DECOLONIZING MEMORY

Algeria & the Politics of Testimony

JILL JARVIS

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IN MEMORIAM

Yamina Mechakra
(1949–2013)

Assia Djebar
(1936–2015)

Fadwa Saïdi
(1983–2016)

Marcel Bois
(1925–2018)

Gisèle Halimi
(1927–2020)

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The Future of Memory

Literature is not evidence, but an instrument for imaginative training. —Gayatri Spivak

L'Algérie coloniale championne du monde du rendre-invisible: on n'avait même pas besoin d'apartheid: on pouvait se promener au milieu de la foule algérienne sans les voir.

Colonial Algeria, world champion of making-invisible: we didn't even need apartheid: we could walk around surrounded by Algerian crowds without seeing them. —Hélène Cixous

. . . *musulmans* (le vocable inscrivait l'exclusivité dans laquelle la société coloniale nous avait tenus depuis 1830 et les différents décrets qui avaient annoncé la décrépitude dans laquelle nous devions être maintenus*: Français-Musulmans, disaient les uns, musulmans à part entière, disaient les autres, sans qu'aucune de ces deux appellations puisse nous fournir l'illusion de quelque disponibilité juridique*) . . .

. . . *musulmans* (the term registered the exclusive state in which colonial society had held us since 1830 and the various legal decrees announcing the decrepitude in which we were to be kept: *French-Muslims, said some, fully Muslim, said others, while neither of these two names could give us the illusion of any legal access*) . . . —Nabile Farès

Seeing Ghosts

In the last epigraph above—from *Mémoire de l'Absent* (1974) by novelist Nabile Farès—a parenthetical clause disrupts the syntax of a sentence. As if muttering commentary on the italicized word *musulmans*, this interjection opens space on

the page to veer away from the narrative present. A reader is slyly confronted by the complaint that Algeria under French occupation was ground zero of a uniquely strange juridical regime whose afterlife has indelibly shaped the present order—or rather, disorder—of the novel's world.[1] Like Farès, many of Algeria's writers have found themselves in the difficult bind of trying to make perceptible what has been forcibly disappeared, and of sounding out what cannot yet be heard. *Decolonizing Memory* tracks their literary responses to a historiographic impasse: how to see or to hear what history has rendered ghostly?[2] As the digression in Farès's text seems almost to whisper, the magnitude of the legal violence exercised by the French to colonize and occupy Algeria is such that *only* aesthetic works, in particular, literature, have been able to register its enduring effects.

Above all, *Decolonizing Memory* is a defense of literature's unexpected, disruptive, and surreptitious power to make ghosts perceptible, and to make possible what state violence has rendered nearly unimaginable. I chart a literary constellation whose center is Algeria.[3] Foregrounding the ways that texts speak to one another across time and between languages, I explore anarchival forms of literary expression that unsettle and elude official discourses of both the French and Algerian states in ways that not only rewrite the colonial past, but also make it possible to envision decolonized futures. While I am indebted to scholarship that has established the myriad ways in which Algeria's independence war indelibly shaped French political and intellectual life as well as anglophone literary and critical theory, the focus of my inquiry lies elsewhere. By taking Algeria to be an important nexus of aesthetic innovation and theoretical contestation rather than a periphery legible only in relation to the former imperial metropole, and by highlighting the profoundly multilingual and heterogeneous character of Algerian writing, this book contributes to expanding decolonial approaches to African memory. Through a critical practice grounded in close reading across languages and informed by research conducted in Algeria, I aim to help shift the spatial, temporal, and linguistic frameworks that have to this point organized aesthetic and theoretical studies of testimony around Euro-American reference points. Maghrebi and African literatures *already* "theorize from below," presenting an opportunity to radically retrain our political imaginations.[4]

From its legal annexation to France in the mid-nineteenth century until Algeria's national independence in 1962, Algérie française was founded on a juridical distinction drawn between French citizen (*citoyen*) and French noncitizen subject (*sujet*).[5] Soon after the French invaded the Ottoman Regency of Algiers, a military directive (September 1830) declared the seized territory a blank slate on which to write French law. A directive issued the following month (October 1830)

revised this claim to recognize the limited jurisdiction of what the French called *musulman* and *israélite* civil codes. These categories and codes evolved over time to facilitate state-sponsored violence whose destructive impact has not been fully calculated or worked through.[6]

In her *Le trauma colonial: Une enquête sur les effets psychiques et politiques contemporains de l'oppression coloniale en Algérie* (2018), Karima Lazali cites details from recent demographic studies done by Kamel Kateb in collaboration with historians Abderrahmane Bouchène, Jean-Pierre Peyroulou, Ouanassa Siari Tengour, and Sylvie Thénault that attempt to count Algerian victims of French state violence. Lazali underscores that during four decades of French colonizing war to break Algerian resistance (1830–75), *nearly one third* of Algeria's indigenous population was exterminated. That is, between the massacres, military razzias, epidemics, and famines that took place during these decades of military rule, nearly one million out of almost three million estimated inhabitants of Algeria were killed.[7]

My guiding claim is that literature provides what demographic data, historical facts, and legal trials cannot in terms of attesting to and accounting for this loss. This legally orchestrated mass murder has never been the focus of a legal trial or state-sponsored reconciliation process like those held to reckon with the Shoah, or more recently in South Africa after apartheid and in Rwanda after genocide. As Lazali also points out, studies of the enduring psychological impact of the calculated erasure that forcibly made and kept Algeria *French*—the destruction of entire tribes, lineages, patronyms, toponyms, languages, worlds—do not yet exist, with the exception of Frantz Fanon's works, which he composed before French occupation ended in 1962. The explicitly nonrestorative power of literary representation does not retrieve or recuperate; it does not provide verifiable evidence. It does, however, register the traces of the disappeared in ways that provoke disturbance, unsettlement, pain, anger, and movement.

Decolonization tends to be the framework for narrating histories of Algérie française and what came in its wake. But, as scholars like Todd Shepard and Françoise Vergès have pointed out, this can be a deceptive frame that freezes settler colonial violence into a story about the past. Drawing insight from Shepard and Vergès, I take the terms *decolonization* and *postcolonial* to be invented—not neutral or natural—temporal categories with consequences for political imagination. In its unsettling and disturbing way, literature can help to set memory and imagination free from the temporal and spatial frames that underwrite the *ongoing* coloniality of power.

The multilingual, genre-defying literary works at the heart of my inquiry test and stretch testimonial practices beyond such frames. These literary experiments in testimony, as I read them, move in what Lia Brozgal has called an *anarchival*

relationship to the language of the nation-state and its laws.[8] Transforming Derrida's adjective *anarchivic* into a noun (*anarchive*), Brozgal underscores the ambivalent and contestatory relationship of anarchival aesthetic works to state-controlled archives: "the anarchive is not located in any single text," she writes, "but rather designates a set of works that evince an archival function and that, together, produce an epistemological system in oppositional relationship to an official archive."[9] The anarchival movement facilitated by writing, publishing, translating, circulating, and interpreting literature in Algeria has created clandestine space not only to protect and preserve threatened historical memory, but also to nurture political resistance and rebellion.

The peculiar legal history of French-colonized Algeria casts the relationship of testimony to law in a troubled light. This history has also been narrated in ways that render rebellion illegitimate or invisible. In 1848, the constitution of the French Second Republic legally annexed Algeria to France, carved it into three French departments (Constantine, Alger, Oran) and a southern territory, and affirmed a consequential distinction between *les citoyens français* (bearers of full citizenship rights) and *les sujets français* (bearers of extremely limited or no political rights, subject to military conscription, forced labor, and a separate disciplinary system) in order to facilitate wide-scale dispossession and occupation of Algeria's profitable, arable land. As the French military invaded south into the Sahara during the mid-nineteenth century,[10] the initial premise of political assimilation was institutionalized with the 1865 "Sénatus-Consulte on the Status of Persons and Naturalization in Algeria," which further classified les sujets français as either *indigènes israélites* or *indigènes musulmans.* A few years later, the Crémieux Decree (1870) extended French citizenship to most (but not all)[11] of the thirty thousand "indigènes israélites" living in Algérie française but reserved the ambiguous status of sujet for those millions of inhabitants designated as "indigènes musulmans," legally considered to be "Muslim" French subjects, but not citizens.[12]

The French category of the "musulman" subject had little to do with the religious practices and commitments of those it supposedly described and much to do with placing a vast population of noncitizens at a precarious legal threshold.[13] The noncitizen "indigène musulman" juridical status persisted under different names until beyond World War II, while Algeria's Jewish inhabitants abruptly lost and regained French citizenship under the Vichy regime between 1940 and 1943.[14] Jacques Derrida, who left Algiers for the first time in 1949 at age eighteen, refers to this complicated situation as "the most extraordinary history of citizenship in Algeria, which has to my knowledge no equivalent, *stricto sensu*, in the world."[15] In her "Lettre à Zohra Drif" (1999), Hélène Cixous remembers her

adolescence in colonized Algiers where she was one of few Jews among even fewer Muslim "indigène" students enrolled at the prestigious Lycée Fromentin in 1947: "Colonial Algeria, world champion of making-invisible: we didn't even need apartheid: we could walk around surrounded by Algerian crowds *without seeing them*."[16]

In recent years, scholars have elucidated the myriad ways in which the peculiar legal "exceptions" that governed Algérie française created defining fissures in the very institutions of modern citizenship and democracy, as well as in the concept of modernity itself.[17] The invented category of colonized person classified as a French national but not a citizen technically lasted until 1948, but the French ways of perceiving Algerians—and of *not* seeing them, as Cixous describes—that this category both reflected and engendered have lasted much longer, under different names and configurations.

Beginning in the 1880s, a chaotic jumble of legal decrees, circulars, and rulings were gathered together and formalized as a body of law called the Code de l'indigénat. This overtly discriminatory code outlined a separate penal system along with a list of infractions classified as punishable crimes *only* when committed by the majority of Algeria's population classified as "indigène."[18] Special infractions included such acts as behaving disrespectfully toward an agent of authority; refusing to furnish topographical information demanded by agents of French authority; living alone in an isolated place outside the *mechta* (small village); gathering for religious festivals without authorization; begging outside the *douar* ("duwār," a larger village; this became a term for French administrative divisions), even for the sick or disabled, except in authorized cases; giving asylum to undocumented vagabonds; burial outside the specified areas or at a depth less than what has been determined appropriate; and shooting weapons without authorization during festivals.

In his study of this dark side of French law, tellingly subtitled *Anatomie d'un "monstre" juridique*, Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison calls the code a "juridical anarchy" and underscores the extreme and unprecedented nature of this legal experiment in the history of French empire.[19] Historian Sylvie Thénault has studied the relationship of the Code de l'indigénat to the expanding network of prisons, detention centers, and concentration camps that was indispensable to the French conquest and administration of Algeria from the nineteenth century through the long war waged against Algerian resistance during the mid-twentieth century (1945–62). "With the *indigénat*," Thénault argues, "colonial violence was inscribed into law. Legitimized, it was made banal."[20]

Dictating from his hospital bed in Bethesda in late 1961 as the anticolonial uprising in Algeria raged to its end without him, Frantz Fanon observed the

magnitude of French legal violence with prescient acuity. "The colonial regime draws its legitimacy from force," he writes near the conclusion of his essay on violence in *Les damnés de la terre*, "and at no point does it try to dissemble this order of things."[21] Fanon was not convinced that legal independence for Algeria would resolve the damage already done by the force of French law. He outlined the tragic "misadventures" that would befall any decolonization process entrusted to a national bourgeoisie already poised to take up the relay of state power in Algeria, as had happened in other recently liberated African states.[22] He also observed the French state's effort to make disappear its own long-standing politics of extermination, and raised serious questions about relying on any future nation-state as a framework for genuinely decolonial justice.

