The Words of Others: Remembering and Writing Genocide as an Indirect Witness

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Remembering and Writing Genocide as an Indirect Witness

A dissertation presented

by

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to

The Department of Romance Languages and Literatures

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the subject of

Romance Languages and Literatures

Harvard University

Cambridge, Massachusetts

September 2016

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Abstract

This dissertation examines literary representations of the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide by writers-indirect witnesses: the French writers Henri Raczymow and Patrick Modiano write from their position of descendants of Jewish survivors of the Second World War; the Chadian writer Koulsy Lamko, the Djiboutian Abdourahman A. Waberi, and the Ivorian Véronique Tadjo are African writers who took part in the project "Rwanda: Écrire par devoir de mémoire" under Fest'Africa. The ambivalent position of indirect witnesses shapes the type of memory that is created by way of literature and the authors' representational strategies and stylistic choices. This dissertation investigates the development of *complex-ified memory*, an assembled web of different mnemonic processes (remembrance) and memorial positions (commemoration). The writers must accommodate the incentive to bear witness in their own indirect ways as well as through imagination. They develop a poetics of memory which represents genocide in all of its intricacies and complexities, ultimately showing how the memory of genocide needs to be read as well as interpreted, just like a work of literature. Moreover, memory is opened up: events characterized by violence are connected as a way to enlighten one another, to help create bridges. *Complex-ified memory* is both a complex form of many memorial threads *and* an active process. The writers-indirect witnesses "complex-ify" memory, writing and reading both its positive and negative outcomes. The plurality of the works examined in this dissertation calls for the deployment of numerous memoryscapes, showing how the memory of genocide is ultimately subject to fluidity and movement once it is opened up and *complex-ified*.

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Acknowledgments

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Susan R. Suleiman for her continuous support during my years of research and teaching at Harvard University. I would like to thank her for her patience and for her immense knowledge during the research and the writing of my dissertation. She has challenged me in many ways, both in terms of my writing and in the ways I express and present my ideas in English. Many editing sessions made me finally understand that less is indeed more.

Besides my advisor, I would also like to thank the rest of my thesis committee: Prof. Verena Conley and Dr. Amaleena Damlé, for their insightful comments and constant encouragements. My discussions about the African continent with Prof. Verena Conley led me to consider more political questions linked to literature. Dr. Amaleena Damlé's encouragements and positive yet always constructive comments spur me on, especially during the last few months of my writing.

I thank my colleague and close friend Dr. Mona El Khoury for her continuous support and the many conversations we had about our different topics over the years, discussions which have greatly influenced my views and perceptions of literary as well as political and social matters. I also thank her for our fun late-night trips to various convenience stores in Cambridge. One finds comfort in the little things.

I also thank the many friends that have been supportive during my writing. They have always encouraged me and, through their presence, truly made a difference. I particularly thank Amy Auguston, Amalia Kempf, Farah Mahlaoui, Chhavi Sharma, Anoosh Tertzakian, and Felipe Valencia. I am truly blessed to count them as my friends.

I want to thank my cat Diane (aka Boubou) for her constant presence (both in Cambridge, MA and in Paris) during my Graduate School years – she is as old as this project is.

Last but not least, I want to thank my wonderful family: my father Christian, my mother Dominique, and my brother Olivier. I wish to thank them for their support, during this project and also in my life in general. I love them very dearly. This dissertation is dedicated to them.

Introduction

Writing and Reading *Complex-ified* Memory

The act of witnessing usually entails the possibility of testifying, whether carried out or not. In *The Drowned and The Saved*, Primo Levi associates the noun "witness" with the verb "to bear," a common utilization of this phrasal expression, but which nonetheless implies and emphasizes an active stance. Following the comment made by one of his friends that "[he] survived so that [he] could bear witness," Levi continues by questioning this "testifying of [his]" as well as the causes and effects of witnessing and testifying. The action of seeing an event, which can result in an act of recounting, in Levi's case writing about genocide, nonetheless remains problematic, and Levi himself speculates on the outcomes of the "privilege" of telling (63). How does the nature of genocide pose a challenge to the processes of building chronological and coherent causal sequences, adjectival descriptions that could also be applied to narratives? What kinds of intricate relations exist between seeing, experiencing, and testifying through writing?

The writing of a traumatic event induces a paradox in terms of its necessity and its irrevocable impossibility. Sarah Kofman refers to the existence of a "*double bind"*[1] in *Paroles suffoquées*: a state of suffocation emerges from the inevitability of speaking and the difficulty, or even impossibility, of formulating the adequate words. Trying to find words (the signified) to represent the event asphyxiates the speaker: *parole* is muffled, blocked. The duty to speak becomes a "devoir suffoquer," both a duty and an inevitability, playing on the polysemy of the word "devoir" in the French language.[2] The witness becomes the subject, or rather, the object of "une

[1] In English in the original French text.
[2] In *Le Trésor de la Langue française*, "devoir" is defined as an "[i]mpératif de conscience, considéré dans sa généralité, qui impose à l'homme − sans l'y contraindre nécessairement – d'accomplir ce qui est prescrit en vertu d'une obligation de caractère religieux, moral ou légal" and as a "[c]hose (tâche) ou ensemble de choses (tâches) imposée(s)."

revendication infinie de parler, un *devoir parler à l'infini*, s'imposant avec une force irrépressible – et une impossibilité quasi physique de parler : une *suffocation* ; une parole nouée, exigée et interdite" (46). This aporia, as observable through the apposition of antonymic terms, emblematizes a recurrent discourse on the writing of that which is unpresentable in association with extreme acts of violence such as genocide. Therefore, what means should be used to permit testifying after an act of witnessing and in the form of a recountable narrative? The possibility of giving testimony of genocide entails the questioning of representation itself, juxtaposing and vacillating between aesthetic and ethical concerns in the act of writing, and this debate has influenced intellectual life since the Second World War and the Holocaust.

The oftmentioned aporia at the core of the witnessing-writing dichotomy recurs in numerous influential works, whether literary or philosophical, which deal with depictions of the Holocaust. In *Remnants of Auschwitz*, Giorgio Agamben highlights the same aporetic characteristics behind the figure of the witness and alludes to the necessity of first establishing the distinction between the *testis*, the bystander situated in an in-between space that calls for neutrality, and who is more of an observer; and the *superstes*, a witness-survivor involved in an event and who is consequently positioned in a more subjective stance.[3] Agamben refers to the *superstes* as "a person who has lived through something, who has experienced an event from beginning to end and can therefore bear witness to it" (17). Through having experienced an event and consequently retaining internal knowledge of it, the *superstes* is able to write and testify.[4] However, being a *superstes* does not simplify the act of testifying or render it straightforward, as previously

[3] Didier Fassin describes the distinction between *testis* and *superstes* as being founded on the difference in affects involved; that is, whether the testimony is objective or subjective: "the truth of the testis, expressed in the third person, is deemed objective. The truth of the superstes, expressed in the first person, is deemed subjective. The latter has merit by virtue of the affects it involves, the former by virtue of those it eliminates" (535).

[4] Similarly to Levi, Agamben uses the phrasal verb "to bear witness" to signify the possibility, if not the necessity, of recounting the experience the *superstes* has undergone and survived.

emphasized by Levi. Caught between several aporiae, the witness must articulate a narrative that is both "true" and "unforgettable," yet which is nonetheless "unimaginable" (12). This crisis of storytelling, brought about by the senselessness of such an event and its narrative, is accompanied by another problematic characteristic, which takes on the form of an intrinsic lacuna. Not only must the witness's narration accommodate two paradoxical strains, namely, the simultaneous existence of the possible and the impossible, the real and the unimaginable; it must also encompass different speakers, different "witnesses." Because the *superstes* must also tell the story for and of the other who perished, the one who is, according to both Levi and Agamben, the true witness of the Holocaust: "The survivors speak in their [the Muslims', the drowned's] stead, by proxy, as pseudo-witnesses; they bear witness to a missing testimony" (34); and yet, how can the dead speak or "have [any]thing to say" (34), Agamben wonders. Similarly to Kofman, the Italian philosopher stresses the paradoxes of testifying and the many double binds that the witness must consider and manage. Testimony therefore becomes the narrative of the impossibility of bearing witness, through a language that contains non-language (39), and that can somehow merge the testimony of the witness (the one who has survived and is writing) and the complete witness (the one who perished) into a single whole. As they encompass both what is "testifiable" and "untestifiable," testimonies are indicative of the void at their core.[5] They emblematize lack and the inability to fully testify as

[5] A lot of criticism ensued regarding Agamben's ambivalent and very Heideggerian approaches and statements. Claudine Kahan and Philippe Mesnard have written a whole book, entitled *Giorgio Agamben à l'épreuve d'Auschwitz: Témoignages/interprétations*, problematizing the Italian philosopher's *Remnants of Auschwitz*. They notably question Agamben's vision of the witness, who appears to be deprived of all authority in the act of testifying to the untestifiable, because of a certain rejection of History and the reduction of the multiplicity of experiences suffered in concentration camps (which Agamben does not differentiate from extermination camps, thus once again reducing the reality of multiple invisible threats, humiliations, and forms of disappearance). For Kahan and Mesnard, Agamben remains caught in an almost mystical and sublime approach, because he reduces testimony to an impossibility, repudiating all history or imagination in a restrictive position between dualities implied by an essentialist tension: "Exiger du témoignage une vérité intégrale serait le condamner à l'enlisement dans une controverse manichéenne où il s'opposerait soit à l'histoire, soit à la fiction; problème qu'Agamben résout en frappant le témoignage d'impossibilité" (Kahan and Mesnard 78). This exclusion of fiction/imagination, or rather its silencing, may be problematic, especially for the purposes of this dissertation. However, as I try to emphasize, Agamben does not completely ignore the possibility of writing through imagination, contrary to what Kahan and Mesnard seem to suggest. However, Kahan

well as to develop a complete narrative of a traumatic experience, albeit one that nonetheless needs to be recorded. Hence the juxtaposition of paradoxical terms, which further underlines the double bind of testifying.

Defining Afterness: The Future of Witnessing

The Second Generation and Writing

With the disappearance of the last survivors and of (f)actual memories of the Holocaust, new concerns are arising in relation to the testimonial representation of a violent event not directly experienced but that has marked spirits and even memories. More specifically, the complex case of the second generation can illustrate a first step in my analysis of memory after – after the event and after the direct testimony of survivors. Currently, critical attention has shifted to the descendants of survivors, children and other relatives who did not experience the genocide in person, but who are personally linked to it through familial ties, whether affective or memorial. How is the second generation introduced into the concerns and debates about the writing of genocide? What consequences do the aforementioned aporiae have on the testimonial writing of the members of the second generation, who did not witness the Shoah?

Numerous theories regarding the second generation have been developed to examine the psychological and representational dilemmas that are associated with being born after the Holocaust. These approaches are abundant – Hirsch's "postmemory," Fine's "absent memory," Raczymow's "mémoire trouée," Fresco's "diaspora des cendres," and Zeitlin's "vicarious memory" to cite only a few –, and they all take into consideration two essential elements of my

and Mesnard do raise important questions, including the negativity of (de)subjectivity as opposed to Lévinas's constructive vision of subjectivity and responsibility, the repudiation of affect in the act of testifying, and Agamben's unclear notions of non-language or dead language, or the excessive use of the example to support a text which is already precarious, to cite only a few.

dissertation; namely, the actions of remembering and writing from a position characterized by remoteness. Such theories deal with the transgenerational transmission of trauma, what Anne-Lise Stern refers to as "transmission parentérale"[6] (18), and its repercussions on memory, both on the individual and collective (familial) level. Several theories touch upon the question of creativity and leaving a trace, as well as communicating an experience from the second generation's position. How do members of the second generation transcribe into literary texts the legacies of the traumatic experiences transmitted to them by their parents? How can the descendant of a *superstes* represent and write about genocide despite the many double binds of testimony? Perhaps it is through the very impossibility of solving these problems, or through writing *with* them, that representation can be achieved.

Ellen Fine, in her essay "The Absent Memory: The Act of Writing in Post-Holocaust French Literature," states that the dilemma of post-Holocaust generations is similar to that of witnesses: "they, too, are faced with the impossibility of communication" (42). One of the most potent explanations for such an impossibility derives from the absence of concrete experience, the fact that a person's communication must be based on incompleteness or even ignorance. Absence, as a literal and structural conception, regulates the act of testifying/writing by the second generation: "They are confronted with a difficult task: to imagine an event they have not lived through, and to reconstitute and integrate it into their writing – to create a story out of History" (41). Caught between the question of whether one has the right to speak and a certain drive to nonetheless

[6] Stern uses medical terminology to symbolize the kind of transmission that takes place in the case of the second generation. She emphasizes the depth of the transference, which is not only cognitive but also corporeal: "Maintenant, imaginez un petit garçon de quatre-cinq ans, de la deuxième generation. Sa mère et une de ses amies prennent le thé ensemble, régulièrement. Sous la table, régulièrement, le petit garçon joue, entre les jolies jambes de sa maman et les bottes noires bien brillantes de l'amie. L'amie est une rescapée d'Auschwitz. Les deux femmes bavardent : histoire de femmes, histoires de famille, histoires de camp. Le petit, sous la table, tout ça lui rentre, direct. Et, plus tard, il l'aura… *dans la peau*" (my emphasis 18). Stern speaks of the skin of the body, concretely, and of the skin of language, which is, according to Jean-Luc Nancy, the skin of memory.

recount the event, the authors of the second generation are shaped by an aporia similar to that of the witness and must also face "creative guilt" (Lifton, cited in Fine 43). Writing becomes a struggle with a past which is both unknown and known, and which must be remembered *despite* its voids as well as *along with them*. Fine shows that it is this memorial void that pushes the second generation to write, to "the necessity for reconstructing the past through the imaginary" (45), and as a result, absence recurs in almost all literary texts written by the post-Holocaust generation. Literature becomes a reconstructive enterprise, also seeming to introduce the possibility of "remembering," the process of working through and around gaps in memory, "trous de mémoire" in the words of French author Henri Racyzmow.

In France, Nadine Fresco wrote one of the first articles focusing solely on the generation of individuals born after the Holocaust. Entitled "La Diaspora des cendres," the article invokes a form of dispersion, a scattering that emblematizes the generation's complex situation.[7] Fresco tries to show the kind of *emprise*[8] that Jewish children born after the war, and more specifically descendants of survivors, endure. She distinguishes between several different instances of *emprise* – silence, nostalgia, and proxy (*procuration*) – while nonetheless stating that they occur together, feeding off one another. In her essay, Fresco does not address what relations can exist in the attempt to concretely construct the narrative of the absent other. At one point, she alludes to the act of writing as an attempt to revive the dead or to preserve them from death. In her opinion, a writer

[7] The title in English, "Remembering the Unknown," is more straightforward and clearly shows the issues and questions at stake. The French title is more poetic and relies on the knowledge of a defining image linked to the Holocaust, that of the incineration of corpses and of the resulting ashes. It also echoes the tone of the article itself, based on concrete examples and interviews, but which nonetheless remains very poetic in its language and evocations.
[8] *L'emprise* was the title and subject of issue 24 of the *Nouvelle revue de psychanalyse*. Rightfully so, in the translated text, the translator notes that the word *emprise* cannot be translated into English to express exactly what it entails in French: "It is difficult in English to find a term that can bear the degree of generality and abstraction possessed by the French word. The sense in which emprise (from *prendre*, to take) is used here might be rendered by 'hold' or 'grip,' as in such phrases as 'to take hold' or 'to be in the grip' of something" (note 1, page 417). Here, the same approach/choice is adopted: the term will be used in its original language in order to maintain the images, as well as the complex connotations and mechanisms implied by the concept.

who tries to do so, or rather, a scribe (referring to the term's connection to Jewish history), would embark on an irrational endeavor and would be(come) crazy:

> Les préserver de leur mort ce serait aussi se transformer en *scribe fou, greffier obsessionnel* de leurs pensées perdues, les errances de leurs derniers moments, leurs prières, leur désespoir, les images qui leur revenaient, les souvenirs d'enfance, les paroles, leurs dernières paroles, la voix de ceux qui ont gémi, pleuré, hurlée, prié, le silence de ceux qui se sont tus, leurs derniers regards, leurs derniers gestes, leurs sanglots, leurs bras tremblants, les battements de leurs cœurs et leurs corps déjà mourants. [emphasis added] (214)

Is this enterprise "foolish" because it is impossible? She adds: "Ces mots, ces larmes, ces pensées, rien ni personne ne pourra jamais les restituer" (214). It is precisely the attempt to reconstruct, while nonetheless problematizing a total and complete restitution,[9] that I would like to analyze and question. Fresco remains cautious in reference to writing: for her, any recording of the Holocaust by the second generation seems to be just a putting down, an articulation in words, the creation of documentation. She never uses the terms linked to artistic creation, choosing instead notions from the lexical field of the copy, of a second degree process/representation: "scribe" and "greffier" both imply writing down the words of others. However, Fresco's cautiousness is justified insofar as the different kinds of *emprise* do have the potential to evolve into the appropriation of unlived past experiences and (over-)identification[10] through the creation of potentially inappropriate or incorrect memories. Her long enumeration of many different instances of the past lives of survivors or even non-survivors seems to point to the inability to represent in writing all of the life moments and their associated emotions for another individual, in her or his stead. Consequently, the belief that it is possible to do so is necessarily a "crazy" endeavor.

