REMEMBERING THE OCCUPATION: REPRESENTATIONS OF MEMORY AND IDENTITY IN FRENCH CHILDREN'S HISTORICAL FICTION

BY

VERITY JAYNE SMETTE

A thesis submitted to The University of Birmingham for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS BY RESEARCH

Department of Modern Languages

College of Arts and Law

University of Birmingham

July 2019

ABSTRACT

In 2012, on the 75th anniversary speech of the roundup of Parisian Jews known as the *Vél d'Hiv*, former President Hollande revealed that two-thirds of French schoolchildren were ignorant of the event. This is part of a growing unfamiliarity amongst young people in France regarding the Second World War and the Holocaust.

This study takes literature as a basis of learning and understanding, and asks about the effectiveness of French historical fiction for children in the process of remembrance. What role does such fiction play in transmitting memory in France, and how does it facilitate empathy and identity? The study comprises a close analysis of six French children's novels, and draws on studies from several disciplines such as child psychology, history, and literature.

The research conducted in this MA has implications beyond the war and can be applied anywhere ignorance finds a foothold. Children's war literature is pedagogical, and carries warnings and messages of hope through which children may develop a more peaceful future. This research addresses the contribution of literature to the collective memory of the Occupation, in light of the falling historical awareness of French schoolchildren towards the darker side of their nation's past.

In memory of Dr Angela Kershaw, who supervised this thesis from 2016 until her death in 2018. This research would have been vastly more complicated and far less enjoyable without her support, enthusiasm and absolute dedication to teaching. Angela's joy for learning and teaching will always inspire me and she continues to be deeply missed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Above all, I would like to thank my supervisors Dr Angela Kershaw, Professor Stephen Forcer and Professor Martyn Cornick for their full support and guidance over the last three years. Thanks especially to Stephen and Martyn for reading the first draft, giving valuable feedback and always being there to offer their expertise and perspectives.

I would like to express a deep gratitude to the Neville Chamberlain Postgraduate Scholarship and the family of Neville Chamberlain, without whose financial support I would not have been able to undertake this research. Thank you for investing your time, faith, and resources into my work.

Thank you to Natalia, my library helper, who carried all my books during my recovery from neurosurgery.

Finally, thank you to all my friends and family, especially my parents and brother for their love and encouragement.

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REMEMBERING THE OCCUPATION: REPRESENTATIONS OF MEMORY AND IDENTITY IN FRENCH CHILDREN'S HISTORICAL FICTION

INTRODUCTION

In July 1995, the then-President of the French Republic, Jacques Chirac became the first President to formally acknowledge French complicity in the Holocaust (Gorrara, 2012, p.108). Notably, France's deliberate policy and enactment of enforced detainment and deportation of Jews, both foreign and French nationals. The landmark speech observed the 53rd anniversary[1] of the infamous roundup of Parisian Jews known as the *Vél d'Hiv*, named after the stadium, the *Vélodrôme d'Hiver*, in which they were held. Chirac voiced the shock that 'la patrie des Lumières', the nation renowned for its Human Rights Laws, 'ce jour-là, accomplissait l'irréparable. Manquant à sa parole, elle livrait ses protégés à leurs bourreaux' (Chirac, 1995, n.p). This monumental admission of French culpability was particularly poignant given that it took over 50 years for the government to officially recognise their predecessors' complicity in the atrocities. As Chirac strove to 'reconnaître les fautes du passé, et les fautes commises par l'Etat' (1995, n.p), he also expressed hope that young French people would combat ignorance and help older generations to confront the traumatic past: 'ils veulent savoir. Et avec eux, désormais, de plus en plus de Français décidés à regarder bien en face leur passé' (Chirac, 1995, n.p). It was hoped that the natural curiosity of the younger generation, eased by a certain temporal and emotional distance from the events themselves, would facilitate the desire of a growing number of French people to re-examine the national past. Indeed, Philippe Buton refers to the post-1995 period in France

[1] Numbers are rendered in words up to ten, with numbers greater than ten written in numerals.

as a ‘revolution in memory’ (2007, p.245), after which fragmented discourses of the war had converged, the dust had settled, and the national memory of the Second World War had reached a ‘relative balance’ (Buton, 2007, p.238).

However, a little more than a decade later, marking another anniversary of the *Vél d’Hiv*, then-President François Hollande, echoing Chirac’s speech, admitted that ‘la vérité, c’est que ce crime fut commis en France, par la France’ (Hollande, 2012, p.5). Yet in contrast with Chirac’s optimism for the future, Hollande made the startling revelation that ‘deux jeunes Français sur trois ne sachent pas ce que fut la rafle du Vél d’Hiv’ (2012, p.6). These figures were part of a survey carried out by the *Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel* (CSA) to investigate the memory of the *Vél d’Hiv* roundup. Although *jeunes* refers to those aged between 15 and 24 years old, it should be noted that this survey revealing ignorance of the *Vél d’Hiv* roundup is inversely proportional to age, with those aged 65 and older having the greatest awareness (75%). The younger the age group, the lower the percentage of those having knowledge of the *Vél d’Hiv*, with 15 to 17 years olds being the least aware (CSA, 2012, p.6). Over the course of a decade, there has been an unexpected, yet growing ignorance of one of the most shocking atrocities of the French Occupation. What could account for the disparity between Chirac’s hope of children helping the older generation reconcile with the traumatic past, and this growing unawareness amongst the young? This leads us to question to what extent this ignorance applies to other aspects of French involvement in the war, and to ask how the war is being presented to the younger generation.

One of our most powerful tools in the fight against ignorance is education and, by extension, the act of reading. As literature is fundamental to learning and understanding, it is pertinent to examine to what effect it can be used in the remembrance and education of

the Second World War, the Holocaust and the French Occupation. Such literature can include history textbooks, first-hand survivor testimonies, poetry, and fiction. This thesis focuses on children's contemporary historical fiction published in the wake of Chirac's landmark speech. It analyses the representation of the war with emphasis on the themes of memory and identity and the role portrayed by the French in the rounding up, detaining and deporting of Jews. Furthermore, it assesses the cognitive benefits of reading and the ability to invoke an emotional response in readers. This fosters a child's ability to connect with fictional characters and therefore with history. Reading literature is a way for children to develop their skills of empathy and encourage cognitive growth. Connecting emotionally with the past increases understanding of those people and places. The hope of many children's authors and scholars, such as Genevieve Humbert and Mitzi Myers, are that children can then use these skills to promote understanding of the past and to foster both hope and peace.

Literature Review

There is an ever-increasing corpus of studies of children and war, as well as many studies on the neurological and cognitive benefits of reading in childhood. Although this thesis will draw on many sources from several disciplines including history, literature and child psychology, a brief overview of the most relevant studies will be outlined here. Claire Gorrara's chapter on children's crime fiction centred on the theme of the Second World War in France is a particularly striking piece of work, not least because she takes her starting point from Chirac's 1995 speech. Gorrara focuses on children's crime fiction of the 1990s and 2000s, and examines Jewish persecution and collaboration in stories for both children and adolescents. She notes the overarching aim of such fiction is not only to

remember the traumatic past but for children to apply knowledge of the past to the present, and suggests, in terms of children's fiction, 'that the Second World War may be entering a new phase of memory, one which sees its integration into an inclusive civic memory of the recent past' (Gorrara, 2012, p.127). However, Gorrara's work was written before Hollande's speech and paints a more positive image of an increasing young adult awareness of the war. This Masters thesis hopes to build upon Gorrara's foundations with reference to the more recent speeches by Hollande and Macron as a measuring point by which to compare changing French attitudes towards the war and the ways in which the war and Occupation are remembered in French society and by the younger generation.

Humbert's short study, *The Second World War in French Books for Adolescents,* investigated what image of the war was being presented to young people, questioning whether this image corresponded to reality, and what point each author was trying to make (1979, p.8). Her research focused on several novels, including Meynier's *Un lycée pas comme les autres* (1962) and Gamarra's *Le Capitaine Printemps* (1963). For Humbert, one aim of such books is to 'acquaint the young people of today with a part of the national history so that they can better understand the present-day situation', as well as giving hope (1979, p.12). This has little changed over the decades. Reading inspires a timeless, universal hope in literature's redemptive capacity to educate young people about the past. Humbert concludes that looking forward to a peaceful future and to reconciliation is just as important as looking back in remembrance. However, authors such as Hamida Bosmajian question how much is too much in terms of the representation of the traumatic reality of war in children's literature and there is a debate as to whether it is even possible to adequately represent the Holocaust in a work of fiction, a question which will be addressed in greater

detail in Chapter 1. This thesis aims to continue in a similar vein to Humbert by asking what image of the war is currently understood by the young generation in fiction.

Donna Norton, writing in 1983, identifies common themes found within children's historical war fiction such as 'the consequences of hatred and prejudice, the search for religious and personal freedom, and the role of personal conscience and obligations towards others' (1983, p.464). Norton also alludes to the idea of passivity and its moral implications as being an inherent theme of children's war fiction. She discusses the benefit of literature for children in bettering their understanding of their own heritage and discovering important universal truths. More recently, Maria Nikolajeva specifies the dichotomous nature of children's fiction, which 'operates around basic binaries of good/bad, right/wrong' as well as 'the child/parent conflict [and] an urge to preserve facts for the coming generations (Nikolajeva, 2014a, p.181, p.73). Margaret Atack draws attention to the repeated use of remorse as a dominant motif in French wartime narratives (2007, p.79). Although Norton and Nikolajeva do not refer specifically to French children's fiction, this thesis investigates whether these themes are also common in French children's historical fiction, with a particular emphasis on the theme of memory and obligation to the past.

Given that the field of memory studies is an extensive and detailed area, I have selected a number of scholars whose work in this field is of particular significance to this study. According to Philippe Buton, the French used – and continue to use – memory as a way to 'manage their double identity crisis' caused by the defeat of 1940 and the questions over who was responsible for the Liberation. He describes 'a veritable kaleidoscope of memory' that illustrates the ways in which the war has been remembered in France since the Liberation. He first identifies *synchronic* variations in memory – the idea that each social group and its individuals have distinct memories of the war. Secondly, *diachronic*

variations describe the notion that memory can be altered or lost over time, even to the point of revisionism on a collective level. Lastly, *generational* variations describe how memory changes from generation to generation (Buton, 2007, p.234-235). Through the changing generations of memory in France, Buton believes 'since the very end of the Mitterrand years, a real revolution in memory has taken place. At the end of at times muted investigations, this now appears to have produced a relative balance' (2007, p.238). It is appropriate to ask if such a revolution of memory and subsequent balance are present in children's contemporary historical fiction relating to the events of the Second World War.

Marianne Hirsch coined the term 'post-memory' to describe 'the child of the survivor whose life is dominated by memories of what preceded his/her birth' (Hirsch, 1992, p.8). She believes that 'post-memory should reflect back on memory, revealing it as equally constructed, equally mediated by the processes of narration and imagination' (Hirsch, 1992, pp.8-9). This is pertinent as many children's Second World War novels tend to focus on either the children, or more commonly, the grandchildren of war victims, particularly Holocaust victims. This is explored in further detail in the main body of this dissertation.

In her studies of the memory of the Second World War in France, Margaret Atack draws attention to the divided, fragmented nature of French national memory. Indeed, Atack believes that memory of the war in France is principally focused on the nation as a singular entity, explaining that 'the national framework is vital to any understanding of the way memories of the Second World War have developed and evolved in France' (2018, p.12). She elaborates that 'there is an undeniably powerful naturalising effect in the model of the nation as a consciousness with repressed memories, where unity can operate as a false memory, especially in a country with a central allegiance to the 'Republic one and

indivisible' being coterminous with France itself' (2018, p.26). As well as detailing the crucial role of the nation in French wartime memory, Atack also highlights the importance of the representation of everyday life during the Occupation, although she acknowledges the tension in using teleological narratives to represent daily life (Atack, 2007, p.81). Atack believes that representations of daily life under occupation are the best way of communicating the experience of war, as 'it is in the tensions of transgression versus domestic stability that that strangeness [of daily life] becomes visible, represented as lived experience' (Atack, 2007, p.80). Although the memory of the Second World War has been predominantly a national one, it is important not to undermine or underestimate the power of individual memory, particularly in literature, to provide a deeper portrayal of the wartime experience.

Similarly, Michael Rothberg believes that a focus on the everyday is essential in Holocaust writing. He believes that 'by focusing attention on the intersection of the everyday and the extreme in the experience and writing of Holocaust survivors, traumatic realism provides an aesthetic and cognitive solution to the conflicting demands inherent in representing and understanding genocide' (Rothberg, 2000, p.9). Rothberg refers solely to the benefits of everyday narrative in Holocaust survivor testimony, but it will be interesting to note whether a focus on the everyday in children's literature is used, and to what effect. Like Atack, Rothberg argues that group and individual memory is preferred to collective, national memory, and 'that the forms of memory […] produced by groups in civil society as well as by texts that circulate publicly play an essential role in opposing the homogenization and moralization of memory produced by the instrumentalization of the state' (Rothberg, 2009, p.270). This thesis investigates whether there is an emphasis on individual or collective memory in works of French children's fiction, and to what extent

the representation of memory in these texts fights the homogenization and moralization mentioned by Rothberg, as well as the politicisation of memory, which is further explored in Chapter 2.

Where is Research Needed?

Hollande's commemorative *Vél d'Hiv* speech revealed a disparity between an expected greater awareness of the event and willingness to confront the traumatic past, compared to the reality of the CSA statistic revealing an ignorance of the *Vél d'Hiv* amongst two-thirds of young people in France. Research is vital to understanding the reasons for this disparity and investigating the efficacy of practical solutions such as the role of children's literature in combating ignorance of the past. Although there is a wealth of academic work on memory studies as well as on the representation of the Holocaust and the Occupation in children's fiction, there are few studies that take an interdisciplinary approach, drawing from not only traditional literary theory but also cognitive criticism (Cave, 2016). This is the idea that works of fiction must be appraised on both a literary and cognitive level, as Nikolajeva explains: 'while reader-response theories deal with *how* readers interact or transact with fiction, cognitive criticism also encompasses the question of *why* this interaction/transaction is possible' (2014a, p.8). It utilises cognitive understanding of emotions and empathy to better interpret how a child interacts with fiction. This is an uncommon approach in the analysis of children's fiction and is a relatively new area of study. Patrick Hogan tells us that children's fiction 'is largely absent from this interdisciplinary study of emotion' (2011, p.1), and Nikolajeva reiterates that cognitive science 'has not yet been fully adapted by children's literature scholarship […] There are, so far, few studies of children's or young adult fiction focused on empathy and theory of

mind' (Nikolajeva, 2014a, p.79). It is by using this approach that this thesis will investigate the representation of the Occupation in French children's literature.

Questions and Hypotheses

This thesis seeks to evaluate the representation of the war in contemporary French children's literature through the lens of cognitive literary criticism. It will investigate how French children's historical fiction treats the Second World War in France, particularly the deportations, and how books present memory and identity in such a way as to develop the young readers' theory of mind and their capacity to empathise with others. It will comprise an in-depth study of some of the major themes of French children's historical war fiction. These include: the grandparent-child relationship; duty of remembrance; the representation of trauma; and the representation of both national and social identity. As stated earlier, the novels selected for analysis are those published post-1995 Chirac's speech as this will allow us to see whether there have been any patterns in the way such themes are represented over the last 20 years. The novels are those written by French or Francophone authors and does not include translations of famous children's war fiction or autobiographical testimonies such as *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1995), which is used in the French classroom. This is to see how the French experience of the war has been interpreted by French authors. These authors have been shaped by the way the war and the Holocaust were treated by the society they grew up in and will ultimately tackle fictional works differently from, say, an English writer, writing in the voice of a French child experiencing the Occupation. From an extensive body of French children's Second World War fiction, this research focuses on six key texts. These are: Sophie Adriansen's *Max et les poissons* (2015); Francisco Arcis's *Le Mystère du marronnier* (2005); Bernard Gallent's *Un secret derrière la porte* (2008);

Giorda's *C'était juste après la guerre* (1998); Yaël Hassan's *Un grand-père tombé du ciel* (1997) and *Quand Anna riait* (1999)[2]. These books cover the time period since Chirac's speech, with several of them having recent reprints, namely Yaël Hassan's novels, which were both reprinted in 2010, along with *Un secret derrière la porte* in 2015, and *Le Mystère du marronnier* in 2016. All six books are stand-alone works on the part of the authors. *Max et les poissons* was featured in the recommended list of books for *collégiens* (aged between 11 and 15) in 2017 (Éduscol, 2017), and several of the novels have won literary prizes voted for by pupils themselves, demonstrating that these texts are a part of the consciousness of that generation of children[3]. In Myer's chapter 'Storying War', the author states that 'the best and most relevant war stories in an increasingly violent world […] seek, as many authors and illustrators avow, to teach the skills of peace' (2000, p.23). This is important because not only can children learn the skills of remembrance and reconciliation with the past, but they can also look toward the future with a fresh perspective. The most significant purpose of children's war literature is a pedagogical one – to shape the younger generation's perspective on such a traumatic theme and encourage these children to work towards a more peaceful future. In addition to a thorough analysis of primary texts, this research will draw on several existing studies including those already mentioned.

[2] Books titles will have dates referenced in their first appearance within each section, after which only the title will appear.

[3] To give some examples: *Un secret derrière la porte* won *le Prix Opalivres* and *le prix Renaudot des Benjamins* in 2009. *Max et les poissons* won le Prix des écoliers de la Côte d'Opale, le Prix PEP 42-ASSE Cœur Vert and le Prix intersalons du Montargois in 2016, as well as being nominated for 17 other awards. Hassan's *Un grand-père tombé du ciel* won four awards in 2000: le Prix des écoliers de Rillieux-la-Pape; le Prix Tatoulu, le Prix du roman de Mantes-la-Jolie; le Prix de la ville de Lavelanet. *Quand Anna riait* won seven including le Prix du meilleur roman SLJ St-Lauren-de-la-Salanque in 2009 and le Prix du Jury et Prix des Lecteurs, Clamart in 2006. A full list can be found within the books themselves.

By these means I aim to investigate to what extent the power and use of literature can be an effective tool in the process of education, remembrance and knowledge. What, indeed, can account for the loss of national memory amongst French schoolchildren and what role does literature play in shaping children's memory? This research will investigate several questions to analyse the reasons for this widespread amnesia. How does children's war fiction approach the themes of memory and identity? What, if any, is the overarching message of each book and what does each one hope to pass on to its readers? By extension, what image of France during the Second World War (with a particular emphasis on the Holocaust) is being painted for the nation's future generation? It must be asked whether this portrayal of France during the Second World War is tackling ignorance or whether it is perpetuating it. For example, to what extent is memory seen as a duty? How do authors adequately portray the emotions of traumatic events in the past? What is the impact of the literary devices used to this affect? How do family relationships such as the grandparent/child bond address the duty to remember? Furthermore, to what extent does a novel's understanding of memory shape the identity of its protagonists, their familial relationships, and what does this teach its readers about their own identity and relationship to the memory of the Second World War?

This thesis is written at a time when the world has been witnessing the worst refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War (Ayrault, 2016). It comes at a time of global political strife seen in the rapid rise of populism, nationalism and the alt-right, particularly in Western countries. There are parallels between the conditions and feelings of division that precipitated the Second World War with those prevalent today, seen, for example, in the rise of anti-Semitism. The increase in instances of anti-Semitism and racism show that the hatred characteristic of the Nazi era still exists today. A 2014 survey by the ADL Global

100 revealed that 37% of French people hold anti-Semitic views, the second highest score in Western Europe, and the 37th highest globally (ADL Global 100, 2014, p27). In terms of ignorance of the Holocaust, 94% of those in Western Europe have heard of the Holocaust but, of those, 11% believe it to be either a myth or an exaggeration (p.17). While younger people are less likely to hold anti-Semitic views, they are *also* less likely to have heard of the Holocaust regardless of their religion (p.39). Young people are also less likely to believe the historical accounts of the Holocaust (p.42). This points to a growing trend towards a more generalised ignorance of the Holocaust across Western Europe, particularly amongst young people. Holocaust education in France does not seem to have had a lasting and positive impact on the younger generation over the past decade. In 2003, children's author Bertrand Solet commented: 'la répression organisée par les nazis et la police française contre les Juifs sous l'occupation a été, et reste encore, le sujet de nombreux ouvrages pour les jeunes. Ils alimentent une des valeurs qui marquent les jeunes aujourd'hui: l'antiracisme.' (Solet, 2003, pp.98-99). However, the CSA and ADL global statistics indicating a growing ignorance of the Holocaust, combined with the degree of anti-Semitism in France, contradicts Solet's optimism, and paints a rather less hopeful vision for a future in which the younger generation can learn from the past and create a more peaceful future.

Outline

This thesis opens with a chapter looking in more detail at France's collaborative role and, in the case of *Vél d'Hiv*, through their own volition, in the rounding up and deportation of Jews on a massive scale. The opening chapter also focuses on presidential commemoration speeches, followed by a discussion of the role of *devoir de mémoire* in French society. It

will then explain how Second World War and Holocaust history have been taught and are currently taught in schools in France. The thesis then continues by narrowing the focus onto children's fiction, detailing both the benefits and limitations of reading historical fiction. The final section of this chapter will cover theory of mind and cognitive literary criticism and explain its use in the analysis of the themes and texts in this research. Subsequent chapters are dedicated to the themes of memory and identity in historical children's fiction, using both existing studies and analysis of primary texts to evaluate how each theme is presented and how this advances a child's understanding of the Occupation and the Jewish deportations.

The books that are analysed throughout the thesis can be summarised as follows. Sophie Adriansen's *Max et les poissons* (2015) follows the story of Max, whose family is rounded up on his birthday. They are taken to Drancy internment camp where Max is rescued by the Resistance. He survives the war and the story ends with Max trying to trace his relatives. Adriansen's novel is published by Éditions Nathan, a company specialising in children's literature and education: 'depuis plus de 130 ans, l'éducation est le cœur de métier de Nathan' (Nathan, 2018).

In Francisco Arcis's *Le Mystère du marronnier* (2005), a young boy visits his grandmother together with his Uncle François and other relatives following the death of his great-grandfather. His grandmother relates the story of great-uncle Léon, a Resistance fighter who disappeared during the war. During this visit to his grandmother's home, the young boy Pierre discovers some nearby ruins and an upstairs window that overlooks the family courtyard. On peering through the window, Pierre and his Uncle François look out onto a view that takes them back to the period of World War Two. This literally becomes a window into their family's past through which they uncover the mystery of great-uncle

Léon's disappearance. This novel is part of publishing house Magnard's series entitled *Que d'histoires! CM2*. This is a collection of six novels that cover a range of genres for pupils in CM2, of which Arcis's novel is the sole work of historical fiction. The collection is described as 'un outil complet offrant une sélection d'œuvres intégrales riche et originale, et une méthode qui renforce les compétences en lecture, langage oral, écriture et étude de la langue' (Magnard, 2019).

Bernard Gallent's *Un secret derrière la porte* was first published in 2008 (with reprints in 2013 and 2015) by Oskar Éditeur, as part of its *Les aventures de l'histoire!* series. This collection comprises of novels set in varying historical periods, ranging from prehistory to the 20th century. Bernard Gallent has written several novels in this collection, each set during a different era, such as *Le mystère Guillaumin* (2016) which takes place in the middle ages. The series also includes other children's novels set during the Second World War, such as Philippe Barbeau's *Sauver Paris, Souvenirs de 1944* (2014). *Un secret derrière la porte* (2008) tells the story of another young boy, Jeannot, whose family home is bombed by the Allies and completely destroyed. As a result, Jeannot is taken to live with his godparents in an apartment in Paris, where he is forbidden entry to a bedroom. When alone in the apartment, Jeannot hears noises emanating from this mystery bedroom and realises that he is not alone, that somebody is being kept hidden and he is upset that he has not been party to this secret. On confronting his godmother, she explains that a young Jewish girl, Sarah, is being hidden for her safety, her parents having been rounded up by the French police. The story concludes with the adoption of Sarah by the godparents and her continuing friendship with Jeannot.

Giorda's *c'était juste après la guerre* (1998), is set in aftermath of the Second World War, and again features a young boy, Jérôme, who is sent away to live in the mountains for

the good of his health. He lives with a family of farmers who employ a German ex-prisoner of war (POW) called Franz. The story is one of guilt and innocence: Jérôme, who is ignorant of both the killing of Jews and the recrimination massacres of the Vercors Maquis and villagers, strikes up a friendship with Franz, still only a teenager himself, and does not understand the villagers' hostility. Though Franz saves Jérôme's life, he is nevertheless chased down by the villagers and faced with attack. He brands himself with a hot iron, thereby bearing the scars of the war and his nation's guilt. Giorda's novel was published by Éditions pocket jeunesse as part of its pocket junior collection of children's fiction. It is a stand-alone novel and the collection contains a variety of different genres.

Finally, the last two novels by Yaël Hassan feature grandchildren of Holocaust survivors. Hassan's first novel *Un grand-père tombe du ciel* (1997), features Leah, a young Jewish girl whose grandfather comes to live her and her parents. Her grandfather at the outset is hostile towards both his daughter and granddaughter but softens as the tale continues. Leah is fascinated by a photograph in her grandfather's room of a young girl, also called Leah, who looks exactly like her. She discovers that her grandfather lost both his first wife and eldest daughter who were victims of the *Vél d'Hiv* roundups and subsequent extermination in a concentration camp. This discovery by his granddaughter is cathartic and he dies having been reconciled with his past and his Jewish faith.

Similarly, Hassan's later novel *Quand Anna riait* (1999) recounts the discovery by a Jewish grandchild, Simon, of his grandfather's life during the Occupation when together with his cousins he finds his grandfather's diary and a photograph of a young woman called Anna. Simon and his cousin Déborah set out to send out a message on a Jewish internet forum, seeking to trace the infamous Anna, their grandfather having shared that Anna, his girlfriend, had been rounded up during the *Vél d'Hiv.* Whilst waiting for news, Simon's

grandfather falls gravely ill, but it is the revelation of Anna's survival and hopes of being reunited that enable him to recover. The novel concludes with their subsequent reunion. Both Hassan's novels are published by Casterman, which is a publisher of children's fiction. The novels were both reprinted in 2010 as part of a roman poche collection that includes works from a range of genres. However, Hassan herself has written other children's novels that take place during the Second World War, such as *Le Professeur de musique* (1997), which is aimed at slightly older readers, and *À Paris, sous l'Occupation* (2014), that is targeted towards younger readers.