Near the conclusion of the chapter "De la violence," Fanon accents the calculated, arithmetic character of a "disparition" that entails both the legal erasure and actual killing of human beings: "This line of reasoning that so arithmetically foretells the disappearance of colonized people," he writes, "does not shock the colonized with moral indignation."[23] Fanon initially depicts this "disappearance" from the viewpoint of the French occupier, to whom mass murder appears as an instrumental, unsurprising, even necessary part of civilizing progress: "And when, prescribing specific methods, the colonizer asks each member of the oppressing minority to take down 30 or 100 indigènes, he sees that no one is outraged and that ultimately the whole problem is to determine whether this can be done all at once or in stages."[24]

Such reasoning "does not surprise the colonized either," Fanon emphasizes—though for different reasons.[25] From the standpoint of colonized Algerians that Fanon assumes in this passage, such violence is not shocking or surprising because at no point was it hidden or secret. Algerians targeted by French law were never blind to its brutality. They never mistook the occupier's law to be a humanizing or civilizing force, or regarded such terror as "progress." Having seen French law in action from the start, Fanon points out, the colonized know well that the law was never meant to protect those whom it identifies for calculated destruction and erasure.

Fanon's observation about the nature of colonizing law appeared less obvious to French citizens who were not its targets but its beneficiaries. Just before resigning from his civil post at the Blida psychiatric hospital to join the Front de libération nationale (FLN) in 1956, Fanon had written a short "Letter to a Frenchman" designed to shock a well-meaning French citizen of Algeria out of his own blindness to the legally orchestrated disappearance of Algerians taking place all around him. In the letter, Fanon gestures to spectral human figures vanishing into the desert landscape: "Unseen Arabs. Ignored Arabs. Arabs passed over in

silence. Arabs vanished, hidden. Arabs repudiated every day, transformed into Saharan scenery. And you are on the side of those: who have never shaken an Arab's hand. Never shared coffee."[26]

Fanon had already diagnosed this problem many years before he composed *Les damnés de la terre* in 1961 or resigned from his post at Blida in 1956. In fact, analyzing a French propensity for creating "Muslim," "North African," and "Arab" ghosts[27] is the central preoccupation of Fanon's first published essay, "Le 'syndrome nord-africain'" ("The 'North African Syndrome'"), which appeared in print just before *Peau noire, masques blancs*. In a February 1952 issue of the journal *L'esprit*, Fanon focused on the condition of North African workers in France.[28] He had just completed his medical residency in Lyon, where he had treated many of these workers in his clinic. Fanon raises pointed questions about the Algerians hidden in plain sight in the French city, where their status as human seems to recede beneath a torrent of racist epithets: "Who are they really, these creatures who dissimulate themselves, who are dissimulated by the social truth behind attributes like *bicot, bounioule, arabe, raton, sidi, mon z'ami*?"[29]

As the quotation marks in its title immediately signal, the essay mimics the etiological protocols of a scientific medical paper in order to subvert its diagnostic norms. What opens sounding much like a case study transforms itself into a cutting indictment and a justice plaint. At the essay's conclusion, Fanon shifts abruptly to direct address, demanding of his French reader: "How, how, this man that you reify by systematically calling him Mohammed, whom you reconstruct or rather dissolve on the basis of an idea—an idea that you know to be disgusting (you know perfectly well that you're robbing him of something, that something for which not so very long ago you were willing to give up everything, even your life), well then! *this man*—don't you get the sense that you are draining him of his very substance?"[30] Here, Fanon's parenthetical aside pinpoints the irony that the very "humanity" that so many French citizens had been willing to die in order to protect from Nazi destruction just six years earlier is what the idea and the institutions of Algérie française are designed to strip from men (*cet homme-ci*) whom the same French citizens routinely treat as interchangeable, disposable "Mohammeds."

The essay concludes by appealing to a sense of justice that transcends French law. Fanon sounds the keywords of French republicanism—"Rights, Duties, Citizenship, Equality, how nice!"[31]—to underscore the precarious status of colonized subjects to whom such promises never really applied: "The North African on the doorstep [*seuil*] of the French Nation—which is, they say, his own nation—experiences in the political realm, at the level of citizenship, an imbroglio that no one wants to face."[32] He exposes a founding paradox: France had promised to

the "indigènes musulmans" a place in a modern republic of equality and rights where, by legal design, "there is absolutely no place for them."[33]

A decade later, just before he died in 1961, Fanon underscored the point he had long been making about the vanishing force of this legal imbroglio. In "De la violence" he narrates from a standpoint close to those living under French occupation in Algeria: "[The colonized] notice on the spot that all of these discourses about the equality of human beings that are spewed one after another cannot mask this banality which makes it so that seven Frenchmen killed or wounded at Sakamody Pass ignite the indignation of civilized consciences whereas the sacking of the *douar* of Guergour, the *dechra* of Djerah, and the massacring of the very populations who had caused the ambush count for nothing at all."[34] In this scene, Algerians see plainly that while French deaths exacted during an ambush at Sakamody Pass count as precisely seven, the multitude of lives lost in massacres in the villages of Guergour and Djerah *comptent pour du beurre*; that is, they do not count at all. Such discrepancies in colonial record keeping also have made it difficult for historians to accurately count Algerian deaths. In Fanon's analysis, Algerians see right through French discourses about human rights and equality because they recognize the banal truth that their own lives do not count as human before French law, so that killing any number of Algerians never quite adds up to the crime of murder under French-colonized jurisdiction: "Soon it will be seven years of crimes in Algeria," adds Fanon, "and not a single Frenchman has been tried [*traduit*] before a court of justice for the murder of a single Algerian."[35]

The French idiom *traduire en justice* (literally, to translate into justice) in Fanon's sentence can be glossed in English in a number of ways—to bring to justice, to prosecute, to call someone before a tribunal—but none of these translations does justice to the verb *traduire* at the heart of the idiom. In French, legal prosecution is etymologically linked to the act of translating. In Algérie française, Fanon observes, killings only count as murder when the victim is a French citizen; justice for Algerian victims simply does not translate or compute. This impasse points to an intractable decalage in the French state's legal order, and to the state's self-authorized power to decide which human lives to protect and which to dispose of in the name of "justice."

For this reason, Fanon adds, "these commissions do not exist in the eyes of the colonized."[36] Algerians are not confused about the status of their own lives in Fanon's account. Rather, they see clearly that French law itself has mistaken its own power to confer or confiscate human status, and to calculate the value of lives. This authority is not legitimate in the eyes of Algerians—hence the revolutionary situation, whose outcome Fanon would not live to see.

Decolonizing Memory

The kinds of blind spots that Fanon noticed in 1961 have since played a role in shaping the story of Algeria's independence war and its afterlife, and continue to limit what can be seen about the Algerian present and future. Algeria's eight-year war to end French occupation—described by Fanon in 1959 as "the most hallucinatory war ever waged to break colonial domination"—was the longest and most violent anticolonial uprising of the twentieth century.[37] The conflict transformed political, social, intellectual, and aesthetic domains on both sides of the Mediterranean and created waves across the decolonizing Global South. It became both an inspiration and a cautionary tale for audiences as divergent as the Black Panthers—who had offices in Algiers provided by the FLN during the 1960s—*and* intelligence strategists at the Pentagon and West Point who were preparing for military invasions and occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan after September 11, 2001.

This complicated history is difficult to fully fathom not only because of how differently it has unfolded in postcolonial France and Algeria, but also because what Todd Shepard has called the French *invention of decolonization* has played such a powerful role in shaping the way that the war's history has been narrated. Shepard argues that *decolonization* was invented in France as a temporal category—the inexorable step "after" colonialism in a progressive liberal teleology—precisely in order to exorcise Algeria from France after 130 years of their profound entanglement.[38] The implications of this exorcism become evident in the forms of collective forgetting and blindness that Karima Lazali points out in her study of colonial trauma. Nonexistent archives and lacunae in historiographic and psychoanalytic studies further reflect the French state's concerted effort to distance itself from its own long-standing politics of disappearance, a politics that the Algerian state has taken up and honed for its own purposes since 1962.[39]

In the wake of national independence in 1962, Algeria became viewed by millions across the African continent and diaspora as an effervescent beacon of liberation. Algiers, its capital city, was known as the capital of the Third World, a "Mecca of revolutionaries" where emancipatory ideas and practices could be forged.[40] This radical promise and hope appeared to die a swift death in subsequent decades. By 1988, Algerian citizens protesting against the government were attacked on the streets of their once-revolutionary capital city by state security and police forces. This repression, often referred to as *octobre noir*, marked a dramatic rupture for many Algerians, who were stunned and traumatized to see their own state turn its weapons against the people it had so recently been founded to protect.

For many Algerians, the date October 1988 now names the unofficial start of a devastating and brutal war on civilians that unfolded throughout the 1990s. Its official start is more often taken to be 1991, when the government canceled parliamentary elections that would have given the Front islamique du salut (FIS) a ruling majority and ended the single-party rule of the FLN. This more recent war, often called *la décennie noire* (the black decade, in Arabic *al-ʿashriyya al-saudāʾ*) or *snīn al-irhāb* (the years of terror) transformed Algeria into an apparent crucible for the failures of decolonization, a dramatic theater for a supposed battle between modern democracy and antimodern Islamists, *and* a key ally on the Maghreb front of the U.S.-led global war on terror. Beginning in 1999, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's government passed a series of laws that both legislated a formal end to this conflict and more deeply entrenched government authority to justify unlimited exercise of force in the name of "fighting terrorists."

