking towards the Eiffel tower: they exhibit a similar sense of playfulness at the irony of the way the shot has been framed, since the centre of Paris is continually portrayed as not belonging to them. They are socially, spatially and racially outcast from society in the film, as despite being French their Jewish, Arabic and African descent makes integration problematic. Like the *Sacré Cœur* in Daeninckx's frame, the Eiffel tower might be seen as the symbol of the city of modernity, conjuring up romantic views of this *ville lumière*. The reference to the Paris of the cinematic imaginary in *La Haine* serves only to contrast starkly with the harsh lives of the protagonists, as depicted in the film. The characters click their fingers to turn the Eiffel tower lights off (this is an intertextual reference to Eric Rochant's *Un Monde sans pitié* (1989)) their position implying that just this once Paris could be theirs, but to no avail. On turning around, the lights switch off behind them, reinforcing their exclusion from the centre and their lack of agency in this space.

⁴⁴ In literary terms the connections and intersections between the memories of the Holocaust and the Algerian War are explored through a variety of mechanisms. One of the first of the hints at echoes, imprints (Jones 2006: 93) and interplay between the different memories is the reference to the film showing at the Rex at the very moment that Saïd and Lounès meet at the Bonne Nouvelle Metro station, *Les Canons de Navarone* (Daeninckx 1984: 16), which whilst made in 1961, is a film about the Second World War.

⁴⁵ Daeninckx has identified himself as occupying a space on the cusp of history and literature (Reid 2010: 39), and although my interest is with the role of literature in memory, the question of historical connections is nonetheless prominent in *MM*. For instance, the reference to de Gaulle's trial of 1940 (Daeninckx 1984: 42) is particularly pertinent because of the way that it emerges through the connective space of Toulouse, where Bernard himself is investigating.

film, which is itself a representation, thus setting up a chain of signifiers, recalling Jacques Derrida's notion of the inevitable deferral of meaning between signs in 'différance' (Derrida 1968). Signs in myriad forms abound throughout the novel and they draw attention to questions of indexicality, signification and referentiality, and equally therefore to the representational nature of memory.

The Rivette film poster also brings the question of ownership of the city to the fore: in asking who this city belongs to, Daeninckx invites an intertextual dialogue with Lefebvre's reflections on issues of access to urban life, questions of urban authority and the collective power to shape urban politics, addressed in *Le Droit à la ville* (Lefebvre 1968). In this work, Lefebvre is concerned with questions about the structure of social relations under capitalism, as played out in urban space, but crucially it also has profound implications for issues of citizenship. Moreover, *Le Droit à la ville* 'stresses the need to restructure the power relations that underlie the production of urban space, fundamentally shifting control away from capital and the state and toward urban inhabitants' (Purcell 2002: 101-102). Both participation and appropriation of urban space are central to Lefebvre's considerations here, resonating strikingly with the Rivette film poster foregrounded by Daeninckx. Although Lefebvre's conception of appropriation is about more than simply having the right to be physically present in the city, and includes the right to produce a space that meets the inhabitants' needs, in the case of the curfew, even this basic right to circulate freely is denied. In the context of the protest, such intertextual reverberations stress that urban space is a locus of power, authority and state regulation, something equally

explored in Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power operating beyond the confines of the prison and in the very structure of the city (Foucault 1975).⁴⁶

The idea of the appropriation of central city space, intended by the peaceful protest, is captured in the slogan of the following day's *Paris Jour*, the only paper to have ostensibly 'covered' the story of the protest, 'les Algériens: maîtres de Paris pendant trois heures' (Daeninckx 1984: 38). This reported appropriation of Paris is illusory, however. It shows the disconnection between the previous passages' bloody descriptions of police violence, and the media coverage of '3 morts' (ibid.: 38). The use of the word 'maîtres' implies not only the mastery of space, and associated notions of power and authority, but more specifically recalls the master/slave dialectic of Hegel and Frantz Fanon. Fanon's reformulation of Hegel's master/slave dialectic develops the paradigm for a colonial and postcolonial context, of *white* master/*black* slave (Fanon 1952), in his critique of Western colonialism. Hegel's original thesis posited that self-consciousness stems from this encounter of recognition, and crucially held that subject and object could no longer be thought of as distinct, showing rather that the inside and outside of the human mind, the subjective and objective, sublate into one. This intertextual echo through the word 'maîtres' reveals the how these power relations are embedded into urban space. Perhaps, too, it reveals something about Daeninckx's treatment of tightly policed divisions between notions of subjectivity and objectivity, so problematic for questions of memory and history.

Daeninckx's attention to location in this section foreshadows the investigation itself, as if as readers/detectives we are collecting clues to re-examine later, when we know the crime. However, the effect of the constant references to specific places in

⁴⁶ Lefebvre's analysis, however, also conceives of urban space as a potential site of resistance, as a space in which new power relations can take shape, implying the urban space is a key vehicle for both control and domination, but also liberation, a concept I will explore in depth in the following section.

the city is to map the story onto real, known Paris space. Lounès and Saïd park the car on Boulevard MacDonald, la Villette (ibid.: 14), which locates them quite specifically in a boundary space represented by the *périphérique*, the ring road which both contains the centre and demarcates the suburbs. This space is not the periphery or the centre but is a liminal, boundary space. Such a boundary resonates with Homi K. Bhabha's conception of 'third space', where processes of negotiation and difference form borderline existences (Bhabha 2004). For Bhabha, these continuous processes of hybridity are features of *all* social collectives: nation-states, cultures, small ethnic groups, and they reveal the impossibility of thinking of any collectives as homogenous entities.⁴⁷

Daeninckx has been credited with shining light on the hidden protest and bringing it into the public sphere (see, for instance, Rothberg 2009: 274). Since 1984, both academic research and public debates have engaged with the events of October 1961, although at the time Daeninckx's narrative told a relatively unknown story. The constant references to places in Paris function to orientate the reader: they are *points de repères* that anchor the story in the real and known world. In this way, the unknown story of the protest, and the crime, literally maps onto known Paris co-ordinates. The blurring of the unknown and horrific narratives with familiar spaces functions to collapse these categories and produce unexpected connections. Paris cannot be kept separate from the unravelling of the various historical and fictional narratives of violence, but rather is a crucial part of it. This resonates with Rothberg's identification of a place 'between the extreme and the everyday' (2002: 55), and Silverman's reformulation of a Surrealist aesthetic in the juxtaposition of the horrific

⁴⁷ Bhabha posits that the Third Space of enunciation 'challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past...' (Bhabha 2004: 54). He goes on to argue that it is only through an understanding of the inherent contradictions and ambivalence of cultural systems that 'hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or 'purity' of cultures are untenable' (ibid.: 55).

with the everyday, not as separate from, but rather as produced in it (Silverman 2006). Both analyses argue for a reconfiguration of the interplay between extremity and the everyday that involves a spatial dissolution of the boundaries between the two. Both critics configure their arguments through the geographical conceptualisation that challenges the common location of the horror as ‘over there’, separate from the everyday space that ‘we’ inhabit. Daeninckx likewise troubles these categories, showing how Paris is inextricable from the crimes depicted.

The textual mapping of the fictional story of the interlinked Thiraud family murders onto the real story of 17th October has been widely noted as exemplifying a number of intersections: between public and private, individual and collective, and personal and official. The sense of mapping that emerges as a result of the constant orientation amongst the city reference points produces a number of effects. Maps infer order and positionality, helping citizens to know their place, and moreover keeping them in it. The effect of mapping, then, is inextricable from official regulation and control. Frederic Jameson’s concept of cognitive mapping outlines the ways in which an individual makes sense of their urban surrounding, representing precisely that sense of intersection between personal and social. It is through urban space that the characters negotiate their subjectivities. Jameson uses cognitive mapping and the negotiation of public space as a metaphor for ‘the processes of the political unconscious’ (Jameson 1992: xiv) and the link between the psychic and the social.⁴⁸

Ross locates the city as both ‘scene and object of noir investigation’ (Ross 2010: 95), and it is clear that in the novel the city plays a major role from the outset.

⁴⁸ This idea of cognitive mapping goes back to Kevin Lynch’s *The Image of the City* (1960), and is about how we think about space, and our positions and experiences in and of that space. In her conception of the ‘postcolonial city’, Jane Jacobs argues that the spatial has always been intrinsic to imperialism itself, and that this is ‘clearly evident in the spatial practices of mapping and naming’ (Jacobs 1996: 19). In her analysis of imperial spatiality, cartographic practices producing ‘known’ space are not mimetic or innocent. See also, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* 2nd ed. (Pratt 2008) and *The Last Blank Spaces: Exploring Africa and Australia* (Kennedy 2013).

Such a focus on the urban element has a number of implications. Cadin sets off against the backdrop of the city on the search for clues, signs and traces.⁴⁹ Material referents – literally the signs that stand in for an absence (the past) – are inscribed into the materiality of the city. Importantly, memory is depicted as functioning in much the same way: simultaneously signifying an absence and a presence. This indexicality is brought starkly into focus just after the height of the action, the violence of the police and Roger's murder: 'au petit matin il ne restait plus sur les boulevards que des milliers de chaussures, d'objets, de débris divers qui témoignaient de la violence des affrontements' (Daeninckx 1984: 37). Here, on the city streets the morning after the bloody violence, there is nothing but these material referents to stand in for any 'hard' evidence. The everyday objects, the pile of shoes, invites the intertextual consideration of that poignant image of shoes piled high from *Nuit et brouillard* (Resnais & Cayrol 1955). These traces come to stand for unspeakable violence. In semiotics an indexical sign is one whose relationship to the signified is not completely arbitrary, as in the symbolic sign, but rather is directly connected in some way. Indexicality, then, is a synecdoche for making connections.

As Paris stands symbolically for centralised government in France its primary (not secondary) place in the text implicates that government in the perpetration and subsequent concealment of the crimes.⁵⁰ One vital way in which Daeninckx depicts the Paris police is through archival space in the present moment. Later, these very same systems of classification will be revealed as fundamental not only to the Nazi genocide, but also, and in particular, to the French state's pivotal role in the deportation of Jewish children. It is significant, however, that Daeninckx exposes

⁴⁹ This structure of investigation in the city, in the form of the search for traces, equally provides the template for Maspero's, Modiano's and Sebbar's characters.

⁵⁰ House and MacMaster's innovative and meticulous study provides significant evidence linking the state overtly to the violence of 17th October (2006).

these structures in the present of the narrative. The bureaucracy of the police archives in Paris is directly related to the purification or purging of files: ‘on épure les fichiers. Il faut refiler tout ce qui touche de près ou de loin au terrorisme’ (Daeninckx 1984: 73). Cadin’s old friend from the force who works at the police archives becomes a ‘gardien du temple’ (ibid.: 74), as soon as Cadin begins to ask questions about October 1961.⁵¹ The reference to terrorism captures the rhetoric used to justify the police violence, and recurs throughout to draw attention to the ways in which that same rhetoric continues to work. Language, then, can function as a tacit form of oppression, demonstrating how easy it is to normalise and naturalise extreme racial violence. The case was classified as closed, ‘sans suite’, but it is precisely a continuity that is exposed. The official report ruled that the Paris police ‘avait répondu à sa mission, en protégeant la capitale d’une émeute déclenchée par une organisation terroriste’, but ‘très peu de choses ont été rendues publiques’ (ibid.: 83). This will be a structuring image of Daeninckx’s Paris, one of Fortress Europe defending itself against outside threats. It emerges later in the form of Bernard’s girlfriend’s doctoral thesis about settlements in the ‘zone parisienne’ on the site of the old fortifications.⁵²

Marc Rosner, the police photographer that night, describes to Cadin some of the horrors he witnessed. His account of the CRS directly contests the narrative of defence, depicting instead Paris police officers standing for photos over dead or injured Algerians’ bodies (ibid.: 92), like ‘des bêtes féroces’ (ibid.: 93). Rosner’s narrative also makes use of known Parisian markers – the Opéra, the Champs-Élysées, the Madeleine, République – all of which are transformed into spaces of

⁵¹He is warned that others who meddled in this matter paid a heavy price (Daeninckx 1984: 77). The use of the word ‘gardien’ resonates with my analysis of archival space represented by Modiano in chapter three, which makes the connection with Derrida’s identification of institutional power and regulation so crucial to the notion of the archive (Derrida 1995).

⁵² This depiction of Paris as a space that needs to be defended is something explored by Haneke in *Caché*, where domestic space is represented through the trope of fortification.

overt state violence. As a photographer, Rosner reflects on his role as a witness to the events: ‘j’ai assuré l’essentiel de mon travail à cette place, l’œil collé au viseur’ (ibid.: 95). Crucially, he explains how you don’t really *see* what is happening, but just ‘la lumière, les masses, le cadrage’ (ibid.: 95). For Rosner, in fact, the photographer is anything but a witness, ‘son film est là pour jouer ce rôle’ (ibid.: 95). Rosner’s assertion that ‘l’objectif faisait écran’ (ibid.: 95) echoes Emma Wilson’s contention, outlined in my introduction, that film in fact screens the reality *from* us, rather than *for* us (Wilson 2005: 95). The lens of the camera, *l’objectif*, is here anything but objective. The screen of the lens does not allow the eye to see more closely, but provides a physical screen between the eye and the object, paradoxically blocking vision. Just as Haneke reveals the hidden to be a site of revelation, as I demonstrate in chapter five, here Daeninckx depicts the lens, the eye, the camera and seeing, as a sort of blindness. This disturbs a range of categories relating to seeing and objectivity, as Rosner confirms: ‘j’ai peut-être photographié le meurtre de votre gars, mais il est certain que je ne l’ai pas vu’ (Daeninckx 1984: 95).

Through Rosner, Daeninckx troubles the category of the witness, and in so doing questions the status of photography as evidence. There is an essential ambiguity here, and it is one that is reproduced across the thesis. On the one hand, the narrative is structured around a search for clues, evidence, and traces to prove that an event happened, but equally and at the same time, Daeninckx suggests the inadequacy and even illegitimacy of such evidence. Having established that Rosner did not really see anything, behind the screen of the lens, it is his testimony that reveals that some protestors had died *inside* the préfecture: ‘Vous voulez dire que les manifestants sont morts à l’intérieur de la préfecture?’ (ibid.: 96). Cadin cannot believe that it could

have happened.⁵³ Rosner's story of that night confirms that at least 48 dead bodies displayed the marks of being bludgeoned to death and he crucially locates them at the very heart of the city, on the *île de la cité* – which houses the *préfecture de la police* as well as the *Palais de justice*. Despite Rosner's memory of the *Institut Médico-Légal* coming to collect the bodies from near Notre-Dame, there remains 'aucune preuve. Aucune trace de ces 48 cadavres' (ibid.: 97). The shock is produced in the unexpected connections between these institutional spaces: sites steeped in the history of the revolution, and the extreme violence and murders described by Rosner. Tourist landmarks take on sinister functions, and yet no visible trace remains. Daeninckx not only points out that this event happened, but rather that it was produced in the very spaces of assumed state protection, something Modiano equally explores in relation to the Paris police.

Inspecteur Cadin goes to Brussels to view the footage caught by the film crew. Cadin is clear that 'le montage ne m'intéresse pas', he wants 'la prise en continu' (ibid.: 100), implying that he wants the unedited version of events. Cadin can orientate himself in Paris when he sees the *quartier de la Porte de la Villette*, and the buildings of the former abattoirs. The identification of the old abattoirs is disturbing in the light of Rosner's witness account of events and bodies dropped into the water that the film then shows. The following description of Algerians being loaded like human cargo (ibid.: 106) onto the RATP buses in central Paris not only serves to inscribe the violent narrative onto Parisian space through the state-run bus service, but also contains echoes of the Holocaust experience of travelling on overcrowded, state-run trains to extermination camps. Cadin observes that no escape is possible, because Paris itself was 'bouclé' (ibid.: 106). Daeninckx explicitly links the fate of the

⁵³ This disbelief, at the way in which the police and state are revealed not as protectors but as oppressors, is echoed later in my analysis of Modiano's exposition of the *gardiens de la paix* as the very people who sent Dora Bruder to her death, in chapter three.

prisoners, their inability to escape the violence, to the city itself. The ‘cordon de sécurité destiné à protéger les spectateurs du Ballet’ (ibid.: 107) set up outside the Paris opera house amplifies the contrast between the police as protectors and the incriminating narrative depicted in the film. The Opéra is a well-known tourist landmark and cultural space of high art. The police violence unfolds in this very space, whilst people go to watch a ballet performance, ‘puis l’écran devint vide’ (ibid.: 107).

City Streets: ‘Sites’ of Memory as Contested Space

One of the ways in which the history of place reveals itself in the text is through the tropes of layering, archaeology, excavation, and burial.⁵⁴ Many of the *points de repère* identified function as sites of memory. One association of the word ‘site’ is an archaeological site, where excavation reveals layers, clues and traces of the past, in need of interpretation. The other theoretical connotation is of Pierre Nora’s seminal catalogue of *Lieux de mémoire* (1984-1992). Although Nora’s use of ‘realms’ is not limited to the spatial category the title denotes, Nora’s work nevertheless raises some important theoretical issues about how national identity is formed in commemorative practices. This section will explore how these spatialised tropes of burial emerge in the text. It will go on to consider the city streets as specific ‘sites’ of memory of both resistance and oppression.

⁵⁴ For more on defining the linguistic, theoretical and conceptual boundaries between ‘space’ and ‘place’ see David Clarke’s Introduction to *The Politics of Place in Post-war Germany* (Clarke and Rechtien eds. 2009). In his broad overview of ‘place in literature’, Clarke challenges the indiscriminate and interchangeable use of the terms ‘place’ and ‘space’ (2009: 5), and highlights some of the problems in common usage. But he also challenges the neat compartmentalisation that allocates space as exposed, open and abstract, and place as enclosed, humanised and known (ibid.: 7). Drawing particularly on Doreen Massey, he demonstrates that this binary opposition is unproductive, as it idealises place as known and unchanging (ibid.: 8). My approach to Daeninckx’s novel cuts through this construction of space and place, but will use place to refer to the specific place of Paris, and space to refer to a more general human engagement with surroundings.

My approach is rooted in Lefebvre's identification of the urban as both reproducing the uneven, and unequal, development that characterizes capitalist society, and presenting a space (literally and metaphorically) with the 'potentialities' (Lefebvre 1991: 349) to resist the hegemonic order. Daeninkcx's Paris is likewise characterized by ambiguity. One of the ways in which this is articulated is through the implied dual heritage of the Parisian streets. Duality and ambiguity are staged through a number of intersections in the text, one of which points to the double significance of the city on 17th October 1961 and throughout history. On the night of the protest the city functions simultaneously as a potential site of revolution and resistance to the established hegemonic order, and as a site of brutal, racial state oppression. Drawing on Kristin Ross's analysis of the spatial nature of the Paris Commune (Ross 1987:105), and how it created the very notion of a revolutionary city, my analysis suggests that it is through space and the fabric of the urban that both revolutionary and contestatory narratives are played out in the novel.

The trope of burial, and its associated images of layers, digging and excavation, forms a leitmotif throughout the text, manifesting itself in various ways. Charles Forsdick looks specifically at the way in which processes of unearthing the past, and the figure of the unexploded bomb, have structured this category of detective fiction, dealing with buried, and thus hidden, elements from the French past (Forsdick 2001: 338). The language of Forsdick's analysis clearly points to a reliance on spatial imagery to articulate historical (and detective) investigation: 'excavating the past of a crypto-Papon' he describes its central detective as 'digging into historical memory and unearthing similarly linked strata' (ibid.: 338-339). Although this language and imagery is well established in the genre, and merely a metaphor for memory, Forsdick argues that conceiving of the past in this way has important

implications for the interconnections of different memories and for its multidirectionality (Rothberg 2009).

The gravediggers' strike that Cadin is initially called to contains echoes or even clues that link the present back to the other crimes.⁵⁵ Despite the change of narration, Daeninckx's focus on both 'cadavres' and 'manifestants' in this new temporal context produces the effect of an echo from the previous pages' description of the police violence at the protest. One of the gravediggers hints at the link: 'aujourd'hui on sort les macchabées des années soixante' (Daeninckx 1984: 45). This is the very fabric of multidirectional memory, opened up by what Forsdick identifies as a key feature of the excavation metaphor: how the different layers become compressed and interlinked during burial. Later, it is not just bodies, but important, classified documents that are 'enterrés' (ibid.: 74) and such burial is explicitly framed by the amnesties. For state documents there is a fifty year secrecy policy, 'et certains dossiers explosifs pourriront pendant des siècles entiers avant de revoir la lumière' (ibid.: 84). Here the state is portrayed as burying potentially incriminating documents, and justifies the obfuscation of truth and knowledge by saying that bringing this to public attention would 'destabilise' the public, resulting in a 'perte de confiance' in 'des corps de maintien de l'ordre et dans l'armée' (ibid.: 84). Even in light-hearted banter between the detectives, the idea of clues for the case being Cadin's buried treasure (ibid.: 75) reinforces this theme. Cadin is explicitly told not to dig up (*exhumer*) the past, as it will revive past tensions (ibid.: 82). Cadin is also warned by police photographer Marc Rosner about the dangers of investigating such state-

⁵⁵ The family murders trigger the investigation and discovery of larger, national crimes, relating to the state during both the Algerian War and the Holocaust. Whilst attempting to avoid the trappings of a more reductive comparative approach that might list the historical overlaps in the two events, it is interesting to consider the case of corpses as proof in both of these crimes. The bodies thrown into the Seine, and the ovens and *Nacht und Nebel* decree of the Nazi genocide explain the focus on traces for events that ostensibly have left none.

sanctioned violence:

aucune trace de ces 48 cadavres: l'institut a trouvé une cause réelle et sérieuse pour expliquer chaque décès. Direction les oubliettes de l'Histoire. Il vaut mieux pour tout le monde qu'ils y restent! Ne vous amusez pas à les remonter à la surface. (ibid.: 97-98)

The very notion of a surface implies that there are layers hidden beneath, so although the surfaces themselves are visible, they simultaneously signal what cannot be seen.⁵⁶

In this conception of memory, then, focus is brought to its natural selectivity, implying that it is as much about what is cut out and what remains hidden as what is recalled.

If, for Lefebvre, the city streets are simultaneously a site of domination and resistance, then the protest itself clearly represents a return to the central administrative space, from which the Algerian immigrants had been excluded. The city streets also hold the potential to subvert and challenge the oppressor in other, less overtly political ways. Just prior to the protest, the young Algerians who hope that for one night Paris will be theirs, joke that 'nous allons peut-être débaptiser la place de l'Etoile et l'appeler place du Croissant et de l'Etoile' (Daeninckx 1984: 25). This element of play adds to the dramatic tension that is to be followed by extremely brutal oppression, but it also represents an instance of *détournement*. In the Situationist movement, *détournement* was a form of subversion that worked through the mechanism of play. It links to Daeninckx's portrayal of the Algerians as it is entirely peaceful in nature and yet seeks to resist and undermine some of the ways in which hegemonic control is exerted through cultural and artistic institutions. Crucially, it subverts the institutional uses of language and art through appropriating, and reusing for different ends, the very element it is contesting. This way of undermining the

⁵⁶ The interplay between surface and depth is a theme to which I return in chapter three, in my analysis of Patrick Modiano's *Dora Bruder* (1997; 1999). I explore a complex set of processes, including erasure, regeneration, modernization, visibility and façades.

dominant culture through the use of pre-existing cultural aesthetic elements demonstrates the possibility of different types of resistance. The idea of the protestors taking the star from the name of *la Place de l'Etoile* to re-use it with the crescent of the Algerian flag shows the contested nature of public space. The addition of the crescent to the existing name *la Place de l'Etoile* uses symbols and urban space to show that emerging postcolonial identities are in the *process* of being created. The reference to the Algerian flag highlights the symbolic ways in which national identities are essentially constructed. The figure of the star as a point of convergence of the many streets at the *arc de triomphe* also points to the connection between different identities in this new configuration of a hybridised Franco-Algerian form.

Perhaps the most striking example of this Situationist-style play with existing aesthetics to re-appropriate and subvert the dominant culture manifests itself in the buildings of the city.⁵⁷ Three days earlier, we are told, 'une équipe venue de la cité de transit avait osé, en plein jour, escalader l'édifice pour ajouter aux trois lettres peintes en blanc O A S, le I et le S, qui faisait de la réserve d'eau une OASIS' (ibid.: 25). The *détournement* is not only achieved in urban space but rather is articulated *through* it. Furthermore, through adding to, and not defacing, the letters that connote the extreme right racist military army in France, the OAS, a new web of associations and connotations is created that directly connects the OAS to the human occupation of space, and in particular life in a harsh environment. An oasis is a natural area of vegetation found in the desert that can be a human dwelling. Often this is located close to the water source – hence its location in the text next to the 'château d'eau' (ibid.: 25). Even if the protest itself is brutal (ibid.: 30-31), these examples highlight

⁵⁷ There is a sub-narrative in the novel about a radical anti-establishment group 'qui envoient des fausses convocations concernant le fichier anti-terroriste' (Daeninckx 1984: 59), and who were also responsible for a 'faux bulletin' in 1977 (ibid.: 60). Such a 'play' with authenticity is striking. It reveals the malleability of such physical evidence, and directly shows how easy it is to create false official documents. Furthermore it provides another example of resistance to the state.

not only the non-violent forms of resistance that are possible in city space, but also Lefebvre's notion that such space embodies the potential for both resistance and oppression. These elements of play point to larger debates about identity and belonging in space, and who has the *droit à la ville* (Lefebvre 1968).⁵⁸

The naming of city streets marks an interesting nexus between the tropes of visibility, national identity, collective memory and the question of commemoration. Robert Aldrich's study 'Putting the Colonies on the Map: Colonial Names in Paris Streets' outlines what is at stake in street naming in terms of colonial memory: 'the extent to which the colonial past is preserved in France – whether or not the French choose to recognise or remember it – can be seen in the visible traces of the overseas empire in the landscape' (Aldrich in Chafer & Sackur eds. 2002: 211). Daniel Milo's entry in the second volume of Nora's monumental catalogue of locations of memory also explores the history of street-naming in France, identifying the turning point at which naming went from being spontaneous and organic to being almost entirely endorsed by the state or more locally elected municipal councils. The result is street names infused with ideologies that emphasize national unity through history. Nora's formulation of *lieux de mémoire* is not restricted to such literally spatial examples, but rather uses memory, or the nation's relationship to its past, as the lens through which to identify how France and Frenchness has been symbolically generated. Although it is not about literal locations of memory, it has equally important implications for my study. Milo's chapter on street names could be read as encapsulating Nora's overarching framework. Nora identifies that in previous epochs society had a more natural connection to memory, through shared experience, and that in these contemporary times when memory is supposedly ubiquitous the previous organic

⁵⁸ The original title for Kassovitz's *La Haine* (Kassovitz 1995) was *Droit de cité* (Vincendeau 2005: 12).

connection to memory no longer exists. In its wake are sites that generate national consciousness (Forsdick in Forsdick and Murphy eds. 2009: 271; Schwarz in Schwarz and Radstone eds. 2010: 20).

Aldrich argues that street names should be read as the way that a culture, city or a nation ‘enshrines its past, in general, civic or national identity’ (Aldrich 2002: 212). He notes that street naming itself is essentially propaganda, and functions as such: writing the ideologically dominant, ‘official’ view of history into the urban landscape (ibid.: 213).⁵⁹ In the novel, the references to ‘avenue de la République’ and ‘la Place de la Nation’ operate to underline the immigrants’ alienation from these identities and the fact that such a cohesive revolutionary vision of Paris does not correspond to their lived experience.⁶⁰

Fragmented Space

The novel’s representation of Paris cuts against any expectation that the object of study is a homogenous unit to be depicted. Rather, the city is exposed as divided and fragmentary. This section will explore that fragmentation and its implications for Daeninckx’s conceptions of the dynamics of collective memory. The spatial nature of exclusionary practices in France has been well documented (Hargreaves & McKinney 1997; Silverman 1999; Tarr 2006) and it brings us back to Lefebvre’s contention that space is socially produced and as such not only reflects but also reproduces hegemonically determined subjectivities. A growing body of scholarship has dealt

⁵⁹ However, street names can also function to encapsulate counter narratives in France, as is the case for the various Communist municipalities in the immediate post-war period, and why there are also a plethora of Communist related street names. Although pertaining to what would now be considered counter narratives, these street names demonstrate the same thing: that naming the spaces we move in can foster ideas about cultural belonging, history and identity.

⁶⁰ This is something to which I return in more detail in chapter four in my analysis of Sebbar’s novel.

with the social and spatial exclusion of the *banlieue*.⁶¹ Many have noted the legacy of French colonialism (Silverman 1992; Stora 1992; Hargreaves 1997) in contemporary integration and assimilation debates, highlighting the central role of memory in terms of identity and citizenship in France. This is a fertile and well-established ground for study so my approach is distinguished by the specific focus on the relationship between the configurations of city space and the dynamics of collective memory. Instead of the reductive binary oppositions upon which much social exclusion debate is structured,⁶² I suggest ‘fragmentation’ to cover a much more complex and nuanced set of processes, which reflect the fragmented nature of collective memory and its primary relationship with identity.

Lounès and Saïd take the metro to Bonne Nouvelle, and at each of the stops the metro fills with Algerians: ‘à Stalingrad, il était bondé; les rares Européens se lançaient des regards angoissés’ (Daeninkcx 1984: 15). The reference to Stalingrad is portentous, not only bringing to mind one of the bloodiest battles in recent history, but also hinting at thematic threads relating to fascism, Nazism and the Second World War, civilian and military deaths and extreme brutality. The looks of fear exchanged by the Europeans on the metro signal the strategic role of fear in maintaining social divisions, a theme that will later be taken up directly by Claudine, Bernard’s girlfriend:

La grand-mère la mieux attentionnée serre son sac à main sur son ventre dès qu’elle croise un garçon aux cheveux un peu trop bouclés ! Rien que cette peur permet de légitimer, par avance, les mesures prises à l’encontre de ces gens. (ibid.: 134)

Claudine is a history *doctorante* and her thesis is about ‘la zone parisienne’ in the

⁶¹ Culminating in the 1990s as socio-geographical critiques were used to analyse cultural production, and there was an explosion of mainstream films and novels ‘from the margins’.

⁶² Jacobs argues that it is ‘not to deny that binary notion of self/other did not inhabit the imperial imagination, but rather to show that this was an intensely unstable arrangement...’ (Jacobs 1996: 14). She posits that in the wake of such binaries, concepts of hybridity, diaspora, creolisation and transculturation have emerged (ibid.: 13).

1920s and a specific settlement on the site of fortifications, where the ring road separates the outskirts today (ibid.: 69).⁶³ Like Bernard and Roger, she is directly linked to the academic activities of learning and research and the related issues of dissemination, transmission, pedagogy and knowledge production, in the field of History. In the novel, research, learning, teaching and academic historical investigation link three of the characters, and for two of them this act of finding out and coming into knowledge costs them their lives. Their deaths are explicitly linked to knowledge of the past. Claudine's research focuses on the settlement where the fortifications once were, after their destruction in the 1920s. Invoking the defensive walls of Paris, built around the centralised administrative and governmental centre during the *Ancien Régime*, points to the fact that the division between the centre and its periphery has a long history.⁶⁴ It is framed by a fear of the enemy, or the outside world, and its purpose is quite literally to keep people out.⁶⁵ The Thiers wall is the last remaining part of this construction, and as Claudine explains, where it once was is now the *périphérique*. This large ring road continues to function as a defence against 'outsiders' in many ways.

Later, Cadin and Claudine are walking through the housing projects and along

⁶³ Andrea Goulet (2007) has observed the pivotal role of the detective's girlfriend in Daeninkcx's *12, rue Merckert* (2001). It is the girlfriend's job as an estate agent, with a deep knowledge of the history of a particular area of Paris - its buildings and street name changes - which essentially creates the device of superimposing the Paris of the past onto the Paris of the present. Goulet reads toponymic change as signifying historical and ideological shifts, and the 'joint histories of places and names' (Goulet 2007: 104). She highlights the ways in which, primarily through the girlfriend's knowledge of the history of a place, a sort of archival layering is produced, cutting through urban space and demonstrating the interconnectedness of street crimes in Paris, history, memory, ideological power and politics (ibid.: 104).

⁶⁴ Annie Fourcualt, Emmanuel Bellanger and Mathieu Flanneau explore precisely this history in *Paris/Banlieues: Conflits et solidarités: historiographie, anthologie, chronologie 1788-2006* (2007). They remark on the simultaneously 'fragmentée' and 'commune' history of Paris and the *banlieue* (2007: 4), noting that it is 'une histoire en chantier' (ibid.: 9) – there are so many representations of this relationship, and yet it is so unknown. History of the *banlieue* is treated as an annex to history of the capital, showing, 'la question de la rémanence des limites mentales et administratives, qui subsistent après la disparition des éléments matérielles' that produced them (ibid.: 14). See also *Les Fortifications de Paris: de l'hygiénisme à l'urbanisme, 1880-1919* (Charvet 2005).

⁶⁵ Its initial function was simply to tax goods entering Paris, reminding us that economics is at stake with geo-political borders.

Poterne des Peupliers, another of the remnants of the original fortified wall and they face a 'vaste jardin public...dont les différents niveaux étaient reliés par d'imposants escaliers de pierre' (ibid.:131). The clue for Cadin is right in front of him, in the stone stairs that link the different levels of this public space: it is the connection between the two crimes that is the real key to the mystery. Cadin has already confessed to Claudine that 'la seule hypothèse digne d'intérêt consiste à admettre que les deux meurtres sont liés' (ibid.: 129). The urban landscape around them is serving up clues. The overarching theme of connections and processes of connecting up seemingly disparate or opposed spaces and entities can be seen to manifest itself in the stone walls of urban space.

Laurent Dubois highlights that the train is a locus for exactly the kind of French 'fears' about immigrants that Claudine warns of. Pointing to the ways in which these contemporary debates about citizenship are inescapably shaped by French colonial history, he identifies the birth of a new 'republican racism' through which 'new practices of exclusion are articulated' (Dubois 2000: 15).⁶⁶ Dubois uses the example of the RER trains that connect the suburbs to the centre, and the ways in which they have become heavily policed. The policing takes the form of identity checks on those who 'look' foreign, recalling Saïd and Lounès's experience on the Metro, rather than the RER, into the centre.⁶⁷ Dubois argues that this is a structural

⁶⁶ In 'La République métissée' (Dubois 2000), Dubois argues that in an age where territorial borders are being opened up (a so-called 'Europe without borders' and processes of globalization), national identity as an 'exclusionary concept' is in fact on the rise (Dubois 2000: 16), reminding us that such processes do not mean a simple elimination of borders, but rather a *reconfiguration* of exclusion and its practices.

⁶⁷ The image of the RER and the train journey to and from the suburbs as simultaneously connective and separatist is apparent in both theory and popular culture. Maspero's journey from the centre to the suburbs in *Les Passagers du Roissy-Express* is reversed in *La Haine*. Again, Ross is insightful, 'in today's Paris the frozen temporal lag [of uneven development] appears as a spatial configuration: the white, upper-class city *intra muros*, surrounded by islands of immigrant communities a long RER train ride away (Ross 1996: 12).

reflection of the economic exclusion of the *banlieues* (ibid.: 17).⁶⁸ Just as Claudine argues about the people living in the ‘zone’:

certains avaient intérêt à donner une image négative du peuple de la zone. Ils ont utilisé le phénomène de rejet pour les chasser de la périphérie immédiate de la ville. (Daeninckx 1984: 134)

She makes the point that their outcast status is used to further push them beyond the limits of the city,⁶⁹ and then clearly links this to contemporary Paris:

ça continue avec l’utilisation actuelle du thème de l’insécurité. On tente d’assimiler les couches sociales les plus durement frappées par la crise, à des groupes présentant des dangers pour le reste de la société. Un véritable tour de passe-passe! Les victimes sont transformées en épouvantails. Et ça marche! (ibid.: 134)

Claudine’s knowledge of the history of a specific place in Paris is pivotal.⁷⁰ As they walk on the edge of the ramparts, the boundary space between inside and outside,⁷¹ attention is brought to the process of modernization and the resultant destruction and eradication of traces of the past: ‘nous sommes sur les vestiges des fortifications de Paris! Il n’en reste pas grand-chose, tout a été cassé à partir de 1920. Les derniers bastions ont sauté au moment de la construction de la périphérie’ (ibid.: 131). The ways in which modernization and urbanisation in the city are portrayed as being

⁶⁸ For an exploration of the ways in which this civic, economic and spatial exclusion is reproduced and challenged in cultural production see *Post-Colonial Cultures in France* (Hargreaves & McKinney 1997). Hargreaves argues that ‘resident rights – or the lack of them – facilitate or limit access to important cultural processes’ (ibid.: 5). The spatial element is central to his approach, as it focuses not just on the Empire ‘writing back’ but rather on the ways in which it traverses the centre itself (ibid.: 5). The value of this approach is in how it validates emerging forms of cultural production as platforms of expression, such as rap and graffiti.

⁶⁹ It is paradoxical that such a particularist discourse on race and difference, the legacy of colonial constructions of self/other, actually performs the ‘social construction of indifference’ (House & MacMaster 2006: 16) towards the troubles Algerians faced in society. House and MacMaster argue that this construction of indifference, based on similar strategies of dehumanization discourses to the Nazis used and manifesting itself in exchanges in public spaces such as the train, also had an impact on the memorialisation processes of 17th October.

⁷⁰ Recalling the case of *12, rue Merckert* (Daeninckx 2001).

⁷¹ Fourcault et al note how Baron Haussmann perpetuated images of the *banlieue* as ‘une zone uniforme, dangereuse et dépendante de la capitale’ (Fourcault et al 2007: 16), highlighting the administrative obsession with clarifying ‘la limite de la ville’ (ibid.: 14). Claudine’s response to Cadin’s invocation of the crime figures in the ‘zone’ shows how myth and representations can mislead, as she asserts that in fact, the rate of criminality is exactly the same as in Paris and the *département de la Seine*, ‘ni plus, ni moins’ (Daeninckx 1984: 134).

somehow linked to the eradication of markers, traces or evidence of the past, has particular consequences on the conception of memory being depicted. Here then, post-war regeneration in France has come at the cost of material referents for the past, the building blocks of memory.

Kristin Ross contests the tendency in French historiography to ‘keep the stories separate’ (Ross 1996: 8) in her path-breaking reformulation of post-war modernization as being directly linked to the processes of decolonization. She contends that the use of space in the city transformed radically in the period after the war, with the development of the suburban housing projects for immigrant communities. At the same time, she acknowledges the paradoxical eradication of all traces of the ex-colony in the metropole as it retreats rapidly from Empire.⁷² It is precisely this tension that has tended to be elided in French discourse, at the very moment that France retreats back into *l’Héxagone* and culturally entrenches itself within its own borders, is precisely the moment at which those borders have become more permeable in new global economic configurations (Ross 1996: 11). Daeninckx’s portrayal of urban space feeds into what Ross identifies as modernization’s great broken promise (ibid.: 10): that of even development.

Cadin retraces the steps of the Belgian camera crew on the night of the protest,⁷³ and remarks that twenty years on ‘peu de choses avaient changé depuis lors, à part l’affiche du Rex qui annonçait un dessin animé de Walt Disney et le self-service de l’*Humanité* qui s’était mué en “Burger King”’ (Daeninckx 1984: 111). The reference to the historic Rex cinema now showing not a war film, but a seemingly

⁷² Aldrich’s study *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire in France* (Aldrich 2005) provides significant evidence to demonstrate that the opposite is in fact true, and that many buildings directly linked to France’s colonial past remain present throughout the former metropole.

⁷³ Interestingly Cadin realises, ‘je refais, presque inconsciemment, le trajet qu’avait effectué le CRS vingt ans plus tôt’ (Daeninckx 1984: 111), which chimes with Modiano’s observation that he felt as if he was following, unconsciously as well as consciously, in the footsteps of someone, a structuring device for Modiano, to which I return in chapter three.

anodyne children's cartoon, and the canteen of *L'Humanité* newspaper, points to the depoliticization of popular culture. A link is made that hints at the fairy tale approach to national histories. Walt Disney and Burger King represent the global flattening of borders and local differences that was part of the modern global economy,⁷⁴ and it is through these urban, spatial markers that Daeninckx presents the ever-expanding Americanization of French culture, the triumph of capitalism and the failure of Communism.

Standing on the ramparts, Claudine describes the shanty towns that once sprawled where there is now nothing, and Cadin jokes that it does not make a good tourist advert for Paris (ibid.: 133). Claudine admits that it sounds grim, but there were also scenes reminiscent of Jacques Becker's *Casque d'or*. Through the evocation of cinematic Paris and the ironic admission that this does not correspond to the Paris of tourism the process of superimposition serves to enhance the sense of juxtaposition and jarring. Through Claudine's research, Daeninckx uses space to demonstrate a fluidity between the past and present: 'les immigrés ont remplacé les romanichels, et les jeunes chômeurs ont pris la place des biffins' (ibid.: 134).⁷⁵ The fortification of the past blurs into the ring road of the present, and the excluded community that settled on the remains of the Paris wall is replaced by new social outcasts. It points to another history, narrative or *histoire*, demonstrating that the foundations of modern France have their roots in exclusion as well as revolution.

The symbolic distance between the centre and the periphery, often evoked through the 'long RER train ride' (Ross 1996: 12) is evoked a number of times in

⁷⁴ This cultural imperialism demonstrated in these instances of Americanization corresponds to Reid's analysis of Daeninckx's political stance (Reid 2010).

⁷⁵ The reference to rag pickers serves to superimpose another Paris from the cultural imaginary as it brings to mind Baudelaire's city of modernity, central to which was the collision of public and private, individual and collective and self and other that took place on the city streets for the first time. It is also an example of how Haussmann's plans for ordered, rational and controlled city space created the very subculture that subverted it.

MM. Early on, the detective is linked to the suburbs, as he confesses that he has fallen in love with a client before in Courvilliers (ibid.: 70). Courvilliers is a suburb that functions as a connector in the text, primarily through the mechanism of coincidence. When Cadin finds out that there was a police photographer documenting the bloody night of 17th October 1961 he is keen to obtain some footage, or at least Marc Rosner's testimony. By coincidence, the very definition of which is a connection between two seemingly disparate things, Cadin already knows Rosner and the connective tissue of the coincidence is the suburb Courvilliers (ibid.: 85). 'Une sombre histoire de montages photographiques destinées à mouiller les personnalités locales. Comme par hasard je suis tombé sur Rosner' (ibid.: 84), Cadin explains.⁷⁶ This coincidence, which manifests itself through space, has spatial implications as it sees Cadin travel from the institutional police space of the centre to the outskirts. He is a character with privileged mobility, travelling with ease between the centre and its periphery. Cadin's mobility serves to reinforce the lack of social mobility for those from the suburbs. And when he gets a taxi to 'Courvilliers...ça se trouve après Aulnay-sous-Bois', the driver comments that it is a long way (ibid.: 88). The hard-boiled detective is often depicted as occupying a liminal space: as neither marginal nor bourgeois and is at ease in all of the class environments in which he finds himself.

In 'Watching the Detectives' (1992), Ross draws on Lefebvre to highlight a fundamental and structuring contradiction of our time, which is that paradoxically enough, the urbanization of society has led to the widespread deterioration of urban life. She argues that boundaries are not now drawn between the city and the provinces, but within the city itself. The way in which social relations are inscribed in,

⁷⁶ Rosner's photography and the Belgium film crew's footage from the night of the protest are privileged traces of the past for the police because they provide hard evidence. The question of visibility, seeing, looking (and believing) becomes of central importance in relation to the tropes of burial and hiding. It implies that even if one cannot see the traces, it does not mean that they are not there. This is the condition of the postmemorial generation.

and produced through, urban space is further evidence of the interconnectedness of cityspace and politics, and affirms the validity of this approach to memory.

Significantly, Ross locates Cadin, and detective figures more generally, as connecting the disparate zones of the city (Ross in Barker, Hulme and Inerson eds. 1992: 61). It is through his journeys between the centre and the periphery that the disparity between them is revealed.

Through the figure of Cadin, Daeninckx privileges the *banlieue* as a site where knowledge might be found. A trip from the centre to Courvilliers turns out to hold crucial linking clues to the investigation. I will demonstrate in the concluding part of this chapter that the process of linking the centre to the suburbs is fundamental to the narrative of mystery and to the political project. Daeninckx's challenge to the conceptual and cultural separation of the suburbs from the centre and moreover the implied effect of separating 'French' national culture and history from 'immigrant' culture and history, is a call to recognize that the stories of Drancy and la cité de la Muette are one and the same as the story of central Paris. Locating them within the same framework is a crucial aspect of Daeninckx's presentation of collective memory.

Drancy: *Le fil conducteur*

MM clearly invites a comparative analysis, as the question of the connections between memories is so fundamental to the narrative. I shall now argue that it is city space, and specifically the suburb of Drancy, that acts as the *fil conducteur* between the different narratives of history and memory throughout the text, and crucially between the past and the present. Existing scholarship has tended to focus on the thinly veiled figure of Papon in Veillut, or the generic conventions of the *néo-polar*, as opening up

the possibility of a comparative approach to collective memories of both the Holocaust and the Algerian War. This section will address the problems that arise in adopting a broader, multidirectional approach to memory, as well as arguing for the primary importance of space and place in opening up a network of associations in the text.

The sense of *chassés-croisés* referred to by Forsdick in his analysis of the comparative approach adopted by the defence during Papon's 1997 trial for crimes against humanity in many ways prefigures the notions of 'negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing' (Rothberg 2009: 3) so central to multidirectional memory. The 'complex reverberations' (Forsdick 2001: 334) that are identified as a result of the Algerian War emerging at the heart of a trial about Papon's role in the deportation of Jews raise the question of why any sort of comparative approach to memory has been avoided for so long. Taking the path of drawing parallels and conflation is indeed 'troubling' (Forsdick 2001: 334) in its erasure of the specificity of each historical event. However, as Rothberg argues, the flaw is precisely in the language of equation (Rothberg 2009: 3). Such conflation is problematic, and is distinct from the more nuanced approach I argue for. The purpose of this is not so much to argue for the historical connections or similarities between the two distinct moments of war, but rather to suggest that the representational space of the city provides a specific point of convergence between memories in the text. The city opens up a space where a shared lexicon of hiding and revealing traces of the past can be identified as a central part of representations dealing with both histories.

The embedding of one crime in an earlier, unresolved one has long been the very substance of crime fiction (Gorrara 2005: 131). In this way, the generic conventions of the crime thriller lend themselves particularly well to Daeninckx's

political project,⁷⁷ which is broadly concerned with making connections. Kathryn N. Jones's study (Jones 2006) of memories of the *bataille de Paris* in early representations of the massacre by Beur writers Nacer Kettane, Mehdi Lallaoui and Tassadit Imache, raises the point that it is through using such a mainstream popular genre that the massacre was brought to the attention of the public for the first time. However, what is interesting here is that Jones's analysis of a different set of sources (produced 'from the margins') shows that Daeninckx's novel is not the first to deal with the massacre as a pivotal event, either for immigrant memory and identity, or for French history.

Daeninckx, then, did bring the massacre to widespread, unprecedented public attention, but the criticism that the massacre is subsequently eclipsed by the primary narrative relating to Vichy (Jones 2006: 93) is worth exploring. That the section actually representing the protest of 1961 is relatively short, compared with the investigation of the mystery (which leads to Drancy), does not itself constitute the criticism. Rather, the fact that it functions merely as a clue, or trigger, for the primary crime in the novel – the French role in the deportation of Jewish children from Drancy and the subsequent and continued state cover of this – suggests an unintended but nonetheless identifiable hierarchy.

The 'zero-sum struggle for pre-eminence' (Rothberg 2009: 3) of competing memories in the public sphere is reductive. What this model undermines is the currency of literature to condense, distort, and exaggerate.⁷⁸ If it were a historical

⁷⁷ Forsdick's analysis confirms the politically engaged and committed nature of Daeninckx's writing (2001: 337). Despite the many links that appear between the work of Daeninckx and Modiano, in the shared focus on making connections, the overtly political stance of Daeninckx contrasts significantly with the more subtle and ambiguous stance of Modiano.