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[9] It is important to note the difference between reconstitution and restitution. While restitution, the restoration of something past to what it was, is impossible, as Fresco rightfully points out, reconstitution, on the other hand, can appear as possible in certain instances, since it includes mediation, evolution and a subjective change in the person undertaking the task. Reconstitution entails that the finished product does not have to be identical to the original; it has been processed and manipulated, shaped by an intermediary.

[10] A term she never uses in her essay. She does use the reflexive verb "*s'identifier*" but only to highlight the impossibility of some children to do so: "[…] d'autres ont exprimé l'intense frustration qui découlait pour eux et de l'impossibilité de s'identifier aux victimes et de la quasi-certitude de ne jamais en faire partie" (211).

Through Fine's and Fresco's arguments, one can observe two recurring issues; namely, the problem linked to creation from absence and therefore the designation of the type of writer who carries out such a task. Following a similar analysis of the second generation and its links to a catastrophic past, Alain Finkielkraut refers to the individuals who construct narratives around suffering they have inherited and who live in the "sécurité de l'anachronisme" (20) as imaginary Jews (*juifs imaginaires*) in his text bearing the same name, *Le Juif imaginaire*. Far from stating that they are not Jews – one of the meanings of the word "imaginary" is "not real" – he is actually maintaining that they live in *imaginary spaces*[11] ("espace romanesque" [23]) through building these narratives, with which they can identify, in order to mask the paradox of their own existence and position.[12] Finkielkraut advocates a passage from the *romanesque* to memory. He argues that memory is a way to relate to the previous generation of Jews, the ones who actually experienced the horrors of the Holocaust, without establishing one's identity through the suffering of others, without conflating past and present into an incoherent false continuity. The imperative to remember follows the understanding and recognition that this past is and will remain unknown, broken, absent, and that a separation does exist between the *superstes* and the second generation: "il y a

[11] On the page where the concept first appears, the vocabulary relating to fiction is predominant – "pour du beurre," "romanesque," "imprimé," "intrigue," "fable," "irréel," "imaginaires" – and is accompanied by vocabulary pertaining to fascination, or even obsession, with a religious connotation – "fanatiques," "hypnotisés," "identification," "ravit," "élève," "sanctifie" (23).

[12] What troubles Finkielkraut is not the memory of the Holocaust; on the contrary, he is worried about its instrumentalization by the second generation. For him, the process of the appropriation, or even usurpation, of past affect is all a carnival, a show. Imaginary Jews live as a "fantasme d'Histoire" (29). Why does the second generation feel the need to resort to fantasy?

> Il faut dire que, sidérés par la mémoire immense de ce que nous n'avions pas vécu, nous singions tout, même la lucidité de nos maîtres, mascarade effrénée par laquelle nous tentions d'apaiser notre mauvaise conscience et de nier le hiatus qu'il y avait entre notre confort d'enfants de la croissance et les événements énormes, effroyables qui l'avaient immédiatement précédé. (30)

The gap between their experience of the present and the experience of Jews in the past is such that they seek out a fake linkage and attempt to construct it through this intrinsically imperfect mimicking process. Identification and appropriation occur as symptoms of the second generation, therefore justifying the fact that Finkielkraut points to the inadequacy of such processes.

entre moi et le passé juif une distance infranchissable ; avec la collectivité emportée dans la catastrophe, je n'ai pas de partie commune. L'impératif de mémoire naît avec la conscience douloureuse de cette séparation" (51). Only such a realization can enable true, in that it is appropriate, yet imperfect, remembrance.

While family plays a primordial role in the creation of memory, it is only through a process of opening up to others that the memory of genocide may sustain itself and be passed on: "Histoire de famille? Si l'on veut, mais dans l'exacte mesure où cette famille-là n'est pas un lieu homogène ou un champ de forces œdipien, mais un espace culturel traversé par l'histoire, coupé, comme dirait Deleuze, de coupures qui ne sont pas familiales" (Finkielkraut 210). Keeping the memory of the Holocaust within the realm of the family would indeed, for Finkielkraut, be counterproductive, as it would only perpetuate the creation of imaginary Jews. The last words of his book sum up the task Finkielkraut attempts to undertake : "je me fabriquais – imparfaitement – une mémoire pour détenir et pour transmettre le plus de vérité possible sur les êtres que désignait à mon affection le vocable de judaïsme" (216). Finkielkraut calls for the creation of a new form of memory that propagates the memories of witnesses to the Holocaust as rightfully as possible, while nonetheless stressing the differences between memories experienced first-hand and memories that were transmitted, in other words, legacies.

Through her concept of "postmemory," Marianne Hirsch encompasses all of the aforesaid concerns and arguments related to the memorial experience of members of the second generation. First, she emphasizes a process of creation, of the imaginary attribution of meaning when referring to the connection, through the familial inheritance of remembrance, which exists between the present second generation and survivors' past experience of genocide. In the deployment of her concept in *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* in 1997, Hirsch examines representations in the familial sphere which are both internal (the family itself and its memory) and

external (the ideology of family), at "the intersection of private and public history" (13). However, what interests her is the indirect memory of important events in the life of a family, created and transmitted by members of the family through a mnemonic filiation. She examines the narratives produced by this indirectness and the viewing of photographs, which are results of mediation and interpretation. The look becomes simultaneously affiliative, enabling identification ("they could be any of ours"), and "unfamiliar" (40), creating opacity. Hirsch wants to make it clear that even though identification occurs, a certain distance must be maintained because it is impossible to ever fully account for the lost world of before and during genocide, as well as its numerous repercussions, both direct and indirect, on the present. Moreover, in her essay "Projected Memory: Holocaust Photographs in Personal and Public Fantasy" in the collective work *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*, Hirsch tries to rearticulate her notion by affirming that the "space of remembrance" that "postmemory" opens up is linked to both factuality and to imagination, two strains that can be connected through creation, and this dichotomy expresses the complexity of Hirsch's conception. Therefore, paradoxes are characteristic of the experience of the second generation; paradoxes which are expressed through the very notion of "postmemory."

In her subsequent essay "The Generation of Postmemory," written almost ten years later, she defends her use of the prefix "post-" and her utilization of the term "memory," pointing out the paradox that exists and that appropriately describes her notion: "If this sounds like a contradiction, it is, indeed, one, and I believe it is inherent to this phenomenon" (106).[13] Mediation is a feature of memory. Consequently, by using the prefix "post-" along with a form of memory which is always already mediated, Hirsch highlights the distance that exists between memory and "postmemory,"

[13] I am choosing not to focus in length on this particular essay, as it is developed in more detail in her subsequent book bearing the same title and which is introduced just below. The essay "The Generation of Postmemory" is a shortened and condensed version of her book, in which Hirsch's additions and clarifications are better grasped in its lengthy development.

pointing to a state of double remoteness. In *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*, a book based on the aforementioned article, Hirsch continues to develop and apply her now widely-used term of "postmemory." Once more, she defines her concept in the first pages, taking into consideration some of the comments/arguments of her critics, hence continuously developing a more explicit idea:

> "Postmemory" describes the relationship that the "generation after" bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before – to experiences they "remember" only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to *seem* to constitute memories in their own right. (5)

In fact, Hirsch seems to be so careful with her terminology, applying qualifiers and textual markers such as punctuation (citation marks) and italics to draw the attention of the critical reader, that her definition becomes broad enough to possibly encompass all instances of relating to the past. This shows the way in which she is trying to open up her own concept to other instances of "postmemory," trying to reach outside the cycle of the family. For instance, when examining *Maus* by Art Spiegelman, Hirsch introduces Connerton's term "acts of transfer" to open up her notion to more "public" memories: there exists an interrelation between individual and collective memories, a transformation of history into memory that can be spread across generations (Hirsch 31). This is extremely important in that it incorporates history into "postmemory." She also broadens "postmemory" by including indirect witnesses who are not linked to past experiences of genocide through familial ties. These individuals are connected through a sentiment of affinity and affiliation, a remembrance established by adoption. Hirsch thus distinguishes between familial and affiliative "postmemory," defining the former as vertical identification and the latter as a type of horizontal identification, which is therefore broader. Though she still stresses that familial "postmemory" facilitates its affiliative counterpart, she does recognize the existence of "structures of mediation that [are] broadly appropriable, available, and indeed, compelling enough to

encompass a larger collective in an organic web of transmission" ("The Generation of Postmemory" 115).

Despite her terminological downfalls and many obscurities, some of which I examine in certain chapters of this dissertation, Hirsch's "postmemory" does stress ruptures in temporal transmission (with her use of "post-") and the ruptures caused by trauma, essential in the case of the memory of the Holocaust, and I would argue, of genocide more broadly. "Postmemory" allows for an empathic relation to the past and its agents, here the parents and survivors, "introduc[ing] the 'not-me' into my memory reserve" (Silverman, cited in Hirsch 85), therefore establishing a "heteropathic" process of identification or "allo-identification." This seems essential with regard to ethical concerns surrounding the role of survivors and the specificity and validity of their direct testimonies. Hirsch manages to carefully underline the importance and necessity of giving a voice to the second generation, permitting other types of representations and (affiliative) relations to the Holocaust. Through "postmemory," new forms of remembrance may take shape through art, allowing for (in the words of Phillipe Mesnard) "une autre valeur du témoin" (*Témoigner entre Histoire et Mémoire* 7).

Although Hirsch has slowly modified her line of argument to include the possibility of affiliative transmission outside of relations of kinship, she nonetheless puts special emphasis on familial relations. She stresses that affiliative postmemory is dependent on familial postmemory, as it is through the latter that the former can occur.[14] I would argue that Hirsch's conception of "postmemory" is too focused on the second generation, establishing a hierarchy among the relations to the past event. Thus, "postmemory" runs the risk of building a mythical relationship to

[14] "Affiliative postmemory would thus be *the result of contemporaneity and generational connection with the literal second generation* combined with structures of mediation that would be broadly appropriable, available, and indeed compelling enough to encompass a larger collective in an organic web of transmission" [emphasis added] ("The Generation of Postmemory" 115).

an unknown past for a specific group, trying to build remembrance primarily on highly affective grounds. Many theorists have problematized such instances of "postmemorial" narrative construction and have pointed out some of the dangers of the processes of transfer of trauma and the transgenerational transmission of affects. However, as one can observe in the numerous and diverse theories discussed above, there is indeed a non-expressed symptomology that is passed down, something that goes beyond signification and words, beyond the scope of representation. How can something that is beyond representation take shape in the form of a literary representation based on indirectness and a remote form of memory? How can such issues be opened up to affiliative forms of memory which do not need to be dependent solely on the second generation?

The Writer-Indirect Witness and Transmission

In my dissertation, I diversify these occurrences of transmission, through opening up the construction of "postmemory" to equivocal examples of transmission (silence, forgetting) as well as total indirectness (the lack of affiliation or of a direct personal connection). I am interested in the representation of genocide, more specifically the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide, in recent French and Francophone literature (from the 1985 to 2000) written by indirect witnesses; that is, people who did not personally experience genocide. The notion of "indirect witness" itself is based on dichotomies, as it refers to a direct versus indirect experience and therefore act of witnessing, as well as internal versus external knowledge of an event. The term "indirect witness," which has roots in historiography, is commonly used in opposition to "direct witness." According to Gilbert J. Garraghan, an indirect witness is an individual who was absent but heard about an event or occurrence from another person: "Most of our information about past happenings comes to us not from direct, but from indirect witnesses; that is, from persons who did not themselves see or experience what they report to us, but learned of them from others" (*A Guide to Historical*

Method 292). Garraghan adds that, usually, there are more than two individuals involved, as "the information is passed along from one to the other through a whole series of individuals" (292), further implying mediation,[15] an "indirectness" which I believe is meaningful, and which ought to be affirmed and maintained.

In literary studies, the concept has been adopted to distinguish between a survivor-witness, what Agamben would refer to as a *superstes*, and someone who has not experienced a traumatic event. Some scholars choose to use the notion of "witness to the witness," as she or he seems to enable the survivor's recounting by listening to her or him, and is thus faced with similar yet different consequences when listening to such tales. Once again, the idea of a "witness to a witness" comprises a direct link or encounter with a direct witness, therefore limiting the range of possible relations to a catastrophe. For this reason, Catherine Coquio perceives a specific apostolic tonality at the core of this conception, which connotes "un imaginaire moral, sinon une injonction moralisante," thus reducing a person's relation to the witness to solely a relation of moral empathy (*Le Mal de vérité* 148). The apostolic nature is notably due to the status given to the witness, a status which an individual seeks to pass on to another person, and more particularly a member of the second generation. Hence the emphasis on the affective side. While I would not so blatantly condemn empathic relations, given that they *are* an important aspect of memorial transmission, I do argue that the appellation "witness to the witness" reduces the scope of possible relations that a person can have to historical events and the type of memory one can develop.

[15] In relation to the added mediation of these various indirect witnesses, Garraghan recognizes that "[i]t has been objected that the trustworthiness of an account decreases with every new mediated version of it, since every new informant can claim only a portion of the trustworthiness of his predecessor; hence, in the long line of intermediates the final degree of trustworthiness will be so insignificant as to be negligible," and yet states that "[i]t is incorrect to say that an account necessarily loses in trustworthiness by passing through an intermediary" (293). He concludes by arguing that any account, whether direct or indirect, eventually needs to be evaluated through its apposition to other historical documents.

The convolutedness inherent to the concept of "indirect witness" and the fact that it rests on dichotomies does not imply that it inadequately represents the situation which is of interest to me here, quite the contrary. By being put into opposition with "direct" witnessing, the concept of "indirect witness" carefully states its difference. It expresses an epistemological position that is not that of the survivor, thus preventing any type of over-identification or the appropriation of an experience not lived. Moreover, it also opens up to instances of indirectness: by implying external knowledge, it includes *all* external agents. I argue that it reduces the sort of hierarchy between familial and affiliative relations to the event that Hirsch seems to imply. Similar reasons lead me not to use LaCapra's concept of "secondary witness," as it also establishes a horizontal order in its use of ordinal numbers, although LaCapra himself rejects any type of order in secondary witnesses themselves. Moreover, the sense of "indirectness" points to fragmentation. The prefix "in-" can convey two meanings: one expresses lack ("without; a lack of") and the other connotes movement and inwardness ("in; into; toward; within") (*Oxford English Dictionary*). The prefix has a double meaning, as it bears a dichotomy at its core, a paradox which echoes the many theories I discuss above. Therefore, it appropriately conveys the complexity of the situation of indirect witnesses, one which echoes in different ways the double bind of direct witnesses themselves.

The figure of the indirect witness that appears in my dissertation is above all a writer, and this specific role appears in the examined novels themselves, becoming a recurring trope. Writing is of importance when faced with remoteness and with questions surrounding the attribution of meaning at the core of the aforementioned theories. Returning to Agamben's aporetic dichotomy which characterizes the witness, it is possible to observe how these paradoxes related to the act of testifying become complicated when they are placed in relation to the writing of indirect witnesses. In *Rwanda: Le Réel et les récits*, Catherine Coquio considers the writers of Fest'Africa's initiative "Rwanda: Écrire par devoir de mémoire" to be *testes* in terms of its definition as "le tiers ou

l'intermédiaire garant" (76). She nevertheless qualifies the situation in which the *superstes* is integrated into an artistic approach: "Mais que se passe-t-il, pour le 'superstes,' lorsque ce tiers écrit un texte où le survivant est utilisé dans son témoignage, où la victime et le bourreau lui-même sont mimés et réinventés dans une scène, une fiction, un poème ?" (76). Giorgio Agamben, toward the end of *Remnants of Auschwitz*, introduces another witness category, that of the *auctor*, one which links testimony and writing, and which I believe may constitute an answer to Coquio's line of questioning. The *auctor* is a witness who writes based on a preexisting subject matter, "a fact, a thing or a word" (149), as the etymological evolution of the term illustrates. The *auctor* must imbue subjects and/or objects with life, basing her or his writing on an incomplete subject matter that will be carved out, both literally and figuratively. In this sense, the *auctor* is actually a co-creator of the survivor's testimony. This term points to the inability to be fully capable of speaking for the others or to utter the words of those others:

> In a crucial philosophical detour, Agamben argues that the experience of desubjectification is coincident with and part of subjectification; the appropriation of language is also an expropriation, the living being can never fully occupy the vacant place of the speaking subject. One consequence of this is that, as Agamben puts it, "every author [is]a co-author." (Davis, "Can the Dead Speak to Us?" 84)

The *auctor* represents the inherent duality of testimony, namely its joining of possibility and impossibility, demonstrated by the paradoxical duality of the expression "speaking the unspeakable." I propose that the *auctor* can be considered an indirect witness, a person who has witnessed some of the consequences of genocide or has been involved in them, and who is thus aware of the effects and affects of trauma, without being a survivor her- or himself. She or he transcribes/inscribes a past occurrence (the experience of genocide by someone else) and then testifies for an other, writes for this other. A sort of "testimonial chain" is established through writing; as a consequence, memory can be propagated, or at least transmitted in all its intricacies.