The main body of analysis in this thesis is followed by a conclusion considering the ways in which contemporary French children's literature presents the topic of the Second World War and to what extent this aids a child's understanding of an uncomfortable past and their theory of mind. It also reflects upon the opportunities for further research in this area, and the ways in which the approach developed in this dissertation might be expanded.

CHAPTER 1 — THE *RAFLE DU VÉL D'HIV* AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

On 16 and 17 July 1942, over 13,000 Jewish men, women and children were rounded up by the French authorities and placed in deplorable conditions inside the *Vélodrome d'Hiver* in Paris, before being later sent onwards to concentration camps. Of those captured, around 50 survived the war (Lévy and Tillard, 1967, p.235). The event was part of the broader 'Opération Vent printanier', spearheaded by the Nazis. Although the *rafle du Vél d'Hiv* remains the most notorious, it was not the first such roundup of Jews to take place in occupied France. The first occurred in May 1941, with foreign-born Jewish men taken to the camps at Pithiviers and Beaune-la-Rolande, followed by arrests in August and December of the same year. The later roundups now involved French Jews 'sous prétexte de représailles pour les attentats' (Rayski, 2002, p.15). The French authorities believed that targeting foreign Jews first would assuage any hostile public opinion towards the arrests and until 1942, 'juifs français[..] se sentaient protégés par leur nationalité et qui avaient le sentiment […] que certaines choses n'étaient pas possibles dans ce pays' (Lévy and Tillard, 1967, p.198). The *Vél d'Hiv* was perhaps the most shocking of the roundups as it was the first and largest operation to target women and children alongside men. This factor sadly led to more arrests. Although rumours abounded of an imminent roundup, some women and children did not seek to hide, assuming only men would be taken. (Lévy and Tillard, 1967, pp.36-37).

Of course, what gives this event its great infamy in French history is the fact it was orchestrated with the direct participation of French authorities. The event so deeply scarred French national consciousness with a pervasive sentiment of shame that permeated through the decades, that it was not until half a century later that Chirac became the first French government official to acknowledge French complicity in the Holocaust. As François

Azouvi acknowledges, this was not the first time the *Vél d'Hiv* roundup and the Holocaust were spoken of publicly. Both Chirac's 1995 speech and 'la déclaration de repentance des évêques de France du 30 septembre 1997 […] répètent, l'un, le discours du même Chirac du 18 juillet 1986 au Vél d'Hiv, l'autre, la déclaration de repentance du père Dupuy du 21 septembre 1986. Mais la solennité des deux événements, leur caractère public, leur confèrent une importance immense' (2012, p.527). Chirac's famous recognition that France 'accomplissait l'irréparable' (1995, n.p) was in stark contrast to previous statements which sought to distance the French Republic from the Vichy government. Most notably, Chirac's predecessor François Mitterrand had declared a few years earlier in 1992: 'en 1940, il y a eu un Etat français, c'était le régime de Vichy, ce n'était pas la République' (Courtois, 2007, n.p). As much as Chirac's words are primarily remembered for his famed admission of guilt – the first official apology – they are also a rallying cry for remembrance. Chirac called his listeners to 'transmettre la mémoire du people juif […] témoigner encore et encore' (1995, n.p). His speech also explains why we should remember: 'la communauté juive se souvient, et toute la France avec elle […] Pour que de telles atrocités ne se reproduisent jamais plus' (Chirac, 1995). This is most reminiscent of George Santayana's oft-quoted adage 'those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it' (1905, p.284). There is a widespread belief that history serves significant educational value. We study it to learn how to avoid past mistakes. It is a sombre warning, a how-not-to guide to the future. Chirac's words here are interesting in his distinction between the French and Jewish communities. The image of France standing side by side with the Jewish community, rather than that community being a part of France is at odds with the notion – mentioned earlier by Atack – of the ''Republic one and indivisible' being coterminous with France itself' (2018, p.26).

Back in 1995, Chirac expressed hope for the young generation of France in their desire to understand the past and to confront the uncomfortable truths presented by such difficult, traumatic history:

> Les plus jeunes d'entre nous, j'en suis heureux, sont sensibles à tout ce qui se rapporte à la Shoah. Ils veulent savoir. Et avec eux, désormais, de plus en plus de Français décidés à regarder bien en face leur passé (Chirac, 1995, n.p).

In post-war France, a silence enshrouded the deportations and it was not until the early 1960s that such events began to be taught in schools (Lalieu, 2001, p.85). As Wieviorka explains, there were written survivor testimonies in the immediate aftermath of the liberation of Paris (1992, p.167) and also recalls Alain Resnais' documentary *Nuit et Brouillard* (1956). However, it was not until the period of the late 1960s and early 1970s that the events surrounding the deportations entered the national consciousness with the emergence of literature, film and academic work that exposed some of the more uncomfortable truths of the Occupation in France (Paxton, 1972). Slowly, French people began re-examining their country's past and remembrance became part of a moral and civic identity. The most notable of these were Robert Paxton's *Vichy France: Old Guard, New Order 1940-1944* (1972), and later Henry Rousso's *Vichy Syndrome* (1987) alongside such films as Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985). It seemed that with time, a growing awareness and a willingness not to shy away from facing the past developed. This is echoed in Chirac's pride in France's children and their ability to help older generations of French men and women confront the darker, uglier side of their nation's history.

Almost 20 years later, in 2012, President Hollande gave an address at the 70th anniversary of the *Vél d'Hiv*. Drawing comparisons between the two speeches reveals a remarkable change in children's awareness of the deportations, and the change is not what one might expect given Chirac's optimism. 'Beaucoup de dérives trouvent leur source dans

l'ignorance. Nous ne pouvons pas nous résigner à ce que deux jeunes Français sur trois ne sachent pas ce que fut la rafle du *Vél d'Hiv*' (Hollande, 2012, p.6). This worrying change forms the crux of this study. Rather than experiencing a growing enlightenment, with children helping their parents and grandparents face the past, it appears that there has been a slide into ignorance and collective amnesia. Like Chirac, Hollande insists upon our duty as moral beings to ensure appropriate homage and recognition of past trauma. He similarly compares the duty of remembrance to a fight, 'le combat contre l'oubli' (Hollande, 2012, p.3). The Nazis' aim in perpetrating the Holocaust was to wipe away all memory of the Jewish people and their history. Memory has become the latest battleground in the war against ignorance.

Although no-one can deny the extent of what is currently being done to preserve the memory of what happened, there exists a frightening possibility that our own lack of understanding passed down through generations may one day bring this amnesia to fruition. Likewise, there is the belief that a failure to learn from the Holocaust may one day lead to its reoccurrence, since it has not prevented more recent genocides such as those in Bosnia and Rwanda. Meïr Waintrater compares these genocides and states that the more the Shoah is studied, the more analogies we find it has with other genocides. He argues that differentiating between them and setting the Holocaust apart makes it more difficult to recognise when a new genocide is taking place. Waintrater suggests that an ignorance of the Holocaust may have contributed to later genocides, as it leads to a failure to recognise the conditions under which genocide may happen (Waintrater, 2009, p.200). However, critics such as Robert Melson have argued that later genocides bear more in common with the earlier Armenian genocide than the Holocaust, in terms of 'the character of the victim groups, from the ideology of the perpetrators, and from the methods of destruction' (1996,

p.158), and therefore one cannot draw comparisons between them. Similarly, Nicolas Kinloch has argued that ‘a careful study of the successful destruction of Europe's Jews might act as an incentive for those anxious to destroy their own minorities’ (2001, p.9). Although we can be certain that the teaching of the Holocaust will not, in itself, prevent a similar event from happening in the future, as Short so succinctly states: ‘lessons drawn from the Holocaust can be of value even though they do no more than diminish the likelihood of genocide’ (2003, p.280). Evidently, there is still a strong fear over the possibility and ease at which such horrors may be repeated. Hollande thus reinforces the pedagogical purpose of history, where there is a lesson to be learnt and avoided. There is a collective, duty-bound imperative for preservation, ‘pour qu'elle ne puisse plus jamais ressurgir demain’ (2012, p.7).

The most recent commemorative speech given by President Macron on the 75th anniversary of the roundup in 2017 re-emphasised the necessity of remembrance. Beginning with an homage to the victims of the roundup and observing a minute's silence, the President first chose to confront those ‘qui prétendent aujourd’hui que Vichy n’était pas la France […] Je récuse aussi ceux qui font acte de relativisme en expliquant qu’exonérer la France de la rafle du *Vél d’Hiv* serait une bonne chose’ (Macron, 2017, n.p). That Macron’s very first lines were to challenge these ideals reveals a worrying underlying attitude that some hold towards French involvement in the war and the Holocaust. Three months previously, the president of the Rassemblement national (formerly the Front National), Marine le Pen, had stated in a television interview: ‘je pense que la France n’est pas responsable du Vél’ d’Hiv […] ce n’est pas LA France’ (Le Pen, 2017, n.p). This draws to mind remarks made by Mitterrand in 1992 that ‘la nation française n’a pas été engagée dans cette affaire, ni la République, c’était un régime nouveau’ (cited in Azouvi, 2012,

p.529). Although a divisive and controversial politician, Le Pen is still a well-known public figure who therefore commands a position of considerable influence. Her disclaiming responsibility of France's role in the roundup underlines the importance of teaching the younger generation the lessons of the Holocaust.

Macron is clear: to honour the memory of the past, first we must tackle these dangerous attitudes. He reiterates that 'le racisme et l'antisémitisme sont encore présents et bien présents' (2017, n.p). The same pervasive sentiments of fear and ignorance which precipitated events such as the *Vél d'Hiv* are as much alive today as they were during the Second World War, although, as Macron notes: 'ils prennent des formes nouvelles, changent de visage' (2017, n.p). It is a sobering fact that in a society that places such weight on the duty of remembrance, we realise that we may not have learnt very much at all from the past.

Although these Presidential memorial speeches address a specific event in the war, their words advocate the importance of remembrance, with implications beyond the *Vél d'Hiv* and the Second World War, and can be applied to other forms of injustice. From Hollande's statistics, we learn that the younger generation of French children are increasingly unaware of their nation's own past. We hear influential political figures exchanging conflicting opinions over French involvement in the war. It is only natural to question a wider ignorance of the Second World War and to ask what such ignorance conveys about France's broader attitude towards the war. Yet paradoxically, alongside a growing ignorance there also exists an apparent national obsession and fascination with the past in France, beginning in the 1970s, to the extent that 'memory has become a veritable cult' (Conan and Rousso, 1994, p.206). This highlights the growing potential for the instrumentalisation of Holocaust memory. This is particularly true of the commemoration

of Jewish deportations, particularly the *Vél d'Hiv*; 'because it was necessary to commemorate an episode of the past that had formerly been covered up, people wound up with a policy of national commemoration that was absurd' (Conan and Rousso, 1994, p.199). As Richard Golsan asks his readers:

> to what extent does this obsession with the past simply feed on itself, opening the door to the political, artistic and intellectual exploitation of traumatic memories for political gain, or to indulge cultural and intellectual animosities and prejudices, or simply, to turn a financial profit? (2011, p.493).

In a society both obsessed with its own past yet plagued by forgetting, the place of remembrance and *devoir de mémoire* must be more closely examined.

The Role of *devoir de mémoire*

The famous imperatives 'we must never forget', or, in French, 'ne jamais oublier' and the idea of *devoir de mémoire*, form an immediate association with the Holocaust, although they stem from the horrors of the First World War battlefields. Behind these words lies a fierce reminder that remembrance is an active and continuous process. As described by Hélène Waysbord-Loing in 2008: 'la mémoire est le meilleur antidote à l'indifférence ou à la négation' (2008b, p.5). Ignorance and amnesia, whether intentional or inadvertent, are presented as a disease requiring a moral medicine – that is, memory. However, this intrinsic link between remembrance and the Holocaust did not always exist. It was not until the 1970s, 'quand une mémoire de la Shoah prit son autonomie et fut inscrite à l'épicentre de ce "devoir"' (Lalieu, 2001, p.83). Rousso identified several post-war phases in memory, including 'une période de "deuil inachevé" au lendemain de la guerre, une période de "refoulement" entre les années cinquante et les années soixante-dix pour évoquer les silences ou les tabous pesant sur certains aspects de la période de l'Occupation' (1998, p.17). This was followed in the 1970s and 1980s by the advent of Rousso's *syndrome de*

Vichy, 'a national preoccupation, and even obsession, with the so-called Dark Years of the German Occupation during the Second World War and French collaborationism and complicity in the Holocaust under Vichy' (Golsan, 2011, pp.491-492). Rousso's understanding has since been critiqued and refined by several scholars such as Bracke, who argues that during the 1970s, 'collective memories of World War Two were historicized and de-politicized, despite the 'obsession' with the War in the popular media' (2011, p.6). It is important to acknowledge here the myth of silence regarding both Holocaust discourse and discussion of the realities of collaboration. There has arisen a misunderstanding that this silence was in part due to what Rousso identified as the myth of *résistancialisme,* a term which 'refers to the marginalisation of Vichy and collaboration in the national consciousness' (Atack, 2013, p.59), and the idea the French all resisted during the war. This idea, as Atack rightly recognises, was falsely interpreted as having started in the 1940s, when Rousso is in fact referring to the 1960s. Atack explains: 'Rousso […] points to the instrumentalisation of resistance memory by "le devoir de mémoire" as the cause' (Atack, 2013, p.73). Evidence also reveals a proliferation of material written about the concentration camps: 'nulle part dans la documentation que nous avons consultée nous n'avons trouvé l'idée qu'il était impossible de parler de la vie du camp de concentration' (Wieviorka, 1992, p.169). It is important to acknowledge this as it reveals the way in which exploitation of memory and *devoir de mémoire* may be misused. The result has been a pervading sense of shame:

> Affects such as trauma and shame have come to dominate our thinking about memory, history, and violence. For generations that did not live through the Holocaust but encountered it as secondary witnesses, as readers and viewers of films and documentaries, a peculiar sense of metaphorical survival and secondhand guilt has emerged (Sanyal, 2015, p.27).

This collective guilt and its impact on the younger generation will be explored in both Chapter 2 and 3.

Describing the act of remembrance as a duty or obligation gives rise to the potential for exploitation of the past. As Rothberg notes, 'historians express an increasingly influential impatience with what the French call "le devoir de mémoire", the duty of memory, and a sense that the past has become subject to political and moralistic manipulation' (2009, p.268). When traumatic memory serves as a warning it ceases to be an act of simple remembrance and becomes a tool and an instrumentalisation of past tragedy. The potential for exploitation of trauma and the increasing use of *devoir de mémoire* over the decades means that the act of remembrance as 'une obligation sociale et civique autrement urgente' (Rioux, 2002, p.159) may be taken for granted.

Emmanual Kattan's *Penser le devoir de mémoire* highlights a paradox: 'nous cherchons à nous rapprocher du passé pour en éloigner la répétition' (2002, loc 1157). Katten addresses the problems generated by teaching about past tragedy purely as means to avoid its recurrence in the present. 'Subordonné aux soucis du présent, le passé est l'objet d'une préoccupation instrumentale […] le passé n'a de valeur qu'en tant qu'il peut servir les objectifs et les projets qui nous préoccupent' (2002, loc 2247-2255). When the past is considered solely on the basis of its relationship with the present day, it is at greater risk of manipulation or instrumentalisation. For example, there are critics who fear that by insisting the younger generation bear witness to past trauma, a heavy sense of guilt is bestowed onto a generation not directly involved in the past. Jean-Pierre Rioux explains:

> À propos des camps d'extermination Nazis, le «Plus jamais çà!» peut culpabiliser parfois, en toute impunité et franche bonne conscience, quelques représentants des nouvelles générations jusque dans les établissements scolaires où des témoins en viennent quelquefois à convaincre les jeunes innocents d'aujourd'hui qu'ils participeraient d'une

> catégorie inconnue de l'histoire: la culpabilité collective éternelle et imprescriptible (2002, p.163).

In this sense history, remembrance, and the *devoir de mémoire* risk becoming a politicised weapon. A balance must be found between making children aware of their nation's dark past without making them feel guilty for crimes in which they are not directly implicated.

Furthermore, by insisting on the term 'devoir', or duty, there is a subtle implication that we 'owe' something towards the past, or to the victims. This begs the question of what *devoir de mémoire* really means for the young generation in France today. According to Olivier Lalieu, 'l'utilisation de l'expression "devoir de mémoire" se banalise dans les médias' (2001, p.83). Sloganised by both politicians and the media, the term loses some of its potency. The same phenomenon is explained by Gérard Gengembre: 'nous vivons une époque d'obsession mémorielle qui a érigé le génocide perpétré par les Nazis comme Mal absolu' (2010, p.374). By elevating the Nazis to the pinnacle of absolute evil, society has inadvertently distanced the memory of their crimes. 'Nazi' is now commonly a by-word and insult for evil, but by entering the common vernacular, it has become over-used and often misused. Consequentially, it has lost the true depth of meaning behind the word and crimes committed. Even during the Second World War itself, George Orwell observed a similar phenomenon around the term 'fascism', noting 'it is in internal politics that this word has lost the last vestige of meaning […] There is almost no set of people […] which has not been denounced as Fascist during the past ten years' (1944, p.112). Orwell recognises that its use as an insult does indicate 'a kind of buried meaning', but cautions the reader to use the term 'with a certain amount of circumspection and not, as is usually done, degrade it to the level of a swearword' (1944, p.114).

This trivialisation of Nazism is not helped by the rise in internet usage, which is also changing the concept of *devoir de mémoire* and remembrance. The Internet will shape

the way young people learn about history, given that their generation make up the highest proportion of internet users (INSEE, 2013). According to the IPSOS study researching reading habits amongst seven to 19 years olds in France, young people spend on average almost three times as long each week using the Internet than reading (2016, pp.4-5). Édouard Philippe, French Prime Minister at the time of writing, specifically referred to the fight against malicious internet content in his speech commemorating the 76th anniversary of the *Vél d'Hiv*: 'c'est notre volonté absolue de modifier le droit – droit français comme droit européen – pour supprimer les contenus haineux sur internet. Pour en démasquer et en punir leurs auteurs' (Philippe, 2018, n.p), thus highlighting the growing significance of the Internet with regards to the memory of traumatic historical events and illustrating the ongoing need for education and awareness.

In online discussions and forums, the term 'Nazi' has come to be seen as an inevitable end to every argument. This is famously expressed in *Godwin's Law,* which states that 'as an online discussion grows longer, the probability of a comparison involving Nazis or Hitler approaches' (Amira, 2013). Godwin's Law is itself a development of the notion of *reductio ad Hitlerum,* which was first identified in the early 1950s by Leo Strauss as an analogy to reductio ad absurdum (de Smet, 2014, loc 33-34). The adaptation of this logical fallacy refers to the mention of Hitler or Nazism as a means of supporting an argument, in the case where such a reference is inappropriate or irrelevant. According to Strauss, 'a view is not refuted by the fact that it happens to have been shared by Hitler' (1953, p.42-43). Thus, once the Nazis or Hitler are referenced in a discussion, the debate loses credibility and is effectively ended since 'the default […] should be to consider it a fallacious argument until proven otherwise' (Teninbaum, 2009, p.576). The fact that the Nazis and Hitler are commonly used as a purely fallacious argument indicates a certain

degree of indifference and triviality that are now becoming attached to these labels, arguably through increased internet usage amongst children and young people.

Furthermore, the term 'Grammar Nazi' is popularly used online to describe someone intent on correcting grammatical mistakes: 'simultaneously, the word "Nazi" was being employed in humorous discourses to describe a person holding strong opinions and strictly requiring people to follow certain rules' (Sherman and Švelch, 2014, p.316). As the term 'Nazi' enters the common vernacular as a petty insult, it highlights a desensitisation towards the past and the crimes perpetrated. The loss of personal connection with the past may explain somewhat the increasing ignorance towards the *Vél d'Hiv*. In Macron's commemorative anniversary speech, he expressed how the forces behind Nazism – hatred, fear racism and anti-Semitism – still exist today, though under a different banner: 'ils prennent des formes nouvelles, changent de visage, choisissent des mots plus sournois. Le racisme ordinaire pullule dans le vocabulaire' (Macron, 2017). There is a risk that this proliferation and banalisation of language associated with the Holocaust and the Second World War will devalue their true meaning and dilute the potential to educate. However, to understand the changes in attitude toward the past, we must investigate how the events of the Occupation and the Second World War have been taught in France.

History in Schools: Past and Present

The teaching of history in schools in France began in earnest in the late 19th century, with the original intention to promote the values of the Republic. History was politicised to encourage a strong sentiment of patriotism and create loyal citizens. According to the Inspecteur général de l'éducation nationale, Philippe Claus, 'l'histoire, la géographie, la morale et l'instruction civique ont été des enseignements indissociables, au service de la

patrie et de la République' (2007, p.73). Patriotism and history were, to all intents and purposes, one and the same. History was not taught, as it is today, to teach some moral or social lesson but solely to develop a sense of pride in one's nation. Although history is now taught for educational, moral and social instruction, its original purpose shows its potential to be utilised as a political or social tool. This has not changed since the very beginning. Though far less concerned with generating patriots, history is still taught to foster a bond between pupil and nation, to give cultural and national identity and a sense of place and belonging.

The teaching of the Second World War was introduced in France during the 1980s in the Troisième (ages 14 to 15) and Terminale years (ages 17 to 18). In 2008, a revision was made that now includes the teaching of the Holocaust in CM2 (ages ten to 11), with the aim of providing an initial introduction to the chronology of events. It also aims to 'contribuer à l'éducation morale et civique des élèves en commençant à approcher la question de la responsabilité personnelle et collective, celle aussi de la résistance à la barbarie' (Ministère de l'Education Nationale, 2008a, pp.1469-70). This thesis therefore focuses on children's literature written for those aged from ten to 12 years as this is the age at which a child is first formally introduced to the topic of the Occupation at school. It is also the earliest age targeted by children's authors on the subject: 'la production des RHJ (le roman historique pour la jeunesse) s'adresse, sauf rares exceptions, aux jeunes à partir de dix ans' (Solet, 2003, p.35). At this age, there is a purposeful focus on child victims of the Holocaust: 'le thématique […] retenue comme une approche particulièrement aux élèves de CM2' (Waysbord-Loing, 2008a, p.2). This is achieved by reading child testimonies and diaries such as Annette Muller's *La Petite Fille du Vel'd'Hiv* (1991). This is the preferred way of teaching as it is believed it best facilitates pupils' understanding of

the past. Lalieu adds that 'la visite de témoins dans les classes devient le moyen le plus sûr d'aller à la rencontre des jeunes' (2001, p.88), although the number of survivors is dwindling.

Textbook lessons comprised of facts and figures have little bearing in a child's present-centric life and simply igniting interest in history may be problematic. This is partly because children are predominantly focused on the present moment or immediate future, and thus history holds little concern for them (Huyghe, 2012, p.4). It is difficult for a child to grasp the personal aspect of history in lessons built upon pure fact: 'les chiffres et statistiques ne signifient pas à cet âge. Il faut aborder le sujet de façon concrète, par l'étude d'un nom, d'un visage' (Waysbord-Loing, 2008a, p.7). Therefore, it may be argued that it is better for children to learn and relate to history in an emotional way as opposed to bombarding them with statistics which hold little meaning at that age. By concentrating history lessons on the impact of war on children, it is hoped that the pupil will develop an emotional bond with the child witness. If there is little relevance and application for the younger generation, there is consequentially little motivation to learn about the past.

Just *how* history is taught in school varies across France, as teachers are at liberty to decide how to approach the subject matter (Ministère de l'Education Nationale, 2008a, p.1470). At the ages of 14 to 15 just two hours in an academic year are dedicated to the teaching of the Holocaust (Arber, 2010, p.336), severely limiting the scope of teaching possibilities. We have seen there is a clear agreement in both government and society, that Second World War history including the Occupation and deportations should be taught to children, and that it is indeed a moral, social and civic duty to do so. However, the lack of national consensus on how this should be implemented and the lack of time dedicated to study leads to a lack of cohesion that may go some way in explaining the increasing

ignorance of the *Vél d'Hiv*. Hence the importance of leisure reading for children to gain a greater understanding of the Occupation.

Fiction: Why do we Read?

There is no denying the importance of reading fiction, yet to properly assess the cognitive, emotional and social benefits of historical fiction, we must understand why we read in the first place. Humans have a fascination with the self and other human beings: we are primarily social creatures. It is theorised, most notably by evolutionary psychologist Robin Dunbar, that the reason language first evolved was to allow us to increase the number of our social connections (Tecumseh Fitch, Huber and Bugnyar, 2010; Dunbar, 2017). Human beings are such social creatures that we are even able to form deep emotional bonds with fictional characters. Novelist Edward Morgan Forster created the term 'homofictus' to describe this fictional species (1927, p.39) and theory of mind scholar Blakey Vermeule believes 'the reasons that we care about literary character are finally not much different from the question of why we care about other people' (2010, p.xiii). This extraordinary ability to connect with a made-up character means that historical fiction affords us a unique and fantastic opportunity to teach children about the past, with lasting impact. The aim is for this genre of fiction to leave a permanent impression that will continue to shape the child beyond the act of their reading the book.

The combination of history and literature make perfect sense given that both are involved in story-telling and are built upon a narrative. In advocating historical fiction as an indispensable means of transmitting history, there must be proven benefit in reading such fiction. Elie Wiesel asserted the importance of historical literature being essentially moral (Wiesel and Abrahamson, 1985, p.135).

Proponents of fiction, particularly children's fiction, hold onto the misconception that literature is a primarily pedagogical tool. Certainly, its didacticism is well-studied and undeniably significant but, as Nikolajeva states, 'fiction does not have the transmission of knowledge as its primary goal' (2014a, p.45). Rather, the benefits of fiction lie in its spectacular capacity to develop emotional, social, and cognitive ability. In de Groot's *The Historical Novel,* the pedagogical importance of children's historical fiction is stressed, and de Groot explains that historically, such novels were also used to 'provide content for play, a kind of ludic historical imagination' (2010, p.88). These benefits outweigh the knowledge a work of fiction may contain, and it is only through developing such skills through cognitive and imaginative growth that effective transmission of knowledge can then take place. According to a recent study, reading amongst children in France remains popular. An Ipsos study published by the Centre national du livre revealed high reading rates amongst French schoolchildren: 'en primaire, 90% des 7-11 ans lisent des livres dans le cadre de leurs loisirs' (2016, p.4). Furthermore, 'les ouvrages de littérature de jeunesse référés à l'histoire occupant une part non négligeable du marché […] plus de 3000 titres recensés' (Cariou, 2012, p.164).