⁷⁸ Silverman's analysis of the interconnections between Holocaust and Empire, in which he refers to *MM*, posits that it is in literary rather than historical, or indeed sociological, works, that such connections may be revealed, as 'repetitions, substitutions and transformations' that make up the literary imagination serve to blur the boundaries between literature, imagination, history and memory (Silverman 2006: 417).

inquiry, then maybe such a critique would be valid. Given Daeninckx's inescapable subjectivity (he is a white, western male),⁷⁹ then such an emphasis on Vichy might have important implications. However, this thesis is concerned with precisely that point between art, history, memory and politics, and as Daeninckx has stated himself, he is not a historian, but he puts 'gangways of fiction' between the blocks of reality (Reid 2010: 39). The question of a 'primary' narrative seems to miss the key point about the ways in which literature offers a legitimate entry point into an exploration of the representational overlaps in cultural production treating these memories, rather than a reductive investigation of which narrative takes prime position in the plot.

Perhaps what is exposed, however, is the inadequacy of existing templates for dealing with the different collective memories of the Holocaust and the Algerian War. Increasingly, scholars are noting a reductive over-reliance on Vichy terminology and frameworks to deal with collective remembrance of the Algerian War (Dine 1995; Higgins 1998).⁸⁰ As I have argued above, collective memory is inherently fragmentary and resists any kind of overarching unity that frameworks such as *Le Syndrome de Vichy* risk imposing.

The real crime that is exposed in the text relates neither to the protest nor to Vichy, but rather unveils the French state's complicity in both as located specifically in Drancy. As Rothberg has identified, it is the wider question of responsibility (2009: 277), read in both a concrete and abstract terms, which is in fact unearthed. Having

⁷⁹ Indeed, this inescapable subjectivity might be directly linked to the identification of the relative lack of Algerian voices in the text, after the first few pages (Rothberg 2009: 277). The question of who has a voice, and writing 'from the margins to the centre' has been a productive one in the field of postcolonial thought.

⁸⁰ See, for example, Gorrara's (2000) chapter '*Meurtres pour mémoire*: Remembering the Occupation in the Detective Fiction of Didier Daeninckx', which is symptomatic of precisely this problem of continuing to read all traumatic memory through the Vichy syndrome (Rousso 1989) paradigm. Her analysis posits that the novel draws on the psychoanalytic approach devised by Rousso, and the central idea of the return of the repressed. However, her framing of the novel within this narrow and arguably reductive framework risks striking out the very margins that she claims Daeninckx represents (Kelly ed. 2000: 131).

identified the connections between the protest and Vichy as the real key to the mystery, I argue that urban space emerges as the privileged site for connectivity, with important implications for the relationship with the present as well as with the past. Rather than the barely disguised figure of Maurice Papon, located by many scholars as the central connecting thread in the text (Gorrara 2000; Forsdick 2001; Rothberg 2009),⁸¹ or the narrative conventions of the hard-boiled crime fiction genre (Rothberg 2009; Gorrara 2000),⁸² I argue that the urban space of Drancy also allows the two memories to be explicitly interlinked and leads to some sort of resolution to the mystery.

If Roger Thiraud's project on the history of his hometown Drancy is a pivotal clue for Cadin in seeing the connection between the crimes, then as evidence it is full of blank pages and gaps. Reading the gaps becomes a powerful metaphor for our engagement with traces of the past, an issue I return to in chapter three, as it is also central to Modiano's conception of memory. The study is shown to be incomplete:⁸³ 'pas un livre à proprement parler, tout juste une maquette. Il semble destiné à être reproduit...' (Daeninckx 1984: 174). Here Roger Thiraud is again linked with transmission and dissemination, as the book looks destined for reproduction: it is only a mock up. The title of the book performs the mechanism of connection between the

⁸¹ Such an analysis of Papon as connecting the crimes in the novel is potentially problematic, in that it is too concerned with historical connections, which have not yet been exposed by the Papon trial itself, and does not realise the full potential of the literary form. The problem is also one of retrospectively endowing the text with a contextual framework.

⁸² Significantly, it is through space that this is often articulated. For instance, Rothberg uses the idea of bringing the different narratives into the same 'frame' (Rothberg 2009: 279), which implies a sort of field of vision that is inherently spatial.

⁸³ This is not the first time that Roger Thiraud is linked to the discipline of History in the text, we already know that he is a History teacher, and so is directly associated with themes of knowledge (through the trope of things coming to light and coming to the surface) and transmission. He has become interested in the history of childhood, since his wife's pregnancy (Daeninckx 1984: 16) and the motif of the child, which will be picked up again in the revelation of the deportation of Jewish children from Drancy, serves to reinforce the connections between past, present and future, and transmission. The film he goes to watch at the cinema 'était commencé; il lui faudrait attendre le début de la séance suivante pour connaître le titre' (ibid.: 17-18). This underlines that the process of learning about the past is inherently full of gaps.

present, 'DRANCY, des origines à nos jours' (ibid.: 174),⁸⁴ through a place.⁸⁵ What emerges is a specifically spatial configuration of the structure of collective memories, one that necessarily traverses space to represent its form.

When Cadin leafs through the book, he finds that 'de nombreuses pages comportaient des blancs encadrés au rayon et annotés. Roger Thiraud avait prévu l'emplacement exact des illustrations, photos, graphiques, plans' (ibid.: 174). This develops the contrast between the historian's rigour (all the bibliographical references are given) and need for proof and evidence to support his work on the one hand, and on the other the specific ways in which memory in general, and traumatic memory implicating state involvement, may leave no material traces or evidence to work from. The mock-up nature of the book and its gaps also implies the writing of history as an open and ongoing process, of which absences and gaps are an intrinsic part.

Roger's history of Drancy starts with a history of the earth itself and the geographic location upon which it was built. This reference to geological history and processes, where material layers of the past are compressed beneath the ground as separate sediments, develops the images of burial and excavation identified in *MM*: 'la mer recouvrait la région parisienne. Des sédiments argileux et calcaires se déposèrent dans le site où des milliers des années plus tard, allait naître Drancy' (ibid.: 175). Here, the geographical locations of Paris and Drancy are shown to be sites with many layers of history, which also signals their constructedness. What we know as Paris, and all that that conjures up, is just a site of earth and rock that was once covered by the sea. Spaces, then, are socially constructed to become places:

⁸⁴ In *Dora Bruder*, the title of the section of *Paris-Soir* in which the missing person advert is found, 'd'hier à aujourd'hui', almost directly mirrors this structure of temporal connections with an implied emphasis on the present.

⁸⁵ As in Modiano's analysis, place serves as a fixed locus upon which convergences between people, time periods and traumatic memories, can emerge. Although the notion of place as itself 'fixed' will equally be contested.

there is nothing essential or intrinsic to them, rather they have been randomly labelled.

‘L’époque secondaire’ (ibid.: 174) that is referred to in relation to this detailed history of the earth upon which Drancy has been constructed is widely known in English as the Mesozoic Era. A number of elements emerge in this specific historical reference. We are brought right to the brink of knowable history as we are taken back as far as the ‘age of dinosaurs’; somewhere between 248-265 million years ago. In a sense, this reference invokes history itself, drawing attention not only to temporality but also to the categorisation of temporality into eras that is the mark of modern history. The word Mesozoic derives from the Greek words for ‘between animals’. This sense of a liminal space recurs throughout this thesis, as the authors use space to challenge neat compartmentalisations of past and present, or memory and forgetting. The results of tectonic activity during this era are commonly thought to be the basis of modern life. The process of drifting that characterises this historical, geological moment, as the continents shifted from being connected together to what is largely recognisable as the lay of the earth today, has implications for my analysis of national identities. The motif of connections and the central themes of time and space are present here in a somewhat raw form.

A key feature of Daeninckx’s political project is revealed in this reference to a time before the geography of the world as we know it existed: the original lack of such spatial divisions. As Gayatri Spivak has argued, ‘the search for absolute etiologies is as fascinating and elusive as the search for the origin of language’ (Spivak 2004: 77). Daeninckx likewise questions the viability of cultural homogeneity through the reference to the early history of this space. Territories, thus, cannot be

conceived of as essentially distinct but are revealed as culturally constructed.⁸⁶ The question of borders and boundaries, not just between the disciplines in France but also the more concrete borders between countries, or even the more abstract boundaries between people and ‘others’, are central to any theorizations of racial violence and oppression. This is echoed sharply as Cadin jumps forward some millennia in Roger’s thesis and we learn that the suburb’s name, Drancy, came from a ‘colon romain’ (ibid.: 175). The theme of colonial domination is directly linked to the spatial, and reinforces the importance of names, naming places, and related structures of power.

Reading through the more recent history of Drancy just before the war, one is struck by the development of this Parisian suburb: in 1934, ‘Drancy abriterait les premiers gratte-ciels français!’ (ibid.: 176-177). The skyscrapers are symbolic reminders of the belief in the progress of modernity and the urban transformations occurring at the time. The vast construction of so many individual and collective dwellings, we are told in Roger’s final chapters, is like ‘une sorte de métropole idéale’ (ibid.: 176). This image of an ideal metropolis and the new, modern housing estates built in optimistic anticipation of new ways of living comes crashing down with the mention of the suburb’s name at the time, ‘on baptisa le tout La Muette’ (ibid.: 177). La cité de la Muette’s changing functions serve to assert the importance of space in Daeninckx’s formulation of memory in striking ways.⁸⁷ The almost jarring optimism of this part of Roger’s chapter not only enhances the sense of shock at the discoveries on the pages that follow, but it also represents the prevailing attitudes at this point in the city’s history.

⁸⁶ This theme of territorial divisions and maps is something I return to in my analysis of Maspero’s travelogue in the *banlieue* in the following chapter. Yves Lacoste explores the ways in which space, territories and borders, are ideological constructions in *La Géographie ça sert, d’abord, à faire la guerre* (Lacoste 1976).

⁸⁷ The changing functions of spaces are also explored in my analyses of both Modiano’s and Maspero’s representation of Paris more broadly, and the site of Drancy in particular.

La cité de la Muette was constructed as one of the first examples of modern architecture's public housing estates. Its function was soon to change, however, and the irony of such intentions to improve community living is brought into stark relief with knowledge about the fate of Drancy's la cité de la Muette since those modernist architects designed the first *grand ensemble*: 'hélas, les espoirs de vie communautaire qui agitaient les esprits des architectes d'avant-garde eurent un bien étrange destin' (ibid.: 177). At this point in the narrative we are about to confront the bleak reality of the new function of this incomplete, modernist housing estate. The themes of community, family and children, that have permeated both the novel and the preceding chapters of Roger's project are the lens through which Drancy's function as a transit camp during the war are depicted in the text. This is not to link explicitly the avant-garde movement with subsequent French complicity during the war, but it does demonstrate the unlikely connections between seemingly anodyne spaces and the human capacity for violence. Furthermore, it directly maps the darkest story of the war years onto the more glorious story of French modernism. The two cannot be kept separate, even if their relationship is not causal. The shock is produced precisely in their unlikely and jarring proximity.

The brief reference to the captive German soldiers during the phoney war emphasises the fluidity with which one can pass from the role of victim to perpetrator: 'mais bientôt les Allemands s'installèrent à Drancy. Ce fut en changeant de rôle: de gardés ils passèrent gardiens' (ibid.: 177). This phrase echoes the coda of *Nuit et brouillard* (Resnais & Cayrol 1955) which warns of the very fluidity with which

victims may become perpetrators, as it evokes the ‘nouveaux bourreaux’, with faces not so different from our own.⁸⁸

Daeninckx uses a known reference point in Paris to locate the horror: ‘76,000 personnes, femmes, enfants, vieillards rassemblés, en trois ans, à quelques kilomètres de la place de la Concorde, et déportés vers Auschwitz’ (Daeninckx 1984: 178). This is not to suggest that it is all the more horrifying because it happened so close to the centre, but rather to reveal the well-known public square, which translates as ‘the place of harmony’,⁸⁹ as located so close to the deportations. Our attention is also brought directly to the four German soldiers and the twelve French auxiliaries (ibid.: 178). History is configured as a confrontation with a difficult past: ‘je me forçai à en lire certains passages’ (ibid.: 178), and one which is recreated with the use of press cuttings and survivor interviews (ibid.: 178). The strategic placement of a survivor quote reiterates the focus on family, children and, crucially, place names: ‘lorsque nous parlions de Drancy devant les enfants, nous avons inventé un nom, pour ne pas les effrayer. Un nom presque joyeux, Pitchipoï. Drancy, c’était Pitchipoï (ibid.: 178). The poignancy of this survivor’s testimony is only reinforced by the harsh and brutal facts of historical inquiry, which cannot be signified in themselves but rather through their absence:

La page suivante était barrée d’un trait de crayon et agrémentée d’une légende explicative: “Reproduire le fac-similé de la lettre du commandant de Drancy annonçant à Eichmann le départ du premier convoi comportant des enfants de moins de deux ans. (ibid.: 178)

⁸⁸ Daeninckx’s stance is broadly anti-fascist (Reid 2010: 39), and Reid notes the breadth of his leftist approach, that covers critiques of capitalist, as well as fascist, power, as we have seen in his critique of the omnipresence of American culture in France (Daeninckx 1984: 111). Reid highlights that this has left him open to the critics of a comparative approach, with claims of relativization, trivialization or dilution, not of fascism’s uniqueness, as Rothberg identifies claims to specificity of the Holocaust, but rather a troubling equation of cultural imperialism with a much more violent and dangerous form of rule.

⁸⁹ Place de la Concorde used to be known as Place de la Grève and was the site where public executions were carried out.

Something stands in the place of the facsimile of the letter announcing the departure of the first convoy of children under two, as if to signify the futility of a sign adequate to capture the horror and to underline the inherent gaps of any inquiry into the past. Then we are forced to confront the figures of the Nazi death machine in their starkness: ‘des longues colonnes de chiffres s’étageaient sous des titres de rubriques dont la sécheresse de rédaction décuplait le tragique: “Date de départ”, “Convoi”, “numéro d’ordre”, “Camp de destination”, “Gazés à l’arrivée”, “Sélectionnés H”...’ (ibid.: 179). Daeninckx thus reveals the mundane bureaucracy of genocide, a bureaucratic system that bears the mark of the country in which this is taking place.⁹⁰ France.⁹¹

One of the historical elements that Daeninckx draws attention to here is that the French police at Drancy seemed more than merely compliant with the Nazi orders (Paxton 1995: 270) and are presented as almost relishing them: ‘en réponse à votre note du neuf courant, nous avons l’honneur de vous communiquer les renseignements suivants’ (Daeninckx 1984: 179). The mechanisms of categorisation include categories of geographical origin.⁹² The use of a quotation from Hugo’s *Les Misérables* pages before produces a striking and sinister sense of dramatic irony. The climax is reached with the revelation of the horrific use of Drancy during the Second World War:

⁹⁰ Modiano’s account of the bureaucratic structures that lead to Dora’s deportation and death also draw on such motifs of categorisation, numbers and forms, as if to link the French paperwork to the Final Solution. Again, what is striking is the ‘banality of evil’ (Arendt 1961), which precisely locates the perpetrators not only as Nazis but also as everyday Frenchmen.

⁹¹ Later, at the archives in Toulouse, under the listing DE, Cadin describes the effect of this, ‘j’affrontai avec dégoût l’horreur insidieuse de ces notes de service qu’échangeaient les fonctionnaires afin de parfaire l’efficacité de la machine à broyer les corps’ (Daeninckx 1984: 188).

⁹² As Cadin reads, again he releases himself from the difficult confrontation, not only with the past, but with the complicity it implies, ‘je renfermai le livre inachevé de Roger Thiraud... je me relevai pour suivre le dernier journal télévisé’ (Daeninckx 1984: 180). The question of confrontation with the past and the present is also picked up by Haneke in *Caché*, where the constant references to the media and television (Georges presents a book show) paradoxically reinforce the myriad ways in which society cuts itself off from such confrontations. This is also depicted in the film through the motifs of light and dark and Georges’s final closing of the curtains, in order to block out the past.

Paris Centre, la banlieue circonférence, voilà pour ces enfants toute la terre. Jamais ils ne se hasardent au-delà. Pour eux, à deux lieues des barrières il n'y a plus rien. Ivry, Gentilly, Aubervilliers, Drancy, c'est là que finit le monde. (ibid.: 176)⁹³

For the young deportees Drancy really was the place where their world and their lives would abruptly and horrifically end. Through reading Roger's project a sense of superimposition of different time frames upon the axis of place, the pivotal spot of Drancy, is produced. Daeninckx makes use of the mythic Paris: a representational city produced through films and literature.⁹⁴ He uses this known Paris to anchor the story of French involvement in the deportation of Jewish children to Auschwitz, through Drancy. As in Silverman's analysis of the horror and the everyday, the shock is produced through locating that horror in the known, familiar, western world ('over here' rather than 'over there'). The children of Hugo's novel were condemned to a miserable life and trapped in their place in society that had been determined by the industrial revolution and the birth of a capitalist society. The deportees are taken from Drancy to their deaths and although the immigrant communities of the present day are not brutally murdered they are equally contained and trapped by their place in society: they are literally contained in this space. Moreover, the less overt and more insidious forms of racism that seep into society unnoticed are arguably more dangerous in their naturalisation.

It is finally, and significantly, in a dream sequence of condensed and displaced proportions that Cadin is forced to confront the implications of what he has found out. The dream's presence is not signalled by Daeninckx explicitly but melts into the narrative and it only announces itself implicitly: 'je savais qu'il s'agissait de lui [Matabiau] sans même voir son visage', and then, 'je me trouvais sur son passage, nu'

⁹³ This quotation also resonates with Modiano's evocation of the children that were victims of the Paris round-ups, who were so Parisian that they are part of the urban landscape (Modiano 1999: 139).

⁹⁴ Modiano also makes many intertextual references to literary Paris, including Hugo's Paris, showing this urban space to be a web of representations. I return to this in more depth in chapter three.

(ibid.: 180). The dream reveals, in a way that only dreams can, the interconnections of the narratives with the crucial emphasis on space. The convoy to Auschwitz melts into one of bleeding Algerians (ibid.: 182), reminding us of the RATP buses Daeninkcx identifies earlier in the film footage Cadin watches (ibid.: 106). Finally, the space that links the two is articulated, having been condensed into the name from the survivor's quotation to avoid the harsh reality of Drancy, Pitchipoï (ibid.: 182). It is salient that it is in a dream that the interconnectedness of complicity is revealed. This could signal that what is repressed in waking hours cannot be truly repressed. Perhaps it implies that the language, lexicon and vocabulary of the dream world, one of substitutions in condensation and displacement, making the signified further removed from the signifier, is in fact an appropriate way of engaging with memory.

The story of la cité de la Muette ends in a noteworthy way as the space itself changes function yet again: 'le camp...abrita, à partir du mois du septembre [1944], plusieurs milliers de Français accusés de collaboration avec l'ennemi' (ibid.: 183). In a sense, this rapid and radical change of function suggests the speed with which the resistance myth was put into operation, whilst underlining the ways in which such space can function overtly to hide the traces of the past. The collaborators interned here at this time were not the guilty perpetrators that we have just identified; not only the police but also the wider institutional state system of which they are a part. It is precisely this institutional systemic crime that is the 'primary narrative' in the novel. Here, Drancy, in its myriad functions, is not separate from but is rather part of the same Paris as la Place de la Concorde, mentioned pages before, as the very spot where the roundups took place and connoting the centralised state in the heart of Paris.

The structuring motif and device of superimposition is deployed through the prism of geographical space as Cadin, on waking from his revealing dream, returns to

the office. As he arrives at the office, Lardenne is taking down the 1971 roadmap of France which covered the wall. Lardenne explains that the department has sent the current version of the map, ‘il y a toutes les nouvelles routes et même le tracé des autoroutes programmées jusqu’en ’85’ (ibid.:184). The outline of the old geographical shape of France’s interconnected motorways is thrown away and the new one is put up, which even promises to trace the potential trajectory of roads of the future. The image of the new map of France being literally superimposed onto the space of the old one, with a further superimposition of a future spatiality, effectively condenses the themes of memory, history, time and space. Furthermore, it is through this map that the theme of connections emerges: ‘je ne parvenais pas à détacher mon regard du tracé des autoroutes qui sillonnaient la France’ (ibid.:184). Here the motorways literally criss-cross the image of France, making hitherto unseen connections.⁹⁵

When Ross talks of ‘keeping the stories separate’ (Ross 1996: 8), that is to say the narratives of post-war modernization and the history of decolonization, it has implications for conceptions of ‘French’ and ‘Francophone’ histories. The rapid closing down of national boundaries in the cultural imaginary, in the wake of (a long and bloody war of) decolonization, consigned cultural phenomena to being (yet again we recourse to a spatial configuration) either inside or outside. Much scholarship has noted the way in which the ‘barbed wire’ functioned in literature and in post-war culture more broadly to separate us from the horror of the experience and the European complicity that it implies.⁹⁶

Daeninckx uses central and suburban Parisian space to explore not only the connections between the mysteries and memories in *MM* but moreover to examine the

⁹⁵ The overall spatial trajectory of the novel is not restricted to the zone of Paris, and the interplay of Paris to other cities, such as Toulouse, is central.

⁹⁶ See Rothberg on Ruth Klüger in *Extremities: Trauma, Testimony and Community* (Miller & Tougaw eds. 2002: 55).

complex relationship between power and identity: demonstrating how space produces subjects, subjectivities, identities and citizens. Space is likewise central to Cadin's dream, in which a carriage of children being deported to Auschwitz blends seamlessly into the image of the RATP buses loaded with Algerians on the night of the Paris massacre. Daeninckx thus suggests at once the central roles of fiction, historical research, detective work, dreams and imagination as possible strategies for engaging with the past. The vital clues to the mysteries lie in the ability to identify unimaginable or unexpected connections, and urban space is a key channel through which Daeninckx articulates this. It is the site of Drancy, and its history and evolution that functions to reveal the alarming state complicity in the various narratives depicted. Such a sense of continuity, opened up by the representation of this *Parisian* internment camp, will also be central to Maspero's exploration of memory in the *banlieue*.

CHAPTER TWO

MEMORY UNDER ERASURE: LEARNING TO LOOK FOR CONNECTIONS ON THE *ROISSY-EXPRESS*

This chapter addresses the representation of (sub-)urban space in *Les Passagers du Roissy-Express* (Maspero & Frantz 1990) through the prism of memory. The ways in which traces of the Holocaust and the Algerian War are inscribed into and erased from the suburban landscape depicted in the text will provide a structural framework for this chapter's re-engagement with *Les Passagers du Roissy-Express* (hereafter *PRE*) as a text about the relationship between the past and the present. This sense of an interstice permeates Maspero's presentation of memory through space. These questions about the relationship between memory and urban space are inextricable from metatextual issues of writing and representation.

In the year of the bicentenary of the French revolution François Maspero and photographer Anaïk Frantz set out, from Châtelet-les-Halles in the centre of Paris on the RER train line B, to document the *banlieue*. The bicentenary, then, is the backdrop to their journey: the question of commemoration underpins the whole project. Wherever they go, the *tricolor* flag symbolises the celebrations of the birth of the French Republic, but in fact only reveals the *décalage* between those revolutionary values and the present experience of citizens in the *banlieue*. The result is a travelogue with all the features of classic travel writing: photographs and reflections on the local area, reports on local people, customs and cultures, introspective moments of realisation about 'home' opened up by an encounter with otherness. They stay in hotels and have to negotiate local transport. They stick to an arbitrary itinerary agreed at the outset and are guided by maps. Along the way,

Maspero writes and muses on his observations of the people in this space, looking as a tourist would for local history – for traces of the past.

Throughout *PRE* Maspero sets up a constant interplay with events as they were unfolding in Tiananmen Square, Beijing, where student protests against the oppressive totalitarian Communist state had been playing out over the months of May and June – precisely the context of Maspero's journey. Such a dialogue with events in the East not only performs the central function of interconnection between two apparently distant, disparate places, but it also brings questions about oppressive state control and violence, and questions about democracy and equality, into focus. Tiananmen Square's rich history reminds us that city space can be at once a tool of ideological control and a potential site of revolution and protest.

PRE has a distinctly intermedial quality: text and image blend whilst autobiographical and imaginative elements seep through into the objective *reportage*. The space of the *banlieue* is transformed into a space worth exploring, just like a distant and exotic destination, far from home. Maspero plays with the idea that for Parisians, the *banlieue* is cut off from the centre, somehow distinct and foreign. It is a place where foreigners live, but is also separate from the centre of Paris, *despite* the RER train that connects it. It is through the train that Maspero explores the dualities of division and connection, near and far, home and abroad, familiar and strange, calling these categories and oppositions into question.

In the previous chapter I observed that, whilst the question of memory was often central to existing analyses of *MM*, the theme of urban space, and the specific ways in which the author's presentation of memory emerges through representations of the city, had been elided. Here, however, questions of urban space and representations of Paris are central to most critical reflections on this source. I suggest

that Maspero explores the specific dynamic between memory, that peculiar, refracted engagement with the past through the present, and particular spaces in the *banlieue*, to contemplate questions about ‘national’ identity, Republican citizenship, and cultural belonging and participation. Whilst the importance of memory across Maspero’s travel œuvre is evidenced in Kathryn Jones’s identification of Maspero as a ‘memory traveller’ (Jones 2009: 340), there remains no coherent overview of the intricate connections between memory and urban space in *PRE*.

Margaret Attack observes that *PRE* has been widely read in terms of writing on the city and postcolonial thought (Attack 2007: 441). She points out that the city as an object of study for literature, film and cultural studies has a long history,⁹⁷ and notes a renewal of interest in the urban environment in the context of the 1980s and 1990s, often in order to address questions of identity, exclusion and violence (ibid.: 442). In many existing analyses, the paradigm of the centre/periphery binary opposition is read as being subverted (Attack 2007; Jones 2009) or unintentionally reinstated (Gantz 1999). I argue, in line with Charles Forsdick’s identification of the persistence of diversity, both in *PRE* specifically and in travel literature more broadly (Forsdick 2005), that *PRE* in fact cuts against such binary thinking, challenging the very construction of such oppositions. I contend that more liminal concepts of boundaries and border zones are foregrounded, positing multiplicity, plurality and diversity in place of the homogenous, non-descript grey ‘magma informe’ (Maspero 1990: 24) that the term *banlieue* connotes (for Parisians).⁹⁸ Deconstructing binary paradigms, my analysis posits a complex network of associations, connections and intersections

⁹⁷ Many point to Baudelaire, Benjamin, Breton, Aragon, Réda, Perec and Debord as engaging with the city in particularly productive, now almost paradigmatic, ways (see for instance, Hazan 2002; Kearney 1994; Reader 2011; Sheringham 1996; Silverman 1999).

⁹⁸ Alexandre Dauge-Roth makes the point that the very term *banlieue parisienne* masks more than it signifies in its generalised and overloaded highly mediated connotations (Dauge-Roth 1997). Dauge-Roth frames Maspero’s project in terms of an interrogation of referentiality, positing that it is almost driven by asking what, specifically, does such a term stand for, or hide.

articulated through urban space in the text, as a productive way of engaging with Maspero's representation of memory in the city. Rather than turning the centre/periphery model on its head, Maspero questions the very foundations of such oppositions, through literary techniques that destabilise the validity of the binary paradigm. Instead, he opens up a space that is sensitive to the nuances and differences that binary oppositions tend to obscure.

Much scholarship has productively read the journey north to south on the *ligne B* of the RER from Roissy (Charles de Gaulle) down to St Rémy lès Chevreuse, as an innovative (Wilson 1995), inverted (Jones 2004) form of travel writing. The innovation of the project is ascribed to the object of its study being the mundane, everyday and proximate, rather than a more exotic site geographically (and culturally) located some distance from 'home' (Forsdick 2005; Jones 2009; Sheringham 2007). Whilst it is true that Maspero's journey will have been an unusual one in the context of the late 1980s, the entire referential system of constructions and meanings that assign dual categories of near/far, home/abroad, exotic/mundane, is questioned here. Rather than a simple inversion of notions of home and abroad, for instance, the very system in which these meanings are produced and circulate is interrogated. Such an analysis of travel literature, moreover, implies related concepts of migration, exile, borders and transit that have spatial configurations, implications and representations. The delineations between the everyday and the extreme, and the very construction of such categories, lies at the heart of important work in the field of (traumatic) memory (Arendt 1961; Rothberg 2002; Silverman 2006), but also points to tacit mechanisms (of exclusion, for instance) becoming naturalised and hidden from view (Gantz 1999: 82).

The generic ambiguity of this hybrid form has divided scholars. Gantz (1999) argues that Maspero's attempt to forge a novel out of a cultural studies project is ultimately unsuccessful, as it never fulfils its potential and the split between perspectives and genres remains un-reconciled. Cooke explores this generic instability through an analysis of the relationship between text and image as embodying sites of tension and friction, and concludes, as Ridon (2000) does, that the photographs add depth to the surface (Cooke 2008: 102).⁹⁹ What emerges is a metatextual reflection on the nature of art, literature, photography and representation more broadly. The spatial is the primary category employed for analysis, therefore my approach will reconnect it with temporality, in order to ask what specific configuration of memory emerges in such representations of urban space.

Although Katherine Gantz's analysis, of the 'failed' connection between French and cultural studies, undermines the subtlety and complexity of Maspero's project, her analysis does bring into focus the re-envisaging of 'seemingly invisible elements of ordinary life' (Gantz 1999: 82). She reminds us that cultural ideology operates at this level, and that one endeavour of cultural studies is to expose unseen connections. The first section of this chapter will explore how Maspero engages with the question of the visibility of traces of the past. It will consider how he renders problematic notions of visible as opposed to invisible and suggests a more complex set of processes, of hiding, revealing, superimposing, and transforming.

One of the structuring tropes for my analysis is again that of connections and interconnectedness.¹⁰⁰ In this chapter, it will be explored through my identification of

⁹⁹ I will return to such considerations of genre in the following chapter, dealing with Modiano's play with notions of fiction, biography, autobiography, and the insertion of historical documents to drive the narrative.

¹⁰⁰ Whether it is the 'dangerous intersection' or collision of French and cultural studies (Gantz 1999), the observed connection between Frantz and her photographic subjects (Cooke 2008), the intercultural encounter staged through photography (Gorrara & Topping 2008), the emphasis on links between

the interdependence of the disciplines of history and geography, and therefore of time and space. I will reflect on the challenge to disciplinary boundaries presented by Maspero, and consider the implications for my comparative approach to memories of the Holocaust and the Algerian War in representations of urban space. Finally, I will demonstrate that urban space emerges as a privileged site for exposing more fluid conceptions of the relationship between the past and the present, as an overarching sense of continuity is explored between France's now established Vichy past and its postcolonial present.

Visibility: Looking for Signs of the Past in the *banlieue*

The trope of visibility is a central and recurring one throughout the collected works and relates in various ways to the question of seeing and interpreting traces of the past in the contemporary city. It is one of the structuring ways in which the theme of memory is explored in the *PRE*, and recalls Resnais and Cayrol's scratch marks: material signs of the past which might remain 'hidden in plain sight' if you do not know how to look for them. Gantz points to a cultural studies approach to expose hidden mechanisms of power, and reveal unseen connections between ideology and cultural practices (Gantz 1999: 82). Such a focus on how ideology functions to make power relations appear so natural that their mechanisms are invisible is instructive for my examination of memory and visibility in the city, as it problematises clear cut notions of visible as opposed to invisible. I argue that a more complex set of processes is at work, where traces of the Holocaust and the Algerian War share a vocabulary of being simultaneously hidden and revealed in the *banlieue*. One

different struggles as encapsulated by the May '68 slogan 'tout est lié' (Milne 2006) or the connection of 'fragments' of space (and time) to form a new geography (Atack 2007: 453), the figure of connection has been central to existing analyses of *PRE*.

category will be shown to be, troublingly, already part of its perceived opposite. This section will examine how visibility functions specifically in relation to memory in *PRE*, how seeing and looking for traces of different histories in the urban landscape bring into a play an intricate set of questions about the visual dimension of memory, as well as poststructuralist considerations of memory's mediation and representation of the past.

Maspero's representation of the *banlieue* could be viewed as part of a project to offer visibility to the suburbs. However, the question of the visibility of traces and signs of the past cannot be framed within a clearly delineated opposition of visible/invisible. Such dichotomous terminology can function to mask the intrinsically ambiguous and complex nature of the processes at work. Jean-Xavier Ridon concludes (Ridon 2000), for instance, in line with Margaret Attack (Attack 2007), that if the *banlieue* is made visible, it is only through the trope of disappearance. A striking sense of simultaneity is apparent here: that visibility (of the *banlieue*) is achieved paradoxically through disappearance.¹⁰¹ I will argue that the reference to the film showing at the Blanc Mesnil municipal cinema (Maspero 1990: 149) contains important clues to Maspero's project, reflecting on the mechanisms of representation and memory as they emerge in the space of the *banlieue*.

From the outset a connection is established between the journey as a spatial one, and a more metaphorical journey into the past, 'à quoi servent les voyages si ce n'est à évoquer les souvenirs?' (ibid.: 6). Likewise, the question of how to look and

¹⁰¹ Michel Laronde's analysis of postcolonial infiltration in *beur* fiction (Laronde 2000) posits town planning as a primary discourse in which this is articulated. A number of elements of his argument are striking in terms of my analysis of memory in urban space. Firstly, he 'reads' urbanism and architecture not as natural, but as state control mechanisms for 'ambiguous processes of integration-assimilation' (Laronde 2000: 64). Secondly, he highlights that resistance is to be produced in a space outside of the perceived insider/outsider binary, as the model is a 'sham' (ibid.: 69) produced by the 'empowered voice'. Furthermore, he highlights that categories of visible and 'in-visible' dominate literary representations of the outsider, who identifies himself or herself as 'in-visible', whilst being 'too' visible for the those in power (ibid.: 69).

how to see, and devices that might block visualisation of present space and the past, are also clearly set out. The author's initial observation, from the train, that the weather is fine and the sky is blue is soon complicated, as he describes the varying hues of grey that dominate the skyline as the eye reaches the horizon (ibid.: 9). In fact, the sky is described as being rather dirty, 'mais il ne faut pas oublier que les vitres du train sont teintées, elles-mêmes grisailantes' (ibid.: 9). So the initial observation is almost immediately contradicted, and the window or screen through which the journey is being seen and described has overlaid its own film of colour that distorts the 'true' nature of the colours and images being seen. Furthermore, it is significant that the windows were manufactured to produce this effect, explicitly highlighting agency: 'pas de risque de coups de soleil dans le RER: prévoyant ingénieur chauves' (ibid.: 9). This state-run train network is revealed as producing the windows to refract and tint the view of the world outside, directly linking the state to such partial and tainted modes of apprehending 'reality'. The internal contradictions that characterise the text, far from undermining the project, as Gantz argues (Gantz 1999: 86), rather feed productively into Maspero's broader interrogation of the construction of categories that organise bureaucracy, people, nation-states, identities and wars. The search for authenticity is constantly put into tension with an acknowledgement of its futility: a recognition that signs, symbols, signifiers, windows, photographs, literature, maps and, most significantly, memory can never be fully accurate representations of the referred 'reality'. If the text is indeed full of 'inconsistencies' (Gantz 1999: 86), I will demonstrate that this is integral to Maspero's project.

Challenging expectations of the form of travel (no, they will not visit 'instances officielles, aux municipalités, aux différents offices et administrations'), and drawing attention to the process of the project, 'comment se documenter, alors?'

(Maspero 1990: 22), Maspero suggests ‘un regard attentif’ (ibid.: 22). In establishing the *contraintes*, or rules, of the project (Gratton and Sheringham eds. 2005: 18) it is significant that Maspero posits looking and seeing (‘ce n’était pas une enquête. C’était juste un regard, le leur, et rien d’autre’ (Maspero 1990: 22)) as the primary modes of apprehending their subject. This calls on the notions of veracity and authenticity culturally invested in the eyewitness and relates seeing something *with your own eyes* to a sense of objective truth. This is precisely what Maspero is setting out to investigate. In fact, an investigation is exactly what it is: he will be asking questions and examining things more closely. It is, then, just what the author has signalled that it is not. The whole notion of seeing as believing, and questions about the relationship between the material and the intangible, are central to Maspero’s presentation of memory. The question of authenticity and the quest to represent things ‘as they really are’, and ‘ne pas faire semblant’ (ibid: 23), establishes the slippery issue of objectivity as a central concern.

Maspero plays with subject positions: ‘plutôt que de regarder, dire: ça me regarde’ (ibid.: 22). The power relations inherent in the act of looking, be it Laura Mulvey’s male gaze (Mulvey 1973) or the violent colonial gaze towards the ‘other’, are effectively inverted. This act of looking that Maspero has identified as key to the fieldwork of the project contains within it a sort of duality or paradox as Maspero makes himself the subject and the object of the looking *simultaneously*. Moreover, the double meaning of ‘ça me regarde’, is particularly striking when framed by the issues of French complicity at stake in memories of both the Holocaust and the Algerian War: not only is the entity seen looking back at Maspero, but it also implicates him: it is his business.

The interplay between surface and depth, a dynamic that resonates throughout the thesis, brings into play a number of issues in relation to the visibility of traces of the past. Such spatial configurations of memory as layers or stratifications beneath the visible surface, and the related figures of burial and excavation (digging to expose and reveal traces of the past that have been built on) are also an important vehicle for exploring how different memories intersect. Therefore, not only is a shared literary motif of burial and excavation pertaining to memories of the Holocaust and the Algerian War broadly identifiable, as I explored in the previous chapter, but furthermore, it is precisely through the image of stratification that the intersections and connections between the separate memories are represented.

As part of the preamble to *PRE* Maspero asserts that the landscape of the *banlieue* is, contrary to Parisian perception,¹⁰² in fact a varied one, with ‘cités nouvelles et des banlieues anciennes, des zones industrielles et peut-être d’autres encore agricoles’ (ibid.: 15). So the landscape is set up as full, even if it is just full of people, ‘deux millions d’habitants’ (ibid.: 16). But how will it be possible to find traces of the past *under* all of that, François asks himself:

serait-il possible de retrouver là-dessous les traces du passé, les traces de la plaine de France et du Hurepoix? Mais qu’est-ce qui l’intéressait le plus: le dessous ou le dessus? Le passé ou le présent? (ibid.: 16)

If Maspero is presenting the past as underneath, and the present as on top, then figures of building and construction become symbolic of processes in the present that block the past from view. Such processes of construction and reconstruction will function to obfuscate the search for traces of the past that is so integral to the formulation of the

¹⁰² In her work on the *banlieue* Annie Fourcalt also stresses the extent to which reductive and inaccurate *representations* of this area have structured common perceptions (Fourcalt et al 2007). She shows how the area has been generated in the popular imaginary through images and clichés, rather than any direct experience. For instance, she argues that the concept of ‘coupure’ is a central and structuring one (ibid.: 18) and neglects the shared history of the territory.

shape of the project.¹⁰³ Such a visualisation of surface and depth in relation to past and present demands a reconsideration of the tendency to rely on visual authentication for the past. It complicates the notion that ‘seeing is believing’ by positing that traces of the past may well be there, even if they are not ostensible from the surface.

It is not until they reach Villepinte that the landscape offers up a material sign of the Occupation in the form of a transcribed commemorative plaque. Many of the signs,¹⁰⁴ posters and plaques that proliferate in the text are not just transcribed,¹⁰⁵ but are entirely reproduced: indented in the page and often in capitals. This brings attention to the fact that they are signs, and adds to the sense of veracity achieved in the text, as well as recalling Surrealist techniques for playing with the printing of letters and words from advertisements, posters, and street signs.¹⁰⁶ Significantly, in a section where many signs have been visually reproduced, the plaque for fourteen hostages shot on 14th June 1940 is described in continuous prose. This refers the reader directly to the textualisation of the memorial and the way it has been recreated

¹⁰³ Maspero explicitly recapitulates the scope of this project, explaining that the overarching rule was to take the metro to each stop on the line B, find accommodation, walk around and ‘ils chercheraient les traces du passé’ (Maspero 1990: 20).

¹⁰⁴ Signs abound in Blanc Mesnil. There are signs for the exhibition at the town hall, in red, white and blue, fitting with the bicentenary celebrations (Maspero 1990: 142). There must have been an industrious trader of neon signs in this area, Maspero muses (ibid: 143), as publicity and personal messages flash, as does public information, giving the time, date and temperature (ibid: 143). A handwritten sign in front of the local primary school (Jules Vallès – an author/journalist/teacher involved in the 1848 revolution – inscribing more layers of history into space through toponymy) warns that the state is imposing ‘sectorisation’ (ibid: 143). The changes mean that children may be in danger on their way to their new allocated school. When later we learn of the role of the French State in the Paris *raffles* of children in 1942, the danger of crossing the busy road highlighted here is amplified. Equally, it is striking that Maspero highlights the dangers of such division, for children, in spatial terms.

¹⁰⁵ Frantz’s photograph of a sign that reads ‘la rue n’est pas une poubelle’ (Maspero 1990: 58) serves to underline the essential disconnection between signs and referents in visual form. The large billboard has been extensively graffitied, which is not something Maspero necessarily associates with vandalism, as it represents, as Hargreaves and McKinney have argued (1997) a form of cultural, artistic and indeed textual expression. However, the car next to the sign has also been graffitied and the overall impression is one of a run down, overlooked area.

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, *Le Paysan de Paris* (Aragon 1926). The intertextual *clin d’œil* to the Surrealists is striking in the light of their focus on revealing the hidden part of the mind, that part suppressed in waking life by rationalist thought. The Surrealist movement sought to go beyond, and break free of literary, social, and artistic constraints, and the fundamental role assigned to imagination, and indeed to being in urban space, make it an important intertextual context.

by the author, in words. The description of the plaque's location in relation to a supermarket advertisement and a car park demonstrates the idea of cutting through 'des stratifications géologiques' (ibid.: 113). If going through Villepinte is like cutting through living stratifications, an image that Maspero uses as he observes the 'pile-up' (Maspero trans. Jones 1994: 89) of years of different housing ideas manifesting itself in the landscape, 'un siècle de conceptions successives d'habitants venus s'agglomérer' (ibid.: 113), then the location of the plaque in relation to street names, car parks and posters illustrates the connections between different strata.

Gantz contends that 'period references are crowded together in ways that suggest an almost hostile connection between the ages' (Gantz 1999: 88), which suggests a more jarring relationship between memories than Maspero presents. Her conception of 'layers of cultural material' and 'cultural signifiers' (ibid.: 88) is instructive, but her conclusion that Maspero could 'better illustrate' (ibid.: 88) the connections between Avenue Karl Marx, the Franprix sign, the car park and the memorial, is reductive. Maspero is suggesting a certain type of critical engagement with everyday life, one that precisely requires that the reader think and see the connections for themselves.

Initially Drancy's la cité de la Muette is articulated through images of emptiness: 'à cette heure, la cité de la Muette, comme les autres, est déserte' (Maspero 1990: 174). The overall impression is that of 'dénuement' (ibid.: 174). The narrator speculates that this emptiness and destitution could be the product of poverty and notes 'l'économie de la construction' (ibid.: 174).¹⁰⁷ He also describes the shoddy nature of the concrete as 'lépreuses' (ibid.: 174). As Atack has demonstrated,

¹⁰⁷ The space will become emblematic of a certain type of emptiness, resonating with Modiano's identification of emptiness that permeates the spaces that the Bruders passed through: the narrator explains, 'j'ai ressenti une impression d'absence, et de vide, chaque fois que je me suis trouvé dans un endroit où ils avaient vécu' (Modiano 1997: 29).

the sense of rotting and disease that is attributed to the built environment adds to the text's sense of experiencing the past through being in the space, as the experience of the camps is overlaid onto the present through words that connote filth, dysentery and death (Atack 2007: 450). Other echoes of the past use of this space are hinted at, as the openwork cement blocks of the stairwells are described as 'cages' (Maspero 1990: 174). The connotation of being imprisoned, not only in the past use of the space but also in the present, explicitly links the built environment to structures of control and domination. Furthermore, the idea that outside appearances can conceal internal processes is implied by the word 'façades' (ibid.: 174), which can mean the outside face of a building as well as referring to something being a pretence, front or for show. This is then directly associated with the modernist housing projects that came to be known as rabbit hutches, as Maspero, with a hint of sarcasm characteristic of his style, observes, 'jamais construction "moderne" n'a mieux mérité d'être comparée à une succession infinie de clapiers' (ibid.: 174). Significantly, the sense of fragility of the façades of the estate, and the image of a 'château de cartes' invoked (ibid.: 174), is explicitly linked to modernist architecture. It is as if the narratives that the façades represent, such as the modernist housing dream narrative of providing better accommodation for sprawling urban populations, are in fact a delicately balanced house of cards, intimating that while they hold up the entire structure, moving one of them could topple the whole thing. If this is symbolic of the way in which post-war narratives are structured, then it is also a powerful image for the structure of official narratives of memory: scratch the surface, Maspero implies, look behind the façade, or take just one card away, and what is revealed is a poorly constructed sham.

If the act of seeing the world around us is presented as passing through the window of representation whether you articulate what is seen in words or pictures

(like the window on the train), the process of representation is not entirely transparent. Memory, then, must also pass through a mode of representation, and just as the photographic frame is selective and partial in nature, so too is the process of textualising experience Maspero is attentive to.¹⁰⁸ The film showing at the Blanc Mesnil municipal cinema, *Une histoire de vent* (Ivens 1988) is only mentioned in passing (ibid.: 149),¹⁰⁹ but the reference to it is an important clue to Maspero's linking of memory to visibility. The film makes a perfect hyperlink to the text, as it is a film about the director himself, played by himself. It is the story of his journey to China to try to capture the story (and history) of the wind with his camera.¹¹⁰ Its blend of real, fictional and dream elements suggest a metatextual fascination with the possibilities and limitations of representation. Perhaps Maspero is also suggesting that trying to capture the past *and* the present is like trying to film the wind: it may not be visible, but it is experience nonetheless.

Histoire-Géographie: Interconnections between Time, Space and Disciplines

This section will explore the dual focus on time and space that emerges through Maspero's overt linking, or cross-fertilization, of the disciplines of history and geography. Disciplinary boundaries, like all other divisions in *PRE*, will be exposed as purely constructed and illusory in nature, reflecting a profoundly dialogic view of

¹⁰⁸ Maspero is acutely aware that the record of what they see and experience is mediated through the process of writing. Indeed the focus of *PRE* is the very possibilities for capturing experience. Maspero constantly draws attention to this process, revealing its gaps and inaccuracies, 'à la relecture des notes de François, on a souvent des surprises' (Maspero 1990: 139). Later, he gets to a point where his notes let him down, whether they are 'prolixes ou succinctes, précises ou à peine indicatives, elles ont toujours à peu près servi', but for La Courneuve, he has nothing. He has words, but they give 'images confuses, des bruits de conversations décousues' (ibid.: 200). La Courneuve, then, is depicted as a 'passage à vide'.

¹⁰⁹ This reference to 'vent' reverberates later with the code name given to the *rafles* in Paris in 1942, 'opération *Vent printanier*' (Maspero 1990: 184).

¹¹⁰ Milne notes that China and Paris form the oppositional reference points to the *banlieue* in *PRE* (Milne 2006: 494).

epistemological inquiry that has important implications for this broader, comparative approach to memories of the Holocaust and the Algerian War. What is at stake here is a re-conceptualisation of the field of French studies as a disciplinary space in which cross-fertilization can reveal previously unseen connections. Furthermore, the overarching focus on interconnections and the challenge to perceived divisions opens up a space to explore the possibility of more mobile concepts of French-ness that have continued to be at the heart of debates about French and Francophone identity within the academy.¹¹¹ I argue that urban and suburban space emerge in *PRE* as privileged sites for such a reconfiguration of boundaries and intersections, between geography and history, and post-Holocaust and postcolonial studies, suggesting the validity of an approach to memory and the city sensitive to the overlaps in post-Holocaust and postcolonial representation.