I examine the ambivalent position of the indirect witness, a *testis* to a *superstes* and an *auctor*, someone who has chosen to write about genocide. How do indirect witnesses try to recount genocide and write the stories of others? What kind of memory is developed through such writing? These individuals are "écrivains de l'extérieur" (Prstojevic), and as such, they must accommodate the incentive to bear witness in their own indirect ways and as writers, through imagination and fiction. Since "[é]crire, c'est recréer et par-là même témoigner" (Blanckeman 147), the testimonial vein of the texts produced by writers-indirect witnesses is visionary (as opposed to ocular). Because of their lack of immediate personal knowledge and their role as indirect witnesses, the authors find new ways to appropriately convey and empathetically represent acts of extreme violence against a specific group of individuals. The specific approach that the indirect witness develops through literature raises essential concerns about aesthetic and ethical modes of writing, as well as about the combination of imagination and factuality. Once again, the paradoxical nature of their writing expresses the complexity of their position, becoming a potential asset in the processes of creation and of transmission. In order to affirm a different epistemological position while nonetheless aiming to remain as faithful as possible to the events she or he recounts, the writer-indirect witness often expresses the different status of her or his enunciation through the image of a quest or a journey. Because writers-indirect witnesses compose a "témoignage du dehors" (Fonkoua 71), they search for information they do not possess and the testimonial relation becomes that of an initiatory quest (Germanotta 11) that ought to be put into writing. Writing becomes the way of expressing this quest, an *[en/]quête* as I choose to refer to it, and of exposing the consequent dilemmas of the position of an indirect witness. Literature opens up ways of verbalizing these haunting dichotomies in order to accept them, as well as to remember with and through them.

In this dissertation, I consider two types of writers, who come to represent the openness of my perception of an "indirect witness." The French writers Henri Raczymow and Patrick Modiano

are members of the second generation; they write from their position of descendants of Jewish survivors of the Second World War. As they were both born after World War II, in 1948 for the former and 1945 for the latter, their relation to the Shoah is marked by afterness, which encompasses both absence and temporal distance. They come to represent the ambiguities of the remote position of the second generation. The Chadian writer Koulsy Lamko, the Djiboutian Abdourahman A. Waberi, and the Ivorian Véronique Tadjo are African writers who took part in the project "Rwanda: Écrire par devoir de mémoire" under Fest'Africa, a festival of African art and media organized by Maïmouna Coulibaly and Nocky Djedanoum, which used to be held annually in Lille starting in 1993.[16] Unlike Raczymow and Modiano, temporal delay does not characterize the position of these African authors, as their works were produced only a few years after the genocide. They are contemporaries of the events of 1994 in Rwanda, often witnessing it from their remote geographical location, either in Europe or other African countries.

The literary project "Rwanda: Écrire par devoir de mémoire" came into existence after Nocky Djedanoum, a writer and a journalist, saw the terrible images of the genocide in Rwanda on television and the ways the genocide was misrepresented by the Western media, mainly as a civil war or as an interethnic conflict. These images led to conversations with some of his colleagues, namely Maïmouna Coulibaly (the co-founder of Fest'Africa and Ivorian journalist), Théogène Karabayinga (a Rwandan journalist for RFI), and Gratien Uwisabye (a representative of Fest'Africa in Kigali, Rwanda) (Mbongo-MBoussa 165). Despite difficulties getting the project started, with expressed resistance on the part of both Rwandan and French officials, it was launched in 1998 with a two-month (July and August) writer-in-residence program in Rwanda. Eleven

[16] Nocky Djedanoum describes Fest'Africa as a "festival culturel consacré aux différentes formes d'expressions des réalites africaines" and which attempts to "enrichir notre vision européenne, souvent étriquée, du continent noir" (*Le Partage du deuil*). Unfortunately, it is not held anymore, as the last festival took place in 2007.

writers from different African countries participated: Boubacar Boris Diop (Senegal), Abdourahman A. Waberi (Djibouti), Tierno Monénembo (Guinea), Koulsy Lamko (Chad), Véronique Tadjo (Ivory Coast), Monique Ilboudo (Burkina Faso), Meja Mwangi (Kenya), Jean-Marie Vianney Rurangwa (Rwanda), Kalisa Rugano (Rwanda), Vénuste Kayimahé (Rwanda), and Nocky Djedanoum himself.[17] Some of the writers went back to Rwanda in 1999 to do further research, to once again meet with survivors and perpetrators, and to visit memorial sites as well as prisons. Ten works were produced and nine were published in 2000,[18] all of them in French. A hybrid performance was also created (by Koulsy Lamko and Cécile Cotté), using parts of each of these works and incorporating them into a guiding narrative: *Corps et voix – Paroles rhizome*, which was performed in France, Belgium, and Rwanda, and which expresses the plurality of voices and perspectives that emerged from the project.

"Rwanda: Écrire par devoir de mémoire" was first and foremost a sign of the resurgence of solidarity through "un partage du deuil," as Djedanoum states:

> Le premier réflexe des écrivains invités dans le cadre du projet "Rwanda : écrire par devoir de mémoire" a été avant tout de partager le deuil avec les Rwandais. Pour eux, les frontières coloniales arbitraires ne devraient en rien être des cloisons qui séparent fatalement. Ils sont venus au Rwanda pour essayer de comprendre, avec les Rwandais, les raisons du génocide et apporter leur modeste contribution à la recherche de la Paix. ("Rwanda: Écrire par devoir de mémoire" 116)

Despite his optimistic and platitudinous statement on how his project was intended to contribute to peace, Djedanoum states that the main aspects of the project were aimed at artistic creation *and* the execution of a political act. The political facet of the project was reiterated by Diop, one of the

[17] This list appears in Nocky Djedanoum's own text "Rwanda : écrire par devoir de mémoire" published in *Notre Librairie* (116). However, in other scholarly works, it varies. Since it was given by the organizer of the project, this version will be used in this dissertation.

[18] The texts are: Diop's *Murambi. Le Livre des ossements*, Djedanoum's *Nyamirambo!*, Ilboudo's *Murekatete*, Kayimahé's *France-Rwanda. Les Coulisses du génocide*, Lamko's *La Phalène des collines*, Monénembo's *L'Aîné des orphelins*, Mwangi's *Great Sadness* (unpublished), Rurangwa's *Rwanda : Le Génocide des Tutsi expliqué à un étranger*, Tadjo's *L'Ombre d'Imana : Voyages jusqu'au bout du Rwanda*, and Waberi's *Moisson de crânes*.

participants: “il y a vraiment un acte politique très fort qui fait que l’évènement va être inscrit dans la durée” (Diop). The novels of the group of African writers, who, impelled by a kind of Pan-Africanism movement that envisioned the creation of a global community, and in this case a memorial one, decided to speak of the 1994 genocide as a “duty to memory.” Two intellectual domains, engaged African literature and Western philosophy, characterize the Fest’Africa project. By mixing different genres and responding to various incentives, the African writers-indirect witnesses aim at creating a transcultural memorial discourse about genocide.

Genocide and Memory Mechanisms

The opening up of memory performed by the authors of Fest’Africa bears great significance in terms of how to address the memories of two different genocides. The scope of genocide and its traumatic consequences require care in its juxtaposition with other events. Comparative approaches to genocide ought to acknowledge the fact that no two catastrophes are identical, and therefore need to affirm, clearly and firmly, differences and particularities. In *Les Geurres de mémoire*, Benjamin Stora warns against the emergence of a “communautarisme mémoriel” (84): because of the desire for communities to have their memory recognized, they often set themselves against another group and another memory. The rivalry of memories reinforces the definitional boundaries of these communities; in other words, how they set themselves apart. These communities have their own specific history; they also connect the memory of their group to a specific identity construction. A person’s identity is then defined in terms of remembrance; that is, what a person remembers and how it defines her or his community: “Le droit à la mémoire, c’est le droit à l’identité, et bien sûr, réciproquement” (Lavabre 485). The compartmentalization of memorial discourses and of their subsequent collective identities raises questions and concerns in terms of what role memory can and should actually play. Of course, this is too large of a question; no

answers and definite means of examining such questions will be given or can ultimately be drawn. My aim is only to problematize and, with due care and sensitivity, to examine the literary texts which try to remember and write about the Holocaust and about the Rwandan genocide. However, I believe that the opening up of memory as performed by the indirect witnesses I examine here is fruitful, since it also widens people's relations to collective memory as well as their sense of identity.

Because of the constantly growing place which memory has been assuming and the surplus of commemoration, I examine how the broadening and complexification of memory can actually become a positive and productive approach to certain significant questions and events, instead of progressing toward a negative stance (the sort of confrontational "hyper"-memory mentioned above). Memory is in itself a living process, an instance of transmission that is active and evolving. However, confronted with the fear of the disappearance of memory, theorists have been modifying the concept, starting to question limits, expanding the boundaries of the definition of the concept, as is observable through the apposition of different adjectives to the term (*cultural* memory, *collective* memory, *historical* memory, etc.), as well as the blurring of the boundaries between memory and other concepts in other fields. My utilization of the term memory encompasses all of its problems, concerning what is being created and what is at stake. It is through its problematic development and ambivalence that memory actually takes on all its significance for my argument.

As Frédéric Rousseau rightly points out, apposing events which are different on an epistemological level runs the risk of relativizing a person's experience, thus facilitating memory wars and even the denial that these events occurred. He himself encourages comparisons, all the while warning against assimilations: "Ce que j'appelle le 'relativisme' c'est le fait de mettre sur le même plan des actes, des statuts, des conditions, des situation, qui, s'ils sont comparables dans la mesure où ils peuvent effectivement faire l'objet de comparaisons, ne sont pas, à mon sens,

assimilables" (135). While I agree that an opening up of memory through a juxtaposition of various events characterized by violence can be problematic, I believe that if it is done carefully, from a distance and based on a questioning process, it can actually work against the very reductions of relativism and the compartmentalization characteristic of memorial communitarianism. I contend that memory is indeed losing its specificities and is becoming a broad spectrum used to describe all relations to the past. There are many books which denounce the abuses of memory (Todorov, Robin, Coquio, and Rieff, to cite only a few), and I do not wish to add more to an already excellent corpus on the excesses of memory. What I want to propose here is a process of working through memory, a productive route with and around memory, as opposed to against it. Perhaps my approach is too idealist and optimistic; I certainly thought so myself at times while working on this dissertation. Slowly, this idealism has also become a part of my dissertation; I have come to accept it and even to assert it. My frustration faced with so many articulations of the abuses of memory, as well as the recurrent criticism directed at scholars who try to articulate an alternative approach, has led me to reinforce my stance. For instance, in her latest book, *Le Mal de vérité*, Catherine Coquio denounces the growth of memorial studies and maintains that people's desire to remember is linked to a desire to know, to discover the truth in order to understand past events and thus to understand themselves in the present. Her "mal de vérité" is one of the reasons why memory has acquired so much "power" in the last decades, and she is horrified simply at the thought of another theory on memory (31). She strongly criticizes the belief that memory can ever be "happy" (citing Hirsch) and productive, and argues that the opening up of memory would actually mean an increase in worries and the generalization of tensions (30). She attempts to show that in reality, it is necessary to accept that truth will never fully be known, and that memory is a utopia in which the truth people seek does not exist. While I do agree with her, I find that her claim that people must accept that they will never know the whole truth is as unrealistic as the idea of working for the

creation of a positive and productive "postmemory" that she herself describes as idealistic. An excessive reliance on memory is indeed problematic; and yet, I believe that the opening up of memory can actually limit abuses of memory and transform wars of memory into connections on both the global and local level, as well as both personally and collectively.

My primary concern remains to show how it is possible to connect two events as a way to enlighten one another, to help create bridges. I express the importance of developing a multidirectional approach to genocide, following Michael Rothberg's lead. In order to counter instances of competitive memory, Rothberg suggests that we should view such differences through the lens of memorial processes that evolve at the same time. In this sense, I maintain that memory appears as a nexus of diverse stances and directions; it is collective as well as active. Rothberg associates the term memory with the adjectival description "multidirectional" to highlight the points of connection that exist between different memories and how one can help in the articulation of another. Rothberg wants to show that not only is memory intrinsically collective and a sum of other people's memories, reiterating some of Maurice Halbwachs's claims, but that this cross-referencing can also permit memorial discourses on important events to dialogue with one another. "Multidirectional memory" becomes a composite term; despite its singular form, it remains intrinsically plural. I truly believe that Rothberg's vision of multidirectional memory enables modes of expression that are potentially empowering.

Complex-ified Memory

My dissertation investigates the development of *complex-ified memory*, an assembled web of different mnemonic processes (remembrance) and memorial positions (commemoration) through literary works on genocide by indirect witnesses. I examine the type of memory that is created by way of literature and the authors' representational strategies and stylistic

choices. This then enables me to show the means through which these different combinations of complex processes of memory come to exemplify and illustrate how genocide enters our ontological and ethical realm of collective and cultural reference. I analyze the inherently multidimensional interactions between history and memory, in their opposing influences of connection and rejection, with the aim of relating these two concepts to art and even to the politics of art. *Complex-ified memory* is both a complex form of many memorial threads *and* an active process, a creation of complexity achieved in order to express its continuous progression.

My idea of *complex-ified memory* encompasses a multitude of relations to genocide organized around the problematization of the direct utterance of memory; it refers to a constructed memorial web which joins historical, political, cultural, ethical, and aesthetical stances on the collective level. The hyphenated word "complex-ified" refers to the state of memory, *complex*, along with its perpetual movement and construction. Indeed, an examination of memory after the event and which is perceived as "broad" usually follows two approaches. Collective memory appears almost as a homogenized core, because it focuses solely on the interactions between an individual and her or his social group; on the other hand, cultural memory is a process of creation through the means used to summon the past and socialize memory, and constitutes a product of representations. While collective memory is necessarily and intrinsically linked to cultural memory, recent scholarly publications have tried to differentiate the two through the rejection of their interconnection and therefore of the concepts' permeability with one another (Assman, Rigney). Scholars have carried out this forced differentiation as a scheme to emphasize the dynamism of their specific approaches, which in my opinion seems to ultimately go against their own endeavor. I believe that post-genocide memory must incorporate these two conceptions of collective and cultural memory, along with their porousness towards one another and their different makers and performers.

Memory has always been defined as being fluid and ever-changing. Because of this variability, it is also often put into opposition with history. The French historian Pierre Nora perceives memory and history as being antagonistic realms: he defines memory as being synonymous with "life," since it is "toujours portée par des groupes vivants, et à ce titre, elle est en évolution permanente," whereas history relates to "la reconstruction toujours problématique et incomplète de ce qui n'est plus" (19-20). Nora adds that memory is therefore a phenomenon which always pertains to the present, whereas history is a representation of the past. What should one make of this strict distinction in terms of events such as the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide, events that are between memory and history, not fully present and yet not part of the past, belonging to what Karein Goertz refers to as a liminal zone "– that is, between the past as object of dispassionate study and the past as an affective part of personal and collective consciousness" (33)? While I seek to examine the construction of mnemonic and memorial processes, history nonetheless remains an essential domain of inquiry through its ambiguous and yet intrinsic inter-relations with memory. My aim is to consider memory in its relations to history through their reconvergence, an analysis of memory *along with* – and not as opposed to – history.

In my dissertation, the analysis of memory and its interdependence with history is organized around and through literature, shaped by literary writing. The paradoxical relations between memory and history are observable in literature and can be examined in the ways the authors introduce a possible dialogue between these two concepts in contemporary culture. The perception that memory is an open process which can be inscribed into literature has greatly influenced my work. Walter Benjamin also notes the importance of the act of writing in order to consider history. Through Benjamin's notion of a constellation – "a montage in which diverse elements are brought together through the act of writing" (Rothberg, "The Demands of Holocaust Representation" 10) – the act of representation becomes essential to the interpretation of history. While the constellation

links the past and the present (through the present writing of the historical past), I would argue that it also relates to memory. Like history, memory is articulated through writing. The idea of a constellation adds to the composite nature of memory, highlighting its *complex*ity.