Historical fiction is not merely a powerful educational tool but an aid to emotional and cognitive development. It opens a window onto the past, by which its readers can witness their own and others' national history and it 'can also help students to gain an understanding of their own heritage and others' (Rycik and Rosler, 2009, p.163). This idea that historical fiction gives a child access into the past and a link to their own cultural inheritance is not a new one. Reading such fiction expands a child's mental horizon to encompass times and places not their own, broadening their 'intrapsychic cognitive map of the external world' (Alcorn and Bracher, 1985, p.344). Reading a fictional story encourages

emotional development as it allows the child a safe space to experiment with ideas and emotions, shaping and developing their understanding and interpretation of the real-world events themselves. Vermeule believes that 'fictional characters are the greatest practical reasoning schemes ever invented. We use them to sort out basic moral problems or to practise new emotional situations' (2010, p.xii). This is particularly true for children and young adults who may lack emotional experience or maturity. Reading provides an imaginary battlefield to play out different emotional scenarios, detached from the real world, but with the ability then to incorporate these skills into their own lives. The fact the characters are fictional does not invalidate the authenticity of such works or undermine their educational value, as they allow children to explore these emotional lessons in a safe environment. Indeed, 'for novice readers, a fictional world may provide a good, arguably more reliable source of knowledge because it is more structured and dense' (Nikolajeva, 2014a, p.27). The deliberate, ordered nature of fiction frees the reader from the risk and spontaneity of the real world and creates a more stable environment for them to process the past and their feelings toward it.

The Importance of Historical Accuracy

This deliberate way of altering the past to render it more accessible to younger readers will inevitably call into question its historical accuracy, which in turn shapes the reader's understanding of the event. Although reading historical fiction advances a child's understanding of their past, there is debate as to how much is too much in terms of representing the trauma of the Second World War, and particularly the Holocaust. Indeed, there are those who question whether it is even possible to represent the Holocaust and the depth of horror it inspires and whether it is even ethical to do so. Its uniqueness renders it

'fundamentally irretrievable, either in a work of the imagination or in non-fiction' (Wiesel and Abrahamson, 1985, p.20). This view is held by many, most notably Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, who stated 'the Holocaust transcends history' (1985, p.158). However, others such as Wieviorka have pointed out that referring to the Holocaust as unspeakable is 'une notion paresseuse […] Elle a transféré sur les déportés la responsabilité du mutisme des historiens' (Wieviorka, 1992, p.165).

In terms of children's fiction, there are those who believe that 'la Shoah résiste à la mise en fiction classique de la littérature de jeunesse' (Cariou, 2012, p.174). Didier Cariou also argues that reading cannot allow for vicarious experience since a child reader would be unable to connect and identify with Jewish child victims of the concentration camps: 'le héros ne saurait en être un enfant auquel s'identifierait le lecteur puisque les enfants juifs étaient condamnés soit à se cacher soit à périr dès leur arrivée dans les centres de mise à mort' (2012, p.174). The sheer magnitude of the terror and subject matter will mean that part of it will always remain inaccessible to children, which serves to protect them on an emotional and psychological level. However, the call for remembrance in order to avoid repeating past trauma implies that such a trauma is not unique. Despite the difficult ethical and moral questions of Holocaust representation in literature, there is clearly a need to remember. The question is not so much whether the Holocaust *can* be represented in the first place, given the breadth of literature and film that exist, but rather, *how* the events can be portrayed in a manner which can be understood and interpreted by its intended audience. Such literature might acknowledge the necessary limitations of the representability of the Holocaust and be open to learning despite the limits of knowledge. One might argue that the purpose of such fiction is to articulate the fact that this was one of the darkest periods in human history, some would argue *the* darkest period in human history. It is important

that the next generation understands and appreciates the reasons *why* it was the darkest point, without going into the graphic details of the whole event. In terms of children's fiction, there are those who err on the side of caution and hide salient facts to protect the delicate minds of the young, whereas on the other hand there will always be those that argue that you *cannot* alter, manipulate or embroider the facts of an event that was so traumatic and left such a scar upon the history of humanity.

Supple considers the issue of trauma by asking what age children can cope with learning about the Holocaust. She refers to the lack of consensus and difficulty in knowing whether children under 12 may be too traumatised by Holocaust education, as children aged ten and 11 'can be taught about sensitive issues with powerful material', whilst recognising that 'secondary school age may be too late to tackle racial or ethnic prejudices' (Supple, 1998, p.18). With regard to the fear of traumatising the child, Supple writes that rather than trauma resulting from learning about the Holocaust, 'the problem sometimes lies in evoking an emotional response rather than keeping it under control' (Supple, 1998, p.36). The biggest risk in reading traumatic historical fiction lies in the potential for desensitisation to violence and trauma.

The debate on the ethics of Holocaust representation also highlights the continuing tension between historians and fiction writers on the subject of historical truth and the legitimacy of authors to create fictional works set in the past. Traditionally the two disciplines of history and literature were considered as 'deux formes différentes et opposées de mémoire: l'une historique et scientifique, l'autre existentielle et artistique' (Nora, 2011, p.7). It is important to acknowledge this tension, although this thesis will not attempt to resolve this long-standing argument. The challenge for authors of historical fiction is on the one hand retaining historical accuracy and integrity, while on the other, showing sensitivity

and consideration for the impact it may have upon their readership. Many underestimate the potential of historical fiction because by its very nature it is fiction, and thus it is seen to compromise the authenticity of what actually happened and can be considered inferior to textbooks and witness testimony. As Leneman states, 'the historical novel is considered by most academics to bear about as much relation to real history as science fiction does to science' (1980, p.52). This may be because the historical novel usually focuses on one or two individual characters who become symbols of the wider affected group, rather than addressing a population in its entirety.

As well as questioning the authenticity of historical fiction, there are also concerns that it can be manipulated as an attempt on the author's part to propagate a certain viewpoint, 'to fulfil their own writing agendas' (Groce and Groce, 2005, p.102). There is always potential for fiction to promote certain ideologies, and an author carries the heavy responsibility of ensuring their work remains impartial. The elimination of such bias remains greatly problematic. However, bias can affect both fiction and history. C. Behan McCullagh describes ways historical writing can be biased, including 'misinterpreting evidence, and omitting significant facts about the subject so that it is unbalanced' (2000, p.40). These biases may be subconscious or deliberate. McCullagh argues whether bias actually matters given that 'the data available to them [historians] are themselves often biased, resulting in inevitably biased history' (2000, p.41). Likewise, Wieviorka points out that 'la mission [of the historian] qui lui est dévolue n'est plus de rendre compte des événements, mais de les maintenir présents' (1992, p. 163).

The potential for bias also raises the ethical question as to the appropriate way to end a children's novel about the Holocaust. There is a general belief that children should be left with hope, yet 'any writing about the Holocaust for fiction breaks a strict taboo: that

children are not to be frightened' (Kokkola, 2003, p.11). Thus, authors can range from adhering to this taboo to adopting a more honest approach. It is arguable that ending a Holocaust or war based-fiction with a happy ending, although comforting for the child, gives them an unrealistic and distorted view on historical events. It could lead children to believe that not all outcomes were bad, and 'they give an impression, erroneously inferred from the protagonist's fate, that most Holocaust victims survived' (Nikolajeva, 2014a, p.66). This is as ethically ambiguous as leaving the child with an unhappy ending. Adrienne Kertzer believes that the response is a double narrative 'that simultaneously respects our need for hope and happy endings even as it teaches us a different lesson about history' (2002, p.75). This thesis explores endings of particular children's books with regard to the theme of memory, and asks how unrealistic endings may alter the representation of the war, and by extension what lesson about history is being taught to the young reader.

If one purpose of learning history is to avoid the mistakes of the past, then we will only do so if we teach the younger generations to develop and utilise empathy. Combining historical knowledge with empathy and kindness is the way forward to educating young minds in their quest for a peaceful future. In the next section, I will seek to explain the model of theory of mind, with a view to understanding how children read, and how reading then produces empathy.

How do Children Read? Theory of Mind and Empathy

In order to learn through reading fiction, to understand fictional characters and situations, and thus to connect emotionally with them, readers use a technique known as mind-reading, or Theory of Mind. Theory of Mind (henceforth noted as ToM) was first defined by David Premack and Guy Woodruff in their research into the existence of ToM in chimpanzees,

and was used to ‘mean that the individual imputes mental states to himself and to others’ (1978, p.515). Broadly speaking, it is the recognition that others have thoughts and feelings different to our own and this includes our ability to understand the mental states of others. This contrasts with the theory that we can understand others by simply projecting our own thoughts and feelings onto them. ToM develops in early childhood, by about the age of five, but continues to develop into late childhood (Perner and Lang, 1999). It is marked by the ability to recognise false beliefs, and that others hold opinions different to one’s own.

Studies have shown that reading fiction can improve ToM (Mar and Oatley, 2008; Kidd and Castano, 2013). This in turn helps us understand how young readers can develop empathy, since empathy is a component of ToM. ToM can be broadly divided into two theories known as theory-theory and simulation theory that both aim to explain how ToM is developed (Vogeley et al., 2000, p.170). There is a wealth of academic literature detailing both theories. In the simplest terms, using theory-theory, one draws on theoretical knowledge of a potential situation or mental state of another person, as opposed to imagining or simulating a scenario in our minds. In simulation theory, ‘we cognitively put ourselves in another person’s shoes and allow ourselves vicariously to go through whatever they are going through’ (Vermeule, 2010, p.35). Although there are proponents of both theories, this thesis does not seek to promote the advantages of one over the other. As Ralph Adolphs notes, ‘it is likely that both these views have some truth to them, depending on the circumstances’ (1999, p.476). In this vein, this thesis chooses to focus on simulation theory, as it is this element of ToM that is particularly involved in reading fiction. Vermeule believes ‘for fiction and literature, simulation theory is by far the most promising of the mind-reading hypotheses’ (2010, p.39). This is because it is through simulation theory that empathy is developed.

ToM is necessary for the development of empathy and perhaps the greatest benefit of reading historical fiction is its ability to foster empathy in young readers. It has been 'demonstrated that fiction print-exposure predicts performance on an empathy task, even after gender, age, English fluency, trait Openness, and trait Fantasy are statistically controlled' (Mar, Oatley and Peterson, 2009, p.420). Several other studies have shown a positive correlation between reading fiction and levels of empathy (Kidd and Castano, 2013; Carter and Pickett, 2014), but 'it remains to be uncovered, however, whether empathy precedes fiction-exposure or proceeds from it, and both may well occur' (Mar et al., 2006, p.707). Reading fiction, then, universally enhances a reader's ability to empathise as part of a virtuous cycle.

Although there is no single definition of empathy, most critics agree that it involves putting yourself in someone else's shoes. Patrick Hogan, who contends that 'the ethical point of empathy is to produce action', differentiates between two types of empathy, situational and categorical empathy. According to Hogan, 'situational empathy is a likely product of any literary reading' (2003, p.206). This is empathy based on shared experiences, 'a vicarious, spontaneous sharing of affect' (Keen 2006, p.208) as opposed to shared categories of age or race. However, it is arguable that categorical empathy advances situational empathy, as a reader and character that share characteristics such as age or nationality are far more likely to have shared experiences. The ability of situational empathy to produce action renders it 'crucial to understanding traumas of heroism' (Hogan, 2003, p.142). This distinction is vital when analysing historical fiction, since it is the hope of authors that such reading inspires the act of learning from the past, and in utilizing such lessons in the future.

It is this empathic dimension of reading that lends itself to the teaching of history: ‘successful fiction moves one emotionally’ (Djikic, Oakley and Moldoveanu, 2013, p.31). With this is mind, it is important that children’s Second World War fiction encourages empathy in its readers, in order for them to engage with the past and expose them to people, places and situations unfamiliar to them. Particularly, ‘the use of stories that contain more emotional, social and psychologically convincing content predicts empathy and socioemotional adjustment’ (Aram and Aviram, quoted in Tamir et al, 2016, p.216).

However, there are limits to the development of empathy through reading fiction. As Nikolajeva explains, ‘novice readers […] may fail to apply their real-life experience to fiction and they may equally fail to recognise that true and false information conveyed by fiction may be helpful for understanding the actual world’ (2014a, p.25). Furthermore, Nikolajeva argues that solipsism on the part of the reader is restrictive, ‘the “just-like-me” assessment of characters is limited to the readers' scope of experience and does not endorse mind-reading’ (Nikolajeva, 2014b, para. 27). Thus, if a child is reading about a past event with which they have little or nothing to relate, such as the roundups or the Holocaust, then a solipsist mindset may prevent them from being able to engage with the work of fiction or developing their skills of empathy and ToM. Similarly, it has been suggested that everybody has a natural limit for empathy beyond which one can suffer from ‘compassion fatigue’ that ‘can lead to apathy and inaction’ (Västfjäll et al, 2014, p.1). This could be the case for large-scale traumatic events such as the Holocaust where it is difficult for anyone for any age to comprehend its scope and impact.

In summary, it is clear that children need to learn about the past, whether as an act of pure remembrance or a means of understanding the present and future. Historical children’s literature has been shown to engage a child’s ToM and facilitate the development

of empathy, and it is therefore an effective tool for teaching about the past. However, authors must navigate the limits to empathy development, overcome ethical considerations to the representation of trauma, and it is the aim of this thesis to investigate the ways in which fiction can do so successfully.

CHAPTER 2 – REPRESENTATIONS OF MEMORY

The teaching of history, whether through literature, film, testimonies, and other records, serves to develop one's understanding of the past and its impact on the present day. This understanding can foster a sense of collective identity built upon a shared history. As such, children's historical fiction is an invaluable way of studying complex events such as the Occupation and Jewish roundups, particularly the ways in which they use memory to educate, memorialise, and warn their readers of past trauma. According to history author Beverley Southgate, the use of memory is 'an important meeting point for history and fiction', and is 'the only tool we have for gaining any access to the past' (2009, p.72). Here, memory refers to the collective rather than the individual: a form of public consciousness engraved on the national psyche. Jeffrey Olick distinguishes history and memory: 'history is the remembered past to which we no longer have an "organic" relation […] while collective memory is the active past that forms our identities' (1999, p.335). Collective memory can be seen in national commemorations of events such as the *Vél d'Hiv* or the liberation and is integrated into the national identity, which is explored in greater detail in Chapter 3. In children's historical fiction, it is the individual's memory and their story that represents the collective memory as a whole. For example, Giorda's *C'était juste après la guerre* (1998) uses Jérôme's experience to commemorate the lives of the Maquis killed in the Vercors and the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Sophie Adriansen's *Max et les poissons* (2015) commemorates the *Vél d'Hiv* roundup through the eyes of eight-year-old Max. By reading individual stories, children may gain an understanding of a wider collective memory of the war. Whether adult or child, it is difficult to comprehend the impact and scope of the Second World War. However, reading about the exploits of one individual of a similar age facilitates the child reader's development of empathy. However,

as discussed in the previous chapter, empathy has its limits. Whilst those such as Kattan 'souligne l'importance de l'aspect collectif dans le processus de transmission' (Burtin, 2004, p.373), studies by psychologists show that 'when it comes to eliciting compassion, a single individual with a face and a name typically evokes a stronger response than a group' (Västfjäll et al, 2014, p.2). Psychologists David Hamilton and Steven Sherman were the first to propose that individuals are seen as 'coherent entities', and 'the perceived entitativity of the group does not approach the degree of unity that one expects in the individual' (1996, pp.335-337). This may be 'because as numbers get larger and larger, we become insensitive; numbers fail to trigger the emotion or feeling necessary to motivate action' (Slovic and Västfjäll, 2015, p.55). Thus, in order for children's historical fiction to teach its readers about the past and contribute to collective memory and the commemoration of the Second World War, a focus on individual memory is required. After all, 'who hasn't gained a deeper understanding of the Holocaust from reading Elie Wiesel's Night or The Diary of Anne Frank? Fiction, too, can create empathy and meaning' (Slovic and Västfjäll, 2015, p.65)[4]. Individual memory in fiction is uniquely poised to foster empathy development in children and perhaps assist in overcoming the limits of group empathy by giving a face to the past.

As discussed in the previous chapter, France's relationship with the memory of the Second World War has undergone several periods of change since the liberation. Buton divided this into three 'landscapes of memory':

[4] Although Slovic and Västfjäll do not include dates for the books mentioned, both these works can be found in the bibliography of this thesis.

> The first of these, running from the Liberation to May 1968, offers a reassuring, but rose-tinted memory of the Second World War […] There followed a period of considerable uncertainty, marked notable by the extreme fragmentation of frameworks of memory […] Since the very end of the Mitterrand years, a real revolution in memory has taken place (2007, p.238).

As this thesis analyses children's literature post-1995, the purpose of this chapter is to investigate whether such a revolution of memory is apparent, and indeed, ask to what extent do the novels' use of memory contribute to a child reader's understanding of the events and to their development of empathy. This chapter will consider generational memory, the duty of remembrance, the representations of traumatic memory as well as the ethical implications of happy endings in Holocaust fiction.

Generational Memory

The relationship between grandparent and child as a form of remembrance is a theme prevalent in contemporary French Second World War fiction, particularly children's Holocaust fiction. This may be because it is currently the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Holocaust survivors that are the latest young generation to learn about the war, and 'grandchildren may represent the last resort for their grandparents to process the unresolved past' (Shmotkin et al, 2011, p.16). Contemporary young readers of the novels explored in this thesis are likely to have had a (great)grandparent alive at the time of the Occupation, and perhaps have even heard family stories. The grandparent/child bond, therefore, is one with which they may identify, although one which not all children will have experienced.

Furthermore, it appears there are fewer contemporary novels featuring the children of Holocaust survivors compared to grandchildren.[5] This may be due to the passing of time, as survivors have had a greater length of time over which they can come to terms with the past. In Yaël Hassan's novels *Un grand-père tombé du ciel* (1997) and *Quand Anna riait* (1999), the grandparent's memory of the war is discovered by their grandchildren through an old photograph and diary, and it is the act of discovery that enables the grandparent to share their story for the first time and to achieve some form of peace. This is certainly the case for Simon and Déborah's grandfather Jacques, in Hassan's *Quand Anna riait*, for whom the memory of the war remains extremely painful. The reason for Jacques' annual pilgrimage to Paris each 16th July has remained a mystery to his family, and his refusal to speak about the past hints at a deep trauma. Jacques has kept his silence since the end of the war and according to Simon, 'grand-père cachait bien son jeu, refusant de laisser deviner ses sentiments' (p.46). It is only thanks to his grandchildren's accidental discovery of a wartime diary and a mysterious photograph that the identity of Jacques' lost first love, Anna, is revealed, as well as her apparent fate following the *Vél d'Hiv* roundup. Through their investigation into Anna's journey, their grandfather tentatively begins to open up to his family about the past. When Déborah asks him about his pilgrimage to Paris, Jacques' open response about the *Vél d'Hiv* surprises everyone, as they are used to his silence (p.47). Hassan's novel suggests that traumatic memory is better explored through the grandparent/child bond rather than between parent and child, as it seems temporal distance from their grandchildren provides more space in which the grandparent survivor is able to

[5] Although I cannot state with any certainty, as there does not appear to be concrete statistical analysis, from my own research I have found few French children's historical novels written post-1995 that feature the child of a French Holocaust survivor as a central character.

process trauma and reconcile with their past. Simon's aunt Noémie admits that as a child, she asked a friend to follow Jacques on one of his secret trips to Paris, but upon finding out he was visiting his childhood home, 'cela ne représentait à nos yeux aucun intérêt' (p.27). Since 'il n'a jamais été très causant' (p.27), neither Noémie nor her siblings ever dared to ask their father about his wartime experiences. The lack of interest in the past coupled with a reluctance to approach their father contrasts considerably with the relationship between Jacques and his grandchildren, who are deeply intrigued by their grandfather's past and, to his surprise, express a deep interest in the period of the Second World War (p.48). A study by Shmotkin *et al.* of the long-term effects of the Holocaust on the families of survivors notes that 'whether motivated by their own curiosity or by an external push, it is the GHS [grandchildren of Holocaust survivors] who, in some cases, break the barrier of silence in their families' (2011, p.16). Certainly, this is reflected in the literature of Yaël Hassan. Jacques' children, upon learning Anna's identity, hesitate to confront their father about his past because, 'cela ne changerait rien et ne ferait que reviver de vieilles souffrances' (p.99). However, Simon and Déborah feel compelled to search for Anna, with the help of the Internet. Tension arises when their grandfather falls gravely ill, with 'une maladie qui n'avait pas de nom' (p.103). Only once their plan to find Anna is revealed does their grandfather recover: 'les joues de grand-père avaient repris des couleurs et ses yeux pétillaient d'excitation' (p.106). Here, Jacques' physical healing mirrors an emotional healing from the trauma of losing Anna and from his immense feelings of guilt (p.107). Simon himself remarks on his grandfather's recovery: 'je me dis alors qu'il était guéri et que c'était un petit peu grâce à moi' (p.110). In the closing chapter, Anna is found to have survived the *Vél d'Hiv* roundup and is reunited with Jacques. Ultimately, it is only through

his grandchildren's efforts and their passion for discovering the past that Jacques is able to reconcile his feelings of guilt and become more open with his family.

Hassan's novel *Un grand-père tombé du ciel* (1997) centres on the relationship between the protagonist Leah and her grandfather, Alex, who is a survivor of Auschwitz. Leah grows up believing she has no extended family. The novel commences with the shock revelation that she has a living grandfather, kept secret by her parents, who explain 'comme nous étions en froid avec lui et que tu ne l'as jamais connu, nous n'avons pas jugé nécessaire de t'en parler' (p.11). According to a study of families of Holocaust survivors, 'when the interaction between the parents and the survivor grandparents is entwined in conflict, the parents keep the grandchildren distant from the grandparents. The dwindling relationships […] deprive these two generations from the opportunity to gain common meaning' (Shmotkin et al, 2011, p.17). This is reflected in the decision taken by Leah's parents to hide the fact of her grandfather's survival. Indeed, Leah's relationship with her grandfather is initially just as fraught and hostile as the one between her mother and grandfather, whom Leah describes as 'un personnage grognon, querelleur, égoïste, et peu aimable. En fait, ce n'était pas un grand-père, mais un tyran!' (p.24). Their mutual antagonism and struggle to find any common meaning is not only due to the distance enforced by Leah's parents, but also to the evident trauma suffered by her grandfather. Leah refers to their conflict as a war: 'c'était la guerre qu'il voulait, et il l'aurait !' (p.33). She is also impatient with her parent's plea to understand her grandfather's suffering: 'cela ne lui donnait pas le droit d'être désagréable, mesquin ou méchant' (p.33). The conflict serves to provide some moments of comic relief through a series of tit-for-tat pranks, such as Leah hiding her grandfather's glasses and newspapers, but more seriously, reflects her grandfather's deep emotional pain as he is unable to form a bond with his sole grandchild. It is only with time that Leah and

her grandfather begin to grow closer. Similar to Hassan's later novel, revelation comes at the discovery of a mysterious photo and it becomes Leah's quest to discover the identity of the young girl in the picture, to whom Leah bears a striking resemblance. Furthermore, it is Leah that helps her grandfather in his emotional recovery as she witnesses the radical change in his temperament, also noticed by her grandfather's friends: 'patience, Leah […] Il a beaucoup changé depuis son retour à Paris et c'est grâce à toi' (p.71). Alex eventually opens up to Leah about the deportation of his first wife and child to Auschwitz. His admission helps him reconcile with his family and with his Jewish faith, as he then feels able to visit the synagogue for the first time since before the war. Alex, whose speech in this novel is written in the phonetic spelling of his accent, explains to his granddaughter that Auschwitz robbed its victims of their identity. 'On n'était déjà *pli* des hommes… *pli* de nome… *pli* d'identité' (p.81)[6]. It should be noted that only the dialogue of Alex and his friend M. Tenenboïm are written in imitation of their accent, described as 'un mélange de yiddish, de polonais, de français et d'anglais' (p.47). Though the other characters undoubtedly have an accent or dialect, their speech in written in standard French. In some words, vowels are substituted: *juif* becomes *jvif* (p.50) and *une* becomes *ine* (p.59); in others, the final consonant of words such as *riene* and *nome* have an added *e* to emphasise the stress on the last syllable, which differentiates it from the French pronunciation (p.59). Hassan also italicises all words written in this accent. The effect of this emphasises Alex's otherness and highlights the contrast between Leah and her grandfather. However, language is one of the ways in which Leah and her grandfather attempt to overcome their conflict. Alex's accent connects Leah to a part of her heritage and identity, and he begins teaching

[6] Italicised words referring to Alex's Yiddish accent in *Un grand-père tombé du ciel* are italicised in the original text, and appear in several quotations throughout this thesis.

her the Yiddish language (p.101). Furthermore, Alex's phoneticised accent adds authenticity and encourages the reader to imagine how his speech sounds.

Having lost his identity, faith, family in Auschwitz, it is his developing bond with Leah that enables Alex to let go of some of his pain and anger and to reconcile himself with his past (p.83). 'For Holocaust survivors, many of whom lost the majority of their family, the formation of new families after the end of World War II represents a critical stage in their personal, social, and national recovery' (Shmotkin et al, 2011, p.12). Leah's grandfather, like many survivors, lost his whole family during the war. He begins a new family after the war, and his daughter and granddaughter share the same names as his deceased wife and daughter. This may be seen as an attempt on Alex's behalf to put the past behind him and begin anew. However, his life-long silence and troubled relationship with his daughter prevent him from achieving personal recovery. Hassan's novels suggest that with the help of the younger generation of grandchildren, Holocaust survivors may achieve such a recovery through the transmission of their memories.