The centrality of questions of memory (including public processes of memorialisation and commemoration) to spatial issues of territory and nation, and thus to identity, is well established. If Halbwachs asserts the inherently collective and cultural dimensions of remembering (Halbwachs 1925), then it follows that communities are linked by their memories, and by how they articulate a shared past. I have outlined various aspects of Pierre Nora's concept of *lieux de mémoire* in the introduction and chapter one. He posits that in the absence of spontaneous memory, 'sites of memory' are (figurative) spaces in which symbols of national identity are created. Matthias Middell explores how the postcolonial notion of *la francophonie* understands its object of study primarily as a transnational space held together by historical events, common experiences and places of remembrance (Middell 2003:

¹¹¹ As Forsdick points out, there is a (rapidly) growing body of scholarship engaged in moving beyond a reductive and exclusive focus on *l'héxagone* to explore a more complex network of French-speaking spaces as loci of French culture and cultural production (Forsdick 2005: vii). For instance Forsdick cites Apter (1999); Forsdick & Murphy (2003); Spear (2002); Stovall & van den Abbeele (2003). To which I would add, Forsdick (2005); Higbee (2007); Middell (2003).

205). This highlights the importance of a sense of both geography and history, or more precisely mediations and representations of the past, to conceptions and constructions of identity. In *PRE* the issue of French-ness in a postcolonial world, one in which national identity is no longer bounded by national borders, is examined against the backdrop of celebrations to commemorate the bicentenary of the French Revolution.¹¹² This context, of public commemoration of the birth of the French Republic, directly links the question of memory to identity and citizenship, examining the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, and how they operate within the modern French Republic.

Here, the geographical and historical nature of Maspero's project will be outlined,¹¹³ highlighting the duality and ambivalence of his attitude to the disciplines for learning about spaces and their pasts.¹¹⁴ Maspero is ultimately suspicious about the hidden ideological dimensions of a certain type of history and geography. However, the scholarly processes of learning, researching and investigating remain important to him, and suggest a type of fieldwork that privileges the plurality of

¹¹² Margaret Attack notes the frequent references to local celebrations, and outlines some of the commemorative projects that took place in 1989 as important 'discourses of nationalism and national identity' (Attack 2007: 442). She points to the way in which their journey is embedded in these national celebrations, and yet such a 'self-conscious relation to history' (ibid.: 443) also sustains a 'critical distance' from it (ibid.: 443). This is supported by Forsdick's analysis which highlights that the context of the bicentenary is left deliberately implicit in the text, apart from in the 1993 postface (Forsdick 2005: 185). Such deliberate 'ambivalence' or ambiguity, I argue, is fundamental to the type of engagement Maspero requires from readers, implying that these clues might not be presented explicitly, and one must play detective to find them and decipher meaning.

¹¹³ In *The Art of the Project: Projects and Experiments in Modern French Culture* (Gratton & Sheringham eds. 2005) both time and space are identified as key to the codified constraints of the project.

¹¹⁴ In Roissy, the renovations of a church in successive centuries shows how deeply entwined history and geography are for Maspero: 'la pierre, que s'épurent les formes dans leurs authenticité, simplicité, dépouillement historique, toutes les choses qui bien entendu n'ont jamais existé dans l'histoire vraie, car l'histoire vraie est plutôt accumulation, mélange, confusion et même bric-à-brac... mais ceci est une autre histoire' (Maspero 1990: 33). History is conceived of as a process of mixing, accumulation and confusion, suggesting that history is layered and that the layers may mix with the passing of time. Indeed, history is plural here, there are different types of history – 'histoire vraie' and 'une autre histoire'. 'Histoire vraie', the process of confused accumulation, is opposed to the processes of sanding down and refining to reveal pure and authentic elements, that are identifiable in the stones of the church.

memories over history's unifying frameworks. It is clear that the project is a geographical one, indebted to the tradition of travel writing (Maspero 1990: 14), and concerned with 'incompréhensibles espaces désarticulés de ce qui n'était plus une géographie et qu'il faudrait bien essayer de réécrire' (ibid.: 14). The reference to *Danube* by Claudio Magris is credited with inspiring Maspero, as he read about this more traditional travel project when returning from Roissy airport, attempting to capture the essence of the primary school geography project, 'suivez le cours du Rhin, ou du Mississippi, ou du Danube, et parlez de ce que vous recontez en route' (ibid.: 14). Here, Geography as a discipline clearly frames the project, and furthermore the figure of the border zone is brought into play: 'prenez un atlas. Pays que traverse le Danube ou auxquels il sert de frontière:...' (ibid.: 14). It is crucial that Maspero chooses to include this reference to a country that the Danube runs through, or for which it acts as a border, as it draws attention to the arbitrary nature of such longstanding, natural, geographical borders, how territory is divided up, and furthermore how this is communicated. It also points to the inherent symbolic ambivalence of the border, which might be viewed as both a divisive and connective space.¹¹⁵ In his project, it will be the train line that runs through space, simultaneously functioning to divide and connect.

Maspero's resistance to traditional geography and travel writing is demonstrated in the way he overlays pink felt tip pen onto the Michelin map, an act of subversion through superimposition;¹¹⁶ 'il avait souligné au feutre rose, luminescent, le tracé de la ligne B du RER, celle qui se coule à travers la région parisienne du nord

¹¹⁵ As such the border functions as an 'undecidable' in Derrida's thought: a sign caught between two possible but seemingly opposed meanings. More than just an open lack of fixed meaning, this concept 'reveals a very specific structural condition at the heart of language' (Bates 2005: 4). I return to this concept in the following chapter and chapter five.

¹¹⁶ This process of overwriting existing representations in the present signalled by a bright pen, is a device used by Sebbar, when her protagonists graffiti over the commemorative plaques in red spray paint (Sebbar 1999: 29).

au sud' (ibid.: 14). Just as with Magris's Danube he looks at the way this new line, traced onto the old map, cuts through spaces. The present is quite literally superimposed onto the past through the pink pen markings that trace the train line, and moreover, link the discipline of geography to processes of making or leaving indelible traces. It might be seen as a playful example of *détournement*, re-appropriating the map as a pedagogical and ideological tool to disseminate and transmit information about territory, to retrace the 'official' lines of geography.

Maps, of course, are central to geography, and his Michelin map of the 'environs de Paris' has a scale of 1/100,000: 'une bien trop petite échelle' (ibid.: 14). The question of maps and their scale draws attention to the representational nature of something that we have a tendency to invest with accurate, scientific objectivity. This is a central thread throughout the text, and fits into its broader self-referential, meta-textual dimension, as exemplified in the many references to signs and processes of signification and representation, as well as a recurring focus on the gap between experience and its textualisation, which Forsdick has argued is characteristic of travel writing more broadly (Forsdick, Basu & Shilton eds. 2006: 14). One important intertextual reference point that forms a leitmotif throughout *PRE* is the work of Marxist geographer Yves Lacoste, published at Editions Maspero.¹¹⁷ *La Géographie ça sert, d'abord, à faire la guerre* (Lacoste 1976, 1985) explores the intimate links between geography and the military, exposing the school-taught subject not as a social science, but as in the direct service of ideology (Lacoste 1985: 7). Two people Maspero and Frantz meet on their travels are former students of Lacoste. This is fundamental to Maspero's project of exposing hidden traces and the mechanisms that sustain such concealment, and to the conception of memory that is emerging through

¹¹⁷For more biographical details of Maspero's background in publishing, see *Les Abeilles et la guêpe* (Maspero 2002).

spatial representations. Just as the map is ‘une forme de représentation géographique’, Lacoste also interrogates the perception that institutionally taught geography is about describing the world, implying techniques of memorising, rather than understanding, as with history (Lacoste 1985: 9).¹¹⁸ He questions the dangerous tendency to naturalise what is a strategic pedagogical and ideological tool to control and dominate society (Lacoste 1985: 10) and thus maintain hegemonic rule.¹¹⁹

The geographical character of Maspero’s project is clearly overlaid with a temporal, historical dimension in which traversing space becomes a vehicle for learning about the past: ‘donc ils partiraient pour un mois...il noterait, elle photographierait...la règle de base: prendre le RER de station à station...et ils chercheraient les traces du passé’ (Maspero 1990: 20). The two are not depicted as parallel projects, but rather are to be seen as mutually constitutive. As they travel through the *banlieue*, space will function to expose the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that are central to processes of commemoration. Maspero explores monuments and how they function to inscribe certain memories into public spaces, whilst also revealing their ultimate inadequacy in guaranteeing memory. As Peter Carrier has observed, this is the ‘inherent ambiguity of monuments, which can serve equally as catalysts for remembrance and forgetting’ (Carrier 2006: 1). This implies, perhaps, something crucial about meaning production that is true of language and all

¹¹⁸ Lacoste argues that the map converts a concrete space ‘en une représentation abstraite’ in the service of the State. Furthermore, the naturalisation of this in academic geography functions to mask geography’s intrinsic ideological purpose (Lacoste 1985: 12), and happens at such an insidious level that even those transmitting the information do not think to question it (ibid.: 21).

¹¹⁹ This chimes with Kristin Ross’s observations about the birth of geography as an institutionalised academic subject being directly related to colonial expansion (Ross 1988: 4). Likewise, she draws attention to the naturalisation of spaces in Vidal’s geographical landscape ‘science’ and highlights that this has important ideological implications (ibid.: 86). She identifies Saussurian structural linguistics as producing understandings of space as natural and ‘out there’, rather than constructed, which are deeply problematic and yet have dominated much thinking about space. Ross’s argument here is significant in terms of what I have identified as a recurrent focus on the relationship between signs and referents in Maspero’s travelogue, as she argues that in post-Saussurian thinking, the problem of reference, or denotation, is essentially undermined by what Saussure takes as the primary problem of signification (ibid.: 86). For more on the relationship between geography and imperial expansion, see also *Geography and Imperialism: 1820-1940* (Bell, Butlin and Heffernan 1995).

art; that nothing inherently or intrinsically has any fixed meaning. As Maspero points out at the ‘musée de l’Air’, another form of monumentalisation, these Spitfire and Lightning planes can be seen at once as ‘porteurs de mort et pourtant messagers de liberté’ (Maspero 1990: 160).¹²⁰

One of the preconceptions that Maspero explores is the idea that the suburbs lack history. His attitude towards this is marked by ambivalence, as in each small suburban town he in fact reveals its history. Yet in Sevran Beaudottes the station is so new that it gives the impression ‘d’inachèvement, de provisoire, alors que tout ici devrait être achevé et définitif’ (ibid.: 86). This space where the latest flux of immigration has flourished lacks history and a sense of ‘projet commun’, Maspero notes. However, he also reveals a number of commemorative narratives embedded in these palimpsestic spaces. In Blanc Mesnil, against the backdrop of the bicentenary anniversary celebrations – an exhibition of *tricolore* painting – Maspero comments on the ‘rose résurrection’ (ibid.: 145), a flower that has been invested with symbolic significance to mark the 30th anniversary of the liberation of the death camps. His mother bought one along with her former camp comrades but it died immediately, exposing the fragility of the line between remembering and forgetting in commemorative practices. Maspero’s own autobiographical narrative thus seeps into his report on Blanc Mesnil, overlaying different historical strata and revealing mechanisms of commemoration. That the flower instantly died shows how temporary, and indeed elusive, this public fostering of memory can be.¹²¹

¹²⁰ This duality will be one reproduced in later chapters, where I explore Derrida’s notion of the undecidability revealed in signs that stand for two apparently opposite meanings at the same time, and are thus dependent on context for interpretation.

¹²¹ He jokes that his mother and her comrades from the concentration camp (Ravensbrück) are a ‘marché captif’ for this rose seller (Maspero 1990: 145). The reference to the ‘marché’ implies the economic and political backdrop to this commemorative activity, revealing how it is embroiled in broader political processes and contexts.

In the 'caveau de 70' at Le Bourget cemetery, names of the Parisians that fought in Franco-Prussian war are listed: 'les noms ont été regravés récemment, mais le temps en avait effacé beaucoup que l'on n'a pas retrouvés et dont l'emplacement demeure vide' (Maspero 1990: 152). Re-inscription and erasure result in an empty space where the name should be, drawing attention to the absence at the heart of any attempt to memorialise the past. Even in stone, more permanent than the rose that died instantly, the commemorative space is characterised by erasure, absence, loss and emptiness. All that the stone space can do is mark the spot where inscription should be, pointing to a referent that cannot materialise.

Whilst Maspero does draw attention to Second World War commemorative practices throughout his writing, reference to the Algerian War is more oblique. It materialises in the postcolonial present when Maspero explores the spatial legacy of the colonial relationship. Ostensibly, pages 256-259 treat the specific question of October 1961, revealing the disparity between numbers of dead and highlighting the roles of the amnesties that impeded the dissemination of information for so long. However, I argue that it is through the connection between two disparate places that Maspero articulates the uniquely spatial memory of October 1961. The constant reference to events as they were unfolding in China permeates the account of the here and now with accounts of the there and now. This temporal and spatial interconnection is striking for a number of reasons. The student uprising in Tiananmen Square was a specifically spatial challenge to the oppression of the totalitarian Communist state. The protesting students were known to have been unarmed in their demonstration. Assault rifles and tanks were used by the military to

‘control’ the students. Like the Paris Commune of 1871,¹²² this spatial reclamation of the central square, with its monuments wrapped up in hegemonic political power, represented a way for the oppositional movement to articulate its political position. I do not want to suggest that Maspero conflates these narratives, indeed he could not have known at the time of writing that the Chinese state would prohibit forms of remembrance of this event, or that they would vastly downplay the number of dead. However, I do suggest that there are a number of temporal and spatial interconnections set up by Maspero, which call across to each other, and perhaps allow Maspero to articulate something about how space has functioned in all of these events. The events at Tiananmen Square in the present arguably allow him to reveal something about October 1961, and invite us to think about how we are connected to seemingly distant events. It is one crucial way in which Maspero disrupts the near/far dichotomy, exposing transnational reverberations and overlaps in histories of state violence.

In la cité de la Murette, Maspero observes the enormous and hideous monument that has been erected to mark this space with its history. Maspero muses: ‘comment faire pour que les monuments du souvenir ne soient pas comme la dernière pierre qui scelle définitivement l’indifférence et l’oubli ?’ (Maspero 1990: 188). His question, which is evoked through the reference to the materiality of the monument, shows how questions about public and collective remembering and processes of commemoration are deeply embedded into urban space. Each stone of the monument,

¹²²Kristin Ross’s analysis of the Commune as an inherently spatial event provides an important intertextual reference point for Maspero’s presentation of the *banlieue*. For Ross, the Commune operated through the dismantling and remapping of both social and physical space, the indexical sign of this being the toppling of the *vendôme* column, representing a challenge to, indeed a literal flattening of, traditional spatial hierarchies (Ross 2008, 2nd ed.: x). The communards’ demolition of the *vendôme* column is symbolic of the challenge to the old order, and crucially demonstrates how the workers, pushed to the outskirts during the redesign of Paris under Baron Haussmann, returned to reclaim the centre, the space from which they were expelled.

only functions to block memories, rather than encourage them. The idea that the monument seals in forgetting and disconnection is backed up in a more recent film called *Les Voix de la Muette/ If These Walls Could Speak* (Zanzotto 1998), where the current inhabitants vandalise the monument, revealing that Maspero's fears are true: the monument does not mean anything to people. By contrast, Maspero suggests the potential value of a paper monument, created by a college teacher and his pupils: 'c'est le monument le plus simple, le plus émouvant et le plus efficace contre l'oubli' (ibid.: 189). The students had created a book that was printed, and Maspero clearly aligns printing, editing, paper and writing with more effective ways of fostering remembrance.

In Drancy, Maspero and Frantz sit down in a square and observe a strange concrete construction, with brown plastic flowing out of it and a polished copper tap. They wonder if this is supposed to symbolise some sort of river of life (Maspero 1990: 192). Significantly, Anaïk muses that 'c'est certainement un monument...puisque ça ne sert à rien' (ibid.: 192). Anaïk's observation is revealing, suggesting that monuments never serve their function to promote memory. As signs, they are depicted here as empty signifiers, carrying no meaning, as the pair are unable to decode its message.¹²³ It recalls Robert Musil's famous words about the ultimate invisibility of monuments (1927), in which he observes that rather than attracting attention, monuments somehow only succeed in repelling it. It raises the issue of how

¹²³ In the film *Les Voix de la Muette* (Zanzotto 1998) Daniela Zanzotto foregrounds the continuity that emerges in urban space, drawing attention to those excluded and persecuted by society as echoes of the housing estate's former function reverberate in its present usage as a large immigrant housing estate. She overlays archival footage from the past onto the estate of the present, asking similar questions about the connections between those excluded from society. In one scene, the train carriage that is there as a memorial to those who died at Drancy, is shown to be vandalised by the current inhabitants. Despite the connection that is evoked between the persecuted members of society in different historical contexts, the memorial itself does not mean anything to those that live there now. If anything, it seems to represent, for them, if not a State-sponsored amnesia, then at least a symbol of authority and power. The memorial fails to foster memory or connections and empathy, and paradoxically becomes a site in which the inhabitants express their frustration.

individuals and groups engage with these symbols of social and political communication.

Continuity: Between (Holocaust) Past and (Postcolonial) Present through Suburban Space

In the following chapter, I explore Modiano's exploration of the passing of time in the city, and how his engagement with the past through urban space is characterised by an overarching ambiguity, implying an irreconcilable tension between urban space as a preserver of time and the past, and of time's erasure through spatial transformation. Such a sense of internal contradiction is also the substance of Maspero's presentation of the duality of preservation and erasure of the past in (sub-)urban space. This perceived conflict is identifiable from the outset: 'vers Blanc Mesnil une antique inscription affirme encore qu'unis les travailleurs ne laisseront pas mourir une usine dont le temps a effacé jusqu'au nom' (Maspero 1990: 10). The passing of time is presented as simultaneously leaving writing from the past intact and being an agent and subject of the erasure.

As Max Silverman has observed, it is precisely in Maspero's presentation of Drancy that the connections and overlaps between the different layers of memory are made visible (Silverman 2008: 420).¹²⁴ My analysis draws on the permeability and elasticity of borders and divisions between perceived oppositions, as the past and present will collapse into a more fluid sense of continuity that has important

¹²⁴ Other scholars have indeed noted that Drancy is pivotal to *PRE* and serves to tie together some of the narrative threads, Attack notes that this 'problematic of migration and an historicised geopolitics' connects through the presentation of Pierre Laval (Attack 2007: 447). Gantz also notes, 'Maspero astutely traces France's history of racism, anti-semitism, and xenophobia across the decades to make the connection between 1930s Drancy and its present form both visible and alarming' (Gantz 1999: 90). The question of visibility is central to Gantz's analysis, although ultimately this is framed by a critique of Maspero's lack of self-awareness (ibid.: 83) and interdisciplinarity (ibid.: 91).

implications for the compartmentalisation of metropolitan and francophone historiography. As this exploration of the site of Drancy's la cité de la Muette will demonstrate, France's complicity in the Holocaust cannot be neatly contained in the past, but rather spills over into the postcolonial present, connecting the two directly, not through the destruction or transformation of space, but rather through its continuity.

The description of the transformation of the 14th arrondissement of Paris, where Anaïk has lived since she was 18, shows the simultaneous processes of transformation and continuity. Anaïk's 'quartier du bout du monde ... aujourd'hui...n'existe plus' (Maspero 1990: 17).¹²⁵ As I demonstrate with regard to Modiano's treatment of reconstruction in the city in the next chapter, the function of a space might change, while its exterior remains the same, or the façades might change but the function is maintained, suggesting that oppositional thinking is not only reductive, but can also mask the complex nature of things.¹²⁶

The 'démolition' (ibid.: 17) of the *vieux quartier* of the 14th arrondissement is followed by an intricate series of processes that almost serve as an illustration of Eric Hazan's conception of the concentric rings of Paris's history (Hazan trans. Fernbach 2010: 7).¹²⁷ Anaïk followed the demolition street by street ('elle a vu partir les vieux, exilés vers la banlieue qui leur faisaient peur' (ibid.: 17)) and witnessed the subsequent arrival of the Portuguese and North-African labour-force. Hazan explains

¹²⁵ In the next chapter I observe the recurrence of the phrase 'mais il n'existe plus' throughout Modiano's *Dora Bruder* (for instance Modiano 1997: 12), and challenge Alan Morris's contention that a series of oppositions, such a creation and destruction, structure Modiano's fiction (Morris 2000: 64), arguing that in fact a much more complex set of processes is in operation, including substitution, modernisation and evolution.

¹²⁶ If, following Ferdinand de Saussure's structural linguistics, logocentric thought asserted that opposition is the mode in which meaning is produced, then poststructuralist criticism sought to contest the whole binary system, not only because of its intrinsic embodiment of hegemony, but also because it restricts thinking on the complexity, diversity and plurality of what is being described.

¹²⁷ Indeed, Katherine Gantz describes Maspero's project as one of 'sketching the concentric circles of Paris surrounded by suburbs' (Gantz 1999: 85).

that Paris's history can be seen in its unique spatial configurations, largely circular in form, that come from the long history (eight centuries) of constructing walls. Each time the area around the wall is quickly populated, space becomes premium and high in density, and a spillage into the 'zone' then sees the cycle begin again (Hazan 2010: 10).¹²⁸ Hazan likens this to the growth rings of a tree, invoking a clearly spatial form to visualise the movement of time, and capturing the interdependence of the spatial and the temporal. He goes on to explain how areas of Paris that are now clearly located 'within' the bounded space of the centre were once themselves caught in the annexed stratum (Hazan 2010: 10). This demonstrates the very sense of fluidity and elasticity of boundaries that is depicted in *PRE*. The next growth ring identified by Anaïk is the 'passagers en transit dans les logements voués à la disparition, les locataires précaires, squatters, familles sans toit, immigrés d'Afrique et d'Asie' (Maspero 1990: 17). The sense of continuity is further emphasised in the following long, stream-of-consciousness sentence, in which line after line pours over onto the next one, exemplifying the very spillage identified above, and adding to a sense of ongoing build up, implying the question: who will be the next to be pushed out?

Quand tout fut terminé, quand d'autres habitants, anonymes ceux-là eurent pris possession des tours neuves, à l'abri derrière les codes électroniques et les interphones, quand elle-même eut réussi à être relogée dans une HLM des années 20 de la ceinture des Maréchaux, entre boulevard extérieur et périphérique, à l'extrême limite de son quatorzième, la famille d'Anaïk s'était démesurément agrandir : il lui était poussé des ramifications dans les couloirs du métro, sur les rails rouillés de la petite ceinture, dans les cités-dortoirs, les pavillons de banlieue, dans les hôpitaux-asiles-hospices-mouroirs pour vieux du côté de Kremlin Bicêtre et de Nanterre, chez les prostituées de Pigalle, chez

¹²⁸ *Zone non aedificandi*, Latin for the law against construction outside the fortifications, is mostly referred to as the *la zone* (Hazan 2010: 7). Significantly for this analysis, the zone refers not to a concrete space, but to an ongoing movement in space over time, and it signals the opposite of its name – despite the laws against it, it consistently emerges as a space of (re-) construction to deal with an ever-growing Parisian housing need. For more on the history of the Parisian *banlieue*, see Annie Fourcault's *Paris/Banlieues: Conflits et solidarités: historiographie, anthologie, chronologie 1788-2006* (Fourcault, Bellanger & Flonneau 2007), *La Banlieue en morceaux: La crise des lotissements défectueux en France dans l'entre-deux-guerres* (2000). A key feature of her analysis is the inventory of barriers, material and administrative, which form points of rupture, threshold and margins between Paris and its ever-evolving *banlieue*.

les gitans de la porte de Vanves, sur tous les chemins qui, au cœur des villes, ne mènent apparemment rien et que les gens pressés ne prennent pas, ne connaissent pas. (ibid.: 17-18)

The endless stream of new inhabitants to the area suggests an ongoing, open-ended continuity that is picked up later in the section on Drancy, but is also teased out in the discussion of Anaïk's photographs. 'L'histoire qu'elle racontait était toujours une histoire à suivre' (ibid.: 18),¹²⁹ which Maspero compares to oral traditions of storytelling in African and Arab cultures, and crucially carries a sense of the past spilling over into the present, and even the future. The reference to oral storytelling to capture the essence of Anaïk's photographs invokes various types of representation that themselves reflect different modes for mediating and engaging with the past. The link between stories, narratives, histories and memories is rendered visible.

Furthermore, the idea that the photograph is a snapshot of a moment in time is challenged, as it is likened to the oral tradition, which has a more self-conscious relationship to its retelling, re-creation, representation and re-construction of the narrative in the present.

Maspero, like Daeninckx, reflects on the history of Paris's fortifications, which function to protect and defend the centre from outsiders. There are still a large number of military forts from *la ceinture militaire de Paris*, and some have been appropriated for new uses: 'tel celui de Châtillon où fut mis au point, en 1947, le

¹²⁹ This overarching sense of continuity, and of open-ended, ongoing research, are identified by Sheringham and Gratton (2005) as one part of the dialectical dimensions of the time of the project (Gratton & Sheringham eds. 2005: 17). As they point out, the semantics of the term 'project' imply both a completed work and something ongoing that could potentially be projected into the future (*ibid.*: 17). This is exemplified in *PRE* in the notes added after the initial writing, such as their return in October 1989 to Madame Zineb (Maspero 1990: 49) to bring photos and have the tea that Maspero had originally refused. The 1993 postface also annexes the original text, all of which recalls the endless footnotes in Georges Perec's *W ou le souvenir d'enfance* (1975), suggesting that the work of memory and representation are subject to endless amendments and additions to fill in the gaps. It is something echoed in the next chapter, where I draw attention to the differences and additions, in details such as street names, between the 1997 and 1999 publications of *Dora Bruder*.

premier réacteur nucléaire français' (Maspero 1990: 211).¹³⁰ The fortifications consist of various rings of defence constructed after various invasions. Maspero draws attention to the duality of keeping out and keeping in performed by the walls, 'efficaces contre les Prussiens' in 1870, and yet 'inefficaces, donc, dans un premier temps, contre la populace parisienne' (ibid.: 212). In the 1920s the 'fortifs' were declared useless and were mostly destroyed, but 'en quatre-vingt ans, Paris et sa banlieue en avaient subi l'empreinte' (ibid.: 213). This idea that the purpose of keeping others out continues, despite the destruction of the forts for military use, chimes in with Daeninckx's presentation of continuity through the character of Claudine and her research into the settlements in the *zone parisienne*. The relationship of the *banlieue* to the centre is depicted as one of servitude, highlighted here by the possessive adjective 'sa', and reiterated later as Maspero considers the taxes that were introduced to enter the city: 'ce n'était pas le mur de Berlin, mais quand même, à vivre ainsi séparés, les Parisiens et *les autres*, avaient de quoi, de part et d'autre de la "ligne de servitude", se sentir différents' (ibid.: 214). This division, however, that has left such an indelible mark on conceptions of Paris, is equally represented as illusory and constructed. François and Anaïk, having borrowed Karin's car, are invited to go for a drink with her, but find that she does not know anywhere to go in the *banlieue*. As Haneke shows in *Caché*, cafés and ambient meeting places seem to be the preserve of the centre; the outskirts are decidedly lacking in communal public spaces for such interaction. Karin proposes going a little further, to find a nice place, and then before they know it they are at Bastille, where she says she may as well offer them something at her flat. Maspero ends up a few doors away from his flat in Saint Paul, which means that they have broken the agreed 'rules' never to cross into the

¹³⁰ This, Maspero notes with irony, had the very sweet name of 'Zoé', reinforcing not only the disconnection between signs and their referents, but also showing again how labels can actively mask what they stand for.

centre. This invites Maspero to reflect ‘que la réalité est là, toute simple, que rien ne sépare vraiment Paris et les banlieues, et que tout le reste est littérature y compris leurs ampoules aux pieds?’ (ibid.: 165). This exposes the divisions between Paris and the outskirts as purely constructed and not in any way essential or indeed innate.

The chapter on Drancy, la cité de la Muette (ibid.: 169-192) is located at the centre of the text, perhaps highlighting the foundational importance of this section for Maspero’s political project (Jones 2004: 131) and the significance of the history of this space to present-day concerns of the *banlieue*. Maspero opens the chapter with the line ‘ce n’est pas finalement la Bérésina’ (Maspero 1990: 169). On the one hand, this sentence is a clear continuation of the end of the previous chapter, where he refers to the chaos at the gare du Nord as an interrupted train service impedes them returning to the suburbs, adding to his uneasy feeling about breaking ‘the rules’ of the trip (ibid.: 167) having ended up back in Paris. It is a turn of phrase that refers historically to Napoleon’s disastrous retreat with his *Grande Armée* from Russia in 1812, but has entered common language usage to mean disaster or catastrophe. The favoured French word for the Holocaust, *la Shoah*, which derives from the Hebrew word for disaster, is hinted at in this reference to la Bérésina. The overt statement of negation, ‘ce n’est finalement pas la Bérésina’ (ibid.: 169), frames this chapter. Furthermore, on the surface, the opening paragraph describes simply the disorder engendered by cancelled trains:

les panneaux d’affichages sont morts, les guichets déserts, et d’ailleurs il n’est pas question de billets, tout le monde se rue sur les tourniquets déconnectés, un assaut en débandade. Ils sont lancés, compressés, écrasés à l’intérieur d’un wagon sans lumière, toujours dans un épais silence, personne ne regardant personne. (ibid.: 169)

With the revelation that is to come (‘des logements sociaux aux camps de concentration’ (ibid.: 169)) already clearly marked out as part of the itinerary of the

chapter, such a description of the everyday, relatively mundane experience of catching a train is pervaded by the experience of the Holocaust. Crucially, signs that should contain information for the traveller are empty, and they are furthermore represented through natural or human imagery, in that they are described as ‘morts’.¹³¹ Such a lack of information further intensifies the sense of disorientation produced, a characteristic feature of Holocaust survivor testimony of the moment that the victims were loaded onto the trains.¹³² Maspero’s description of dead departure boards, empty ticket offices, and a crowd of people likened to cattle, ‘comme un troupeau de bisons’ (ibid.: 169), being thrown, flattened and crushed into an unlit carriage, bears more than just an echo of the deportation trains. Simone Gigliotti frames her exploration of Holocaust memory in terms of these train journeys, without which mass deportation would not have been possible, arguing that forced relocation ‘identified Jews as deportable, administered them as ‘travellers’, and transported them as freight’ (Gigliotti 2009: 2). Such an emphasis on identity, administration and transport can be clearly identified in *PRE*. Furthermore, Gigliotti directly links deportation train journeys to ‘modern state-sponsored practices of isolation, exclusion, and ethnic cleansing’ (ibid.: 2).

¹³¹ Margaret Attack identifies the unnatural naturalisation of mechanical things as a key literary device in *PRE* where the vocabulary of nature is used to describe inanimate things as rotting, dying or diseased. She identifies these recurring ‘signs of death and putrefaction’ (Attack 2007: 450) in the urban landscape as intrinsic to the poetics of the text, calling to mind an almost Surrealist juxtaposition of seemingly opposing words that jar, as in the ‘mer de camions’ or ‘fleuve motorisé’ (ibid.: 450). She argues that this potentially points to the soullessness of modernity (ibid.: 450), draws historically on the economic reality of the *banlieue* receiving waste and sewerage from Paris, and is inextricable from representations of deportation and concentration camps. She goes on to demonstrate, however, that the suburban landscape is also represented through positive tropes of freshness and freedom, particularly associated with the canal (ibid.: 460). Jean-Xavier Ridon argues that Maspero’s entire presentation of the *banlieue* exposes the political tendency to articulate its existence through the semantic field of a cancer that needs treatment, attacking the nation’s cells from the inside out, threatening its security (Ridon 2000: 25).

¹³² See, for instance, *The Train Journey: Transit, Captivity and Witnessing in the Holocaust* (Gigliotti 2009) for an exploration of the tendency in existing scholarship not to treat the space of the train as a specific site of Holocaust experience. In literature, examples that call across to Maspero’s description of the train include *L’Espèce humaine* (Antelme 1947), *Le Grand voyage* (Semprun 1963) and *Weiter leben: eine Jugend* (Klüger 1992).

It is another sign, this time in the form of a commemorative plaque that draws attention to the importance of place for anchoring memorialisation: ‘EN CE LIEU’ (Maspero 1990: 175). The plaque testifies to the fact that between 1941 and 1944 Drancy was a concentration camp where 100,000 Jewish women, men and children were interned by ‘l’occupant hitlérien’ (ibid.: 175) before being deported to extermination camps, where most died. The plaque’s information will be revealed as misleading, however, as Maspero demonstrates that the Jewish prisoners of Drancy were not, in fact, interned there by the German occupying forces but rather by French administrators, police and officials.

We are to be left in no doubt: ‘l’idée de le transformer en camp de concentration est une idée française’ (ibid.: 182). With the instalment of the barbed wire, the transformation from modernist housing project to death camp is complete. The roundups in Paris in August 1941 were ‘effectué par 2 400 inspecteurs, gradés et gardiens français de la préfecture de police’ (ibid.: 182). The repetition, ‘le camp de Drancy est un camp français’ (ibid.: 183), reinforces the disparity between the plaque’s emphasis on Hitler’s occupation of France and this alternative narrative of the past that Maspero reveals. In the English translation the past tense is used (Maspero trans. Jones 1994: 146), referring to this phase of Drancy’s history with a certainty of its past-ness, but Maspero’s French is more ambiguous. The entire paragraph explains that Drancy was in fact placed under the direct administration of the prefecture of police, in an agreement signed by Pétain (Maspero 1990: 183).¹³³

¹³³ Maspero makes it clear: ‘jusqu’en 1943, la garde du camp est assurée exclusivement par la gendarmerie française...en fait la présence allemande au camp de Drancy ne dépassera jamais cinq hommes’ (Maspero 1990: 183).

Crucially, later in the text, this same prefecture of the Paris police will be central to Maspero's description of 17th October 1961 (ibid.: 258-259).¹³⁴

So firstly, the memorial's assertion that Drancy was a Nazi death camp has clearly and systematically been contested, as responsibility has been clearly assigned within French borders – an interesting instance of the 'mechanics of inclusion' performed by the text (Jones 2009) in the context of a reconsideration of borders. Secondly, the memorial implies that death was found elsewhere, 'over there', the other side of the 'barbed wire', so symbolic in post-Holocaust literature of the division between European culture and the Holocaust.¹³⁵ In fact, Maspero shows this to be inaccurate also: 'en novembre 1941, 1 400 détenus furent victimes d'une épidémie de dysenterie. De 1941 à 1944 40 détenus moururent de faim sans quitter Drancy' (ibid.: 184).

Maspero is profoundly unambiguous in his stance:

[Drancy] est placé sous l'administration directe de la préfecture de police... Les directives générales de Dannecker sont reprises en français pour former une réglementation plus précise, rédigée et signée par l'amiral Bart, préfet de police de la Seine, et par le général Guibert, commandant la gendarmerie de la région parisienne. Jusqu'en juillet 1943, la garde du camp est assurée exclusivement par la gendarmerie française... (ibid.: 183)

The camp of Drancy, then, comes spilling into the central administrative space of the centre, which is explicitly responsible for its operation. This is not the story of complicity, of a few French police who knew of the crimes being perpetrated by the Nazis but were unable to stop them. This maps responsibility directly onto French and

¹³⁴ This draws on a more direct, historically anchored sense of continuity between the role of Maurice Papon in the deportation of Jews and the brutal and horrific police murder of Algerians on 17th October 1961.

¹³⁵ Again, Silverman's analysis of Resnais and Cayrol's concentrationary aesthetics clearly illustrates that this division is illusory, referring to the effortless, smooth and seamless tracking shot, that slides easily from outside the camp's the normal, even idyllic, countryside to the horror inside (Silverman 2006: 6). For more on the barbed wire in post-Holocaust culture, and reformulations of the extreme and the everyday see Rothberg's 'Between the Extreme and the Everyday: Ruth Klüger's Traumatic Realism' in *Extremities: Trauma, Testimony and Community* (Miller & Tougaw eds. 2002).

Parisian space.¹³⁶ Separation is no longer possible: of centre from periphery, of here from there, of France from responsibility. The whole process of official commemoration has been challenged. The marble plaque not only points to the gaps between experience and textualisation, representation and the past, but also contests their integrity. The disconnection between signs and referents finds a striking visualisation in the plaque and raises serious questions about official collective memory.¹³⁷

The transformation of Drancy into a concentration camp starts with the history of the modernist housing dream,

la construction est fondée sur la définition d'éléments standardisés...on se trouve là en présence de la réalisation la plus "moderne", tant sur le plan technique qui concrétise les vœux de productivité de la période. Un autre signe de la "modernité" peut être trouvé dans l'extrême rationalisation de l'aménagement interne des logements: leur superficie très réduite ...et le détail de leur plan ne sont pas sans rappeler les réalisations de la même époque en Allemagne, marquées par les recherches des architectes «modernes» promoteurs de la notion d'*Existenzminimum*. (ibid.: 179)

What is striking about this extract from a history of social housing is that it draws out the unlikely connections between modernism and the design of what was to become a concentration camp. Just as the Surrealists favoured the combination of unlikely entities to produce jarring juxtaposition, albeit through a more playful element of surprise, Silverman's formulation of the horror and the everyday (Silverman 2006) in post-Holocaust representation also draws on such a sense of something unexpected emerging in the everyday. Silverman argues that the shock of *Nuit et brouillard*

¹³⁶ Maspero also draws attention to poet Max Jacob's death in Drancy from pneumonia caught on the train journey (Maspero 1990: 184–185). The image of the train shows how the everyday, familiar world was part of the process of extermination. That is not to say that the train itself is inherently horrific, but rather that horror is played out within seemingly ordinary structures. Indeed, the very structures that symbolised the advance of the modern world are here depicted as caught up in the horrendous death of a French Jewish poet. Max Jacob was found by French police and died in France in a French train. The dark and horrendous story of the Holocaust is deeply embedded into the fabric of the city's infrastructure.

¹³⁷ In the following section, I return to the question of Paris and the *banlieue* as commemorative spaces where I explore the specific links between geography and history, the spatial and the temporal, space and memory.

(Resnais & Cayrol 1955) is produced in the dissolution of boundaries between unimaginable horror and everyday life. They are not separate or opposite, and the intertextual reference to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is striking: 'horror does not belong to a distant world of savagery but is at the very heart of western civilisation and our selves' (Silverman 2006: 7). The description of a normal, everyday housing unit, then, is infused with hints of the horror that is to come, as '*Existenzminimum*' takes on a horrific twist. Moreover, the shock is produced not just at the revelation of the horror at the heart of the everyday, but also in its association with modernist architecture.

In the light of Maspero's revelations about Drancy, a sense of the horror of the Holocaust in the form of traces, imprints and echoes, permeates other sections of the text. Near the start, Maspero brings into play the question of arbitrary categories and processes of categorisation, as well as reflecting on systems of signs and referentiality:

Depuis une dizaine d'années les trains du RER portent, selon leur destination, des petits noms de quatre lettres. De A à J, ils vont tous vers le nord ; de K à Z, vers le sud. Ou le contraire, je ne me rappelle jamais. Il y en a de tendres : LILY, EMMA, PAPY. De carrément farouches : KNUT. Un temps il y eut PRUT, et puis un beau jour, allez savoir ce qui s'est passé dans la tête aux cheveux arrachés des ingénieurs de la RATP (ou de la SNCF, parce qu'il ne faut pas oublier que ce RER-là est une *interconnexion*), un beau jour, pfuitt ! PRUT a disparu, volatilisé. PRUT, KNUT, LILY. Chacun de ces petits noms correspond à une *mission*. Ainsi entre Gare du Nord et Aulnay sous Bois, GUSS ne s'arrête pas aux stations où s'arrête EPIS, sauf au Bourget, et vice versa naturellement. Ou le contraire, je ne sais plus. (Maspero 1990: 9)

The letters on the trains are depicted as an arbitrary code, and the signifier has no symbolic or indexical relationship to the signified, but is rather a purely random combination of letters coming to stand for certain journeys. The arbitrariness of this categorisation is reinforced, as Maspero (twice) cannot remember which way round it goes. If the trains have been classified, and to some extent personified, it

serves as the inverse to Holocaust accounts of dehumanisation. But the categorisation remains the same: some go north, and some go south, and one day one of these trains disappears. The mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion are revealed as purely random and the combination of linguistic elements is shown to work on divisions that are not innate, but are constructed and made to *appear* natural. They do not exist outside their own allocation agreed by a given community (ie. that the letters A-J will go north).

Maspero picks up on this idea that each train name corresponds to a different mission: '*mission*: c'est probablement cela le vocabulaire de la modernité' (ibid.: 9). Here the word mission brings to mind the *mission civilisatrice* and so makes the insidious racism and violence of the colonial project the very vocabulary of modernity. Furthermore, the *mission civilisatrice* is the rhetorical device used to justify the violence of colonialism with a universalist, ethnocentric discourse that claimed it was to the benefit of the 'savages'. Maspero develops this: 'mission sacrée, mission Marchand, Fachoda, terres de mission, saints martyrs: mission missionnaires, ce sont des mots qui veulent dire plein des choses, y compris qu'on part chez les sauvages' (ibid.: 9). Here then, the colonial past pervades the postcolonial present in the form of the train, and reminds us that the French Republican civilising mission posed as an almost inclusive discourse, but that such inclusion at the cost of identity and difference (the essence of assimilationist discourse) masks intrinsic and insidious racist nationalism.

Later, in the section on Drancy, the combination of a randomly combined four-letter word printed in capital letters, recalling the names on the trains, performs a striking interconnection: 'vous êtes allé vous faire enregistrer au commissariat de police. Sur votre carte d'identité, le secrétaire a mis un tampon: JUIF' (ibid.: 176). Ethnic identity then, is presented as being based in exactly the same arbitrary code of

categorisation as the trains. If you have a stamp with the combination of letters ‘JUIF’, you are sent not merely north or south, but to your death. As a result, the experience of the Holocaust is written into the everyday experience of the train, which on its ‘mission’ to the suburbs is also infused with imprints of the colonial past. Systems of categorisation and their labelling schemes *produce* the identities, rather than merely representing a natural, innate referent, just as language produces what it refers to. The categories and mechanisms of exclusion are revealed as random and have been agreed to by those in power. When Gantz criticises Maspero and Frantz’s apparent ambivalence towards their constructed *règles*, contending that they undermine their own project, she risks missing an essential point – which is that all rules, divisions and categories are social constructions, and that ambivalence provides an important site of contestation and resistance. Rules, of course, are important structures for ideological, political and social domination, and they manifest themselves as part of the machinery of genocide. Maspero includes reproductions of cuttings from archives as proof of this:

CAMP DE DRANCY. NOTE DE SERVICE N. 77
D’ordre des AA il est formellement interdit à tout interné ou internée
d’approcher les ouvriers aryens travaillant dans le camp ou de leur adresser la
parole. (Maspero 1990: 178)

In the light of this rule prohibiting communication, and therefore dialogue forming connections between people through spoken words, the sign that Maspero sarcastically imagines in a train journey heavy with silence, absence and fatigue, takes on a grotesque echo. He describes the silence as awkward and embarrassing, almost obscene, and then jokes that one almost imagines a sign:

LA CONVERSATION SE FAIT AUX RISQUES DU VOYAGEUR.
LA SNCF DECLINE TOUTE RESPONSABILITE.
L’USAGE DE LA PAROLE
EST INTERDIT PENDANT L’ARRET DU TRAIN
ATTENTION: UN VOYAGEUR PEUT EN CACHER UN AUTRE
MON VOISIN NE PASSERA PAS PAR MOI.
NE PARLEZ PAS: CELA PEUT RENDRE FOU.

SILENCE!

(ibid.: 93)

Whilst Maspero is clearly playful in his tone, it is still striking in its resemblance to the later memo for Drancy. It is significant that words are prohibited and this is deemed outrageous. So this symbol of potential connections, the train, is not only now associated with deportation in the past, but it is also a space in the present where a rupture between subjects continues in the form of silence. If one passenger may hide another one, however, it does imply a potentially infinite trail of connections between people, should you choose to look.

After the liberation graffiti was noted down at Drancy, testifying to dates arrived, addresses, mundane personal details, and the hope of return: ‘on a effacé les graffitis. On a tout effacé’ (Maspero 1990: 185). It is not clear whether the ‘monument de souvenir’ was opened in response to such wiping away of words, writing, and expression, or indeed whether the memorial monument is part of the wiping away of traces of the past.

In apparent contrast to this, Maspero posits that ‘heureux ceux qui pensent que le temps efface tout’ (ibid.: 186). It is possible, he contends, for ‘lieux d’horreur’ to be transformed into ‘havres de paix’, and he gives the example of the island of Gorée in Sénégal. Once used to store slaves it now looks like a postcard paradise. What are the possibilities for learning about the past if not only all traces have been erased, but the surface narrates a different story? La cité de la Muette has not been destroyed and reconstructed, however, or even modernised, it ‘a simplement été rendue à sa destination première’ (ibid.: 186). This continuity is built into the very fabric of the building, since just as seamlessly as it moved from modernist housing estate to concentration camp, with the addition of barbed wire (it was already designed for

‘minimum existence’): ‘il n’a pas fallu grandchose pour repasser du camp aux HLM. Juste démonter les barbelés et les baraques’ (ibid.: 186-187).

The duality of ‘l’histoire’ in French is well established, but the story of Drancy (this ‘pièce en trois actes’ (Maspero 1990: 175)) ‘ne s’arrête pas d’un coup de baguette magique en août 1944’ (ibid.: 185): it is not solely the domain of the past. Like Daeninckx, Maspero draws attention to how quickly the perpetrators become victims, in the fluidity of the function of this space, as collaborators are interned there from 1946 (ibid.: 185). With different internees but the same guards: ‘cette continuité n’est pas une exception’ (ibid.: 185). He demonstrates with reference to the camp at Saint Maurice d’Ardoise that the flow of successive internments could not have a more unexpected and paradoxical range: ‘Espagnols, des ressortissants allemands, des juifs, des collaborateurs, des militants du FLN algérien, des membres de l’OAS, jusqu’à ce que ses baraquements soient affectés au logement des harkis’ (ibid.: 186). Like all other conceptions of categories and divisions the categorisation of ‘others’ is fluid and constantly evolving, as the history of this one space effectively illustrates.

Maspero’s invocation of Rymkiewicz, a Polish poet and author who explored the symbolic and cultural meaning, implication and heritage of a specific place in Warsaw, *Umschlagplatz*, from which Jews were sent to the camps, serves to reinforce his own cultural topographic exploration of Drancy. Rymkiewicz researched the history of this one place, highlighting the link between being in space and learning about the past. Maspero’s quotation of Rymkiewicz is further evidence that it is urban space that is the privileged site for such continuity:

est idiot celui qui considère que ce qui s’est passé dans les rues Niska, Dzika, Stawki ne recommencera plus. La liquidation a été interrompue. Mais nous qui vivons à proximité de l’*Umschlagplatz*, nous savons bien que rien n’est encore terminé. (Maspero 1990: 186)

Although it asks the opposite question to Resnais's and Cayrol's at the end of *Nuit et brouillard*, the implication is the same: who will be the next victim, perpetrator or bystander, and are there really clear divisions between these terms?

Maspero displays the same ambivalence that I identify in Modiano in the next chapter, not only to the ravages of time and the duality of preservation and erasure, but also in his relationship to urban space as a legible archive or container for traces of the past. If some spaces can be transformed into paradise, but have once been a receptacle for slaves, and some, like Drancy, seem destined for 'minimum existence' of whoever passes through, then Maspero equally interrogates the possibility of total disappearance: 'il est d'autres lieux d'horreur, au contraire, où tout a été rasé. Tout a disparu, du moins aux yeux du passant ignorant. Tout est différent. Même l'espace n'est plus la même' (Maspero 1990: 187). Like Modiano on the search for traces of Dora Bruder, in these places, such as the site of the Warsaw ghetto: 'on ne trouve, sur l'emplacement même, qu'oubli et indifférence' (ibid.: 187). One has to muster all the imagination and emotion possible to really try to *imagine* what once happened on that spot (ibid.: 187). Urban space, therefore, functions in a variety of ways in relation to traces of the past, and rather than clear-cut opposites between erasure and preservation, these are found to coexist in more complex processes of re-writing and superimposition.

Drancy provides a striking case study for Maspero's project to expose the mechanisms of exclusion, in the present, as he states: 'ici le temps n'a rien recouvert' (Maspero 1990: 187). It is rare, he concedes, that a space requires so little imaginative effort to evoke its past function. The 'vague impression d'inachèvement' (ibid.: 187) that penetrates the buildings recalls Anaïk's photos, where there is always something *à suivre*. For the present inhabitants, who are largely immigrants 'cette histoire-là n'est

certes pas leur histoire' (ibid.: 188). This is a significant aspect of a comparative approach: the two narratives of memory are not to be totally collapsed into each other or conflated, and like different geological strata they are distinct. Maspero uses the word 'écho' (ibid.: 188), which has an appropriate resonance for the space of the housing estate. It is true that in drawing out a sense of continuity, Maspero does not intend to imply that the situation for immigrants living at la cité de la Muette is comparable to the experience of being interned at a concentration camp. He does ask, however, how echoes, imprints, legacies and traces of the past, not just material ones, inform the present moment.