Since it is "complex-ified," memory ought to be critically understood and interpreted; it requires agency. Moreover, because I am primarily dealing with literature, I maintain that it actually encourages a *reading*, a dual instance of deciphering the texts examined here and the memories which emanate from them, as well as the readers' relation to these memories and to their own memories. The reader must engage with the texts created by writers-indirect witnesses as well as attempt in her or his own ways to comprehend their representations, analyzing her or his relations to them. This may even be carried out through imagination:

> The novels respond to the testimonies of survivors […] by engaging the imaginative capacities of the reader, by drawing on their capacity to engage with a text and to participate imaginatively in a process of attempting to comprehend something which might last a lot longer and go a lot deeper than the bare, shocking, incomprehensible facts. (Small 96-97)

The dual reading I advocate is the active reception of a piece of writing (created by an indirect witness) which is intended to make the reader question her or his position and to relate to memory intellectually and critically. This critical approach actually maintains difference, since "[t]he act of reading begins with identification, but it ends in the awareness of distance and difference" (Pieters 126). Literary texts become "contact zones" (Pieters 130-131) which allow for connections to be made, extensions of memory to be established with respect to a person's position and role. *Complex-ified memory* is thus characterized by agency and movement, a fluidity in a person's perception, reception, and relation to memorial discourses.

The structure of my dissertation tries to echo the nature of memory: it slowly opens up, subsequently becoming *complex-ified* and plural. It starts by examining individual and familial memory and ends with collective and cultural memory. I incorporate a spatial conceptualization of

my approach, like the one this introduction has tried to show, by beginning with theories relating to familial memory and the position of members of the second generation, later broadening its focus by touching upon multidirectional and *complex-ified* memory. Along with the progressive theoretical opening up of my approach to memory, I organize my dissertation into two parts: the first is dedicated to the Holocaust, the genocide perpetrated against Jews and other minorities and segregated groups (the Roma people, homosexuals, and mentally disabled individuals) by Nazi Germany during World War II; and the second to the Rwandan genocide, the killing of Tutsis and moderate Hutus by extremist Hutus over approximately four months (April 6th to early July) in 1994. The literature on these two violent events of the twentieth century offers a set of diverse and noteworthy approaches to the problems of the recounting of genocide as an indirect witness and as a writer. The apposition of these two genocides demonstrates the type of productive relations different events can have and illustrates the *complex-ified* connections which I advocate. Holocaust memory has notably influenced the ways in which African writers have discussed, remembered, and represented the Rwandan genocide. Robert Eaglestone points out the representational relations that exist between the two catastrophes:

> [T]he Holocaust and our knowledge of the representation of the traumas and damages of those events shape and in no small part form of these African accounts of atrocity and mass death. Indeed, it may be that the forms of representation for traumatic events of this sort – in these cases, in narrative prose – are themselves shape by Western culture's deep involvement with the after-effects of the Holocaust. (77)

Moreover, discourses about the Rwandan genocide have altered and given further meaning to the memory of genocide, as they have changed the very representations of genocide in which they are ingrained. Memorial mechanisms surrounding the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide thus come to echo one another, creating *complex-ified* representations of the two events. This juxtaposition also allows me to question notions of universality, considering it something one should try to both

problematize and consider inasmuch as it constitutes an attempt to incorporate memorial discourse into the realm of the general.

My first chapter, titled "Writing the Book of (the) Other(s): Multiplicity and Absence in Henri Raczymow's *Un Cri sans voix*," discusses a novel from 1985 by the second-generation author Henri Raczymow. The author's fictitious writing about individuals who are themselves writers and descendants of Jews points to the haunting of an unsettling past and comes to exemplify the role of an *auctor* in representations and meta-representations of the Shoah. Several levels of narration characterize the text: the novel is presented as both a biography and a fictional tale about Esther Litvak, written by her brother, Mathieu, who is himself a character in Raczymow's novel. A double writing leads the different layers of fictionalization and their *mise en abyme*, which become a device for Raczymow to emphasize distance. *Un Cri sans voix* poses the question of fictionalization in relation to "postmemory" – raising the question of the dual role of fiction in both recounting the massive loss of human beings as well as its potential to appropriate the experiences of others. The narrator-writer denounces his sister's identification with a photo taken in the ghetto – Esther's excessive focus on seeing herself as this young woman who rebelled leads to her death, as she is unable to fully become her (the photographed woman) in life. By writing Esther's fictitious and real stories, the narrator sets out to forget the past and erase Esther's traces. The future is to be found in forgetting. This is not necessarily surprising, considering that memory can only function and bear significance if certain matters and stories are forgotten. "To remember" is antonymous and, in many ways, synonymous with "to forget."

Chapter 2 – "Through Gaps in Time: The Search for History/the Other in Patrick Modiano's *Dora Bruder*" – examines how, in *Dora Bruder* (1995), Patrick Modiano tries to articulate his own past in relation to Dora's. Modiano grapples with his status as non-victim, which is nonetheless intrinsically linked to victims because of his Jewish identity (a recurring theme in his novels), as

well as the ambivalence and guilt he feels regarding his father's questionable activities during the war, through the co-writing of Dora's story along with his. Modiano parallels certain of her life moments with his own, namely moments of walking in specific areas and streets of Paris, with a time difference of about fifty years. An archive initiates these connections and plays a primordial role in the re-constitution of a history: often, it is History that must replace and reconstruct a memory that has disappeared or that is incomplete, unknown, or deficient. The links between Modiano and Dora Bruder multiply, as the author receives several photos of the girl, setting in motion the process of identification as exposed by Marianne Hirsch. However, this process of identification (autobiography) manifests itself through the act of writing Dora's book (biography) and the creation of missing moments (fiction), an enterprise which is bound to fail, or at least to be incomplete. Dora's trace as well as the secret of her life disappear with her death. Modiano's memory is undoubtedly "post-"; nonetheless, he reworks the types of transmission proposed by Hirsch: he actually joins vertical and horizontal transmissions, reorganizing the relations one can maintain with an event as an indirect witness. Modiano shows how the past and the present merge in order to construct memory (his text overlaps different time periods in his writing) and be perpetuated in the future. However, it also questions whether "postmemory" can actually bridge past and present times, as the past is ultimately part of history. Modiano's *Dora Bruder* shows the (im)possibilities of writing a work of "postmemory."

Titled "Flight, Transmission, and Paradoxes: The Heritage of the Haunting Victim in Koulsy Lamko's *La Phalène des collines*," the first chapter of Part II examines the novel *La Phalène des collines* written by Koulsy Lamko, and the author's use of prosopopoeia (the speaking of a ghost reincarnated into a butterfly) and surrealism in order to link the past with the present and the future. It also expresses a possible instance of "postmemory" that links the victim, the teller of a story of violence, with the empathetic indirect witness, the carrier of its articulation and memory.

Koulsy Lamko prefers to adopt the recounting of (a) personal trauma(s) through a fictional narrative using (semi-)fictional characters. In *La Phalène des collines*, Lamko embodies the traumatic wound in the persona of a night butterfly, the reincarnation of violently-murdered Tutsi women (Théreza Mukandori and Queen Gicanda). It is the victim who attempts to propagate her memory and, through a synecdoche, the memory of the event. In addition to how the use of prosopopoeia highlights the unreal and fantastic side of his novel, Lamko's dense and poetic prose stresses the distance that exists between the subject and the author. I link this idea to Derrida's notions of the specter and heritage, in terms of a connection between past and present, but also an opening toward a future, symbolized by the return to the motherland of one of the main characters, Pelouse. The latter receives the heritage of the ghost and must then assume the responsibility to remember the victims of the genocide and reconstruct herself, her country, and the memory of genocide.

The final chapter – "Listening, Polyphony, and Multidirectional Memory: Abdourahman A. Waberi's *Moisson de crânes* and Véronique Tadjo's *L'Ombre d'Imana*" – looks at the hybrid texts of Tadjo and Waberi and how they deploy ways of understanding and listening, namely *entendre* (to hear) but especially *écouter* (to listen) as defined by Jean-Luc Nancy, which become the fundamental tools used in their attempt to write and to relate to the Tutsi genocide. Waberi and Tadjo create eclectic novellas that speak of their position as writers-indirect witnesses through the straightforward questioning of their position and the genocide. Waberi moves away from generalizations and from giving answers that run the risk of pre-empting and reducing genocide to an explicable accident. However, intertextuality, the introduction of multiple voices in a single narrative (Waberi himself, Hutus, Tutsis, Primo Levi, Aimé Césaire, etc.) indicates contamination. Waberi writes a "methexic" text that propagates voices, both direct and indirect, in an echo, a resonance of sense. A collective memorial voice is formed. While listening is at the basis of the

project, it also remains the first step towards perpetuation and movement, the blank screen that Dori Laub suggests is the position of the listener,[19] yet one that comes to be written. Tadjo's precise descriptions through her journalistic style, which shed light on the current state of the country and the daily life of survivors, emphasize the necessity of remaining an outside party that witnesses *a posteriori*. Nonetheless, *L'Ombre d'Imana* also stands as a composite work that combines different literary forms. Her personal journalistic parts are intertwined with fictional stories about the genocide and its repercussions on people in the present. This association between fiction and reality underlines the presence of exteriority linked to Tadjo's status as an indirect witness as well as interiority through which the ethical and aesthetic dimensions of mass killings are considered and questioned. I also show how the interactions between interiority and exteriority in writing echo the internal and external structure of memory. Memory is constructed through writing, while writing mimics memory.

However, this blurring and shattering of antagonistic dichotomies performed by Tadjo and Waberi, far from excusing and viewing the genocide as an act that can be explained, further problematize its occurrence and the absence of concrete answers to the questions raised. Both writers manage to constantly give an unsettling quality to their narrations along with their problematic actions of indirect witnessing. What they ultimately want to create is a space where the memory of genocide can exist in all of its complexities, a collective voice organized around previous spaces of memory (the Holocaust) and with an African basis. In particular, I show how this collective voice is intrinsically linked to multidirectional memory (the development of the memory of the Rwandan genocide around the memories of the Holocaust as well as of colonialism) and of "Afropolitan" nature. This web-like or rhizomic formation clearly opens up and expands in

[19] "The testimony to the trauma thus includes its hearer, who is, so to speak, the blank screen on which the event comes to be inscribed for the first time" (Laub, "Bearing Witness or the Vivissitudes of Listening" 57).

all directions, allowing for a "methexic" approach to writing and to memory: the memorial text finds itself ingrained with multiple voices and various influences. The plurality of the works examined in my dissertation calls for the deployment of numerous memoryscapes, showing how the memory of genocide is ultimately subject to fluidity and movement once it is opened up and *complex-ified*.

Part I

Chapter 1

Writing the Book of (the) Other(s): Multiplicity and Absence in Henri Raczymow's *Un Cri sans voix*

Elle [la mémoire absente] est chez moi le moteur de l'écriture. Et mes livres ne cherchent pas à combler cette mémoire absente – je n'écris pas, banalement, pour lutter contre l'oubli – mais à la présenter, justement, comme absente.
Henri Raczymow – "La Mémoire trouée"

Écris pour ne pas seulement détruire, pour ne pas seulement conserver, pour ne pas transmettre, écris sous l'attrait de l'impossible réel, cette part de désastre où sombre, sauve et intacte, toute réalité.
Maurice Blanchot – *L'Écriture du désastre*

Et il acheta un gros cahier d'écolier. A sa sœur, il inventa une autre vie et une autre mort. La vie et la mort qu'elle s'imaginait peut-être. La vie et la mort à défaut desquelles elle n'avait pas pu vivre.
Henri Raczymow – *Un Cri sans voix*

In his novel *Un Cri sans voix*, published in 1985, the French novelist and essayist Henri Raczymow, who belongs to the second generation, tells the story of the Holocaust by way of an other/others. Through this narrative displacement, Raczymow attempts to show the intricacies of people's relationship with history and the difficulty of verbalizing the event, due to the remoteness of the second-generation position. He constructs a literary work about and around the Holocaust, yet without directly representing the event, as the core of the novel relates to questions of absence, erasure, and forgetting. Through these shifts, the author is able to write a respectful text about genocide, without appropriating survivors' narratives, while nonetheless testifying to being a member of the second generation. Since his novel deals with absence, it comes to symbolize his perspective and position.

Raczymow is an emblematic figure of the "Generation After." He has written both fictions and critical essays on being the child and grandchild of Polish Jews during the historical period after World War II, and on Holocaust victims themselves. Infused with many autobiographical elements, some of Raczymow's works portray the dilemmas of relating to an event as destructive as the Shoah when one has not personally gone through it, as well as the repercussions of such an experience, or rather, non-experience. More particularly, the author's interest pertains to the question of the transgenerational transmission of traumatic and (H/h)istorical[20] memories in personal and familial Jewish spheres. He therefore highlights the (re/de)construction of shared personal memories and stories over an extended period, starting with what he qualifies as a before-past (*avant-passé*) or a prehistory (*préhistoire*) and proceeding toward the future.

Raczymow's literary career can be described as being composed of two phases. His early stage was linked to the creative ideas of the *nouveau roman*, with texts such as *La Saisie* (1973). This movement and its conception allowed the author to speak about and to represent nothingness literarily as well as stylistically. His second stage was characterized by a slight detachment from purely esthetic writing and by a growing involvement with Jewish history, in novels such as *Contes d'exil et d'oubli* (1979) and *Un Cri sans voix*, which deal with the complex formation of traumatic narratives and their transmission within immediate and extended families. Moreover, Raczymow's writing displays the development of the idea of Jewish nothingness, and is therefore intrinsically influenced by the author's cultural and religious origins (Fine 47). Raczymow himself expresses

[20] The play on the capitalization of the letter "h" refers to History, the historiographical recording and writing of important past events, and to history, more personal micro-histories, especially familial ones (and which would be translated as both history and story in English). In one of his essays, Raczymow refers to History as a "grande hache," hinging on Perec's appellation which appears in *W ou le souvenir d'enfance* ("une autre histoire, la Grande, l'Histoire avec sa grande hache, avait déjà répondu à ma place : la guerre, les camps" [Perec 17]), and history as "petit h." His essay, unsurprisingly entitled "Histoire : Petit h et grande hache," examines the intersection between History and history, "entre ce qui relève de l'histoire avec un grand H (ou une grande hache comme disait Georges Perec) et ce qui relève des micro histoires intrafamiliales" (18-19). While Raczymow focuses on family histories, which prevail as the central storyline of his novels, History surfaces as influencing and shaping those personal spheres and narratives.

the shift away from pure formalism as a "blank," as non-writing, a parenthesis that formulates itself, or rather, which covertly and progressively contaminates his novels: "au centre de cette parenthèse, un blanc, une fois de plus" and "plus tard encore, tout récemment, je sus que ce 'blanc' avait un nom, mais j'étais incapable de prononcer ce nom" ("La Mémoire trouée" 179).[21] The parenthesis reveals a suspension or erasure not only in terms of time, but also in terms of the content that it formulates, thus denoting silence. In this sense, the blank progressively specifies itself, progressing from nothingness toward a void with intrinsic Jewish connections and to the understanding and acceptance of a paradox of absence.

Thus, what characterizes Raczymow's position, along with the texts he produces, is a paradox. In his influential essay titled "La Mémoire trouée," he maintains that this particular text and his works more generally articulate the contradictory situation of the second and even third generations. Starting his essay with the strong statement that "[m]a position est ici un peu paradoxale" (177), he suggests that he himself is caught between two stances and cannot fully belong to one or the other, echoing the double bind that Kofman describes in the case of survivors.[22] Raczymow refers to this as a "double contrainte" and clarifies this dilemma: "c'est le sens, pris en abîme entre, pour moi, la nécessité impérieuse de parler et l'interdit de cette parole," a prohibition that differentiates this conundrum from that of survivors, since he is "ni victime, ni rescapé, ni témoin de l'évènement" (180). Because of the additional remoteness introduced by being born after the genocide – Raczymow was born in 1948 –, the paradox is in fact twofold, convoluted so to speak: he should not speak, yet he is speaking *and* he has nothing to say; more exactly, he has "to

[21] He continues, addressing the details of the shift in his writing: "Mon premier livre, *La Saisie*, une récit sans thématique juive, disait le rien. Mon premier livre 'juif', *Contes d'exil et d'oubli*, quelques années plus tard, répétait cette absence, ce 'blanc', mais dans une inscription juive, et cela dessinait une parenthèse marquant l'avant et l'après, l'avant-guerre et l'après-guerre, un cadre au centre duquel gisait le silence" (179).
[22] I discussed Kofman's notion in my introduction.

say the nothing," "dire le rien" (177). Although it remains intrinsically linked to it, this "nothing" is not precisely the Holocaust. Rather, it is his Jewishness, as emphasized above, which therefore makes it appear to be a positive nothing (177), which itself forms a contradiction yet again. How can Jewishness be "a nothing" to express and write about? It may be because of a blank or, as I would argue, because of the *consequences* of that blank: transmission becomes non-transmission, an oxymoronic conveyance through silence. Hence the importance of writing.