Marianne Hirsch's use of the term post-memory to 'connote how the descendants of trauma survivors gain vicarious experience of events they "remember" only by means of the stories, images and behaviours among which they grew up' (Finney, 2018, p.4) cannot be applied to these two novels. Neither Simon, Déborah, nor Leah's childhoods are dominated by the memory of the Second World War. Although Leah acknowledges that the absence of any extended family is due to the war, she declares that she does not care (1999, p.7). In fact, both Simon and Leah's grandfathers are reticent to discuss the past and it is only due to their grandchildren's curiosity that the past and the identities of their lost loved ones are revealed, and their memory passed to the younger generation. However, it could be argued that the discovery of Simon and Déborah's grandfather's wartime journal

– which is scattered throughout the novel in short, italicised chapters – provides some vicarious experience for the grandchildren and the readers. Along with Simon and Déborah, readers discover for the first time Jacques' thoughts and feelings through the first-person narrative of his experience of the Occupation. The notion of post-memory and its vicarious effect on the descendants of Holocaust survivors brings to mind recent epigenetic studies which suggest that children and grandchildren of survivors exhibit 'physical health problems, behavioral and emotional issues' (Bowers and Yehuda, 2016, p.235). Likewise, recent studies (Gangi et al, 2009; Kellermann, 2013) have found that children of trauma victims have a greater genetic risk factor for stress disorders such as PTSD. However, as the study of Shmotkin *et al.* shows:

> the claim that most of the Holocaust survivors have succeeded in reducing the intergenerational transmission of their trauma to a tolerable or even minimal level is corroborated by the substantial empirical evidence on normal functioning and well-being among offspring of Holocaust survivors (Shmotkin et al, 2011, p.11).

Shmotkin *et al.* concludes that grandchildren of Holocaust survivors are generally resilient, although they may have certain vulnerabilities (2011, p.17). Although we see briefly this inherited trauma in the fractious relationship between Leah's grandfather and mother, resilience prevails in the characters of Hassan's novels, for whom investigation into their grandparents' past is intriguing and at times, akin to a fun detective game (Hassan, 1997, p.68; 1999, p.12). This may be for several reasons. Firstly, likening family and historical research to a game encourages readers to be inquisitive as well as introducing them to a complex subject in an accessible way. More mature readers may be able to appreciate a novel that explores the traumatic impact of the Holocaust upon the children or grandchildren of survivors, but the novels studied in this thesis are intended for children at an age when they are first formally taught about the Holocaust and roundups at school.

Therefore, one would expect that as an introduction to the events, these novels would encourage curiosity and empathy for the characters and their experiences. However, these are but two books by the same author and more research is needed[7]. Ultimately, 'grandchildren are also the last connection between the survivors and the next generations and, thus, they carry the burden of bearing the families' histories into the future' (Shmotkin et al, 2011, p.16). With this in mind, we turn to the theme of *devoir de mémoire*, which often dominates children's historical fiction.

Duty to Remember

As discussed in the previous chapter, one of the principal aims of children's historical fiction is to develop young people's understanding of the past, its peoples and their motivations, and the impact this has had on the present day. Historical fiction is a form of memorialisation, and can bear tribute to those lives lost as well as acting as a warning not to repeat mistakes of the past. With regard to the memory of the Second World War, over the past 75 years France has traversed periods of optimism, remembrance, silence, and even obsession (Conan and Rousso, 1994), and undoubtedly the ways in which the war and the Occupation are remembered will continue to change over time. This is very much evident in the advances in technology, particularly the rise and dominance of the Internet, which has led to the proliferation of free and accessible information. This has led to new forms of remembrance, such as the New Dimensions in Testimony project, which aims to 'develop interactive 3-D exhibits in which learners can have simulated, educational conversations with survivors through the fourth dimension of time' (USC ICT, 2012). However, the

[7] Again, though there may be other novels that feature the grandchild of a *Vél d'Hiv* survivor as the protagonist, I have found few in my own research.

current Prime Minister of France, Édouard Philippe, disagrees with Buton's assessment that France has entered a period of 'relative balance' (2007, p.238): 'avec la disparition des témoins, la "mémoire" entre dans une zone de turbulences. Ces "turbulences de la mémoire", c'est la négation, l'oubli, c'est la manipulation, la confusion' (2018, n.p). Thus, the duty to remember is as pertinent as ever, and even in modern times, 'on cherche encore le moyen de commémorer le souvenir des millions de victimes de cette guerre' (Rousso, 2013, p.131). With an ever-changing society, we must ask ourselves what commemoration means in the 21st century for the current generation of children who will one day be tasked with carrying on the memory of these events, at a time when all witnesses to the Second World War will have passed away and it will be out of living memory. The former Mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoë said of the duty of remembrance: 'ne jamais oublier, c'est un enjeu de civilisation' (cited in Rayski, 2002, p.3). This is especially important in France, with worrying statistics showing a decreased awareness of parts of the Second World War, such as the *Vél d'Hiv* roundup. Indeed, all the novels studied in this thesis share the theme of duty and memory on behalf of the child protagonist.

Hassan's *Un grand-père tombé du ciel* (1997) documents Leah's relationship with her grandfather and her discovery of his past. Its prologue takes the form of a diary entry, in which Leah thanks her grandfather for the gift of the journal for her 12th birthday. The gift may be a subtle nod to Anne Frank, who was given a diary by her father for her 13th birthday and whose very first lines declare: 'I hope I will be able to confide everything to you, as I have never been able to confide in anyone' (1995, p.1). Similarly, Leah's grandfather tells her, that since he will not always be around, the diary will be, 'un ami, un confident […] un ami fidèle et muet qui jamais ne te trahira' (1997, p.5). This foreshadows his death and expresses the from the outset, the author's belief in the necessity and urgency

of the transmission of memory, since the very purpose of Leah's writing is to record and remember her grandfather's story. Anne Frank's diary is later referred to explicitly by Leah, who explains to her grandfather that it helped to teach her about the Second World War (p.64). There is also a small illustration of Anne Frank and her diary at the beginning of chapter 8 (see appendix).

Hassan's novel moves between the occasional diary entry into longer first-person narrative. According to Nikolajeva:

> the fictitious diary is a popular narrative structure in children's fiction. One would assume that a diary is the closest way of conveying a character's consciousness [...] some diary novels merely attempt to render external events […] we do not learn much about the narrator's internal life' (2001, p.177).

As described in her diary, the purpose of the main body of Leah's first-person narrative is to tell the story of her grandfather's move to Paris, and the simple structure adheres to the narration of chronological events. Her diary entries, however, always take the form of personal letters to her grandfather. These are emotional and introspective, and not necessarily conversations that she would have face-to-face with her grandfather, given their enormous difficulty in healthy communication (1997, p.46). While these difficulties between them illustrate her grandfather's emotional pain and provide moments of comedy, it is important the reader can connect emotionally with Leah and Alex. The diary entries overcome their barrier to communication, giving the reader a deeper insight into Leah's feelings towards her grandfather and towards the memory of the war. Through Leah's diary, Hassan implies that writing is a valuable way of accessing and witnessing the past. Leah remarks: 'quand j'écris, j'ai l'impression que tout recommence, que le temps ne s'est pas écoulé' (p.44). She also acknowledges its limits: 'parfois, j'ai l'impression que les mots n'existent pas pour parler de ce que l'on ressent au plus profond de soi' (p.44). In her entries

following the death of her grandfather, Leah begins to write with a greater focus on *devoir de mémoire*, also prompted by a friend of her grandfather who reminds her:

> Les uns après les autres, s'éteignent tous les témoins du plus monstrueux crime commis contre l'humanité […] c'est à vous, les enfants, de perpétuer la mémoire. C'est vous qui devrez raconter à vos propres enfants ce que nous avons vécu. Et la mémoire se transmettra ainsi de génération en génération, de siècle en siècle (p.110).

The only exception to Leah's narrative chapters and diary entries is a single letter from her grandfather written shortly before his death, in which his very final words to his granddaughter are a call to remember: 'et quan tu sera istorienne [*sic*], raconte à tout le monde l'histoire de Deborah [*sic*], de Leah et de tous les autres' (p.120). For Leah, writing has enabled her to fulfil this duty as well as leading to her emotional development: 'je suis bien loin désormais de la petite Leah d'avant, capricieuse, gatée et intolérante' (p.121). The novel implies that a deeper understanding of history allows Leah greater empathy, not only for her grandfather, but for those affected by the wider events of the Holocaust: 'elle m'a permis d'y voir plus clair et de mieux comprendre les choses et les gens' (p.121). Learning history has helped her to understand the human and emotional aspect of the war and Hassan's message is one of hope that understanding and empathy developed through learning history, as well as through reading and writing, may encourage young people to continue the work of remembrance. 'Les questions de Leah force son grand-père à sortir du silence dans lequel il s'était muré et celle-ci se trouve être le premier témoin de son terrible récit' (Delbrassine, 2012, p.3). Hassan implies that the duty of remembrance is a two-way process, as not only do Leah's actions help her grandfather to share his story for the first time and thus confront his deep anger and grief, but Leah's emotional development allows her to surmount the ignorance which surrounded her and leaves her permanently and positively changed. Holocaust fiction 'évoquent moins la Shoah en tant que telle […] que

son implication pour le présent, aussi bien pour les survivants qui s'en libèrent par la parole que pour les générations survivantes qui assument à leur tour le devoir de mémoire' (Cariou, 2012, p.175). Certainly, *Un grand-père du ciel* is as much a reflection on Leah's personal growth and empathy development as it is a story about her grandfather's past.

Hassan's novel *Quand Anna riait* (1999) also draws on the use of diary entries as a way of remembering the past, although this time, it is the grandfather's diary which is discovered and read by his grandchildren. At first, their fascination with the past is driven by curiosity surrounding the discovery of Anna's photograph. Their discovery is a game, 'quelque chose de rigolo à faire' (p.12) but Simon soon becomes obsessed with the secret: 'la mystérieuse Anna occupa toutes mes pensées' (p.15) and 'l'histoire d'Anna me hantait' (p.90). As a result of his obsession Simon spends hours researching the Second World War via all means available: 'j'étais incapable d'expliquer pourquoi, mais je ne pouvais pas m'empêcher de collectionner tout ce qui avait trait à cette époque et plus particulièrement à l'histoire des juifs durant cette période' (p.91). He does not feel a sense of duty to remember the past, but an overwhelming passion to learn about history fuelled by a desire to change what he assumes will be an unhappy ending for Anna: 'le temps passait mais la volonté de changer la fin de cette histoire me taraudait inlassablement' (p.91). However, despite his fears that Anna did not survive the war, Simon feels compelled to complete his research and uncover her fate, knowing that if he gave up his search, 'je me le reprocherais toute ma vie' (p.94). The intensity of Simon's searching is thus rewarded when he is able to track Anna via an internet announcement, an unlikely ending that is highly problematic, and one which is discussed in the section on ethics later in this chapter. In this novel, there is a greater focus on *devoir de découvrir* as opposed to *devoir de mémoire*. Simon's fascination with his family history is driven by the desire to uncover his family secrets and

to give his grandfather emotional closure and he does not appear to undergo the same level of personal growth as Leah in *Un grand-père tombé du ciel*.

However, both novels address the silence and forgetfulness, which, according to Atack 'are fundamental to the duty to recall' (2013, p.73). This itself echoes Rousso's observation: 'existait ainsi des conflits permanents entre la volonté d'oubli et la volonté de se souvenir' (1987, p.321). This is true of Hassan's novels, perhaps because they feature two grandfathers, both directly impacted by the Holocaust, and due to the trauma of their past, feel unable to talk about their experiences. Thanks to the curiosity and proactiveness of their grandchildren, they are both able to resolve their feelings of guilt and anger and are made aware of the necessity to pass on their memory. After the war, Leah's grandfather's life is dominated by silence and distance from his family, even to the point that Leah's mother keeps his identity a secret from her daughter. In the novel, we see Alex's silence is slowly overcome through the relationship with his granddaughter and that he ultimately changes his entire outlook and leaves his parting words as a call for Leah to remember the past. In *Quand Anna riait*, although Simon's grandfather Jacques claims that: 'de la guerre, c'est à peine si je m'en souviens' (p.77), his diary often refers instead to his feelings for Anna and her impact on his memory: 'chaque mot, chacunes de des intonations […] sont encore gravés en mémoire' (p.60). Jacques chooses to downplay the impact of the war, namely, 'l'occupation, les tickets de rationnement, le marché noir, les restrictions, les combats n'ont laissé de traces en ma mémoire, ou si peu!' (p.43). However, his long list is contradictory to his claim that he barely remembers the war. What is made clear, however, is Hassan's suggestion that the memory of war is made more accessible through its impact on the personal relationship between Jacques and Anna rather than on the day-to-day circumstances such as rationing and restrictions.

Giorda's *C'était juste après la guerre* (1998), more unusually, focuses on the relationship between France and Germany, as protagonist Jérôme arrives in a remote Vercors village and attempts to understand the mysterious prisoner of war Franz. The readers, through the eyes of Jérôme, witness the events of the novel from an outside perspective, and like Jérôme, initially do not understand the depth of mistrust and hatred the French villagers hold for Franz. Both Franz and the villagers call for the trauma of the war to be remembered. However, for the villagers affected first-hand by the massacre of the Maquisards, and scarred by the events they witnessed, the need to remember is fuelled by anger, fear and hatred. However, it is ultimately Franz who calls for Jérôme never to forget the trauma of the war. Franz takes upon himself the guilt of his fellow countrymen. Although young and new to the German army at the end of the war and therefore uninvolved in any combat, his mere status as a member of the enemy party make him a symbol of the destruction they caused. Franz is an ambiguous figure – but for age and circumstance, he may have himself participated in the massacre of the Vercors Maquis. The reader sees that he is not driven by any hatred or Nazi ideology and had no other choice to join the army, and so perhaps Franz subverts their expectations of what a German soldier was like. 'For Bruckner […] the so-called 'duty to memory' […] can in many ways be more accurately characterized as a 'duty to repent' (Golsan, 2011, p.495). However, in Giorda's novel, it is Franz who ends repentant on behalf of the whole German nation. The author suggests that even the countries which were the perpetrators can come to learn of the mistakes caused by their forefathers, and suggests that the duty to remember is an international responsibility. However, Franz's symbol as the repentant martyr is somewhat problematic and will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 3.

According to Conan and Rousso, ‘the duty to remember is nothing but an empty shell if it does not proceed from knowledge. It is nothing but a test question or a pompous moral lesson if it is not connected to a respect for the truth’ (1998, p.197). Certainly, the line between history and fiction is a blurred one, with the historical accuracy of events depicted in works of children’s historical fiction often called into question. How then, do these authors combine their desire for remembrance alongside changes to the historical veracity of their works without becoming a ‘pompous moral lesson’?

Ethics and Endings

The duty of remembrance, alongside its message of transmission and memorialisation also broaches ethical and moral debates over the question of representation and the fidelity of fiction to historical accuracy. This is most plainly seen in the endings of several of these novels discussed in this thesis and is particularly the case for those novels centred upon the Jewish roundups. Kertzer, who believes in the necessity of hope in children’s Holocaust fiction, feels ‘the stories we give them about the Holocaust will be shaped by those expectations, and we will need to consider narrative strategies […] that give readers a double narrative’ (2002, p.253). Other prominent researchers in this area such as Bosmajian (2002), Jordan (2004) and Kremer (2004) agree on the acceptance of happy endings in such fiction, and that ‘stories for young readers must have an affirmative, if not happy end, at least in North America’ (Bosmajian, 2002, p.134). Though Bosmajian focuses on North American literature, the trope of a happy ending is recurrent in the novels presented in this thesis.

In addition to presenting a distorted view of history, Bosmajian argues that ‘the necessity of an affirmative, if not happy, closure […] denies the child the chance to imagine

and rehearse through ambivalent, even tragic narratives life situations that are indeed possible' (2002, p.135). Surely, if the purpose of Second World War fiction is to educate children in the hope that an increased awareness and empathy for the past may preserve the memory of the lives lost and encourage readers to learn from past mistakes, then happy endings, as Bosmajian suggests, may hinder readers from gaining insight into these events. As discussed in Chapter 1, fiction, unlike other forms of memory such as documentary or survivor testimony, offers children a more distant, and thus, more comfortable environment in which to explore complex and difficult emotions associated with traumatic history. In an analysis of Pausewang's *The Final Journey (1996),* Sarah Jordan agrees that by concluding a Holocaust novel with a happy ending, 'there is also a danger that some children who might be judged too young to know the truth will understand and be affected by this conclusion' (Jordan, 2004, p.203). Who is to judge whether books should adhere to solid fact as far as is possible, at the risk of traumatising, alienating or disengaging the reader from wanting to know more, or, at the other extreme, remain overtly optimistic – an approach that may only succeed in contributing to myth and ignorance about the impact of the war? It may be argued that if children are considered old enough to read about the Holocaust, then they should also be considered old enough to learn the facts and be trusted with the truth. Holocaust fiction should strive to be as honest as possible. This is a delicate balance, perhaps without answer, and one which may need to be continually readjusted with each generation of children that comes to learn about the Second World War and the Holocaust.

To give a concrete example, in *Max et les poissons* (2015), Max and his family are victims of the *Vél d'Hiv* roundup. After a few days in the Vélodrome, they are transported to the Drancy internment camp, from which Max is subsequently rescued by members of

the Resistance. Max survives the end of the war, and the reader is left to judge the fate of his family. While never explicitly stated, it is implied that they have not survived, as Max's family name never appears on the lists in the large hall that he is taken to after the war. However, novice readers might not register the subtleties of Adriansen's writing and may possibly remain hopeful of Max's family's eventual return. In terms of historical accuracy, this ending is problematic for several reasons, which Adriansen addresses in a short afterword. Firstly, at the time of the *Vél d'Hiv* roundup in 1942, 'ce sont les célibataires et les couples sans enfants que l'on a menés au camp de Drancy' (p.83), and it is therefore implausible that Max and his family should have been taken there. It is not explained why Adriansen chose to alter this fact, but she provides a subtle hint in another explanation. Adriansen acknowledges the fact that no children deported from the *Vél d'Hiv* survived the war, and to her knowledge, 'il n'y a pas de gardes qui aient permis à des enfants de s'échapper d'un camp' (p.84). She adds that her fictionalised Resistance members, Catherine and Guy, were inspired by all those citizens who risked their lives during the war to save others (p.84). Perhaps Adriansen's use of historically questionable information is borne from her desire to pay homage to those spheres that her work would not have crossed, such as the Resistance. '67000 of the 75000 Jews deported from France to the death camps in Poland were interned at Drancy' (Bangert, 2017, p.68), and therefore, out of all the internment camps, it is arguably a greater symbol of the suffering of French Jews. Furthermore, 'les enfants restés à Pithiviers et à Beaune-la-Rolande ont été, au bout de quelques temps, amenés à Drancy par convois de 1000 à la fois' (Rayski, 2002, p.63), and this may be why Adriansen chose to feature it. Her afterword includes a timeline of the events of the Second World War and several short paragraphs detailing the treatment of Jews, statistics regarding the *Vél d'Hiv*, internment and concentration camps, rationing, the

resistance, and the Hôtel Lutétia (p.91). However, it is worth noting that Adriansen's brief paragraph on internment camps makes no mention of Pithiviers or Beaune-La-Rolande, where the families from the *Vél d'Hiv* roundup would have been sent.

It is worth questioning what impact Adriansen's alterations may have on a child reader's understanding of the roundups. Adriansen's choice of Drancy as a place of internment is a clear and deliberate falsification on the author's behalf. Whether this was due to Drancy's prominence amongst the internment camps as a place that held the majority of deportees is not certain; however, this change does not add to the child reader's historical understanding of the facts of the war. In fact, it arguably serves only to perpetuate false information. However, Adriansen's involvement of the Resistance, while not grounded in known historical fact, is understandable in a work of children's fiction since it draws attention to the good work the Resistance did. Regarding the 'happy ending' of *Max et les poissons*, although Max is left to deal with the loss of his family, the departure of his friend Antoine and an uncertain future, there is still hope in his survival. The novel arguably achieves Kertzer's double narrative that 'respects our need for hope […] even as it teaches us a different lesson about history' (2002, p.75), because Max's survival leaves the reader with a sense of fairness and optimism, despite the changes Adriansen made to the historicity of the events.

Quand Anna riait (1999) likewise features a young person who escapes the *Vél d'Hiv* round-up. Simon is able to track down his grandfather's lost love Anna through putting out an appeal online in the hope that Anna has had children or grandchildren that may see the announcement: 'je vais répertorier tous les sites juifs qui contiennent une rubrique « recherche » et j'y mettrai l'annonce. Voilà!' (p.92). After several days, Simon receives an email response from Anna's granddaughter Yaël Shapira, who reveals that

Anna 'sortait vivante d'Auschwitz' (p.111), and details her move to Israël and life post-war. 'Quelques semaines plus tard, toute la famille au grand complet se rendit à l'aéroport pour y accueuillir Anna et Yaël' (p.113), and the novel concludes with a moving reunion between Jacques and Anna. Hassan's fairy-tale ending rewrites history, since we know that no women or children survived the deportations to Poland from the *Vél d'Hiv* (Lévy and Tillard, 1967, p.235). Simon's quest for knowledge and closure for his grandfather is thus rewarded by this unlikely discovery of Anna's survival. In reality, however, such forays into family history of the Holocaust would likely prove much more difficult, and more likely than not, one without a positive outcome. Similar to *Max et les* poissons, Anna survives whilst her family does not. Again, Bosmajian's reference to North American adolescent Holocaust fiction bears a great deal in common with French children's historical fiction:

> While many stories […] leave no doubt as to the ultimate fate of European Jews, that fate is limited to Jews in general and occurs "off stage," so to speak; it does not happen to the main character of the story who usually emerges at the end with an "I have come through" attitude (2002, p.134).

This attitude is also evident in the works of French children's fiction, such as the texts studied in this dissertation, and again, provide the reader with a sense of hope and triumph that perhaps such adversity can be overcome.

Hassan's previous novel, *Un grand-père tombé du ciel* (1997) features similar distortions of historical fact. Leah grandfather recounts his memories of his first family and his life after having fled Poland following increasing anti-Semitism. He recalls the birth of his first daughter Leah and his pride at having a French daughter (p.88). Alex and his family are all arrested during the roundup of the *Vél d'Hiv*: 'le 16 juillet 1942 au petit matin, quand les policiers sont *venis à la maisone* [*sic*] pour nous arrêter […] Grand-père me raconta qu'après quelques jours passé à Drancy qui servait de camp de transit' (p.88-89). However,

as in *Max et les poissons*, in 1942, Drancy did not intern families with young children, who would have been taken instead to Pithiviers or Beaune-La-Rolande. Like Sophie Adriansen, Yaël Hassan does not explain this alteration and one is left only to guess at her motivations, perhaps due to Drancy's notoriety as a transit camp. However, young readers of these novels are unlikely to question the veracity of the 'facts' presented in these novels, and as such, may develop a more positive understanding of the Holocaust and the survival rates of the Jewish deportations from France. Unlike Adriansen, who does include a short afterword to differentiate some of the fact from fiction in her work, Hassan's novels do not provide any such clarity for the reader. According to Nikolajeva, in terms of Holocaust fiction, 'for a novice reader, the novel offers true facts so horrendous that they may be hard to believe' (2014a, p.67). Ultimately, the idealistic ending of Hassan's novel and those like it, risk compounding the disbelief of young readers when they are later introduced to the facts of the Holocaust, as these novels give a child reader an unrealistic expectation and understanding of history. Nikolajeva further argues that 'tragic endings […] are unethical […] because they leave the novice reader with a sense of frustration' (Nikolajeva, 2014a, p.193). However, tragic endings are arguably part and parcel of Holocaust fiction. Heroism and the triumph of good over evil are common themes of children's fiction. However, one question concerning war fiction and Holocaust fiction is the representability of events in which good does not triumph. Whether or not tragic endings are unethical, the tragic nature of the Holocaust should not be avoided, and children's fiction should strive for honest endings. As Danielle Thaler expounds: 'there is room for the child in the historical novel, but in an historical novel firmly turned towards the recounting of a daily life that spares neither children nor adults' (2003, p.4). It should be noted that, unlike other novels studied, *Un grand-père tombé du ciel* explicitly references the conditions of the concentration

camps, ‘la faim le froid, les coups, les tortures, les sévices, le travail forcé, la promiscuité et les humiliations’ (p.89). The simple list is later used in Alex’s description of the brutality of the pogroms (p.105) and is both a striking and effective way in which readers can learn some of what happened in these places.

Gallent’s *Un secret derrière la porte* (2008) also contains a dossier at the back of the novel, which includes a chronology of events, maps, a brief paragraph about the Jewish children who were saved in the war and concludes with pages about wider global events of the time (pp.122-135). Although Sarah/Sabine survives her time in hiding, she is not a victim of the *Vél d’Hiv*, and is representative of many of the Jewish children who lived through the Occupation in hiding, a fact which is further detailed in the dossier’s page dedicated to the Righteous Among Nations (p.124). Similar to the novels so far explored, the Jewish child Sarah survives the war, whilst her parents do not. However, unlike *Max et les poissons*, this fact is stated and not left to the reader’s imagination. This provides the reader with the hope of a positive future for Sarah, but a hope that is not founded upon unrealistic expectations or falsified historical fact. The child reader is heartened by Sarah’s survival while also invited to empathise with the loss of her parents. Her guardians, René and Madeleine’s, have two sons: Alain – who was a prisoner of war in Germany for the duration of the war – makes it home; the youngest, Charles, dies a few days after the Normandy landings (p.116-117). Arguably, Gallent’s novel portrays a more faithful and honest approach to the impact of war, depicting the harsh and senseless nature of war, in that one son survives whilst the other does not.

Although questions over the representability of war in children’s fiction will perhaps always remain a topic of debate, in order to avoid more traumatic depictions of war and events such as the Holocaust, there are several ways in which authors may allude to

traumatic memory. Some of which have so far been explored through devices such as the grand-parent/child bond and the loss of parents. The next section investigates the ways in which these novels attempt to portray the emotional impact of the traumatic memory of war through physical injury and scars.

Representations of Traumatic Memory

One way in which traumatic memory is depicted is through the use of scars and physical illness as a metaphor for emotional pain. In fighting the irrepresentability of events such as the Holocaust and navigating questions of ethical representation of the Second World War, authors employ several literary devices in their attempt to educate their readers about this period in history. As previously discussed, it is generally agreed that having an emotional connection to history benefits a child's understanding and degree of empathy, but if that history is complicated or traumatic, then how can readers today relate to those events and the emotions they raise? With particular regard to Holocaust fiction, 'within the boundaries of skin, ultimately and utterly private and incommunicable […] a prevalent visual figuration of trauma often takes the shape of a bodily mark, wound, or tattoo' (Hirsch, 2012, p.80). The physical embodiment of emotional pain as a way to transmit memory lends itself to the development of empathy in child readers:

> empathy builds a bridge between self and other by creating a sensibility for the suffering of others under the premise that the observer could be subject to the same pain and […] is possible without any personal connection to either the victims or the perpetrators (Assmann, 2015, p.33).