Since February 2019, a massive people's revolt against Bouteflika's regime has been underway in Algeria, a movement (*ḥirāk*, in Arabic) that continues to unfold in the early months of 2020, although its course is being changed by the global pandemic that began in March 2020.[41] To observers persuaded by the version of decolonization invented by France, this peaceful uprising might look like a potential step forward in a teleological progression that has been best modeled by European democracies. However, the dignity revolution (*thawrat al-karāma*) taking place in Algeria cannot be described as simply a popular revolt against the dictator of a failed African state or another episode in a so-called Arab Spring. Such tropes and terms reflect distorting Eurocentric assumptions.[42] Seen from the standpoint of the people who have put their bodies on the streets every week for the past year, this movement is a much more radical and powerful collective dispute with the cartographic and temporal frames that underwrite the coloniality of power itself. If we take seriously what many of the protestors themselves are saying, the *Ḥirāk is* the unfinished liberation war.[43]

On the French side, knowledge of the anticolonial war seemed to arrive belatedly in public discourse and historiography after a long period of traumatized amnesia, and it remains a charged and contentious topic in France now. As Benjamin Stora pointed out in his influential book *La gangrène et l'oubli: La mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (1991), for decades the French government referred to the war as anything *but* a war—*évènements, opérations de police, actions de maintien de l'ordre, opération de rétablissement de la paix civile, entreprise de pacification, le drame algérien*—because to call it a war would tacitly recognize Algerian sovereignty. It was not until 1999 that the French National Assembly adopted a law formally recognizing that an event called *la guerre d'Algérie* had taken place. It was not until September 2018 that a French head of state acknowledged the

systematic nature of the violence done to Algerians and their allies during that war when President Emmanuel Macron made a public declaration announcing the French government's responsibility for the disappearance, torture, and murder of Maurice Audin in Algiers in 1957.[44]

The work to overcome official disavowal and silence is far from finished in France, as Macron declared. One of the motivations driving this ongoing *travail de mémoire* (memory work), in the French president's words, is to help heal a nation scarred by its recent colonial past: "The Republic cannot . . . minimize or excuse the crimes and atrocities committed by either side during this conflict. France still bears scars, some of them not fully closed."[45] That said, it remains impossible to classify *as* crime the violence that was exercised by the French in Algeria for well over a century prior to the intense counterrevolutionary war waged by France between 1954 and 1962. For instance, outraged furor swept through the French media after Macron stated, during a visit that he made to Algiers while he was a presidential candidate in February 2017, that the colonization of Algeria had constituted a "crime against humanity."[46]

In Algeria, on the other hand, the independence war has always been called a revolution, *thawra* in Arabic. Algeria's second constitution names it "one of the greatest epics in history to have marked the resurrection of the peoples of the Third World."[47] In Algeria it is common and not the least bit controversial to refer to French colonization as a genocide—it would be provocative, in fact, to deny this. There, the revolutionary narrative is openly and ritually celebrated as the birth of a sovereign nation emerging from the night of colonial terror. This sanctified revolutionary epic serves both as a symbolic touchstone for consecrating state power (the Algerian government has been ruled since 1962 by the party that claims the mantle of the revolutionary vanguard, the FLN) and as a symbolic resource for staging resistance against the government and the oligarchs in and beyond Algeria monopolizing the nation's oil wealth. Reworking the revolutionary story has long been a contestatory strategy for groups disputing state power and calculated dispossession in Algeria. This includes Islamists critical of the state during the 1990s as well as those millions of citizens who recently have taken to the streets armed with banners, posters, slogans, songs, images, and chants that tap into collective revolutionary memory as a resistant practice of generating new political possibilities.

Since Stora published his study of the war's memorial afterlife in the early 1990s, literary scholars and historians of postcolonial France and Algeria have explored how official national discourse and popular memories on both sides of the Mediterranean have been shaped by lacunae, disavowal, amnesia, blind spots, and ongoing acts of silencing and forgetting.[48] They have analyzed the

state-sponsored torture whose exposure so shocked and transformed French public opinion about imperialism during the late 1950s and 1960s, and they have brought to light long-obscured instances of state violence such as the police massacre of Algerian protestors that took place in the heart of Paris in October 1961. In 2010, Michael Rothberg, Debarati Sanyal, and Max Silverman together edited a volume of *Yale French Studies* entitled *Nœuds de mémoire: Multidirectional Memory in Postwar French and Francophone Culture*. This collective project reignited questions of cultural memory by pivoting from Pierre Nora's massive, multivolume *Lieux de mémoire* project—started in 1986, and itself characterized by an amnesiac relationship to French empire, as the editors of the *Yale French Studies* volume point out—in order to "probe the points of contact between the memories and legacies of genocide, colonialism, and slavery in a world defined both by decolonization and the aftermath of the Shoah."[49]

Over recent decades, a growing body of memory studies scholarship has illuminated the ways in which Algerian decolonization constitutively shaped "postwar" French cultural memory and political institutions, and also has demonstrated that the force of Algeria's anticolonial revolt lives on in what the Anglo-American academy has inherited in translation as poststructuralist and thus postcolonial theory.[50] In short, it has become impossible to seriously study French history, literature, philosophy, politics, cultural memory, or experiences of World War II without also seriously considering French empire. It has also become increasingly salient to understand "France" itself not as a self-contained nation that happened to once possess overseas colonies that it has now shed, but rather as an inherently imperial territory whose institutions and ideas (equality, liberty, fraternity) were forged through *and remain unthinkable apart from* centuries of transatlantic slave trade, colonizing war, and settler occupation. As Gary Wilder has aptly put this point, modern France was never not an imperial nation-state, although it is the character of constituent state violence to train us not to see this fact.[51] France remains constitutively haunted by the empire that it has tried both to exorcise and atone for.

While such scholarship has done much to highlight and to redress the amnesia that France's swift "decolonization" has helped to institutionalize, other scholars point out that the forms of political decolonization that were established in France in the mid-twentieth century *still* facilitate blindness and amnesia concerning the true historical scope and ongoing intensity of French state violence and racism. For instance, Françoise Vergès extends Todd Shepard's argument in her recent book *Le ventre des femmes: Capitalisme, racialisation, féminisme* (2017) to argue that the French invention of decolonization that took hold during the decades after 1945 produced a mutilated understanding of both cartography

and history that continues to reinforce the *coloniality of power* in the present.[52] "Postcoloniality," as Vergès defines it, "designates a period that opens the moment that France presents herself as liberated from her colonial empire. It does not indicate a temporality, but a politics."[53]

Until this point, postcolonial francophone memory, testimony, and trauma studies have been largely oriented by cartographies, textualities, and temporalities that implicitly center French experiences and narratives of decolonization, even when critiquing these narratives. For instance, the interpretive pattern of forgetting, remembering, acknowledging, and working through the traumatic exorcism of Algeria from France has simply never been a shared framework. This pattern does not play out in comparable ways on the Algerian side of that complex rift, where blindness to French state brutality was never a real option. Likewise, the "multidirectional" memory paradigm has reflected a critical orientation in which wide-ranging vectors appear to lead back toward the French metropole, so that the "tangled knots" of memory that come into clearest focus also tend to be those located within or indelibly connected to French cultural spaces and public spheres, while aesthetic works addressed to other audiences or in Algerian and African languages other than French have largely fallen outside the scope of consideration.[54] The linguistic partitions and assumptions that have tacitly endured in francophone literary studies scholarship replicate a colonialist enterprise. It is time to collectively expand reference points both by moving beyond French materials and by recognizing French as an Algerian language that is not intrinsically preoccupied with (or tormented by) France.

My study also takes a cue from the art historian Hannah Feldman by amplifying her point that the term *postwar* itself is not a neutral or shared reference. In *From a Nation Torn: Decolonizing Art and Representation in France, 1945–1962* (2014), Feldman argues that the widely accepted term by which scholars name the period "after 1945" institutionalizes European experience of World War II and elides the fact that the very same years were also a time of escalating anticolonial resistance and colonial repression. The term further eclipses more than a century of colonizing massacre and indigenous resistance underway in Algeria *prior* to 1945. From an Algerian standpoint, the date May 8, 1945, does not signify a triumph over fascism but rather its brutal escalation; it does not name a moment of liberation but rather a series of attacks and repressions carried out on Algerian civilians by French colonial authorities and *pied noir* settlers, also known as the Sétif, Guelma, and Kherrata massacres. For Algerians, the date May 1945 marks the start of the armed resistance that would become a long decolonizing war to break French rule.[55]

In *The Invention of Decolonization*, Todd Shepard further points out that the radical questions raised by theorists of decolonization such as Fanon and Aimé

Césaire remain unanswered. That is, the version of political "decolonization" that fundamentally transformed France after 1962 also enabled the French to avoid facing more thorny and unsettling questions concerning the "paradoxes, limits, and incoherencies of Western universalism, as well as the violence it required and thus produced."[56] Both Shepard and Vergès demonstrate that French "postcoloniality" has made it possible to elide such questions in ways that have exacerbated rather than addressed ongoing practices of state violence, xenophobia, and racism in France.

These unsettling decolonial questions are at the heart of the literary texts that I bring together in this book. I understand *decolonial* in the way that Vergès defines it, as a term that names "the struggle to deconstruct the coloniality of power."[57] In other words, "decolonizing" is not a process that has already happened to bring us all into a shared "postcolonial" time and space. The present participle in my book's title names an ongoing struggle that concerns whether there will *be* a future, and for whom.[58] Literature, I argue, creates and protects indispensable space for *present* struggles against the coloniality of power.

In other words, a central claim of this book is that the radical decolonial questions like those raised by Fanon and Césaire, highlighted by Shepard, and taken up by Vergès did not in fact die out during decades of political decolonization and postcolonial amnesia. Such questions may have gone underground, but they have been kept alive thanks in no small part to Algerian activists, workers, artists, writers, and theorists working in the face of considerable and ongoing repression. Over four chapters and a conclusion, I explore how works by some of these writers sound out demands for justice that cannot be articulated within existing legal frameworks. At the juncture where aesthetic imagination confronts juridical reason, the capacity of literary representation to complicate and contest reality comes to light. These texts are not documents of past events, but traces of a dynamic, collective, open-ended process oriented to the future.[59]

Finally, this book highlights the indispensable value of aesthetic study in a disciplinary space that has tended to be the domain of social scientists. In the wake of both Algeria's "dark decade" of the 1990s and the "war on terror" launched after September 11, 2001, historians and sociologists such as Sylvie Thénault, Jim House, Neil MacMaster, Marnia Lazreg, Malika Rahal, Muriam Haleh Davis, James McDougall, Walid Benkhaled, and Natalya Vince have undertaken important studies that contextualize the violence exercised during Algeria's independence war within a more expansive picture of colonizing violence. They have also identified in this conflict a recessed prehistory of contemporary counterterror practices.[60] Their research has made Algeria's modern history speak meaningfully to global movements[61] and has connected the history of French empire and

its long afterlife to other imperialist projects in and beyond Africa. Very recently, scholars have begun to substantively evaluate the ongoing impact of the 1990s war, as Karima Lazali and Tristan Leperlier do in fields adjacent to and deeply informed by literary study (psychoanalysis and sociology, respectively).[62] I draw on Leperlier's detailed, data-rich overview of the politics of literary production in Algeria during the 1990s, and am inspired by Lazali's turn to fiction as a way to supplement the lacunae in historiographic and psychoanalytic studies.

These vital projects are shaped by nuanced attention to the specificity and heterogeneity of Algerian cultural spaces, yet they also leave open the question of literature's transformative and disruptive capacity. I turn directly to literature in search of alternative interpretive and theoretical frames, and practice close textual analysis to highlight the seditious play of signification within a given text. In Algeria, acts of critical dissidence and textual sedition have long taken place in more than one language, and not just French or Arabic. Furthermore, French is now an Algerian language with an Algerian literary genealogy, shaped through intertextual and translational contact with Arabic and Tamazight literatures both spoken and written. *Decolonizing Memory* is an exploratory lexicon that brings together multilingual texts that I read in ways that test and expand the limits of testimonial forms. Reading across and between languages wherever possible—French, Arabic, Darija, Kabyle, Chaouia—permits me to make a case for how literature creates space for material that has been ghosted through acts of legal and linguistic violence. Read closely, these translingual texts pose resolute challenges to a long-standing ideological schema that continues to reinscribe reductive political divisions along linguistic lines in contemporary Algeria, a schema that has too often served the interests of abusive power.[63]

Following a loose chronology, *Decolonizing Memory* weaves together close readings of literary fiction with analyses of theoretical, juridical, visual, and activist texts concerning disappearance, detainment, torture, and genocide that have circulated within and beyond Algeria in the wake of both the national independence war (1954–62) and the (un)civil war (1988–99). Neither of these wars is truly over yet. My book's temporal sense therefore departs from an established trend in both historical and literary scholarship that narrates Algeria's modern history as a tragedy in three separate phases: colonization, decolonizing war, and civil war.[64] By contrast, I foreground the ways in which literary texts register out-of-joint temporal scansions to help see continuities between periods of violence that have been framed as discrete and discontinuous, and to help to articulate connections between myriad sites of violence beyond Algeria's borders. I linger over the impasses and disjunctions brought to light by this anarchival network of literary texts to demonstrate how Algerian writers have transformed the genre

of testimony in ways that both defy imposed linguistic partitions and dispute the authority of the modern nation-state to serve as ultimate arbiter of justice.