For Raczymow, writing and the specific (particular yet unspecified, once again a contradiction) kind of memory characteristic of the generation after the disappearance of millions of European Jews are connected. It is through writing that memory can be (re)created, or rather, understood as being deficient, given that it is full of unrepairable holes. Along with the numerous references to the idea of the blank and of parenthesis, Raczymow expands the lexical field of nothingness through the ideas of the gap and of the hole. More specifically, he speaks of "a memory filled with holes and gaps, both symbolic and real" (Fine 45). This *mémoire trouée* is the Jewish nothingness that Raczymow wants to try to articulate in all its intricacies, in accordance with its own paradoxes. Because it is paradoxical, it is caught in yet another double bind: it is both present, through the narratives which spring forth and evolve around memory, as well as absent, considering that these refer to experiences lived by other people. The absence is more fully pronounced, since it encompasses blanks, parentheses in the shared narratives, due to the large gap which exists both in Jewish History and in the family history.

Writing shifts memory without remembrance ("la mémoire sans mémoire," ["La Mémoire trouée" 178]) into the space of creation, in the sense that it constructs something new out of a preexisting subject matter as well as constitutes a way to fill in a blank. Both relate to an articulation of the past. In his numerous essays, Raczymow continually emphasizes the role of writing in the process of moving from acting out a transmitted trauma to working through it,

initiating the slow completion of a process of mourning, "jusqu'au jour où ça passe" ("Histoire : Petit h et grande hache" 18). This process of change can be summarized as follows: while in "La Mémoire trouée," writing is about the attempt – impossible yet undertaken – to recreate a lost memory, what Raczymow refers to as a process of stitching together ("Mais, en fait, recoller les bouts, comme je le disais, c'est la tâche de tout écrivain. C'est une tâche par hypothèse indéfinie, une tâche impossible" ["La Mémoire trouée" 180]), it becomes clear in "Histoire : Petit h et grande hache" that the continuous act of writing has allowed for the progression and acceptance of "un passé qui ne passe pas" (18), a phrase charged with references, since it was first stated by Ernst Nolte and was later spread by Henry Rousso.[23] The process results in the understanding and acceptance of such a lacunar memory, and writing allows this transformation from attempting to fill in this blank to its acceptance.

If the state of memory after the event and writing are intrinsically linked for Raczymow, how does this translate into literary works? How is it possible for memory to be present in Raczymow's fiction despite it being riddled with holes? Moreover, how does writing help with the process of working through that Raczymow advocates and for which he seems to be searching? Raczymow works through synecdoches and palimpsests: he chooses to develop the subject of genocide around individuals whose existence is connected to the Shoah, connections which are similar to the ones he has with the traumatic event. These characters constitute the points of entry into the mnemonic processes present in *Un Cri sans voix*. Raczymow displays the intricacies of the abovementioned processes of filling in and acceptance through his writing. Moreover, his

[23] Henri Raczymow clarifies the origin of the phrase, which is usually attributed to French historian Henry Rousso, when explaining that writing allows for the passage from acting out to working through: "Je reprendrai volontiers à mon compte la célèbre formule du détestable Ernst Nolte, elle-même reprise par Henry Rousso à qui on l'attribue généralement: 'un passé qui ne passe pas', ou plutôt pour reprendre le titre exact de la conférence de Ernst Nolte de 1986, 'Un passé qui ne veut pas passer.'" (18).

characters are portrayed as performing a similar task: Esther Litvak was an aspiring writer, and her brother Mathieu Litvak ends up writing Esther's novel and her story as well as his own story and "prehistory" (to use one of Raczymow's terms). In this sense, writing is presented through a *mise en abyme* which also engenders paradoxical outcomes: it destabilizes the representation *and* permits transmission.

Because of its *mise en abyme*, *Un Cri sans voix* is a complex novel with a convoluted structure. The main character and narrator is Mathieu Litvak, who is both a "subject" of the novel and its author. The fictitious writer Mathieu tries to gain knowledge relating to his history and to remember his dead sister, Esther Litvak, who committed suicide in 1975. The novel's parts each pertain to a different stage of his quest, including the novel he writes in his sister's place, and the memorial quests of her story are intertwined with his story and their family's prehistory. The novel starts with a short self-reflective prologue (4 pages long) told from the point of view of Mathieu, the writer of the novel the reader is about to read. It is then divided into two parts of different lengths (indicated by Roman numerals): Part I (84 pages long) is the text written by Mathieu mentioned in the prologue; it is a sort of diary by/about Esther, a young woman living in the Warsaw Ghetto in Poland in the early 1940s. It is composed of different entries separated by asterisks, the lengths of which vary greatly (some are several pages long, while others are composed of only two lines). This part, written by Mathieu in 1982, is the book his sister Esther could have written; or rather, it is a book about the woman Esther would have liked to be and with whom she identified. This young woman, also called Esther, was twenty in 1940 (*Un Cri sans voix* 14).

Part II (107 pages long) is written from the point of view of Mathieu, and recounts his quest to understand his sister Esther and ultimately to uncover the story of his family. Part II is divided into three chapters (designated by Arabic numerals). Chapter 1 contains numerous sub-sections with titles in italics and solely recounts Mathieu's story, starting from his birth in 1948 until the

present of writing in 1982.[24] The main pronoun of this chapter is "il." Chapter 2 recounts Mathieu's family history, that is, Mathieu's prehistory, as well as the story of Simon P., Esther's ex-husband. This reconstruction is notably undertaken through the many interviews Mathieu conducts (with his father Charles, his uncle Avroum, etc.) and, therefore, the dominating pronoun is the "je" of the interviewer. Finally, Chapter 3 is somewhat different, as the narrator is Simon P. recounting Esther's last months before her suicide. There is one last part, an epilogue (only 2 pages long), though it is possible to consider it as pertaining to the last chapter of Part II, since there is no clear delimitation between them, except for the fact that it starts on a new page and there is a change of narrator (from Simon P. back to Mathieu the writer/narrator). Moreover, what I perceive to be an epilogue is reminiscent of the tone and style of the prologue, as it focuses on Mathieu's main endeavour, the writing of the book currently being read. The epilogue also deals with the future, namely, what is going to happen now that Mathieu's quest and novel are completed. Therefore, I would maintain that *Un Cri sans voix* is also paradoxical in its form: unified by a writer, Mathieu, and the common theme of absence, it is also characterized by this very absence in the shifts in its narrative points of view and its divisions.

The structure of the novel echoes the subjects broached, not only because of its complexity, but also because the different parts remain fragmentary. These come to symbolize the holes that characterize the second generation's memory, "la mémoire trouée." As in Raczymow's theoretical texts, his narrator Mathieu illustrates how memory can appear through writing around the holes left by the Holocaust and Jewish history. Words then allow the hole to exist without its expanding and swallowing more individuals. In a sense, Mathieu manages to finally scream with his voice, articulating his wounds in order to work through the loss of his sister and of a certain Jewishness.

[24] "Esther, ma sœur, une nuit de l'été 1982, sept ans après sa mort, ressuscita sous ma plume…" (*Un Cri sans voix* 14).

The numerous displacements through the synecdoches, blurring, and palimpsests used by Raczymow unveil the gaps that the representation of the Holocaust entails and creates. Nonetheless, he manages to utilize these gaps in his representation: it is through them and around them that a certain type of reconstruction is possible. Impossible to fill in, their emptiness paradoxically allows for meaning to appear. What *Un Cri sans voix* succeeds in showing is that the holes in memory reflect the very nature of it. It is through those holes that Esther comes to haunt the narrator/writer.

Remembering (around) Holes and Temporal Blanks

The blank that Raczymow refers to again and again remains uncertain, itself caught in the poetics of absence so representative of the author's literary universe: what is this blank that has had such grave consequences on contemporary Jewish people? Is it the Holocaust? Raczymow casts doubt on a clear answer by suggesting that "la Choah n'a rien à faire dans cette histoire" and that what is lost dates back to before the Holocaust. He suggests that Judaism itself has been lost, opening up the issue to a broader realm than that of an event: "Cette éternité perdue dont parle le poète [Bialik], c'est le judaïsme lui-même, du moins le judaïsme traditionnel. Et cela, pour les juifs ashkénazes, fut perdu dès avant la Choah et dès avant l'émigration vers l'Ouest" ("La Mémoire trouée" 178). The vagueness in distinguishing the reasons behind the supposed loss of Judaism seems fitting, as it emphasizes the ambiguity of pointing to a sole event, the genocide, as the culprit behind the blank. It also indicates an unsettled temporality through the complicated interrelation of the "before-past," the past, and their repercussions in the present and the future. Mounira Chatti refers to this as a sense of loss in cultural terms: "A l'origine de ce projet [le projet romanesque de l'auteur], la prise de conscience d'une perte: 'A trente ans, dit Raczymow, je me

découvris l'héritier d'une culture assassinée, celle des Juifs d'Europe orientale. Depuis cette découverte, ce monde à jamais englouti ne cesse de me hanter.'" (297). This loss is mentioned in general terms as well as in relation to its consequences for the present. Despite this causal blur in relation to temporality, the inscription of the event becomes primordial in *Un Cri sans voix*.

Following the introduction of a Jewish perspective and connection to his earlier idea of nothingness, Raczymow addresses different stages of Jewish life in Europe as well as different periods, often transitional ones, in *Un Cri sans voix*. The organization of this novel echoes the aforementioned blanks and the uncertainty regarding what has disappeared, when and why. The prologue's first word, Esther, introduces the subject of Part I. At the same time, the text directly relates Mathieu to Esther through the possessive adjective in "*ma* soeur aînée" [emphasis added] (11), indicating that he is the author of the first part. The epilogue specifically refers back to the main protagonist and narrator, Mathieu, as illustrated by the first pronoun utilized: "Voilà. Hier, *j*'ai enfin pu avouer…" [emphasis added] (213). With each character comes a story, along with specific concerns and questions, as illustrated by the epigraphs of Part I and Part II. These epigraphs are useful for determining both the storyline and its temporality. The first is a quote from *Les Bâtisseurs du temps*, published in 1951 by Abraham Joshua Heschel, a Jewish theologian born in Warsaw, Poland in 1907, who emigrated to the United States in 1940. Heschel analyzes the meaning of the Sabbath and how the holy day is a sanctification of time. However, what seems to be of importance here beside the fact that the Jewish religion has a certain temporal structure is the meticulous description of Eastern European Jewry with which Heschel starts. The epigraph itself conveys the idea that affliction and dismay are intrinsically linked to Jewish people from Eastern Europe, due to various historical events:

> *L'affliction leur était une seconde nature, et le vocabulaire du cœur se réduisait pour eux à un seul son :* Oï.[25] (15)

Part I of *Un Cri sans voix* also portrays another time period, that of the Warsaw Ghetto between 1940 and 1942, and is consequently concerned with a highly Jewish environment. It is also a story about Esther, or rather, it is a fictional tale of the past that Esther Litvak, born during the war, was obsessed with, without having experienced it. This obsession can be justified by the fact that she feels she could have experienced it, as she is a member of the 1.5 generation,[26] born during the war. The second part focuses on Mathieu, Esther's younger brother as well as the author of Esther's story and of her potential story in the Ghetto. His inquiry into the reasons behind his sister's suicide is set just after the conflict between Lebanon and Israel in 1982. The epigraph of Part II is a definition taken from *Le Petit Robert*, that of the sexton beetle (*nécrophore*), which attempts to illustrate as well as to explain, through a disturbing image, what Mathieu feels he is doing through his writing, as well as the complexities of his endeavor:

> *Le nécrophore est un insecte coléoptère qui enfouit des charognes, des cadavres de taupes, de souris, sur lesquels il pond ses œufs.* (103)

The dating through epigraphs establishes the time frame of each part; namely, the distant past in Poland and the present in France. However, both parts with their different narrative voices refer to other temporalities through personal recollections and reminiscence. This is especially true of Part II, in which Mathieu undertakes a quest investigating Esther's life and death, resorting to clues and conversations with members of the family. However, the fact that a reconstruction of the past is attempted points to its intrinsically lacunary nature. Flashbacks in the form of possibilities

[25] The quote appears at the beginning of *Les Bâtisseurs du temps* (10) in the context of the description of the Jew from Eastern Europe: "C'était un type d'homme unique que le Juif d'Europe orientale" (9). The exclamatory expression "Oï" conveys a sentiment of dismay and suffering. In *The Yiddish Dictionary Sourcebook*, "Oï" or "Oy," אוי in Yiddish characters, is translated as the interjection "Oh" in English and said to express pain, fright, and/or impatience (101).
[26] Defined by Susan R. Suleiman in her essay "The 1.5 Generation: Thinking about Child Survivors of the Holocaust" as individuals who were children during the Holocaust and who suffered its consequences without possessing the understanding of an adult.

appear recurrently; known occurrences are expressed in a disconnected manner. In fact, often, no answers seem to be adequate, notably because Esther has disappeared and cannot tell her story, a silence illustrated and amplified by the fact that she, herself, has erased all traces of her thoughts: "En tout cas, avant de mourir, elle avait tout détruit. Elle resterait une énigme, oui, et sur laquelle il serait vain de s'interroger" (119). This claim appears persistently in Mathieu's complicated and often unfruitful quest. The conversations he has with family members, in which they express their desire not to recall that painful past, echo the doubtful memories he himself remembers only in a blur.

In two sub-parts, titled "*Jeu*" (120) and "*Sur avant, encore*" (122), Mathieu stages the different responses to remembering Esther and the past in his family. In "*Jeu,*" he recounts an episode in which he and Esther are together in her bedroom, silent. This silence in which Mathieu observes his sister turns into an awkward, and perceived as insane, display of affection following a moment of insanity: he suddenly calls her name and wraps his arms around her. To his surprise, she returns his embrace. This moment of intimacy results in a sort of erotic occasion, an expression of his fascination for his older sister's body, in which he asks her if her breasts have milk. The moment is interrupted by their younger brother Yanick, who screams out of pure joy after having caught them in an intimate moment, a rare sight.[27] The incongruousness of the embrace and Mathieu's question, as well as Yanick's excessive response, cause the narrator to question the authenticity of the episode. The part ends with the affirmation of the likelihood that it must have been a dream: "Oui, Mathieu a dû rêver" (122). The last sentence breaks the flow of Mathieu's

[27] Yanick's sentiment of elation is reinforced by the fact that Esther seems to dislike Yanick and often acts rashly and unfriendly toward him. The description of Esther's feelings for her younger brother Yanick starts the sub-part "*Jeu*": "Yanick, Dieu sait pourquoi, elle semble le detester. Parfois, elle le prend dans ses bras, mais on dirait qu'elle lui veut du mal, qu'elle s'apprête à l'étouffer. Les caresses qu'elle lui prodigue ressemblent étrangement à des meurtrissures" (120).

recollection: no previous hints that the event has been fabricated have appeared when suddenly, with a few words, the whole experience is questioned, almost annihilated. The game is one between Esther and Mathieu as well as between reality and fiction in the act of remembrance, with one emanating from the other. The complex relationship between two siblings seems to represent, or even mimic, the transformations of an event through the process of remembrance. No event is remembered exactly as it happened, as the passage of time changes its imprint on the mind, and the versions of others add to and shift its initial understanding.

The sudden emergence of doubt at the end of "*Jeu*" introduces the resistance and approximations present in "*Sur avant, encore*." Following his own recollections, Mathieu narrates his plea to his mother Fanny to remember Esther. Above all, he wants to hear about his mother's past and to know how Esther was before his birth, alluding to moments he has not lived and which he cannot construct (remember?) by himself. This part is very short, because Mathieu's mother agrees to tell him what he wants to know, and yet, avoids doing so by stating that he already knows all of this. The sentences at the end are short, unfinished and illustrate the unsaid parts of a traumatic family history: "Ce n'est pas comme si elle [Fanny] avait été… Non, elle est quand même revenue avec Esther ! Elle n'a pas été… enfin, il sait bien quoi. Il sait bien… Non, il ne. Ah oui, il sait quoi." (122). The ellipses show the interruption of meaning, as well as how close it comes to erasure and the consequent non-transmissions that result from this. Mathieu's mother refuses to name the event, reinforcing the blur pertaining to loss at the core of Raczymow's work. What goes unsaid is the Holocaust, which has had enormous repercussions on the Litvak family, both for members born during it (like Esther, who was born in 1943) and after it (like Mathieu).