The sustaining image of connection in *PRE*, rather than the intersection or interstitial contact zone, is that of a tangled web, a network, or a skein, like the 'map' depicting the train stops of their journey (Maspero 1990: 6). An intersection implies the place where two entities meet, but as I have demonstrated, it is a more complex sense of overlaps that emerges in Maspero's presentation of memories in the *banlieue*. This vision of memory is full of cross-referencing, negotiation and borrowing, between the memories of the war of decolonization and the Holocaust that lace the space of the city and its *banlieue*. In Maspero's text it is the representational space of the city that opens up a network of associations that allows such connections to be teased out. This conception of memory does not take the path of equating or conflating one event with the other, however, and it is precisely sensitive to notions of difference and specificity. The text's play with genre, that is to say the textual uncertainty produced by a travel report permeated with fiction and intertextual literary references, seems to have divided and confused scholars, who have critiqued the way in which Maspero and Frantz appear to have randomly come up with a set of rules towards which they show ambivalence. But this is essentially to miss the point that rules, like language, are

shown to be arbitrary and constructed: they are shown to have been agreed upon by a given community, and to be capable of appearing natural, like myths.

The inclusion of photos implies a sense of playing with notions of representation, authenticity and objectivity, as well as bringing in the important category of the visual/visibility. The photos function to verify that they went to these places and saw these people, but like all the other forms of representation, they do not offer unfiltered, unmediated or transparent views of the 'real', and like memory, literature, and language, they (re-)create the thing they are representing anew.

What does seem clear is that the text's very form seeks to rework disciplinary and epistemological boundaries, playing with the Foucauldian idea of how rules, categories and language work to organize and structure knowledge and knowledge production. For Foucault this is of course inseparable from questions of structures of power. The central trope of interconnectivity is mirrored in a sense of cross-fertilization of form that has been the mark of British cultural studies since the 1970s and represents what we now recognize as French cultural studies *avant la lettre*. The structuring motif of bridging gaps, and connecting individuals, texts, time periods and spaces, memories and disciplines, not only points to a political project, but also implies a profoundly dialogic view of epistemological enquiry, enabling productive links between disciplinary fields, and creating a new textual space in which boundaries are more permeable.

CHAPTER THREE

ARCHIVAL CITY: THE SEARCH FOR TRACES OF *DORA BRUDER* IN MODIANO'S PARISES

In Patrick Modiano's *Dora Bruder* (1999) Parisian history and personal and collective memories are presented as layered and inextricably entwined. The space of the city provides an entry point for the author, and the reader, into an exploration of a range of concerns about the preservation and erasure of traces of the past, how these traces relate to past and present, and their legibility. The narrator's search for traces of one girl, triggered by a missing person *annonce* in an issue of *Paris-Soir* from 1941, brings into play the trope of connections explored in previous chapters: between people and subjectivities (self and other), between time-periods and between memories. I argue that Modiano uses the space of Paris as one key way of exploring such connections and of representing memory. Modiano's emphasis on writing as trace and on figures that foreground a duality of meaning invite a Derridean analysis of the author's self-reflexive position. Such a sustained emphasis on modes of communication and representation such as language, photography and film, suggests a challenge to the hierarchical relationship between 'original' and 'copy', and in so doing implies the difficulty of conceiving of an 'original'. This chapter will examine cityspace (Soja 2000) in Modiano's text to consider the various ways in which Paris is represented,¹³⁸ and how memories of the Holocaust and/or the Algerian War emerge not only *in* this space in the text, but also how they are articulated *through* it.

¹³⁸ In *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions* (2000) Soja defines cityspace as referring to the city 'as a historical-social-spatial phenomenon, but *with its intrinsic spatiality highlighted*'. Relevant to this study is the 'social production of cityspace as... a material *and* symbolic context or habitat for human life' (Soja 2000: 8).

I draw on Silverman's reformulation of the capital in his analysis of the interconnected histories of Empire and Holocaust (2008). He suggests scratching the surface in the city to reveal 'a series of intersections between personal and collective trajectories and between memory, history and imagination' (Silverman 2008: 424). I shall argue that it is precisely in the material and representational space of the city that a broader, comparative framework for analysis is opened up. It is through urban space that these narratives and memories converge and intersect. It is this that allows for a new conceptualisation of the 'dynamics of collective memory' (Rothberg 2009: 7). In this new formulation, dialogue, transfers and exchange are viewed as productive, in contrast with the emphasis of more prevalent competitive memory models.

Although many scholars have noted the unity of place and the importance of space in Modiano's novels (Gellings, 2000: 38; Howell 2010: 65; Jurt 2007: 100; Morris 1996: 28; Schulte-Norholte 2008: 101; Warehime 2000: 313; Vanderwolk 1998: 61), there remains no coherent overview of how urban space is represented and functions in Modiano's work in relation to memory. To date, analyses of Modiano's presentation of the city have primarily been framed in relation to the literary inheritance of the Surrealists (Rose 2008) and Baudelaire (Kawakami 2007; Vanderwolk 1997), the generic *clin d'œil* to crime fiction (Gorrara 2000; Warehime 1998) or the question of postmemory (Howell 2010). Alan Morris sees the capital as the Janus-face of modernity, portrayed in terms of contrasts and binary oppositions,¹³⁹ and symbolically cut down the middle by the river Seine. Although he notes Modiano's own observation that Paris is the main character in his oeuvre (Morris 1996: 28), beyond identifying the river as demarcating sites of resistance and collaboration, no significant consideration of the implications of foregrounding the

¹³⁹ Morris notes a whole series of oppositions: 'présent/passé, remémoration/oubli, construction/anéantissement, association/dissociation, modernisme/classicisme, fixité/dérive, intégration/marginalisation, approche/recul, enfance/âge...' (Morris 2000 : 11).

city is developed. I argue, in contrast, that such binary oppositions are destabilised, as Modiano creates multiple 'Parises' and emphasises boundary figures that are 'undecidable': signs that contain their opposites and thus reveal the internal contradictions inherent to language. I address representations of spatiality more broadly, as well as the specific nature of Parisian space, to explore the relationship between cultural memory and the city.

Much criticism on Modiano highlights the importance of the historical context of the Occupation years (Hueston & Nettelbeck 1986; Morris 1996; Roux 1999) and reads his oeuvre in terms of larger issues of public and collective memory. Equally, however, critics have examined the very personal nature of Modiano's writing, warning against overextending frameworks for the individual (Rachlin 1998),¹⁴⁰ or reading symbolic metaphors as straight fact. I propose a reading of Modiano that takes both approaches into consideration. It is precisely the connections between individual and collective, self and other, which are represented in Modiano's Paris.

Dora Bruder (hereafter *DB*) is shot through with intertextual references that draw on the Paris established in literature, in implicit or explicit references to Hugo's *Les Misérables*, Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, or Aragon's *Le Paysan de Paris*, amongst others. Modiano superimposes the different 'Parises' and through a sort of archaeology exposes the myths or at least the *décalage* between surface and

¹⁴⁰ Rachlin's analysis raises some questions germane to the field of memory studies more broadly, as well as specific issues about the nature of Modiano's writing, and the readings that locate it within the *Vichy Syndrome* framework. Rachlin points to two problems; firstly, the way in which Rousso draws on Freud's theories of repressed memory and the return of the repressed. Not only does Rousso apply Freudian theories of trauma and mourning, frameworks developed for the individual, to France's collective consciousness (Rachlin 1998: 124), but he also undermines the complexity of what 'constitutes an adequate integration of the past into collective consciousness' (ibid.: 125). According to Rachlin, this issue of precisely what would constitute 'working through' for Rousso, or any given community, continues to be debated amongst psychoanalysts and historians. Secondly, for Rachlin, locating Modiano within this historical context, and framing this author within one specific interpretation of the vicissitudes of French collective memory of Vichy, undermines what is essentially a highly personal and idiosyncratic body of work (ibid.: 125).

depth, between image or word and referent. In Surrealist and Baudelairean formulations of the city a space for an encounter between self and other, individual and collective, and private and public,¹⁴¹ is opened up that will also be particularly productive for engaging with Modiano's configurations of memory. Such an encounter with otherness is represented precisely through the space of the city in *DB* and will open the past out onto the present to raise complex questions about immigration and identity that should not be read as pertaining solely to the period of the Occupation.

Like Michael Sheringham's image of 'Parisian fields', which are characterised by fragmentation and multiplicity (Sheringham 1996), this chapter will not attempt to 'pin down an elusive essence', but rather will 'dispel the illusion of an imaginary unity' (Sheringham 1996: 2) of Modiano's city. The first section will explore the central motif of traces in relation to the city. The notion of traces is fundamental to the inspiration for this thesis, having its roots in that powerful cinematic image from *Nuit et brouillard* of the material traces of the horror of the Holocaust. We are warned by Cayrol, however, that you have to know how to look for them. As if to imply that these 'signs' might not be visible, or indeed legible, we are invited to look at the concrete in a new way. Modiano's representation of Paris brings together the conceptual threads of the visibility of traces or signs of a traumatic past, the issue of referentiality, and the relationships between presence and absence, past and present, us and them, and here and there, that are also explored in Resnais's film. Modiano's exploration of traces in the city invites a broader metatextual reflection on the very process of writing. His laborious and meticulous search for traces of Dora in Paris takes him back to the archive, and the banal bureaucratic structures of categorisation

¹⁴¹ For more on the city of modernity and postmodernity, see Silverman's *Facing Postmodernity: French Intellectual Thought* (1999), *Parisian Fields* (Sheringham, 1996) and *Writing the City: Paris and the Nineteenth Century* (Prendergast 1992).

he encounters in the form of official files, documents and archives, feed into a wider discussion about identity, alterity and urban space.

The next section takes the complex issue of authenticity as its focus. Modiano constantly problematises the relationship between vision and veracity, and seems to contest seeing as a method of authentication. This is achieved through various literary devices. I explore Modiano's representation of the city through the imagery of light and dark, in which he overturns expectations of the opposition of this trope through an emphasis on mirages, *trompe l'œil* and the liminal light of twilight. This section equally examines the relationship between surface and depth that is articulated through cityspace, in a re-evaluation of the creation/destruction dichotomy identified by Alan Morris (Morris 2000: 11) and an analysis of the recurrence of changing building façades.

The section on the processes of superimposition looks at the devices employed to layer people and time in the space of the city, as well as the implications of these mechanisms on Modiano's memorial project. Then, focusing on the representation of institutional spaces in the text, the next section will consider the city as symbolising the state and raising difficult questions about state complicity in racial violence. Here, I shall argue that Modiano's representation of the city does not allow for such state complicity to be neatly related to the Holocaust and safely contained in the distant past. Rather, it opens up directly onto the present and more recent past, in order to present a chilling account of other traumatic memories.

Finally, a consideration of the transit camps at Drancy and Tourelles calls into question the notion of the 'barbed wire' (to use Rothberg's term (2002) in his analysis of Ruth Klüger's Holocaust memoir) that functions to separate us from the horror of the Holocaust. Just as in *Nuit et brouillard*, Modiano's city breaks this divisive device

down. Drancy and Tourelles cannot be geographically located as ‘over there’, but are part of Paris. This spatial imagery of the boundaries of *l’univers concentrationnaire* (Rousset 1945) is interrogated and reconfigured in *DB*, and becomes a crucial element of Modiano’s political literary project.

Traces: The city as an Archive

Through the image of the archive as a physical place where records of the past are stored, the question of how we interpret the traces left by those lost to trauma (the ‘drowned’ (Levi 1989)) emerges as a central one. Questions about leaving a mark, and the bureaucratic structures that can lead to concealing such traces and marks, are also addressed through the act of retracing Dora’s (possible) steps in the city. The way in which the author-narrator explores the city in this search for traces presents the topography of Paris as itself a sort of archive: as a physical place where traces of the past can be found, if we look just under the surface of what is there now. Just like the gaps in the archives that Modiano trawls, many of the Paris streets and places he tries to find have been pulled down and do not exist anymore, or have undergone extensive reconstruction and rebuilding.

A sense of place is crucial to any notion of the archive, as Derrida’s exploration of the etymology of the word, in *Mal d’archive: une impression freudienne* (Derrida 1995), makes clear: its Greek root means ‘domicile’ or ‘address of the magistrates’, and refers to the place where public documents are filed (Derrida 1995: 13). Woven into this concept is at once a physical space and the processes of categorisation and filing. These ideas are inextricable from notions of public and private and moreover from power and authority. The archive, then, is not a neutral

space; it implies both the location of the records, and also their ‘consignation’, that is to say the gathering and organisation of signs (ibid.: 14). For both Derrida and Foucault, this process, like discourse, constructs its very objects and field of knowledge. The archive, then, operates at the nexus of time, space and power. I argue that like Derrida, Modiano also probes the limits of the archive, asking where it ends and where its contents begin, suggesting as he does so an essential fluidity between the inside and outside, between the archive and what it houses.

Like the image of the scratch marks from *Nuit et brouillard*, Modiano’s traces are not always visible, or rather they are not always *seen*. Furthermore, visibility itself does not guarantee legibility. Modiano invites us to consider the very process of interpreting and decoding traces – traces as material remains of the past, signs or marks that stand in for the past, as well as writing as a system of signs and traces. Referentiality and representation are addressed through a variety of approaches in the text. This section will address the importance of traces for Modiano’s broader metatextual reflection on the process of writing, and of writing history specifically. I consider the ways in which, through devices that draw attention to the referential nature of writing, history, representation and memory, traces in the city are used to explore notions of evidence, proof, authenticity and truth. Traces function in various ways in *DB*. They can be physical traces in the form of official documents, archives and files, which are constantly shown to be incomplete, full of gaps or closely guarded and impossible to access (Modiano 1999: 16; 65; 76; 81; 83; 88; 89). These records and forms pertaining to the Bruder family present the utterly mundane and banal nature of the organisation of society, based upon categories under which people are filed, and implicate Paris in striking ways.

Modiano draws attention to the very forms of categorisation upon which the Holocaust was based. The way in which this information is relayed is precise and yet detached, informing us that Jews under the letter B had to report to the police on 4th October. However, that day Ernest did not declare his daughter (ibid.: 47). The roundups in Paris are portrayed as part of a bureaucratic filing system, even alphabetised for efficacy. The random and arbitrary nature of the system for categorising people is exposed, 'la lettre B tombait le 4 octobre' (ibid.: 47). Modiano uses irony to reveal subtly how the horrific consequences of such categorisation are sewn into the banal fabric of everyday life in the city: 'afin d'éviter une trop longue attente, les intéressés étaient priés de se rendre, selon la première lettre de leur nom, aux dates indiquées au tables ci-dessous...' (ibid.: 47). The absurdity of this world is highlighted: this process is for your benefit, to avoid long queues in this first step towards extermination. Crucially, it is through a document with a table displaying dates and letters of names that the route to an extermination camp takes place. Furthermore, Modiano links Parisian bureaucracy to the systems of categorisation that will lead to the death camps. It is through specific spaces in Paris that the first step of the death machine is put into action, 'ce jour-là, Ernest Bruder est allé remplir le formulaire au commissariat du quartier Clignancourt' (ibid.: 47). The emphasis on the Clignancourt area of Paris not only reinforces the author-narrator's own connection with the Bruders but also breaks down the idea that the death camps were something that happened 'over there', beyond Paris. Rather, the very categories of inside and outside blur: just as Silverman's horror is revealed as part of the everyday, here it is the very fabric of Paris that is implicated in this search for Dora's route to the death camps.

Systems of classification and categorisation recur throughout *DB*. Some are harmless: at Dora's school for the 'jeunes filles de familles déshéritées de la capitale', for instance, the girls are divided 'en deux catégories' (ibid.: 38). However, this follows Modiano's speculation about the 'camps de rassemblements' (ibid.: 37) in which Dora's parents might have found themselves, and why they enrolled her at the *pensionnat*. Here, his deliberation turns on two elements. Firstly, the systems of classifying and categorising people are again exposed: 'On vous classe dans des catégories bizarres dont vous n'avez jamais entendu parler et qui ne correspondent pas à ce que vous êtes réellement. On vous convoque. On vous interne. Vous aimeriez bien comprendre pourquoi' (ibid.: 37-38). Secondly, the *camps de rassemblement* he mentions are located in Paris, in Colombes (in the *banlieue*) for the men, and in the *Vélodrome d'hiver* for the women. Modiano thus reveals the way in which Paris was embroiled in the creation of these camps, and furthermore questions the legitimacy of such classifications. He is explicit: there is no correlation between the categories assigned to you, 'et ce que vous êtes réellement'. He thus reveals the disconnections between labels and referents, and challenges the system of classification so tightly bound up in notions of the archive.

As seen in the previous chapter, Maspero's reflection on the state fabrication of Jewish identity, which he explores in his ironic comments on the arbitrariness of the RER train names, pivots around ideas about proof. In line with Deleuze's formulation that identity is the effect of difference, Maspero muses about being and not being,¹⁴² and possible ways of ascertaining proof of this. Modiano likewise wonders of the Bruders, 'Au fond, qu'est-ce qu'ils entendaient exactement par le mot

¹⁴² Maspero uses a story about an elephant and a mouse to explore notions of being and not being in order to show how we might prove that we are not something (Maspero 1990: 175). His subsequent reflection on the impossibility of proving that you are *not* Jewish is thrown into stark relief by this story of the mouse and the elephant, highlighting the absurdity of the premise for ethnic cleansing.

“juif”?) (Modiano 1999: 48). He speculates that for Dora in fact, the category designated by this word ‘ne voulait rien dire’ (ibid.: 48).¹⁴³ For Dora, the word does not correspond with any part of her identity:¹⁴⁴ it is just a word. For Ernest, ‘il avait l’habitude que l’administration le classe dans différentes catégories, et il l’acceptait, sans discuter’ (ibid.: 48). This system of classification, then, was already embedded into French administrative practices, rather than being something peculiar to the Nazi genocide. Ernest’s identity is depicted as being generated by administrative forms and categories,¹⁴⁵ rather than being something essential or intrinsic. Just as ideology works by becoming naturalised and therefore going unchallenged, Modiano imagines that Ernest accepts the categories that define him without thinking to challenge them.

Traces are also shown to be something less tangible and containable, but rather are related to the realms of the sensual and spiritual. They are not necessarily ghosts, but almost spectral presences. Whether a symbol of the persistence of the past in the present, in the sense of Rousso’s ‘deuil inachevé’ (1987), or Derrida’s use of spectres as another way of referring to trace, *différance* and the supplement, Modiano’s conception of traces negotiates a space between past and present, or presence and absence, and contests the illusion that they are indeed separate and opposed. Derrida’s notion of *hantologie*, in *Spectres de Marx* (1993), plays with the

¹⁴³ This rupture between words and their meaning is recurrent throughout and is so tightly bound up with Modiano’s reflection on identity: ‘pour elle le mot « juif » ne devait pas signifier grand-chose’ (Modiano 1999: 58).

¹⁴⁴ In *PRE*, Maspero meets Akim from La Courneuve who says that the label *beur* does not mean anything to him, and that he prefers the word *arabe*, ‘Mais beur ce mot-là, il est arrivé un jour, ce n’est pas moi, ce n’est pas nous qui l’avons inventé, on peut m’en affubler mais pour moi c’est une étiquette qui ne signifie rien’ (Maspero 1990: 203).

¹⁴⁵ This administrative dimension to the *rafles* is highlighted elsewhere: ‘sur une petite fiche parmi des milliers d’autres établies une vingtaine d’années plus tard pour organiser les rafles de l’Occupation’ (Modiano 1999: 23). Here, the forms themselves are directly linked to the round-ups of Parisian residents. Later, Modiano notes how despite Ernest’s injuries obtained for fighting for the French, ‘on ne lui a pas donné la nationalité française. La seule fois où j’ai vu mentionner sa blessure, c’était bien dans l’une des fiches de police qui servaient aux rafles de l’Occupation’ (ibid.: 25). Modiano draws out an explicit connection between these official bureaucratic forms and systems of violence. Modiano’s focus on Ernest’s wound here also reinforces the importance of the trace, as a physical mark on the body of past suffering.

phonetic similarity with *ontology*, but ‘replac[es] the priority of being and presence with the figure of the ghost as that which is neither present nor absent, neither dead nor alive’ (Davis 2005: 373). It is this space between; this being neither and yet strangely both at the same time that characterises Modiano’s sense of ghostliness. It is the lingering of something left over, or the trace of something absent.

One of the most significant ways in which Modiano explores traces is through space and in specific places. After expressing difficulty at finding official records relating to the Bruder family or any relatives that could give any sort of oral testimony, he observes that ‘ce sont des personnes qui laissent peu de traces derrière elles. Presque des anonymes...ce que l’on sait d’elles se résume souvent à un simple adresse’ (Modiano 1997 : 28). To be anonymous is to be without a name. If names, like words in language, stand for the person, it follows that to be anonymous means that you are a referent without a sign: it means that there is no way to describe you. You do not exist in language, one of the governing structures of society. As Modiano points out, the Bruders do not exist through their names, or signs, but rather what we know of them can be encapsulated in a single address. Space functions as a signifier or marker of identity, then. The spaces in which they have been, or might once have passed through, stand in for an absent sign or signifier. They function through their very lack: they make up for something missing. An address refers to space in a similar way that a name relates to its referent, it is a random and arbitrary relationship: a collection of numbers and letters to designate, categorise, or organise, space.

What will later become a core thread in the text is here only a whisper, but nonetheless a significant question presents itself about the novel’s exploration of Ernest’s roots: is it because they are not French that there are so few official traces? In

the absence of records, Modiano looks to spaces where they might once have been,¹⁴⁶ ‘et cette précision topographique contraste avec ce que l’on ignore pour toujours de leur vie – ce blanc, ce bloc d’inconnu et de silence’ (Modiano 1999: 28).¹⁴⁷ The contrast is one that Modiano reproduces throughout the text, between the precision of topographical references in the city and the ultimate lack of any records or details of their lives. This encapsulates part of Modiano’s research process that is as important as more traditional historical research methods of consulting archives to authenticate facts and paint a picture of what once was. In contrast to the fleeting quality of time and people Modiano interrogates the capacities of space to hold perhaps some trace of the people that have passed through it, ‘on se dit qu’au moins les lieux gardent une légère empreinte des personnes qui les ont habités’ (ibid.: 28-29). In a sense, this speculation about space launches the whole urban investigation. This contrasts greatly with the rigour of historical research; in his role as detective Modiano must enter into the spaces,¹⁴⁸ and search for ‘indices’ (ibid.: 11). In this way the city, as well as the archives themselves, is presented as a receptacle for traces of the past.

This ‘précision topographique’, however, is somewhat illusory. Alan Morris (2006) and Jennifer Howell (2010) have shown that there are significant alterations, adjustments and differences between the 1997 Gallimard Blanche and the 1999 Gallimard Folio editions of *DB*, and furthermore additions and revisions to Joanna

¹⁴⁶ In the absence of ‘concrete facts’, Modiano is frequently ‘réduit aux suppositions’ (p.42). This imaginative engagement is the very substance of the text.

¹⁴⁷ Dora and her family often lived in hotel rooms, it emerges (Modiano 1999: 27), and Morris notes that *lieux de passage* are a recurrent type of space in Modiano’s wider oeuvre, such as hotels, cafés, and train stations. This is striking in terms of Marc Augé’s concept of *non-lieux* (1992), which he identifies as defining features of supermodernity. *Non-lieux* are ultimately places of transience that lack memory, history or a sense of belonging. The idea of a place transit takes on a grotesque irony in the light of the French transit camps, Drancy and Tourelles.

¹⁴⁸ Existing scholarship on Modiano’s intertextual relationship with French crime fiction (see for instance, Gorrara, 2000; Warehime, 1998) stresses the ways in which this genre allows Modiano to explore notions of guilt, ‘lost’ or silenced narratives, false clues, concealment of evidence and a multilayered narrative that values equally the story of the crime and the story of the investigation. They also emphasise the ultimate departure from such generic constraints, as Modiano crucially leaves many mysteries unsolved, and resists narrative closure that would imply the restoration of social order.

Kilmartin's 1999 English translation. Both critics point out that the 1999 Gallimard Folio edition contains certain revisions to specific details, such as proper names and street names. For Morris, such alterations are 'sub-editorial in nature: correction of typos, inconsistencies' (Morris 2006: 270). However, as Howell points out, such toponymic changes and alterations to proper names are vital to Modiano's project. Morris suggests that with these minor details Modiano is simply revising inaccuracies (Morris 2006: 270); part of his 'implicit drive for greater precision' (ibid.: 271). He notes that other additions constitute 'diegetic bolstering' (ibid.: 272) and offer new information where before there were gaps, somehow 'completing' the narrative. Howell's observations about the translation, however, problematise Morris's view, since despite its 1999 publication, the translator takes toponymic details from a combination of the 1997 and 1999 editions (Howell 2010: 61). Furthermore, Howell points out that the translation includes extra-textual material, such as maps and photographs, not included in either of the French editions (Howell 2010: 62). I suggest that not only do these revisions show the impossibility of closure, and point to a radical openness that I will explore as a key characteristic of Haneke's film in the final chapter, but furthermore they engage with semiotic questions about signs and their relationship with their referent that are strikingly similar to the literary devices used by Maspero, explored in the previous chapter.

Rather than a 'drive for greater precision' then, as Morris suggests, it seems that Modiano is playing with the very notion of pure objectivity. He draws attention to the modes of representation and communication that thwart such objectivity and structure our perceptions of the world. Furthermore, it is significant that this takes place through urban space. Not only do the street names 'rue Liégeard' and 'avenue de Picpus' become 'avenue Liégeard' and 'boulevard de Picpus', but moreover

Modiano corrects (or at least seems to correct) the name of the architect of 39 boulevard Ornano from a plaque with ‘Pierrefeu’ to ‘Richefeu’. The slippery nature of signification is revealed. Words are in a random relationship to the space they represent and street names are no more than names assigned to the space. Knowledge of ‘the truth’ is impossible: the toponymic changes show that neither of the names reveals anything intrinsic about the space itself. Furthermore, Modiano’s texts are themselves continually under reconstruction, just like the spaces he describes. They refer and relate to each other, and are in this way radically open and unfixed. The author makes every effort to unfix the text, freeing it up and opening it out, casting doubt on the ostensibly ‘objective’ dimension to this generic mix.

His search for some sort of sense of the family’s existence in space is thwarted, however: ‘j’ai ressenti une impression d’absence, et de vide, chaque fois que je me suis trouvé dans un endroit où ils avaient vécu’ (Modiano 1999: 29).¹⁴⁹ Reflecting on the material nature of an imprint, mark or trace, Modiano considers the meaning of the word ‘empreinte: marque en creux ou en relief. Pour Ernest et Cécile Bruder, et pour Dora, je dirai: en creux’ (ibid.: 29). In opposition to something being convex or in relief, ‘en creux’ means hollowed out, denoting that something has been removed. Modiano underlines that although both senses of ‘empreinte’ mean ‘imprint’, ‘en creux’ carries with it a sense of hollowness, emptiness and lack characterising the type of imprints left by the Bruders. A defining feature of *DB* is that rather than constructing a clear-cut dichotomous relationship between ‘relief’ and ‘en creux’, Modiano finds an image that allows for both to co-exist; as in the ‘empreinte’. It recalls Derrida’s fondness for words that are paradoxical, in that they

¹⁴⁹ Andreas Huyssen observes, in his analysis of Berlin as a historical palimpsestic text, that it ‘is marked as much, if not more, by absences as by the visible presence of its past’ (Huyssen 2003: 52). For Huyssen, Berlin reads like a ‘narrative of voids’ (ibid.: 53), suggesting that the voids themselves constitute a valuable site for analysis.

contain both one meaning and its (apparent) opposite. Drawing on Mallarmé's observation about the double meaning of 'hymen' (in *Mimique*), as both separation and fusion, Derrida is likewise struck by how this word simultaneously signifies the virginal membrane and the consummation of a marriage:

L'hymen, consommation des différents, continuité et confusion du coït, mariage, se confond avec ce dont il paraît dériver : l'hymen comme écran protecteur, écrin de la virginité, paroi vaginale, voile très fin et invisible... (Derrida 1972: 241)

It captures this ghostly sense of the inbetween: 'aussi bien n'est-il ni l'un ni l'autre puisqu'il ne se passe rien et que l'hymen reste suspendu entre, hors et dans l'autre' (ibid.: 245). Derrida is equally drawn to Plato's story of the *pharmakon*; the Greek word for drug, signifying at once remedy and poison. Here, meaning is ultimately open and undecidable. Likewise, Modiano seeks to challenge such binaries; between presence and absence, inside and outside, demonstrating that one is already part of the other. His reflection on the word 'empreinte' suggests just such a multiple and ongoing play of signifiers that are at work in this sign, and reveal an essential ambivalence that depends on context for its meaning. For Derrida, *pharmakon* and spectres are both traces, that is to say they expose inner contradictions inherent to language but that can be masked by language itself.

The word 'trace'¹⁵⁰ itself features numerous times in the text in different contexts. The feeling of being 'sur la trace de Dora Bruder et de ses parents' (Modiano 1999: 10-11) structures the text to the extent that even before he knew of Dora and her parents, back in 1965 when he frequented the Clignancourt area, with hindsight he thinks he might have already been searching for them, 'en filigrane'

¹⁵⁰ The verb 'décalquer' is also identifiable (Modiano 1999: 51), giving the sense of the action of tracing a shadow or outline of someone. Tracing has a broader sense than just writing, implying a visual dimension, and is another example of Modiano's engagement with the question of 'trace'. Shadows equally recur to describe people and Paris, and again fit into the Derridean notion of trace as a residue or the sign left by the absent thing.

(ibid.: 11). The image of a watermark here brings into focus Modiano's central preoccupation with the writing process itself, in its raw form, as a process of leaving marks on a page. The reference to the watermark is loaded with ideas about (in)visibility.¹⁵¹ It is only possible to see it when it is viewed by transmitted light: otherwise, it remains hidden to the naked eye. However, the watermark here represents a sort of 'prememory' (Gratton 2006) of the Bruders' existence, a trace *before* a trace, as it were. It implies that the trace is in an ongoing chain in which identifying a solid starting point becomes impossible. Later in the text, referring to a showery June in 1971 when he was walking in the area of the Saint-Cœur-de-Marie, which is also near where Dora was born, in la rue Santerre (Modiano 1999: 48-49), the narrator recalls 'sans savoir pourquoi, j'avais l'impression de marcher sur les traces de quelqu'un' (ibid.: 49).

Like many second-generation or 'postmemorial' texts, *DB* is structured around absence, gaps, and voids. Pointing to the inherently creative nature of all memory, and highlighting that in 'postmemory' there is no direct connection to the past,¹⁵² these traces form the basis for imaginative engagement. As such, they are connections to the past but they do not mediate it directly. They embody an absence and a presence simultaneously, as they are marks and signs of loss and annihilation. Through the

¹⁵¹The use of watermarks to control counterfeiting was introduced to France under the Vichy government, and so could be seen as embodying the concepts of both subversion and control.

¹⁵²In Marianne Hirsch's theorisation of 'postmemory', originally a concept related to the children of Holocaust survivors who have been shaped by a past that they cannot access, in *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Hirsch 1997), the author explores the special role of family photos in mediating the past for the second-generation, positing them as the 'building blocks of postmemory' (Hirsch, 1997: 22), and it is worth recalling the particular way in which the author/narrator engages with photos in *DB*. Postmemory is 'not mediated through recollection but through projection, investment, and creation' (Hirsch 1999: 8), and is thus about the ways in which traumas have been inherited by the following generation.

process of writing and leaving marks on the page, Modiano creates his own traces for the victims who disappeared without a trace into the night and fog.¹⁵³

The process of writing fiction provides the antithesis to the lack of material traces in the city: 'il me semblait que je ne parviendrais jamais à retrouver la moindre trace de Dora Bruder. Alors le manque que j'éprouvais m'a poussé à l'écriture d'un roman' (ibid.: 53). In *Voyage de nocés*, we are told, Modiano continued to commit himself to the search for Dora, the girl who has haunted him since 1988 (and even before). The importance of space is foregrounded here, as he hopes the novel will help him to elucidate perhaps 'un lieu où elle était passée (ibid.: 53). In fact, he postulates, 'il m'a fallu écrire deux cents pages pour capter, inconsciemment, un vague reflet de la réalité' (ibid.: 54). Modiano is referring to the coincidence whereby, without knowing it, in a passage of *Voyage de nocés* where Ingrid and Rigaud step off the train onto a snow-covered platform near the boulevard Soult, he may perhaps have come close to Dora in space and time for the only time (ibid.: 54).

Derrida's reflection on Plato's *pharmakon* not only highlights the way in which some words are open, paradoxical and undecidable in their 'ambiguïté de sens' (Derrida 1976: 109) but moreover his analysis of the narrative of Phaedrus pivots around questions pertinent to Modiano's representation of traces: questions about memory, writing and truth.¹⁵⁴ Derrida uses Plato's myth to expose logocentrism and

¹⁵³ Through the motif of crossing paths with somebody and a fascination with chance encounters, *le hasard*, Modiano remembers a small detail from his father's account of being put in 'le panier à salade' (Modiano 1999: 62) and taken to the police station. He reflects on the similarities between his father and Dora, and their different destinies. The police destroyed their files, we are told (ibid.: 65), and in the absence of such official records and traces, Modiano suggests the role of the writer as a provider of another form of traces: 'si je n'étais pas là pour l'écrire, il n'y aurait plus aucune trace de la présence de cette inconnue et de celle mon père dans la panier à salade en février 1942, sur les Champs-Élysées' (ibid.: 65). For Modiano, the writer makes marks and leaves traces for those who cannot. These traces function to signify both an existence and a double loss. That is to say, knowledge that the girl existed at all, Dora's death and the lack of traces as evidence and proof, such as the police files.

¹⁵⁴ In Derrida's analysis of Plato's myth on the origin of writing, Theuth, the God of writing, presents writing as a *pharmakon*, rendered by the translator as remedy, to help people with the problem of memory (Derrida 1976: 103). The translator has in effect chosen the meaning of this undecidable word

reveal how writing is represented as inferior to speech. Crucially, this relationship pivots around the idea that speech represents unmediated truth, whereas writing represents a mediated and impure version of speech: ‘l’écriture peut seulement les mimer’ (ibid.: 122). Derrida shows that if writing is supplementary to truth, then so too is speech, as both are mediated through language.

I suggest that Modiano’s representation of writing in relation to memory is likewise shot through with ambiguity and ambivalence. For Modiano, too, writing functions as something to stand in for memory, when all traces and records of presence have been destroyed. Modiano writes in part to leave a mark for these ‘ombres’, these ‘personnes – mortes ou vivantes – que l’on range dans la catégorie des “individus non identifiés”’ (Modiano 1997: 65). Writing functions as a trace that there was once a presence, of Dora, his father (and the girl in the *panier à salade*). In this way it might be seen to help the process of memory, of recording existence. Yet simultaneously, Modiano draws attention to the deficit, lack and inadequacy of writing to capture even a ‘vague reflet de la réalité’. Modiano also shows that it is not just memory that is constructed and mediated through language but that so too are all articulations of experience.

Authenticity: Visibility, Twilight and Reconstruction in the City

As I have shown above, the question of authenticity is a slippery and yet fundamental one in *DB*, and it permeates Modiano’s presentation of memory in the city. This section will examine the complex interplay between surface and depth that Modiano constructs in (and through) the city. I shall focus on the specific ways in

(ibid.: 109). In response, the King contends that writing will in fact function as a poison to memory – that people will over-rely on these marks and that it will efface memory, ‘l’efficace du *pharmakon* puisse s’inverser: aggraver le mal au lieu d’y remédier’ (ibid.: 110).

which the imagery of light and dark is used to represent Paris in the text. This analysis will move beyond the perceived binary oppositions that pervade Modiano's œuvre (Morris 2000) to consider his evocation of the liminal light of twilight as revelatory of his attitude towards such oppositions. At the heart of this analysis of Paris lies Modiano's preoccupation with visibility, in which traditional expectations of the light and dark motif are subverted, making way for *trompe l'œil* and visual tricks. This emphasis on artificial light further destabilises any binary relationship. Just as I argued earlier that the visibility of traces does not guarantee their legibility, here I suggest that seeing does not function in such a clear-cut way, and that this emerges particularly in relation to the tropes of obscurity and clarity. In the final chapter on Haneke's film *Caché* (2005), I will explore the implications of the idea that what is hidden is in fact visible, but not seen, and how concealment can function as a site of revelation. Such a complication of these categories will also underpin my analysis of Modiano's Paris, suggesting a more complex engagement with visibility than binary models allow for.

The recurrent motif of changing building façades will develop my earlier semiotic analysis of toponymic change, and will once again establish the complexity of Modiano's presentation of the relationship between time and space. Rather than a straightforward depiction of a 'création/destruction' dichotomy, one of a series of binary oppositions that Morris identifies (Morris 2000: 11), the figure of reconstruction has different implications. The final part of this section will 'read Modiano's city'¹⁵⁵ as a site that challenges the conceptual compartmentalisation of memories, opening up a broader framework for analysis.

¹⁵⁵ In her introduction to *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City and Modernity* (2000) Deborah Longworth notes how in literary, cultural and linguistic approaches to urban landscapes the image of 'the city as a text to be read, the text as a city to be traversed' (Parsons 2000: 1) are well established formulations.

Modiano uses the imagery of light to signal coming into knowledge, memory or sight of traces in the city: ‘Il faut longtemps pour que resurgisse à la lumière ce qui a été effacé’ (Modiano 1999: 13). The movements into the light or dark in the city draw on the tropes of shedding light onto a crime that has been covered up and ‘kept in the dark’.¹⁵⁶ The processes of hiding and revealing are simultaneously set in motion, creating a sort of *va-et-vient* effect of coming into light and knowledge, only to retreat back into obscurity again. The narrator’s search for traces of Dora is meticulous and yet constantly full of gaps, holes and ‘blanc[s]’ (Modiano 1999: 28; 89). This is mirrored as the narrator physically enters parts of Paris that are ‘ténébreux’ (ibid.: 61).¹⁵⁷

One form of trace that has a particular resonance for Modiano is the photograph. Warehime explains how photos function in a variety of ways in his work, serving as ‘evidence, found objects, clues, souvenirs, symbols, metaphors and narrative shifters’ (Warehime 2006: 311). They signify a loss – a person who has ‘disappeared’ and a time gone by, and perform the device of *surimpression*. But they also allow Modiano to ‘conjugate space and time’ (ibid.: 312), and represent, however elusively, the past recaptured and preserved in a state of permanence.

The etymology of the word ‘photography’ is from the Greek word *photo* meaning light and *graphos* meaning writing. Modiano uses words to describe images

¹⁵⁶ This image is also used by Henri Alleg in his preface to *Algeria and France, 1800-2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia*, as he writes of a process of ‘shedding light’, to ‘elucidate certain hitherto unpublished aspects of a past, long deformed and obscured by colonial historiography’ (Alleg in Lorcin ed. 2006: ix), making the symbolic link between obscurity and amnesia. Here, Alleg links the very process of historiography itself to such amnesia and obscurity.

¹⁵⁷ Paris is presented as dark, shadowy or black on a number of occasions (Modiano 1999: 44; 50; 55). When he does manage to track down someone who also went to the Catholic boarding school, just months after Dora escaped, she remembers that ‘tout était noir dans ce pensionnat: les murs, les classes, l’infirmierie – sauf les coiffes blanches des sœurs’ (ibid.: 44). This image of darkness, presumably because of the blackout at the time, dominates Modiano’s imagination about the school from this point (ibid.: 50). But the darkness of the Saint-Cœur-de-Marie plays a double role: as Modiano notes, it is precisely to keep Dora hidden, and out of sight, that she was sent there in the first place (ibid.: 44).

in some photos he finds of the Bruders (Modiano 1999: 31-33).¹⁵⁸ These descriptions necessarily traverse the spatial, so that the reader can visualise where and how they are standing (ibid.: 32; 33). In contrast to words, which are symbolic signs in a random relationship to their referent, photos are in an indexical relationship with the referent, they point to the thing they represent. Modiano's textual description of the photos thus doubly refracts the referent: once through images, then again through words. The textual descriptions of the photos are another example of a trace of a trace, pointing to the ongoing Derridean process of deferral that I have located in Modiano's writing. The question of the archive, for Derrida, shows that there are no originary documents, but rather only traces left by traces are possible.

In his consideration of the 1941 film *Premier Rendez-Vous*, the role of cinema, and the impossibility of film to capture a vague reflection of reality, Modiano describes a sense of unease (ibid.: 80). The processes of effacement and erasure taking place on the cinema screen are just another trick of the light:

Un voile semblait recouvrir toutes les images, accentuait les contrastes et parfois les effaçait, dans une blancheur boréale. La lumière était à la fois trop claire et trop sombre, étouffant les voix ou rendant leur timbre plus fort et plus inquiétant. (ibid.: 80)

These material referents and signs of the past, often considered signifiers of authentication, verification and evidence, can themselves be subject to processes that changes their very substance, so that they look like something else. In the light of the subtextual thread about the process of writing and recording the past, these chemical processes of bleaching and erasure serve as symbols of a similar process that occurs in the archives. Modiano problematises the idea that 'seeing is believing', reminding us that even if we can't see something, this does not mean it is not there.

¹⁵⁸ Warehime (2006) and Howell (2010) both frame this in terms of ekphrasis in their analyses.

Significantly, the light from the cinema screen was both too bright and too dark at the same time. The simultaneity of this image is striking, and suggests the possibility of a conceptual space in which two seemingly opposite processes can both be contained. This space necessarily presents them not as mutually exclusive, where one screens out any possibility for the other, but rather as in coexistence. Modiano speculates, hopefully, that in some sort of chemical process, between the light, the film and the spectators, if Dora had watched the film, her presence might have impregnated the celluloid.

One of the fragments of the narrator's memory that superimposes itself onto the imagined story of Dora's last months takes us back to 1968. It comes in the context of research into details of Ernest Bruder's life, family tree, transnational displacements and service as '2e classe, légionnaire français' (ibid.: 23). The narrator retraces the steps of Ernest and Cécile Bruder, visiting the hotel rooms where they might once have stayed when Dora was a baby, to see if places hold onto even the lightest imprint of those who once lived there (ibid.: 28). The superimposition is striking because of the strange sense of intuition that the narrator refers to: 'Je ne savais encore rien de Dora Bruder et de ses parents. Je me souviens que j'éprouvais un drôle de sensation...comme si j'avais pénétré dans la zone la plus obscure de Paris' (ibid.: 29). Johnnie Gratton uses the term 'paramemory' (Gratton 2005) to move beyond the concept of postmemory and capture this less tangible sensation of experiencing someone else's memory.¹⁵⁹ 'Paramemory' draws on Modiano's idea of having 'une préhistoire', which he explores in *Livret de famille* (Modiano 1976). It refers to those surreal moments of intuition or spaces haunted by ghosts, and is, therefore, laced with the subtext of paranormal activity (Gratton 2005: 45). As

¹⁵⁹ 'Postmemory' has been widely used by scholars to read *DB*, see for instance, Howell (2010) and Rose (2008).

Gratton points out, this literary technique demonstrates Modiano's innovative and creative authorial approach to accessing the past (ibid.: 43).¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, it functions to contest tightly policed boundaries between separate entities, as divisions between self and other, Dora's memory and his memory, are shown to be more fluid. This spilling-out of different people's experiences is not necessarily something that can be tangibly proven in the outside world. It is something opened up to Modiano through the literary imagination rather than by historical research. Such a transgression of boundaries, triggered by spaces in the city, implies a literary conception of subjectivities as porous, suggesting an ethical dimension to the text that recalls Maspero's ethical responsibility to the other. Moreover, it feeds into the processes of opening up and connecting that underpin my comparative approach. Equally it implies something about this generically uncertain text, that the historical narrative at stake cannot be contained in either historical investigation or literary narration.

Modiano seems to suggest that new formats are required that are neither objective nor subjective, and yet are both at the same time. This is one vital way in which I suggest that he contests any reliance on hard facts and evidence for authentication – as if tangible, physical evidence is not enough, and some other type of engagement is needed for something less material. Again, the primacy of imagination and the role of narrative in Modiano's research are central and have ethical implications. Space also functions here to foreground the issue of positionality, and draw attention to how subjectivities are constructed, where 'self' ends and 'other' begins. Modiano's approach is characterised by this duality, between the precision of historical research into the facts (the places where the Bruders were born or lived) and

¹⁶⁰ Gratton draws on Giorgio Agamben's reflection of the central role of the poet in testimony, as *auctor*, highlighting how this conception of the writer is one of creation and innovation rather than simply recording (Gratton 2005: 45).

the less verifiable spectral presences captured by his sense of ‘voyance’ (Modiano 1999: 53). This less tangible dimension to his research, through the emphasis on space, positionality and subjectivity, hints at an ethical subjectivity which will equally characterise Haneke’s film making, in which imagining the suffering of another, literally by putting yourself in their position,¹⁶¹ becomes a more powerful vehicle for exploring the past than merely recording the facts. There are many instances where the author-narrator senses Dora’s presence, or has the uncanny feeling of having crossed paths with her (despite the fact that her deportation precedes his birth). It is in retracing Dora’s steps in the same streets of Paris, and I argue precisely through urban space, that the narrator experiences spectral presences, as if an essence of her might somehow have been captured in the pavements or the walls.

The narrator describes leaving ‘la Place Blanche’ (Modiano 1999: 29), which evokes the process of *blanchissement* (literally the bleaching-out of any colour) and is layered with the subtext of erasure. From this ‘white/bleached square’ the narrator sees the lights of a nearby fairground stall fade, then plunges into what feels like the darkest part of Paris. This seemingly straightforward play with light turns out to be a sort of *trompe l’œil* produced by the contrast between the bright lights of the Boulevard de Clichy and the seemingly interminable black of the hospital wall he passes (ibid.: 29). This ludic element produced by tricks of the eye, playing with light and mirages, clearly invites a postmodern analysis.¹⁶² However, a broader framework

¹⁶¹ Maspero’s rumination on identity and subjectivity, in *Les Passagers du Roissy-Express*, similarly considered where different subject positions start and end, through his conjugation of the verb *être* with the adjective *juif* (Maspero 1990: 175). He tells a story about a little mouse approaching the border, who wonders to an elephant, during a time when elephants were to be arrested if they didn’t leave the country within twenty-four hours, how can I prove that I am not an elephant? He then deliberates that ‘en vérité personne ne peut prouver qu’il ne l’est pas [juif]. Et personne ne peut non plus se mettre à la place de celui qui l’est’ (ibid.: 175). For Maspero, then, the fluidity of subjectivity opened up by literature and imagination ultimately can never offer insight into the experience of that other.

¹⁶² Alan Morris notes that mirages are paradigmatic in *Les Boulevards de ceinture* (1972), pointing out how they function as ‘things which seem real, but which most definitely are not’, and that they are

for analysis might be opened up in the reference to the ‘baraques foraines’ and the lights from the travellers’ fair (ibid.: 29), that are only briefly mentioned by the narrator before he plunges into apparent darkness. It is only a whisper, a little flicker of light, but the blurring of the past and the present and the image of the dimming lights from the fair reinforces the central issues of identity and immigration, nomads, roots and rootlessness, and otherness articulated through space in the text. The question of geography and borders is fundamental to Western conceptions of identity and citizenship. The distinction between the past and the present blurs once again and we are invited to consider not only Dora and her parents as *immigrés* (others), but also all those ‘othered’ since then. This takes on particular resonance in the context of the details just given about Ernest. How can we clearly delineate identities based on where people are from, especially if, like Modiano, they are born of a rootlessness? How does France, a heterogeneous collective, attribute citizenship and belonging? What is the relationship between space, memory and identity? If Ernest served and was injured for the French (ibid.: 25), then what does it mean to be French?¹⁶³

It is artificial light that has created an effect of disorientation and tricked Modiano and the reader. However, natural light is equally significant.¹⁶⁴ One of sustaining images from *DB* is the *pénombre*. This light of dusk or twilight represents a liminal space where neither light nor dark dominates and where both are possible at

mirrored at a narrative level with the same ambivalence and devices that produce a trick of reality (Morris 1996: 33).