Hearing Voices

Literature offers something other than evidence; it can be, as Gayatri Spivak tells us, an instrument for imaginative training, capable of moving at precisely those points where historiographical and legal genres reach an impasse. Here, works by Frantz Fanon and Assia Djebar permit me to bring to the fore this surreptitious and disruptive capacity of literary representation to loose memory and imagination from received temporal and spatial frames. Djebar's novel *L'amour, la fantasia* even works as "instrument" in an acoustical sense, like a vessel resonating with the unsettling demands of ghosts.

In his description of colonial law, Fanon enacts a point of view shift. From the vantage point of any "indigène musulman" living under occupation in Fanon's picture, French law never looked the least bit neutral or just: "He had always known that his encounters with the colonizer would take place inside a rigged system," writes Fanon. "The colonized loses no time in lamentations and almost never seeks that justice be done for him within the colonial framework."[65]

The absence of lamentation does not, of course, suggest that Algerians do not experience grief and pain; it means that they know it is futile to address their complaints and injuries to French judges and courts. In the series of clinical case studies appended to *Les damnés de la terre* in a section entitled "Guerre coloniale et troubles mentaux" ("Colonial War and Mental Disorders"), Fanon describes the disfiguring violence inflicted by the French colonial regime in Algeria without hyperbole as "a true apocalypse" and "a real genocide."[66] He had, of course, read Aimé Césaire's *Discours sur le colonialisme*.[67] He had also spent several years working in a psychiatric hospital in Blida, and thus witnessed firsthand the pathologies wrought by settler colonial violence.

The final text included in the appendix is not a clinical case study but an essay entitled "De l'impulsivité criminelle du Nord-Africain à la guerre de Libération nationale" ("From the North African's Criminal Impulsiveness to the National Liberation War") whose title and tone recall those of Fanon's first published essay "Le 'syndrome nord-africain'" (1952). Much as the earlier essay had done to the genre of French medical diagnosis, "De l'impulsivité criminelle du Nord-Africain" outlines a psychiatric theory elaborated by French magistrates, professors, police, lawyers, journalists, and doctors, in order to subvert and denounce it: "The Algerian, they all maintained, is a born criminal."[68]

Fanon outlines the colonial theory of Algerian criminality, citing evidence from reams of scientific studies produced by faculty at the University of Algiers: Algerians kill frequently, savagely, and for no reason. They love death, and submit to it willingly. Fanon parodies the anti-Muslim racism on which the legal and penal order of Algérie française depends—"These magistrates, these police officers, these doctors all dissertate quite seriously about the relationship between the Muslim soul and blood."[69] He exposes the French doctrine of Algerian criminality as a lie that renders the "indigène musulman" legally disposable. He also mimics the solemn pronouncements of a French judge in his legal chambers in Algiers in 1956, who sees what he takes to be "aggression in purest form" (*agressivité à l'état pur*) manifested by the Algerian rebels' supposed affinity for the military "fantasia" as a spectacle of bloodthirsty fanaticism.[70] The French judge cannot see what Fanon does: a political act of armed resistance to colonial terror.[71] Fanon notes that the apparent willingness of Algerians to die has nothing to do with their being fanatical Muslims, but is rather a sign of revolt and protective solidarity in the face of unlivable conditions: "The Algerian combatant has a particular way of fighting and dying," writes Fanon, "and no allusion to Islam or to the promised Paradise can explain this selfless generosity when what is at stake is protecting one's people and shielding one's brothers."[72]

At the essay's conclusion, Fanon abruptly shifts the temporal and spatial frames in order to clarify his central argument that Algerians' psychic dysfunction and distress are not "the consequence of an arrangement of the nervous system, nor of a congenital disturbance [*originalité caractérielle*] but the direct product of the colonial situation."[73] To illustrate his claim, Fanon interrupts the narrative present—the last months of anticolonial war—to splice in a series of past scenes of war.

First, the point of view zooms out and pans back to swiftly survey more than a century of colonial war and dispossession that had created unlivable circumstances for the "indigène musulman." Fanon writes: "Exposed daily to attempted murder: famine, eviction from his unpaid room, his mother's dessicated breasts, skeletal children, closed-down construction sites, the unemployed hanging around the foreman like crows—the indigène comes to view his own neighbor as an implacable enemy. . . . Yes, during the colonial period in Algeria and elsewhere, one might do a lot of things to get a kilo of semolina. One might even kill several people. *We need imagination to understand such things. Or memory.*"[74]

After dramatically widening the historical frame, Fanon brings into sharp focus a specific camp scene. At a glance, this description reads like a direct citation of harrowing descriptions from testimonies of survivors of the Nazi camps such as those offered by Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel—accounts that, by 1961,

Fanon had almost certainly heard of or read.[75] "In the concentration camps," writes Fanon, "men killed each other over scraps of bread."[76] Then Fanon's point of view shifts to first person, specifying that the camp scene he envisions is not located in Nazi Germany but rather in French-occupied North Africa in 1944: "I remember a horrible scene," Fanon writes. "It was in Oran, in 1944."[77]

Fanon recounts in detail what he remembers witnessing outside a military camp in Oran in 1944, where he was stationed as a soldier in the Free French Forces waiting to embark from North Africa to launch operations against the Axis powers and Vichy-occupied France: "From the camp where we awaited departure, soldiers tossed scraps of bread to little Algerian children who fought each other over them with rage and hate. Veterinarians might shed light on such problems by recalling the well-known 'pecking order' observed in poultry yards. The corn distributed is in fact a target of relentless competition. Certain birds—the strong ones—devour all the feed while the less aggressive grow visibly thinner. Every colony tends to become an immense poultry yard, an immense concentration camp where the only law is that of the knife."[78] Fanon's geographic and temporal shifts create a haunted transposition that not only moves the carceral conditions of the concentration camp to the colonized terrain of Algeria, but dramatically alters cartographical scale.

In Fanon's picture, colonized territory appears as an immense concentration camp where the law is a weapon used to destroy those at the bottom of its brutal pecking order. Children end up ravaging each other over a scrap of bread tossed their way by French soldiers, like desperate birds in a poultry yard. This transposition disrupts Eurocentric postwar chronologies, so that Nazi camps are not a model for understanding the colony, but the other way around. Thus, in Fanon's splicing, the hallucinatory war of 1954–62 appears within a longer historical memory of state violence. This reoriented perspective *also* imbues Nazi horror with alternate historical meaning: "Not so long ago," Fanon writes in 1961, "Nazism transformed all of Europe into a true colony."[79]

Karima Lazali, who is a psychiatrist currently practicing in both Algiers and Paris, points out that Fanon's is still one of the only clinical and theoretical studies that exist to analyze the effect of this politics of mass extermination on Algerians. Lazali dwells especially on the practice of *enfumades*, which were deliberate asphyxiations of entire tribes carried out by orders of generals such as Pelissier, Bugeaud, and Saint-Arnaud as the French military invasion moved beyond Algiers: "Saint-Arnaud himself went on to asphyxiate [*enfumer*] entire tribes," writes Lazali, "nearly eight hundred people in a single cave. The descriptions of children, women, elderly people, and men convulsing from smoke inhalation are unbearable."[80]

Such images are unbearable, but they are also true. As Lazali illustrates by weaving together psychoanalytic theory, historiography, and literary readings in her study, existing categories are not sufficient to register the psychic and political effects of the human destruction carried out to colonize Algeria. As Fanon pointed out, "*we need imagination to understand such things. Or memory.*" This quality of imagination and memory is best cultivated by way of literature, as the distinctively literary quality of Fanon's generically disruptive writing itself attests. On this point, Lazali offers critical inspiration: "Literature tries to write the blanks [*les blancs*] and the unthinkables [*les impensés*] of history. Above all, literature points the reader toward that shuttling movement [*dynamique incessante*] between the text and its invisible margins."[81]

The "enfumades" ordered by Pelissier and carried out by Saint-Arnaud during the colonizing wars of 1845 constitutively haunt what is perhaps Assia Djebar's most well-known novel, *L'amour, la fantasia* (1985). This novel features a historian narrator—like the writer Djebar herself—who grapples with the tactical and ethical problem of how to write, in a language inherited from the colonizer, a history of those who have been violently blanked out of historical record. Their only traces in the material archive appear in General Pelissier's diaries, which record his descriptions of the terrible massacre authorized by him. By manipulating aesthetic form to generate haunting sonic effects, Djebar's novel reckons with the paradox of subaltern testimony that has also long preoccupied subaltern studies of historiographers and literary theorists—how to write the history of those who leave no traces of their own in the archive?[82]

L'amour, la fantasia translates Gayatri Spivak's famous question into literary form by taking up the archival documents penned by the very person who massacred Djebar's ancestors as her only available starting point for writing about them. What is required of a writer-narrator whose own story must confront the "difficult task of rewriting its own conditions of impossibility as the conditions of its possibility"?[83] *L'amour, la fantasia* answers not by restoring lost testimony that provides access to what has been forcibly and violently erased, but with an act of literary haunting that moves in other ways. As Spivak insists and Djebar's poetics reveal, *subalternity* does not point to something or someone to be recovered, but rather to a structural mechanism that one ought instead think about how to abolish.[84] As Avery Gordon has written, it is in the act of submitting to a haunting that we recognize the urgency of this kind of ghostly call for justice—a demand that something else be done, something different than before.

This novel's part 1 ("La prise de la ville ou L'amour s'écrit") and part 2 ("Les cris de la fantasia") juxtapose intimate first-person narrative with dramatic scenes

from the history of French colonization in Algeria reconstructed from archival records, while part 3 ("Les voix ensevelies") knits the colloquial oral histories of women involved in the 1954–62 anticolonial war with the narrator's own meditations on the painful contingencies of her writing task. The sections of the novel that concern textual transmission and archival excavation are perpetually interrupted by sections whose titles signal an abiding concern for the colloquial Arabic and Tamazight lacunae in the scriptural French and Arabic archive, often denoting indecipherable or nonsignifying forms of human language: "Clameur," "L'aphasie amoureuse," "Murmures," "Chuchotements," "Le cri dans le rêve," "Soliloque," four meditations entitled "Corps enlacés," and "Tzarl'rit."[85]

Djebar's is not a work of testimony that gives unmediated access to obscured voices, but a haunted and haunting testimonial poetics that invite the reader into a different kind of interpretive practice. Djebar's narrator-historiographer cites her peculiar debt to a multilingual sheaf of texts produced throughout the history of imperial conquest that predates the French arrival in Algiers in 1830, drawing epigraphs from Eugène Fromentin, Barchou de Penhoën, Ibn Khaldoun, Saint Augustine, and Ludwig von Beethoven, as well as a series of French-Arabic dictionaries. Each citation at once transcribes and attests to the untranslatability of spoken forms of Arabic and Tamazight, a sonorous wordplay that articulates the oral with the textual *and* that highlights their trace-structure, so that voices only signify under the sign of their effacement. Djebar's sonorous poetics refuse to sustain any illusion of direct or unmediated access to the *cris* within her *écrits* by consistently framing the embedded discursiveness of their transmission, which is also an act of erasure.