As Mathieu's mother cannot name the Holocaust, she comes to emblematize a recurrent process of silencing in *Un Cri sans voix*. The suppression of the name becomes the regulating force of the novel: it influences its organization by governing the division into two parts. The first part

is set during World War II and refers to the years in the Warsaw Ghetto before deportation; the second part concerns the years after, and is set from the point of view of Mathieu and his narrative time period. Between the two parts are forty years – from 1942 to 1982 – and a blank page (102): the extermination. The textual link between the two temporalities is Bari the dog, which appears at the end of Part I and at the beginning of Part II. Bari, the dog of an S.S. officer at Treblinka extermination camp, constitutes an allegory of the Holocaust, and is the reference that comes the closest to naming the actual event. In Part I, Bari threatens to bite Esther and therefore incites Esther to bite him first. In Part II, the associations are clear, as Bari the dog links the lost Yiddish world with that of Nazi Germany: "Il songe alors que *Lalka* était le surnom de Kurt Franz, un S.S. de Treblinka. Il avait un chien féroce, Bari. Et que *Lialka*, c'est poupée en Yiddish." (106). Along with the act of associating two worlds (Yiddish and Nazi), this sort of extended metaphor[28] also joins the two distinct movements of the novel narratively, structurally, and thematically. The blank between these two points of reference functions as a mirror and establishes a correlation of symbols between the Esther of 1942 as recounted by Mathieu and the subsequent ("real," so to speak) Esther that Mathieu is seeking and trying to understand.

The multiplicity of the character of Esther is further emphasized by the fact that she is not solely double, but actually triple. Behind the figure of Esther, Mathieu's sister, and her fictional alter ego, the ancestor Esther Tenenbaum is present. Mathieu's sister Esther-Rose[29] was named

[28] Bari the dog appears in other parts of the novel and introduces links between time periods, serving as a connection to the war for Esther ("Tiens, dit-elle, regarde. Cette morsure-là, tu vois, c'est un chien S.S. qui me l'a faite. Il s'appelait Bari chien-loup, ce chien. Un chien de là-bas, très cruel, qui mordait les déportés quand ils arrivaient," when recounting her imagined life to Mathieu when they were young [128]) as well as for Mathieu ("Sur le bureau de M. Salluste, Mathieu remarqua le portrait encadré d'un chien berger allemand. Il lui demanda si c'était le sien. C'était, oui. Bari…" [139] when visiting his superior's office after being promoted). Bari is also a way for Mathieu to relate to his sister Esther, as Bari is the name of a dog in a book written by James Oliver Curwood, a novel that his sister loved as a child (140). Consequently, this also shows that in Esther's mind, Bari the S.S. dog and Bari the German shepherd connected the camps to her own childhood.

[29] The apposition of Rose to the name Esther in this text is intended to help in the distinction between the three characters. It refers to the name that was to be given to Esther (Mathieu's sister) before her father Charles changed his

after her mother's sister, who was deported in 1942, in conformity with the Jewish custom of naming infants after a dead relative, which after the war often meant one who was murdered in the Holocaust. Helen Epstein has highlighted this phenomenon in *Children of the Holocaust*, and examines its recurrence in terms of the passing on of a traumatic and unspoken legacy, often incomprehensible to children and leaving them with the burden of replacing an individual and trying to live like them and instead of them (24, 56, 170). Raczymow, in a one of his most personal essays, mentions that he himself was named after his uncle Henri, who perished during the war, and that consequently, he had to "replace" a lost child:

> Sa mère à elle [*Raczymow's grandmother*] avait un fils, Henri, qui était mort en déportation, à l'âge de vingt ans. Quand je suis né, il était évident qu'on m'appellerait Henri, en raison du prénom de l'autre fils, mort à Majdanek. Cette identification alla bien plus loin. Ma mère me donna à sa mère, qui me réclamait, pour remplacer l'autre, son fils Henri. ("Histoire : Petit h et grande hache" 21)

Raczymow emphasizes the confusion between two sons, one of whom is dead whereas the other is alive, and that his birth became a compensation for his grandmother's previous loss. In this sense, he has become a perpetual reminder of the absence of the other.[30] Similarly, the superimposition of the two Esthers emerges as a representation of the presence of absence.[31]

The three figures of Esther present in *Un Cri sans voix* – Esther Tenenbaum, Esther-Rose (Mathieu's sister), and the fictive Esther – are connected through the novel's time periods. Esther Tenenbaum was deported along with her mother (Mathieu's grandmother) in mid-July of 1942

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mind at the last minute: "Esther est née le 2 août 1943. Charles se rendit à la mairie pour déclarer l'enfant. Ils étaient convenus de la prénommer Rose, à cause de Raïsl, la mère de Charles. Au retour, Rose s'appelait Esther" (178).

[30] This is a recurrent concern in Raczymow's works. In his latest book, *Mélancolie d'Emmanuel Berl* (2015), the author writes about the French writer and intellectual Emmanuel Berl. He focuses on the question of identity: for Berl, his identity was the negation of all identities. This was notably due to the fact that he was named after his uncle and that his life was intended to make up for the death of the other Emmanuel as well as that of his cousin (Henri Franck): "Ces morts-là, qui le constituent, qu'il porte en lui, tel un nécrophore. Ces morts qu'il ne peut atteindre, pas seulement certes parce qu'ils ne sont plus, mais parce qu'il est, qu'il se juge, insuffisant" (68). For Berl, it was a struggle between death and life, between deference and inadequacy.

[31] "Fanny et Charles attendirent le retour de Rywka et d'Esther. Esther-Rose grandit dans cette attente. Elle dut participer à cette attente. Au contraire de la combler, de l'apaiser, d'en matérialiser l'illusion, la vanité, elle dut être, par son seul nom, la présence même, patente, visible, bruyante, de l'absence" (*Un Cri sans voix* 195).

during the Vel' d'Hiv Roundup (158); the fictive Esther's story in the Warsaw Ghetto is principally set in 1942 and ends with what one assumes is the death or deportation of the young woman in the summer of 1943; and Esther-Rose was born in August of 1943. Temporality does not directly link Esther-Rose and her aunt, the woman she was named after, as Esther-Rose was born more or less one year after her aunt's deportation and death. I believe that the fictive Esther comes to join the two real Esthers, as her diary starts before Esther Tenenbaum's disappearance and ends, supposedly, on the day of Esther-Rose's birth. The fictive Esther fills in, so to speak, the blank that separates Esther-Rose and Esther Tenenbaum; she is a temporal connector. Esther-Rose, knowing that she can never know and make up for the family's loss, identifies with another, imagined woman who died in the Treblinka uprising on the exact same day she was born. In a single paragraph of Chapter 1 of Part II, titled "*Un numéro*," the three Esthers are connected. The paragraph recounts the day Mathieu noticed a number on Esther's arm: he asked about it, and his sister answered that it was the number that was tattooed on the arms of deportees when they arrived at the camps. Mathieu then wonders if she was deported and Esther replies that, indeed, she was: "Oui, elle a été. Au camp de Treblinka en Pologne" (128). By evoking deportation, Esther points to the fate of her aunt, and through her naming of the camp, she alludes to the woman with whom she identifies, the woman wearing a cap in the photo she keeps in her bedroom: "C'est moi là, sur la photo. Et cette casquette, là, que je porte, regarde, je l'ai toujours" (128). In the following sub-section, "*Se taire*," Mathieu affirms that only survivors have the right to speak of the concentration camps, and as a result, he questions Esther-Rose's own right to speak: "Mais elle, Esther ? Quelle souffrance et quel deuil?" (129). I would suggest that the suffering and mourning Mathieu refers to is to be found in the name she shares with her dead ancestor and its signifiers: the name bears the ghost of Esther Tenenbaum; it calls for a due and for replacement. This substitution is undertaken by both Esther-Rose and Mathieu through imaginative investment. In the end, the

fictive Esther remains a tool in the complex relation established between Esther Tenenbaum and Esther-Rose.

The merging of the dead Esther who perished in the Holocaust with the descendent Esther functions like an allegory. Allegory is a literary device which "consiste à substituer au véritable objet dont on veut parler un objet différent, mais semblable, au moins à plusieurs égards, et à laisser aisément découvrir l'intention du discours par le secours d'idées accessoires" (Vapereau 59). Because they contain a double meaning, allegories are ambivalent; Angus Fletcher claims that "there is clearly a disjunction of meanings" (18) involved. The idea of disjunction is relevant, since it involves a gap between two meanings. This gap further shields the secondary meaning from view, thus obscuring it (Fletcher 220). In *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, Walter Benjamin draws a picture of allegory around this idea of a gap, what Paul de Man refers to "as a void 'that signifies precisely the non-being of what it represents'" (Benjamin qtd. in de Man, *Blindness and Insight* 35). From duality to void, allegories point to the fragmentation of a subject matter that is constantly concealed and kept out of sight. Therefore, while the Holocaust is not named directly, the naming of someone after an other is almost like its reflection or mirror image: it is an unfaithful substitution that cannot take the place of the other. Ultimately, it expresses inadequacy and the inability to fully articulate what has been lost.

The problems related to naming illustrate the absence, both literal and figurative, that seems to swallow survivors and their families. In Chapter 2 of Part II, this absence is referred to as a hole that cannot be filled and which expands over the years, forming a sea:

> Le cercle de famille élargit le trou en son milieu. Le cercle de famille décrivait le pourtour d'un trou. Un trou que rien ni le temps ne combleraient. […] plus le cercle s'agrandissait, plus le trou, eu centre, s'élargissait. Un jour, il deviendrait vaste comme la mer. […] Peut-être, songe Mathieu, Esther s'est-elle tuée pour faire en sorte que le cercle cesse de s'agrandir, que les bords du trou se resserrent, qu'on n'oublie pas qu'il y eut, qu'il y a encore là un trou. Qu'on n'oublie pas qu'ils viennent, eux, de ce trou, de cette mer de cendres. Qu'une génération entière de Juifs est née de ce trou, de cette mer-là. (195-196)

The conception of memory filled with holes takes on its full significance in this excerpt, which ends the second chapter of Part II. It involves two of the main concerns of *Un Cri sans voix*. First of all, it addresses how the deficient memory formally inscribes itself within the text. The hole that is described in the quote above is a presence that signifies an absence, thus connoting both death and life. This paradoxical duality, a condition endured by members of the second generation, characterizes the structure of the text and its organization around a hole. For Mathieu, writing becomes a way of surrounding the hole and, like Esther's suicide, a way to seemingly contain the expansion of its edges, hence the mirror organization of the text. The base, what I have referred to as a mirror above, is the blank that the Holocaust appears to be, for his family, for Jewish people, and for others. It is the Holocaust as well as a certain breakdown, a failure of memory (168).[32] Mounira Chatti, in her essay "Le Palimpseste ou une poétique de l'absence-présence," refers to the Shoah as a hiatus that requires a temporal re-composition: "La fissure de la Shoah a recomposé le temps et la géographie. Le temps est brisé : au centre de l'*avant* et de l'*après*, il est un hiatus" (297). While writing cannot completely fill in the hiatus that the Holocaust constitutes, it can instead surround it, verbalizing it through fragments and palimpsests: "De l'effacement, il devra extraire de la trace; du néant, il devra tirer de l'être" (Chatti 297). Therefore, the shifts in time periods echo the thematic shifts that Mathieu uses in order to express that blank, through various types of displacements (temporal, lexical, etc.).

Secondly, the hole completes the likening of Esther to the Holocaust, notably through death. It directly exemplifies one of these displacements: in order to write the story of a certain lost

[32] After Simon P. recounts a conversation between a survivor and a Polish man when the former returned years later to the concentration camp he was deported to, Mathieu mentions the existence of a blank and questions its nature: "Entre ce 'touriste' juif […] et ce paysan polonais […], il y a un blanc. C'est quoi, ce blanc ? Une défaillance de la mémoire ? Un million de livres qui raconteraient la vie de ce camp-là ne suffiraient pas à combler cette absence, à faire que ce Polonais-là recouvre la mémoire" (168).

Jewishness and the Holocaust, Mathieu resorts to telling the story of his sister. He operates based on a transposition; in other words, through allegorical writing. The palimpsest of writing replaces the story of the Holocaust, an event Mathieu has not lived through, with the life of his sister, a member of his family with whom he grew up. He writes what he remembers in order to address what he cannot, transforming silence into words. Mathieu directly connects the symbolism and the significance of Esther's death with that of the Jews killed in the Holocaust: "Il s'était laissé peu à peu pénétrer par la réalité enfin par lui reconnue du suicide de sa sœur, et cet événement, pour lui, était comme la réplique en miniature de ce que le peuple juif avait vécu quarante ans plus tôt" (138).[33] It is possible to argue that, for Mathieu, similar forces have caused this type of extermination, and that a single death comes to represent the death of millions. Mathieu uses this type of synecdochical reinvestment to produce a literary work that can address both cases of disappearance. The displacement of victims is also carried out through a temporal shift: an event that occurred before Mathieu's birth can resonate during his lifetime. It is partly through the life and death of Esther that Mathieu connects himself and his story to the Holocaust, articulating a memory with an additional degree of remoteness, what Marianne Hirsch calls "postmemory." Mathieu's writing is enabled through a synecdoche that bridges three versions of Esther and two time periods: the fictitious Esther of 1942 (imagined by the narrator Mathieu) and his aunt Esther during the Holocaust, the unknown past, and the real Esther of the postwar period, the known past. Ultimately, the temporal blurring allows for connections and permits memorial writing.

[33] The same connection is established in the prologue of *Un Cri sans voix*: "et que cette sœur, ce fantôme, était pour moi comme la déléguée d'autres fantômes. Des fantômes qui, au moment même où naissait Esther, se reconnaissaient au pyjama rayé qui revêtait le fil de fer tordu de leur corps" (14).

Shifts in Narrative Voices

The multiplicity inherent to the character(s) of Esther illustrates the plurality of narrative voices in *Un Cri sans voix*. While Mathieu remains the main narrative force behind the different parts of the novel, other voices are also present. The first part of the text develops the story of a fictitious Esther; it is technically the book of Esther. As explained by Annelise Schulte Nordholt, the genitive underscores a duality in terms of its relation to Esther, as it is both a book about Esther as well as the novel that she potentially would have written: "C'est Mathieu, son jeune frère, qui va écrire le 'roman d'Esther.' Double génétif : il s'agit à la fois d'un roman *sur* Esther, dont elle constitue le sujet, et de *son* roman, du roman qu'elle aurait voulu écrire" (133), and this duality appears concretely in Part I. Esther is the main character of Part I: in the form of a diary, this part portrays the daily life of Esther in the Warsaw Ghetto starting in 1942. The first diary entry expresses this desire to write and to keep track of the present. It also calls for a future, that of being a writer, hence justifying "Esther's" enterprise (which is fictional even in the novel, as Mathieu is the one writing). However, the narration is complicated because of the levels of imagination involved: Mathieu imagines the story of the fictitious Esther as his sister Esther would have envisioned it, which implies that it does not solely pertain to Esther, the supposed source and subject of the journal. In fact, the whole diary doubles itself in a perpetual game between two pronouns, the autobiographical and deictic "I" (*je*) traditionally associated with the diary format, along with the objective and anaphoric "she" (*elle*). This continuous change of pronouns reveals two possibilities as to the act of writing: that the pronouns "I" and "she" are both used by Esther to designate herself in her own diary, or that there is an alternation between "she" pointing to the act of writing by Mathieu (imagining what his sister would have written) and "je" as belonging to the diary. Moreover, the co-existence of "je" and "elle" also points to the sort of identification

performed by Esther Litvak, who associated herself with the image of a young woman living in the Warsaw Ghetto, therefore raising an insoluble question as to whom these pronouns actually designate (the fictitious Esther or Esther Litvak). There exists a clash between the pronouns that narrate and the ones that are narrated, an unresolved tension and uncertainty that come to define and illustrate the whole process of the first part of *Un Cri sans voix*.

The first sentence of Part I introduces the first name of the main protagonist: "C'est nerveux sans doute: Esther 's'amuse' à dessiner des lignes ovales…" (17). However, the fact that the name is followed by a verb conjugated in the third person unsettles the reader. Indeed, it transgresses the diary format, placing at its core the third person pronoun instead of the traditional "I." Esther seems to become a paradox, since she appears to be the written subject of her own diary. The dominance of the anaphoric pronoun "elle" demonstrates the connection that "she" has with Mathieu, that of re-creation and writing. The fact that the diary has been written *a posteriori* by a third party, and is therefore invented, adds another degree of remoteness innate to the act of writing. In "La Diaspora des cendres," Nadine Fresco points out the difficulty of writing the story of another person and has underlined the "crazy" aspect behind such an attempt: "Les préserver de leur mort ce serait aussi se transformer en scribe *fou*, greffier obsessionnel de leurs pensées perdues…" [emphasis added] (214). In *Un Cri sans voix*, the emergence of this third person approach in a diary illustrates the madness and almost senselessness of writing. Unsurprisingly, this madness consumed Esther[34] for many years, and along with unbearable guilt, led her to silence: it either prevented her from writing or resulted in madness and the destruction of all her writing.

[34] In the prologue, Esther is described by her brother as being "sick": "Esther était une 'malade,' et la raison de sa 'maladie' c'était la guerre" (13). The use of the words "sick" and "sickness" can actually refer to this idea of madness, as in French, "être malade" can be used as a synonym for (and as a more informal version of) the expression "être fou." Later in the novel, at the beginning of Part II, the state of being "malade" is further associated with being "douée," and is directly linked to reading and writing (107).