¹⁶³ One of the features of the French dimension of the Holocaust is that the police co-operated with the Nazis’ request for roundups of Jews in Paris on the grounds that the Jews concerned were foreign. For more on the French and these deportations see *The Holocaust, the French and the Jews* (Zuccotti 1993).

¹⁶⁴ Kawakami notes the importance of the role of light in descriptions of the city in *Fleurs de ruines*, be it the real light from the sun or the moon, or the artificial light of the cinema (Kawakami 2007: 262). She draws attention to the uses of false light, stage or set décor, demonstrating how Modiano plays with notions of ‘true’ Paris, filmed Paris and false Paris. The effect is unsettling and disorientating, constantly playing with referents for the ‘real’, and using literary and physical *trompe l’oeil* (ibid.: 262) and trickery. She fits this into a framework of analysis based on postmodern ideas of simulacra, the lack of authenticity, and a disbelief in the objectivity or validity of history’s ‘versions’ of the past.

the same time.¹⁶⁵ It is an image that recurs in the text, starting in the very first fragment:

Janvier 1965. La nuit tombait vers six heures sur le carrefour du boulevard Ornano et de la rue Championnet. Je n'étais rien, je me confondais avec ce crépuscule, ces rues. (Modiano 1999: 8)

Here the fluidity of different time-periods and subjectivities, that I will explore later, blur into one another and the indistinction between them is such that the narrator confuses himself with the twilight and the crossroads. This cuts across any possibility of clear-cut binary distinctions of light/dark, or Manichean categories of good/evil, or victim/perpetrator that Modiano explores. Later, in 1996 (the present in which Modiano writes) he muses that it is fifty-five years since Dora's *fugue*:

La nuit tombe tôt et cela vaut mieux: elle efface la grisaille et la monotonie de ces jours de pluie où l'on se demande s'il fait vraiment jour et si l'on ne traverse pas un état intermédiaire, une sorte d'éclipse morne, qui se prolonge jusqu'à la fin de l'après-midi. (Modiano 1999: 50)

The 'état intermédiaire' that characterises this strange light during the grey days of writing is described as a sort of gloomy eclipse.¹⁶⁶ Modiano's project of making connections through Paris is difficult, however: 'Et au milieu de toutes ces lumières et de cette agitation, j'ai peine à croire que je suis dans la même ville que celle où se trouvaient Dora et ses parents' (ibid.: 50). This is fundamental for Modiano, to make the connection between this Paris and that Paris. This effort is shot through with characteristic ambiguity, however, since at times he reveals the connection between the two 'Parises', showing that the same shadowy Paris that sent Dora to her death is

¹⁶⁵ It is matched with the spatial image of the crossroads or intersection, recalling Modiano's first novel *La Place de l'étoile* (1968).

¹⁶⁶ The eclipse is a natural phenomenon, in which one astronomical object is obscured, by passing into the shadow of another object, or by the presence of another object between it and the viewer. Positionality is central here. So too is subjectivity, for it implies something about Modiano's role as a writer, passing into the shadow of another body in order to understand someone else's experience. The etymology of the word 'eclipse' can be traced back to the Greek verb to abandon, to darken, to cease to exist or to be absent, reconnecting Modiano's representation of memory with theoretical positions that have emphasised the irretrievable sense of loss that is its central feature, such as Baudelaire, and indeed Nora, as I sketched out in my introduction.

the one we recognise today. At others, that space feels different and unrecognisable.¹⁶⁷

One distinctive way in which the *décalage* between surface and depth manifests itself is in the changing façades of buildings. Buildings are found to have been torn down and not there anymore (ibid.: 11; 29; 35; 37); replaced by newer buildings (ibid.: 11, 40); given a different façade (ibid.: 11); or altered in function (ibid.: 60). In this way, Modiano's engagement with the city plays with ideas about permanence and transience,¹⁶⁸ as well as developing the themes of toponymic change and reconstruction. In the concrete and stone of the city's buildings, the author searches for something that cannot be destroyed or disappear. However, despite the very materiality that the city represents, space is found to be just as fleeting as time.¹⁶⁹

Returning to the *quartier* of boulevard Ornano in 1996, Modiano writes a spatial inventory of what is there and what is not there 'now', at the time of writing. Against the fluidity of time that has been introduced through devices that superimpose different timeframes,¹⁷⁰ there is a reassuring stability in the precision of the list of buildings in the area. The author-narrator is familiar with this area from his own childhood in the 1960s. Next door to the Bruders, Ornano 43, used to be, we are told,¹⁷¹ a cinema (ibid.: 11) but it was reconstructed during the 1930s and given the appearance of an ocean liner. Back in the present we are informed that a shop has

¹⁶⁷ This recalls Maspero's reflection on Drancy and L'île de Gorée in Sénégal; that there are some spaces that remain the same, offering clues to their past, and others that are entirely transformed, leaving only 'oubli et indifférence' on the site of past horror (Maspero 1990: 187).

¹⁶⁸ This is redolent of Baudelaire's paradoxical engagement with the city: stone represents permanence, when it is in fact shown to be anything but permanent.

¹⁶⁹ One of Morris's chapters, constructed around the theme of oppositions in Modiano's wider oeuvre (2000), deals with the way in which the author sets up a tension between creation and destruction (Morris 2000: 63-86). He suggests that places that are one of the features most susceptible to the destructive ravages of time and that the phrase 'il n'existe plus' persists without fail as a leitmotif in the city (ibid.: 64).

¹⁷⁰ I explore the device of superimposition in more detail in the following section.

¹⁷¹ One of the consequences of the generic uncertainty that characterises the text is that we can never be fully certain whether to trust the author. As the lines between fact and fiction have been problematised, we are not actually sure which bits are 'real' and authentic, and which have been imagined or embellished (Bem 2000; Damamme-Gilbert 2004; Hartman 2002)

replaced the old cinema there. Some details are given about the date of construction and the architect of the building next door, number 39, and the author is reduced to suppositions that ‘il en va certainement de même pour le 41’ (ibid.: 12). The reference to construction dates and architects symbolises the simultaneous processes of creation at work. Precise details of the changing names and functions of 39 and 41 Ornano are given where possible, building up the reader’s momentum into a sense of knowledge and history of the place, but ultimately culminating in bathos, with the sentence ‘ce café n’existe plus’ (ibid.: 12).

The recurrence of these words is significant: there may not be any material referent for the past, or a life even, in the present. These paragraphs demonstrate that rather than a clear-cut emphasis on ‘l’anéantissement [et] la disparition complète’ (Morris 2000: 63) of all things and people, in fact processes of substitution, modernisation and evolution are also at work. Ornano 43 used to be a cinema, a function that takes on particular significance in the light of Modiano’s reflections on cinema later in the text.¹⁷² Ornano 43 underwent superficial reconstruction that gave it the ‘allure’, or façade, (ibid.: 11) of a ship, we are told. This physical reconstruction of the building functions as a trick, making it appear like something else. The image of the boat symbolically reinforces the central themes of roots, displacement and diaspora. This motif of reconstruction in the exterior of buildings mirrors the toponymic changes between the 1997 and 1999 editions identified earlier.¹⁷³ The text

¹⁷² In considering a film about an escape, released in 1941 that Dora *might* have seen at the cinema, Modiano concludes that it presents a rose-tinted, safe and harmless version of what really happened to Dora (Modiano 1999: 79), one in which he cannot find anything that corresponds to ‘reality’. In the dark room of a cinema, for the duration of the film, one could forget, he imagines, what was going on outside (ibid.: 80). This functional element of the spaces mentioned reveals how myths circulate at the level of popular culture. It points to a disconnection between the referent and its artistic or historical, representation, which is fundamental to Modiano’s conception of the writing of history.

¹⁷³ The use of proper names can also serve to protect people, but only through the function of the concealment of identity. A girl who was at the school just months after Dora’s escape was registered under the name ‘Suzanne Albert’, ‘pour dissimuler ses origines’ (Modiano 1999: 44).

itself, then, is also a site of ongoing reconstruction in which meaning is constantly deferred and reworked.

The author invests a special significance in buildings, as they are containers for traces: if they have been destroyed, so too has a connection to the past. Even before knowing of Dora's existence, Modiano recalls the peculiar sensation of emptiness that he felt at Clignancourt, observing the strange 'terrain vague'¹⁷⁴ of destroyed houses and sheds: 'Je me souviens que pour la première fois, j'avais ressenti le vide que l'on éprouve devant ce qui a été détruit, rasé net' (ibid.: 35). Despite their total destruction, there is the sense of a trace of the knowledge of what once was, captured, paradoxically, by his sense of void. The buildings of the convent school Saint-Cœur-de-Marie 'n'existent plus' (ibid.: 40), but the author can suppose from the size of the flats built there now that it was a vast space. Referring to old maps of Paris, the author can see exactly where the *pensionnat* was located, and in the next pages an attempt to visualise the space as it was for Dora occurs in detail (ibid.: 41).¹⁷⁵

Archaeological excavation in the city reveals the processes of construction and destruction as intertwined and continually active, and through layering some traces can be lost or hidden from view. Mechanisms that simultaneously hide and reveal traces of trauma in the city exemplify Silverman's treatment of the horror and the everyday in post-Holocaust representation (2006).¹⁷⁶ It is precisely through the space of the city that the shock is achieved.

¹⁷⁴ Maspero also uses the term 'terrain vague' (Maspero 1990: 25) in his exploration of the *banlieue*, challenging this preconception to demonstrate this space is actually 'un terrain plein: plein de monde et de vie' (ibid.: 25).

¹⁷⁵ The author-narrator, fears the changing appearance of roads and buildings in the *banlieue* where Dora was born, but vows to return and search for traces one day; 'Un jour j'irai à Sevrans mais je crains que là-bas les maisons et les rues aient changé d'aspect, comme dans toutes les banlieues' (ibid.: 19).

¹⁷⁶ Silverman points to *DB* as an example of post-Holocaust representation that employs this structuring device, where 'European civilisation, even in its most banal manifestations, reveals traces of the horror of the Holocaust' (Silverman 2006: 7).

Superimpositions: Paris as Collage

Modiano's use of literary devices to superimpose layers upon layers of time-frames and people provides many formal examples to express one central aim of Modiano's literary and political project: the process of making connections. Two aspects are salient on that account. Firstly, that these superimpositions occur not just in space but rather are achieved through it. Secondly, the form that they take, the imagery and language that they call on, are inherently spatial. This section will examine in detail how this takes place in the text, and its consequences for Modiano's conception of memory.

The importance of space and place is brought into focus from the outset, as it is the address of the Bruder family in Paris that first strikes the author-narrator because he has his own memories from this *quartier* (Silverman 2008; Damamme-Gilbert 2004):

Ce quartier du boulevard Ornano, je le connais depuis longtemps. Dans mon enfance, j'accompagnais ma mère au marché aux Puces de Saint-Ouen.
(Modiano 1999: 7)

Thus, it is through a spatial connection that the first link is made between Dora and himself.¹⁷⁷ The process of projection onto, and therefore identification with, Dora is a leitmotif throughout the text, which continually blurs neat distinctions between different subject positions.

¹⁷⁷ It is from an authentic document, found in an archive by the author-narrator in 1988 (ibid.: 53), that the first fragment of the text is developed, and introduces the central themes of time and space, and their entwinement. It is in an old newspaper called *Paris-Soir* that Modiano finds this archival document (ibid.: 7), encapsulating the dual focus of his project: a place, Paris, and time, including memory, history, the retrieval of 'lost time', and the passing of time more generally. The key structuring device for the whole novel is captured in the section of the newspaper 'd'hier à aujourd'hui', translated as 'between yesterday and today', or 'from yesterday to today': memory as the space between and the motif of connections.

In a number of instances timeframes blur and become intermingled. As Schulte-Nordholt notes, five seemingly distinct time periods are established in this first fragment of the text, three of which are brought into play in the very first paragraph (Schulte-Nordholt 2008: 100). The first timeframe, ‘il y a huit ans’ (Modiano 1999: 7), informs readers that it is eight years since he found the missing person appeal. The second timeframe is the implicit present of the narration, which we find out is 1996 (ibid.: 53). The third is articulated with precision, ‘31 décembre 1941’, the familiar temporal setting of the Occupation.¹⁷⁸ However, it is not the 1940s more broadly that are indicated here, but rather the specific moment of Dora’s *fugue*. This is the timeframe that belongs to Dora: it precedes Modiano’s own birth and memory and introduces a different realm of possibility from that of autobiography.¹⁷⁹ It is the realm of the biographer, an author who tells someone else’s story, and will remain the timeframe of one of the primary narratives of the text.¹⁸⁰ Akane Kawakami observes that, in Modiano’s contemporary novels, it is the order in which the subject remembers, the order of narration, that takes precedent over any chronological order (Kawakami 2000: 33), suggesting the primacy of the *processes* of both remembering and writing.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ See, for instance, Baptiste Roux in *Figures de l’Occupation dans l’œuvre de Patrick Modiano* (1999) for an analysis which foregrounds the Occupation as a central preoccupation in Modiano’s writing.

¹⁷⁹ It is in *Livret de Famille* (1977) that Modiano clearly states this feeling, detectable in *DB*, of having lived in another Paris, the Paris of the Occupation: ‘...ma mémoire précédait ma naissance. J’étais sûr, par exemple, d’avoir vécu dans le Paris de l’Occupation’ (Modiano 1977: 116).

¹⁸⁰ Much scholarship has focused on this question of genre (Cooke, 2005; Damamme-Gilbert, 2004; Howell, 2010; Laurent, 1997) and to some extent this is relevant to this study, but I want to move beyond this to reflect more broadly on the significance of the slippery generic boundaries for a comparative framework for cultural memory.

¹⁸¹ Schulte-Nordholt argues that the text is characterised by an interplay or tension, between the apparently irreconcilable poles of biography and autobiography, historical investigation and fiction, the story being told and its narration (Schulte-Nordholt 2008: 101). This tension is where the creative force of the novel lies, and it reveals a key characteristic of Modiano’s conception of memory.

A fourth timeframe is introduced through the familiarity of the narrator with this part of Paris, as we are told that in his childhood he used to go to the flea market near boulevard Ornano with his mother (Modiano 1999: 7). These temporal and subject frameworks that are emerging are almost three-dimensional in form. It is through the unity of this one place, a specific part of Paris (boulevard Ornano), that the link is made between the narrator and the missing person (different subject positions), and simultaneously between the different timeframes. His memory of this area crystallises into a more specific moment: the afternoon sun of a Sunday in May 1958 (ibid.: 8) forms the next layer that is superimposed onto this space. This layer carries with it the thread of another historical narrative that is implicitly evoked through the groups of soldiers around the barracks of Clignancourt, ‘à cause des événements d’Algérie’ (ibid.: 8).¹⁸²

The temporal jump then takes us to winter 1965, the narrator’s youth, where precise details of a friend’s address are given, overlaying this era onto the exact space of ‘Ornano 49-20’ (ibid.: 8). The subtext of another historical thread is hinted at: ‘A quoi avait-elle servi, cette caserne? On m’avait dit qu’elle abritait les troupes coloniales’ (ibid.: 8). This is achieved through one of the central spatial motifs that contrasts either what was once there with what is there now and the different ways in which such spaces have been re-appropriated for different functions. In Silverman’s analysis of the interconnected histories of colonialism and the Holocaust (2008), this moment, captured in the image of colonial barracks and the ‘events’ in Algeria,

¹⁸² Modiano’s choice to use the word ‘événements’ to evoke the Algerian War draws attention to the way in which euphemisms function in memory discourses to mask and downplay atrocities. Peter Carrier has argued that euphemisms are a common feature of memory cultures and public memory representations, and argues that our complicity with such language shows our incapacity to witness and represent the past (Carrier 2002: 2). Crucially, for Carrier, such euphemisms both ‘foster historical misrepresentation’ and yet ‘also illustrate and offer insight into the very semantic and psychological distortions on which memory cultures are founded’ (ibid.: 2).

becomes a ‘gateway’ to the other story of racial violence being told, the Holocaust (Silverman 2008: 424). I suggest that this is achieved in the text through spatial terminology, resulting in a visualisation of different characters and different timeframes layered upon each other, as if digitally superimposed, or arranged in a collage. These layers are simultaneously distinct and yet intermingled with one another. The author admits that as the years go by ‘les perspectives se brouillent pour moi, les hivers se mêlent l’un à l’autre. Celui de 1965 et celui de 1942’ (Modiano 1999: 10). The narrator’s confusion at the timeframes muddling and blurring into one in his head is achieved through the connective tissue of space. These named streets of Paris are pivotal points for two specific times to become intermingled and blur into each other.

Critics use terms that invoke this ‘enchevêtrement de couches temporelles’ (Schulte-Nordholt 2008: 100) through spatial imagery and visualisation. Often returning to the imagery of layers, slices, collages, stratification, mapping, or levels (ibid.: 100-101) for both time and characters. The result is a space onto which infinite layers of people and times can be built up. This superimposition structures the text,¹⁸³ like layers of tracing paper built upon each other, and recalls both Freud’s mystic writing pad, and the image of the palimpsest. Crucially, it is in the space of the city that these various superimpositions take place, demonstrating how urban space opens up a network of connections and associations. Specific places in the city form the interstitial point connecting the different characters and eras.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Modiano himself uses the word *surimpression* in *Voyage de nocces*, ‘le passé et le présent se mêlent dans mon esprit par une phénomène de surimpression’ (Modiano 1999: 26). In this novelistic attempt at a possible trajectory for Dora Bruder (ibid.: 53) Modiano also superimposes three main timeframes: 1940s, 1960, 1980s (present).

¹⁸⁴ Kawakami’s identification of places that function as ‘gateways’ in *Fleurs de ruines* (Modiano 1991) further substantiates this. Space is the *fil conducteur* through which these associations take place. She defines these as ‘geographical locations that have witnessed the passage of events and people through the course of history, points from which the narrator can accede to the pasts of other people’ (Kawakami 2000: 59).

Through a process of identification with Dora and through their shared heritage of the Parisian streets, Modiano projects his own story onto the story of Dora. In part, this occurs because he is so limited in what he finds in the historical investigation, that he is forced into imagining what might have happened to her. However, it also represents part of a broader methodology of making connections, developing my observations in the first section of this chapter, about Modiano's presentation of porous and flexible subjectivities. This fluidity between people also underpins Modiano's enduring challenge to systems of classification, which consequently become unsustainable. He makes connections with Dora through the very topography of Paris. His sense of empathy develops because those same streets were a part of his own childhood (Schulte-Nordholt 2008: 102). Again, space seems to provide what time cannot: what is impossible to share with her temporally just might be possible in space.

In rescuing Dora from obscurity, in naming her and giving form and 'relief' to her existence, Modiano engages in a discourse of particularity. And yet in tension with this, through these processes of identification, projection and connection, he simultaneously highlights the universal human condition. The projection of his narrative onto hers serves to reinforce that it could have happened to anyone, but it happened to her. The city then becomes a space in which micro and macro narratives intersect, and individual, private, and particular concerns map directly onto collective, public, universal concerns. Modiano layers his own story, and his father's story, onto Dora's path to show a sense of connection between human beings, that cuts against the Nazi project of categorising people.

Modiano's intertextual reference to Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* interweaves

another representation of Paris, and crucially superimposes real and imaginary spaces.¹⁸⁵ Modiano describes a ‘sensation de vertige’ (Modiano 1999: 51) that he experiences reading Hugo’s story at the moment in the narrative when the ‘real’ roads of Paris become fictional roads:

Et soudain, on éprouve une sensation de vertige, comme si Cosette et Jean Valjean, pour échapper à Javert et à ses policiers, basculaient dans le vide: jusque-là, ils traversaient les vraies rues du Paris réel, et brusquement ils sont projetés dans le quartier d’un Paris imaginaire que Victor Hugo nomme le Petit Picpus. Cette sensation d’étrangeté est la même que celle qui vous prend lorsque vous marchez en rêve dans un quartier inconnu. Au réveil, vous réalisez peu à peu que les rues de ce quartier étaient décalquées sur celles qui vous sont familières le jour. (ibid.: 51)

Modiano’s parallel with the way in which dreams trace unfamiliar roads onto ones that you see everyday not only establishes the blurring of ‘real’ and imaginary/literary worlds through space: the way in which they are ‘décalquées’ draws on an impression of superimposition. Hugo’s narrative is further traced onto Modiano’s (or the other way around) through the coincidence that Cosette and Jean Valjean end up running from the police and hiding at ‘62 de la rue Petit-Picpus’ which Modiano renders as exactly the same address as Dora’s school (ibid.: 52). Modiano thus distorts the distinction between the ‘real’ and ‘imaginary’, as Dora’s school has been earlier located on rue de Picpus (ibid.: 41). ‘Real’ Paris, then, is multiply refracted, not only because of the reference to the dream, but also through both Modiano’s and Hugo’s creations, whose roots are in something ‘real’ and verifiable on a map (ibid.: 51). One trace points to another trace, endlessly deferring, as Modiano formally demonstrates Derrida’s assertion that there are only traces leaving traces.

Guyot-Bender highlights the ways in which the ‘inconclusiveness of this fiction duplicates the inconclusiveness of the Occupation’ (Guyot-Bender 1998: 25). Her

¹⁸⁵ Significantly, Hugo’s historical novel *Les Misérables* (1862) treats the design and architecture of Paris in its narrative.

analysis brings into focus this idea of the omnipresence of crimes and criminals from the occupation years, in post-war France, drawing on a sense of continuity that is opened up in Modiano's work and make it difficult to distinguish past from present, hinting at the links between the crimes of the Occupation years and other crimes. Through this process of superimposition, that owe a lot to the spatial dynamics of the city, the narrator tells us that the time periods blur and a link between those time periods emerges.

Institutional Spaces: City as State

The argument for making *DB* a text apart from Modiano's broader œuvre pivots, partly, upon the lack of ambiguity that is a prominent feature of his novels. Instead, through certain spaces in the city that represent the state at the time, Modiano presents a searing portrait of a city and a nation that are not only the backdrop for the Nazis' Final Solution, but implicated in its very perpetration. This analysis of the city presents not just an account of the past, but also a shocking denunciation of the present. In a challenge to analyses that read Modiano's work as dealing narrowly with the Occupation (for example, Roux 1999; Hueston & Nettelbeck 1986), the representation of institutional space in *DB* suggests the viability of a broader framework for analysis.

A range of spaces in the text link the city to the state, including police archives (Modiano 1999: 83); town halls (*ibid.*: 15); hospitals (*ibid.*: 17), schools (*ibid.*: 40) and prisons. It takes the author-narrator four years to discover Dora's date and place of birth (*ibid.*: 14). The search for details and traces of the family in official documents starts at the *mairie* in the 17th arrondissement (*ibid.*: 15). In trying to

obtain Dora's original *birth* certificate he comes up against the very same bureaucratic system that sent Dora to her *death*. However, access to records is immediately denied due to the fact that the narrator has no direct familial link to Dora. Here, Modiano's project of making connections comes up against a rupture: 'il m'a dit qu'il ne pouvait pas me donner la copie intégrale de l'acte de naissance: je n'avais aucun lien de parenté avec cette personne' (ibid.: 15-16). In starkly unambiguous terms, the author wonders if the man at the desk is one of the

sentinelles de l'oubli chargées de garder un secret honteux, et d'interdire à ceux qui le voulaient de retrouver la moindre trace de l'existence de quelqu'un. (ibid.: 16)

This invocation of guards again recalls a central link, made by Derrida in *Mal d'archive: une impression freudienne* (Derrida 1995), between the *archons*, the people charged with the security of the documents at the archive and the power of institutions to mediate and interpret archival documents. For Derrida, these *archons* have the power to interpret the archives, hermeneutically policing its contents. Modiano's encounter with the *archon* at the *mairie's service de l'état civil* equally shows the archive to be a closely regulated space of institutional power and authority. The personification of the 'guards of oblivion' highlights the human dimension to these banal and mundane systems that will be shown to be integral to the extermination process. Here, then, a duality is set up. On the one hand, this feeds into Silverman's location of the horror, not as separate from but as precisely part of, the everyday (Silverman 2006), and as perpetuated *through* seemingly banal bureaucratic processes. On the other hand, Modiano does not allow us to dehumanise the perpetrator, and to blame these systems and structures. In a time when the horrors of the Holocaust have been exposed, the 'shameful secret' that is closely guarded must

have other, perhaps wider, implications. The obstacles to accessing the truth are presented not in the past, but are quite clearly located in the present.

However, we are told, this man is not one of the ‘sentinelles’, and he directs the author to the ‘Palais de Justice’.¹⁸⁶ The bureaucratic maze the narrator enters becomes overlaid with echoes of the methods of disorientation that were so integral to the Holocaust experience. To enter this civic building he must empty his pockets into a little tray (Modiano 1999: 16). Because of his confusion and delay in so doing he is hurried along by an official figure (either a security guard or the police). His experience is heavy with the subsequent knowledge that this was one of the processes camp victims were subjected to; they were often told their belongings would be returned to them, part of the overall deceit of the experience.¹⁸⁷ With a hint of sarcasm perhaps, the narrator asks whether they will ask next for his laces, belt and purse, as if he were entering prison (ibid.: 17). Later, it is not the camp of Auschwitz that will hold echoes of this search, but rather the camps of Drancy and Pithiviers: ‘ces hommes se livraient à une fouille’ (ibid.: 65). Modiano’s present-day experience of emptying his pockets into the tray during this search is retrospectively permeated with the horrific knowledge of experiences at French internment camps: ‘A la fin de la fouille, numéraire et bijoux étaient entassés en vrac dans des valises entourées’ (ibid.: 66). It is not the Nazis who are responsible for this, but rather the French *police des questions juives* operating in Paris. Modiano unsettles the idea of Occupied France, in which an outside force takes over and is responsible for these crimes. He reveals

¹⁸⁶ The details given for the *Palais de Justice* are found by Bertrand de Saint-Vincent (whose study is used by both Howell (2010) and Morris (2006)) to be erroneous (Saint-Vincent 1997: 122). The number of the room Modiano gives corresponds in reality with the office for marriages, and the 5th staircase does not exist. Such a knowing play with the tension between facts and imagination is characteristic of Modiano’s approach to writing.

¹⁸⁷ Deceit and trickery formed a central part of the camp experience, according to survivors. Examples include gas chambers under the guise of showers, and the famous sign ‘work makes you free’ at the entrance to Auschwitz.

instead the insidious and pervasive ways in which violence is perpetrated and locates it squarely within Paris. This links archival space, the place where historical documents are guarded, with oppressive penal space, redolent of Derrida's observations about the links between the archive, space and authority.

The disorientation experienced by the narrator as he is directed around various parts of this civic building in search of the 5th staircase cause him to panic, a state described as having a dreamlike quality (ibid.: 17). Drawing on the template of shared, recognisable dreams, such as being late for a train and the clock is ticking, the author's panic results in an association with another time in his mind. We are taken back twenty years, and this time he is lost in the maze of a hospital, as he desperately searches for the room where his father is dying.¹⁸⁸ The horror of this real life memory far exceeds the fear of missing the train. This inversion of dream/nightmare and reality, with expectations, results in one of the central features of survivor testimony, experienced on a somewhat smaller scale: what are the possibilities for representation or articulation of an event that exceeds even the worst nightmares and was itself experienced as an unreality?¹⁸⁹

In Modiano's evocation of this memory of being lost and trying to find his father, a symbol of the personal, autobiographical search for his roots and identity that maps onto the biographical search for Dora and the larger search for traces of the past, the 'real', imaginative, dreamlike and literary space of the hospital Pitié-Salpêtrière intermingle:

En passant et repassant devant cette église majestueuse et ces corps de bâtiment irréels, intacts depuis le XVIII^e siècle qui m'évoquaient Manon

¹⁸⁸ The importance of the father figure has been noted by many critics (Morris 1996; Rachlin 1998) and represents the deeply individual and personal relationship to his own father as well as coming to stand for questions about identity and roots more broadly.

¹⁸⁹ One literary manifestation of this inversion of reality and unreality/dreams/imagination can be found in Charlotte Delbo's *Aucun de nous ne reviendra* (1970).

Lescaut et l'époque où ce lieu servait de prison aux filles, sous le nom sinistre de l'Hôpital Général, avant qu'on les déporte en Louisiane. (ibid.: 18)

Within this characteristically long, *modianesque* stream-of-consciousness style sentence, the real and the literary mix effortlessly. Intermingled into that experience, the search for traces of Dora is brought back into focus with the reference to Prévost's *Manon Lescaut* and the idea of the changing functions of a single place. Pitié-Salpêtrière becomes laced with a literary history that brings to mind Dora's fate, as she was interned at the prison of Tourelles before being deported to Auschwitz. The *Palais de Justice* is turned into a labyrinth and is layered and infused with other memories and associations, creating a sort of disorientation that comes crashing down when he finally finds the correct office.¹⁹⁰ We are no closer to any further details about the Bruders' existence: just as we feel that we are about to come close to finding a document with some small detail, the narrator is advised to write to 'M. le procureur de la République' (ibid.:18).¹⁹¹

The author-narrator's experience and description of the Saint-Cœur-de-Marie school is based on suppositions as the buildings themselves 'n'existent plus' (ibid.: 40). Looking at an old map of the space though reveals that opposite the Catholic boarding school is a cemetery in which over a thousand victims, guillotined at the end of the French Revolution are buried (ibid.: 40-41). Here, two traumatic narratives lie side by side in the old map of the city. The image of the cemetery, with its dead buried in the ground, creates another form of overlaying and superimposition

¹⁹⁰ Research has shown that 501 is not, in fact, the office of birth certificates but that of marriages (Saint Vincent 1997), demonstrating a further entanglement of the 'real' and imaginary.

¹⁹¹ This is, indeed, the correct department for dealing with these matters in Paris, but it serves as a reminder that this personal narrative of a search for evidence of a girl's last steps in Paris maps onto a narrative thread exploring what it means to be part of this *République*. The address of the *Parquet de grande instance de Paris* is 14 Quai des Orfèvres, which calls to mind Clouzot's 1947 crime thriller, in which 'Dora' is the main character, serving to further develop the web of intertextual references to literary and cinematic Paris.

and demonstrates that in any given place in the city there is layer upon layer of the past upon which the present is built. Looking at the map reminds him that the sisters at Dames Diaconesses (ibid.: 41) once looked after him when he was eighteen. The superimposition of this memory on the space of Dora's school ('cet établissement avait servi pour la rééducation des filles. Un peu comme le Saint-Cœur-de-Marie' (ibid.: 41)) triggers Modiano's reflection on the enclosed nature of these types of spaces: 'Ces endroits, où l'on vous enfermait sans que vous sachiez très bien si vous en sortirez un jour, portaient décidément de drôles de noms' (ibid.: 41). It is the names of these spaces that strike Modiano, again suggesting a rupture between names and the spaces they encode: 'Bon-Pasteur d'Angers. Refuge de Darnetal...' (ibid.: 41).

Modiano wants to visualise the space of Le Saint-Cœur-de-Marie as Dora would have seen it: he searches for 'les rares détails que j'ai pu réunir sur ces lieux, tels que Dora Bruder les a vus chaque jour' (ibid.: 41). He describes the space in detail and wonders if there might be someone that knew her somewhere in the Parisian *banlieue*, remarking that Mère Marie-Jean-Baptiste, the headmistress at the time, was sure to have remembered Dora, precisely because of her escape. She died in 1985 we are told, and Modiano dismisses the usefulness of her knowledge of Dora and stresses instead the importance of space as a trigger to imagining the experience of another:

Mais après tout, qu'aurait-elle pu m'apprendre? Quelques détails, quelques petits faits quotidiens? Si généreuse qu'elle fût, elle n'a certainement pas deviné ce qui se passait dans la tête de Dora Bruder, ni comment celle-ci vivait sa vie de pensionnaire ni la manière dont elle voyait chaque matin et chaque soir la chapelle, les faux rochers de la cour, les murs du jardin, la rangée des lits du dortoir. (ibid.: 43)

Modiano's search for traces is characterised by this duality: on the one hand it is structured around a search for facts about details of her life, but equally this passage

reveals his suspicion of the value of hard facts and testimonial evidence, and the limits of what they can ‘tell us’. Space, however, is depicted as a potential trigger for the imagination, to get that bit closer to the texture of experience of another. It is important for Modiano’s exploration of memory precisely because it performs imaginative associations and connections, the very substance of memory.

The archives of the *préfecture de police* ‘vont peu à peu livrer leurs secrets’ (ibid.: 83) after nearly sixty years, the narrator informs us. The building in which the secrets of the past are kept is located right on the river Seine, but is now nothing more than ghostly barracks (ibid.: 83). ‘Nous nous persuadons que ce ne sont pas les mêmes pierres, les mêmes couloirs’ (ibid.: 83), and the inspectors responsible for deporting Jews are now long dead. The reflexive verb here demonstrates how easy it is to persuade ourselves that this space has changed, and might now offer up archival traces more freely. Modiano reflects on the nature and transmission of memory for the generation after: ‘Ceux à qui elles étaient adressées n’ont pas voulu en tenir compte et maintenant, c’est nous qui n’étions pas nés à cette époque, qui en sommes les destinataires et les gardiens’ (ibid.: 84).

Expectations of these institutional spaces have been reversed, and the very spaces and structures created to maintain safety and order – the schools, civic buildings and police – have become not just witnesses to the events of the Holocaust, but are actually presented as crucial components in its very perpetration. Modiano consistently highlights the French camps Drancy, Tourelles, Pithiviers and Loiret, rather than the Polish ones. The space of the internment camp Tourelles ‘occupait les locaux d’une ancienne caserne d’infanterie coloniale’ (ibid.: 60), chiming in with Maspero’s representation of the changing functions of spaces, and overlaying the narrative of colonialism onto the very specific site of a Parisian internment camp.

Institutional power and control are also depicted as being exerted at a less overtly violent and more insidious level. During the curfews of 1941, ‘autour du pensionnat du Saint-Cœur-de-Marie, la ville devenait une prison obscure dont les quartiers s’éteignaient les uns après les autres’ (ibid.: 56). The whole of Paris is thus conceived as a prison, opening out responsibility beyond the camps themselves. This resonates compellingly with Foucault’s argument in *Surveiller et punir: naissance de la prison* (1975) about the ‘ville carcérale’, where he identifies the absorption of mechanisms for social control beyond the confines of the prison. Panopticism, for Foucault, is a figure of political technology with insidious implications for broader social contexts. Like ideology, disciplinary power functions not only through oppressive and violent strategies, but rather more worryingly, it becomes naturalised.¹⁹² Modiano, like Foucault, seems to suggest that prisons are just one highly concentrated space of disciplinary power and control, which are in fact replicated in the very texture of broader society. The city is depicted through its various *quartiers*, represented by Modiano as plunging one by one into the darkness of this ‘ville carcérale’. Foucault also draws attention to the very structure of the city, and how its segmented space allows for easier control and surveillance.¹⁹³

The curfews function not only to make the link with the curfew Algerians protested against 1961, twenty years later: they also demonstrate how state regulation and control of people was achieved through space itself. Streets were then under ‘surveillance’ and once innocent spaces, places of culture and the arts, are transformed into spaces of arrest by the French police: ‘la police des questions juives

¹⁹² For Foucault, ‘la généralité carcérale, en jouant dans toute l’épaisseur du corps social et en mêlant sans cesse l’art de rectifier au droit de punir, abaisse le niveau à partir duquel il devient naturel et acceptable d’être puni’ (Foucault 1975: 355).

¹⁹³ In the chapter ‘Le Panopticisme’, Foucault describes the partitioning of a town during the time of the plague: each *quartier* under the strict surveillance of a guard; leaving your street or house is prohibited; inspections are ceaseless; space is enclosed and segmented (Foucault 1975: 228–231).

tendait des traquenards dans les couloirs du métro, à l'entrée des cinémas ou à la sortie des théâtres...' (ibid.: 61). Modiano calculates that it must have been in February that they arrested Dora and he ponders that 'they' caught her in their net: "“ils”": cela pouvait être aussi bien de simples gardiens de la paix que les inspecteurs de la Brigade des mineurs de la Police des questions juives faisant un contrôle d'identité dans un lieu public' (ibid.: 62). This simple consideration of the personal pronoun 'ils' shows how the perpetrators could in fact be anyone. It plays with the idea that the 'gardiens de la paix', those everyday police officers charged with our security and social control, could be the people that sent Dora to her death. It reveals, once again, an essential fissure between words and what they represent. The fact that Modiano suggests that 'ils' could be anyone amongst French institutional officers contributes to this radical challenge to 'us' and 'them' divisions – the divisions that allow us to locate the perpetrators 'over there'.

This unsettling and disturbing image of state complicity cannot be reassuringly contained in the category of 'the past', if this category does indeed exist in any such non-porous and impermeable way. The day after Dora and her father were deported (19th September) the streets of Paris were deserted because of the curfew introduced by the authorities, but for Modiano it is almost to mark Dora's absence (ibid.: 144). The impossibility of containing this state complicity in the past is introduced simply with the word 'depuis', highlighting that as important it is how it has been dealt with *since* then that is as important as the occurrence of the events itself: 'depuis, le Paris où j'ai tenté de retrouver sa trace est demeuré aussi désert et silencieux que ce jour-là. Je marche à travers les rues vides' (ibid.: 144). The Paris of then, where (and when) the deportations took place, is directly mapped onto the Paris of today. Perhaps they are not so different after all: they are still silent.

Modiano points out the chain of traces referring onto each other and simultaneously casting doubt on their existence, as Ernest is arrested as he searches for the missing Dora:

Un père essaye de retrouver sa fille, signale sa disparition dans un commissariat, et un avis de recherche est publié dans un journal du soir. Mais ce père est lui-même “recherché”. Des parents perdent les traces de leur enfant, et l’un d’eux disparaît à son tour, un 19 mars, comme si l’hiver de cette année-là séparait les gens les uns des autres, brouillait et effaçait leurs itinéraires, au point de jeter un doute sur leur existence. (Modiano 1999: 82)

This tangled web of people and their traces foregrounds processes of disconnection and erasure. Traces are lost, erased, blurred, and their disappearance is signalled by somebody else who themselves disappears, destroying the traces of traces.

The playful approach Morris exhibits by concluding his work on Modiano with a (non-)conclusion (Morris 2000: 113) is certainly justified in the light of the fundamental lack of narrative closure that forms Modiano’s mosaic project. Much post-Holocaust literature in France has represented the horror of the camps. As Silverman argues (2006), in *Nuit et brouillard* the horror of the camps is brought through the ‘barbed wire’ and into our own, familiar world. Through reductive post-Holocaust articulations, we can deduce that the Holocaust is Auschwitz, and what happened in Paris was the Occupation. Dark and shadowy, the Occupation was cut down the middle by resisters and collaborators. *DB*, however, is not about the Occupation but rather it is about the Holocaust. It is about the transit camps at Drancy and Les Tourelles, on Parisian soil, where Dora and her family were imprisoned until they were sent to their deaths. Modiano does not allow for any such neat and clear distinctions, but rather presents a fluidity that raises uncomfortable questions about ‘le Paris d’aujourd’hui’.

On the one hand, Modiano’s project serves to reverse the attempt to send so many like Dora to their deaths and so too to oblivion. On the other hand, through

subtle cross-referencing, and the focus on Parisian immigrant areas, the subtext can be detected: what else might these archive walls hide? What other memories might be inscribed into the streets and buildings of Paris? In making the links too explicit Modiano would defeat his own objective: it must be difficult to detect the traces of the past, it requires engagement and activity, like detective work. You must be able to read the signs, signals or traces: 'En écrivant ce livre, je lance des appels, comme des signaux de phare dont je doute malheureusement qu'ils puissent éclairer la nuit. Mais j'espère toujours' (Modiano 1999: 42).

Dora's possible escape from her fate at the concentration camps is imagined, by Modiano, through her staying between 'les murs noirs du pensionnat' and 'de se confondre avec eux' (ibid.: 48). This idea of blending seamlessly with Parisian space is striking: later, Modiano will reflect on Dora's time in Les Tourelles internment camp and wonder how it was possible to put a yellow star on children 'qui étaient si parisiens qu'ils se confondaient avec les façades des immeubles, les trottoirs, les infinies nuances de gris qui n'existaient qu'à Paris' (ibid.: 139). For Modiano, it seems, a clear marker of her identity is her Paris accent (ibid.: 139) and roots. The administration of the Holocaust pivoted around notions of race, even more so than religion. Although foreign Jews were deported first, French Jews were also targeted. People were sent to concentration camps because of their genealogy which pigeonholed them as belonging to a 'race'. Modiano reflects on 'Parisianness' and the people that are so Parisian that they literally blend into the urban landscape: in so doing he seems to suggest that 'Parisianness' might be a more fluid and less exclusive category of identity than 'Frenchness'. One in which it is knowledge and a sense of connection to this city space that create a sense of cultural belonging, rather than questions of race or ethnic origin.

CHAPTER FOUR

REPUBLIQUE AS AN EMPTY SIGNIFIER: PERFORMING INTERGENERATIONAL, INTERMEDIAL AND INTERCULTURAL MEMORIES IN SEBBAR'S PARIS

Leïla Sebbar's depiction and problematisation of collective memory in postcolonial France in *La Seine était rouge* (1999) raises a number of questions about national and cultural identity in the modern French Republic.¹⁹⁴ Paris is again represented as a site of historical and memorial re-inscription: a space of overt state oppression and violence, and likewise the channel through which resistance is articulated. The text has an intermedial quality – as readers we imagine the documentary film of witness testimony that is described in the narrative – and self-consciously draws attention to its status as a text and to the *processes* of representation that structure our relationship to experience. The novel, which explores the relationship between personal and official memories of the Paris massacre on 17th October 1961, addresses a number of concerns central to this thesis, including: the question of the presence, visibility and *legibility* of traces from the past in the contemporary city, partly through the trope of archaeological excavation;¹⁹⁵ the representational interconnections and interaction

¹⁹⁴ The difficult question of collective memory has been central to much existing scholarship. Many analyses focus on the ways in which Sebbar re-inscribes immigrant memories into metropolitan history. See, for instance, Fiona Barclay in *Writing Postcolonial France* (41–49); Dawn Fulton in 'Elsewhere in Paris: Creolised Geographies in Leïla Sebbar's *La Seine était rouge*' (2007); Michael Rothberg in *Multidirectional Memory* (2009). Michel Laronde, in 'Effets d'Histoire: représenter l'histoire coloniale forclosée' (2007), explores the how the novel stages the process of anamnesis in its reclamation of lost immigrant memories. Anne Donadey likewise suggests that the novel is part of a process of anamnesis and collective rewriting in order to remember this obscured moment, in 'Anamnesis and National Reconciliation: Re-membering October 17th 1961', in (Proulx & Ireland eds. 2001).

¹⁹⁵ Dawn Fulton uses the trope of archaeological excavation to explore how the novel reveals silenced and erased histories, making the comparison with the project of creolisation (Fulton 2007). This

between memories of the Holocaust and the Algerian War in France;¹⁹⁶ the persistent ‘haunting’ of the present by the past;¹⁹⁷ the interconnections between familial, personal and domestic narratives, and larger national, international and historical narratives; transgenerational memory transmission;¹⁹⁸ and the ways in which recollection is inescapably framed by, or rather is a product of, the present moment. Almost all existing analyses of *La Seine était rouge* (hereafter *LSR*) engage with Sebbar’s representation of the relationship between memories: whether this be the overlaying of individual and collective memory or the palimpsestic depiction of various different historical narratives. Furthermore, the text clearly presents the interweaving of memory and the city: in Rothberg’s consideration of Sebbar’s revisiting of ‘sites of memory’ in Paris, for instance, public urban space is a primary vehicle for his analysis of commemoration, identity and memory’s essential multidirectionality (Rothberg 2009: 299).

archaeological framework for memories thus exposes ‘the intricate melding of historical and geographical concerns’ that the novel stages (ibid.: 25).

¹⁹⁶ Many scholars have highlighted the points of convergence between memories of the Second World War and memories of October 1961 in the text. Rothberg examines how the characters engage with landmarks in Paris, revealing at various sites multitudinous connections between histories of violence (Rothberg 2009). In his recent publication elaborating his concept of ‘palimpsestic memory’, Silverman (2013) opens with a reference to the novel to illustrate ‘processes of superimposition and interaction of temporal traces to constitute and sort of composite structure, like a palimpsest, so that one layer of traces can be seen through, and is transformed by, another’ (Silverman 2013: 3). Fulton likewise invokes the figure of the palimpsest, exploring the city as a memorial space where layers of history can be written, as does Barclay (2011), contesting ‘official narratives’ and showing the interpenetration of different histories (Fulton 2007: 28). Kathryn Jones also explores the interconnections between memories that emerge in urban space (Jones in Fell ed. 2009), foregrounding potential problems in such a comparative approach. She draws on Philip Dine’s notion of ‘the inescapable allusion’ in which he argues that there is a tendency to frame the Algerian War in terms of categories and tropes from the Occupation years: the danger is not only the erasure of specificity, but moreover the reinstallation of a hierarchy that validates European over non-European history (Jones in Fell ed. 2009: 211–212).

¹⁹⁷ Fiona Barclay’s analysis of postcolonial haunting in French culture highlights the importance of textual space in addressing these *spectres* and argues that the haunting North-African element ‘destabilizes Republican understandings of French national identity as fixed and homogenous’ (Barclay 2011: 133).

¹⁹⁸ See, for instance, Laila Amine’s ‘Double Exposure: The Family Album and Alternate Memories in Leila Sebbar’s *The Seine was Red*’ (Amine 2012). Fulton (2007) notes how the intergenerational gaps and the memories never articulated create narrative tensions.

Complementing this rich field of existing scholarship this chapter seeks to provide a direct and sustained engagement with the depiction of Paris as a possible archive for traces of the Holocaust and the Algerian War in the text. Rothberg's observation that the text is 'self-conscious' (Rothberg 2009: 296) in its inquiry into issues of transmission, media and mediation (ibid.: 299) is instructive and reveals a tendency elsewhere in existing scholarship to undermine the essentially metatextual dimension to the text.¹⁹⁹ I argue that Louis's ekphrastically rendered documentary film is a self-reflexive meditation on filmic, textual, memorial and urban space. In a similar vein, the text merits reconsideration within an analytical framework that foregrounds poststructuralist questions of language and semiotics, and related questions of making marks and leaving traces.

Sebbar's novel explores the memory of the events of 17th October 1961 through three young protagonists living in contemporary Paris. Their parents played various roles in the protest, from *porteurs de valises*, to children who lost their parents that night, but their relationships to the young Amel, Louis and Omer are frequently characterised by silence and rupture about the Paris massacre. Amel is a young *française* of Algerian descent living in Paris; her mother, Noria, grew up in the pro-nationalist shantytown of La Folie in Nanterre with her migrant grandparents and was a young girl at the time of the protest. She witnessed the event as a child, too young perhaps to integrate or process the action either directly or as a memory, and yet she was and continues to be directly implicated, and indeed interpellated, by the events. She belongs to the '1.5 generation', one of many symbols of 'inbetweenness' that weave as a leitmotif throughout Sebbar's work. Noria's silence on the subject of 17th October makes Amel feel distinctly cut off from her own Algerian *and* Parisian

¹⁹⁹ Fiona Barclay examines the text's 'multivocal' quality (Barclay 2011: 41) reflecting on its formal features, but there has been little focus on how the text draws attention to its status as a text and to processes of representation more broadly.

heritage. Louis is the son of Flora, who is Noria's radical anti-colonial French friend, imprisoned for her resistance during the war. As a journalist, Omer fled the bloodshed of post-liberation Algeria with his mother and is taken in by Flora, Louis's mother. The national identities and political orientations of the characters portray a sense of the blurring of clear-cut boundaries that the novel explores on various levels. Semiotic questions about the relationship between signs, labels, words and referents emerge, as what 'French' and 'Algerian' signify will be called into question, as much as what constitutes 'nous' and 'vous' in this postcolonial context.