The sonic qualities of Djebar's text reveal an imbrication of the aesthetic and deadly: *fantasia* is a military cavalry exercise (a French description of an event performed by Algerian horseback riders) as well as a musical form (taken up by Beethoven).[86] The term *tzarl'rit*, which Djebar cites from an Arabic-French dictionary, invokes what is mutilated by the French writers of dictionaries, given that tzarl'rit is a transcribed approximation of a trilling cry that is not Arabic at all.[87] A musical network of rhymes and homophones begins to sound from the text's opening epigraph, which is from Eugène Fromentin's *Une année dans le Sahel* (1859), and which conveys a scene of violence that is not visible, but audible.

At first there is just one cry: "Il y eut un cri déchirant—je l'entends encore au moment où je t'écris," but this multiplies: "puis des clameurs, puis un tumulte . . ." (There was a searing cry—I still hear it as I write to you—then clamors, then a tumult . . .) The novel's second epigraph is from Barchou de Penhoën's *Expédition d'Afrique* (1835). This also conveys "cris" and footsteps arriving from somewhere

unseen: "L'expérience était venue à nos sentinelles: elles commençait à savoir distinguer du pas et du cri de l'Arabe, ceux des bête fauves errant autour du camp dans les ténèbres." (Our sentries learned from experience: they began to be able to distinguish from the footstep and the cry of the Arab those of the wild animals lurking in the shadows around the camp.)

The "cris" in these epigraphs accumulate and amplify in homophones on the novel's next pages, generating the effect of a subterranean clamor that becomes detectible especially when the text is read aloud: *les cris, je t'écris, tes cris, l'amour s'écrit, ses cris.* It is as if ghosts are rustling and whispering from between the lines and pages of the written text with this accumulation of homophones. Such stylistic devices enact a phonic and graphic haunting that cannot be reduced to a purely aesthetic quality. What is the status of the disembodied "cris" that seem to echo throughout Djebar's text?

An answer to this question arrives in a section of the novel which reconstructs the scene of Pélissier's 1845 asphyxiation of the Beni Menacer tribe. Immediately preceding the chapter is a brief passage entitled "Biffure" that falls on an unnumbered page in the text, as if it does not quite belong. A narrator descends into a cave as if searching for petroglyphs, or listening for the sounds of tormented ghosts: "To read this writing, I must contort my body, plunge my face into shadow, scan the rock or chalk vault above me, allow the immemorial whispers to resurface, blood-stained geology. What magma of sounds is rotting there, what stench of petrification emanates from it? I grope about, my sense of smell unsettled, my ears open like mollusks, in the flood of ancient pain. Alone, bare-faced, without a veil, I confront images of the dark . . . Out of the wells of past centuries, how to face the sounds of the past?"[88] Her body contorted and her bared face plunged into darkness, the writer descends into an ancient and echoing cave that is also a tomb stinking of putrid corpses.

This fragment alerts the reader to what will be exposed in the following section, "Femmes, enfants, bœufs couchés dans les grottes" ("Women, children, oxen asleep in the caves"), which describes in detail an extermination that took place in 1845, when an entire tribe—claimed by the narrator as her ancestral clan—was asphyxiated inside a mountain cave in which they had taken refuge from Pélissier's troops. The historian-narrator draws these details from Pélissier's own written descriptions, preserved in the French colonial archive; she envisions the charred corpses of women, children, and cows dragged from the smoldering cave to be exposed to the bright sunlight where Pélissier surveyed them.

She expresses profoundly conflicted gratitude to the French *bourreau-greffier* (butcher-scribe) whose writing is the only archival trace she can read to construct any memory of this massacre. She does not attempt to imagine the corpses back

to life, but the sounds of their silenced screams weave through her French text, easily missed, but imminently detectible if sounded out by a reader. The literary text does not provide access to these lost kin. It does not offer healing or reparation. It is a prayer to be haunted that extends an invitation to the reader: to submit to becoming a vessel for anguished, indecipherable voices that arrive, insistent and disturbing, from another place and another time—like ghosts.

L'amour, la fantasia concludes with a different scene of violence described in detail by the French explorer-painter Eugène Fromentin in his Saharan notebooks. The narrator recounts to her kinswoman, Lla Zohra, a story about the murder of two young women, *naylettes*, violated in a desert tent by French soldiers. *Naylettes* is a French deformation of the tribal name Oualed Naïl; in Arabic "nā'ilāt" could designate women from this tribe, while the French suffix "-ette" inflects the word with casual misogyny. Djebar's narrator tells the horrible tale: a sympathetic French lieutenant arrived late at the murder scene to find the French soldiers leaving, their bayonets bloody and hands filled with stolen jewelry. Fatma was already dead and Mériem mutilated and dying, the button of her executioner-rapist's military uniform clasped in her stiffening fingers. The reader is offered no imagined reconstruction of either Mériem's or Fatma's voices. The details mark a point of fade-out in the historical record, like a vanishing trail of footprints—a trace that effaces even as it discloses. The novel's concluding chapter, "Air de Nay," extends this reflection on the mutilated "naylettes." Here, Fromentin offers a gruesome detail in the description of a woman's severed hand, as Djebar writes: "He offers me an unexpected hand, that of an unknown woman that he could never draw."[89] In turn, Djebar transcribes the sinister detail of an anonymous Algerian woman's severed hand, which Fromentin noticed, picked up, and then tossed back onto the dusty road he was traveling through the Algerian Sahel.

Djebar inscribes that mutilated appendage into her text with a desire not just to grasp it, but to bring it back to life: "Plus tard, je me saisis de cette main vivante, main de la mutilation et du souvenir et je tente de lui faire porter le 'qalam'" ("Later, I seize this living hand, hand of mutilation and of memory, and I try to make it take up the 'qalam'").[90] Here, the "hand of mutilation and memory" is *alive*, as if after the passage of time the severed hand might be restored to life in the act of writing. Djebar's "seizing" the severed hand conveys an ambivalent desire to suture and restore what has been mutilated and dismembered, as if to perform a resurrection or an act of necromancy.

Yet the word *qalam* stands resistant, a transliterated Arabic word set apart by guillemets. In evoking the name of the Arabic writing instrument, the text gestures to another vast archive of written histories of the Sahel and Sahara.

The agency registered by the clause "je tente de lui faire porter le 'qalam'" is not that of the narrator. Her desire is not to deliver the "qalam" to an immobilized hand, nor is it to write with the "qalam" on the severed hand's behalf. The narrator's vision is to touch a living hand, and her desire is to make *it* pick up the "qalam" to write on its own, and in a language other than French. This desire for a miraculous grafting offers a paradoxical, morbid vision of transmitting a story that cannot be retrieved.

The narrator's desire to make an anonymous, severed hand pick up a writing instrument remains unfulfilled by Djebar's novel, which concludes on the following page. Yet her closing image also offers a vision of future testimony, gesturing to a time in which a violently dismembered hand is grafted onto a living body with a beating heart in order to write what has not yet been written. As a metonym for discursive participation, this reanimated hand gestures to a future in which what was called "subaltern," violently scored out of history and inaccessible to memory, might become capable not only of writing and speaking on its own behalf but also of being heard as authoritative.

Itinerary

Chapter 1, "Remnants of Muslims," reframes the problem of subaltern testimony by juxtaposing Zahia Rahmani's *Moze* (2003) and *"Musulman" roman* (2005) with Giorgio Agamben's theoretical reflection on the enigmatic figure of the "Muselmann" as it appeared in the Nazi camps in 1945. Rahmani's literary works redress Agamben's consequential blind spot by bringing to light—and by putting on fictional trial—a repressed history of French colonial violence that produced an army of ghosts called "musulmans" in Algérie française, where the term long functioned as a founding juridical category of empire. Rahmani contemplates the bizarre and entangled histories of Muslim and Jewish citizenship under French law in colonized Algeria and considers the postcolonial afterlife and grim future of such laws. Furthermore, her vernacular Kabyle-Arabic literary history of modern Algeria and Abrahamic scriptural tradition features the shadowy figure of the fugitive slave Hagar alongside that of a ghostly "drowned Muslim" to highlight precisely what Agamben's theoretical reflection on testimony misses, namely, that the laws of nation-states do not have power to confirm or to deny human status, and that what is *most* human is that which lies beyond the reach of law.

Chapter 2, "Untranslatable Justice," explores the censored and clandestine testimonies circulated by Algerian and French anticolonial activists during the late years of Algeria's decolonizing war in order to sound out the unexpected call

of the literary that inheres in the narrative genre of the legal plaint. Quasi-legal texts like *La gangrène* (1959), *Nuremberg pour l'Algérie* (1961), and *Djamila Boupacha* (1962) are constituted by an irreducible tension in their framing as legal testimony. This generic impasse generates a series of haunting literary effects that bring to view a dispute over what kinds of voices and speaking can be heard as legitimate justice claims, and that also open space outside existing legal and linguistic frameworks for other kinds of plaints to be heard. Given the terms of legal amnesty established by the Évian Accords that ended Algeria's independence war—and despite the formal recognition of state-sanctioned torture that was issued in late 2018 by the current French president, Emmanuel Macron—the justice demands sounded by these recessed testimonies have not yet been answered.

Chapter 3, "Mourning Revolt," moves squarely into the time and space of postindependence Algeria to explore a model of spectral justice that is oriented by a literary perspective noticeably disinterested in the European metropole. Here, I consider how Yamina Mechakra's two novels *La grotte éclatée* (1979) and *Arris* (1999) explode the state-sanctioned limits of historical testimony by transfiguring the politically charged Arabic term *shahīd* (martyr/witness). Mechakra's linked novels, published at either end of the period that began with Boumédiène's long presidency (1965–76) and ended with Bouteflika's much longer one (1999–2019), sanctify as grievable—and claim as kin—those who are most abject, banished, and dispossessed in Algeria's history. Moreover, Mechakra's French is marked by the haunting presence of the Chaouia language in ways that compel a reader to dwell on losses and disappearances that state policies attempted to erase, especially during and after the violence that took place in Algeria in the 1980s and 1990s.

Chapter 4, "Open Elegy," points out that the 1990s war on civilians remains unresolved despite amnesty laws instituted by Bouteflika's presidential decrees in 1999 and 2005. In light of these laws, I explore the elegiac form of Waciny Laredj's controversial Arabic-language novel *Sayyidat al-maqām* (1993), translated into French by Marcel Bois as *Les ailes de la reine* (2009). Analyzing the novel in connection with its central intertexts, especially *Alf layla wa-layla* (*The Thousand and One Nights*) and Fadhma Aïth Mansour Amrouche's French-Kabyle *Histoire de ma vie* (1968), counters a myth of intractable language and cultural conflict in postcolonial Algeria to show that Arabic, Tamazight, and French literary spaces are connected in translational practice. Laredj elaborates a poetics of testimony that make of the literary text a sanctuary for the ghosted material targeted by amnesty law for destruction. This translingual haunting creates modes of address not reducible to those plaints destined for public legal tribunals. It also

anticipates the heterogeneous and alternative forms of testimony that have resounded throughout Algerian cities and streets in a grassroots vernacular "symbolic revolution" that has confronted and disrupted the ruling political order there since February 2019.