As time passes and these events become ever distant, the ability to empathise with the victims of the Second World War risks becoming an increasing challenge. In several of the novels studied, the emotional memory of traumatic events is often

externalised and this allows them to circumvent the barriers to representation by translating the emotion into physical reality.

For example, in Gallent's *Un secret derrière la porte* (2008), Jeannot's home is destroyed during an allied air raid. This event is devastating for Jeannot and his parents, as it shakes their fundamental sense of security. In the aftermath of the air raid, Jeannot's father attempts to collect what possessions he can from the ruins and Jeannot follows him into the wreckage of his home. He trips and falls, cutting his calf on a rusty nail: 'aïe aïe aïe! Se plaint-il, assis dans l'herbe envahie de décombres, en se tenant le mollet sanguinolent' (p.22). While it may be difficult for a child reader to empathise with such a violent destruction of one's house, the physical injury Jeannot suffers – although it cannot possibly equate to the emotional trauma of losing a home – does, in some small way, allow the reader to empathise with Jeannot and alerts them to the danger he faces. The reader learns that for Jeannot, physical and emotional sensation are closely combined. Upon being told he will be sent away to safety at his godparent's apartment in Paris, 'Jeannot se sent soudain des fourmillements dans les pieds, comme chaque fois qu'il se trouve désorienté' (p.3). Jeannot is used to a physical response to stress and this is an experience with which many readers will be able to identify.

However, Jeannot's injury is not only used to draw empathy from the reader, although it certainly does this, but it also documents Jeannot's emotional journey over the course of the novel. During his time in Paris, he discovers his godparents are keeping a secret from him and it becomes his mission over the course of the novel to uncover this. It causes Jeannot much emotional pain to realise that everyone in the household is aware of the secret except him, and the sense of not being trusted hurts him deeply. However, once Sarah's identity and story are revealed and Jeannot is finally party to the secret, he begins

to heal, both emotionally and physically. The wound on his leg has healed: 'c'est bien aussi. La coupure semble se refermer rapidement' (p.109). There is resolution in the simultaneous physical healing of his scars and the revelation of secrets.

In terms of Holocaust fiction, Hassan's *Un grand-père tombé du ciel* (1997) directly references the Auschwitz tattoo as a mark of identity and memory:

> C'était ça, l'histoire de mon grand-père. C'était son histoire et celle de millions d'autres durant cette Deuxième Guerre mondiale. Une histoire dont il portait encore les meurtrissures. Une histoire gravée à l'encre bleue sur son bras' (p.90).

The Auschwitz tattoo is a physical mark that has come to represent the enormity of the suffering and inhumanity endured by prisoners. In this passage, Hassan illustrates how the symbol of the tattoo has become endemic in the shared history of the Jewish people. With a narrower focus on one individual, with whom they are encouraged to empathise, readers can better understand the wider impact and gain a larger perspective of the Holocaust. According to art historian Jill Bennett:

> it is precisely through the breached boundaries of skin in such imagery that memory continues to be felt as a wound rather than seen as contained other [...] it is here in sense memory that the past seeps back into the present, becoming sensation rather than representation' (2005, p.364).

This external and visible injury is a way for readers to visualise the permanency of the trauma. At the conclusion of the novel, Leah's grandfather falls gravely ill. Unlike in *Quand Anna riait* (1999), in which Simon's grandfather undergoes a near-miraculous recovery in response to his joyous reunion with Anna, Alex's illness continues to deteriorate and results in his death. Although Leah compels him to fight, he responds: 'tu crois que je me suis pas assez *batti* dans ma vie? Je suis fatigué, Leahlé. Il est temps que je parte' (p.118). Alex, long aware of the fate of his family killed in Auschwitz, experiences resolution through the relationship with his granddaughter, who helps him to release much of his anger and to

rediscover his faith. *Quand Anna riait* seems to suggest that it is through a grandchild's intervention that the revelation of past secrets can result in the emotional healing of the survivor. This is illustrated through the analogy of Jacques' nameless physical illness, that defies diagnosis in as much as the horrific events of the past are often said to defy translation into written word. Both Hassan's novels conclude with the survivor achieving resolution with the past, whether through discovery and relationship with their grandchildren. According to Nikolajeva, 'the theme of suppressed traumatic memory is frequent in children's literature, most often connected with the death of a close relative or friend' (Nikolajeva, 2014a, p.156). Through Alex's death and his reconciliation at the end of his life, Hassan illustrates the overarching influence that the Holocaust had upon him and how it dominated his life. Thus, the reader, through the close personal relationship between Leah and her grandfather, can envision the extent and longevity of the impact of traumatic memory.

This is briefly touched upon in *Max et les poissons* (2015). Although the novel does not refer explicitly to the death of Max's family, Adriansen uses an example more familiar to child readers. Many children may relate to the experience of the loss of a pet, and Adriansen's novel attempts to engage empathy and understanding through the death of Max's beloved pet fish, Auguste. Abandoned in the apartment during the roundup, it is only once Max realises Auguste's fate that he begins to understand the gravity of the roundup and its impact on his life. Auguste was a gift from Max's parents, a reward for good marks at school. His forced abandonment and death are figurative of the loss of innocence, security and happiness characteristic of Max's life before the roundup. Auguste's death is a turning point for Max and a concrete visualisation of the emotions Max experiences.

Readers are also more likely to identify with the experience of losing a beloved pet and this reinforces the upsetting and tragic nature of the event.

The novel attempts to bridge the divide between understanding and traumatic memory by offering experiences more familiar to the reader, as depicted through the disruption to Max's birthday. Max is very excited about his impending birthday and the sense of anticipation is one which many children can share. Therefore, when Max is subsequently unable to celebrate due to the *Vél d'Hiv* roundup, while contemporary readers may find it difficult to imagine what this event was like, they can imagine and empathise with the pain of being unable to celebrate a birthday. This is compounded by the fact that the date of roundup coincides with Max's birthday, a theme also used in Hassan's *Quand Anna* riait, where Anna's birthday also falls on the day of the *Vél d'Hiv* anniversary. This coinciding of significant life events emphasises the emotional impact for characters and readers. Given that a birthday is a special day for many children, the fact that no such celebrations would take place for Max, but only abject misery and suffering, reinforces the tragic and horrendous nature of the event.

Although this will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3, Giorda's *C'était juste après la guerre* (1998), uses physical scarring to represent both identity and memory. In terms of the visualisation and externalisation of memory, at the novel's crux, former prisoner of war Franz burns his arm with a branding iron. This of course, calls to mind the branding of slaves and prisoners, most obviously the tattooing of prisoners at Auschwitz. However, this metaphor may not be so obvious to younger readers. As will be explored later, Franz feels a deep sense of collective guilt for the crimes committed by his countrymen, particularly for the Vercors massacre and the Holocaust. In branding himself, Franz is creating a permanent, physical reminder of the memory of both these events. His

scar is a shocking and clear analogy not only for his feelings of guilt, but for the emotional scarring that these events had on a wider scale. This novel epitomises Atack's observation of 'remorse as a dominant motif in French wartime narratives' (2007, p.79). Franz's message to Jérôme is a plea never to forget, and therefore, his physical scarring shows the degree to which he believes the duty to remember is permanent and unchanging. Ultimately, the child reader can understand the depth of trauma through the externalisation of Franz's emotional pain.

Physical scars and illness are a way in which authors can translate the more difficult emotional aspect of traumatic history. Another way through which authors facilitate the accessibility of history for young readers today is through the genre of fantasy and adventure.

Fantasy, Adventure, and Historical Fiction

The use of fantasy is another lens through which memory is explored in children's historical literature. Speculative fiction is the most popular genre amongst children aged 11 to 15, whereas adventure novels are more popular with those in primary school (Ipsos, 2016, p.34). Both genres share a similar sense of daring, intrigue and wonder, with fantasy having a firmer basis in the supernatural. In combination with historical fiction, adventure and fantasy are arguably better suited to engaging children with the past than other genres, as they stimulate a child's imagination, curiosity and anticipation. As such, they are often used in Holocaust fiction, since they 'offer accessibility for young audiences to learn about the brutal and incomprehensible extremes of the Holocaust' (Lassner and Cohen, 2014, p.167). As well as capturing the imagination, incorporating elements of fantasy into such fiction may also serve to shield the reader from the full exposure to traumatic history, particularly

for younger readers being introduced to the topic of war and the Holocaust. If historical fiction has an anchor in reality as well as fantasy, it sets a certain distance or buffer between the reader and the events described. Of course, there is a balance to be made, since over-use of fantasy elements in historical fiction may give a child reader a distorted view of history, which is considered in greater detail later in this chapter.

Fantasy blurs the line between past and present in Francisco Arcis's *Le Mystère du marronnier* (2005). The mystery of Pierre's great-uncle Léon and his fate following his arrest by the Gestapo during the war has haunted their family across the generations. The death of Pierre's great-grandfather 'Yayo' prompts the family to gather at his grandmother's house, where they regularly spend every summer. For Pierre's grandmother, 'elle y est née et compte bien y finir ses jours' (p.4), and thus, to Pierre, it is a location that has deep roots in his sense of family identity, as well as history, its windmill described as having 'captured time' (p.3). It is at this farmhouse, in a ruins of a chalet, that Pierre discovers a magical window in the attic that allows him to look into the past. He senses this window is special: 'je suis sur le point de revenir sur mes pas lorsque mon regard est attiré par la petite fenêtre. Elle doit être la seule de la maison à avoir conservé tous ses carreaux intacts' (p.15). Through the window, Pierre can see the same view exactly as it was in 1943 and watch in real time the activities of German soldiers and his great-uncle Léon in the days leading up to his disappearance. His view is not passive as though watching a television but a whole sensory experience; Pierre, and later his Uncle François, with whom he shares his exciting discovery, are able to hear the rumble of tanks in the distance and conversations between German soldiers and even feel the sensation of the walls shaking as shots are fired (p.23). Watching their uncle Léon, François remarks that 'nous assistons à l'histoire en direct' (p.36). The magical window brings the past to vivid life and renders it

as real as the present moment. Thus, this makes the past more concrete and accessible for the child reader, and they may be better able to imagine and relate to the past. Léon, only known from a handful of family photographs and the scant memories of Pierre's grandmother was a mystery to Pierre, the 'héro de l'ombre' (p.9), someone discussed at family gatherings, but Pierre's encounters with the magic window transform his memory into a living, breathing person. Thus, aware of Léon's impending arrest, Pierre grows a deeper empathy and concern for him as he watches him in the preceding days, helpless to intervene. Similarly, this invites the readers to think about the past in a different way, not only in terms of factual information, but in terms of the human and emotional aspect.

The night before Léon's arrest, Pierre and François, watching from the present day, spot two German soldiers searching for Léon. Fraught with fear for their uncle, Pierre and François recount that 'nous tambourinons contre les vitres, qui résistent à nos coups, et l'incroyable se produit: les hommes du passé nous ont entendus!' (p.55). In doing so, Pierre and François are able to divert the soldiers' attention away from Léon and are able to save him. Pierre remarks that 'la frontière entre le présent et le passé est tellement mince… Sans doute pourrions-nous même converser avec des hommes du passé' (pp.58-59). The following day, under François' questioning, they discover from grandmother that as a result of that night in 1943, in which Pierre's shouts prompted the soldiers to enter the chalet, the then-inhabitants left it abandoned: 'cette visite les a terrorisés. Le lendemain, ils pliaient bagage. On ne les a jamais revues' (p.66). Pierre's discovery that his actions in the present can have a tangible impact on the past and that two way communication is possible between them has further implications when he realises that he may be able to save his great-uncle from his eventual fate: 'si nous n'avions pas été là, derrière cette fenêtre, que se serait-il produit? Avons-nous modifié le passé?' (p.60). Knowing now that he is able to influence

the past, Pierre is faced with a moral dilemma – whether to intervene in history by saving Léon's life or allow history to unfold as it should. However, upon Léon's capture the following night, François tells Pierre, 'cette fois-ci, nous n'y pouvons rien. L'histoire va se dérouler comme prévu, et cette nuit, l'oncle Léon va se faire arrêter par la Gestapo' (p.76). The magic window has created a paradox in which Pierre and François, by changing history, succeeded in contributing to and creating history. Were it not for the fact that they initially saved Léon from arrest, he would not have been free to hide the letter for the Jewish children the following night, and therefore, Pierre and François would never have been able to inform those children of their parents' arrest. The novel implies that we can all contribute to history and encourages the reader to understand that past and present are more closely related than one might appreciate. The sense of history coming full circle is also seen in the novel's emphasis on dates. Léon's disappearance coincides with the date of Yayo's funeral and also the death of père Joseph, the collaborator who denounced Léon. There is poetic justice that he passes away on the very anniversary of the disappearance of the man he denounced, and the combination of these three significant events as part of the novel's culmination provides closure for Pierre, his family and the reader. As the former head of the family, Yayo's interment may be seen as metaphor for putting the past to rest, and Pierre describes the aftermath of his burial in simple terms: 'c'est fini' (p.71). Indeed, the novel's final lines explain that the chalet has been bought by a young architect and 'son premier travail a été de changer toutes les fenêtres et de brûler les vieilles, réduisant les carreaux en miettes' (p.95). Its purpose fulfilled and mysteries revealed, the magic window can be broken, giving the characters absolute closure on the past. In Tess Cosslett's analysis of fantasy literature involving time-slips, she registers that 'children in these books are finally identified with growth, change and forward movement. Their experiences teach them that

they cannot remain trapped in the past, they must move on' (2002, p.250). Similarly, Arcis's novel culminates in a moment of revelation and resolution for Pierre and the mystery of Léon's arrest, and also for Sarah and Samuel, the two Jewish children who are finally informed of what happened to their parents.

Through the use of fantasy, Arcis's novel portrays how present actions can reach across the chasm of time and influence events in the past. By using this tool of fantasy, the novel suggests that history is not in fact static and unreachable, and encourages the reader to imagine the past as though it were the present day. Pierre's deep emotional bond with the places in the novel and his great-uncle allow readers to empathise with him. In real terms, the author implies that though we may not be able to influence the past through magic or time-slips, we are able to change history in other ways: primarily by altering our own present since our present is tomorrow's history, and in doing so, making a better past for those in our future.

Consequentially, it is easier for readers to empathise with Pierre given that the story involves his own family history and takes place on a family member's property that is imbued with deep personal meaning for him. Writer Humphrey Carpenter, speaking of British children's fiction of the 1960s and 1970s, notes that such fiction is often based around the following theme:

> The discovery or rediscovery of the past […] likely to concern one or two children who stumble across some feature of history or mythology which concerns their own family or the place where they are living or staying, and which often involves magic or supernatural events. The children become drawn into it, usually at their own peril, and in consequence achieve some kind of spiritual, moral or intellectual growth (1985, p.218).

The theme of discovery and family history is certainly apparent in *Le Mystère du marronnier*, as geographical location serves as a junction between the past and present, giving Pierre and by extension, the reader, a deeper understanding of the events through the

visual depiction of recognisable physical landscapes. The eponymous horse chestnut tree, for example, is the means by which Pierre and François ascertain which point in history they are witnessing, depending on its height. For Pierre, seeing the same places 55 years apart is both troubling as well as enlightening: 'c'est une fois de plus une expérience troublante que de retrouver ces mêmes lieux, à un demi-siècle d'intervalle' (p.60). He is struck by the knowledge that it is the very same places that such events took place: 'je me contente d'observer, un peu inquiet tout de même de savoir les soldats allemands dans le chalet où je me trouve. Cinquante ans plus tôt, pour moi, c'est aujourd'hui' (p.59). Growing up listening to family stories about his great-uncle Léon, family history has been actualised in the simultaneous convergence of time and place. The sense of familiarity of the family farmhouse enhances the reality of the historical events which took place there. The reader is perhaps encouraged to consider not only the emotional aspect of history, but to realise that the past can have a local resonance and significance and thus encourage them to ask what might have happened in their own street or town during the Second World War.

Location is also significant in Yaël Hassan's *Quand Anna riait*, where Simon and Déborah discover their grandfather's wartime diary and photograph of Anna in the attic of his holiday home. In a way similar to *Le Mystère du marronnier*, both stories take place in the home of a grandparent who has lived through the Occupation, although Simon's grandfather did not live in his home until after the war. In both novels, the discoveries take place in the attic. This is the domain of adventure, secrecy and can often itself be a gateway to the past by virtue of the artefacts and detritus that are often stored there. Attics are exciting, out of bounds, and not regular places for children to play. One would not expect a child to find something exciting, for example, in the bathroom or living room, as those

rooms do not have the same mystique from a child's point of view, whereas attics are somewhere for mysteries to be uncovered.

Further to Carpenter's view that books focused on the discovery of the past often concern family, place and culminate in the child's growth and development, Cosslett argues that 'empathy is obviously central to the experiences of the past […] the element of "discovery" is also often present' (2002, p.48). Empathy and discovery are imperative to the child reader's understanding of the past through fiction. For example, Simon's discovery of the diary sparks a fascination with the entire period of the Second World War: 'j'étais incapable d'expliquer pourquoi, mais je ne pouvais m'empêcher de collectionner tout ce qui avait trait à cette époque et plus particulièrement à l'histoire des juifs durant cette période' (p.91). This intense preoccupation with the past inspires Simon's Internet research which conclude with the discovery of what happened to Anna. Likewise, in Hassan's *Un grand-père tombé du ciel*, Leah discovers a photograph in her grandfather's room depicting a young girl who looks so familiar that at first Leah mistakes it as a photograph of herself. Later it is revealed that this young girl shares not only a face, but the same name as the protagonist. The deep sense of personal connection to the past that Leah then feels as a result of this photograph trigger an intense desire to discover the girl's true identity and her grandfather's secret. Ultimately, it is one which leads to revelation and catharsis for Leah's grandfather and the rest of her family.

These novels take place decades after the events of the Occupation and thus the past is initially distant and obscure, and not as alive and immediate as it is, for example, in *Max et les poissons* (2015), whose approach to the duty of memory is somewhat different. However, these authors attempt to render the past more accessible to contemporary young readers by using family history, heritage, and the sense of belonging as vessels of memory.

Through the use of fantasy and adventure to captivate the reader's attention, the protagonists' personal connections with physical location and objects of memory encourage inquisitiveness and empathy with the characters. This in turn prompts readers to question and explore their own family or local stories. These devices help readers to understand the war on a personal level, by focusing on its impact on one child and their family. Whether the transmission of memory and teaching of history in this genre of fiction be through story, place or with the help of the fantastical, it is clear that the memory of the past can shape a child's understanding of their family history, national history and by extension their own identity within those spheres.

CHAPTER 3 – REPRESENTATIONS OF IDENTITY

The transmission of the memory of the Second World War in children's historical fiction has implications for both identity formation and empathy development, since our identity is partly shaped by cultural memory: 'en plaçant l'enfant au centre de cette transmission, elle l'a positionné comme un passeur de mémoire, chargé de se construire une identité ancrée dans un passé' (Lévêque, 2011, n.p). As children grow and learn about the environment around them, they begin to develop an understanding of both their own unique character and their place in the wider world. This formation of identity is essential to a child's wellbeing and ability to connect with others. In the field of educational psychology, identity is broadly divided into two categories, namely personal and social identity (Barrett, 2000; Schachter and Rich, 2011; Raburu, 2015). Developmental psychologist Rudolph Schaffer has defined personal identity as being 'concerned solely with individuals' distinctiveness from others', whereas social identity 'may be defined as an individual's sense of belongingness to particular social groups and a feeling of distinctiveness in comparison with members of other groups' (2006, p.80). There is much debate on theoretical explanations of identity formation. Martyn Barrett provides an excellent summary of the differences between cognitive-developmental theories and socialisation theories:

> Cognitive-developmental theories (Piaget and Weil, 1951; Aboud 1988) have postulated that children's identity development is driven by deeper, underlying cognitive-developmental changes. Socialisation theories have instead postulated that the child's identity development is driven by influences from the child's social environment, especially parents, schooling and the mass media (2000, p.39).

Like Barrett, who argues these theories are too simplistic and the reality is that both mechanisms are at work, this thesis does not wish to delve into the rights and wrongs of either theory, but rather to indicate the complex duality of identity formation and

acknowledge the distinction between self-identity and social identity. Curiously, this dichotomy features in the children's historical fiction chosen for this thesis, where there is a much greater emphasis on the role of the social identity.

These two facets of identity continue developing throughout childhood and adolescence. In early childhood, children acquire their identity through their parents or caregivers as well as the culture in which they grow up. Identity becomes more complex and diverse as a child reaches school age, begins to leave the family structure and enters into an institutional environment. Here they begin to spend more time amongst peers and adults other than their parents. It is between the ages of six and 12 years old, the period which Martin Packer refers to as 'middle childhood', that a child undergoes significant development of self-concept (2017, p.396). This thesis analyses literature written for eight to 11-year-olds, whose identities are most prominently shaped by their family, culture, and school relationships. As well as being a period of significant personal identity development, between these ages 'the child's psychological functioning now has both an internal and external aspect' (Packer 2017, p. 370). The widening of a child's social circle corresponds with the growth of both their personal and social identity. The school environment may cement certain notions of identity, such as the education system in France reinforcing the idea of French national identity, which is explored in greater detail in this chapter.

The formation of identity, both personal and social, gives the child a sense of stability, belonging and confidence, from which they can extend that understanding towards others and foster empathy. It is important to recognise that not all children may have a strong sense of stability or confidence. However, a sense of identity can help children in this part of their development and therefore, the role of literature is pertinent because it has been shown that literature helps a child to build identity (Holland, 1975; Nikolajeva, 2014,

para.6). Furthermore, studies show that there is a higher rate of reading amongst French primary school children than at any other age, with 90% of children this age reading for leisure (Ipsos, 2016, p.12). Therefore, it could be argued that reading literature is a vital part of identity formation at this age. The development of identity through reading is made possible through ToM, and in turn, ToM is itself furthered through reading. It is this virtuous cycle that encourages empathy in young readers.

This chapter focuses, then, on the representation of identity in French children's historical fiction, and how this representation encourages emotional and empathic growth in young readers. It first investigates the role of social identity, with a section on the importance of national identity in France. The role of social identity will be lastly investigated through familial relationships, namely the recurrent theme of conflict between adult (usually the parent) and child. Secondly, this chapter investigates personal identity and the consequences of the loss of identity. Given the focus on the *Vél d'Hiv,* this section examines the representation of Jewish identity with particular reference to *Max et les poissons* (2015), whose protagonist experiences the events first-hand. This chapter hopes to show how these books portray the personal and social identity of their characters. In turn, what does this teach readers about identity during the war, and how can this be applied in a wider context? This chapter will consider whether the representation of identity aids young readers to learn from history and be more empathic.

National Identity

As previously discussed, the teaching of history in France was, until recently, largely synonymous with the formation of a united national identity. Historical instruction aimed to construct an identity founded upon the principles of patriotism and loyalty to the values

of the Republic. Indeed, equating national pride with learning history was a prevalent discourse throughout the period of the war and Occupation. Benoït Falaize notes, 'jusqu'à la fin du régime de Vichy, faire de l'histoire en classe c'est faire aimer la France' (2016, p.18). We also know that during the Second World War, 'warrior virtues were inherent in France's national identity' (Flood, 2000, p.98). Hence, the transmission of national memory has long been used as a means to foster a collective sense of identity and belonging. In some respects, this merging of history and identity remain in place today.

In 2009 Éric Besson, former Ministre de l'Immigration, de l'Intégration, de l'Identité nationale et du Développement solidaire, launched *le grand débat sur l'identité nationale*, an online study which asked its respondents, 'Pour vous, qu'est-ce qu'être Français aujourd'hui?', demonstrating that national identity remains an ongoing topic of debate well into 21st century France (Anon, 2009, n.p). An analysis of the vocabulary used by respondents identified 'history' as one of the most frequently occurring words (Jeannot, Tomc and Totozani, 2011, p.68). This corresponds with the notion that French citizens are heirs to their country's past. Pascal Marchand and Pierre Ratinaud remark in their analysis of the *grand débat* that 'chacun se sent propriétaire de l'histoire de France' (2012, p.154). As discussed earlier, the fact that history is considered as property highlights the extent to which it is intrinsically associated with French identity. Indeed, French history and its cultural inheritance is known in France by the word *patrimoine*, which 'is deeply imbued in the French psyche. It connotes more than its literal translation as patrimony' (Lea, 2009, n.p).

It is important to recognise the temporal aspect of identity in its relationship with memory and history. In terms of literature, 'the individual response of the reader is embedded in the cultural ambiance of the time' (Cullingford, 1998, p.1), and therefore

identity requires cultural contextualisation. William James Booth expands the definition of identity to include temporality, defining it as 'the enduringness through time and change of a subject (individual, corporate, social group or state) capable of being held responsible' (2008, p.238). It is therefore not a fixed notion and is influenced by the cultural memory of historical events and is indeed open to politicisation, which is furthered explored in this chapter. The sense of ownership mentioned above also indicates a sense of responsibility towards the past which is passed down through the generations. Booth states that 'identity of the subject across time is an essential precondition of accountability' (2008, p.238). Indeed, the notion that an individual carries some part of their collective history within them, and can be held accountable for this history, links to the theme of collective guilt discussed with regard to *C'était juste après la guerre* (1998) in Chapter 2. Therefore, we can conclude that history is integral in the formation of national identity in France. Addressing his desire for a new constitution in 1941, Pétain declared, 'le peuple français porte son avenir en lui-même, dans la profondeur des soixante générations qui vous ont précédés sur notre sol et dont *vous* êtes les héritiers responsables' (1989, p.155, italics in original). This idea of inheritance is not dissimilar to the current belief that French people hold about being heirs to their history. In Weber's *Peasants into Frenchmen* documenting France's transition from a nation to a *patrie*, or fatherland, he notes 'the concept of the *patrie*, can mediate between private society and official society' (Weber, 1977, p.97). Thus, the notion that a country can establish a strong sense of national identity by aligning both personal and social identity is one that is very much part of French history.

Currently, at primary level, children undertake moral and civic education classes which aim to teach pupils the fundamental values of the Republic: 'la liberté, l'égalité, la fraternité et la laïcité. S'en déduisent la solidarité, l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes,

ainsi que le refus de toutes les formes de discriminations' (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, 2018, p.1). By the end of cycle 3 (ages nine to 12), a child must understand 'ce que signifient l'appartenance à une nation, la solidarité européenne et l'ouverture au monde' (CNDP, 2002, p.181). Where previously it was history that was used to teach French values, nowadays children are given lessons in *enseignement moral et civique*. The same principles apply: to foster a sense of national identity built on the ideals of the Republic. Although contemporary education does now seek to teach history within a wider civic, moral and social framework, the relationship between history and identity is still very much present yet vulnerable to manipulation. As in the days where history was taught solely to raise loyal citizens, the risk of conflating identity and national memory remains problematic.