Some scholars have noted how Sebbar's novel demonstrates the importance of being in urban space to learn about the past (Fulton 2007; Jones 2009). As Rothberg's analysis demonstrates, the emphasis on memorialisation and national identity in Nora's concept of 'lieux de mémoire' is compelling. These symbolic places where the nation recalls a shared past – where memory has 'crystallised' – include cultural artefacts like books, as well as more abstract concepts such as 'République'. Rothberg observes that Sebbar's protagonists visit 'sites' of memory in the city,²⁰⁰ and it is Sebbar's literalisation of the concept in her exploration of how landmarks in the city represent the past that will structure this chapter. I will demonstrate that Sebbar uses urban space not only to depict traces of various histories of violence, but also to show some of the complexities and paradoxes at the heart of the modern French Republic.

Rothberg concludes that Sebbar is less pessimistic than Nora about the deterioration of 'milieux de mémoire', as she presents instead the 'possibility of new forms of remembrance in the interplay between sites and agents of memory'

(Rothberg 2009: 298). I argue that these urban sites emerge as a set of places in Paris

²⁰⁰ In Sebbar's very broad œuvre a great deal of scholarship has focused on the themes of memory and the spatial. Much of Sebbar's writing deals with questions of exile; displacement and dislocation; immigration; the *banlieue* and *bidonville*; exclusion, borders and boundaries; geographical space; urban space and memory (see, for instance, Donadey 1998; Hiddleston 2005; Mortimer 1988; Roy 2007).

to be relived and re-enacted, thus highlighting the performative nature of cultural memory that is likewise represented by the character Louis's textually rendered documentary film. As Erll and Rigney have argued, such sites represent 'repeated acts of remembrance' (Erll & Rigney 2009: 2) only for as long as people 'continue to reinvest in them and use them as a point of reference' (ibid.: 2).

Across Sebbar's broader œuvre her presentation of postcolonial identity is multiple, shifting, ongoing and hybridised (see, for instance, Hayes 2000; Hiddleston 2005; Kaplan 2001; Lionnet 1997; Mortimer 1988, Nunley 1996; Proulx 2000; Redfield 2008). Such an emphasis on shifting and multiple literary subjectivities recalls Modiano and Maspero's approaches to identity: both authors play with subject positions and authorial positionality through a variety of literary devices. Modiano's narrator is named Patrick Modiano, and the novel is a fictional, biographical and autobiographical search concerned with identity. For Maspero too, identity is not fixed but rather is revealed as slippery and unstable.²⁰¹ If identity and subjectivity are repeatedly related to their construction in language, then Hiddleston's study of languages as dynamic and mobile, rather than fixed (Hiddleston 2005: 85) is pertinent here. Indeed, if memory too is emerging not as separate from but rather as constructed through language, then Hiddleston's identification of languages as inherently dialogic (as Bakhtin proposed), polyphonic, polysemic, open to flux and ambiguity, and constructing themselves 'through their contact with other languages' (ibid.: 85), also has profound implications for conceptions of both memory and identity.

As Françoise Lionnet notes, Sebbar's fiction likewise becomes 'unclassifiable' as either French or Francophone, inviting us instead to rethink the standard opposition between centre and margins, amongst other ideological categories (Lionnet 1997:

²⁰¹ There is a moment when we are told by the author, François Maspero, that the character François Maspero is told by Gilles the postman that he cannot be François Maspero, as François Maspero is dead (Maspero 1990: 103).

177).²⁰² Nicole Kaplan also identifies the ways in which Sebbar's writing forces a rethinking of the colonial process and postcolonial paradigms (Kaplan 2001), and James Redfield posits that she explores and ultimately subverts a whole range of dualities, not just Algerian/French, but also Muslim/non-Muslim and man/woman (Redfield 2008).²⁰³ I argue that Sebbar uses the textually rendered documentary film to renegotiate boundaries between 'French' and 'Algerian', but equally between film, fiction, memory, and imagination, rendering the very concept of collective memory problematic. She challenges the myth of unified political struggle, on both sides, and in so doing contests the possibility of clear-cut, dichotomous categories, between victim and perpetrator, resistance and collaboration, and memory and forgetting. Such a probing of the limits of the text itself, produced at that interstitial point between fiction and the visual, and the resulting intermediality created by the ekphrastic depiction of the documentary film, implies a sense of transcending boundaries that I contend is a compelling way of thinking about memory and identity.

It is clear that many dimensions of postcolonial identity politics have structured existing scholarship on Sebbar and her unique status embodies the rupture of decolonization in Algeria but also becomes a potential site for resistance. The question of exile here, as both spatial and metaphorical, serves to reinforce the sense

²⁰² Critics almost invariably point to Sebbar's 'cultural bivalence' (Weber-Feve 2010: 156), 'multiple otherness' (Roy 2009), or position as a cultural hybrid 'at the crossing of East and West' (Mortimer 2000: vi). Hiddleston explores how Sebbar fits in to Bhabha's model of the third space as a productive field of cultural production (Hiddleston 2005: 152) and, as Hayes notes, she is emblematic of the ultimate 'in-between', occupying a status even more interstitial than *beur* (Hayes 2000: 216). In an interview with Michel Laronde she highlights her unique status as neither *beure*, or *maghrébine*, or *française* (Laronde 2003) and in *Lettres Parisiennes: histoires d'exil* (Sebbar & Huston 1986) she confirms she is neither an immigrant, or the child of an immigrant, or Maghrebian writing in French, or French with French roots, or Arabic-speaking.

²⁰³ Kate Roy uses Deleuzian theories of difference, focusing on precisely how difference is produced and experienced, to explore Sebbar's texts (Roy 2009). The figure of the border, metaphorical or physical, and so connotative of divisions, is cut through with Sebbar's own identification of herself as not just at a crossroads but as a *croisée* (Mortimer 1999: 125) at the intersection of East and West. The gendered nature of Sebbar's writing about the Franco-Algerian relationship in metropolitan France, and the specifically feminist angle of her work has been explored by scholars in terms of the gaze (Rye & Worton 2002), embodied memory (Vasallo 2008), and the subversion of western pictorial and literary representations of women (Kaplan 2007).

of psychological dislocation that results from the uniquely abrupt nature of decolonization in Algeria.²⁰⁴ Likewise, reflections on language, speech and the process of writing underpin Sebbar's entire body of work (see, for instance, Bourget 2006; Hiddleston 2005; Mortimer 1998; Nunley 1996). In this chapter, I align Sebbar's persistent challenge to the concept of pure and homogenous identities and objective national memories with a Derridean analysis exposing the inherent internal contradictions of language and thus revealing that such clear-cut dichotomous paradigms are untenable.

Both Rothberg and Jones point out the interconnected (in other words multidirectional) nature of memories in the text, exploring the features and validity of a broader, comparative approach to memories. This chapter considers the question of the connections between the different layers of memories solely through their representation in urban space. I seek to engage with existing analyses that present an 'Algeria syndrome' (Donadey 2001) in a reapplication of Rousso's framework for collectively remembering Vichy in France (1987) to the memory of the Algerian War. This is problematic on a number of counts. Firstly, it implies that an overarching, fixed structure can adequately account for what we know to be a fragmented, multiple, heterogeneous collection of national identities (France), and furthermore it proposes simply to transpose the event in question, revealing a reductive 'one-size-fits-all' model for collective memories of entirely distinct historical events. Despite locating this research within a growing trend challenging rigid compartmentalisation within French studies between post-Holocaust and postcolonial studies, a key part of my own approach lies in allowing intersections, overlaps and imprints to emerge

²⁰⁴ In *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Shepard 2008) Tod Shepard argues that having held on to the notion of Algeria as part of mainland France for so long, in 1962 'unexpected and still largely unknown decisions' had lasting and wide-ranging implications (Shepard 2008: 2). Likewise, Hargreaves notes that 'almost overnight, centuries of overseas expansion and rule seemed to disappear from public consciousness in France' (Hargreaves 2005: 1).

without conflating the two distinct memories, histories and narratives. Rather than an overarching explanatory framework, my approach posits that a sense of intersections, overlaps, echoes and imprints is made possible by representations of urban space.

I argue that in *LSR* it is the city that is depicted as the key witness in the various historical narratives explored, including the present moment. Rather than an emphasis on Sebbar's representation of the past, and the central narrative of the protest, the city emerges as the most sustaining link between the past and the present, between different narratives of memory, and between subjectivities.

Documentary Paris: Film, Testimony and Ekphrasis

Louis's film occupies a central and structuring place in the novel as it becomes one of the primary vehicles through which Sebbar explores questions about recalling and imagining the past; the transmission of testimony; absence and erasure; language and silence; and urban space. The character Louis is a documentary filmmaker and his film facilitates the staging of Noria's testimony about her childhood in La Folie shantytown in Nanterre and her memories of October 1961 when she was a young child. This broader historical approach recalls House's and MacMaster's analysis of the Paris massacre,²⁰⁵ as they argue that it is best understood not as an event in isolation but rather against the long-range 'background of violent nationalist struggle on metropolitan terrain' (House and MacMaster 2006: 26). Through the plot device of

²⁰⁵ Like other scholars, House and MacMaster highlight that a key feature of October 1961 was 'the unusual penetration of colonial violence into the imperial heartland' (House and MacMaster 2006: 25). Highlighting geographical reasons for this they draw on image of the Mediterranean Sea as the River Seine, arguing that although the two shores separated the different cultures, it was nonetheless relatively easy for government ministers or military officials to pass between them. They point out that the primary reason for the 'imbrication' (ibid.: 25) of colonial warfare with metropolitan life was the vast number of Algerians migrant workers living in or around Paris.

the film, Sebbar unsettles the expectations of a documentary in her fictional and ekphrastic rendering of the imagined documentary about a real historical event.

Although the definition of documentary genre is ‘slippery’ (Ellis 2005: 342), it is generally considered a form of representation premised on a more direct relationship to the referred ‘truth’ or ‘reality’ than overtly fictional genres. As John Ellis points out, the genre is riddled with paradox or ‘logical impossibility’ as it is a construct that seeks to ‘reveal the real without mediation’ (ibid.: 342). Bill Nichols observes that the key feature of this tradition is the direct connection between documentary and the historical world, and furthermore that it ‘contributes to the formation of popular memory’ (Nichols 1991: ix). Nichols points to the status of the genre as ‘visible evidence’ of a shared experience, or history, affirming the link, which Sebbar explores in the novel, between this form of media, which seeks to represent its subject faithfully, and the processes of representation that structure memory and our relationship to the past.

However, many scholars equally point to the lack of clear generic distinctions and markers. Whilst the realm of documentary might appear to be the non-fictive, non-narrative, objective reflection of reality, it is clear that the boundaries between fiction and documentary are in fact more fluid. We know, for instance, that documentaries make use of practices such as editing, narrative and re-enactment, they can be ideologically charged and call on imagination. In fact, much theoretical work characterises documentary as a marginal or boundary representational form.²⁰⁶ In the novel, Sebbar exploits the film’s boundary status to bring attention to the tangled relationship between the referent and modes of representation, with important

²⁰⁶ Bill Nichols insists that the separation between the two is not guaranteed or absolute, but rather establishes a sense of fluidity at this boundary zone (Nichols 2010: xi). The genre is frequently invoked through these borderline figures: Christian Metz identifies non-narrative genres as ‘marginal provinces’ and ‘border regions’ (Renov 2012: 1).

implications for her conception of memory. In contrast to analyses concerned only with content, and the *subject* of 17th October 1961 in the novel, here I suggest that form and metatextual questions about representation more broadly are primary to Sebbar's exploration of memory and identity.

The chapter introducing the character Louis is signalled, like many others, by the title consisting of his name and location, which directly links characterisation – subject formation and therefore questions of identity – to geographical space: 'Louis. Rue de la Santé' (Sebbar 1999: 25). This emphasis on location builds up a sense of the city as primary witness in the various historical narratives being explored (as well as the present moment) and offers the reader a sort of panoptical narrative experience of being able to see the various characters in different places. Such a Foucauldian notion of the reader being able to see invisibly reminds us that the characters we are introduced to in the novel are contained in an urban spatial formation that (re) produces power relations and mechanisms of control.²⁰⁷

The themes of imprisoned space and the interrelationship between inside and outside space, which form a leitmotif throughout the novel, are introduced through Louis and the location of his flat opposite the prison: 'de la terrasse il voit l'intérieur de la prison' (ibid.: 25). The questions of subjectivity, subject positions and sightlines that emerge reaffirm the privileged locus of the city for exploring how subjectivities interact in the public sphere. Here, vision is something that is either enabled or blocked by spatial co-ordinates.²⁰⁸ Rothberg draws on Miriam Hansen's work in his

²⁰⁷ In *Surveiller et punir: naissance de la prison* (Foucault 1975) Foucault argues that since the ways in which the authorities dealt with the plague, those same strict divisions, mechanisms of regulation and observation have filtered into the details of everyday life (Foucault 1975: 231). In the final section, 'le carcéral', Foucault argues again that the disciplinary methods of the prison reach far beyond the prison walls, and are embedded into the fabric of society, in the way, 'le réseau carcéral', 'il n'a pas de dehors' (ibid.: 353).

²⁰⁸ For Benjamin Stora, 'une mémoire (de guerre) peut en cacher une autre (coloniale)' (Stora 2005), invoking a spatially orientated figure of hiding and revealing for the interaction of different memories. Isabelle McNeill highlights that as the Algerian War emerged as an object of study, and memorial

critique of some understandings of Freud's 'screen memories' model, arguing that the interaction of different memories in the public sphere is predicated on processes of *displacement*, rather than the occlusion of one memory by another. He argues that 'displaced referents' result from memories of traumatic events that could not be 'approached directly' (Rothberg 2009: 12). Hansen posits that in the American context, the 'fascination' with the Holocaust may function in such a relationship of displacement with memories of the Vietnam War or even the genocide of Native Americans. Such an emphasis on displacement and substitution as the very substance of screen memory, and indeed all memory, is compelling for this analysis. Not only does it open up a sense of dialogue between memories, the 'lines of communication' (ibid.: 12), but it also implies a spatial figure to invoke the lines of visibility.

Furthermore, displacement and substitution and the 'remapping' of memory and its links between the conscious and unconscious (ibid.: 14) suggest that art, literature and representation might be particularly productive sites in which to explore this. The simultaneity of processes of hiding and revealing 'the suppressed' captured by Rothberg (ibid.: 14) is explored in this thesis: the tension between the two, their co-existence rather than perceived opposition, articulates itself in contradistinction to the tendency of existing scholarship to declare either memory or amnesia of these events.

The sense of panoptical surveillance is heightened as Sebbar focuses on Louis's observation of the prisoners, drawing attention to the mechanisms that allow close observation: 'avec des jumelles, il pourrait suivre les détenus en promenade' (Sebbar 1999: 25). One of the features of modern subject formation identified by Foucault in his image of the Panopticon is hidden surveillance by the state, creating

activity in France and abroad increased, it almost blocked the longer, broader, 'more extensive' history of colonialism from view (McNeill 2010: 9).

‘corps dociles’ (Foucault 1975: 159).²⁰⁹ Louis’s use of binoculars to see the inside of the prison from outside his flat, remaining unseen himself, brings into play an interrogation of visibility and power. Louis uses his binoculars to get a closer look at those excluded from society, or made invisible, in captivity in the very heart of Paris. It is striking, in terms of the recurring questions about borders, roots, divisions and identity both across the corpus and in the novel, that La Santé prison is unique precisely because of its spatialised ethnic divisions.²¹⁰ The prison will also function as a palimpsestic space in which unexpected connections between memories are revealed through the characters’ over-writings, re-inscriptions and erasures, but it primarily facilitates the exploration of the interrelationship between race, identity, citizenship, urban space and social control. As Loïc Wacquant has argued in *Les Prisons de la misère* (1999), prisons do not just control crime, but they *invisibly* regulate both the free market and the racial order. Moreover, the incarcerated poor and unemployed, overwhelmingly ethnic minorities, perceived and conceived as a threat through fear by the French nation, as Julia Kristeva’s and Franz Fanon’s psychoanalytic analyses of foreigners and otherness have demonstrated, are themselves kept invisible by society.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ For Foucault, ‘ces méthodes qui permettent le contrôle minutieux des opérations du corps, qui assurent l’assujettissement constant de ses forces et leur imposent un rapport de docilité-utilité, c’est cela qu’on peut appeler les “disciplines”’ (Foucault 1975: 161). This ‘politique des coercitions’ acts upon the body, defining the power one body might have over another, and thus revealing how discipline *produces* subjected and practiced ‘corps dociles’ (ibid.: 162).

²¹⁰ In ‘Theorizing Race and Imprisonment: Towards a New Penalty’ (Bosworth 2004) Mary Bosworth explores the relationship between race, citizenship and prison populations. She points out that Paul Gilroy’s history of race ‘dovetails’ with Foucault’s identification of the birth of the prison, ‘suggesting that the modern articulation of Otherness may parallel that of criminality’ (Bosworth 2004: 223). She refers to the work of Doctor Véronique Vasseur, which exposed living conditions at La Santé prison and which attests to the separation of inmates on the basis of ethnicity up until the 1990s (ibid.: 230). Bosworth makes the point that social views of crime and delinquency, and indeed the practices of policing and punishment, ‘are shaped in part by the vestiges of colonialism’ (ibid.: 229).

²¹¹ In *Etrangers à nous-mêmes* (Kristeva 1988) Kristeva examines the history of foreigners in Europe, considering the limits of national borders and the practices of inclusion and exclusion that govern cultural belonging. Her account is equally about a more personal sense of strangeness within the self and uses psychoanalytic theory to consider the uncanny strangeness of within the unconscious.

Louis's idea to make a short film about the prison as viewed from his flat serves as a springboard to introduce his mother's narrative, which is framed by the motif of imprisoned space. His mother was imprisoned in women's prisons during the Algerian War, 'en province, à Paris' (Sebbar 1999: 25). Not only does the reference to Paris and the provinces again serve to bring the violence of the Algerian War onto metropolitan soil, but it also brings into play the uniquely centralised nature of France, and the multilayered relationships of cultural belonging this centralisation produces.²¹² The present narrative is overlaid with one from the past, a superimposition achieved through the motif of incarceration. Initially, the third person narration recounts Flora's narrative of having been imprisoned during the Algerian War for resistance activities, as one of the *porteurs de valises*, but it is Louis's film that opens up communication between him and his mother.

Flora's story is structured around *points de suspension*: 'elle disait qu'elle avait rencontré des femmes qu'elle n'aurait pas connues autrement et qu'elle ne regrettait pas ce temps même si...elle n'achevait pas son récit' (Sebbar 1999: 25). The ellipsis not only signals the unfinished narrative but also functions as a mark or sign of what cannot be expressed with words. It indicates and highlights the absence of words, and implies a gap for the interlocutor between the experience they are trying to describe and the vocabulary available to them. Textually, it recalls the device that structured Georges Perec's *W ou le souvenir d'enfance* (1975),²¹³ and the effect that it

²¹² Dawn Fulton identifies the latter as forming concentric circles: of metropolitan France (l'Hexagone) to the colony, of Paris to the provinces, and of central Paris to its outskirts (Fulton 2007: 26). She develops a parallel between immigrant *banlieue* culture, located explicitly at the outskirts of society (social) and Paris (spatial), with those other 'overlooked appendages' (ibid.: 26) of France's overseas Empire: the French Antilles, that are the subject of Creolisation.

²¹³ A number of aspects of *W ou le souvenir d'enfance* (Perec 1975) are particularly striking in relation to *La Seine*. Perec is part of the second-generation of 'postmemory' (Hirsch 1997) children of survivors, or the 'liminal generation' (Jaron 2002), to whom some of the trauma has been transmitted, but for whom silence, absence and gaps in memory are common. Perec breaks up the first and second parts of his double layered alternating narrative with ellipsis in parenthesis (Perec 1975: 85), and asserts that the entire text hangs on these ellipsis, representing both rupture and the intersection of

creates is redolent of the point in the documentary *Shoah* (1985), where Lanzmann pushes Holocaust survivor Abraham Bomba to the edge of his memory and his capacity to articulate his experience.²¹⁴

The communication between Louis and his mother, reflected in the dialogic structure of the text, is characterised by a sense of coming closer to and then retreating from the ‘truth’ that Louis is searching for: ‘vous commencez à parler et vous vous arrêtez’ (Sebbar 1990: 26). Louis’s film is directly connected to knowing the ‘truth’ about the Algerian War, but from the outset this is problematised.²¹⁵ As Margaret-Anne Hutton has observed, truth is both ‘constantly deferred and represented as something which remains hidden’ with dangerous consequences, linking *LSR* to *MM* (Hutton in Gascoigne ed. 2007: 163).

Whilst Louis does initially want to know ‘la vérité sur cette guerre’ (Sebbar 1999: 26), with the definite article of the abstract noun ‘truth’ indicating his wish to fix the past and experience in order to know it, this is immediately challenged by Flora: ‘quelle vérité?[...]la vérité...c’est difficile’ (ibid.: 26). The interrogative adjective ‘quelle’ implies that truth is not fixed or singular, but rather that it is multiple, requiring a choice to be made, between the various options on offer. In a sense, this view of ‘truth’ reflects the position of the documentary viewer: multiple, diverse and fragmentary ‘truths’ or clues to ‘the truth’ must be pieced together with the rigour of a historian. Louis’s own conception of truth mutates at once acknowledging the subjective nature of truth as well as his own quest for it: ‘ta vérité,

fictional, real and autobiographical narratives, to the point that they become indistinct. The trope of *suspension* is a sustaining one for Perec and it is striking that such a sense of in-between equally characterizes Sebbar’s work. This sense of suspension is captured by the idea of the migrant as trapped in a permanent state of transience, ‘le passager de toujours’ (Begag & Chaouite 1990).

²¹⁴ Guy Austin points to this landmark moment in *Contemporary French Cinema: An Introduction* (1996: 26). Lanzmann himself refers to this moment as the ‘silence de Bomba’, in *Shoah, Une pédagogie de la mémoire* (2001: 10).

²¹⁵ Margaret-Anne Hutton, in the context of a chapter exploring violent histories and national identity, asserts that Louis’s desire to know about the past is directly linked to his ‘unformulated sense of self’ (Hutton in Gascoigne ed. 2007: 164).

celle de papa...' (Sebbar 1999: 26). Louis wants to know his parents' stories and almost concedes that it is precisely this very subjective angle he is seeking, supporting Hutton's observation that it is a personal quest for the past so strongly tied into his sense of identity.

Flora argues that even if she were to try to tell her story, it will lack precision, clarity, and interest as it was so long ago: 'mais tu n'auras qu'un aspect, minuscule, trop partiel... Plus de trente-cinq ans... Tu imagines. On aura oublié, ce sera flou, approximatif, sans intérêt' (ibid.: 26). This is revealing, as it depicts Louis's documentary and memory itself as inherently selective, cutting out as much as it exposes, simultaneously hiding and revealing, the past coming both into and out of focus. The mode of capturing the experience is not up to the job and his documentary will be blurry and out of focus, offering only an approximate outline of what happened. 'Tu imagines' Flora asks Louis, as if mocking the thought of a documentary consisting of blurry, uncertain, and incomplete memories. But imagination is precisely what the documentary will require from the viewer and as Alain Resnais reminds us, it is also the very fabric of memory.²¹⁶ In Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985) the oral testimonies of the various witnesses filmed in the present are full of gaps and silences, and rely on the imaginative engagement of the viewer, bringing the creative and imaginative dimension of all remembering into the form of the film. Transmission here is portrayed as being restricted by the inherent limits of modes of representation. The articulation of testimony stages the interface between private and public realms: between self and other, and between interlocutors. The process of making memory public and knowable is mediated by language, which is not transparent or indeed adequate.

²¹⁶ In *The Holocaust in French Film*, he asserts, 'I have always refused the word "memory" a propos my work. I'd use the word imagination' (Colombat 1993: 121).

Having established the uncertainty and incompleteness of memories and the inescapably creative aspect to both making and watching a documentary, we are immediately reminded that it is still an art form more directly concerned with the ‘facts’ of history than more overtly fictional forms, as Louis and his father will have to search for material evidence and clues to support the film: ‘il veut bien parler, chercher des archives pour moi, des photos, des journaux, des tracts...’ (Sebbar 1999: 26). Here, his work as a documentary filmmaker mirrors the research of a historian or a detective searching for clues and traces, recalling the protagonists of both Modiano and Daeninckx. Like the characters Patrick Modiano and Inspector Cadin, for Louis too the narrative of wider, collective, public memory, the film about *porteurs de valises* and 17th October, is interwoven with a personal quest for traces from the past. Flora asks why Louis wants to make this film, reminding him that ‘c’est pas ton histoire’ (ibid.: 26). The use of the possessive pronoun serves to underscore that for Flora, that narrative does not belong to Louis; it only belongs to the generation who experienced it directly. It is neither his history nor his story to tell. Both testimony and memory transmission involve a kind of breaking down of bounded subjectivity as you try to enter into the experience of somebody else. Private becomes public and it is the interface *between* the witness and the auditor that produces the act of testimony.

For Louis, it is precisely because it is not his history and narrative that making the film is so important: ‘justement je veux le faire, je le ferai parce que c’est pas mon histoire. 1954-1962. Le 17 Octobre 1961, à Paris et vous dans cette guerre coloniale’ (ibid.: 26). What is crucial about Louis’s desire to know the past is that it is directly linked to the present and to a sense of national identity through the city of Paris. Paris is the shared space that connects him to his mother. Across the corpus the boundaries between time periods, memories, and subjectivities have not been conceived of as

tightly bound and clear-cut, but rather as fluid and unstable. The collective dimension of memory and national identity, we are reminded, implies the convergence, interaction or intersection of multiple, diverse and fragmentary subjectivities.

Flora tells Louis that to help him make his film he can meet Jean-Louis Hurst, a friend from the resistance network who deserted the French army and wrote a book called *Le Déserteur* by his pen name, Maurienne (ibid.: 26). For Louis, the clue to his mother's past is a book. Published in 1960,²¹⁷ it was an important work for the development of the *jeune Résistance* as it documented his reasons for deserting the French army and the Algerian War. It was soon banned, but was disseminated through the student movement. Writing under a pseudonym implies the disconnection between signs and referents. It draws on the arbitrary relation of signifier to signified, and suggests that this arbitrariness has important implications for questions of personal identity. Martin Evans interviewed Hurst in 1991 for a publication exploring the motivations for anti-colonial resistance during the Algerian War through oral memory. This interview demonstrates why the text is a particularly striking intertextual reference point, as Evans highlights the way in which Hurst 'related the general process of decolonisation, in Hurst's opinion the dominant historical phenomenon of the epoch, to the microcosm of relationships within his own family' (Evans 1997: 129). Such an overlaying of personal narrative onto the unfolding of historical and social phenomena and the ultimate intertwining of individual and collective concerns in Hurst's testimony provides an interesting context for Louis's film. Furthermore, Evans notes the importance of the Algerian War as a 'pivotal' moment for Hurst's personal identity (ibid.: 129) and the 'remarkable precision' of his recollections (ibid.: 129), whereby his story is recounted sequentially, seemingly

²¹⁷ Significantly, for the questions of generic instability that have pervaded the thesis, and indeed for Sebbar's explorations of genre in terms of representation, memory and 'truth', it was published under the category of *roman*.

resistant to structure being imposed on it (ibid.: 129). Evans identifies the significance of anti-Nazi resistance more broadly in shaping anti-colonial resistance and for many interviewees the Second World War was a vital reference point.²¹⁸ But Hurst's interview reveals a central tension that is also key to Sebbar's text; it demonstrates the transmission of resistance from the Second World War to the Algerian War through the family: 'my father...who'd been my model of the Resistance, who'd passed onto me the Resistance chromosomes' (ibid.: 130). Such an emphasis on blood relations and genes draws on motifs identifiable in the wider corpus that privilege the image of connection. However, Hurst's relationship to his family is equally characterised by rupture, as he describes his father's racism towards Arabs (ibid.: 130) thereby shattering the image of his father as an inspirational figure in resisting fascism. The duality of continuity and rupture are also central to *LSR*, and this shows that these processes work in tension with one another – that memory transmission is characterised by points of rupture and continuity *simultaneously*.

Louis wants to make 'le plus beau film sur cette histoire' (Sebbar 1999: 27) and the jarring juxtaposition of the word 'beau' with the horror of the story that will unfold through testimony, serves not only to highlight that horror, but also reveals the tendency of certain representations to make narrative beautiful. Crucially, Louis asks for letters in his search for traces of the past, he wants 'les lettres des militants' (ibid.: 27) as well as more personal letters between his mother and father. The letters continue the motifs of dialogic connection and communication: they are both private and to some extent public, and they emphasise the process of writing.²¹⁹

²¹⁸ The '1945 moment' provided a specific historical context in which explicit attempts to 'inscribe anti-Nazi values within the new world order' resulted from the horror and affront on civilised values that the Holocaust represented (183).

²¹⁹ In *PRE* the postman Gilles traverses urban space, connecting otherwise disparate people through the delivery of written words.

Paris is not merely the starting point for Louis's film but rather becomes its central narrative. More than a context or container, it might be viewed as a key character in the film: it is the primary witness. A fragmented sense of temporality and varied subject positions produce a kaleidoscopic effect on the reader through the film.²²⁰ Omer is struck by the words 'liberté, égalité, fraternité' above the door to La Santé prison and as he reads the plaque commemorating Second World War resistance and connoting de Gaulle and the resistance 'myth', he suggests that Louis comes back to film later (ibid.: 28). Located at the prison's entrance, the sign denoting the values of the revolution and the modern French Republic highlights the disconnection between signs, words, signifiers, or captions and referents. This is quickly followed by a description of Louis filming Omer's graffiti, drawing attention self-reflexively, and indeed metatextually, to the mode of representation. From an outside perspective that captures Louis's filming of the film and the film itself:

Louis filme le mur de la prison, à l'angle de la rue de La Santé et du boulevard Arago, la plaque commémorative fixée sur la pierre et à droite, les lettres rouges bombées:

« 1954-1962
DANS CETTE PRISON
FURENT GUILLOTINES
DES RESISTANTS ALGERIENS
QUI SE DRESSERENT
CONTRE L'OCCUPANT FRANÇAIS » (Sebbar 1999: 29)

The words 'dans cette prison', from both the original plaque and the red graffiti, echo 'en ce lieu' in Maspero's depiction of Drancy (Maspero 1990: 175), and in fact the effect produced is similar. Both point to the incomplete, partial and misleading relationship between the signifiers on the plaques and their signifieds, which in turn highlights a sort of crisis of official commemoration that Sebbar

²²⁰ The kaleidoscope is perhaps the visual equivalent of the polyphony observed by Jane Hiddleston as a key characteristic throughout Sebbar's work (Hiddleston 2005), and it also recalls Modiano's approach to writing.

continues to expose. Moreover, the thread that links these two literary explorations of commemoration, the semantic element around which the memorial inscriptions are built, is the space. Sebbar is clear about why Omer wants to inscribe the hidden narrative of history onto *this* wall: 'je veux juste rappeler ce qui s'est passé dans ces murs. C'était une autre guerre' (Sebbar 1990: 28-29). The driving force for the action, what will become the very substance of the film and Sebbar's fictional narrative, is explicitly anchored in a sense of *this* space. Maspero muses that there are different types of spaces, some that are transformed into postcard paradises that once stored slaves, some that are totally destroyed and contain no clues to their past use, and some, like Drancy and arguably La Santé prison, that are destined for 'Existenzminimum' (Maspero 1990: 180) of whoever passes through them. The sense of continuity is achieved precisely through the locus of specific urban sites. Furthermore, attention is drawn to the dual commemorative exigency of spatial and historical facts. What is striking about this over-writing of the Second World War narrative with that of the Algerian War, is arguably that it is anchored in prison, and therefore state, space.

Many scholars have observed that this key motif of re-inscription through the red spray paint, in which the central characters over-write official narratives and monuments of commemoration with alternative historiographies, represents urban space as a palimpsest (Barclay 2011; Fulton 2007; Silverman 2013). Fiona Barclay conceives of the text itself as palimpsestic, likening it to the work of Assia Djebar, in which a multivalent perspective incorporates layers of history and both French *and* Algerian views (Barclay 2011: 47). In her analysis of haunting as a persistent figure in postcolonial Francophone writing, she argues that the red graffiti create 'ghostly memorial sites, replacing the absence left by amnesia with a transient presence' (ibid.:

47). Such an emphasis on spectrality is instructive, as Derrida uses the notion of haunting to challenge clearly delineated notions of past, present and future, and conceives instead of lingering traces across temporal frontiers (Derrida 1993). Spectrality not only negotiates this space between, but the sense of something lingering or left over is another way of expressing trace, *différance*, and the supplement, or the endless deferral of meaning in the chain of signifiers that is writing. Barclay points out that, in line with the image of the palimpsest, ‘the over-writing does not erase earlier discourse, which is still visible beneath the graffiti’ (Barclay 2011: 47-48) but that this new ‘spectral layer’ now co-exists with the national narrative. It is the possibility of opening up a space in which different layers of collective memory can coexist that is so compelling. What is striking about both motifs, the palimpsest and spectrality, is the ways in which they foreground a sense of co-existence and simultaneity that has important implications not only for the distinct memories in question, but furthermore for metatextual questions about writing, representation and meaning production more broadly. Such a sense of co-existence challenges the legitimacy of dichotomous paradigms and thinking, and does so not only through the content of the novel, but moreover through its awareness of, and reflection on, the form.

Dawn Fulton also invokes the trope of the palimpsest, where processes of recollection, excavation and inscription create a multilayered urban space (Fulton 2007).²²¹ Fulton makes the point that the over-writing on the commemorative plaque in La Santé employs a ‘strategy of imitation and transformation’ she aligns with the

²²¹ Fulton points to the collective nature of the project that is ‘asymmetrical’ and ‘prismatic’ in form, which implies the ‘interpenetration’ of different narratives, subjectivities, communities, generations and memories (Fulton 2007: 28). This model implies overlaps and convergences that are not neat or symmetrical, and which are the very substance of ‘multidirectional memory’ (Rothberg 2009). Fulton frames this multiplicity of perspectives, voices and narrative threads in terms of an aesthetic that undermines universal or exclusive claims to knowledge (Fulton 2007: 28).

theorists of creolisation, opening up potentially endless layers of narratives that contest claims of exclusivity of those that are dominant or hegemonic (Fulton 2007: 31). Barclay is also attentive to the precise way in which Sebbar enacts the re-inscription, transposing the words of the official plaque almost exactly to highlight not only the role of the Algerian immigrants as resisters and the identity of the French as the oppressors (Barclay 2011: 48), but also implying the ease with which France went from the role of victim to perpetrator. Barclay argues that this not only emphasises agency for the Algerian immigrants, thus rescuing them from the persistent perception that they are victims, but that it allows for the ‘reinsertion’ of October 1961 into the grand narrative of French history, rather than conceiving of it as immigrant and thus not French (ibid.: 48). As I demonstrate, however, Sebbar in fact establishes not an inversion of these categories, but a profound challenge to the construction of such oppositional frameworks.

Barclay’s point about immigrant memory and ‘metropolitan’ French memory contains within it a problematic reliance on specifically ‘Vichy’ frames of reference. While she instructively highlights 17th October as a site of resistance, she nonetheless falls into the terminology of oppressors and resisters, directly transposing the terms used about the Occupation to the radically distinct context of the Algerian War. In Fulton’s terms, the resistance is based on imitation, rather than an acceptance of difference. This raises an important issue about the comparative approach adopted here, which is concerned with the overlaps and intersections between different memories made possible by representations of urban space. Within this framework, it is important to be attentive to the differences, nuances and complexities that distinguish these two very different historical moments, not least because of the thorny question of citizenship. Perhaps what is thereby revealed is an embedded

assimilationist logic, that requires the Other, or the other memory, to be the same in order to be integrated.

What both analyses of this moment of re-inscription seem to miss is the importance of the fact that it is relayed through the film. The ekphrastic rendering of the documentary serves to highlight the gap: between the film itself and its description in the text, between text and image. Here, the imagined and fictional film (a documentary) is translated, as far as possible and remediated through words. The reader is let into the world created by the film (the image of Omer's red letters alongside the original plaque) but also crucially, we are let into the filming of the plaque for the film: revealing both the product and the process. The narrative present is itself experienced as multiple. This constant interplay between the narrative frame of the film as watched and the frame of the film as filmed brings attention to the process of filming itself, and creates multiple and expanding frames.²²² The question of the frame and the boundary that it invokes is a significant one, for it is the question of where a text or a film begins. The reframing that the novel enacts, and the way in which the referent itself is already textual, suggests that Sebbar, like Derrida, establishes a need to 'rethink [the] effects of reference' (Creech, Kamuf and Todd 1985: 19).

We are told that 'la voiture de police qui passe ne remarque rien' (Sebbar 1999: 29) but it is unclear whether it is the filming of the graffiti or the graffiti itself for which this is significant. In Fulton's analysis it is as if the defiant traces remain unseen by the policeman (Fulton 2007: 31).²²³ Perhaps more accurately, the film might be viewed as another process of leaving traces: visually recording those left by

²²² This device is also used by Michael Haneke, in *Caché* (2005), where the question of the frame is equally at the heart of the film's theoretical concerns. See, for instance, James Penney's 'You Never Look at Me From Where I See You: Postcolonial Guilt in *Caché*' (2011).

²²³ She compares this to Glissant's portrayal of reclaiming history in Martinique, but it remaining 'unread' and unseen (Fulton 2007: 31).

Omer, but equally interrogating the very notion of permanence and authenticity. The film testifies to the traces that Amel and Omer leave, as well as the lack of traces in the urban landscape and refracts them through multiple levels of representation.²²⁴

As readers, we access Louis's film not through the visual realm as a viewer would, but rather through a combination of the textual with personal imagination. This notion of ekphrasis, that I contend is crucial to Sebbar's presentation of memory, is further complicated by the fact that the film is part of a fictional and imagined narrative. What results is an intermediality exploring modes of representation in relation to memory. Ekphrasis is a literary device for representing a visual referent (originally a work of art) with words. In a sense, ekphrasis doubles the 're' of representation: as James A. W. Heffernan explains, it might best be defined as 'a verbal representation of a graphic representation' (Heffernan 1991: 299). Such a notion of multilayered, intertextual and intermedial reflections and remediations provides a useful context for Sebbar's novel. In Heffernan's definition, 'what ekphrasis represents in words, therefore, must itself be representational' (ibid.: 300), rather than just visual. Sebbar likewise doubles the 're' of representation and draws attention to the gaps between referents and representations, and to linguistic and visual processes that attempt to capture the referent.

The starting point for Louis's film mirrors the spatial starting point for Amel and Omer in their retracing of the protest, as we read the spoken words of Noria's description of La Folie. Within Noria's words are the voices of her father, her mother and workers from the factory, and her family story is then interrupted by the memory

²²⁴ Building on this sense of remediation, we are then told that 'Amel et Omer regardent le film de Louis. Plusieurs fois' (Sebbar 1999: 29). Amel and Omer are invoked as watching Louis's film almost immediately after leaving their marks, and numerous times.

of 17th October.²²⁵ The story she tells of the first ‘second-generation’ of immigrants in Paris, those children born to parents who had themselves recently arrived from Algeria, repeats and re-enacts the experience of Amel already been established in the text. It is the experience of Perec and Maspero, of hushed conversations when the child enters the room (Maspero 2002: 15). What is emerging is that even for a primary witness at the event itself, some understanding of what was happening remains out of reach. The name for this generation of children, the ‘1.5 generation’, signifies an age group old enough to have been implicated, but not yet fully understand. Susan Suleiman uses the term ‘1.5 generation’ with reference to the children of Holocaust survivors (Suleiman 2002), but it has more recently been appropriated by studies of immigration to refer to immigrants of a young age who are marked by traces of their country of origin but still young enough to start processes of assimilation and socialisation in the host country (Rumbaut 2001). The term encapsulates the duality of this subjectivity through a linguistic emphasis on the in-between, but marks them out as half or incomplete. As Bhabha and Hiddleston have argued, however, this incompleteness can be a site for creativity (Bhabha 1994; Hiddleston 2005).

The speech marks signal the end of Noria’s speech in this part of the film (Sebbar 1999: 35), and we are reminded that what we are reading is a transcription of Louis’s film. Her description of *La Folie* requires imagination from both the viewer and the reader which is ‘interrompue’ (ibid.: 35) by the film’s exposition of archive

²²⁵ Jane Hiddleston has located Sebbar’s wider oeuvre ‘between exile and polyphony’ (Hiddleston 2005). In this analysis, Hiddleston argues that Sebbar ‘embraces’ exile (Hiddleston 2005: 157) seeing it as a productive site for creating new combinations, rather than one of alienation. In a reading of *Lettres Parisiennes*, Hiddleston highlights how Sebbar uses silence (the non comprehension of her father’s native Arabic) as a constitutive part of her hybridised identity. She sees herself as exiled in French (ibid.: 158) and brings traces of suppressed Arabic into her writing, producing something that in Derrida’s terms is linguistically ‘impure’ but seeing this very process as essential to her writing and creativity.

photos (the raw materials of a documentary) of La Folie. The attempt to recuperate the past, anchored in the space of the shantytown, firstly traverses the verbal and textual, then, as the words stop, the viewer is offered a visual image. For the reader, however, the visual image is also unavailable: just as in *MM* when Cadin reads through Roger Thiraud's thesis on Drancy and finds that 'de nombreuses pages comportaient des blancs encadrés au rayon et annotés. Roger Thiraud avait prévu l'emplacement exact des illustrations, photos, graphiques, plans' (Daeninckx 1984: 174). The existence of the photos is signalled but ultimately remains unavailable to us. There is a mark for an absent present, calling to mind the Derridean notion of writing *sous rature*: of writing a word, crossing it out, but leaving both word and deletion in tact, or legible. The word is inaccurate yet necessary (Derrida 1967: 31), and writing under erasure captures this inherently doomed attempt of words to relay the referent. Sebbar also seems to suggest that the vessels that carry meaning, be they images or words, as signifiers may not be completely apposite, and cannot be accurate reflections of the concepts for which they stand: but they are *necessary*.

Noria's testimony further reveals why victim/perpetrator or resister/oppressor dichotomies are reductive and inaccurate templates for the memories at stake. Her father and uncle were on opposing sides of the Algerian liberation movement, one with the FLN and one with the MNA (Sebbar 1999: 43).²²⁶ The violence between the two groups highlights the loss of nuance in accounts that contextualise the events in terms of a purely Franco-Algerian framework. Throughout the novel, Sebbar problematises the categories 'French' and 'Algerian', not least through the inclusion of Flora's narrative as an example of French solidarity with Algerians. She likewise demonstrates how Algerians did not universally support the FLN, a warning of how

²²⁶ The 'Mouvement national algérien' (MNA) was founded by Messali Hadj in contradistinction to the 'Front de libération national' (FLN).

historical narratives are constructed around a set of (usually oppositional) categories that fail to capture the nuances and in-between shades of grey. Indeed, Louis takes offence at the generalising nature of the subject pronoun 'vous' as used by Omer, implying that Louis's identity as French is generated by an opposition. Such use essentially runs the same risk as over-generalising frameworks that posit that all French and all Algerian people were divided in a uniform and clear-cut nature around the 'événements'. The emphasis on the subject pronoun reveals a profound question raised by the novel: if boundary spaces are privileged, and borders are repeatedly revealed as unstable, constructed and blurry, then what do personal pronouns signify in a postcolonial society? What does 'je' designate? Who is 'vous'? Who is included in 'nous'?

The question of the 1.5 generation's understanding of the events unfolding around them is raised in Noria's testimony: 'j'étais petite, j'avais neuf ans, mais je savais faire la différence' (Sebbar 1999: 43). Here, she is referring to her father's warning about 'les harkis de Papon', the 'calots bleus' (ibid.: 43) he describes as being collaborators and even worse than the French police. Yet again Sebbar underlines the difficulty of clearly defining and delineating categories of Franco-Algerian identity positions in Paris at this time. She invokes another shade of grey in the Algerians who worked for Papon's police – almost the perfect mirror image to Flora and the French supporters of the FLN. Despite her young age, Noria could tell that these men were 'pas des Français', presumably because of their visible ethnic origin. In fact, she tells us that these men looked just like her father, '[les] hommes du bidonville...des Algériens' (ibid.: 43). The sight of these Algerians dressed in blue French police uniforms in the Paris streets generates fear in the young Noria.

Significantly, she recalls being able to ‘make or see the difference’.²²⁷ The loop-hole in the Republican model of *laïcité* is ultimately revealed, as race is something that cannot be hidden in the public sphere. The motifs of disguise and assimilation are complicated as the young girl recognises the *harkis* as ‘nous’, Algerians, but recognises the uniform as what marks these men as ‘collaborateurs’, while equally being able to see that they are not ‘français’. The play of visual markers of identity played out in the public sphere, the specific context of Parisian streets in 1961, reveals the categories of French/Algerian and resister/collaborator to have been blurred and inverted to a degree that renders them almost meaningless. Noria refers to reading her brothers’ comics, ‘les cow-boys, les Indiens’ (Sebbar 1999: 42-43), serving to underline the critique of frameworks and narratives based on binary oppositions, and also illustrating how pervasive narratives of racism have been in a variety of cultural and media contexts.

Once again, Sebbar brings us back to the medium and diegesis of the film, which, following the recollection of Noria’s fear at seeing the ‘calots bleus’ in Paris, becomes dominated by silence: ‘la mère cesse de parler’ (ibid.: 43). We are reminded that this young girl is now herself a mother and the film’s tension between testimony and silence is restored. The silence is not ‘cut out’ because it is not the opposite of remembering, as some scholarship on October 1961 would imply;²²⁸ but rather it constitutes a central part of that remembering. Sebbar includes us as viewers of the film: ‘on voit une rue, la nuit. Des images d’archives où des hommes en uniforme

²²⁷ In *Différence et répétition* (Deleuze 1968), Deleuze elaborates a concept of difference in which it is not distorted by opposition, and therefore understood in purely negative terms. Rather, he points to the liberating possibilities of understanding difference ‘en elle-même’ and shows that identities are produced *through* difference, rather than the other way around (Deleuze 1968: 72). In this way, difference (and multiplicity) is a foundational principle *in itself*, rather than being understood in the shadow of identity. Such a focus on difference in itself is illuminating in relation to Sebbar’s portrayal of postcolonial identity.

²²⁸ House and MacMaster are illuminating here, as they point out that silence is not to be equated with forgetting, but rather manifests itself in various and complex ways as part of remembering (House and MacMaster 2006: 191).

frappent d'autres hommes en civil, des Algériens' (ibid.: 43). The image is explicitly anchored in the street, at night. It is this street space, a site emblematic of protest and revolution as we are soon reminded by the plaque commemorating the Paris Commune at La Défense (ibid.: 53), that underlines Sebbar's implicit question.²²⁹ It is as if, through the shared frame of reference of the familiar Parisian street, Sebbar, like Modiano, wonders if she is the only one to make the connection between the Paris of then and the Paris of now (Modiano 1997: 50-51).

Sebbar implicitly calls into question the aforementioned sign, *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, as her description of the archive images readers are made to 'see' make use of the banal and unremarkable word for man, 'des hommes'. The repetition links both sides being depicted in the images simply as 'men', and recalls that the remit of the revolution was *la déclaration des droits de l'homme*, implying that the only category that matters is 'homme'.²³⁰ Sebbar thus reveals that the universalist discourse of the modern French Republic is not at all as inclusive as its slogan implies: she shows that some 'men' are more equal than others.

The scene is counterbalanced by the alternative viewpoint in the following testimony by 'le harki de Papon'. There is no indication that this testimony is necessarily part of the film, and the way in which Sebbar dates the chapter 'octobre 1961' and stipulates the location and time of day ('extérieur jour' (Sebbar 1999: 45)) indicates that this is a different type of reconstruction of the past. The inside/outside, day/night motif suggests the importance of location in the city for this protest and

²²⁹ Kristin Ross argues that the very notion of social space should be conceived of as a 'by-product' of the Paris Commune of 1871 (Ross 2008). For Ross, the Commune was precisely about the transformation of a place, and the streets were not secondary but central to the mobility of the Commune (Ross 2008: ix).