The conclusion, "Prisons without Walls," brings together works by two writers who were shaken and transformed when they witnessed the military repression of popular protests that took place in Algiers during October 1988—the novelist Assia Djebar and the poet Samira Negrouche. Whereas Djebar's poem "Raïs, Bentalha" (1998) tracks a writer's submission to the ghosts of the 1990s massacres and disappearances, Negrouche charts collective movement beyond mourning and paralysis by calling for testimony that has not yet been written. Here, my book's different lines of argument about the spectral force of "musulman" testimony come together to show how literature continues to hold open unauthorized spaces capable of registering the justice demands of those who are most invisible and silenced both in and beyond postcolonial Algeria.

Notes

INTRODUCTION: THE FUTURE OF MEMORY

Epigraphs: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Assia Djebar (1936–2015)," *Frontier*, November 11, 2015, based on an address she delivered at an event commemorating Djebar's death in March 2015; Hélène Cixous, "Lettre à Zohra Drif," address delivered at the conference *Hélène Cixous, croisées d'une œuvre*, Cerisy-la-Salle, June 1998, published in *Leggendaria* 14 (April 1999): 4–9; Nabile Farès, *Mémoire de l'absent* (Paris: Seuil, 1974), 178. A note on the translations here and throughout the book: all translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own; most of them were done in collaboration with Doyle Calhoun, to whom I am grateful for his sharp eye and literary sensitivity. When only the English translation appears in the body of my text, the original citations will be included in the notes for reference.

1. In Farès's novel the setting is initially Algiers after the revolution but the aesthetic cartography charted by this extraordinary text is far more expansive. A considerable body of scholarship has brought the global afterlife of Algeria's revolution into view. See Jeffrey James Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, Decolonization, and the Third World Order*, Oxford Studies in International History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); and the edited collection from Muriam Haleh Davis and James McDougall, eds., "The Afterlives of the Algerian Revolution," *JADMAG* 2, no. 1 (June 2014). My use of *afterlife* is not metaphorical, but registers the largely forgotten fact that the seventeen nuclear bombs detonated in Algeria by the French between 1960 and 1966 were authorized by secret clauses written into the Évian Accords that negotiated Algerian independence on the condition that certain military bases in Algerian territory remained "French" long enough to conduct these nuclear weapons tests. The afterlife of these detonations is part of the legal history of French Algeria, and it has not yet been acknowledged, let alone assessed. Exceptional articles on the topic include Roxanne Panchasi, "'No Hiroshima in Africa': The Algerian War and the Question of French Nuclear Tests in the Sahara," *History of the Present* 9, no. 1 (spring 2019): 84–112; Rob Skinner, "Bombs and Border Crossings: Peace Activist Networks and the Post-colonial State in Africa, 1959–1962," *Journal of Contemporary History* 50, no. 3 (2013): 418–38; and current research by Samia Henni. The toxic sites of former French nuclear test sites were also used as secret prisons to detain many of the Algerians forcibly disappeared by the government during the 1990s; on this, see the documentary film *At(h)ome*, by Elisabeth Leuvrey, based on photographs taken by Bruno Hadjih (Les écrans du large, 2013).

2. This question echoes Avery Gordon's, in the introduction to her *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 18. I share Gordon's understanding of haunting as not superstition or psychosis but a "constituent element of modern social life" (7), and am persuaded by her claim that "to study social life one must confront the ghostly aspects of it. This confrontation requires (or produces) a *fundamental change in the way we know and make knowledge*, in our mode of production" (7, emphasis added).

3. While my approach to this corpus has been shaped by Lia Brozgal's description of the *anarchive*, I also envision that these works constitute *artistic contact nebulae* in the sense defined by Karen Laura Thornber. In *Empire of Texts in Motion: Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese Transculturations of Japanese Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), Thornber extends Mary Louise Pratt's notion of a contact zone in her own definition of artistic contact nebulae as "the physical and creative spaces where dancers, dramatists, musicians, painters, sculptors, writers, and other artists from cultures and nations in unequal power relations grapple with and transculturate one another's creative output" (1). She adds: "Among the most vibrant subsets of artistic contact nebulae are *literary contact nebulae*, active sites both physical and creative of readerly contact, writerly contact, and textual contact, intertwined modes of transculturation" (2).

4. This phrase is inspired by Hoda El Shakry's use of it in *The Literary Qur'an: Narrative Ethics in the Maghreb* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2020): "This book is part of a broader critical effort to *theorize from below*—namely, to decentralize Euro-American historical frameworks, periodizations, and critical methodologies mobilized in the study of non-Western cultural practices and forms" (4). Scholars such as Cajetan Iheka, Brahim El Guabli, and Imane Terhmina are continuing to transform critical frameworks along such lines.

5. Hélène Blais discusses the struggle of the French state to name this colonized territory in the opening chapter of her *Mirages de la carte: L'invention de l'Algérie coloniale* (Paris: Fayard, 2014). See especially the section "Nommer et délimiter" (50–76). The name *Algérie française* came only after departmentalization in 1848. I use the specific French term in this sense, understanding the term to be marked by this conquest history and by the violence entailed in the act of naming occupied land.

6. For scholars who have addressed the magnitude of this violence, see Abdelmajid Hannoum, *Violent Modernity: France in Algeria* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Kamel Kateb, *Européens, "indigènes," et juifs en Algérie, 1830–1962: Représentations et réalités des populations* (Paris: Institut national d'études démographiques, 2001); Kamel Kateb, "Le bilan démographique de la conquête de l'Algérie (1830–1880)," in *Histoire de l'Algérie à la période coloniale (1830–1962)*, ed. Abderrahmane Bouchène, Jean-Pierre Peyroulou, Ouanassa Siari Tengour, and Sylvie Thénaut, 82–88 (Paris: La Découverte, 2014).

7. See Karima Lazali, *Le trauma colonial: Une enquête sur les effets psychiques et politiques contemporains de l'oppression coloniale en Algérie* (Paris: La Découverte, 2018), 51n7, which cites Kateb's "Le bilan démographique de la conquête de l'Algérie."

8. Lia Brozgal defined this neologism in her essay "In the Absence of the Archive (Paris, October 17, 1961)," *South Central Review* 31, no. 1 (2014): 34–54, in which she excavates "the alternative forms of epistemological activity at work during, and in spite

of, the fifty-year period of archival silence imposed by the French government" after the long-disavowed police massacre of Algerian demonstrators that took place in the heart of Paris in 1961, the height of the counterrevolutionary war against the Algerian liberation struggle (35). Her book *Absent the Archive: Cultural Traces of a Massacre in Paris, 17 October 1961* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020) expands on the concept. For other recent discussions of the concept and practice of anarchiving, see Brian Massumi, "Working Principles," Andrew Murphie, "Not Quite an Archive" and "'Where Are the Other Places?': Archives and Anarchives," all in *The Go-To How-To Book of Anarchiving* (Montreal: The SenseLab, 2016), 6–7, 5, and 41–43.

9. Brozgal, "In the Absence of the Archive," 50. In *Absent the Archive*, Brozgal gives an account of how memory of the October 1961 police massacre of Algerians has been smuggled into the world by the "rogue collection of cultural texts" that she names an *anarchive* (24). I amplify and extend Brozgal's important insight that "literature and culture may 'do history' differently by complicating it . . . sometimes, by showing us things that cannot otherwise be seen" (5).

10. See Benjamin Brower, *A Desert Called Peace: The Violence of France's Empire in the Algerian Sahara, 1844–1902* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); as well as Blais, *Mirages de la carte*.

11. See Sarah Abrevaya Stein, "Dividing South from North: French Colonialism, Jews, and the Algerian Sahara," *Journal of North African Studies* 7, no. 5 (2012): 773–92.

12. See Joshua Schreier's *Arabs of the Jewish Faith: The Civilizing Mission in Colonial Algeria* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010) and Benjamin Stora's *Juifs, musulmans: Chronique d'une rupture* (Paris: L'esprit du temps, 2017), as well as Stora's volume coedited with Abdelwahab Meddeb, entitled *Histoire des relations entre juifs et musulmans* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2013).

13. Algerian converts to Catholicism, for instance, were still juridically "musulman." While an "indigène musulman" could in theory become a citizen, in practice this was made so bureaucratically difficult that the number of people who managed to do so is almost negligible. On this, see Patrick Weil, "Le statut des musulmans en Algérie coloniale: Une nationalité française dénaturée," *Histoire de la justice* 16 (2005): 93–109; and Patrick Weil, *How to Be French: Nationality in the Making since 1789* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008). For these specific historical reasons, I do not use the French word *musulman* as a synonym for the Arabic word *muslim* even though one usually operates as the other's translation. Throughout this book, I try to use both terms in quotation marks to signal that neither word is a politically neutral description under European imperialism, except when I am referring to self-identified practicing Muslims.

14. With the Crémieux Decree reinstated after 1943, Jews were reassimilated to the French nation and, as Todd Shepard puts it, "the urgency with which the French government and other French people insisted that Algerian Jews were wholly French helped fix a new boundary for the [French] nation, which now excluded Algerian 'muslims.'" Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 170.

15. Derrida discusses this "extraordinary history" in a long, speculative footnote in his *Monolingualism of the Other, or, The Prosthesis of Origin*, trans. Patrick Mensah (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 78n9.

16. Cixous, "Lettre à Zohra Drif," 6, emphasis added.

17. For an analysis of the riven nature of colonial modernity, consider the foundational place of Algeria in Achille Mbembe's discussion of modernity's "nocturnal face" in *Politiques de l'inimitié* (Paris: La Découverte, 2016); and the central place of Algeria in Abdelmajid Hannoum's theorizing of modernity in his *Violent Modernity*. For histories of French citizenship that do not neglect the Algerian occupation, see: Laure Blévis, "Droit colonial algérien de la citoyenneté: Conciliation entre des principes républicains et une logique d'occupation coloniale 1865–1947," in *La guerre d'Algérie au miroir des décolonisations françaises: Actes du colloque en l'honneur de Charles-Robert Ageron, Sorbonne, Novembre 2000*, ed. Daniel Lefeuvre (Paris: Société française d'histoire d'outremer, 2000), 87–103; Kateb, *Européens, "indigènes," et juifs en Algérie*; Emmanuelle Saada, "Une nationalité par degré: Civilité et citoyenneté en situation coloniale," in *L'esclavage, la colonisation, et après . . . France, États-Unis, Grande-Bretagne*, ed. Patrick Weil and Stéphane Dufoix (Paris: PUF, 2005), 193–227; Weil, *How to Be French*; Weil, "Le statut des musulmans en Algérie coloniale."

18. James McDougall describes this code as an act of "lawfare": "Overtly a wartime law," he explains, "a set of emergency regulations for the suppression of revolt but maintained thereafter in what was notionally a time of peace, the *indigénat* both symbolised and, in the exactions it entailed, made manifest that aspect of the colonial state which constituted an apparatus of permanent, routinised low-intensity warfare." James McDougall, "Savage Wars? Codes of Violence in Algeria, 1830s–1990s," *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2005): 122.

19. Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison, *De l'indigénat: Anatomie d'un "monstre" juridique: Du droit colonial en Algérie et dans l'empire français* (Paris: Zones/La Découverte, 2010).