The sentiment of a certain type of madness emerges sporadically in Part I: while third person pronouns predominate as the main narrative voice, first person pronouns are also present. They interrupt the main narration, going back and forth between internal and external narrators, thus disrupting referentiality. In Part I, the first appearance of the first person is directly linked to the act of writing: "La mienne, je le lui ai répété: devenir un écrivain" (20). The possessive pronoun "mienne" (referring to "ambition") and the subject pronoun "je" mark the resumption of the narration by Esther herself. The following sentence starts with the reminder that Esther is only a character in the text, with her once again becoming a third person reference: "*Esther* et Szymon s'amusent à comparer leurs ambitions respectives…" [emphasis added] (20). The play between writer and narrator, and between the use of the first and third person point of view, complicates the writing of the book of Esther that Mathieu claims to have undertaken. It is as if Mathieu's writing process, namely, the creation of Esther's book and his own writing, is contaminated by his sister. In a sense, the usurpation is double: it is Mathieu's, as he is writing the book of his sister, as well as Esther's, as the text she would have liked to write is the appropriation of an experience she has longed for and with which she has identified.

Part II and its sub-sections pertaining to Mathieu also display the same alternation of pronouns. While the pronoun "il" is used for Chapter 1, "je" appears in Chapter 2. I would argue that the same play on referentiality is undertaken: it remains unclear who is actually writing Part II, and thus who is a "character" in the text. While in Part I, the reader does not know if the change in pronoun is the work of the fictive Esther (pertaining to a diary format) or that of the actual writer Mathieu (thus being a narrative); in Part II, the reader is uncertain as to who has ultimately written about Mathieu's inquiry into his sister's past and his "before-past." Indeed, in the prologue,

Mathieu only arrogates the writing of Esther's novel, that is, the diary-narrative of Part I,[35] and says nothing about the rest of the novel. The recurrent uncertainty in authorial figure points to usurpation and the paradox that qualifies the second generation; it emblematizes them and transcribes them concretely in writing. First of all, this is because the existence of both the first and third person pronouns conveys the consequences of transgenerational trauma, which is especially important since the shift in pronouns is a recurring trope in the literature produced by *superstites*.[36] Furthermore, the ambiguity at the core of a piece of writing by a member of the second generation illustrates the process of identification which is performed and the appropriation that cannot be carried out, which constitutes a point of great importance in the case of Esther Litvak. Whether in the case of Esther or Mathieu, it is unclear who ends up writing whose story, and this very ambiguity characterizes the act of writing by an indirect witness.[37]

These usurpations recall the epigraph of Part II, which comes directly after the end of Esther's diary, considering that the image of the sexton beetle (*nécrophore*) can actually describe both Litvaks. Esther has taken the place of a female victim with whom she identifies and who experienced the Holocaust, performing a sort of direct connection with the dead aunt she must live for, while Mathieu has taken his dead sister's place as a writer and as a way to relate to the Holocaust. This appropriation causes an overbearing feeling of culpability: the guilt of not having lived through the Holocaust, the guilt of longing for such an experience, and the guilt of speaking for and instead of someone else. This sentiment of guilt justifies Ellen Fine's statement that "the

[35] "Esther, ma sœur, une nuit de l'été 1982, sept ans après sa mort, ressuscita sous ma plume sous d'autres traits que je lui inventais, qui n'étaient pas ceux de la jeune fille que j'avais côtoyée des années durant, mais côtoyée seulement, les traits d'un personnage auquel peut-être elle avait rêvé, pour lequel elle se prenait, une jeune fille qui avait vingt ans en 1940. Comme une de la photo" (14).

[36] As, for instance, in Jorge Semprun's *Le Grand Voyage*, Aharon Appelfeld's *The Age of Wonders*, Charlotte Delbo's *La Mémoire et les jours* to cite only a few.

[37] I would also maintain that it symbolizes the "blank" that ought to be expressed and which cannot be articulated because of its very nature, as examined in the first part of this chapter.

book of Esther becomes the book of guilt," juxtaposing it to the general experience of the second generation: "the guilt of the second generation, for having been excluded, and the guilt of the writer for putting himself in someone else's skin" (55). Fine goes even further by suggesting that Mathieu is a thief, as he steals Esther's life, her death, and her book. Like a *nécrophore*, he feeds off her, using her death to create. This reversal – the destruction of death turned into literary creation, what Raczymow describes as a "désir trouble" which is "double, contradictoire et pourtant identique désir de vie et de mort" (145) – echoes the paradoxical duality of the experiences of the second generation, and above all, the story of Esther, including her birth just after her aunt's disappearance, and hence the concordance between a birth and a death. The image of the sexton beetle, which comes to symbolize Mathieu's act of writing his sister's book, actually permits memory. The second part of *Un Cri sans voix* illustrates this: it recounts his dead sister's story, giving her back the presence she lost.

Before examining the restoration and reaffirmation of Esther's existence, or at least the presence of her absence, I would like to further connect the powerful image of the *nécrophore* with the situation of the second generation. The emphasis on this image indicates that the comparison with the sexton beetle symbolizes the contradictory situation of the generation, namely that of in-betweenness. As the bearer of life through death, the sexton beetle seems almost *abject* in its mixing of two opposite forces through the reversal of their connotations. Interestingly, the notion of the abject can transform a literal image into a figurative position. As neither subject nor object, the abject offers a theoretical in-between space of ambiguity, notably designating a territory with mobile and slippery boundaries. In her 1980 essay *Pouvoirs de l'horreur*, Julia Kristeva states that the abject is a mechanism that is unclear, with no distinct object, and is therefore characterized by ambiguity: "Frontière sans doute, l'abjection est surtout ambiguïté" (17). Ambiguity is brought out and experienced as rejection, horror, and disgust, or a blurring of inside and outside. The image of

the *nécrophore* both disgusts by the ways through which the insect creates life (using the corpses of other insects and animals to feed itself and its larvae) as well as blurs the distinction between life and death, a sort of "colonisation de la vie par la mort" (Fresco 209), or even "la vie d'après" (210). The fact that Mathieu uses the image of the *nécrophore* in relation to the act of writing the book of Esther (Part I) and writing her story (Part II) shows that a certain sentiment of abjection ensues from such appropriation. Moreover, this abject clearly, and even adequately, further portrays the ambiguous position of the second generation writer: out of death, he or she creates; out of a blank, he or she attempts to fill in through imagination and writing.

Mathieu's writing of an imaginary book which is potentially Esther's needs to be put into the overall perspective of his desire to reconstruct her story, his memories of her, and her position in the Litvak family. Part I remains dependent on Part II: through Mathieu's frenetic quest, Esther is revived. Part II portrays the slow reconstruction of both Esther's story and Mathieu's story in relation to his sister, because writing appears above all to be a question of the complex relations that exist between forgetting and silence. At the beginning of *Un Cri sans voix*, Mathieu even goes as far as stating that Esther's life and death were a void, a lapse of nothingness that allowed his family to live on: "Ce fut davantage encore que l'oubli: rien n'avait eu lieu" (11-12). This "nothing" echoes the Jewish "nothingness" that Raczymow tries to express through his novels, and a similar enterprise pushes Mathieu to rediscover his sister. As emphasized above, Esther's existence allows for an attempt to articulate the Holocaust in writing. Moreover, I believe that this synecdoche expands itself by adding different parts in order to express the (w)hole that constitutes the Holocaust.

Indeed, the second part of Raczymow's novel deals with Mathieu's inquiry into his sister's life and death. At the beginning of Part II, Mathieu imagines that all the members of the family are united: "Ils sont bien là, tous au grand complet" (105). He continues: "la maman ourse, le papa

ours, l'aînée oursonne et les deux oursons" (105). This description, which appears under the sub-title "*Un rêve*," metaphorically presents the aim of Mathieu's search: the reunification of his family, as well as a certain understanding of his family's past. The connections with the Holocaust are clearly stated, as Mathieu shows his collection of artifacts, "vestiges des camps nazis" (106). These objects appear as the starting point of Mathieu's collection, one that will transform itself into a re-collection. They become the fragments of his memory and of other people's memories. This synecdoche becomes plural; palimpsests conduct memory; and all of these processes regulate the form and content of Part II.

As already mentioned, sub-sections with titles organize Chapter 1 of the second part of *Un Cri sans voix*. They deal with a specific story or character; no transitions and no real connections between the content have to exist to link one sub-section to another.[38] However, the second chapter of Part II seems to return to a diary-like format with entries, mimicking the layout of the first part, given that an asterisk separates each sub-section. Chapter 2 deals with Mathieu's reconstitution of his family's history. Starting with the night his mother's family was arrested, on July 16th, 1942, Mathieu slowly narrates from the beginning: Fanny's (his mother) life after having escaped arrest that night, how the Jews were deported, how Fanny met Charles (his father), etc. He also introduces several influential voices: those of Fanny and Charles, as well as those of Simon P., Esther's husband, and Uncle Avroum. The same lack of connection regulates the appearance of each voice in the text, as one narrates after the other.

Chapter 2 starts with Mathieu's voice, which is clearly identified. Nonetheless, the other voices start to interrupt the narrator and author. First, the author introduces each voice, specifying

[38] While Esther appears to be the storyline that should link them all, it is often broken, as certain parts only pertain to Mathieu (for instance, the sub-part "*La pièce*" [134]). Of course, this only reinforces the dichotomic connection established between the two.

who is speaking, like in the first entry in which Simon suddenly expresses his vision: "'Toi-même l'as dit, avance Simon. Il ne s'agissait pas…'" (156). One can observe the change in narration through the use of quotation marks and words suggesting the act of speaking, in this case, the verb "avancer" (to advance, and therefore to claim as well as to bring forward). Slowly, the quotation marks disappear. The following sub-section has none, although it is still Simon speaking, as indicated by the verb "raconter," which appears in the first sentence: "Il est arrivé, raconte Simon, que, dans un camp don't j'ai oublié le nom, on amène des soldats soviétiques jusque devant la baraque des douches" (157). The paragraph spoken by Simon is followed by a return to Fanny's story without any formatting or textual indications. The lack of connectors to indicate the change in point of view and in focalizing character or narrator becomes more widespread as Chapter 2 progresses. Verbal indicators of the action of speaking along with a name are either integrated into the story ("C'était, dit Charles, une toute petite rue…" [164]) or appear before the paragraph, separated from it ("Charles raconte : // Chez les Goldberg…" [166]). It usually remains clear which story is recounted and by whom. The entry format and the changes in narrative voice illustrate the quest undertaken by Mathieu to reconstitute his family's history. They also underscore the fragmentary nature of this quest: each entry deals with a story and a memorial reconstruction which are pieced together by the narrator/author.

However, the aforementioned indications slowly vanish as several voices appear in the same paragraph and complicate the task of recognizing the source of the locution. In one entry (which starts on page 177), Mathieu's voice is mixed with Avroum's voice. It is possible to witness a rapid shift from one voice to the next. The first paragraph starts with Avroum's name ("L'oncle Avroum cherche dans ses papiers…") while the main narrator is Mathieu himself. The third person (referring to Avroum) and first person pronouns (referring to Mathieu) are combined. However, in the third paragraph, both pronouns coexist, with both referring to Uncle Avroum: "Il a trouvé.

Voilà, j'ai été arrêté le 19 novembre 1942. Conduit à *la Santé*. J'étais en infraction à la loi." Two pronouns are present in a single (short) paragraph: initially, "il" refers to Avroum (as well as in the continuation of the two previous paragraphs), and afterwards, it suddenly becomes "je" when Avroum talks about his story and his arrest in 1942. The next pronoun, two paragraphs later, becomes "il" once again in reference to Avroum: "Il cherche dans ses papiers."[39] "Je" follows directly, though it now designates Mathieu: "N'aurais-je pas dû me munir de deux cassettes plutôt que d'une ?" This game of pronouns and therefore of references continues, with "je" referring to either Mathieu or Avroum without any clear indication of who is speaking. In fact, the pronoun "je" is deictic and has no stable referent, since it designates the person who is speaking and therefore shifts depending on the speaker. The referent of "je" establishes itself through the act of locution, through direct discourse. Because of this, the blurring and shifting of the narrative voice illustrate the ways in which a family's story is transmitted, and more specifically, how Mathieu reconstructs such a transmission. The blurring of narration appears to be dependent on the temporal blank, as Mathieu reconstructs a narrative around and despite the blank, many years after it, a narrative that has been postponed because of the blank.

This process of memorial recomposition manifest in the form and in the content of the text illustrates the very nature of memory for the second generation. Similar to different entries in which several narrative voices emerge, it is fragmented. This fragmentation is plural: firstly, it is composed of different voices and various memories. Individual memory rarely exists as such; it is shaped by others' accounts of specific events, hence the importance of the family in building a person's memory. In *Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, published in 1925, French philosopher

[39] It is interesting to note that the same sentence appears twice on the same page (as well as here, as it was just cited above). This repetition of "[Il/Avroum] cherche dans ses papiers" (177) highlights the need for Uncle Avroum to check his papers to develop reminders and ways of accessing a distant memory, one that has also probably been compartmentalized.

and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs highlights the interconnection between the individual and the group by stating that individual memory does not exist. It is always necessarily plural, constructed and influenced by external forces:

> Si nous examinons de quelle façon nous nous souvenons, nous reconnaîtrions que le plus grand nombre de nos souvenirs nous reviennent lorsque nos parents, nos amis, ou d'autres hommes nous les rappellent. [...] Il n'y a pas à chercher où sont les souvenirs, où ils se conservent, dans mon cerveau, ou dans quelque réduit de mon esprit où j'aurais seul accès, puisqu'ils me sont rappelés du dehors, et que les groupes dont je fais partie m'offrent à chaque instant les moyens de les reconstruire. (vi)

Individual memory can never be "pure" so to speak, a fact that points to phenomena of transmission and of indirectness, as well as of temporal delay. Halbwachs continues by emphasizing the importance of the family unit in the perpetuation of a memory through norms and transmission. He maintains that the family is a community that has a memory, and that familial transmission remains essential for the construction of a person's individual memory. This interdependence justifies the presence of various voices in the section that Mathieu devotes to his family's history, what Raczymow refers to as its "préhistoire," the history reconstructed in order to explain Esther's death along with her silencing and oblivion. The plurality of voices illustrates the very process of memorial construction, which is the result of the quest undertaken by Mathieu. Ellen Fine alludes to a link between "to remember" and "to write" in *Un Cri sans voix* in relation to fragmentation, as memory is created "[w]ith filtered fragments of other people's memories" (46). However, "to remember" occurs as a necessarily active process, one that needs to be constructed as opposed to taking place passively. Mathieu needs to make use of his community in order to rebuild his individual memory and to "remember" Esther – through writing, of course. Ultimately, plurality is what restores Esther's story.

Furthermore, the fragmentation is also temporally delayed, as demonstrated above. The process of reconstruction – which needs to be activated – happens years after the events that have

created the void. In this sense, the prefix "post-" used by Marianne Hirsch in her description of the concept of "postmemory" seems adequate in expressing the remoteness of such a memorial building process. Hirsch primarily utilizes "post-" to illustrate the action of "remembering" events that an individual has not experienced, in particular from a distant point in time. Mathieu emphasizes this very time interval in this text: he is carrying out the reconstruction of a *pre*history, undertaken as an agent of *post*memory. One could say that the prefix "post-" is redundant, since memory is something that appears after an experience and which evolves over time. On this subject, the Argentinian Beatriz Sarlo suggests that the memory of the second generation should not be modified by the prefix "post-," as memory is a mediated process to begin with: "La cuestión es si la cualidad 'post' diferencia la memoria de otras reconstrucciones. […] La primera [razón] es que se trata de una memoria vicaria y mediada" (*Tiempo pasado* 135). Consequently, according to Sarlo, the prefix "post-" has a somewhat hyperbolic quality to it. Since, as Halbwachs suggests, memory is always already composite and influenced, and is therefore fragmented, I would suggest that the particle "post-," as its first definition conveys, is more adequately described as an affirmation of a temporal delay suffered. In *Un Cri sans voix*, the fragmentation in the form, through different voices and across various time periods, refers to a construction process undertaken *a posteriori*, in 1982, years after the events took place. Even the mourning of the death of Esther is delayed, as Mathieu needs to be reminded of the presence of her absence to start his search and process of remembrance. Mathieu's particular construction of postmemory is more forcefully engaged than any "normal" memorial processes. Furthermore, the temporal gap undoubtedly highlights a difference*/différance*. Mathieu's writing accentuates the peculiar temporality that underscores his memory, the gaps and delays he needs to write around in order to reconstruct his past, the past of Esther, and inevitably, the Holocaust.