This is evidenced in Sarkozy's ill-considered proposal in 2007 that the last letter of resister Guy Môquet should be read to all high school students in France, a divisive plan denounced as historical revisionism by the (then) Parti communiste (Cédelle, 2007). Other criticism noted the imposition on teachers' autonomy and questioned the impact of repeating the reading every October, some calling it 'une parodie d'éducation civique' (Levy, 2009). By omitting Môquet's communist ties and using the annual and national reading of the letter to unify the nation's schoolchildren, Sarkozy presented a simplified and restricted vision of Môquet's identity as a member of the Resistance. This was as much historical reductionism as revisionism. The following year, Sarkozy offered an equally controversial proposal to entrust to each CM2 pupil the memory of a child victim of the Holocaust. Simone Veil (Holocaust survivor and former Minister) called Sarkozy's proposal 'inimaginable, insoutenable, dramatique et, surtout, injuste' (Vidalie, 2008, n.p). Neither proposal came to fruition, but both highlight the problem that even at the highest

level of political office, 'identification with a victim of the war was perceived as a bridge to national belonging' (Sanyal, 2015, p.242). National identity clearly remains a contentious issue in France.

Studies have shown 'that the importance which children attribute to their national identity increases significantly between 5 and 11 years of age, and that ingroup favouritism is a widespread phenomenon, irrespective of culture' (Barrett, 2000, p.38). Therefore, one might expect that teaching children about their national identity would be a straightforward task, particularly as 'in France, children's literature has always clearly reflected national identity' (Marcoin, 2001, p.53). However, given the breadth of debate on the definition of French identity (Noiriel, 2007) and the debate over the appropriate ways of education sparked by Sarkozy's proposals, are such conflicts of identity evident in French children's literature? Francis Marcoin acknowledges a change in understanding of national identity in young people, stating 'children are born into an international community. *Nation* is now a negative word; *patrie* seems out-of-date, old, comic, crazy or even sinister […] A foreigner is no longer an enemy or inferior but, instead, is someone different' (2001, p.53). More recently, statistics shows that around two-thirds of French people declare themselves to feel European citizens (Commission européenne, 2017, p.3). Age is a significant factor, with younger people having a greater attachment to European identity (p.10). However, French people identify more closely with Europe only when they see European values aligning with French ones, namely 'la paix, le respect de la vie humaine, et les droits de l'Homme' (p.10). Although a majority of French people claim to feel European, this is secondary to the feeling of being French (Sciences-Po, 2016, p.72). Marcoin's assessment that nation is a negative word seems somewhat premature, since French national identity is clearly more

important to the French than European identity, but a trend is emerging amongst the younger generation having a stronger European sentiment when compared to the past.

Despite the importance of national identity, 75% of French people consider France to be a nation divided, and almost half think the country is less tolerant to people from different cultures than it was ten years ago. The biggest sources of tension are felt between immigrants and French nationals, between people of different religions and between those of different ethnicities (Ipsos, 2018, pp.3-9). This is perhaps reflected in the current resurgence of the extreme right, populist movements, and anti-immigrant sentiment. These contemporary divisions are not new and can be compared to the pre-war sentiment of the 1930s, when 'France emerged as the major haven for German and Central European refugees, the overwhelming majority of whom were Jews' (Caron, 1999, p.1). This led to increased tensions and an 'anti-refugee crackdown', predominantly triggered by 'middle-class professions […] whose campaigns assumed a markedly anti-Semitic tone and ultimately played a critical role in paving the way for Vichy's anti-Semitic legislation' (Kedward, 2005, pp.3-4). The recurring sense of division demonstrates that national identity remains a topic of prevailing debate in France. Therefore, Marcoin's claim that 'French literature clearly reflects French national identity' (2001, p.53) must be investigated. Does contemporary children's historical fiction depict a concrete notion of French national identity?

Marcoin is optimistic that a growing sense of European community is blurring the definition of both foreigner and enemy. This shift is indeed reflected in modern children's literature. However, it is France and her allies, rather than Germany, that are portrayed as different. These novels question the readers' understanding of the enemy by subverting the child's (both character and reader) expectations of French and allied identity. A young

reader may expect the French to play the hero because they can relate to their national identity and have more difficulty relating to those whom they perceive to be the enemy. In this respect, most of these novels portray the Germans as a strictly one-dimensional enemy. For example, Sophie Adriansen's novel *Max et les poissons* (2015) details eight-year-old Max's wartime experience as he survives the *Vél d'hiv* roundup and spends the remainder of the war in hiding with members of the Resistance. Germany is presented clearly as the enemy. Given the age of the protagonist and the book's target readers (age nine onwards), this black and white, enemy-versus-ally approach to the German as the 'other' is unsurprising. The child reader's development of social identity and understanding of morality may not yet extend to a more mature understanding of the complexities of national identity. In *Max,* Germany is a collective, impersonal entity, recognised by its uniformity and lack of expression. 'Ça fait un bruit du tonnerre. Les Allemands, ce sont des gens en uniforme vert foncé qui portent des fusils et ne sourient jamais. Ils marchent souvent tous en même temps et font trembler les rues avec leurs bottes' (2015, p.8). Max remarks on their unsmiling faces, which induces fear, mistrust and further removes their humanity. This fear later inspires a nightmare in which his entire family are kidnapped by 'l'ombre d'un méchant bateau vert foncé', leaving him the sole survivor (p.54). The evocation of the dark green colour of the boat is a clear allusion to the uniform of German army, seen in Max's first description of the marching soldiers. His limited experience of German identity cements the 'them and us' mentality. Studies have shown that compared to the perception of ingroup faces, '6-year-old children perceive less humanness in outgroup faces' (McLoughlin, Tipper and Over, 2017, p.7). However, their 'studies propose that dehumanization is a distinct concept that cannot simply be reduced to intergroup preference' (McLoughlin, Tipper and Over, 2017, p.8). Although more study is required to

understand the mechanism behind the dehumanization of outgroup faces, we see this mechanism at play in the novel, mirrored in Max's perception of the German soldiers.

Max's understanding of his national identity and in-group preference is shaken when he is rounded up as part of 'Opération vent printanier'. Overhearing the word *rafle* spoken by a neighbour, Max looks it up in the dictionary. He discovers it comes from the German word raffen, meaning to gather (p.19). Max logically deduces that the Germans are responsible for the roundup (p.24), since the word is German and they are the recognised enemy. It is therefore a shock to realise that his captors are French. This moment is heavy with poignancy, since it is this infamous roundup that will supplant the dictionary definition and become intrinsically associated with this word.

Max's description of the French police is similar to the way he speaks of the German soldiers. Both groups are categorised by their uniform and facial expression. 'Ces hommes ne sourient pas non plus […] il y a des gens de la police, avec sur la tête des chapeaux' (p.25). Max draws parallels between the German enemy and the French police, noticing that the French are also unsmiling. This signifies to Max that they, too, cannot be trusted, since smiling is associated with security and kindness. Children of Max's age have been shown to have an 'expectation that people with genuine smiles would be more prosocial' (Song, Over and Carpenter, 2016, p.498). For Max, the unsmiling faces are a defining feature of both the German and French forces and underline how far removed they are from goodness, compassion and empathy. The boundary between perceived enemies has been blurred. Over the course of the novel, Max's understanding of German identity remains unchanged and it is the French who have become less human. However, Max ultimately reverts to his natural bias, trusting that 'les gens qui nous gardent ne peuvent pas être méchants, puisque ce ne sont pas des Allemands' (p.39). The return to trust despite the

shock of the roundup being at the hands of the French police highlights Max's clear-cut, enemy-vs-hero mentality. The Germans are the enemy and therefore, those who are not German, by default, cannot be dangerous. This hints at an idealised notion of national identity, as the French remain redeemable whilst the Germans are never trusted, the clear enemy from start to finish. Max retains his preference towards this ingroup identity to which he feels he belongs.

Naming is another significant facet of identity and a theme drawn upon in this novel. 'Personal names and place names are some of the most important tools of the author in the creation of credible characters placed in a literary universe that gives the impression of being authentic' (Helleland, Ore and Wikstrøm, 2012, p.278). François is the name of the school bully who torments Max (p.10). The name itself stems from Latin meaning Frenchman, and Adriansen's naming of the school bully is perhaps a subtle nod to France's treatment of its Jews. Similarly, when forced into hiding, Max chooses the name François as a pseudonym (p.56). Forced to hide his Jewish identity and adopt an unassuming French name that would not arouse suspicion, his particular choice of François exposes Max's notion of French identity. It indicates what he considers to be French and reveals his desire to belong by identifying himself with the national identity.

In Bernard Gallent's *Un secret derrière la porte* (2008), there is also confusion over who is the enemy and who is the ally. The destruction of Jeannot's home in an air raid is traumatic and incomprehensible: 'Jeannot n'y comprend rien. On est en guerre contre les Allemands et ce sont les Anglais qui bombardent' (p.40). This subversion of expectation overturns Jeannot's enemy-versus-ally and good-versus-evil thinking. The reader is similarly encouraged to re-evaluate their own understanding of the war and begin to question the subtler complexities of morality. Through Jeannot's eyes, the reader learns

that the war cannot be reduced to the mindset that since Germany is the enemy, they are the only group capable of causing harm, unlike in *Max et les poissons*. Likewise, Jeannot's neighbour laments the arrival of Americans after the Normandy landing: 'ah, on était si tranquilles sans eux, ces derniers temps!' (p.15). For both Jeannot and Max, it is France and her allies that are the cause of their distress. Indeed, allied bombardments of France accounted for around 67,000 civilian deaths over the course of the war, roughly half of the total number of civilian casualties (Aron, 1959, p.716). Pétain's speeches mention that 'Britain was substituted for Germany as the foreign aggressor, often designated simply as '*une puissance étrangère'* […] to accentuate its role as the Other in relation to France' (Flood, 2000, p.97, italics in original). Though a novice reader may be unaware of these facts, Jeannot's experiences exposes them to the highly complicated nature of war.

This subversion is further bolstered by Jeannot's limited personal experience of the German army and the fact that the novel makes few direct references to them. The scant descriptions depict the military machine: 'une colonne de blindés allemands remonte le boulevard dans un vacarme assourdissant' (p.40); 'les Allemands, ils ont des canons, des chars, des fusils, des avions, des mitraillettes' (p.99). Gallent's portrayal of the German army is mechanical and impersonal, not dissimilar to the austere, marching army in *Max et les poissons*. The conflation of identity with military might and emphasis on power removes any essence of humanity thus distancing the German army from the reader. The focus on the military machine may also reflect Jeannot's genuine interest in the military vehicles and weaponry. Indeed, his encounter with the tanks leave Jeannot feeling both 'fasciné et inquiet. Depuis le temps qu'il entend parler de la guerre et des Allemands sans voir le moindre casque!' (p.40). Despite Jeannot's curiosity, the remoteness of the German army instils fear and mistrust. Their absence accentuates the impact of the war on day-to-day life

rather than on any personal contact between German soldiers and Jeannot. This is described in the shortages of commodities such as gas and water, 'l'eau chaude ne fait plus partie que des vieux souvenirs' (p.69). There are several references to rationing, queuing and food shortages: 'à quoi sert d'avoir des tickets d'alimentation s'il n'y a presque rien à acheter?' (p.77). Most notably, the novel draws attention to the plight of Parisian Jews. Jeannot describes his neighbour's views towards Jewish people: 'j'ai un voisin […] Il dit qu'ils ne sont pas de vrais Français' (p.105). Here, Jeannot learns that there may be such a thing as a 'real Frenchman', and that whatever this constitutes, it cannot possibly include being Jewish. On later discovering and meeting Sarah/Sabine, this incident with his neighbour may have helped Jeannot have a better understanding of the persecution faced by the Jewish population. It may also encourage the reader to question the neighbour's them-versus-us mentality and what is meant by '*vrais Français*'.

Conversely, Giorda's *C'était juste après la guerre* (1998) explores the question of national identity through the interpersonal relationship between a German and French child. The story is set in a small mountain village in the Vercors in 1948. This is a place with high anti-German sentiment following an attack on local Maquisards in January 1944. Giorda's novel was written a few years after Chirac's landmark speech, at a time when attitudes towards remembrance were changing and openness about the past was growing. Protagonist Jérôme admits to total ignorance of the war (p.29), but senses the villagers' hostility towards a young German named Franz, a prisoner of war who has decided to remain in France to work on the farm where Jérôme is staying. Jérôme's first experience of a German soldier is marked by mystery and ambiguity. Name as a metaphor is also at play here, since Franz, the German form of the name Franciscus, means Frenchman. The author is emphasising the uncertainty of Franz's allegiances in order to blur the boundaries between

the traditional image of enemy and ally, forcing the reader to suspend any judgement they may have made about Franz.

Franz is an absent, ghostlike figure who is initially identified by his clothing. His clothes do not obviously belong to the military, being of a 'couleur indéfinissable, vert délavé avec des taches marron foncé' (p.16). Like his muddied clothing, he resists clear identification. This is important for Jérôme as any mistrust he may have had towards Franz is superseded by an intense curiosity. When Jérôme attempts to learn more about this mysterious figure, he is warned away several times by his hosts les Berthou. Yet early on, Franz saves Jérôme from being crushed by an errant cart. This first encounter between the two boys overturns any anticipation of animosity between the young Frenchman and German soldier, as the expected aggressor becomes the hero and Jérôme's saviour. Indeed, a tentative friendship develops between Jérôme and Franz over the course of the novel.

At the novel's climax, the villagers kidnap Franz with an intent to harm him. When Jérôme frees him, Franz refuses to run, insisting that he is not free (p.83). Jérôme discovers that Franz is no longer a prisoner of war but choses to continue wearing his POW uniform as a form of self-punishment to represent his feelings of responsibility for the war. As discussed in the previous chapter, Franz then marks his own hand with a branding iron. In terms of identity, this self-inflicted wound is reminiscent of the branding of livestock and draws to mind Jewish prisoners who were tattooed at Auschwitz; a physical mark serving as identification and an indication of property. Franz has identified himself with those who suffered at the hands of the Germans during the war. This, alongside his insistence on continuing to wear his prisoner uniform, is a manifestation of his self-imposed imprisonment and punishment for the collective guilt he feels on behalf of the German army. This permanent physical reminder demonstrates that Franz identifies himself with

the past and that his notion of German identity is heavily influenced by the events of the war.

Though we have seen that the teaching of national history in France has often been aligned with the positive Republican values (Claus, 2007), 'there is a whole range of other social emotions which the individual experiences by virtue of his or her membership of the national group […] national shame, national embarrassment, national guilt etc' (Barrett, 2000, p.11). Giorda's novel illuminates these negative aspects of national identity. Franz feels guilty on behalf of the German soldiers and takes it upon himself to serve the punishment for their crimes, even though he admits freely that he was too young to know what was going on during the war: 'je ne savais pas quelle sale guerre ç'avait été. Mais je me sentais responsable, malgré tout, même si je n'avais rien su. J'étais allemand' (p.84). This calls into question the extent of an individual's responsibility to the past. Research such as the *grand débat* implies that identity is partially built on collective memory and therefore an individual is a proprietor and bearer of their national history. Giorda's novel suggests that the solution to this national shame is remembrance, the significance of which is stressed in Franz's self-branding.

According to Meek, 'if we agree that literature offers and encourages a continuing scrutiny of 'who we think we are', we have to emphasise the part that children's literature plays in the development of children's understanding of both belonging and differentiation' (2001, p.x). The tension between belonging and othering are at play in Giorda's novel. While Franz is regarded as the Other, the reader is invited to question this label through the lens of Jérôme's curiosity. Jérôme, as a temporary visitor to the rural village, neither belongs wholly to the in-group (the villagers) and nor is he the part of the out-group (Franz). Despite his growing respect and friendship for Franz, Jérôme remains unsure around him,

particularly after he learns what the Germans did during the war. The fact that Jérôme is torn between both groups is what allows him, and by extension the reader, to transcend the divide between a simple enemy-versus-ally mindset. By questioning the readers' understanding of national identity, the novel encourages them to overcome the barrier between belonging and othering.

The novel also highlights the generational divide between those who lived through the war and the children who barely experienced it but whose lives it profoundly shaped. It portrays different aspects of national identity dependent on generation. Despite having saved Jérôme's life, Franz is still blamed by père Berthou for causing the accident. Jérôme ponders: 'est-ce qu'il avait oublié que Franz s'était jeté sous les roues de la charrette pour me sauver?' (p.26). This divide is again apparent when Jérôme attempts to buy tobacco on Franz's behalf. The villagers' animosity confuses Jérôme: 'la première fois que j'avais vu Franz, il m'avait sauvé la vie […] Et je voyais tous ces visages en colère […] Je ne comprenais pas' (p.56). This disparity illustrates the changes in national identity over time. The French villagers are defined by their pain, suffering, anger and hardship. Jérôme, representing the younger generation, seeks to unlock the mystery of who Franz is and what happened during the war. As representative of Germany, Franz is treated as the Other. For him, German nationality is equated with guilt: 'même si je n'avais rien su. J'étais allemand' (p.84). While there is no reconciliation between the Franz and the villagers, Franz's extreme act of self-branding has a lasting impact on Jérôme, whose final words, 'je n'ai pas oublié […] je n'ai rien oublié' (p.87) stress a duty of remembrance. Giorda's novel illustrates that national identity is not fixed, and suggests that younger generations not directly involved in the war are better equipped to reconcile with the past, as long as they commit to adequate forms of remembrance.

The point of view of German POWs was not much explored in post-war literature and it is only recently that this has begun to change. Théofilakis explains this change as a result of a growing post-war European community:

> En un sens, l'intérêt contemporain porté à cette captivité tient sans doute au fait que ces PG ne sont plus vus comme des vaincus mais comme des Européens appartenant à une même communauté de culture, d'histoire et de destin […] que les anciens vainqueurs (Théofilakis, 2007, para 26).

As discussed earlier, the younger generation in France have a greater sense of European identity when compared to their parents and grandparents (Commission européenne, 2017, p.10). The increased shared values and sense of identity which transcends national borders may explain the breakdown in the divide between belonging and othering. Works such as Giorda's offer the message that reconciliation with the past is possible through remembrance. However, for Giorda, this remembrance comes only at the price of Franz's admission of guilt and atonement. Jérôme's drive to remember is only made possible as Franz takes responsibility for the actions of his nation. The French villagers do not achieve reconciliation in this novel. Rather, it becomes Jérôme's duty to lead the way. This links back to the theme of memory explored in Chapter 2, particularly the message that it is the younger generation's responsibility to help their elders reconcile with the traumatic past.

In conclusion, in these texts it is evident that limited personal experience with German soldiers often renders them a one-dimensional enemy. They are presented as a remote, machine-like entity with little humanity. Therefore, since the reader is unable to identify with them, a barrier is formed which hinders any empathy that a child reader may have towards enemy characters. This may be reflective of the actual wartime experience of some children but nevertheless it succeeds in furthering the readers' ability to identify with the protagonist as much as it limits a more nuanced understanding of the enemy. If we are to assume that reading fosters identity formation, then the reader-protagonist relationship

is essential to this process. This is particularly the case when both parties share a national identity since we know that children are biased towards their own national group. In turn, this can foster empathy between the reader and the protagonist, facilitating the child's learning as they feel a stronger emotional bond for the characters, their lives, and the events of the story. In terms of representation of national identity in these novels, the image of France as a nation is quite fragmented. Although this may be representative of the diverse nature of French society, it is possible this fragmentation reflects a more historical divide in France, that of the rural and urban regions, in which rural location and identity is represented as a microcosm of French identity.

Divisions in National Identity: is the Countryside Made National?

In these novels, there is a marked difference between French rural and urban identity, a divide which transcends geographical boundary. For much of its history, French society was predominantly agricultural, made up of 'highly diverse rural societies' (Rogers, 1987, p.56). 'Ancient peasant France remained more or less unchanged until at least 1914 and some would say 1945' (Braudel, 1990, p.674). There was a long and contentious divide between those who inhabited the countryside and those who lived in cities. Eugen Weber's seminal work *Peasants into Frenchmen* (1977) details the deep mistrust between the two groups and attributes the gradual shift towards national unity to improvements in education, the proliferation of the French language, military conscription and a shift to a money economy, amongst other factors (p.129). As a result of the industrial revolution in the late 19th century, the rural population began emigrating in large numbers from the countryside into cities, in what was known as the *exode rural*. This migration was driven by several factors including economic depression, illness and famine in rural areas (Lowe and

Bodiguel, 1990, p.11). It was estimated that 'farmers and peasants together constituted about 50 percent of France's working population in 1870, 45 percent in 1900 and 35 percent in 1930' (Weber, 1977, p.8). As Weber reminds us, due to variations in the definition of terms such as *farmer,* 'statistics of the period are at best suggestive indicators' (1977, 116). Whatever the exact figures, we know that agriculture made up a significant proportion of the country's population. 'After 1870, the introduction of a parliamentary system with constituencies drawn up to favour the rural vote', necessitated the politicisation of rural life (Lowe and Bodiguel, 1990, p.12). Lowe and Bodiguel explain that this system which valued the weighted rural population led to the change in attitude towards peasant life, with the traditional imagery of the rural savage being replaced with more positive associations as politicians sought to secure the rural vote (1990, p.12). Rural life became idealised as a virtuous symbol of the Republic. This idealisation continued into the interwar period, when the need to protect a diminishing rural population 'became an evangelical cause' (Kedward, 2005, p.113). Thus, the image of the peasant as the embodiment of French Republican ideals was born.

Philippe Pétain drew heavily upon this rhetoric during the Vichy regime with his Révolution Nationale and policy of *retour à la terre*. 'The French State glorified the peasant and farm life, introduced credits and subsidies for farmers, and created rural work camps, all with the belief that a strong and valued peasantry would build a strong nation' (Fogg, 2009, p.33). During a radiobroadcast outlining the conditions of the armistice on 25 June 1940, Pétain famously declared: 'la terre, elle, ne ment pas. Elle demeure votre *recours*. Elle est la patrie elle-même. Un champ qui tombe en friche, c'est une portion de France qui meurt' (Pétain, 1989, p.66, italics in original). The term *patrie* meaning motherland, carries connotations of inheritance and reinforces Pétain's belief that rural life and values were an

inherent facet of national identity. Merely a few months later, 'in August 1940, we hear Pétain himself declare that France "will become once more […] an essentially agricultural nation"' (Weber, 1965, p.113). Essentialist discourse during the war was not only limited to Pétain. In their speeches both Pétain and de Gaulle 'used the assumption of narratorial omniscience to represent France's situation […] Each assumed that he knew the fundamental nature, the trans-historical essence, of the French nation' (Flood, 2000, p.109). Pétain's essentialism, however, founded itself on a national unity rooted in ruralism, a theme which still appears in contemporary children's literature.

The idealisation of the rural past and conflation of rural values with national identity was, in the broadest terms, the result of a large rural population and the desire to secure votes. The historical mythmaking of the Vichy regime and politicisation of rural life meant that the rural was, in a sense, made national. Under the veil of promoting national unity, both de Gaulle and Pétain strove to prove that each held the correct idea of French identity, when in fact France's identity had long been one of diversity and even division. Such divisions in national identity are prevalent in contemporary French society, as evidenced by the Ipsos study discussed earlier in this chapter. In his analysis of French children's literature, Marcoin states that:

> I cannot write of a fading French nationality […] the traditional values are preserved. No matter that discussions try to be free, modern, relaxed, the traditional values are preserved, even illustrated, in these books. Although the big towns appear to provide interesting dramatic space for writers, the writers themselves find rural life attractive and interesting (2001, p.53).

While it has not always been considered attractive and interesting, the transformation of attitudes towards rural life since the late 19th century has established the notion of a rural ideal and the schism between the rural and urban in French national identity is still present in contemporary children's fiction. This section will investigate to what extent such

divisions are apparent in children's Second World War fiction and ask whether the countryside is indeed representative of French identity in these novels.

The rural-urban divide and the idealisation of the countryside are themes present in numerous works of children's literature set during the Second World War. In several novels, the countryside is portrayed as a sanctuary. The provincial is held as a paragon of safety compared to the danger of the occupied capital. At least initially, despite rationing and shortages across the country, food was more readily available in the countryside since it was closer to agricultural production, and 'Parisians were relying on trips to the country to find food or on friends and relatives in rural areas who could send it to them' (Drake, 2015, p.138). Indeed, in *Un secret derrière la porte* (2008), Jeannot's neighbour does not envy his trip to Paris, commenting that, due to the abundance of food in rural areas, 'il n'y a pas plus heureux que nous qui sommes presque à la campagne!' (p.33).

In *Max et les poissons* (2015), Max finds refuge in the countryside as he is forced into hiding with the Resistance until the end of the war. For Max, the countryside comes to represent freedom, security and happiness. Max initially rejoices at his safe arrival, describing its colours, flowers and sounds, although on reflection it brings him little satisfaction without his family (p.52). There is much sensory imagery incorporated in the descriptions of Max's time in the countryside, including references to smell as well as to colour and sound: 'ça sentait bon la clafoutis […] ils sentait bon la lessive' (pp.62-63). There is a strong link between smell and childhood memory (Gottfried et al., 2004; Willander and Larrson 2006) and on reading, a child may imagine the smells of fresh laundry or their favourite dessert and the positive associations drawn from the smells. It contrasts starkly with the greyness and stagnation ascribed to Paris and Drancy, where 'tous les gens sont gris' (p.67). Max refers to his former Parisian home several times as an

impasse, comparing it to being stuck circling around a fishbowl like his beloved pet Auguste: 'moi, je m'ennuierais si j'étais seul dans l'impasse, sans Bernard et Daniel pour jouer' (p.13). It is the war which has rendered his home an *impasse*, however, since Max cannot remember a time before the war, he has never felt safe or free in his home: 'papa et maman se souviennent comment était la vie avant la guerre. Moi pas' (p.15). The war has robbed Max of any feeling of security, and on being taken from Drancy, he remarks, 'j'ai peur. C'est à cause de la guerre, tout ça' (p.50). This is perhaps why his initial response to arriving in the countryside is one of excitement, 'la voici enfin, la campagne!' (p.52). The countryside is a refuge and sanctuary away from the war, and from the fear it instils. There is no threat of German presence, 'pas l'ombre d'un Allemand' (p.64). Max's rescuer Guy tells him it is a place where the war is forbidden to enter. Indeed, Max feels safe enough to doubt whether the war is still happening, and notes, 'j'ai bien l'impression que la guerre est finie' (p.74).