20. "Avec l'indigénat, la violence coloniale se trouvait inscrite dans le droit. Légitimée, elle était banalisée." Sylvie Thénault, *Violence ordinaire dans l'Algérie coloniale: Camps, internements, assignations à résidence* (Constantine: Saïd Hannachi, Éditions Média-Plus, 2012), 10. For histories of the Code de l'indigénat, see also Sidi Mohammad Barkat, *Le corps d'exception: Les artifices du pouvoir colonial et la destruction de la vie* (Paris: Amsterdam, 2005); Grandmaison, *De l'indigénat*; Sylvie Thénault, *Une drôle de justice: Les magistrats dans la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: La Découverte, 2001).

21. "Le régime colonial tire sa légitimité de la force et à aucun moment n'essaie de ruser avec cette nature des choses." Frantz Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* (Paris: La Découverte, [1961] 2014), 81. I use the French title instead of *The Wretched of the Earth*, as the term *damnés* conveys a sense of legal condemnation that *wretched* does not; throughout this book all translations of Fanon's texts are my own, because published English translations interpret his scalpel-sharp literary turns of phrase much differently than do I.

22. Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 144. The consequences of this transfer of power are the focus of the chapters "Mésaventures de la conscience nationale" and "Sur la culture nationale" of *Les damnés de la terre*.

23. "Ce raisonnement qui prévoit très arithmétiquement la disparition du peuple colonisé, ne bouleverse pas le colonisé d'indignation morale." Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 82.

24. "Et quand, préconisant des moyens précis, le colon demande à chaque représentant de la minorité qui opprime de descendre 30 ou 100 indigènes, il s'aperçoit que

personne n'est indigné et qu'à l'extrême tout le problème est de savoir si on peut faire ça d'un seul coup ou par étapes." Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 81–82.

25. "N'étonne pas non plus les colonisés." Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 81.

26. "Arabes inaperçus. Arabes ignorés. Arabes passés sous silence. Arabes subtilisés, dissimulés. Arabes quotidiennement niés, transformés en décor saharien. Et toi mêlé à ceux: Qui n'ont jamais serré la main à un Arabe. Jamais bu le café." Frantz Fanon, "Lettre à un Français," in *Pour la révolution africaine: Écrits politiques* (Paris: La Découverte, 2001), 55–58.

27. The French avoided using the term *Algérien*, which Fanon most often deploys, as do I; he tends to use *arabe* or *musulman* only when channeling the colonial voice. In the passage of "Lettre à Zohra Drif" cited above, Cixous identifies the ghosting function of the French term *Arabe*: "On disait 'les Arabes' (et pas Algériens: Algérien est un mot révolutionnaire) et c'était un mot magique: on ne voyait plus ni la foule, ni les regards fiévreux des hommes offensés, ni les femmes farouches, ni une misère que je n'ai plus jamais revue avant de la retrouver en Inde, ni la colère des humiliés, ni la haine des opprimés, ni les ulcères, ni les loques." Cixous, "Lettre à Zohra Drif," 3.

28. Frantz Fanon, "Le 'syndrome nord-africain,'" *Esprit* 187, no. 2 (February 1952): 237–48.

29. "Quelles sont-elles, en vérité, ces créatures, qui se dissimulent, qui sont dissimulées par la vérité sociale sous les attributs de *bicot*, *bounioule*, *arabe*, *raton*, *sidi*, *mon z'ami*?" Fanon, "Le 'syndrome nord-africain,'" 237.

30. "Comment, comment, cet homme que tu chosifies en l'appelant systématiquement Mohammed, que tu reconstruis, ou plutôt que tu dissous, à partir d'une idée, une idée que tu sais dégueulasse (tu sais bien, tu lui enlèves quelque chose, ce quelque chose pour lequel il n'y a pas bien longtemps tu étais prêt à tout quitter, même la vie), eh bien! *cet homme-ci*, tu n'as pas l'impression de le vider de sa substance?" Fanon, "Le 'syndrome nord-africain,'" 246; emphasis in original.

31. "Droits, Devoirs, Citoyenneté, Égalité, que de belles choses!" Fanon, "Le 'syndrome nord-africain,'" 245.

32. "Le Nord-Africain au seuil de la Nation française—qui est, nous dit-on, la sienne—vit dans le domaine politique sur le plan civique un imbroglio que personne ne veut voir en face." Fanon, "Le 'syndrome nord-africain,'" 245.

33. "Il n'y a absolument pas de place pour eux." Fanon, "Le 'syndrome nord-africain,'" 246.

34. "[Les colonisés] constatent en effet sur le terrain que tous les discours sur l'égalité de la personne humaine entassés les uns sur les autres ne masquent pas cette banalité qui veut que les sept Français tués ou blessés au col de Sakamody soulèvent l'indignation des consciences civilisées tandis que 'comptent pour du beurre' la mise à sac des douar Guergour, de la dechra Djerah, le massacre des populations qui avaient précisément motivé l'embuscade." Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 86.

35. "Bientôt sept ans de crimes en Algérie, et pas un Français qui ait été traduit devant une cour de justice pour le meurtre d'un Algérien." Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 89.

36. "Aux yeux du colonisé, ces commissions n'existent pas." Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 89.

37. "La guerre d'Algérie, la plus hallucinante qu'un peuple ait menée pour briser l'oppression coloniale." Fanon, *L'an cinq de la révolution algérienne* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, [1959] 2011), 5.

38. Shepard, *Invention of Decolonization*.

39. On the politics of archival disputes in Algerian and French history, see both Brozgal, "In the Absence of the Archive"; and Todd Shepard, "'Of Sovereignty': Disputed Archives, 'Wholly Modern' Archives, and the Post-Decolonization French and Algerian Republics, 1962–2012," *American History Review* 120, no. 3 (June 2015): 869–83. For studies of colonial archives as techniques of state power and control, see Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Archive and the Arts of Governance: On the Content in the Form"; and Achille Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and Its Limits," both in Carolyn Hamilton et al., eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 83–102 and 19–27, respectively. On the workings of power in the creation of historical facts and archives, see Michel-Rolph Trouillot's inimitable *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

40. The phrase, often cited, comes from Amílcar Cabral: "Christians go to the Vatican, Muslims go to Mecca, revolutionaries go to Algiers." For a depiction of Algiers as center of revolutionary movements, see Mohamed Ben Salama's documentary film *Alger: La Mecque des révolutionnaires (1962–1974)* (Arte France, 2014). See other recent works such as Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution*; as well as Elaine Mokhtefi's memoir *Algiers: Third World Capital* (New York: Verso Books, 2018). Malek Bensmaïl's documentary about the making of the iconic film *The Battle of Algiers*—entitled *La bataille d'Alger: Un film dans l'histoire* (Hikayet films, 2018)—includes revealing interviews with members of the Black Panthers and with US military officials on this topic.

41. On the uncertain impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the movement in Algeria in 2020, as this book goes to press, see Vish Sakthivel's article "Algeria's Hirak: A Political Opportunity in COVID-19?," Middle East Institute website, April 1, 2020, https://www.mei.edu/publications/algerias-hirak-political-opportunity-covid-19. For collective reflection on the movement up through late spring 2020, see "Hirak, Algérie en révolution(s)," ed. Amin Allal, Youcef Chekkar, Lalia Chenoufi, François Gèze, Nacira Guénif, and Farida Souiah, *Mouvements*, no. 102, summer 2020.

42. On this, see Maytha Alhassan, "Please Reconsider the Term 'Arab Spring,'" *Huffington Post*, February 10, 2012, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/please-reconsider-arab-sp_b_1268971.

43. For an exceptionally clear and cogent statement of this point, see Brahim Rouabah's essay "Reclaiming the Narrative of Algeria's Revolt," *Africa Is a Country*, April 26, 2019, https://africasacountry.com/author/brahim-roubah.

44. "Ce système s'est institué sur un fondement légal: les pouvoirs spéciaux. Cette loi, votée par le Parlement en 1956, a donné carte blanche au Gouvernement pour rétablir l'ordre en Algérie." The full declaration is available at "Déclaration du président de la République sur la mort de Maurice Audin," Élysée website, September 13, 2018, https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2018/09/13/declaration-du-president-de-la-republique-sur-la-mort-de-maurice-audin.

45. "La République ne saurait, par conséquent, minimiser ni excuser les crimes et atrocités de part et d'autre durant ce conflit. La France en porte encore des cicatrices, parfois mal refermées."

46. For instance, consider Francois Fillon's response as it was reported in this February 2017 Reuters article by Jean-François Rosnoblet and Mathieu Rosemain, "France's Macron Seeks to End Controversy over Algeria Comments," Reuters, February 18, 2017, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-election-idUSKBN15X0QP. See also historian Sylvie Thénault on why colonial violence remains technically unclassifiable as crime: Marc-Olivier Bherer, "Macron en Algérie: 'La définition juridique du crime contre l'humanité ne peut s'appliquer à la colonisation,'" *Le Monde*, February 16, 2017, https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2017/02/16/peut-on-dire-comme-emmanuel-macron-que-la-colonisation-est-un-crime-contre-l-humanite_5080715_823448.html.

47. For a discussion of the rhetorical functions of the independence war in Algeria's successive constitutions, see Malika Rahal, "Fused Together and Torn Apart: Stories and Violence in Contemporary Algeria," *History and Memory* 24, no. 1 (spring/summer 2012): 120–21; the cited passage from the 1976 constitution is on page 120. For the full text of the 1976 constitution, see *Journal Officiel de la République Algérienne* 15, no. 94 (1976): 1042.

48. Stora's *La gangrène et l'oubli: La mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: La Découverte, 1991) and Kristin Ross's *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996) both argue, differently, that disavowal and forgetting of the "Algerian war" profoundly constitutes contemporary French politics and culture.

49. Debarati Sanyal, Michael Rothberg, and Max Silverman, eds., "Nœuds de Mémoire: Multidirectional Memory in Postwar French and Francophone Culture," special issue, *Yale French Studies* 118–19 (2010): 2.

50. See, for instance, Robert J. C. Young's *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (New York: Routledge, 1990) and Kristin Ross's *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). More recent works extend the insights of Young and Ross in compelling directions, such as Paige Arthur, *Unfinished Projects: Decolonization and the Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre* (London: Verso Books, 2010); Lia Brozgal, *Against Autobiography: Albert Memmi and the Production of Theory* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013) and *Absent the Archive: Cultural Traces of a Massacre in Paris, 17 October 1961* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020); Hannah Feldman, *From a Nation Torn: Decolonizing Art and Representation in France* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014); Ranjana Khanna, *Algeria Cuts: Women and Representation, 1830 to the Present* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008); Mireille Rosello, *The Reparative in Narratives: Works of Mourning in Progress* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010); Debarati Sanyal, *Memory and Complicity: Migrations of Holocaust Remembrance* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015). On the specific historical relation of poststructuralist to postcolonial theory, see Simon Gikandi's essay "Poststructuralism and Postcolonial Discourse," in *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*, ed. Neil Lazarus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 97–119.

51. Gary Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation State: Negritude and Colonial Humanism between the Two World Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). The latter point in this sentence draws on Ariella Azoulay's definition of *constituent violence*. Considering the settler colonial context of Palestine's transformation into Israel, she writes: "Constituent violence is understood here not only—as suggested by Benjamin and a whole tradition of political theory—as the force used to create and impose a new political regime but also as an entire scopic regime that supports it." Ariella Azoulay, "Potential History: Thinking through Violence," *Critical Inquiry* 39, no. 3 (spring 2013): 571.