²³⁰ Both Maspero and Modiano explore the theme of identity as being entirely constructed and based on arbitrary categories. Both authors invoke the French bureaucratic system: Maspero memorably draws attention to the stamp 'JUIF', a random combination of four letters that can lead to a concentration camp. For Modiano, the Bruders' category also led them to their deaths.

introduces the question of visibility through images of light and dark. The harki's narrative demonstrates the poignant disparity between the words of the French who occupied his village of birth in Algeria ('en France, c'est pas la guerre, vous serez tranquilles' (ibid.: 45)) and the overt manifestation of war on metropolitan soil that the curfew and the protest represent. The harki explains his situation – that he was offered a good job and a salary he could hardly refuse – but what is striking is the re-emergence of the motifs of uniform and disguise. On first donning his 'calot bleu' uniform, the French officer remarks that 'on te reconnaît pas, tu es plus le même, tu es fait pour l'uniforme' (ibid.: 46). This game of recognition between the officer and the Algerian, constructed around the way in which the uniform makes this man unrecognisable, has profound and indeed complex implications for questions of identity. The uniform functions to flatten out differences and to make everybody visibly the same, as demanded by the assimilationist model: there can be no ostensible signs of religious identity in the public sphere. However, as the previous chapter in the text attests, the harkis were all distinguishable by their ethnic origin. The harki concedes, 'c'est vrai, je savais plus que c'était moi' (ibid.: 46).

The harki's description of the internal conflict within the category of 'Algerian' during this time, as he describes blocking the pont de Neuilly on 17th October and surrounding the Nanterre shantytowns on the 18th, reveals the inadequacy of existing templates and the initial inscription at La Santé. The categories have been deconstructed to reveal a complex interplay of questions of citizenship, race and nationality for which dichotomous paradigms are deficient. The image of the immigrants of Nanterre being controlled like 'rats' draws on the cultural imaginary stock image of the Nazi justification for the Final Solution, further feeding into a

sense of continuity between past and present, and between the Holocaust and the Algerian War, in urban space.

Furthermore, the horror cannot be kept in the past, as is also explicitly demonstrated through the character of Omer (a refugee), and in Noria's testimony it comes flooding into the present: 'd'autres, aujourd'hui assassinent, laissent pourrir les cadavres sur les places, au bord des routes, des frères, des pères, des amis... des ennemis' (Sebbar 1999: 43).²³¹ Sebbar draws attention to the bloodshed in post-liberation Algeria and the civil war of the 1990s. Across the thesis, a sense of interconnections between time periods and memories has been explored through a sustained analysis of shared literary representations of urban space as a legible archive for traces of the past. Crucially, my analysis of memory has drawn on theories that highlight the importance of the present moment for any question of recollection: in many instances it might be more accurate to define memory in terms of the present, rather than the past. As Erll and Rigney remind us, remembering

is better seen as an active engagement with the past, as performative rather than reproductive. It is as much a matter of acting out a relationship to the past from a particular point in the present as it is a matter of preserving and retrieving earlier stories. (Erll & Rigney 2009: 2)

So the interconnections and reverberations, memory's 'multidirectionality' (Rothberg 2009), not only occur between different points in the past but necessarily traverse and are shaped by the present. It is the present moment that allows the interconnections to be visualised. Sebbar not only explores postcolonial identity in the contemporary metropolis, but she also draws attention to the internal violence of civil war in 1990s post-independence Algeria. This context, an exploration of contemporary violence and war, is just as important as the exploration of the

²³¹ In Rothberg's analysis the trope of burial is foundational, and the re-writing of Antigone so that both brothers remain unburied (Rothberg 2009: 306) implies not only a doubly difficult question of justice in the form of a 'proper burial', but also that there is more than one 'historical referent' for the unburied. In this way, he argues, the novel is truly *multidirectional*.

past.

The device of the film in *LSR* further allows the narrative to come spilling into the present, as the film creates a space in which a sense of the present, rather than a reconstruction of the past, can be captured. The film comes to stand for the process of memory: whatever moment it is trying to recall, the moment it most effectively captures is the present moment of the narration. The present moment is brought back into focus, as we are reminded again that this testimony is a film. The dual time frames of the novel reveal both the moment that Louis filmed, and the moment when it is watched: ‘un silence. Un long silence que Louis n’a pas coupé’ (Sebbar 1999: 43). Louis chose not to cut the long silence, but rather make that silence a creative element of his film, much as Hiddleston argues Sebbar does throughout her writing (Hiddleston 2005: 158).

Retracing the Protest: City as witness

The image of retracing the possible steps of someone from the previous generation in Paris is a familiar literary device used by the narrator of *DB* (Modiano 1999). In Sebbar’s text too, the starting point is one of absence, since for Amel it is the lack of any direct dialogue with her mother that leads her to an engagement with urban space, highlighting from the outset the importance of being in specific sites in order to relate to the past. *LSR* draws on the idea of Parisian space being the key witness to the events of October 1961, as well as to the other (multiple and varied) histories that the novel explores.²³² This section will explore how the characters Amel, Omer and Louis look to the landmarks of Paris and its outskirts as they seek to piece together a sense

²³² Rothberg points out that the multidirectionality takes the form of reverberations with a whole host of histories, including the French Indochinese war, Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt, May 1968, but primarily, of course, the Algerian Civil War of the 1990s (Rothberg 2009: 298).

of what happened. Like Modiano's narrator, they revisit the spaces that the protestors passed through that night in 1961 to see if perhaps spaces do hold traces: 'on se dit qu'au moins les lieux gardent une légère empreinte des personnes qui les ont habitées' (Modiano 1999: 28-29). Amel's search for the site of her mother's shantytown will bring into play a set of vital questions about past and present spaces of transit. I argue that the topography of Paris emerges as a crucial vehicle for exploring the links between the past and the present, and between different memories.

The filming of Noria's testimony punctuates the other threads of the novel, and has the effect of superimposing the narratives of the past onto present experience of urban and suburban space. In fact, it is Paris landmarks that link the testimony to the present timeframe. As Amel and Omer cross the university campus in search of 'l'emplacement du bidonville dit La Folie' (Sebbar 1999: 31), Amel is depicted in disguise, in her 'toque tibétaine, lunettes noires, un long imperméable noir' (ibid.: 32). In response to Omer's question about her disguise, she concedes that she is disguising herself 'en inconnue' (ibid.: 32). The question of disguise not only fits into the issues of visibility and presence, that Fulton reads as central to both Sebbar's depiction of immigrant history in Paris and theories of creolisation (Fulton 2007: 33), but also connects with important questions about assimilation and integration in the modern capital.

The search for the site of the shantytown is 'sans indice, sans repère, comme ça, à l'aveugle' (Sebbar 1999: 40). Their search, unlike Louis's film, lacks the material evidence to orientate them, and the space they seek lacks the co-ordinates to anchor it in relation to Paris. In Noria's account of La Folie, a network of roads that do not resemble city streets creates a 'terrain vague' (ibid.: 33), recalling the perception of the *banlieue* Maspero sets out to challenge. But such a conception of a

network will prove a sustaining image for Sebbar's presentation of key reference points in Paris, and as such cuts through the centre/periphery binary.

Sebbar's protagonists travel to the centre from the periphery, making 'suffocated histories' (Fulton 2007: 32) visible along the way.²³³ At La Défense, Amel removes her dark sunglasses and waterproof, as if gradually peeling off the layers of disguise as they enter the spaces of central Paris. For Amel and Omer, the only clues to the past that they are seeking to uncover have come from Louis's film. It is only from Noria's testimony, not directly transmitted to them but mediated through Louis's film, that they have any knowledge of 17th October. It is through the figure of Omer that the contemporary conflict in Algeria is brought into metropolitan space; Omer having been forced to flee post-independence Algeria as it spirals into civil war: 'je suis parti avant de savoir, à la troisième tentative d'assassinat' (Sebbar 1999: 52). In a postcolonial configuration of more permeable borders between nations, the physical place of Paris is less a self-contained space and rather is depicted as containing traces of cross-cultural exchange.

The leitmotif of sightlines and the visibility of the various characters in relation to symbolic landmarks of French identity reappear as Omer and Amel have a coffee at the Café de France: 'la statue de Marianne est visible, de loin' (ibid.: 52). The question of sightlines (that is, being in a position to see, or having something blocked from view) provides the context for their conversation about Omer's apparent lack of interest in the events of October 1961. Amel implies that for Omer, because a more urgent narrative of Algerians killing Algerians (ibid.: 52) is unfolding, the past is almost blocked from view. Omer argues that he is not simply concerned by 'ma propre tragédie' (ibid.: 53) and perhaps implies what Rothberg argues, namely that

²³³ For Fulton this serves to reinforce a reading of Sebbar as drawing on techniques used by theorists of creolisation to 'undo' the hierarchical relationship of the centre to the periphery (Fulton 2007: 33).

one more recent tragedy does not eclipse the other from view, but rather is engaged in a more continuous relationship to it.

Sebbar's presentation of the Marianne statue at La Défense plays precisely on how sites of memory are generated. This female symbol of French national identity is depicted as tall and courageous in the face of the enemy (ibid.: 53). Crucially, the symbolic status of the flag she holds is laced with ambiguity, as Sebbar points out that it could represent either victory or defeat (ibid.: 53). It reminds us that these streets have a contested history as being a site of both oppression and resistance, and shows how narratives of victory and defeat reduce complex and nuanced intermingled histories of violence down to winners and losers. As the recurrent references to the Algerian Dirty War make clear: the story of the 'victory' of Algerian independence was quickly followed by internal conflict and bloodshed, just as the day of France's liberation marked the beginning of a bloody cycle of uprising and repression in Sétif.

Amel reads the plaque at Marianne's feet so quickly as to jump words, creating a partial and incomplete representation of the plaque itself. As Rothberg has pointed out, this site embodies memory's multidirectionality since it acts as a nexus for both the official memory of the Paris Commune and the more vernacular memory, transmitted through Louis's film, of 17th October.²³⁴ In Erll's and Rigby's terms, Amel questions the significance of 'reinvestment' in and 'reliving' of the narrative of the Paris Commune for immigrants living in Paris: 'qui les a défendus quand les flics ont chargé au pont de Neuilly? Tu les a entendus les récits, la panique, les corps

²³⁴ Ross's analysis of the emergence of the very notion of social space is directly linked to the Paris Commune and is significant in the way in which it outlines the intrinsic spatiality of the event itself. Ross argues that the Commune dismantled and remapped physical space with the effect of reversing traditional hierarchies (Ross 1988: x). She gives the examples of the toppling of the Vendôme column as representing the symbolic 'horizontalising' of hierarchies, and the erecting of the barricades as representing the antithesis of the 'monumental' which they replaced with a notion of *bricolage* (ibid.: 1).

piétinés...’ (Sebbar 1999: 53). The ‘defence’ of Paris is thus problematised and expanded semantically to include all those living in it. We are again reminded of the very slippery issue of identity, as we recall the harki’s corroboration of this event.

In Noria’s testimony in the film, the child’s perspective reveals once again the lack of understanding of the event, which she was only able to grasp in part. Noria remembers hearing fragments of the conversation between her parents on the morning of the protest: ‘j’ai pas compris pourquoi on se séparait et pour quoi on aurait dû avoir peur’ (ibid.: 56). She remembers that on hearing her father affirm many times that it was ‘pacifique’ (ibid.: 56) her child’s mind envisioned the big blue ocean on the map of the world. Not only does this child’s perspective produce a poignant emphasis on the intended peaceful nature of the protest, but it also encapsulates a sense of transnational interrelationships, highlighting the ambiguity of the ocean as a signifier: potentially connoting both division and separation, as reflected in the parents’ separation, and the possibility for connections. Once again, it underscores polyvalence and the random and arbitrary nature of the relationship between signifier and signified, implying that the production of meaning lies elsewhere, in something culturally constructed.

In Noria’s testimony, the Parisian landmarks and place names she observes from the bus parallel Amel and Omer’s trajectory in the present. Crucially, it is the young girl’s first time ‘seeing’ Paris but, ‘c’était Paris et je voyais rien’ (ibid.: 57). Testifying to what she saw is made doubly difficult by the lack of visibility she experiences in the city that night. She hears her mother say the word ‘République’ to her neighbour and asks herself ‘pourquoi République?’ (ibid.: 57). For the young Noria this term has no currency or significance. Not only does it point to the duality of spatial and figurative sites where national identity is crystallised, and how place

names serve to perpetuate and generate memory and identity; it also implies the redundancy of the word itself for Noria's generation. *République* is a word she knows only from her history class, as if the word itself belongs to the past. Sebbar demonstrates that Noria is locked out of realising its significance, as it is depicted as a 'mot de passe' (ibid.: 57). The password image is striking, as it lays bare the perpetually deferred moment of assimilation for the immigrant. *République* fails to signify anything, for the young Noria, other than a sense of being locked out by language itself.

LSR's form might fruitfully be considered in the image of Maspero's metro map, representing Paris as a network, or skein, of different intersecting lines or threads, often inverting power relations between metropolitan centre and colonial periphery. Narrative, temporality and memory are also depicted in the manner of a non-linear, fragmented, and intersecting network. Maps and geographical markers recur as a motif throughout the novel, be it the café l'Atlas or the map of Algeria pinned to Amel's bedroom wall. The names of the cafés evoke the contrasting narratives of Parisian topography and the complex relationship between the urban space of the capital and colonial geography: Amel and Omer sit in the Café de France, implying the metonymical way in which the capital comes to stand for France, but the café l'Atlas summons the image the Atlas mountains running through Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria, bringing the North African landscape into Parisian space. Café spaces arise across the novel and represent a social and public space not owned by the state, redolent of the Baudelairean notion of such public spaces staging an encounter between self and other, individual and collective, public and private.

The map of Algeria pinned to Amel's bedroom wall is a sort of visible, lingering trace of the Franco-Algerian relationship, linking Paris into a broader

postcolonial image of relationality. The red pins mark the places of massacres in contemporary Algeria, making the map on her wall a constantly current illustration of the present situation abroad and embodying the inside/outside strange/familiar relationships that have recurred throughout the thesis. The pins on the map are ‘pour savoir’ (Sebbar 1999: 39), directly linking knowing about the present to geographical specificity, and creating a ‘cartographie terroriste’ (ibid.: 39): a sort of private commemoration of the present. Omer questions whether it is enough to know when and where certain events happened and to mark the spot. In *PRE*, Maspero refers to Marxist geographer Yves Lacoste’s *La Géographie ça sert, d’abord, à faire la guerre* (Lacoste 1976), in which Lacoste takes maps, a form of geographic representation, a ‘formalisation de l’espace’ (Lacoste 1976: 11), as a key site for examining how international power relations are produced. The map as a representation does not and cannot reproduce the spatial referent transparently, but rather produces it anew. Moreover, it can only ever be ‘une représentation partielle’ (ibid.: 53). Each representation will differ, even if it is minimal, as Lacoste employs the image of maps from different disciplines being superimposed onto one another: ‘elles n’ont pas les mêmes contours’ (ibid.: 53).

Lacoste explains that at its inception, geography in France was based on the description of regional differences and similarities, and the maps resulted from lines drawn to separate regions, which were then taught as natural separations (ibid.: 56). Lacoste argues that ‘au lieu de se représenter la diversité et la complexité de l’espace’, geography privileged the instances of coincidences (ibid.: 54). These representations were considered the ‘reality’ by a discipline associated with objective and scientific modes, and the ‘success’ of this idea of neat separations was also applied at a national level (ibid.: 56). Lacoste overtly denounces the use of maps as ideological tools in the

service of the state's military, revealing them to be mechanisms of control and domination. It is illuminating to compare such a conception of maps as representational and culturally embedded to Sebbar's cartographic representation of memory.

Temporality is fragmented as the past and present are superimposed onto one another through the film, but this is also reinforced by the disordered fashion in which Noria recollects: 'j'ai oublié de te dire' (Sebbar 1999: 103). Noria makes direct reference to the process of editing that will be part of Louis's documentary:

Louis, quand on raconte, on oublie, tout vient dans le désordre, je ne peux plus dire exactement l'emploi du temps ce soir-là, tu demanderas à Lalla, il faudra que tu remontes ton film dans l'ordre chronologique... (ibid.: 103)

Louis in fact ends up keeping Noria's comments in the documentary, as signalled by the speech marks, thereby not only drawing attention to its mode of mediation, but implying the broader processes of editing and selecting that are so fundamental to this conception of memory. If the film comes to stand for Sebbar's representation of memory and historiography, then it is aware of its own limitations and it works creatively with them to make them produce something new. The disorder becomes almost a driving force or motor for creativity, for Louis's film in the novel and for Sebbar's writing of the film. Imposing a chronological order becomes almost impossible and the truth of the memory might be seen to lie less in its pure and transparent recollection of the past, but rather in how it comes up in the present.

Sebbar demonstrates that Algerians did not universally support the FLN and in fact reveals a more complex picture of internecine violence on both sides. The textual depiction of the documentary challenges clear-cut divisions between objective and subjective, collective and individual, text and image; and memory is likewise represented as a boundary process. Sebbar explicitly draws attention to the

processes through which we apprehend experience, showing how identities are constructed and how the past is mediated. The ekphrastic film doubly refracts the referent, which is at once a real moment from the past and an imagined testimony. Questions about language and visual processes of representation are foregrounded to highlight the gaps in referentiality, ultimately reminding us that there is nothing essential or intrinsic about national identities in a postcolonial context. The intermedial quality produced as readers are made to 'see' the film, and the constant interaction between fact, fiction, imagination and memory, reflect in the form of the text the challenge to bounded categories that is so crucial to Sebbar's representation of memory and identity. For the young Noria, *République* is an empty signifier: it does not carry any meaning and reveals the disconnection for so many of France's citizens between republican discourses of inclusion and universalism and their lived experience. Sebbar's young protagonists do, however, demonstrate their own participation and resistance through the ways in which they engage with city space. Whilst Sebbar does point to an alarming sense of continuity between histories and the past and present, she likewise presents the *potential* for a more inclusive vision of Paris in the present. It is a vision in which Paris is a site of cross-cultural exchange and diversity: a network of distinct but intersecting narratives and subjectivities.

CHAPTER FIVE

HIDING AND REVEALING IN *CACHE*: CITY AS SETTING, MEMORY AS REPRESENTATION, FILM AS THEORY

Michael Haneke's 2005 film *Caché* explores many of the questions central to this thesis, including the relationships between the past and the present, as well as those between mechanisms of concealment and revelation in the city of Paris. Furthermore, the film suggests the interpenetration of different memories of violence in one space and explores the possibility of a broader comparative approach to such histories of violence within one representational frame. The tension between the local and the global; the particular and the universal; the specific and the general; difference and similarity will be pivotal in Haneke's film and likewise are central in a broader, transnational and transcultural approach to memories. Indeed, the theme of globalisation is a recurrent motif throughout the film. In this way, *Caché* suggests the multiple scars that mark modern French society and invites a reflection on the ways in which that society engages with its current citizens.

Haneke uses Parisian space and its bourgeois characters to explore the relationship between surface and depth, revealing the structures that normalise extreme violence and thus showing the ways in which modern, middle class life is constructed upon seen and unseen narratives of violence, control and domination. More general questions arise about the nature of responsibility, hospitality, citizenship and integration that have been so fundamental in debates about postcolonial identity politics. Characterised by a concern with the nature of reality and modes of representation, it draws upon and exemplifies poststructuralist questions raised across the thesis about the relationship between representation, memory and 'reality'. The

question of how representation constructs our perceptions of reality is pertinent to Haneke's exploration of memory in *Caché*.

The film takes a narrative form familiar from the previous chapters in that it embeds a personal, familial and domestic narrative in a larger, collective national history. Such a sense of connections between individual and collective realms, particularly through the narrative frame of the family, and an overarching sense of the permeability of borders and boundaries have been a recurrent motif across the chapters. Moreover, traces and clues about the past are specifically represented as emerging in the urban landscape, as I will demonstrate; drawing on the notion of the city itself as an archive in which such traces are simultaneously hidden and revealed.

Caché clearly invites a consideration of the question of memory, which has structured many existing analyses of the film (see, for instance, Austin 2007; Milful 2008; Nair 2009; Radstone 2010; Rothberg 2009; Saxton 2007; Silverman 2010; Sundholm 2011; Virtue 2011). I propose to read the question of memory in the film through Haneke's representation of Parisian space, including the *banlieue*, in order to reflect upon some of the structural concerns of this thesis: about how the contemporary space of the city and its *banlieue* have repeatedly been used to articulate a complex relationship between past and present. I argue that it is precisely through the spatial that a sense of the temporal emerges, through processes of superimposing time frames anchored in specific spaces that I have explored through literary devices in other chapters.

Although some scholars point to the value of a spatial analysis when it comes to addressing how the film explores issues of social exclusion and immigration in contemporary Europe (Cowan 2008; Silverman 2007), to date there remains no examination of the specific relationship of the spatial to the temporal and how the

issue of memory is explored both formally and thematically *through* representations of Paris. *Caché* has generated an abundance of scholarship that spans disciplinary boundaries. Since its release the film has proved to be a compelling object of study for scholars in the fields of French studies, film studies, and beyond. Not only does the surfeit of critical work on the film itself merit scrutiny but furthermore the film presents itself as an apposite primary source in terms of the recurrent concerns of this thesis.

Questions of seeing and of visibility have been central to research on *Caché* (see, for instance, Beugnet 2007; Ezra & Sillars 2007; Penney 2011; Saxton 2007). The ‘field of the visual’ has dominated critics’ engagement with the film; be it the identification of ‘blind spots’ (Beugnet 2007) or the articulation of the seemingly oxymoronic ‘hidden in plain sight’ (Ezra & Sillars 2007). Libby Saxton’s analysis of off-screen space in the film (Saxton 2007) has been influential: Silverman’s observation that what is visible is ‘haunted’ by what is outside the frame (Silverman 2010: 58) and Manon’s analysis of how processes of masking-off and part-concealment ‘reorient’ our relation to what remains visible (Manon 2010) both clearly draw on her early observations. Cowan recognizes his debt to Saxton, in his development of the very spatial nature of Haneke’s presentation of the fortification of the apartment against presences beyond it (Cowan 2008). For Guy Austin, it is the child’s drawings, rather than the much commented-upon videos, that inscribe the trauma of the Algerian War in the film (Austin 2007), and his exploration of trauma theory and testimony also occurs through the field of the visual.

Analyses almost invariably focus on the question of memory. For many, the ‘hidden’ of the title refers to the repressed memory of the massacre on 17th October 1961, but I would argue that this functions in a more complex way. I argue that

Haneke uses space to challenge the very semantic categories of hiding and revealing as opposing processes. As Patrick Crowley has argued (2010), the film is not about the events of October 1961 in Paris, but rather is a meditation on the dynamic of remembering and forgetting (Crowley 2010: 267). Crowley's analysis of this dynamic, however, takes place within a thematic and psychoanalytic exploration of guilt. Indeed, shame and guilt have been generative concepts for critics of the film, and Catherine Wheatley's chapter on *Caché* in her monograph on the ethics of viewing in Haneke's wider œuvre takes shame, guilt and the radical way in which Haneke interpellates the viewer (Wheatley 2009) as focal points.

Most critics also engage in some way with another key feature that has emerged across the works selected for this study, by identifying the film as self-reflexive and metatextual, and by bringing attention to the very medium of film.²³⁵ Perhaps part of the overwhelming critical interest in the film is due to the film's manifestation of what Wheatley calls Haneke's 'most complete attempt to date at a harmonisation of content and form' (Wheatley 2009: 154). For Beugnet, Haneke's strategy is not just a 'play on representation', but 'an actual process of thought' (Beugnet 2007: 31), a point echoed by Brian Price and John Rhodes in the introduction to their edited collection, when they state that Haneke's art cinema 'regards the cinematic image as much as a mode of thought as a mode of picturing' (Price & Rhodes 2010: 2).

It seems, then, that one of the reasons why the film is so sustaining for scholars is the way in which it brings the art and medium of film together with 'theory', going beyond metatextuality and self-referentiality to function as a theoretical object. The Greek word *theoria* is clearly associated with looking, optics,

²³⁵ For instance, Jan Jagodzinski (in Foshay ed. 2012) uses the film's essential self-reflexivity as a point of comparison with *Benny's Video* (Haneke 1992).

ways of seeing, perspective and vision, and critics agree that the film holds the status of the image up for debate, ‘disrupting our expectations’ (Ezra & Sillars 2007: 218). All the primary sources examined in this thesis are metatextual, that is to say they all reflect on the very process of writing or filming, drawing attention to the mechanisms of representation to consider the questions ‘what is a text?’ and ‘what is a film?’. For Modiano one way in which a reflection on the boundaries of a text emerges is through intertextual references, not only to the wider literary canon but also intratextually to the author’s own work. Each new text, generically difficult to codify and categorise, makes implicit and explicit references to others through recurring character names or street names that weave a leitmotif throughout the wider œuvre, redolent of Balzac’s *La Comédie humaine*. A similar sense of interconnections marks Haneke’s œuvre, through the repeated use of the names Georges (or Georg in the early Austrian language films) and Anne (or Anna). Such references across his work suggest the importance of the question of the frame and of notions of inside and outside from the outset, as well as implying a permeability of boundaries between texts that returns us to poststructuralist questions about where a text begins. The question of boundaries and borders and the related issues of divisions and connections repeatedly emerge as central considerations in each chapter of this thesis.

Significantly for my spatial analysis, Ezra and Sillars point out how Georges and Anne become almost obsessed with finding out precisely from what position in the street the first tape was filmed (Ezra & Sillars 2007: 218). Location is primary here and they find corroborative evidence in Georges’s and Anne’s proficiency at reading maps: not only are there maps on their walls but they also successfully establish the location of Majid’s apartment (ibid.: 218). As I have demonstrated in other chapters, the motif of maps and a fascination with positionality and spatial co-

ordinates is of significance in a consideration of memory and identity. Beugnet also uses a specifically spatial analysis to argue that the actual and the virtual become entangled in the film. Significantly, rather than drawing attention to how the present is haunted by the past, it is to a process of superimposition or ‘simultaneous presents that overlap’ (Beugnet 2007: 230), that she points. Silverman posits that Haneke’s film marks a shift in postcolonial politics from the French colonial ‘civilising mission’ to a spatially depicted defensive attitude of keeping the Other out (Silverman 2007: 246). One way this is shown is by the high security zone surrounding the Laurents’ house, which is situated on a higher level, as if to signal the locking out of difference spatially (Silverman 2007: 247).

In the first section of this chapter, I consider why Haneke uses the city of Paris as a setting for this story, engaging with analyses that tend to undermine the importance of this specific location. The specific ways in which Paris and the *banlieue* function in the film is due in part to the very spatial nature of the events of October 1961. Part of my argument stems from the fact that a comparative approach, sensitive to the way in which Haneke opens out responsibility to imply a sense of connections between different memories of violence, is equally sensitive to difference and specificity. In the following section, I explore how Haneke directly problematises any clear notion of the diegetic present, offering instead endless images, remediations and representations that challenge the hierarchical relationship between text (in Derrida’s terms) or image and reality. I demonstrate how the city streets become a site of the *unheimlich* as boundaries between inside and outside collapse, revealing the instability of such categories of opposition. Finally, I explore the way in which memory is represented formally rather than just thematically in the film, and return to poststructuralist questions about semiotics, representation and referentiality through a

sustained consideration of the film's motif of maps. I argue that key clues to the violent past, and the ongoing refusal to see that violence as problematic, emerge as embedded, hidden even, in the Parisian streets of the thirteenth *arrondissement*, suggesting that such violence is part of the fabric of the city. Moreover, Haneke pushes the viewer to look in a completely different way.

Paris and the *banlieue* as Setting: Specific Place, Universal Implications

Existing scholarship on *Caché* has tended to oscillate between arguing that the setting of Paris is largely irrelevant (see, for instance, Ezra & Sillars 2007; Wheatley 2010), and implying that the film is specifically about the repressed memory of October 1961, the Algerian War or indeed colonialism itself (see, for instance, Beugnet 2007; Celik 2010; Virtue 2011). Patrick Crowley has suggested that the film may be less about the events of October 1961 in Paris than the dynamic of remembering and forgetting (Crowley in Price & Rhodes eds. 2010: 267), recalling Rothberg's contention that it is state complicity that is the real crime in *MM*, rather than either of the more specific crimes explored.

In this section I will argue that in the film the city of Paris and the *banlieue* function *simultaneously* as specific sites in which to explore questions of French memory as played out in urban space, whilst also sustaining a more general status as a typical European city, thereby making the link to other histories of violence. On the one hand, the film explores a distinct moment in French and Parisian history and memory – distinct for its unique historical context and for the way in which it challenged clear-cut boundaries between linguistic and semantic categories of 'here' and 'there', 'metropolitan' and 'peripheral'. In contrast with analyses that posit the specificity of this distinct moment in French history (the events of October 1961) or

those which argue for the broader, philosophical and moral implications of Haneke's film, my analysis foregrounds precisely the tension between the general and the specific. One of the features of urban space as it is emerging in representations across the corpus is that it is at once irreducibly specific and profoundly universal. Furthermore, it is this very tension that is at stake in any comparative approach to different memories. This analysis draws on Silverman's reformulation of the categories of horror and the everyday (2006), which, as Beugnet also argues, hinges upon a more subtle engagement with the play between similarity and difference (Beugnet 2007: 228). This approach is not driven by the flattening effect of conflating surface with depth, nor by the Manichean distinction of boundaries between opposites (Beugnet 2007: 228), but rather it is predicated on a sensitivity to a more delicate understanding of similarity and difference

Elizabeth Ezra and Jane Sillars point to the seemingly endless debates the film has generated, exceeding normal interpretive possibilities and ultimately resisting decoding (Ezra & Sillars 2007: 211). They explore how the film illustrates the notion of turning a blind eye, and conversely being made to look.²³⁶ They explore the figures of surface and depth and the category of the everyday, and argue that readings that limit it to its French setting undermine the film's radical social, political and philosophical content. Like Crowley they question the specificity of the Parisian setting, arguing that to reduce the questions elicited by the film to issues of purely French history and memory actually replicates the film's 'themes of displacement, avoidance and the refusal to look close to home' (ibid.: 215). Crucially, they argue that Haneke interrogates the very geographic and imaginative category of 'home' and how it functions on the basis of inclusion and exclusion (ibid.: 215). For them, as for

²³⁶ The optic figures of turning a blind eye and being made to look that have been identified elsewhere as central motifs in Haneke's films (see, for instance, Saxton 2008) recall Maspero's formulation of the travel writer's moral obligation, 'plutôt que de regarder, dire: ça me regarde' (Maspero 1990: 22).

Crowley, the ‘hidden’ of the title refers not only to the broader story of ‘colonial suffering’, but more precisely to the structures of oppression and complicity that form the foundations of contemporary metropolitan life (ibid.: 215).²³⁷

Silverman suggests that *Caché* is a film about France (embodied by Georges) not being able to deal with its guilt or the other’s difference (Silverman 2007: 248).²³⁸ He qualifies this somewhat by stating that Georges does not stand for the whole of France, but for a specific demographic. There is a generational as well as class-based nuance here: as Georges’s mother appears to have erased the memory of Majid entirely (Silverman 2007: 248), Georges’s and Anne’s liberal bourgeois lifestyles produce reactions of repression and denial, but Pierrot has his own entirely distinct relation to the drawings, to what they represent, and to Majid’s son (ibid.: 248).

Catherine Wheatley points to the director’s resistance to seeing his films as treating specific national problems (Wheatley 2010: 155-156), and argues that the context of Paris in the film is largely irrelevant, as it is a film with far-reaching moral implications (Wheatley 2010: 156). There may be a danger in reading all Haneke’s films with his own comments in mind, as Rhodes and Price remind us as they read both ‘with and against Haneke’s own statements on image making’ (Price and Rhodes 2010: 7). Wheatley appears only to read with Haneke, as the premise for her engagement is his own declaration that the film is about personal narratives of guilt and denial, rather than the Franco-Algerian relationship (ibid.: 156).

²³⁷ Such an analysis resonates strongly with my exploration of Daeninckx’s presentation of complicity and structures of oppression as the broader crimes at stake, rather than the more specific crimes of deportation and the ‘state terror’ of October 1961 (House & MacMaster 2006) of October 1961.

²³⁸ Part of Paul Gilroy’s criticism of the film pivots around the ways in which Haneke equates today’s ‘complacent and indifferent adults’ and the violence of the colonial and postcolonial encounter with the actions of a six year old (Gilroy 2007: 235). He argues that the reference to 17th October is too casual and ‘does a lot of narrative work for Haneke’ (ibid.: 233). While Gilroy is right to remind us that any representation of the Other, from the point of view of the western, white, male can carry with it problematic politics of identity, and to question precisely how the film interacts with this complex entanglement of issues, he risks undermining the film’s radical metatextual theoretical underpinning, which is precisely engaged in questioning naturalised power structures through both its content and form.

Haneke's presentation of Paris in *Caché* seems to play with notions of space and place, and containing the general *and* the specific in one filmic and geographical space in fact proves integral to the film's philosophy. On the one hand, the markers of this filmed space as Parisian are clear from the start; the blue street sign signals that we are in the thirteenth *arrondissement* on Rue des Iris.²³⁹ On the other hand, the space presented is almost generic in nature, devoid of the history, identity and memory that would make it a place, which aligns it with Marc Augé's concept of *non-lieux* (Augé 1992). However, the relationship between Paris and its *banlieue* explored through Georges's visits to Majid's HLM brings into play a topographical feature which is distinctive to Paris. In this way a complex and ambiguous presentation of Paris as both space and place starts to emerge. David Clarke explores the relationship between space and place in the context of German literature (Clarke and Rechtien eds. 2009), remarking how interchangeable the terms can be in common usage, and yet simultaneously noting how 'space' implies vast and unknown expanses, whilst 'place' connotes familiarity and containment (Clarke and Rechtien eds. 2009: 7).

Part of the theoretical context that frames my approach to memory in representations of Paris draws on scholars such as Lefebvre, Foucault and (more recently) Ross in challenging the traditional tendency to privilege time over space. As I have outlined in other chapters, Foucault's 1967 lecture 'Des espaces autres' is often cited to proclaim a contemporary shift from a cultural fascination with questions of time to an era defined by spatial considerations. But Foucault's notes on the way in which space was emerging as a privileged category for social, ideological, historical and political analysis, and as a key source of contemporary anxiety, clearly point to the ontological parity of space and time: each being constitutive of the other. In fact, it

²³⁹ Many scholars have pointed out that the name *Rue des Iris* reverberates strikingly with the film's overarching thematic concern with eyes, seeing and sight (Peucker 2010), and Osterweil (2006) makes the phonetic connection that would give us the sadness of eyes, or the pain associated with looking.

is the intersection of space and time that interests him. Lefebvre and Ross, like Foucault, also challenge the tendency not to think critically about space: questioning the ways in which space was conceived of as a neutral container or unproblematic backdrop, connoting stasis and fixity, a mere stage for the more dynamic movement of historical narratives. Such a conception of space and place as ideologically implicated rather than neutral is relevant to Haneke's filmed spaces in *Caché*: as Clarke reminds us, 'space does not passively bear the marks of its construction by society (and especially by economic and political power), but simultaneously helps to shape the social order as it is expressed in space' (Clarke 2009: 2).

As Rothberg (2009) has outlined, the film makes unexpected connections between different memories of violence. He explores the scene in which Georges and Anne begin to look for Pierrot, who they think has gone missing. This familial drama plays out against the backdrop of transnational events being screened on television. Such an interlinking of personal and collective narratives of trauma is a consistent device across my corpus: each text plays on a sense of the personal and collective being embedded in each other.²⁴⁰ The events covered on the news include images from the Iraq war, Abu Ghraib and Israeli violence in Palestine. Rothberg argues that in this scene, Haneke foregrounds framing and 'the interpenetration of different frames of reference' (Rothberg 2009: 283) through different media to present both the specificity of the events and the overlap and interference of different histories (Rothberg 2009: 283-284). As the violent images flash on the screen in the middle of

²⁴⁰ In *DB* Modiano uses his search for traces of Dora as a launch for a personal quest to explore identity and a link to his father as well as a historical research about the Holocaust. In *MM* Daeninckx interlinks the Thiraud family murders with broader narratives of deportation and October 1961. Maspero's tour of the *banlieue* is a personal account that is laced with traces of collective histories. In Sebbar's novel the protagonists' search for clues to family secrets is inextricable from the collective histories of violence in France.

their bookcase,²⁴¹ Georges and Anne ignore them and as Rothberg points out, such a ‘structural nonseeing’ (ibid.: 284) by the metropolitan bourgeoisie is the very ‘condition of possibility’ (ibid.: 284) for various histories of imperial violence. Significantly for Rothberg, their ‘nonseeing’ not only implicates them in the broader moral sense of Western culpability, but it is precisely because they fail to *see the connections*, the reverberations between and across the personal and collective realms represented in this scene, that this is so problematic.

Rothberg’s astute analysis raises a number of points pertinent to this question of the film’s at once general and specific relationship to space and place. He identifies how the scene in which Georges and Anne notice Pierrot is missing not only embodies the dynamics of multidirectional memories, but also articulates how this manifests at the interstices of public and private space (as well as between everyday life and extreme violence) in the film. Rothberg’s analysis suggests that *space* functions to contain or refer to multiple narratives and temporalities. One of the recurring themes throughout the film is the process of globalisation. It will be picked up again at various points, but it is striking as a motif because of the way in which it encapsulates a sense of cross-cultural connections, between different places and people, even if such relationships are far from even.

The news report appears as the full frame and, as Rothberg has pointed out, depicts a number of news stories on an international scale. The news concerns European troops in Nasiriyah in Iraq, and Barbara Contini, the Italian politician

²⁴¹ As Cowan has noted, the bookcase in the Laurents’ house mirrors that of Georges’s television show set (Cowan 2008), intimating that they live in a set of simulacra in which the books function merely as props or insubstantial substitutes for reality. Significantly, Cowan highlights how books have become disconnected from reality, and their role in the public sphere is not one of ‘dialogue and debate’ (Cowan 2008: 125), but rather they become physical agents of exclusion, in their spatial manifestation as walls (ibid.: 125). In Cowan’s analysis, such a representation of mass media and high culture illustrates new strategies for defending the psyche and ‘warding off guilt’ (ibid.: 125). A sense of reconnecting with that to which we have become anesthetized is achieved, Cowan argues, not through the tapes depicting that violence, but rather through depicting the (very spatial) shield (ibid.: 126).

specialising in international relations, peacekeeping, and negotiations, is interviewed. The local, the national, the European and the international are all brought into the frame, with the emphasis on their relationality. Equally, the temporal and the spatial are brought into play, as the images show geographic locations indicated on a map. The frame of the report also contains the time for Brussels, Moscow and New York, linking various places to their temporality and creating a space in which multiple layers of space and time are referenced. Barbara Contini contends that the various countries on this mission need to operate under the same rules, for ‘plus d’homogénéité’. This representation of global relations, which we are soon to learn is being played out in the Laurents’ living room, begins to explore what is at stake in a multicultural, globalised society, and in turn highlights the issues of a comparative approach, as such questions of power and the play between similarity and difference (as encapsulated by the reference to homogeneity) are implied.

Contini talks against the backdrop of a map, reminding us again of the relationship between space, power, territories and violence, and significantly her words are filtered through translation. The translation occurs in the recognisable style of reportage in which the original language is audible ‘underneath’ the recorded French, giving the sonic effect of superimposition. Such a layering of different languages and the emphasis on the *process* of translation resonates with the broader concerns of this thesis, which is underpinned by a poststructuralist approach to referentiality; in which language(s), like representation, function as a filter or screen to the referent or reality. The issue of translation is indeed not secondary to Haneke’s presentation of memory through film as it draws attention to semiotics: codified structures, systems of categorisation and modes of communication. The process of translation is not neutral or transparent and inevitably alters the source text, inflecting

it with domestic contexts and characteristics as it passes from one language into another.²⁴² Just as Maspero calls attention to the screen of the window through which he observes his journey on the train, which leaves its own trace of grey on the viewed image, Haneke also brings attention to the processes between the referent and our understanding of it. The etymology of the word translation, to carry over, has significant implications for memory as traces and implies a spatial figure – carrying over across borders, from one language to another, from one place to another, from past to present.

This also occurs as the television camera smoothly zooms out from the scene to show that the news belongs to the background of the diegetic ‘present’, and a US spokesperson is translated speaking about torture in Iraq. Now multiple and competing languages, spaces and time frames are overlaid in the form of the palimpsest, as each layer simply adds to the previous one, whose traces and marks (sonic and visual) are not removed or completely obscured. The process of translation, then, while it must be as objective and ‘invisible’ (Venuti 2008) as possible, in fact leaves its imprints and like representation must be viewed with caution as regards its relation to ‘reality’, ‘truth’ or the source text. Furthermore, in line with representations of memory across the corpus, translation might also be viewed as a creative process.

Haneke’s representation of the *banlieue* in *Caché* has not received any critical attention, and yet it functions in a significant way both thematically and narratively.

Indeed the tension between the *centre-ville* (where the Laurents live) and the *banlieue*

²⁴² Domestication and foreignization are two basic translation strategies put forward by translation theorist Lawrence Venuti. For Venuti, domestication involves ‘an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values’, while foreignization ‘is the ethnodeviant pressure on those (cultural) values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text’ (Venuti 1995: 20). The ‘play’ of similarity and difference are clearly at work here as the question of how strangeness and difference are integrated emerges, raising some central questions about cultural integration and assimilation more broadly.

(where Majid resides) is a key element of the spatial dynamics of the film, which also incorporates the rural farmhouse of Georges's childhood. In an exploration of space in Sebbar's *LSR* (1999), Dawn Fulton has noted that 'the uniquely centralised French nation thus draws three increasingly concentrated circles of cultural *appartenance*, between Hexagon and colony, between Paris and provincial France, and between central Paris and its outskirts' (Fulton 2007: 26). It is precisely this series of spatial relationships that is explored by Haneke in *Caché*, and which opens up the film's treatment of the implications of the past in the present. In a sense it is through space that the relationships between Georges and Majid (and France and Algeria) is depicted. These spatial relations feature a temporal dimension, as it is through them that the shift from colonial to postcolonial politics is marked. It is the tapes that lead Georges to both the HLM and his rural childhood home, as Haneke uses these journeys across and beyond the city to represent a journey to the past and function to encourage Georges to take responsibility in the present. In an interview (Artificial Eye DVD 2005) Haneke asserts that what is at stake in the film is not just a consideration of the past through the narrative of Georges's childhood actions, but also, and perhaps more importantly, it is an exploration of how Georges continues to act in the present. His return to his mother's house and his visit to Majid's HLM are both facilitated by the mysterious tapes and both journeys depart from central Paris. The journey into the past, symbolized by Georges's return to the farmhouse, problematises the retrieval of the memory of what happened with Majid. In fact, the most important trip Georges makes is to the HLM where he can most directly confront not the past but the implications of the past in the present.

Marc Augé's concept of *non-lieux* (Augé 1995) is one prism through which the representation of the relationship between these spaces can be read. As Augé has

argued, non-places are characterised by their lack of memory and identity, and in the film this might be seen in the scenes when Georges goes to Majid's HLM. In the *banlieue* Georges gets a coffee from a vending machine in a petrol station rather than a café, the place most strongly associated with central Parisian social life, and where Anne goes to meet her bourgeois friend Pierre from work. The petrol station shots contrast directly with the busy café scene that frames Anne and Pierre's rendez-vous *en centre ville*; the café is filled with people talking, it is vibrant, bright, there are busy waitresses and the hum of conversation.

By contrast, in the petrol station shop there is nobody to serve the coffee so Georges must take it from the machine: the cups are plastic and disposable, rather than solid, antique crockery with a history and a narrative. The petrol station shop is marked only by rows of identical products, like fizzy drinks.²⁴³ In Augé's modern ethnology of the epoch of supermodernity he highlights the way in which late capitalism has produced non-places of permanent transience, often interstitial, such as the airport and the motorway service station, a category into which the petrol station shop would fit. In such spaces, Augé argues, people do not meet and communicate, as in the lively café scene, filled with the constant babble of conversation: rather interactions are mediated by signs and images. In non-places subjects' interactions are structured by rules they have not defined, in contrast to places, where space is lived in and controlled by its inhabitants. Also central to Augé's anthropologic study of the near and the modern is the sense of 'permanent transience', likewise captured in Haneke's short but loaded representation of the Parisian suburbs.

²⁴³ This scene is redolent of Haneke's first feature film, *Der siebente Kontinent* (1993), which depicts the alienation of modern life for a young working couple and their daughter. One of the key scenes in which such isolation and repetition is established is in the supermarket where rows of identical products are lined up ready for consumption. Although there is a cashier, the exchange is so lacking in life that in accordance with the formal devices of the film, Haneke uses only close ups that sever the actions (of paying the cashier, for instance) from the bodies and faces of the subjects.

Permanent transience encapsulates the tendency I have identified elsewhere, that would suggest a break down in binary conceptions, offering in their stead a sense of paradox, contradiction and ‘in-betweenness’. Furthermore, it draws on the spatial, implying both movement and stasis simultaneously, and a temporal dimension is hinted at as permanence refers to an (ongoing) time span. For Georges, the *banlieue* is indeed only a site to be passed through. Such sites serve capitalism but without the social dimension that marked the Baudelairean experience of early capitalism in the city. Georges can fill up on petrol, buy a drink from a machine and stand with his plastic cup, but the experience has been reduced to a purely functional transaction. In Maspero’s auto-ethnographic travel narrative of the *banlieue* many of these features of non-place are also depicted in a scathing account of the social consequences of contemporary architecture.

Augé’s conception of non-places suggests a lack of clear identity that is supported by Haneke’s presentation of the empty no man’s land surrounding Majid’s HLM. This contrasts visibly with scenes shot in the film’s *centre-ville*, featuring the red, white and blue of the national flag in state spaces such as the police station or the cosy and familiar markers of the Parisian streets.²⁴⁴ Non-places lack these indications of specificity, being much more generic in character. The airport lounge or the motorway service station, for instance, could be located anywhere in the world in the epoch of supermodernity. Haneke’s presentation of urban space, then, draws on what Maspero identifies as a common preconception of the *banlieue* as a grey expanse of

²⁴⁴ In the scene outside the police station the street is depicted as a space of aggressive encounters. As Cowan (2008) has argued, Haneke explicitly draws on the Italian neo-realist fascination with the street as opening up filmic space to chance encounters and crossed paths, and yet in this contemporary European setting such a sense of dialogue between subjectivities takes on new levels of meaning. Furthermore, this street scene also represents the interlinking of the personal narrative of Georges, his threatened and selfish childhood self, and the broader narrative of Franco-Algerian relations. Significantly, Georges’s outburst with the cyclist is explicitly framed by the national colours of the flag and the ‘repressive state apparatus’ that is the police station.

shapeless, in-between space, a *terrain vague* or ‘un magma informe, un désert de dix millions d’habitants, une suite de constructions grises indifférenciées, un purgatoire circulaire, avec au centre Paris-Paradis’ (Maspero 1990: 24). In *Caché* the Paris setting thus functions at once as a generic Western city in which to explore potentially multiple versions of the story of Georges’s guilt and the implications of the past for the present, and yet we are constantly reminded that this is Paris. Furthermore, the representation of Paris in the film is itself not uniform and precisely emphasises the disconnections and differences between the centre and the suburbs, playing with notions of generality and specificity.

“There is no present”: Uncanny Street Space

In *Caché*, any clear-cut notion of the diegetic present is challenged by the disconnected overlaying of voices with images that belong to different time frames. Criticism has repeatedly located the fast-forward lines in the long opening shot as the key moment introducing the image’s unstable status, but in this analysis I argue that a much more complex overlaying of visual and sonic strata is in play, confusing spatial and temporal delineations. Furthermore, I explore the way in which the space of the street is represented as domestic and familiar *and* a site of concealment.

Thomas Y. Levin’s analysis of the ways in which the film deals with issues, themes and motifs of surveillance, while also itself adopting a ‘surveillant narrative practice’ (Levin in Grundmann ed. 2010: 75) is instructive. Arguing that analyses to date have tended to focus on content and themes rather than form and aesthetics, he observes the ‘perceived centrality of political allegory’ (ibid.: 75) in scholarly criticism of the film, at the expense of any sustained engagement with ‘aesthetic politics’ in the film’s use of surveillant techniques. Levin argues that the markers of

the film's surveillant point of view on the tapes begin to disappear in scenes that are simply narrative rather than being framed as surveillant. Crucially, he argues that such scenes adopt the 'vocabulary' (ibid.: 80) – static camera, surveillant duration, and identical framing – of the 'earlier diegeticized surveillant scene' (ibid.: 80). Although my analysis is not especially concerned with the aspect of surveillance, it is informed by a close examination of the ways in which the changes between scenes imply a layering of temporal and spatial planes that is crucial to Haneke's representation of memory in space.