The contrast between city and countryside is also drawn through the motif of the lilac flower. Flowers are recurrent in the novel's countryside imagery, yet the lilac flower is also associated with Max's home in Paris: 'je le sais parce qu'il y en a dans l'impasse' (p.29). Although he feels trapped there, the flower holds positive connotations in Max's mind, 'ça sent bon. Quand il commence à y voir des lilas, ça veut dire qu'on ne va plus avoir froid, et que tout ira bien' (p.29). This is why initially Max is unafraid of being taken to the police prefecture named *lilas*, since he reasons: 'il ne peut rien arriver de mal dans un endroit qui porte un nom pareil' (p.29). Similar to his logical deduction of the term *rafle*, Max infers meaning about the prefecture from its name, and thus it carries a greater impact and sadness when Max realises 'il n'y a pas de lilas aux Lilas' (p.30). The novel later refers to lilacs when Max arrives in the countryside. When he is given new clothes, he notes that

they smell of ‘un parfum de roses et de lilas’ (p.63). The contrast between the two places strikes a discordant tone within the reader. From arrest and fear to liberation and freedom, Max’s associations with the lilac flowers helps the reader to visualise his journey, so that at long last when he experiences their smell, the reader knows that he is in a place of safety and stability.

In Yaël Hassan’s *Quand Anna riait* (1999), the countryside is also a place of refuge from the traumatic memory of the war. Simon’s grandfather moves from Paris post-war due to the painful memories associated with his former home (p.76). It is therefore a place of escape and refuge. This home later becomes the family’s holiday home where Simon and Déborah spend each summer. This is a place of happiness and reconciliation, a place of family and togetherness. It is here also that Simon discovers his grandfather’s diary and photograph which eventually lead to the revelation of his grandfather’s secret and the discovery of Anna’s existence and their eventual reunion. Although Jacques and Anna lived and knew each other in Paris, the events of this novel take place in the external safety of Jacques’ countryside retreat.

In *Le Mystère du marronnier* (2005), Pierre’s family also gather together during the summer at his grandmother’s home in the countryside. Similar to Simon’s family in *Quand Anna riait*, Pierre’s family reunion takes place at the home of a grandparent. These homes carry meaning for the family and are places of memory, as well as revelation, since Pierre and Simon are able to discover and experience the past through the visual devices of the window and the diary. As discussed in Chapter 2, Pierre’s grandmother’s home is much more deeply associated with the past because many of the structural landscapes visible both in the present day and during the war provide the reader with a tangible comparison between

the past and present. The home's rural location is also intrinsic to Uncle Léon's role as a smuggler for the Resistance during the war.

Giorda's *C'était juste après la guerre* (1998), is another novel in which the countryside represents sanctuary and healing as well as discovery and novelty. Jérôme is sent to stay in the mountains to improve his poor health, which his mother often attributes to 'restrictions de la guerre' (p.7), a subtle nod to the harsher realities of city life during the war. For Jérôme, the countryside has healing and restorative properties and it grants him, for the first time in his life, space away from his parents and the chance to be independent. On arrival, Jérôme remarks 'j'avais l'impression d'être arrivé dans un autre monde' (p.10). Jérôme embraces the opportunity to explore his new environment and revels in the tasks of collecting eggs and haymaking. With a gentle joke invoking the long-held tension between city and countryside, le père Berthou congratulates him: 'pour un Marseillais, tu deviens un bon paysan, quand même!' (p.26). Although for Jérôme, his rural retreat is a time of adventure and discovery, Giorda's depiction does not idealise the rural environment. Père Berthou's own son was killed during the war (p.29) and the village has been badly affected by the Occupation, with 'toutes ces maisons fermées, sans lumières' (p.13), the massacre of the Maquis leaving a deep scar on the region and its people. Despite the rural location serving as a refuge for Jérôme, Giorda avoids rural idealisation in his depiction of the Occupation and its impact on the rural inhabitants. However, like the novels discussed so far, the removed, rural setting provides a certain distance for the young protagonist away from their ordinary life where they have a greater freedom to explore and discover, which often leads to the revelation of secrecy or uncovering traumatic history. The child protagonist then uses this revelation to help others come to terms with the past, such as with Leah and Simon's grandfathers, or, themselves benefit emotionally from the undertaking.

Jérôme's foray into Franz's history teaches him about the effect of war on the local people, and this impresses upon him the desire never to forget. Thus, in some subtle way, the rural location often enables the child protagonist to discover and develop their understanding of history.

However, one of the novels studied appears to reverse this stereotype. In *Un secret derrière la porte* (2008), Jeannot comes from the countryside to seek refuge in the city. On arrival in Paris, Jeannot removes his shoes as they are causing blisters, much to his mother's horror, who exclaims 'tu ne vas tout de même pas marcher pieds nus en pleine ville comme un petit paysan?' (p.43). He is not accustomed to city life and his first impressions of Paris and its crowds of people are overwhelming (p.40). At the apartment, Jeannot sees a bathroom for the first time in his life (p.54). Jeannot expresses his feelings of division between city and country, compounded by the separation from his parents, and the feeling of being in a new and unfamiliar place. He feels 'incapable de savoir s'il est heureux de venir habiter, entre des murs bien solides […] ou s'il aurait préféré rester avec ses parents' (p.52). However, Jeannot ultimately remains attached to the countryside and cannot get used to being shut up inside all day, bemoaning his former home where 'il avait un grand terrain pour courir, un pré pour se rouler dans l'herbe, un petit bois pour faire des cabanes avec ses petits voisins, des lapins à caresser et à nourrir, des poules à soigner' (p.81). Jeannot is wistful and nostalgic for the freedom of his old home and thus his identity is torn between longing for home and fitting in. There are several comparisons between countryside and city, particularly regarding the differences in the availability of food. Jeannot's mother brings a rabbit as a gift, and Madeleine remarks, 'nous n'en avons pas mangé depuis cinq ans' (p.46). In Marcoin's assessment of French children's fiction, he states that the recurrence of the Republican ideal in literature is 'the principal problem with

French identity' (2001, p.53). By Republican ideal, Marcoin is suggesting that images of the countryside as representative of a 'true' France are a common trope in children's fiction. However, although Gallent's novel subverts the expectation by presenting Paris as a place of refuge, as opposed to the countryside, the comparisons drawn between the city and Jeannot's home seem to paint a more positive picture of the countryside.

Ultimately, these novels suggest that rural locations are usually places of peace and safety. Furthermore, in each novel there is a transition from one place to the another, regardless of direction. Therefore, one could also argue that while there is no overarching sense of a French or national identity rooted in the idealisation of rural values, the separation between city and countryside is a device by which characters are either forced to inhabit new and unfamiliar places or else places that they only spend time in once a year. Thus, the characters are placed out of their ordinary day-to-day lives to encourage them, and by extension, the reader, to become more resourceful and independent.

Social Identity: The Role of Family in Readers' Empathy Development

Many of the narratives explored in this thesis are driven by conflict in the social identity of their young protagonists, which is most frequently expressed in a division between parent and child. According to Nikolajeva, 'the child/adult hierarchy, generally irrelevant in the mainstream, lies at the very core of what children's literature is and does' (2014a, p.34). Certainly, the family relationship, particularly that between parents and their children, is perhaps the most fundamental relationship in a child's life. Indeed, this relationship is vital to empathy development:

> [A child's] ability to empathize develops with contributions from various […] factors, including parenting factors such as warmth, parent-child synchrony, and other qualities of the parent-child relationship. If one or more of these

> factors function atypically, they may contribute to empathy deficits (McDonald and Messinger, 2011, p.23).

Of course, it is important to acknowledge those children who, for various reasons, may not have a relationship with one or both parents or other extended family. However, for all young children, adults are placed in a position of authority, and the relationship with a caregiver, most commonly parents or family, is one with which children are able to identify. For Hirsch, the family is an 'accessible lingua franca easing identification and projection, recognition and misrecognition, across distance and difference' (2012, p.39). Given the significance of the parent-child relationship in the lives of young readers and its role in the development of empathy, it is understandable this should be reflected in children's literature. Identification with the protagonists and understanding of the characters' family dynamics can aid readers in empathising for them and thus the novel may have a deeper emotional impact.

Conflict between the parent and child as a means to build empathy may seem, therefore, at odds with the notion that warmth and parent-child synchrony are intrinsic to empathy development. However, while this may be the case in young childhood, when 'early attachment relationships with primary caregivers influence the quality of children's future relationships with their peers' (Coleman, 2003, p.351), it is conflict that engenders empathy in the literature targeting the middle childhood and adolescence. There are many different models of the parent-adolescent relationship, including psychoanalytical models by Freud, Blos and Erikson which 'agree that deidealization [an awareness of parent fallibility] and psychic emancipation drive a wedge between parents and children' (Laursen and Collins, 2003, p.334). Others such as Kohlberg and Piaget theorise that changes in an adolescent's cognitive development trigger a shift in the relationship as parents come to be seen as equals. Most models agree that puberty and hormonal changes trigger a shift in the

parent-child relationship that is due to changes in the way both parties communicate (Laursen and Collins, 2003, p.335).

Conflict and parental deidealization are used to drive the narrative in several of the novels. At the beginning of *Max et les poissons* (2015), Max's world is still very much controlled by his parents. They represent security and reassurance, 'Papa m'a dit qu'il ne fallait pas que je m'inquiète' (p.9). Max is close to his father and aspires to be like him: 'plus tard, j'aimerais bien être dessinateur comme lui' (p.13). This closeness suffers its first obstacle following the enforced wearing of the yellow star of David for Jews in France. This is Max's first realisation that he may be different, as his star elicits jeers and taunts from his classmates at school. Although his parents, in their role as comforters, attempt to reassure him that being Jewish does not mean anything bad, Max is not so sure: 'je n'arrive pas à les croire' (p.18). This splinter in the parent-child relationship leads Max to begin doubting the omniscience of his parents. The next obstacle occurs on arrival at Drancy, where Max realises his parents are afraid, 'et quand les grands ont peur, c'est comme une couverture toute râpée par laquelle passe le jour: ça ne protège plus de rien' (p.42). Here Max understands the limitations of his parent's authority and their ability to keep him safe. For Max, his coming of age is not a natural one, not the increasing independence associated with impending adolescence. He is barely eight years old. His increasing distance with his parents has been forced upon them by events beyond their control. For Max, the stability of the entire adult world is now undermined, having witnessed his parents afraid and unable to control their own lives. It is not entirely shattered, however, as upon his rescue from Drancy by a member of the Resistance Max questions the adult stranger's actions: 'est-ce qu'enlever un enfant sans l'autorisation de ses parents, c'est vraiment une bonne façon de le protéger?' (p.51), showing that he still believes parents provide the best protection for

their children. Once in his new home, sheltered by the Resistance, Max is exposed again to the limitations of adults when one of his caregivers tells him: 'parfois, les adultes n'ont pas plus de réponse que les enfants' (p.73). However, as discussed earlier in this chapter, Max eventually feels safe with his new family, evidenced in how he feels the war has ended. Over the course of the novel, we see Max begin to question his parents' omniscience and learn that adults cannot always protect him. Although forcibly separated from his family, ultimately Max is able to find comfort and security with adults, despite realising their limitations.

Similarly, in *Un secret derrière la porte* (2008), Jeannot undergoes a forced transition from childhood into adolescence triggered by the physical separation of parent and child. Jeannot is close to his parents, who reassure him during an air-raid. His father explains the details of the air-raid which serves both as exposition for the reader and as a comfort for Jeannot, whilst his mother offers soothing words: 'ça finira bien par finir, répond la mère à mi-voix, se voulant rassurante malgré l'évidence du danger' (p.9). It is this very air-raid that strikes and destroys their home. His father feels helpless to comfort Jeannot after their house is destroyed: 'il ne laisse pas paraître, mais il se sent aussi perdu que son Jeannot de fils et se voit bien démuni pour tenter de le rassurer' (p.13). In the aftermath of the air-raid, Jeannot seeks constant reassurance from his parents, repeatedly asking them where they will all sleep that evening (p.11, p.13, p.17), They are still very much figures of security and authority, as upon being offered coffee by his neighbour, 'le garçon se tourne vers sa mère, attendant sa permission' (p.18). It is only after the destruction of their house and without a place to sleep that Jeannot begins to experience a divide between himself and his parents, stemming from the question of where Jeannot will be safest. The divide is caused by a mistrust and secrecy on the part of both his parents who

do not wish to discuss their thoughts in front of him, something which Jeannot is rather used to: 'comme à l'habitude, on veut l'éloigner pour discuter à son sujet sans être gêné par sa présence' (p.27). Although Jeannot seeks comfort after this particularly traumatic event, his parents' response is to exclude him from conversations regarding his safety which adds to Jeannot's insecurities and anxieties, driving a wedge between him and his parents.

On arrival at his godmother's Parisian apartment, Jeannot is initially shy and reserved, 'ne sachant plus s'il est grand ou petit' (p.46). Jeannot traverses the boundary between childhood and adolescence, and often feels as though adults do not take him seriously due to his young age, a perception that has been reinforced and enhanced by his parents. He describes his anger when his godmother Madeleine asks him about school: 'une fois de plus on ne s'intéresse à lui que pour lui demander son niveau de classes ou la hauteur de ses notes' (p.47), and, later, on being run a bath, 'Jeannot, tout gêné d'être traité comme un bambin' (p.55). The sense of frustration from not being taken seriously by adults and being treated like an infant is one with which readers may be able to empathise.

However, it is this tension created by mistrust that propels the narrative. Jeannot discovers his godparents are keeping a secret and it becomes his mission to discover it. The feeling of not being trusted by his godparents disturbs Jeannot and he ruminates on the secret: 'que lui cache-t-on? se demande-t-il. Se méfierait-on de lui ? Quelle est cette chose si importante, ou si grave, dont on ne veut pas, dont on ne peut pas lui parler ?' (p.79). Jeannot rationalises that if someone or something is being kept secret and his godparents are fully aware, then '"c'est tout simple: ce "quelqu'un" se cache de moi! Ce quelqu'un a peur de moi, ou se méfie de moi, ou bien encore" […] Voilà Jeannot tout troublé, tout déboussolé' (p.84). Readers may be able to empathise with feelings of mistrust on the part of adults and of feeling excluded. The narrative relies on the tension between secrecy and

revelation, with the novel naturally culminating in the exposure of Sarah/Sabine's identity. Jeannot promises to keep Sarah's Jewish identity a secret and to spend time playing and teaching with her. Sarah describes this new secret to which Jeannot is now entrusted, as 'un secret juste vrai de vrai' (p.114). Unlike in *Max et les poissons*, Jeannot's parents and godparents are not undermined by their fear or inability to protect him, but by their lack of trust in him and by treating him like a younger child. However, this mistrust pushes Jeannot to investigate and discover their secret himself. The mistrust may reflect the readers' own experience and elicit empathy, whilst also pushing the protagonist to investigate and thus encouraging curiosity in both character and reader. The novel concludes with a cathartic revelation of identity and the establishment of a new secret and trust between the two children.

Mistrust between adults and children also occurs in Giorda's novel and describes a coming-of-age journey sparked by the physical separation of parents and child. For Jérôme it is the first time he has been away from his parents (1998, p.7), which causes him great anxiety: 'une artère avait battu violemment au fond de mon ventre. Je n'avais jamais quitté mes parents' (p.8). It is the physical separation from his parents that grants Jérôme an initial taste of independence and space to explore. However, in a way similar to Jeannot, Jérôme is not taken seriously due to his age. Upon asking Franz why he is in the Vercors, Franz responds; 'tu ne comprendrais pas […] Tu es trop jeune' (p.45). For Jérôme, this is something he is used to hearing: 'mon père aussi disait ça. Et tous les adultes. Ils se disputaient entre eux. Ils disaient des choses incompréhensibles. Moi, j'étais trop petit pour comprendre. Et maintenant, j'étais toujours trop petit?' (pp.45-46). Jérôme's rhetorical question demonstrates the change in his personal identity since his arrival in the Vercors. Evidently, he is used to adults telling him that he is too young to understand. However,

Jérôme expects to be taken seriously by Franz, indicating a difference in the way Jérôme sees their relationship. Franz and Jérôme are much closer in age and therefore Jérôme considers their tentative friendship to have a greater equality compared to his relationships with other adults, where the authority tends to lie with the adult figure. Likewise, the separation from his parents has given Jérôme a greater independence, and being given the responsibility of working on the farm may have led him to expect to be treated with greater trust and maturity. Jérôme is therefore surprised and perhaps disappointed when Franz responds in the same way as 'tous les adultes' (p.46). Jérôme's frustrations capture the reader's empathy, leading to a deeper protagonist-reader relationship.

Yaël Hassan's novels employ this same trope. In *Quand Anna riait* (1999), Simon explains to his younger cousin Déborah the divide between the adult and child sphere: 'souvent dans les familles, il y a un secret. Quelque chose que toute la famille sait mais dont personne ne parle […] Nous, on est encore des enfants. Les secrets de famille, on ne les 'raconte pas aux enfants'' (p.20). In a way similar to the other novels discussed, it is the mistrust of children and lack of credibility afforded to them by their parents and caregivers that serves to stir the reader's empathy and to provoke the protagonist into uncovering the adults' secrets. According to Sheila Egoff and Wendy Sutton, 'writers of children's literature routinely used adults as foils; they are the ones who cause the problems around which the plot revolves' (1996, p. 381). Certainly, we see this throughout these novels, perhaps as an effort by the author to promote the notion that children should have the opportunity to be trusted with handling difficult emotions and understanding the past.

In Hassan's *Un grand-père tombé du ciel* (1997) Leah has given up asking her parents about her family's way of life: 'papa et maman me répondait [*sic*] invariablement: "c'est parce que nous somme juifs et que chez nous, c'est comme ça"' (p.8). Leah's parents

use the same reasoning we have seen in other novels – that the child will understand when they are older: 'une histoire de grandes personnes, que tu comprendras peut-être plus tard' (p.10). Leah responds with frustration: 's'il est une manie que je déteste chez les parents c'est celle de penser que leurs enfants sont tellement débiles qu'ils ne sont pas capables de les comprendre' (p.10). The author, in the guise of Leah's voice, makes her point clear: children should be considered capable of understanding traumatic history and be given explanation. Both Leah and her parents' opposing attitudes towards understanding calls to mind the question of representation of traumatic history and to what extent a child of Leah's age can comprehend the horrors of the Holocaust, as discussed in Chapter 1. Regardless of the debate, Hassan's view is that children should be given an opportunity to learn, ask questions and that the dismissive attitude regarding young age is lacking, frustrating and perhaps even damaging for the child, given the sense of mistrust it triggers in the parent-child bond. As Leah exclaims, 'trop jeune, trop petite! Mais c'est pas parce qu'on est des enfants qu'on comprend rien!' (p.36).

Le Mystère du marronier (2005) differs slightly in its interpretation of the adult-child bond. Rather than focusing on a conflict between parent and child (Pierre's relationship with both parents is rather ambivalent), the central relationship is arguably that between Pierre and his Uncle François. It would be pertinent again to draw attention to François' naming, since we know that 'the names in the novel generally will convey important information on many different aspects of the persons – family history, social setting, environment, self-image, personal ambitions, social status, and relationships between the characters' (Helleland, Ore and Wikstrøm, 2012, p.278). Pierre and François share an unusual friendship, in that although François is an adult, the two are able to bypass any conflict since François is considered different from other adults: 'lui est différent des

autres. François semble se plaire davantage en la compagnie d'enfants qu'en celle de ses beaux-frères et belles-sœurs' (p.5). This trust lies in the fact that his uncle seems to transverse the barrier between childhood and adulthood: '[l']oncle François. Il n'est pas trop adulte, et déjà plus un enfant' (p.27). This allows a deeper level of trust and it is to François, rather than his parents or younger cousins, that Pierre entrusts the secret of the magic window. Out of the novels studied, François is unusual since he represents both adult security and authority whilst retaining a childlike sense of adventure which allows him to access the child's world. It is interesting to note that this novel demonstrates a close adult-child bond dependant on the adult becoming more childlike, rather than upon the child growing up and maturing to be more adult-like as the other novels imply. His name referencing his country implies that French people, adults and children alike, should espouse childlike qualities such as openness to the magical and fantastical. These are to be celebrated and are a way through which characters, and by extension, readers, can gain insight into the past, as explored in Chapter 2.

In several of these novels, parent-child conflict is a recurrent theme that drives the narrative. The child protagonist, frustrated by a lack of trust and/or the forced separation from parents, is obliged to develop independence, responsibility and initiative in discovering secrets and the truth of the past. In these novels, children are given little credibility in the eyes of adults and this tends to be a common plot device which illustrates the tension and divide between the two. It also serves to trigger the target readers' empathy, who, being a similar age to the protagonists, may also be able to identify with the feeling of not being listened to or being infantilised. One novel offers a potential solution, by rendering a trusted adult figure more childlike, allowing him to be seen on an equal level. Overall, these novels imply that discussion, openness and trust are imperative to a child's

understanding of the past, particularly regarding the Jewish roundups, although paradoxically it is the poor communication and mistrust that spurs the protagonist to investigate themselves. Perhaps both a combination of a child's independent investigation and appropriate conversation and opportunity for discussion are necessary to a well-rounded understanding of history.

Jewish Identity in *Max et les poissons*

How, then, do children empathise with characters who suffer a loss of identity? As discussed above, parental separation is a recurrent theme in several novels, which acts not only to promote independence, but may be reflective of the real-life experience of those affected by the roundups. For children whose early identities are shaped by their caregivers or parents, the forced separation in these novels constitutes an identity crisis for the protagonist, as they are left to fend for themselves and discover their own identity. This is particularly the case for young Jewish characters forced into hiding under a new name.

In *Max et les poissons* (2015), Max's first threat to his identity comes at the enforced wearing of the yellow star. He cannot understand why he would need identifying: 'je trouve ça un peu bizarre. Évidemment que je suis bien Max Geiger' (p.10). At this point in time Max still identifies strongly with his name and personal identity. The yellow star cements Max's identity as Jewish: 'Nous, on est juifs. C'est pour ça qu'on a des étoiles cousues à nos habits' (p.18). Initially, this is positive, as Max finds the star pretty (p.10). However, it is the reaction he faces at school that begins to shake his understanding of his Jewish identity. He is immediately ostracised and made the Other: 'les enfants regardaient d'abord mon étoile, puis mon visage' (p.10). Normally, the face is the first part of the body we look to for communication and identification and this sentence reveals that Max's individual

identity has been supplanted by a collective Jewish identity. The taunts associated with a bad smell make Max feel ashamed of being Jewish, which is compounded by the importance of smell in the text, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Max's teacher attempts to reassure him: 'la classe est une constellation, chacun brille à sa façon' (p.11). Depsite this, from then on the principal refers to Max and the other Jewish children as 'les enfants à l'étoile' (p.11). Thus any individuality is removed and they are given a collective and impersonal identity label.

Adriansen also uses stars as a recurrent motif throughout this novel to represent the changes in Max's identity and to depict the suffering faced by the Jewish victims of the roundups. As noted by Sarah Jordan, 'a relatively easy and non-threatening way to tell a story of the Holocaust to children is through an allegory' (2004, p.205), and this is illustrated through the recurrent imagery of stars throughout the novel. The night before his birthday, Max says the sky is full of stars, and he feels like the sheriff (p.20). He dreams that every Jewish child who wears the star receives a prize at school. Max is given a second star and is named Chief Sheriff and captain of the class. Here, the star carries positive connotations and gives Max a sense of power and authority over his classmates, contrasting sharply to his waking life, where it has made him a target for bullying (p.21). Later, during the *rafle*, Max at first thinks he is being taken away to be counted and have his star removed, but he has grown attached to it and wants to keep it (p.27). Despite his mixed feelings towards the star, and the unwanted attention it brings, this illustrates Max's continuing attachment to his Jewish identity and the feelings of security that it provides.

In marked contrast to the night before his birthday, during his first night at the *Vél d'Hiv*, Max remarks he cannot see any stars (p.37) and this marks a turning point in his attitude towards stars and his sense of Jewish identity. Once rescued by the Resistance, he

grows to hate his star and feels as though it is unlucky (p.50), perhaps trying to make sense of the persecution of the Jewish people. To Max's mind, the star is the only thing separating him from other people. He later puts his star away in a drawer, remarking: 'je me demande si je suis encore juif' (p.64). Max eventually finds refuge, and his new found sense of freedom and security prompt him to question whether he is still Jewish. His sense of Jewish identity is associated with bullying, arrest, and separation from his family. Once he enters a period of relative stability and calmness, then this identity breaks down, since his understanding of Jewish identity has only negative connotations.

Max's identity undergoes a second forced change as he must use a pseudonym for the remainder of the war. As discussed earlier in the chapter, he chooses the name François Doucet[8]. 'J'aime bien Doucet, parce qu'il y a "douce" dedans' (p.78). The other rescued children also use pseudonyms, and Max calls Juliester by an amalgamation of her French and Jewish names. Like Max, Juliester's identity defies categorisation, she is both French and Jewish, and cannot understand why she must keep her identities separate and even a secret. At the end of the war, when his friend Antoine returns to his family, Max wonders in his final lines: 'je ne sais même pas si Antoine va rester Antoine ou s'il va redevenir Sacha' (p.80), illustrating Max's view that he and his friends have a true identity linked to their Jewish ethnicity, one that is temporarily lost to the Nazis and remains separate from their false French identity. Max also reveals that he has not lost his sense of personal identity, and despite liking his pseudonym, has no difficulty in assuming his former identity: 'Geiger, c'est moi, vraiment moi' (p.78). Though shaken, his identity is preserved

[8] This may be a subtle nod to French-Jewish fencer and Olympic medalist, Yves Dreyfus, who was able to hide from the Nazis as a child by taking the name Yves Doucet (Dreyfus, 2009).

and fixed. His pseudonym François is one which offered him security, protection and ultimately saved his life. Once the war is over, however, he no longer needs to hide and can admit to himself and others who he truly is.