52. Françoise Vergès, *Le ventre des femmes: Capitalisme, racialisation, féminisme* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2017). Vergès picks up the term *coloniality of power* from Anibal Quijano; see page 21 for the full citation, and for other definitions that clarify the stakes of her intervention and inform my own.

53. "La postcolonialité désigne une période qui s'ouvre dès lors que la France se présente comme émancipée de son empire colonial. Il n'indique pas une temporalité, mais une politique." Vergès, *Le ventre des femmes*, 20.

54. Michael Rothberg's generative study *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009) has had a wide impact in the past decade. Rothberg argues persuasively that memories of the Shoah generally help to illuminate and bring into "counterpublic" visibility the memories (or simply awareness) of decolonization, in particular of Algeria's anticolonial war. However, if we first ask *from whose perspective* this anticolonial war was ever hidden or not visible, then the limited directionality of Rothberg's counterpublic framework becomes immediately more clear. See in particular his book's part 3, "Truth, Torture, and Testimony: Holocaust Memory during the Algerian War," and part 4, "October 17, 1961: A Site of Holocaust Memory?"

55. See Feldman, *From a Nation Torn*, 3.

56. Shepard, *Invention of Decolonization*, 10.

57. "La lutte pour la déconstruction de la colonialité du pouvoir." Vergès, *Le ventre des femmes*, 22.

58. On this point about the temporality of decolonization, see Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society* 1, no. 1 (2010): 1–40. Jasbir Puar's essay "The Right to Maim" makes a related argument concerning the Palestinian struggle to survive coloniality: "If temporality itself is already suffused with the biopolitical," she writes, "to claim unfettered access to futurity is already predicated upon the genocide or slow death of others." Jasbir Puar, "The 'Right' to Maim: Disablement and Inhumanist Biopolitics in Palestine," *Borderlands* 14, no. 1 (2014): 14.

59. My argument here combines reflection on the anarchive with insight drawn from Gil Hochberg's *In Spite of Partition: Jews, Arabs, and the Limits of Separatist Imagination* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008). Analyzing the Palestinian/Israeli context, Hochberg underscores "the manner by which [literary representation] not only *reflects* historical and sociopolitical realities, but further *competes* with them, introducing alternative actualities" (3). She demonstrates the ways in which Arabic and Hebrew literary texts "revisit forgotten narratives and figures and missed opportunities *as a means for envisioning the future in counterhegemonic terms*" (140, emphasis added).

60. Muriam Haleh Davis and James McDougall, eds., "The Afterlives of the Algerian Revolution," *JADMAG* 2, no. 1 (June 2014); James McDougall, *A History of Algeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Marnia Lazreg, *Torture and the Twilight of Empire: From Algiers to Baghdad* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0715/2007014846.html; Neil MacMaster and Jim House, *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), http://site.ebrary.com/lib/yale/Doc?id=10271661; Malika Rahal, "Fused Together and Torn Apart: Stories and Violence in Contemporary Algeria," *History and Memory* 24, no. 1 (spring/summer 2012): 118–51; Thénault, *Une drôle de justice*; Thénault, *Violence ordinaire dans l'Algérie coloniale*; Natalya Vince and Walid Benkhaled, "Performing Algerianness: The National and Transnational Construction of Algeria's 'Culture Wars,'" in *Algeria: Nation, Culture, and Transnationalism*, ed. Patrick Crowley, 243–69 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017); Natalya Vince, *Our Fighting Sisters: Nation, Memory, and Gender in Algeria, 1954–2012* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2015).

61. Concerning the recent historical scholarship on Algeria's independence war that has burgeoned during and after the 1990s war, see Arthur Asseraf's informative review essay, "Between the World and Algeria: International Histories of the Algerian War of Independence," *Arab Studies Journal* (spring 2017): 198–201.

62. Lazali, *Le trauma colonial*; Tristan Leperlier, *Algérie, les écrivains dans la décennie noire* (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2018).

63. The apt term *translingual* was recently coined by Yasser Elhariry to name the intertextual and lyrical invasion of French by Arabic in postfrancophone poetics; see his *Pacifist Invasions: Arabic, Translation, and the Postfrancophone Lyric* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017), in particular the lucid introduction "Word over Word." On this point, see also Hoda El Shakry, *The Literary Qur'an*.

64. See Vince and Benkhaled, "Performing Algerianness."

65. "Il a toujours su que ses rencontres avec le colon se dérouleraient dans un champ clos. Aussi le colonisé ne perd-il pas son temps en lamentations et ne cherche-t-il presque jamais à ce qu'on lui rende justice dans le cadre colonial." Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 82.

66. "Une véritable apocalypse"; "un authentique génocide." Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 241.

67. In "Fureur raciste en France," an essay on French anti-Muslim racism collected in the posthumously published *Pour la révolution africaine* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964, 189–92), Fanon directly cites one of the most provocative lines from Césaire's *Discours sur le colonialism* (1955); see page 192.

68. "L'Algérien, affirmait-on, est un criminel-né." Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 285.

69. "Ces magistrats, ces policiers, ces médecins dissertent très sérieusement sur les rapports de l'âme musulmane et du sang." Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 286.

70. Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 289.

71. "Dans la bouche du doyen des juges d'une chambre à Alger cette aggressivité de l'Algérien se traduit par son amour de la 'fantasia.' 'Toute cette révolte, disait il en 1956, on a tort de la croire politique. De temps à autre, il faut que ça sorte cet amour du baroud qu'ils ont!'" Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 289n2.

72. "Le combattant algérien a une façon de se battre et de mourir, et nulle référence à l'Islam ou au paradis promis ne peut expliquer cette générosité de soi quand il s'agit de protéger le peuple ou de couvrir les frères." Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 285.

73. "… la conséquence d'une organisation du système nerveux ni d'une originalité caractérielle mais le produit direct de la situation coloniale." Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 297.

74. "Exposé à des tentatives de meurtre quotidiennes: de famine, d'expulsion de la chambre non payée, de sein maternel desséché, d'enfants squelettiques, le chantier fermé, les chômeurs qui rôdent autour du gérant comme des corbeaux, l'indigène en arrive à voir son semblable comme un ennemi implacable. … Oui, dans la période coloniale en Algérie et ailleurs on peut faire beaucoup de choses pour un kilo de semoule. On peut tuer plusieurs personnes. *Il faut de l'imagination pour comprendre ces choses. Ou de la mémoire.*" Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 295; my emphasis.

75. Primo Levi, *Si c'est un homme*, trans. Martine Schruoffeneger (Paris: Julliard, [1947] 1987); Elie Wiesel, *La nuit* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1958). For an account of the reception of these survivor testimonies in French, see Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*, trans. Jared Stark (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

76. "Dans les camps de concentration, des hommes se sont tués pour un morceau de pain." Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 296.

77. "Je me souviens d'une scène horrible. C'était à Oran en 1944." Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 296.

78. "Du camp où nous attendions l'embarquement, les militaires lançaient des morceaux de pain à de petits Algériens qui se les disputaient avec rage et haine. Les vétérinaires pourraient éclairer ces phénomènes en évoquant le fameux 'peck order' constaté dans les basses-cours. Le maïs qui est distribué est en effet l'objet d'une compétition implacable. Certaines volailles, les plus fortes, dévorent toutes les graines tandis que d'autres moins agressives maigrissent à vue d'œil. Toute colonie tend à devenir une immense basse-cour, un immense camp de concentration où la seule loi est celle du couteau." Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 296.

79. "Il y a peu de temps le nazisme a transformé la totalité de l'Europe en véritable colonie." Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 298.

80. "Saint-Arnaud ira quant à lui jusqu'à enfumer des tribus entières, près de huit cent personnes dans une grotte. Les descriptions des convulsions des enfants, des femmes, des personnes âgées et des hommes, provoquées par l'intoxication des fumées, sont insoutenables." Lazali, *Le trauma colonial*, 52n12.

81. "La littérature tente d'écrire les *blancs* et les impensés du fait historique. Surtout, elle oriente le lecteur vers la dynamique incessante entre le texte et ses marges invisibles." Lazali, *Le trauma colonial*, 13.

82. Ranajit Guha's strategy of reading the archive "against the grain" to detect evidence of subaltern agency by identifying its ghostly traces in the written record is a remarkable act of literary imagination, and a gesture that Djebar's novel investigates and extends. See Guha's essays, "On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India" and "The Prose of Counter-insurgency," both included in *Selected Subaltern Studies*, ed. Ranajit Guha, 37–44 and 45–88 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

83. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 285.

84. In her "Scattered Speculations on the Subaltern and the Popular," Gayatri Spivak clarifies that the term *subaltern* is not an identity position but a structural location, or rather a politically orchestrated *absence*, a site "removed from all lines of social mobility" that cannot be generalized according to hegemonic logic (which would turn it into popular). Spivak adds that "subalternization does not stop," a point that should prompt us to "think of building infrastructure for agency," and learn to "learn from below, *from* the subaltern, rather than only study her." Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Scattered Speculations on the Subaltern and the Popular," *Postcolonial Studies* 8, no. 4 (2005): 475, 477, 482.

85. For these section titles, refer to the table of contents page in Assia Djebar, *L'amour, la fantasia* (Paris: Éditions J. C. Lattès, 1985), 257–58.

86. In Maghrebi dialects, different terms are used for this event. The French word is picked up in Arabic as "fanṭāzya," but it is also called "tbūrīda" and "bāridiyya," from the root "b-r-d" which is linked to gun powder (bārūd), and "khayyāla," from root "kh-i-l" which designates horses.

87. The term may be a French transcription of a word used in Darija and Amazigh languages, "tzaghrit" or "thighratin," which names the trilling sounds made by women to express strong emotion, or "tazzalt," which means prayer. The first term corresponds to the standard Arabic words *zaghrada/zaghrūda* (plural *zaghārīd*) and *taghrīd* (plural *taghārīd*).

88. "Pour lire cet écrit, il me faut renverser mon corps, plonger ma face dans l'ombre, scruter la voûte de rocailles ou de craie, laisser les chuchotements immémoriaux remonter, géologie sanguinolente. Quel magma de sons pourrit là, quelle odeur de putréfaction s'en échappe? Je tâtonne, mon odorat troublé, mes oreilles ouvertes en huîtres, dans la crue de la douleur ancienne. Seule, dépouillée, sans voile, je fais face aux images du noir . . . Hors de puits des siècles d'hier, comment affronter les sons du passé?" Djebar, *L'amour, la fantasia*, 58.

89. "Il me tend une main inattendue, celle d'une inconnue qu'il n'a jamais pu dessiner." Djebar, *L'amour, la fantasia*, 255.

90. Djebar, *L'amour, la fantasia*, 255.

1. REMNANTS OF MUSLIMS

This chapter is significantly revised from previous publications: "Remnants of Muslims: Reading Agamben's Silence," *New Literary History* 45, no. 4 (autumn 2014): 707–28; and "Am I Not One of the Disappeared?," *Public Books*, April 8, 2019. https://www.publicbooks.org/am-i-not-one-of-the-disappeared/.

Epigraph: Ka-Tzetnik, *Kar'u lo piepel*, trans. Moshe Kohn, *Moni: A Novel of Auschwitz* (Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press, [1961] 1963), 116–17. Gil Anidjar discusses Ka-Tzetnik's novel in *The Jew, the Arab: A History of the Enemy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003); see chapter 5, "Muslims (Hegel, Freud, Auschwitz)," 113–49.