Superimposition of different time periods anchored in specific sites in Paris has been a key literary technique employed in the explorations of memory in this study. Here, superimposition and remediation function to disorientate us from the source moment or time frame, so as to frustrate any clear-cut notion of delineations between past, present and future. The device of superimposition is one that is identifiable from the outset, as the credits gradually accumulate on the screen, which apart from the soundtrack resembles a still image, until someone walks past.

The implied impossibility of beginning and related questions about where a text begins and ends, along with the notion of framing and how such boundaries are established, resonates with Derrida's approach to writing. In Leslie Hill's analysis of context in Derrida's paper 'Signature événement contexte', such questions are fundamental. That 'there can be no pure, authorised, authoritative beginning' (Hill 2007: 25) in writing not only presents an appropriate paradigm for reading the film, but also has broader implications for this thesis. The link between memory and representation has been clearly established in other chapters and remains a central tenet of this one. The possibility of getting back to the source time frame or moment in the film is constantly thwarted, as what we think is present time will be revealed as

having been filmed in the past and only remediated in the present (which existing scholarship argues is marked by the fast-forward lines). As Derrida has shown ‘an essential and irreducible aspect’ of context is that it can never be fully and absolutely determined (Hill 2007: 25). If the film is explicitly metatextual or metafilmic, and processes of representation are being linked to the form of memory, then Derrida’s observations about the nature of framing a text and the ‘violence’ (Hill 2007: 25) of attempts at beginning become strikingly relevant.

The much discussed establishing scene will be just one of a series of interrelated filmic frames that deserve attention *in relation to* each other. It is the very notion of such connections and disconnections across frames that produce a sense of temporality. Rothberg observes that the shift occurs at the level of the film’s narration, from ‘external narration to character-bound focalization’ (Rothberg 2009: 282). For him this ‘opening trick’ (ibid.: 282) is recreated throughout the film and imposes an identification with both Georges and those in control of the surveillance (ibid.: 282).²⁴⁵ Like Levin, Rothberg notes how this opening shot challenges the status of all the following shots (as they may all, at least temporarily, be viewed as surveillance shots) (ibid.: 282). It is precisely this tension between focalisation and narration that suggests the significance of modes of visibility for Rothberg.

Libby Saxton and D. I. Grossvogel locate the key perspectival shift of this opening shot in the fast-forward tracking lines that appear on the screen, as they mark the reversal of inside and outside. Both highlight that it is at this moment that what we thought was a long take *outside* the Laurents’ house is in fact revealed as a video tape being watched by the Laurents *inside* the house (Grossvogel 2007: 39; Saxton 2007:

²⁴⁵ Rothberg contrasts this with the perspective of the narration in *Meurtres pour mémoire*, which is marked by an exteriority of the investigator (Rothberg 2009: 282).

8).²⁴⁶ What is crucial in these analyses is the uncertainty of spatial and temporal categories and of oppositions between inside and outside, past and present. Perceived opposites are challenged to the point of total collapse, but this is only made possible by the way in which Haneke initially sets up our expectations of these. That is to say, the shock is produced because we thought we were outside in the present but then realise that we are inside viewing the past. Equally, the shift expands the frame: we thought we were watching the film, but then realise that we are watching the characters watching the film within the film. The shift pivots firstly around our sense that these categories exist as oppositions, but the uncertainty produced hinges upon the simultaneity of the shot, as it is represented as being both inside and outside, and neither at the same time. Boundaries, then, are revealed to be less secure than they first appeared to be. In Derrida's 'La Double séance' in *La Dissemination* (Derrida 1972), what appears to be outside is in fact already inside, rendering the opposition void: 'mais la composition ou décomposition syntaxique d'un signe rend caduque cette alternative de l'intérieur et de l'extérieur' (Derrida 1972: 250). Such challenges have important implications for the relationships between text and 'reality'; and between language and world (Hill 2007: 36), and as I argue here, for memory too.

Saxton draws on Bazin, Burch, Bonitzer and Deleuze to demonstrate how the '*hors-champ* is a permanent presence in cinema' (Saxton 2007: 5). Her exploration of that which is 'irreducibly present' (ibid.: 5) and yet not visible within the frame argues that the spectator is ultimately implicated by the way Haneke mobilises off-screen space. What emerges about the relationship between what is concealed and what is revealed, and about the mechanisms that structure such processes, has

²⁴⁶ For Grossvogel such 'jarring awareness' gives the viewer vision of both the tape and the (diegetic) narrative that contains it (Grossvogel 2007: 39), and for Saxton the effect is one of disorientation and confusion (Saxton 2007: 8), which for Rothberg too also bears the mark of the uncanny (Rothberg 2009: 282; Saxton 2007: 8).

profound implications for both film studies and memory studies. Bazin's famous formulation is pertinent to this thesis: he shows how the cinema screen, in delineating the boundaries of its frame with masking tape, paradoxically draws attention to its partiality, announcing itself as just a section of reality and simultaneously pointing to the space that continues beyond the frame (ibid.: 6). What is cut out and unseen, therefore, is in a dynamic relationship with what is visible within the frame. In fact, in this formulation the unseen becomes a fertile site of meaning production, informing our interpretations. Moreover, Bazin shows that there is something intrinsically partial and selective about the cinematic frame.²⁴⁷

The image itself, Price and Rhodes remind us, is neutral and has no *essential* relation to violence (Price and Rhodes eds. 2010: 6). The absence of violence in what we see onscreen encapsulates what they identify as Haneke's ethical dynamic: we should not depend on the image to directly give us any 'truth' and that it is the relationship *between* the images that we see and those we do not see that is of import (ibid.: 6). Such a poststructuralist conception of the way in which images, like language, do not and cannot give us the truth directly, and have no essential relationship to what they represent, is instructive. In my analysis, the poststructuralist consideration of meaning production and signs I have addressed in the literary texts under examination now deserves attention in relation to the medium of film. Does Haneke do with the image, as a theoretical object, what poststructuralism does with language?

This (re-)formulation of the relationship between visible and invisible identifies the hidden aspects of the medium as a privileged site for revelations. That 'cinematic revelation may be predicated upon a process of concealment' (Saxon

²⁴⁷ In *Benny's Video*, Price and Rhodes have pointed out, violence is revealed only through its absence in the image that we see (Price and Rhodes eds. 2010: 6).

2007: 6) challenges the binary opposition positing a mutually exclusive relationship between visible and invisible, and instead offers a far more complex and compelling model.²⁴⁸ This implies a rather different sense of concealment than is depicted in *MM*, for instance. Rather than overt state cover-ups, Haneke's framework contains clues that remain unseen whilst having ostensibly been made visible. As Rothberg explains, the tapes represent the unknowable and the unseen through the unfathomable position of the hidden camera, and yet it is precisely the visible realm that the tapes reveal. Perhaps Rothberg's notion of 'invisible visibility' points to what Modiano and Maspero both observe: that searching for clues to the past in Paris requires learning to look at something familiar in a different way. It is in this way that familiar, everyday spaces, like the housing estate in Drancy in *PRE*, become archives for traces of histories of more extreme violence.

The clear challenge to perceived opposites and the disintegration of divisive boundaries (the visible is also simultaneously invisible) fits into recurring observations across the broader corpus of the thesis.²⁴⁹ This blurring of boundaries and focus on simultaneity that has been repeatedly observed in the corpus has repercussions for the representation of memory. Such a sense of simultaneity is developed with the effect of superimposing different time periods and spaces, implying a challenge to oppositional thinking about past and present, inside and outside.

²⁴⁸ This is echoed in Rothberg's observation that these two modes, the visible and the invisible, coexist within the film, creating a sense of 'invisible visibility' or something that remains hidden in clear view (Rothberg 2009: 282).

²⁴⁹ For Beugnet, Haneke's film bears comparison to David Lynch's *The Lost Highway* (1997) in the way in which both deal with potentially sinister presences beneath the surface of 'acceptable' everyday life (Beugnet 2007: 229). She likens the two directors' fascination with the ultimate ambiguity of the moving image, as for both of them: 'the medium of presence is also the medium of absence', going beyond the alternation between the two to play on co-existence (Beugnet 2007: 229).

Many scholars have noted (Beugnet 2007; Ezra & Sillars 2007; Grossvogel 2007; Rothberg 2009; Saxton 2007) that the unusually long opening shot of the front of the house is ‘punctuated’ (Zimmer 2011: 98) by the fast-forward lines. As Saxton has observed, this long take has already unsettled us in the sense imagined by Burch, as minutes in there is still no clearly identifiable, ostensible action, making the viewer suspicious (Saxton 2007: 6; 7) and sensitised, compelling us to ask questions and look for clues.²⁵⁰ Crucially, Saxton uses this moment to demonstrate Bazin’s point about the nature of the cinematic frame, that its ‘masked-off-ness’ (Manon in Price and Rhodes eds. 2010) is somehow aware of its partiality, as if the frame signals the image’s location in the bigger picture, ‘reality’, from which it came. While the fast-forward moment does represent a rupture or jump in narrative levels through the very medium itself, I would contend that a complex layering of sonic and visual strata is already in place by the moment the fast-forward begins.

The first superimposition occurs purely at the visual level, as the credits accumulate over the opening shot and we are implicitly reminded through this layering of post-production editing work that this is a film that has been through production and post-production processes. The next superimposition occurs at a sonic level, and it is here that the jarring effect is first created, as the voices that overlay the image are apparently not connected to the image at all: ‘et alors?’, ‘rien’, and ‘c’était où?’. The dialogue introduces the fundamental question of location and positionality, and the word ‘rien’ is the first of many ‘nothings’ repeated throughout the film, perhaps indicating the structural and thematic importance of absence and lack to the film’s aesthetic philosophy. A sense of connection is created between this frame and

²⁵⁰ The motif of looking for clues as an investigator, detective, historian, traveller, researcher, documentary maker or author, and the specific type of reading and looking that this requires, is one that is repeated at a narrative level across the corpus. Moreover, all the texts reproduce this motif at a formal level, so that the process of reading or watching requires a certain type of attentiveness that is active and engaged, and invites us as readers and viewers to make our own connections.

the next shot, which has a different light and texture and in which Georges leaves the house from a different position. The resolution of this new image is sharper, with a higher quality production value characteristic of the high definition format (it is Haneke's first film using high definition video cameras). The connection is created as the sounds seem to join up: just before the shot changes the sound of a door opening can be heard, and then in the next shot we see Georges emerge through his front door. This is the 'present' of the film, which already shifts the initial image to belonging to the past.

The dialogue we hear can be matched up with the voice of Georges as he looks for the place where the person filming must have been, 'il aurait dû être là, non?'. Anne tells Georges to come inside, 'rentre', and the moment that he crosses the threshold of his house back inside the image returns us to outside. It is now that we begin to realise that outside is inside and present is past. Temporality is articulated here as a set of connections and disconnections between frames, and the links are formed through an overlaying of different spatial and temporal strata. It is in this return to the first shot that the diegetic present opens up, revealing the opening shot as a 'trace being reviewed' (Levin 2010: 76) through the now famous fast-forward lines.

Saxton contends that this shift also signifies that the first shot is actually a close up of a television screen (Saxton 2007: 8), which makes narrative sense. However, in a film about cinematic production and about where the frame begins and ends and how to negotiate these borders and boundaries in the first place, the opening shot would not have been relayed through the close up of a television screen, but rather would have been directly lifted from the surveillance footage itself. Furthermore, this realignment or rather perpetual reframing of the present zooms out, in a sense, to include precisely such a reflection on how the films were produced

within the film, whilst simultaneously signalling Haneke's own production processes. Different frames of media compete and intersect, including the frame of the film itself, aligning spectatorial perspective with an 'unknown and potentially hostile off-screen presence' (Saxton 2007: 8).²⁵¹

I want to explore further the implications of this for temporality. This repeated reframing and the central question of the frame brings us back to Derrida, and the lack of clear origin or identifiable present moment also resonates with Derrida's double session. Long-take cinematography, so crucial to the Italian neo-realists, is characterised by a visual stasis anchored in a specific space.²⁵² It is precisely stasis that marks the opening shot: its lack of editing, montage and cuts increases spectatorial awareness, which Bazin also aligned with a 'more active mental attitude' (Rhodes 2010: 89).²⁵³ Another apparent paradox is emerging: the depth-of-focus shot

²⁵¹ Other scholars too have pointed to the possible intrusion of Haneke himself into the diegesis of the film: Brigitte Peucker suggests that the technical continuity between the surveillance tapes and the other images of the film indicate that it is the 'disembodied eye (Iris) of the camera', the director himself, who is responsible for the tapes (Peucker in Price and Rhodes eds. 2010). In Catherine Wheatley's analysis impossible camera angles and the mystery of the tapes not only encourage spectator involvement in a process of self-reflection but also implicate the director in striking ways (Wheatley 2010: 163). For Wheatley this is striking because she sees Haneke as being more concerned, until this film, with exploring the ethical relationship of the spectator to the image, whereas in *Caché* Haneke brings attention to himself as the producer of the images, located on the blurry boundary of the diegesis of the film.

²⁵² Many scholars have noted the influence of Italian neo-realism on Haneke's filmmaking (Niesson 2009; Rhodes 2006; 2010), and as Rhodes points out, this takes place primarily on the aesthetic level as the 'formal rhetoric of neo-realism' persists chiefly through the definitive use of the long take (Rhodes in Price & Rhodes eds. 2010: 88). As Rhodes admits, any consideration of long takes brings us back to Bazin, who believed that depth-of-focus cinematography was closer to the structure of reality (Price and Rhodes eds. 2010: 88-89).

²⁵³ In one interview, Haneke draws on the temporality produced through the long-take: a temporality that attempts to sustain a 'real-time' framework (Rhodes 2010: 90) in the style of a fly-on-the-wall documentary with a static camera seemingly objectively relays the action within the unity of a specific space. This, of course, is equally the structure of CCTV and surveillance, likewise anchored in a particular site. For Haneke, Rhodes points out, the long-take is a mode of representation that facilitates new visions of the world, and critically this new vision carries with it a responsibility (Rhodes 2010: 90) for the viewer.

so favoured by Bazin for its proximity to the 'real world' turns out to be the very shot that challenges that relationship to reality.²⁵⁴

In *Caché* Haneke creates a tension between this real-time framework of the opening shot, of subsequent shots of the house by night and of the school steps, and of how the various scenes relate to each other, continually realigning our temporal perspective. As other scholars have pointed out (see, for instance, Levin 2010), the night surveillance scene shot from exactly the same position, thwarts our expectations in reverse. We are now expecting this to be surveillant, but it is left unmarked until after Georges's television show. As Levin has persuasively argued, this implicates us and the narration itself in the surveillance, as we have already seen what Georges is viewing as it happened (Levin 2010: 81) and as such we are *ourselves* part of that surveillance. For Levin, then, the mysterious presence is the narration itself doing the watching (ibid.: 81). This fits in with a metatextual reflection on image making and positionality. We are continually made to speculate as to the image's temporal status, looking for markers that it is past or present, live or recorded. Such a blurring of boundaries is striking in relation to Modiano's layering of distinct time periods in Paris. What is striking about the shots of the Laurents' house, and their uncertain temporal status, is that it is through the use of the same space that such uncertainty occurs. Furthermore, the space of the street itself is directly implicated in the act of surveillance. It is the street that Georges believes will contain the clues he needs to solve the mystery of the tapes, which is why he comes out into it to search for a clue in the first place. However, Haneke directly problematises this: what if the familiar space of the city street contains no ostensible clues to or traces of the violence of

²⁵⁴ In the interview with Haneke on the Artificial Eye DVD, he hints at the duality of the film, as he is both fascinated with keeping the image 'pure' and free from manipulation, as manifested in the use of the long take. Yet simultaneously he draws attention to the fact that pictures can be manipulated.

surveillance?²⁵⁵ What if the familiar space of the home, the street, might also be the site of concealment?

As I have argued, following Lefebvre (1974), space should not be conceived of as a neutral background to the unfolding events of history or indeed (capitalist) society's activities, but rather as (re-) producing social and power relations. Such a conception of space and topography as part of narratives, even agents in them rather than containers for them, is particularly compelling in relation to Haneke's use of space. In *Caché* Haneke depicts the Parisian street as a site of the *unheimlich*. Both Saxton (2007: 8) and Rothberg (2009: 282) identify the uncanny as a feature of the opening street scene, but the spatial implications of this are worth exploring in more depth. Freud's influential essay raises a number of pertinent points for Haneke's film and the representation of both memory and urban space.

In Nicolas Royle's introduction to the history of the uncanny in psychoanalysis, literature, art and film, he demonstrates that the uncanny means that the beginning is already haunted (Royle 2003: 1). It is a concept underpinned by an overwhelming sense of uncertainty about reality, a challenge to divisions between the personal and the institutional: indeed he presents it as a full-scale crisis of the proper (Royle 2003: 1). It is more than an experience of strangeness: it is, rather, a strange entanglement of familiar and unfamiliar (ibid.: 1). Furthermore, Royle explicitly describes it as disturbing a clear sense of inside and outside (ibid.: 2), and having to do with 'a strangeness of framing and borders, an experience of liminality' (ibid.: 2).

For Freud, something remarkable happens in the German language where this word is concerned. *Heimlich* means belonging to the home, and so not strange, but homely, familiar, and known. *Unheimlich*, then, means *unhomely*, *unfamiliar*, and

²⁵⁵ For Foucault the 'violence' of surveillance is inextricable from questions of state power and regulation (Foucault 1975).

therefore strange. But Freud contends that a sense of the uncanny is more than this, and we get closer to its essential ambiguity, with the second meaning of *heimlich*. In German, *heimlich* has two meanings, since as well as being the word for homeliness and familiarity, it also means concealed, kept from sight, or withheld from others:

among its different shades of meaning the word '*heimlich*' exhibits one which is identical with its opposite, '*unheimlich*'. What is *heimlich* thus comes to be *unheimlich*. (Freud 1919: 223)

For Freud this discovery is striking and it points to a doubleness or split of meanings that are 'different, and yet not contradictory': a single word referring to that which is familiar and known as well as that which is concealed and kept out of sight. It comes to mean both the first idea, and its (supposed) opposite:

heimlich is a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, *unheimlich*. *Unheimlich* is in some way or other a sub-species of *heimlich*. (Freud 1919: 225)

Perhaps this is why the concept has been so persuasive for Derrida (Royle 2003: 25). Julia Kristeva's formulation of Freud's concept points to its implications for conceptions of identity in the ways in which we encounter foreignness in *ourselves* (Kristeva 1989). In the light of this apparent paradox Freud draws on Schelling's account of *unheimlich*, in which Schelling states that its etymology must be related to something that was meant to be concealed, but has in fact come to light.

In the film, Georges and Anne are made to watch themselves through the eyes of an unknown observer, from an unknown location on their own street. The uncertainty produced by this mysterious presence just outside their domestic space, which has penetrated their home via the videos themselves, might also be read as a sense of being robbed of one's eyes. As we have seen, tightly policed boundaries between real and imaginary, the diegetic and extra-diegetic, inside and outside (the

self, the frame, the film, the home, the street, the nation), are being radically subverted so that one is not opposite from, but already inside, the other. The uncanniness produced by the other crossing the threshold of the home via the videotapes, so that Georges and Anne are made strangers to themselves, depends upon a spatial figure for its articulation.²⁵⁶

Street Scenes: Maps, Dreams, Memory and Representation

To date, most analyses of the role of memory in *Caché* have been thematically focused, exploring how the repressed memory of October 1961 and the broader Algerian War return to haunt the guilty protagonist, leading to a plethora of analyses of how guilt is produced within the film *and* on the part of the spectator. What tends to be less examined, and is in fact central to my reading, is the way in which the film's metatextual emphasis on the relationship between 'reality' (the referent) and the mode of representation recording it produces a critical reflection on the functioning of memory itself.

The map recurs as a motif throughout the film and, as Maspero's reference to Yves Lacoste makes clear, also fits into this broader concern with representation, scale, and referentiality. It is a map that locates the television news action in Palestine, the background of the scene at the Laurents' house, as they look for Pierrot. In Lacoste's research (1976), maps are revealed not as objective, scientific renderings of space, but rather as ideological tools used by the military and directly linked to the

²⁵⁶ The way in which the tapes themselves blur the boundaries between public and private spaces is also shown in the scene in which Georges's boss at the television channel receives the tape of the threats that Georges makes to Majid in his HLM. Through the tapes being mysteriously filmed, an otherwise private conversation, reinforced spatially as private by the closed-off flat in the suburbs, crosses over into Georges's professional life, which is significantly for a public television channel. Through this technique the outskirts literally penetrate the centre, just as the past penetrates the present.

production of violence and oppressive structures. The very fabric of maps is, of course, borders and lines that divide up territories. From this, we derive our sense of the identity of places, which is inextricable from what is constructed as inside and outside these borders. A map can be seen just behind Georges in the petrol station where he has a coffee after visiting Majid's apartment, as if to remind us that the metropolitan space of Paris is profoundly connected to spaces beyond its borders, as recent scholarship in French and Francophone studies also attests. The maps that appear suggest that metropolitan narratives are played out against a backdrop (literally) of international concerns, and furthermore suggest that such boundaries are becoming more permeable. Borders, then, like the hymen in Mallarmé's *Mimique*, as Derrida points out in *La Double séance* (1972), refer equally to that which separates and that which joins together.

A green-blue coloured map winds around various walls of Georges's and Anne's apartment. It appears to comprise of lots of panels connected together. The map is an artistic rendering of clearly cartographic and geographic iconography. The map here is self-consciously artistic and abstract, rather than the map that they use to locate the HLM, the only clues to which are in the tape that entered their domestic space. The map on their wall does not have the fine lines of detail and scale of a city map, but has been made into a work of art. Its creative and representational nature has not been played down, as is the case with a city map, but rather has been emphasised. The lines are more abstract and fluid. Each panel, rather than constituting a separate, clearly framed painting, connects up with the next one, even across the corner of the room, in a seemingly endless set of connections. It is impossible to see where it begins or ends. Each panel seems to have equally been divided into smaller panels with faint lines. This artistic map not only relates to Saxton's analysis of Bazin and

the cinematic frame pointing to the space beyond, but also suggests an interesting reflection on the nature of maps: so often taken to be a scientific mode of codified representation with a sense of scale adding to the impression of accuracy, here maps are signalled clearly as an artistic form of representation.

Significantly, it is a map, as well as the tapes, that leads Georges to Majid's HLM. Georges and Anne stop the tape to read the street name more closely, finding Avenue Lénine, which superimposes another history onto the multiple existing narratives. Compared to the anodyne, depoliticized Rue des Iris of *Paris-ville*, Avenue Lénine reflects a decidedly more committed history. Whether this points to the way in which Georges and Anne live apart from such historical and political narratives, in ignorance and forgetfulness, is less important than the issue of nomenclature at stake. Our attention is brought to the sign itself as they scrutinise it for clues: such an emphasis on signs and street names has become characteristic of how the texts in this corpus interrogate signs and systems of signification. Signs and maps anchor us and orientate us in space, but they also produce the space that they represent, a production that can be used as a mechanism of control.

Such references to signs and maps are part of a broader questioning of the relationship not only between images and reality, but also between reality and all modes of communication (visual, linguistic, semiotic). Language is repeatedly held up to scrutiny. Short of observations that the word 'rien' seems to structure the dialogue from the outset (Manon 2010), there remains no engagement with the implications of this. The most recurrent word in the film signifies 'nothing': it signifies a lack of signification. And yet the word 'nothing' does actually mean something, it has a

semiotic value. Meaning production is governed by a complex set of social processes and words relate ambiguously to their referent.²⁵⁷

As I explored above, Haneke's film problematises a clear-cut notion of temporality, making the diegetic present particularly difficult to grasp. The 'trick' of the opening shot (Rothberg 2009) is in fact repeated throughout the film. In the first scene in which Georges walks along the corridor of the HLM, we think we are in the present until the pause and rewind are activated as we arrive at the door of an HLM. This is important, in that until this point we think that we are experiencing the narrative present of the film *directly*: until we realise that it is being mediated there is no clear distinction between that which imitates and that which is imitated. In Derrida's exploration of Mallarmé's mime show in *La Double séance*, there is no present, only endless referring forward and back. The performance of Mallarmé's mime show represents nothing and does so 'sans briser la glace' (Derrida 1972: 238). For Derrida, the oppositions set up between language and world, text and reality, mimesis and anti-mimesis imply one to be dominant, whereas in Haneke's film one does not reign over the other. This infinite network of moving images refers to itself, since even in the first instance when we think we are experiencing it directly within the diegesis of the film, it is of course already a remediation in terms of the metafilm.

The scene in the corridor of the HLM, then, is mediated once in the first place, before we know it is the material of the tapes, again as we watch it in rewind on the

²⁵⁷ This is further demonstrated in the dinner party story about the man being told by an old lady that he resembles her dog, who was coincidentally run over on the very day he was born. Thematically, the story also centres upon a sense of connections across generations and even across species and it makes everybody laugh. Even after the story-teller laughs and everyone understands that it is in fact a joke, his girlfriend asks, 'et alors, c'est vrai ou pas?', to the laughter of the others. The ontological status of this insignificant story is not clear, and it persists as Georges asks, 'alors, où est-ce que tu as appris cette histoire?', implying that it is just that, a myth, a narrative, a story. The dinner guest replies, 'tu ne me crois pas?', to more, nervous, laughter. What is important here is that the group engage in communication through a codified system, but nobody is sure of the truth. Later, Anne says of her encounter with the police, 'c'est un fait', a turn of phrase that also implies that everything in the film needs corroborating, as our sense of reality is deeply problematised.

Laurents' screen, and then it is shown again in the background as they discuss what action to take. The referentiality of this is now multiple, as it refers both back and forwards. In the scene when Georges goes to this HLM, in the *banlieue*, the camera seems jarringly and unparadigmatically to adopt Georges's point of view. Until now, Georges has been filmed entirely as a character in the film by a third-person camera, whether it has been in the surveillance tapes or within the narrative of the film itself. Here, however, the camerawork serves to emphasise that we are retracing the steps of what we have seen before. Such an image is redolent of Modiano's author/protagonist, not only in the slippery subject positions created by the writing, but also in the structuring motif of retracing the steps of an unknown other in the city of Paris. Likewise, this chimes in with Sebbar's device of the young protagonists retracing the possible steps of the parents on the night of the massacre.

However, Haneke's representation of memory is not treated through the tapes alone. There are other images that flash up and do not belong to the diegetic present, or to the surveillance footage. The first nocturnal surveillance shot is only revealed as such in the scene after Georges walks off the set (and the frame) of his television show. We see the childlike drawing of a face with blood gushing from the mouth, that wrapped the tape, just before being plunged into the rewind of the surveillance scene we have already seen. The moment the rewind stops and we return to the exact repetition of the street scene from before, a moving image flashes up almost so quickly as to be missed, effectively remaining 'hidden' in the street scene. Like Georges, the viewer is so caught up in scanning the seemingly innocuous street scene for clues to explain the tapes and their mundane content, that it is easy to miss the three seconds in which a boy at a bay window looks straight at the camera and wipes blood from his mouth. We are quickly returned to the street scene, without any sonic

break to match this visual rupture, and continue to hear Georges and Anne consider whether to call the police.

The nocturnal long take of the house and street watched for the first time by Georges but for the second time by the viewer, has already been framed by the childlike drawing of coughed-up blood that encased the tapes themselves in the narrative.²⁵⁸ This drawing now calls across intermedially to the flash of a young Algerian boy at a window with blood at his mouth. There is already a complex layering of media in place, as the tapes in the film are in sequence with the diegesis of the film itself, even if the distinction between Haneke's own camera work (the film) and the surveillance of the tapes is constantly blurred. The status of this quick-flash image is unclear, unlike similar images later in the film when Georges awakes from a nightmare or takes sleeping pills and is seen going to bed: the markers that this quick flash is a dream are ostensibly absent. This three-second long shot we will later recognise as filmed at the window of his mother's house is so apparently unrelated and unframed in terms of the surrounding shots that it risks being unnoticed on a first viewing. The image, that we will soon recognise as a young Majid, is aesthetically embedded into the quiet Parisian street. Significantly, it flashes up from the urban landscape. Furthermore, it is unclear, even though we have adopted his point of view as we re-watch the street scene, whether it belongs to Georges's imagination. The only clue that the image might be in Georges's mind, either memory or imagination (which are not at all opposed) is when we return to the street scene after the flashing image and Georges seems perturbed. Anne is talking to him but he seems distracted, as if elsewhere: 'comment ça' he says, almost to himself. He takes another look at the drawing at this precise moment. When Anne asks him what is wrong, he responds

²⁵⁸ Nothing is what it seems within and without the film, and in the paratext and context that frames the film on DVD, Haneke reveals that the drawings were by an adult in the style of a child.

‘rien, rien’ and adds that he is very tired, implying that something *has* bothered him, and as we have adopted Georges’s point of view, it could be argued that this is the filmic representation of Georges’s imagination.

The ambiguity in the presentation of this flashing image as either dream, imagination or memory itself highlights the difficulty in distinguishing between these dimensions and visual forms, and reveals Haneke’s own conception of memory to be both intermedial and inseparable from imagination. The child’s representations of faces and blood weave throughout the film as a leitmotif, and when we return once again to the drawing next to a remote control on the Laurents’ coffee table, it is as if to reinforce how different media and filmic elements (dreams, memories, flashbacks, the past, imagination) call across to each other, exceeding their normal boundaries and frames. The remote control is linked through visual juxtaposition to the crayon scribbles of a child. The camera zooms out behind Georges so as to include the frame of the television set on which they are watching the tape, and at this point Georges stops the video, as if unable to confront what the street scene hides from or reveals to him. The street scene blends seamlessly into a news report about scenes of violence in China, and both Georges and Anne look away. The smooth transition, from Parisian street surveillance to the scenes of violence from across the world, is another way in which Haneke makes connections between the local and global.

After the scene when Georges picks Pierrot up from school, another street scene shows a different view of the street. It seems to be looking down the road from which the previous surveillance shots of the house were taken. Its provenance is unclear, but it appears to be filmed from inside an upstairs window looking out onto Rue des Iris, with the view ever so slightly obscured by the frame of the window or a wall. This shot is framed in a way that jars with the other shots from the film set up by

Haneke as belonging to either the surveillance tapes or the narrative of the film. After a few seconds the visuals change, without any ostensible sonic shift, and the camera now moves shakily towards the window ledge of the farmhouse, where the sounds of coughing reveal the same young boy with even more blood spluttering from his mouth. It is longer than the first flashing image, though a near repetition of it. In both the young Majid looks directly at the camera. We quickly return to what looks like the opening surveillance shot of the house on Rue des Iris, but the slow tracking motion as Pierrot and Georges go to the car signals that this is part of the film's narrative frame.

Once again it is the street scene that embeds these other narrative forms and traces, both hiding them from and revealing them to us. It is from the filmed space of the Parisian cityscape that clues to the past are revealed, both to Georges within the film and to the viewers. Later, when the tapes lead him back to his childhood home, he tells his mother that he dreamed of Majid, implying that these images are in fact dreams. He takes a look into the lounge, the place where Majid coughed blood in the flashed-up image, and it is only then that the images begin to be anchored as narrative material from the past coded by Georges's imagination. In an interview for the Artificial Eye DVD Haneke reflects on the difficult relationship between dreams and film, concluding that cinema rarely makes dreams credible, since they have a unique intensity that is difficult to represent.²⁵⁹ The dreams in the film are moments of both revelation and ambiguity, and it is striking that Haneke's exploration of memory is so tightly bound up with his exploration of film and dreams. In *Caché*, there is no raw or direct 'memory': instead there is a range of media forms and creative processes that form connections with the past. This highly mediatised representation of engaging

²⁵⁹ In the Artificial Eye DVD feature about the making of *Caché*.

with the past is as close to depicting memory as Haneke gets. These ambiguous moments of dreams, flashbacks (a cinematic technique for entering into the mind and memory of a character), or imagination emerge in urban space: the complex nexus of these media forms are embedded in the concrete of the street. Haneke encourages the viewer, like Georges, to be attentive and take a closer look at the familiar urban landscape in the film for various forms of traces of the past. He shows that these narratives are not inscribed publicly into this city space, and the first flash is so quick and apparently unconnected to the street scene, that it is almost imperceptible.

Framing a Conclusion?

Susannah Radstone's analysis of *Caché* questions whether the hidden can be named and located at all, and implies that the film suggests such naming and locating to be impossible, citing the 'radical openness' (Radstone 2010: 18) of the ending that fails to end the story in any clear way.²⁶⁰ Rather than seeking to reveal the hidden, as most analyses do, she contends that acknowledging the hidden *as* hidden is crucial for criticism (ibid.: 18). In a sense, the 'hidden' of the title refers to so much inside and outside the film that it runs the risk of being overburdened and overdetermined. As I have demonstrated, the category of the concealed, as with all categories in the film, has been destabilised. Furthermore, one vital way in which Haneke articulates this visually is through the space of the street. The uncanniness produced in the representation of the street as a site of concealment, therefore unknown, *and* homely and familiar demonstrates precisely such an unsettling of these categories.

Undecidability is not non-committal neutrality or an easy way out of a difficult film

²⁶⁰ The DVD interview with Haneke confirms that he intended to leave open the question of who is really guilty, as well as the mystery of the tapes.

but something rather more profound: it reveals the inherent contradictions within language itself through the disruption of categories of opposition.

The question of what is hidden, I would maintain, is less important than the questions of how images, language, memory, and space relate to 'reality'. The film explores the relationship between memory and representation and it articulates it, in part at least, through representations of space. The film brings us back to Derrida's reflections on the frame and the constant reframing of meaning (Hill 2007: 50). In *Caché* the 'truth' is less important than the examination of the processes on which our relation to it is predicated.

The central tension created by Haneke in *Caché* is likewise fundamental for a comparative approach to memories. Through his representation of Paris as both a universal and specific space he offers a vital insight into postcolonial identity in France and the relationship between questions of citizenship and memory while simultaneously presenting a profound ethical argument about responsibility towards the other in the age of globalization. Haneke's tension between local and global, and particular and universal, uses space to demonstrate the possibility of a viable alternative to models based on mutual exclusivity. It is through space, then, that just such a model opens up: one in which a broader approach to distinct memories is possible without undermining crucial differences.

CONCLUSION

J'ai l'impression d'être tout seul à faire le lien entre le Paris de ce temps-là et celui d'aujourd'hui, le seul à me souvenir de tous ces détails. Par moments, le lien s'amenuise et risque de se rompre, d'autres soirs la ville d'hier m'apparaît en reflets furtifs derrière celle d'aujourd'hui. (Modiano 1999: 50-51)

The space of the city has provided rich and fertile ground for the authors and filmmaker under consideration, and indeed for my unique approach to their work. A number of patterns emerge from the analyses of this diverse but complementary corpus of cultural practitioners, and my comparative approach to different memories has implications for the nature of French studies and the epistemological project that underpins this field. In the quotation above, Modiano's narrator, Patrick Modiano, reflects on his project of making connections through the city: connections that are the fabric of memory linking the past to the present. His project is also underpinned, however, by an ethical drive to understand the suffering of another. So the city provides vital links between time, people and memories. Modiano's impression of being the only one making the link between these 'Parises', and the picture of fragile connections that could break at any moment provides a striking image of memory in the city. The furtive reflections of the city of the past glimpsed just behind present-day Paris draw on the vocabulary of seeing, or indeed apprehending, the undetectable or invisible that has been so central to my analyses of the works selected. The potential glimpse of such a hidden reflection of past space is depicted as emerging from *behind* today's Paris, suggesting a sense of layering of historical strata that has also been a recurring trope throughout the chapters.

Modiano's search for traces of Dora Bruder reveals that it was the mechanisms of *French* bureaucratic structures that sent her to her death. He is led to the conclusion that one day in February 1942, she would have been rounded up by the

gardiens de la paix and sent to Drancy, then on to her death at Auschwitz. ‘Making’ the links between the different ‘Parises’ therefore has profound implications about ongoing state complicity in such violence. It is a question that is opened up by all the authors and the director and ties together the various different approaches to memory and the city. In each chapter, I have shown how a variety of literary and cinematic strategies have been used to unveil French complicity in crimes during the Holocaust and the Algerian War, and how these could be examined through parallel interpretive frameworks without conflating them.

One vital way in which I have explored this has been through a notion of urban space not as a passive container for the unfolding narratives relating to the memories of these distinct moments from France’s history, but rather as an agent of social control and state violence. Just as Modiano draws on the irony that it was the Paris police, charged with the protection of the city’s citizens, that is responsible for Dora’s extermination, Daeninckx also depicts the Paris police as murderous and violent, implicated in a number of brutal deaths during both the Holocaust and the Algerian War. Not only do both authors use Parisian space to inscribe the unimaginably violent histories onto the city’s familiar landmarks, just as Sebbar does literally through her characters’ graffitied re-inscriptions onto memorial plaques, but the authors likewise show that the violence occurred not despite the police, within this space, but rather *because* of the state. Indeed, Maspero also presents a denunciation of the Paris police through his revelations of their key role in the management of Drancy, locating responsibility squarely within the central administrative spaces of the city. In his reflection on the death of poet Max Jacob on a French train during deportation from Drancy, location is pivotal. No longer is it conceptually possible to separate France from responsibility. Equally, for Georges in *Caché* the past comes

spilling into the present space of Paris. Haneke presents Georges's contemporary, bourgeois Paris as not so very different from the Paris of his childhood and 1961. Like Modiano, he is inviting us to visualise the links. The implications of Modiano's reflection on making links between the 'Parises' are thus both theoretical and political.

The question of the city's police and the protection of its citizens points to critical questions about citizenship and identity raised in my consideration of these memories in Paris. They are questions about the nature of the modern French republic, about who has rights to the city, and about the complex vectors of cultural belonging or *appartenance*. The city provides an entry point for considering questions about the boundaries that demarcate different identities, about the themes of exclusion, the delineations of inside and outside, and the processes of classification and categorisation that have been so central throughout this thesis.

It is striking that in these representations the violence does not have 'un autre visage que le nôtre' (Cayrol 1955). Indeed, the exposition of these histories of extreme racial violence taking place in the heart of the city not only reveals the horror as already part of the everyday, as Silverman's analysis (2006) of Resnais's and Cayrol's anti-fascist politics of representation has demonstrated, but more precisely that in the works collected here, the horror is articulated *through* urban space. When inspector Cadin is told that Algerian protestors died 'à l'intérieur de la Préfecture', his reaction is that it is 'impossible' (Daeninckx 1984: 96). His shock is caused not only by the fact that these deaths took place, but that remarkably they occurred *inside* the buildings of the Paris police. In a sense, the notion that the horror is not separate from, but rather is constituted in the very fabric of, everyday life, is amplified and extended. It is not only banal structures that become the mechanisms of human extermination,

but it is the very structures that are supposed to safeguard citizens that are implicated in the perpetration of such ‘horror’. Urban space both contains these narratives and is directly implicated in their production. In *Caché*, Haneke shows flashes of the past generated either by an internal memory of Georges, his fearful imagination, or a historical flashback afforded only to the external creator of the narrative, all of which are so deeply embedded into the urban landscape, that they are almost undetectable to the eye on the first viewing. The boundaries between inside and outside are broken down, as I have shown in each chapter, to reveal the violence of genocide and state terror located not ‘over there’ in the colonies or beyond the barbed wire of the famous Polish camps, but as part of the landscape of the ‘city of light’.

All is not what it seems: ‘il faut le savoir’, you have to know *how* to look for traces of these horrors in the city, since because of the unexpected nature of the connections being uncovered, it will seem ‘impossible’. Equally, a disconnection between signs and referents is exposed, as the *gardiens de la paix* function in contradiction to what their label connotes. Memory is depicted in the shadow of a crisis of referentiality: the histories of violence are hidden in plain sight precisely because the labels do not correspond to the referents, and this has been a structuring concern throughout the chapters. In the first chapter, I explored the ways in which Daeninckx draws attention to the issue of signs through the poster for the Rivette film, *Paris nous appartient*, in order to show just such a disconnection between the sign of ownership and belonging in the city, and the experience of the protestors.

In the second chapter, I argued that Maspero’s travelogue is characterised by an ambiguity, since the search for authenticity in traces is shot through with suspicion about forms of evidence. Modiano’s approach also displays such an ambivalence towards traces as evidence, repeatedly drawing attention to their fallibility. Signs in

the city are quite literally disconnected from anything concrete or reliable, and the adjustments to the re-edition demonstrate that Modiano is playing with real and imaginary street names, thereby revealing no essential relationship between the sign and the space. Indeed, the text itself, like the space of the city, is under ongoing reconstruction, its meanings continually deferred. Maspero's postface outlines the ongoing nature of his project of re-writing, commenting that 'c'est comme si le livre n'était jamais terminé' (Maspero 1990: 335). Both Maspero and Modiano reflect in depth on the nature of systems of classification, and how identity is generated through language. It is random combinations of letters, such as the word JUIF for example, that designate identities, with fatal consequences. But these are repeatedly shown to bear no essential relation to the person they are supposed to represent. Sebbar, likewise, problematises the categories 'French' and 'Algerian' as she challenges the myth of unified political struggle on both sides, exposing the internecine violence and reflecting on what the pronouns 'nous' and 'vous' designate in a postcolonial context.

Maspero and Sebbar both draw attention to the inadequacy of commemorative activities to represent and foster remembrance of narratives of the past. They also show how signs connoting the values of the French revolution, *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, do not correspond to the experiences of overt state violence described in the texts. Haneke, too, questions the relation between the referent and processes of representation, holding the status of the image up for scrutiny, and drawing attention to the ways in which representation constructs our perceptions of reality, memory and identity. Like Daeninckx, Maspero and Modiano, he casts doubt on the images and their relation to reality. His ever-expanding frames continually force us to readjust our sense of the 'real' and of what is part of the narrative frame. Just as Modiano's text is under continual reconstruction, and Maspero's postface points to the book's status as

unfinishable, Haneke's film too is structured around a subversive openness, deferring meaning beyond the last frame.

In this focus on referentiality across the chapters, it is not the degree of fidelity that has been of interest, for it is futile to consider measuring that: it is rather the semiotic *processes* of representing referents, the past or indeed experience more broadly, that have emerged as central. As Derrida has argued, the sign marks a place of difference, half of it always not there (Spivak 1998: xvii). To return to Terdiman's analysis of Baudelaire's *Le Cygne*, at once swan and sign, the authors and director under consideration here also point to the shared focus on symbols, simulacra, and surrogates standing in for an absent referent in memory's relation to the past, and representation's relation to the referent. This central figure of absence and loss has been at the heart of these representations of memory and their metatextual considerations on representation itself. Indeed, throughout this thesis, I have foregrounded the ways in which the works highlight processes of signification, drawing attention to the 'inadequate yet necessary' functioning of words, informed by Derrida's Heideggerian notion of writing *sous rature* (Derrida 1967: 31). The works here operate similarly to cast doubt on what words and images signify. The idea of crossing out a word, and leaving word and deletion intact, is a powerful image with which to approach the diverse body of work I have brought together in this thesis. The self-consciousness with which Daeninckx, Maspero, Modiano, Sebbar and Haneke treat the question of representation, bringing attention to its inherent deficiencies, does not present a nihilistic vision of memory and representation, precisely because the words that stand in inaccurately for these concepts are so *necessary*. In a letter to the New York Times, in response to Derrida's obituary, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak writes that Derrida's 'concern was not an exposure of error, but an investigation into

how we produce the truth'.²⁶¹ This emphasis on the production of truth is pertinent to my consideration of memory and representation here, for it highlights the constructed nature of our engagements with the world around us and with all experience.

The trope of the palimpsest productively brings together not only the temporal and the spatial, but it is also inextricable from broader, metatextual considerations about writing itself. It has been one of the recurrent motifs to emerge across the chapters, demonstrating the particular value of a spatial reading of representations of these memories. In the image of the palimpsest, the city is a space in which different layers of writing are superimposed, the text beneath partially visible from the surface, yet simultaneously partially deleted and over-written. Crucially, the palimpsest encapsulates a diverse set of processes: writings, re-writings, preservation, erasure, visibility, legibility and superimposition are at work in this figure. The word refers to the way in which scribes in medieval manuscript production would *re-use* sheets of vellum, rubbing off the existing text and inscribing a new one over it. Vitally for my thesis, this captures the duality of preservation and erasure likewise captured in the representations of Paris I have examined. The palimpsest allows for contradictory processes to co-exist, cutting against dichotomous paradigms for thinking about memory and forgetting, preservation and erasure, absence and presence.

Categories are not clear-cut in this image of the palimpsest. Erasure is part of processes of preservation, and visibility is only partial at best. Traces of inscriptions from years ago may be detectable only through the use of specialist imaging processes, implying that the writing would be otherwise hidden or undetectable to the naked eye. The text that can be made visible will have been partially erased, offering an incomplete view of what came before. Moreover, visibility does not guarantee

²⁶¹ Available at: http://www.humanities.uci.edu/remembering_jd/spivak.htm [accessed 06 June 2013].

legibility. Just like the scratched concrete filmed by Resnais in *Nuit et brouillard*, the lingering traces of what went before are partial, incomplete, distorted and subject to ongoing erosions. Seeing the traces does not mean knowing the history – the traces provide clues, but do not illustrate the narrative.

Throughout these chapters, this image of Paris as a space in which multiple layers of mnemonic material co-exist has been a sustaining one. Moreover, these traces of both the Holocaust and the Algerian War interact with one another, intersecting and overlapping, and yet simultaneously remaining distinct, recalling the imprints of the palimpsest. For Rothberg, this ‘multidirectionality’ is a feature of all memory, as different memories inevitably confront each other in their public articulations, inflecting the remembrance of one with the articulation of another (Rothberg 2009). This comparative approach to memories has been articulated through identifying connections across the two memories, through the ongoing complicity revealed by Parisian space. It has equally been opened up by recognizing a shared lexicon of urban space simultaneously hiding and revealing traces of the past in representations of both memories. I have argued that urban space is a privileged site for the exploration of memories of both the Holocaust and the Algerian War in France. This comparative approach to the study of memories, and their urban and palimpsestic representations, challenges the tendency to separate the disciplines of postcolonial and post-Holocaust studies, and in so doing contests the conceptual separation of metropolitan, European and colonial histories. As such, it contributes to a growing interdisciplinary field of French and Francophone studies, extending the object of study beyond the purely metropolitan.

In this thesis, Paris has been used as a point of entry for a re-engagement with critical questions about the complex relationships between collective memory and

postcolonial 'national' identities, raising important questions about citizenship, cultural belonging and 'Frenchness' in an increasingly globalised and transnational society. It is clear that urban space is a major vector for literary and cinematic representations of various traumatic memories. As I have shown, 'memory' is not separate from 'the past' but rather is the name for a variety of highly mediated processes used to engage with it. 'The past' is not available to us in any kind of authentic or direct form: there are only processes of writing, imagining, creating.

It is through the city that the authors and director have revealed the inadequacy of many processes of public and official commemoration to create meaningful ways for society to engage with the past. Indeed, the monumental has been repeatedly challenged in the works selected: official narratives of history have been over-written with more vernacular, personal and inclusive expressions of memorial inscription in the city. In each of the memories explored here the city of Paris has been both a space of state violence, control and domination and equally a site through which resistance is articulated. This dual history of Parisian space makes it a particularly rich and fruitful way of engaging with these questions of memory, which are likewise inextricable from questions of power and resistance.

These representations of Paris offer an alternative to both the competitive memory model, where uniqueness is the reigning trope, and to a more reductive 'one size fits all' comparison that views each distinct event in terms of another. The city has revealed a representational and critical space in which memories overlap and intersect without conflating one with the other or undermining key differences. In Bhabha's term, it is a space of *negotiation* rather than *negation*: conveying a sense of 'temporality that makes it possible to conceive of the articulation of antagonistic or contradictory elements' (Bhabha 2004: 37). The city likewise opens up a space for an

analysis of identities as multiple, diverse and hybrid, in constant contact with each other and in flux. Each of the works brought together here invites the reader or viewer to look at space in a different way: to look for signs or traces of histories of violence in familiar locations. In this way, urban space has radically unsettled a range of categories, revealing unimaginable narratives of state violence in the very fabric of the city.

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