Max et les poissons teaches young readers about the trauma of losing one's identity and having to adapt to a new one. Adriansen does this by encouraging the reader's empathy for Max, which in turn helps them to understand the Jewish persecution of the Second World War. The trauma of loss is depicted through allegory and the use of concrete examples to which children today may be more able to relate. Max's star of David is a physical object that not only symbolises the wider Jewish suffering but represents and documents Max's changing relationship with his Jewish identity over the course of the war. Furthermore, as discussed earlier in this thesis, readers can also gain some sense of the loss suffered through the disruption to Max's birthday and the death of his pet fish. This may facilitate modern readers' understanding as well as eliciting empathy. Fostering a sense of empathy is essential to all children's historical fiction, because 'when readers make personal connections, when they care about the characters in stories, these vicarious experiences naturally influence world views by adding to their lived experience' (Carter and Pickett, 2014, p.26). Through the story of Max Geiger, whose personal and social identity are fundamentally and powerfully threatened, Adriansen establishes a connection that a child born today may have for the plight of a child who lived 70 years ago, laying the groundwork for a contemporary child reader to develop a feeling of empathy for children in a similar situation today.

CONCLUSION

Philippe Buton's assessment that the memory of the Second World War in France has shifted from revolution to a period of balance must be reconsidered, given that as recently as 2012, two-thirds of French schoolchildren were unaware of the *Vél d'Hiv* roundup (Buton, 2007; Hollande, 2012). Ever since the end of the Second World War, France has had an unstable and ever-changing relationship with its role in this period of history. Even the history of remembrance has been muddied by silence, myths, and narratives of obsession. Yet with each new generation there come new forms of remembrance. With the passing of the war generation, there will soon be none left alive who bore direct witness to the events. With the war fading from living memory and upcoming significant milestones such as the 75th anniversary of the end of the war in 2020, we are perhaps entering a new period in memory, which Édouard Philippe has quite rightly defined as a period of turbulence (2018, n.p). With the rise in populism and the far-right, growing Euroscepticism, increasing anti-Semitism in France, and a refugee crisis on a scale not seen since the war itself, it is more imperative than ever that young people are taught about their nation's history. This seems especially pertinent since it is this generation that will bear the responsibility to transmit the memory of the war to the future generations that are themselves less likely to believe accounts of the Holocaust (ADL Global 100, 2014, p.42). Although advances in technology continue to create new forms of remembrance and facilitate the permanence and ease with which history is documented and accessed online, the proliferation of information on the Internet means that there is a greater risk of manipulation, omission and amnesia. As Nicolas Sarkozy showed through his ill-conceived policies on the transmission of Holocaust memory to French schoolchildren, traumatic history is highly susceptible to politicisation. Thus, there is a clear and urgent need for education and awareness of the Second World War in France. Whether or not an increased

awareness of the Holocaust and other genocides may prevent them being repeated in the future, children's war fiction still has much to teach its readers. As noted by Didier Cariou, 'les ouvrages de littérature de jeunesse questionnent notre rapport à ce passé difficile et donc l'articulation de le mémoire à l'histoire' (2012, p.174).

Through its ability to foster empathy, fiction has a particular propensity to address the imbalance in memory (Galda and Cullinan, 1981; Nikolajeva, 2014b; Tamir et al, 2016). By analysing the representation of memory and identity, whether through the use of literary devices, genre or character relationships, these novels encourage an empathic understanding of the protagonists' lives and the impact of the Second World War on the individual. In particular, 'books whose characters and relationships are psychologically convincing, allow the child to identify, and stimulate the child emotionally' (Aram and Aviram, 2009, p.187) and are perhaps best equipped to teach children about traumatic history. This thesis has shown the ways in which authors attempt to promote empathy between the child reader and protagonist. However, 'literature can have moral consequences only insofar as it alters what we feel about situations and people, what we are motivated to do in our personal and social lives' (Hogan, 2011, p.287). Further research is therefore required to understand the concrete impact of historical fiction on a child's learning and empathy development. As much as an author may attempt to convey a certain message or lesson, in order for these books to have a lasting effect on their readers they require young readers who are receptive to such a message. Literature that prompts meaningful discussion 'probably supports the development of young children's emerging empathy and social behaviors. There is a need for further study to shed light on these speculations' (Aram and Aviram, 2009, p.187).

In terms of memory, it is clear that Hirsch's notion of post-memory and the negative impact on descendants of Holocaust survivors is mostly absent from the novels studied. This may be because this fiction is written for the younger age range and thus authors may desire to maintain a positive and constructive bond between survivors and their families. Where it is present, such as in Hassan's novel *Un grand-père tombé du ciel* (1997), it acts as an obstacle that the child is required to overcome. In both Hassan's works, the grandparent's traumatic memory is explored through the child's questioning and discovery. It is the child who initiates the investigation into the past and the child who encourages the grandparent to break their silence, confront trauma, and pass on their memories before it is too late. The child helps the grandparent release anger and guilt, and consequently, the grandparent achieves some form of physical, emotional or spiritual healing. Hassan's message appears to be focused on the necessity of inquisitiveness, curiosity and the unique position of children as the bridge between trauma and reconciliation.

Indeed, the role of children in the transmission of memory and the notion that it is their duty and imperative to remember the past is a staple theme of all the works studied, particularly those that take place long after the events themselves. Often, the concluding lines of the novel constitute a call never to forget, either on the behalf of a survivor or perpetrator. Furthermore, the uncovering of family history and secrets inspires further acts of remembrance, such as François and Pierre delivering the letter 55 years later, or Simon conducting his internet search for Anna. Norton's allusion to passivity as an inherent theme of such fiction is reversed. In most cases, action is the outcome of the child protagonist's historical education. Since 'the ethical point of empathy is to produce action' (Hogan, 2011, p.284) we see that these novels attempt to encourage empathy development in their readers by showing the ways in which learning about the past impacts their characters, even decades

after the events. The consequence of remembrance leads not only to the emotional wellbeing of the survivor generation but results in permanent benefits for the characters' own identity and their understanding of others.

However, whether an author wishes to illustrate the positive impact of overcoming barriers such as silence and ignorance, calls for remembrance risk becoming little more than hollow sentiment if the historical information presented is inaccurate or false. Several of the novels, particularly those that depict the *Vél d'Hiv* roundup, have altered certain parts of the history or given the story an unlikely happy ending. While changing the location of the holding camps to Drancy, for example, may emphasise its notoriety, it does obfuscate the historical record and give the child reader an unreliable knowledge of history. Likewise, the addition of the Resistance in *Max et les poissons* (2015) served to pay homage to a part of the history that the author felt should be recognised, despite it not being grounded in historical knowledge. This is problematic if one believes that historical fiction is didactic, since such changes or omissions do not ultimately benefit a child's understanding of history. As discussed, Adrienne Kertzer's response to this problem is to advocate a double narrative, one 'which simultaneously respects our need for hope and happy endings even as it teaches us a different lesson about history' (2002, p.75). Her approach is currently considered the most appropriate and balanced response to the difficulties of representation (Pearce and Strakosch, 2013; Bauer, 2014; Robinson, 2015). In the novels studied, we see the authors' attempts to create a double narrative. For example, in Gallent's *Un secret derrière la porte* (2008) and Adriansen's *Max et les poissons*, the child protagonist survives while their extended family does not. However, while Kertzer acknowledges that this teaches a different lesson about history, this surely propagates an inaccurate view of the harsher reality of the roundup and only contributes to the spread of misinformation. If

young people today are less likely to believe accounts of the Holocaust, then their fiction should strive to reflect the harsher truth. In using fiction as a tool for historical instruction, authors bear some responsibility in ensuring that their novels remain as accurate as possible. While changing the ending of a novel may appease the reader's sensibilities, it cannot be denied that it will impact the memory of the event, and it is highly questionable whether this benefits the reader.

Given the difficulty in the representation of traumatic memory, there are several ways in which authors instead attempt to translate the unspeakable aspect of the war and the roundups through literary devices and genre. Physical scarring is often an effective way for children to empathise with emotional pain. The pain of losing one's home and family may be difficult for many children to understand, but this metaphor may better their understanding of the intensity and permanency of pain. Similarly, illness and loss are depicted through the use of comparison and metaphor, with authors again drawing from experiences with which novice readers are more likely to relate, in order to translate the complex emotions and to encourage the readers' empathy. Fantasy, magic, and adventure engage a child reader's attention and also act as a bridge to memory. This is most clearly illustrated in *Le Mystère du marronnier*'s (2005) use of the magical window through which one can watch and interact with the past.

This thesis also investigated representations of identity, since identity is often shaped by memory and a sense of belonging. Atack suggests that the memory of the war in France must be understood in terms of a 'national framework', and warns that 'unity can operate as a false memory, especially in a country with a central allegiance to the 'Republic one and indivisible'' (2018, pp.12-26). Yet there is no overarching sense of a single French entity represented in these novels. In some of the novels, the French themselves are

complicit in the crimes of the occupying Nazis, while in others it is the allied forces that are the cause of destruction and pain. The novels do, however, tend to adhere to the unspoken rule that rural regions in France are associated with sanctuary and happiness, and many of the children travel from cities to rural areas. Though this does support Marcoin's claim that 'the traditional values are preserved […] the writers themselves find rural life attractive and interesting' (2001, p.53), it is also arguable that the use of rural locations as a place of reconciliation, remembrance and revelation is due to the recurrent trope that the protagonist is away from their home and thus their usual zone of comfort. This is seen in *Un secret derrière la porte* (2008) in which Jeannot flees the countryside for the safety of Paris, a clear subversion of the reality of the dangers and difficulty of life in Paris during the Second World War, although Jeannot does retain a preference for the countryside. These novels suggest, then, that it is the challenge of being away from one's home and the development of independence, free-thinking, imagination and curiosity that are central to understanding history, and not the portrayal of France as a single, united entity.

In terms of foreign national identity, these novels often portray the German enemy in a very one-dimensional manner. They are often depicted as a collective group with little to no individuality or humanity. Whether or not this is faithful to the experiences of real children during the Second World War, contemporary readers gain no insight into the enemy or understanding into their motivations or level of hatred and intolerance. Instead, novels which portray the Germans as the Other risk transforming them into a remote, almost alien group. This may impede a child's understanding of history because it may act as a barrier to empathy and understanding of the truth and enforce a general view of the world divided into an us-and-them mentality.

In all the novels, the child protagonist faces conflict with their parents. This is a recurrent trope in which the child experiences frustration with not being taken seriously or being listened to in a meaningful manner by the adults around them. This may provoke a reader's empathy as such frustration is surely an experience to which many children can relate. Through the use of parental conflict, the author's message is that children should be afforded the opportunity to learn about the past, however painful and traumatic. Paradoxically, this message contradicts many of the factual changes and happy endings included in the works of fiction in which authors seek to protect the child reader from the excess suffering endured by victims of the Second World War. These novels encourage independence, freedom of will and illustrate that research into one's family past and the history of the war can benefit both children and adults, leading to physical and emotional healing as well as empathic development. Genevieve Humbert's assertion that French historical fiction gives young people hope (1979, p.12) is true in this respect, as in these texts the protagonist or their family member experiences personal growth or a positive outcome. However, at the risk of spreading false hope, novels must practise what they preach by remaining faithful to the finer details of history and thus treat their young readers with the credibility and respect that their own characters so dearly wish to receive from their parents.

Ultimately, this thesis only draws from six works of fiction. There is a large quantity of children's literature that covers wider aspects of the Second World War, both in France and abroad. In France, Oskar éditeur has published a number of more recent Second World War novels in its *Histoire et Société* collection, such as Catherine de Lasa's *Les Deux inconnues* (2013) and Vanina Brière's *Les Souliers à talons* (2014). This collection also features several novels by Philippe Barbeau, including the *Paul et Rachel* trilogy (Barbeau

and Couty, 2010, 2011, 2012). It would doubtless be instructive to compare the differences between the novels aimed at younger children with those targeted at adolescents to see whether attitudes towards ethical representations of history change according to age. Further study could be undertaken to include more diverse protagonists in terms of age, race and gender, as it must be noted that five of the six texts studied here feature young, white male protagonists. There are also many aspects of the war not discussed in this thesis, such as the exodus, the Resistance, and collaboration, to name but a few. Furthermore, fiction is not the only media that can educate children about history. *Bandes dessinées* are highly popular in France, particularly amongst primary aged children, and many such books are set during the Second World War, such as Didier Daeninckx's series *Les Trois secrets d'Alexandra* (2004), and Roland Causse and Gilles Rapaport's *Ita-Rose* (2008). Of course, this raises questions about the relationship between image and memory and the role of these albums and their illustrations in the broader corpus of remembrance literature. While there has not been space to pursue the question of word and image relations in this dissertation, an appendix includes the cover illustrations and chapter sketches from the six novels studied to provide readers of this thesis with examples of the types of artwork used in children's historical fiction. In terms of other visual media, there are also films such as Roselyne Bosch's *La Rafle* (2010) which, like several of the novels studied, feature a child survivor of the *Vél d'Hiv* roundup. Other possible avenues for future research include the analysis of autobiographies and the semi-autobiographical works of children's literature written in collaboration between a survivor or witness and a children's author, such as Philippe Barbeau and Annette Krajcer's *Le Dernier Été des enfants à l'étoile* (2010). This opens up the possibility of comparing works of children's fiction against real-life testimony, memoirs and historical research into the Occupation. Beyond France, there are

questions to be raised about the memory of the war in overseas Francophone regions such as Corsica and Réunion. Ideally, a further and broader study of a wider comparison of the representation of the Second World War in works targeted for children and their impact on the teaching of history in France is required. In terms of cognitive literary criticism and the ability of fiction to produce empathy, it would be telling to conduct empirical research, such as interviews with pupils, to assess the tangible, stated influence of Second World War fiction on its young audience. The volume of published French historical fiction for children may indicate, as noted in the Introduction, 'that the Second World War may be entering a new phase of memory, one which sees its integration into an inclusive civic memory of the recent past' (Gorrara, 2012, p.127). However, though Holocaust education in particular is considered 'intrinsèquement lié à une dimension morale et civique' (Ministère de l'Education Nationale, 2008b, p.27), the lack of time afforded to its teaching undermines its place within civic memory. Further study is therefore needed to demonstrate the extent to which children's literature forms a part of the civic memory of the Second World War in France. It would also be interesting to repeat the CSA's survey investigating awareness of the *Vél d'Hiv* amongst the younger generation to see whether there has been any change since 2012 and this could include the experience of current French Jewish children and their awareness of their cultural history.

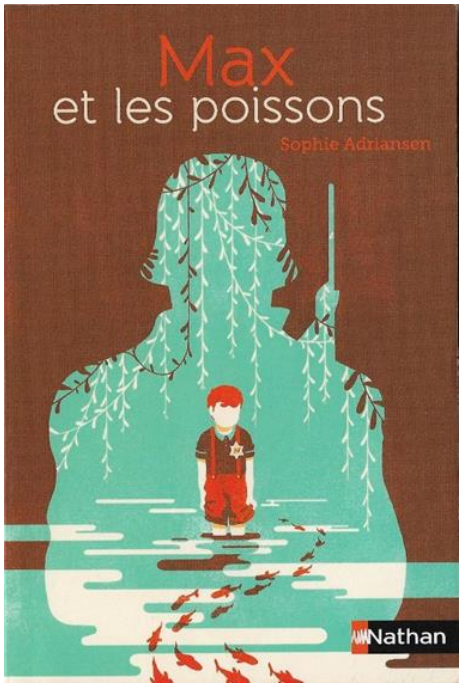
Although this thesis does not include empirical research and draws primarily from the works of fiction themselves, it is clear from the texts studied that fiction which encourages emotional and empathetical development and connection with its protagonists is ideally placed to teach children about the past. Miller writes that, 'specifically, the protagonists of children's war literature model the process of identifying and articulating the place of individual citizens within the social and political context of a world at war'

(2009, p.273). This thesis has shown the ways in which the novels attempt to translate the more difficult aspects of war to a younger audience, whether through fantasy or an emphasis on the individual and everyday life, as espoused by Atack (2007, p.80). By cultivating the readers' empathy, historical fiction lays the foundations for a more caring and understanding generation.

This thesis is intended to add to the broader corpus of children's literary analysis by shining a light on a relatively recent and little-studied area and address the need for more 'studies of children's or young adult fiction focused on empathy and theory of mind' (Nikolajeva, 2014a, p.79). Children's fiction has a significant and effective role in shaping a child's understanding of history. However, the teaching of history must go hand-in-hand with the promotion of empathy, not only to deepen a child's understanding but in order to fight amnesia and encourage remembrance of the Second World War and its impact on the world today in which the politics of Otherness, dehumanisation, and ethno-religious violence remain acutely and catastrophically interlinked.

APPENDIX

BOOK COVERS AND ILLUSTRATIONS



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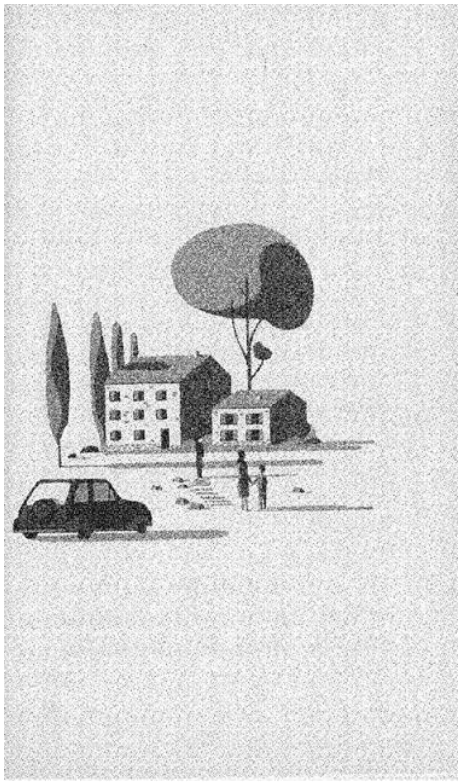

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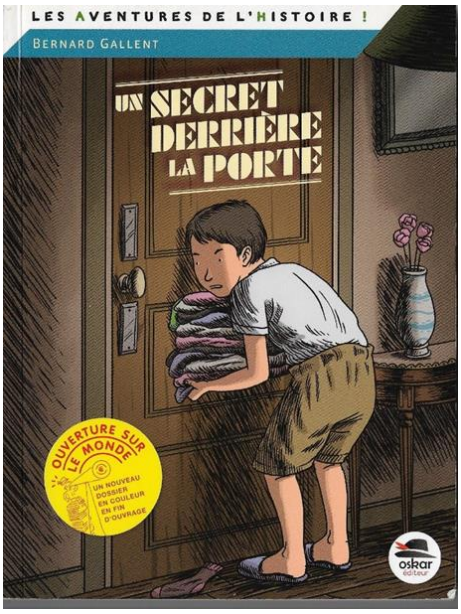

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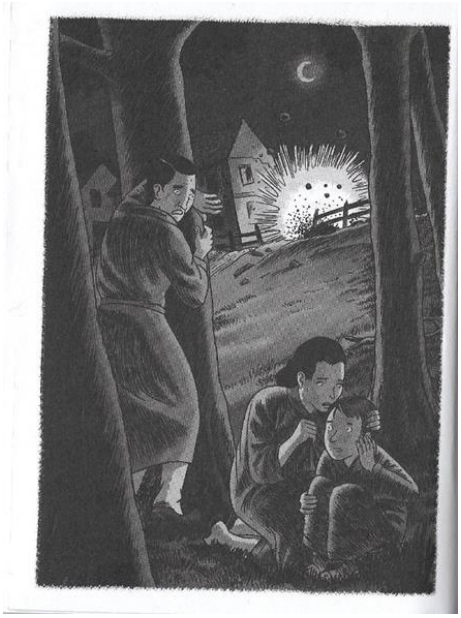

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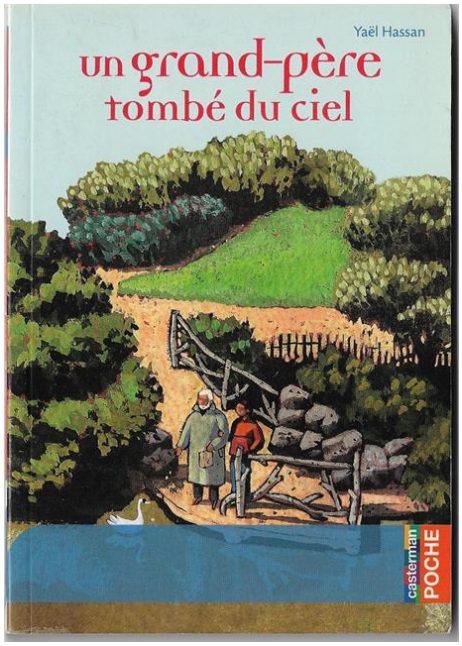

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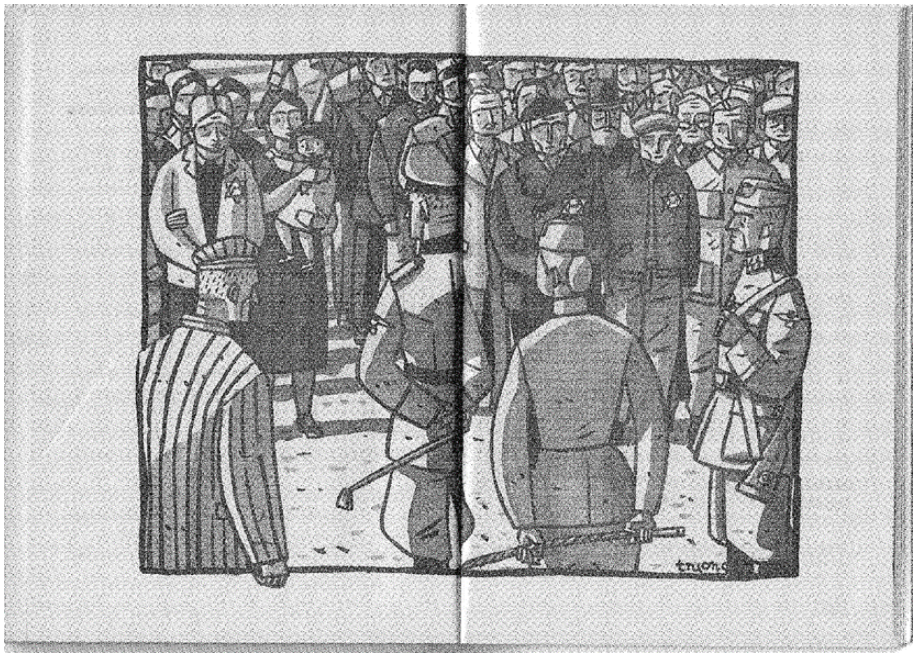

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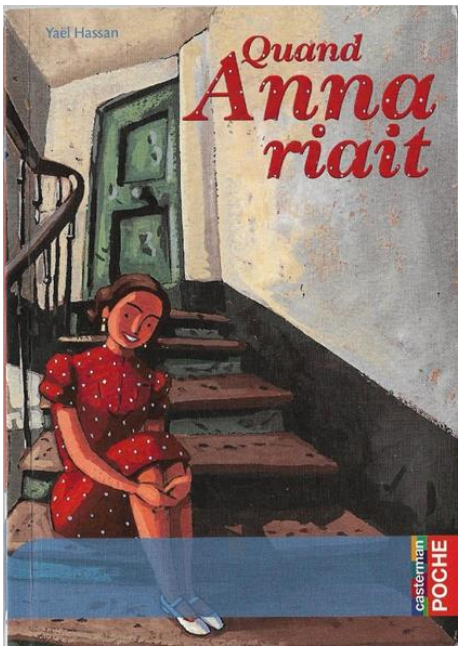

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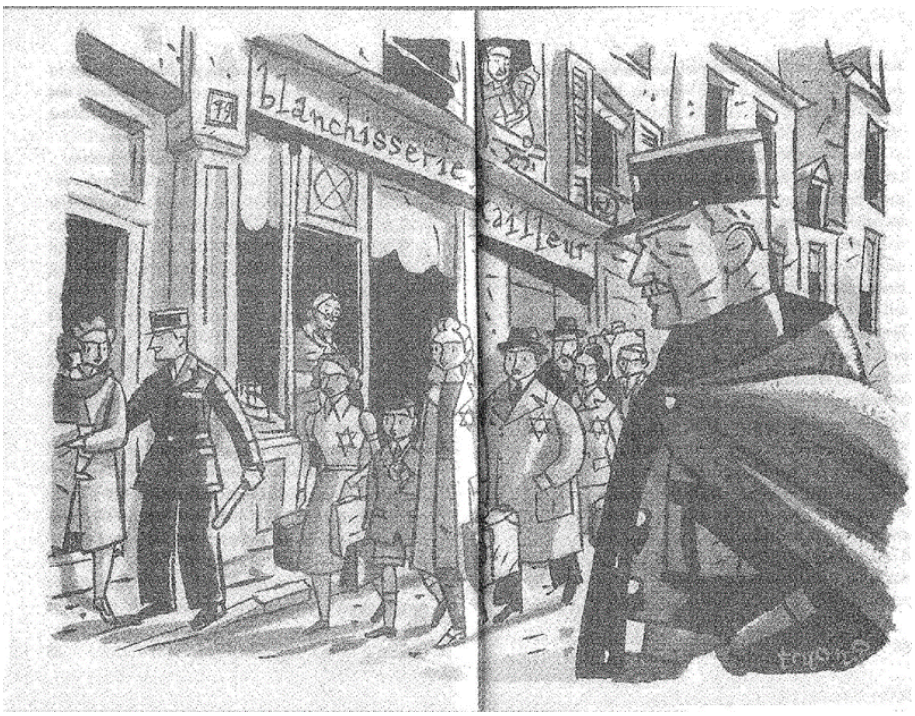

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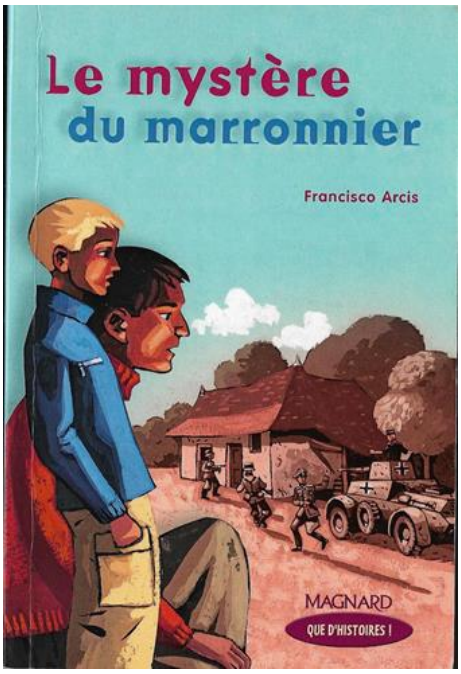

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