Remnants of the Past: Memory and Forgetting as Cinders

In *Un Cri sans voix*, Henri Raczymow uses a poetics of absence in relation to memory and history. This absence is that of an individual, Esther Litvak, who has disappeared into a sort of nothingness, the "rien" at the heart of Raczymow's concerns. Through a synecdoche, the disappearance of this individual as well as this memory embody, to the extent possible, a collective loss and historical event: the Holocaust. Writing allows for memory to become associative, working through detours in order to address the specificities of afterness. In this sense, Raczymow develops images which take on the status of palimpsests for his narrator. Furthermore, through these images, the author develops webs of correlation between his main narrator, Mathieu, and his absent counterpart, Esther. The intent of Raczymow's text is to point out similarities, although only to eventually express the impossibility of total concurrence. The reader witnesses instances of movements back and forth, manipulated closeness, and inevitable distance. Hence, paradoxes define such a memorial construction.

Through her notion of "postmemory," Marianne Hirsch also emphasizes the diverse paradoxes that characterize the memories of members of the Generation After. Hirsch highlights instances of remembrance of events not lived, an example of the transgenerational transfer of effects and affects. "Postmemory" remains highly mediated because it is passed down, recounted to individuals of the second generation by their parents and relatives. Hirsch therefore connects the formation of "postmemory" to a "process of identification, imagination, and projection" (*The Generation of Postmemory* 35). If memories need to be reconstructed into transferable narratives, the tendency would be to reject any associations between memory and terms conveying the idea of an imaginary construction and an identificatory projection, since memories are seen as being highly personal, revealing a closed family history. How can we reconcile the idea of a

memorial production based on imaginary creation with our factual definition of memory? Moreover, how can such a contradiction actually "represent," or even "exemplify," the memory of the second and even third generations?

In *Un Cri sans voix*, imagination is the detour that permits remembrance. Mathieu decides to recall Esther through creation: the fictional tale of Part I is a fight against silence and therefore consists of Esther's projection into his writing, with his words coming to represent her in her stead. Furthermore, these words represent others: Esther's existence is linked to the death of many others for Mathieu, a fact which he states in the prologue: "cette sœur, ce fantôme, était pour moi comme la déléguée d'autres fantômes. Des fantômes qui, au moment même où naissait Esther, se reconnaissaient au pyjama rayé qui revêtait le fil tordu de leur corps" (14). Temporal associations are thus created. Through his sister Esther, Mathieu connects a person he knew with an event that he has not experienced. The absence is rendered visible because it is put into words, articulated. Consequently, it concretely represents the paradoxical "presence" at the core of Hirsch's concept of "postmemory," as it is a subject matter that is both indirect (because it is transmitted) and direct (since it is constructed), as well as close (because it pertains to the family) and distant (since it belongs to the past and was not experienced by Mathieu).

In the chapter "Past Lives" of *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*, Hirsch focuses on the memorial construction of past events, examining the materiality of a lost world as well as the presence of a time and place which have disappeared. She states that postmemory is diverse and can take on many forms (243). However, I find Hirsch's chapter on Raczymow to be puzzling and conflicting, and in my opinion, these ambiguities weaken her conceptualization of "postmemory." The self-contradictory vein is in part due to the continuous affirmation of differences that stand more as opposites than as part of a spectrum of diversity as Hirsch claims. Moreover, her argumentation remains highly personal in this chapter. Hirsch seems

to get lost in her own memories, letting her subjectivity take precedence over objectivity and clarity.[40] As Beatriz Sarlo points out, "postmemory" runs the risk of presenting a sort of mythical relation to an unknown past and may prevent a true instance of understanding. Hirsch herself suggests this fact several times, for instance while examining one of Raczymow's "memorial books," *Contes d'exil et d'oubli*: "Even as he writes the stories of Konsk, Schriftlich must inscribe the impossibility of knowing or *understanding* them" [emphasis added] (247). Even though full understanding is not possible and the desire to understand is in itself problematic, I do believe that understanding – even though this understanding is linked to the absence of total understanding (in other words, recognizing that one cannot fully comprehend what happened) – prevents the risk of over-identification and of the appropriation of experience.

One of the biggest differences between Raczymow's and Hirsch's views of memory after the event is connected to the idea of absence. While Hirsch argues that Raczymow develops a poetics of absence in order to surround the void of the Holocaust without ultimately filling it, her concept of "postmemory" entails that memories are undeniably and uncannily "present" and concrete: "This [Raczymow's, Fresco's, and Finkielkraut's] 'absent memory' does not correspond to my own experience as a Jewish child of exile, nor do I experience my Jewish identity as empty" (244). For her, memory is as temporally distant as it is concrete and emotionally close, and it is precisely this ambiguity that is expressed in the composite notion of "postmemory." However, she then adds that "for [her], having grown up with daily accounts of a lost world, the links between past and present, between the prewar world of origin and the postwar space of destination are more

[40] Once again, Beatriz Sarlo criticizes the subjective turn of some recent theoretical approaches to memory, including Hirsch's. For her, Hirsch's chapters dealing with family photographs present "postmemory" as "un almacén de banalidades personales legitimadas por los nuevos derechos de la subjetividad" (*Tiempo pasado* 134). Even though such a reproach seems justified in cases of theoretical texts that propose the development of critical concepts, literary texts like Raczymow's *Un Cri sans voix* can express this subjectivity in relation to questions of memory, hence the undeniable advantage and power of literature to represent the paradoxes of remembering the Holocaust as an indirect witness.

than visible" (244). Hirsch seems to want to reduce the temporal gap between the past and the present by filing the holes in memory through "postmemory" and by refusing absence. Hirsch's conception of "postmemory" seems to be in conflict with Raczymow's *mémoire trouée,* as the former is "visible" while the latter relates to nothingness, as she herself notes. Her "postmemory" is not characterized by absence but by vividness and presence, given that she uses words such as "visible," "present," "vivid," and "accurate" (244) to describe her own memory and identity.

However, after having stated the differences between her "postmemory" and Raczymow's absence of memory, Hirsch goes on to examine one of his novels, *Contes d'exil et d'oubli*. She states that this very absence of memory makes this novel representative of the aesthetics of "postmemory" (247-248). What should be made of this apparent contradiction? Are "instances" of "postmemory" ever completely possible? Is "postmemory" a constructive path or a deconstructive and secret one? I believe that the paradoxes which appear in Hirsch's attempt to define her own concept embody the complexity and the multitude of memorial relations that characterize individuals of the Generations After. Several paradoxes appear and ultimately illustrate the problematic venture of defining the intricate relations to memory that the second generation must face.

While this chapter has discussed the types of memorial relations that can be created through the writing of a literary text, the ending of *Un Cri sans voix*, which I have purposefully omitted up to this point in my analysis, is of particular interest, as it sheds light on and exemplifies a possible answer to the aforementioned questions. The conclusion illustrates the difficulties of writing and remembering due to a double remoteness which is both literary and memorial. As an indirect witness trying to write the book of another indirect witness, Mathieu exposes the difficulties of accessing the different pasts that have led him to this enterprise of writing. Along with the impossibility of fully knowing what happened and why, Raczymow, and as an accessory, Mathieu,

problematize all transmission. The novel appears to be about restoring transmission, notably through the active reconstitution and hearing of diverse voices, which can help recreate the characters' history. Nonetheless, it also terminates any future transmission. Indeed, at the end of *Un Cri sans voix*, in its short epilogue, Mathieu announces that his wife is expecting a second child, and that, unlike his first child, this baby was planned. He adds that this new infant will signify renewal and that consequently, he will not communicate his history to his second child. He intends to hush the past:

> Le jour où il naîtra, j'en aurai tout à fait terminé avec Esther, ce fantôme. Avec le passé, aussi. Ce passé-là. Simon P. a bien raison : il faut un jour tourner la page. Pour moi, ce jour est proche. […] Mon enfant, du passé, sera épargné. Il n'en portera nul stigmate. Ce sera vraiment un enfant d'après. Entre la guerre et lui, une génération aura grandi, un espace qui l'aura préservé comme d'une souillure abominable. Jamais je ne lui parlerai d'Esther. Son nom sera tu. (213)

This non-transmission seems problematic: while we expect that the reconstruction of a silenced past would advocate transmission and illustrate its necessity, Mathieu discards such a possibility by putting an end to it abruptly. However, things appear to be more complex, as he subsequently recognizes the necessity of speaking and condemns the silence that has transformed his relationship with his past into a traumatic one. For him, writing and words have granted him the possibility of erasing his past: "Mon livre l'aura effacé. Il fallait des mots, curieusement, pour cela. Des mots, et non du silence" (214). The fact of having reestablished transmission as well as having spoken and heard the stories connected to his before-past as well as his own past has permitted remembrance. Writing led to remembrance. And, in turn, these processes permitted a working through, the final mourning of his dead ancestors. Finally, Esther's story can be put aside, not into nothingness as it was before, but into forgetting. Through this seemingly surprising ending, Raczymow is nonetheless still reaffirming the importance of memory. Memory and forgetting remain intrinsically linked, necessarily opposites: in order to advance into the present and the future, the

past needs to be partially forgotten so that essential parts can be remembered; and through the process of forgetting certain matters, they become unforgettable: "The exigency of the lost does not entail being remembered and commemorated; rather, it entails remaining in us and with us as forgotten, and in this way and only in this way, remaining unforgettable" (Agamben, *The Time that Remains* 40). By finally "forgetting" Esther, Mathieu shows that he has truly remembered her and that she will remain unforgettable.

Henri Raczymow demonstrates the paradoxes of the process of remembering: it can only be done partially, through zones of secrecy (did Esther ever write?) and of complete opacity (why did she commit suicide?), which constitute holes that cannot be filled. Catherine Coquio, in her recent book *Le Mal de vérité*, argues that the desire to know the whole truth *is* memory; or rather, that memory becomes the "désir de compréhension totale, utopie de la vérité" (12). She adds the adjective "malade" to describe this sort of memory, an adjective that was also used to describe Esther by her family. For Coquio, the obsession with memory is linked to the fear of forgetting and the destruction of truth. I would argue that Raczymow, through his quest and writing, portrays how Mathieu has uncovered some truths but has also accepted that the truth about Esther will never be fully revealed and known, notably because of her death.[41] Perhaps this is why he welcomes forgetting: unlike Esther's, his memory is reverent, and is non-obsessive. Like memory, truth is full of holes and unanswerable questions. This is what I believe Raczymow tries to write about, to show, and to eventually accept. This is the truth that Mathieu has found, *his* truth.

Raczymow finishes the process of remembering with its opposite, heightening the sense of contradiction and complexity which results. Therefore, his text presents a mitigated form of

[41] "Le mort échappe au banal parce qu'il échappe à tout questionnement possible. Il emporte son secret, comme on dit. Même s'il était sans secret. Même si son secret était justement de ne pas en avoir. C'est quand même un secret" (*Un Cri sans voix* 142-143).

"postmemory," exemplifying and yet countervailing the workings of "postmemory" as defined by Hirsch. This, of course, appears more clearly through the insistence on absence and its poetics developed through literary means. Absence, or rather, the presence of absence, occurs through the fragmentation of temporality and narration. It lets Esther surface in those abrupt changes: Esther appears in Mathieu's fictional text as well as in his memories of her. There exists a paradoxical representation of Esther in *Un Cri sans voix*, a representation which slowly disappears and which ends up incomplete. Fabien Gris maintains that the paradox of such a disappearing figuration is precisely that it passes through its opposite, through "sidedness": "par l'absence, par le négatif, par le détour" (134). No resuscitation is ultimately possible, nor is any conclusion possible: "'Rien, je ne conclus rien, répète Mathieu. C'est de la littérature…'" (*Un Cri sans voix* 157, 166). It is through the literal and figurative, and in this case literary, holes which the dead's existence has left that their history can be recounted, although nothingness remains.

The underexplored image of the *cinder* can fully represent the intricate ways in which *Un Cri sans voix* exposes the paradoxes of writing and remembering those who have disappeared, namely, the victims of the Holocaust.[42] Hinging on his definitions of the trace and the specter, Jacques Derrida highlights the ambivalence of the cinder: there is cinder there, and yet, it is not here anymore ("Il y a là cendre" and "la cendre n'est plus ici" [*Feu la cendre* 15]). The cinder embodies the disappearance of someone, playing on a certain homophony of the word "cendre," which could be a first name "Cendre," that of a woman. This individual is a missing person, "*disparue*," and a thing that both loses and maintains a trace: "ce qui garde pour ne plus même garder, vouant le reste à la dissipation, et ce n'est plus personne disparue laissant là cendre,

[42] Mathieu speaks of the cinders of the dead, the victims of concentration camps, several times in his book. He refers to the sheer amount of cinders that needed to be scattered (112). Esther herself referred to Poland as the country of Jewish cinders and refused to go there (207). The massification performed by Mathieu and Esther actually illustrates the magnitude of absence.

seulement son nom mais illisible" (19). It is a trace of what is not, and is therefore something that cannot be fully deciphered. Derrida continues by stating that perhaps one should use the verb "to be" in the past and not in the present, because what one is actually dealing with is a "mémoire de feu," a play on words in French: "feu" (as a noun) is the fire which creates cinders, and, "feu/feue" (as an adjective) refers to a person who has died in the expression "feu un tel/feue une telle" (19).[43] The development of several ambiguous meanings based on homophonies leads Derrida to explore another double action of the cinder, one that bears particular significance here. The cinder reveals and hides; it exposes while nonetheless keeping secret: "de l'exhibition savoir se garder" (19). Mathieu himself states that he cannot represent and save Esther or the millions of dead Jews through his words, as the cinders have been scattered and are invisible:

> Le nom d'Esther Litvak, comme chaque milligramme de cendre d'Auschwitz, est disséminé, pour Mathieu, comme autant d'étincelles invisibles dans la nuit du monde, qui est la nuit où l'écrivain écrit. Nuit de l'absence et de l'irréalité. Les mots de l'écrivain ne sauvent rien, restent impuissants à rassembler les étincelles en exil. (145-146)

The act of writing the book of an-other is itself impossible and unmanageable: one can never usurp the place and memories of others. The quotation is indeed preceded by Mathieu's affirmation that he knows nothing about his sister, and that he is just using a name and some pieces of information that might have happened or that are plausible. Esther affirms the presence of absence and this paradoxicality allows for Mathieu to try to articulate his past in the present and for the future. As furtively and yet forcefully as she has come to reawaken memory, she disappears once more. Esther has undeniably and irrevocably disappeared. Eventually, Esther becomes a trace, a remnant of a(n) (un)known past. She is a cinder.

[43] In the *Trésor de la langue française*, "feu" is defined as both a "phénomène consistant en un dégagement de chaleur et de lumière produit par la combustion vive d'un corps" and as referring to a "mort ; défunt."

Chapter 2

Through Gaps in Time: The Search for History/the Other in Patrick Modiano's *Dora Bruder*

En écrivant ce livre, je lance des appels, comme des signaux de phare dont je doute malheureusement qu'ils puissent éclairer la nuit. Mais j'espère toujours.
Patrick Modiano – *Dora Bruder*

L'autre n'est en rapport qu'avec l'autre : il se répète sans que cette répétition soit répétition d'un même, se redoublant à l'infini, affirmant, hors de tout futur, présent, passé (et par là le niant), un temps qui a toujours déjà fait son temps.
Maurice Blanchot – *L'Écriture du désastre*

En face de Berl, je retourne à mes préoccupations : le temps, le passé, la mémoire. Il les ravive, ces préoccupations. Il m'encourage dans mon dessein : me créer un passé et une mémoire avec le passé et la mémoire des autres…
Emmanuel Berl – *Interrogatoire par Patrick Modiano*

French writer Patrick Modiano, born in 1945 right at the end of the Second World War, is a member of the second generation, and was therefore an indirect witness to the atrocities of the war, in particular the collaboration of France with Nazi Germany along with the segregation, deportation, and consequent extermination of Jews. Modiano is particularly sensitive to these events, given that his father, Albert Modiano, was Jewish. Furthermore, the latter held a rather ambiguous position during the war: evidence indicates that to escape the fate reserved for Jews in France, Modiano's father participated in the black market. While this point might seem too anecdotal to mention here, it appears in many of Modiano's texts. It haunts his imaginary, because of the uncertainty surrounding his father's involvement in collaborationist milieus. In this sense, his works refer to historical events and are often linked to the Second World War, which he did not

experience first-hand but which nonetheless affected his life as well as French History. Moreover, he develops memorial narratives of individuals and tries to express oscillations between amnesia and hypermnesia in family environments.

Consequently, Modiano's corpus of texts embodies the complex workings of history and memory, representing them as both oppositional and correlational mechanisms. Inexorably, the French author attempts to address a blurry past, which is both known and unknown, through the present. The constant apposition of the past and present is observable in almost all of his novels. Fiction permits the staging of the interrelations between these time periods. This linking is carried out through two opposing strains: temporal porosity characterizes Modiano's approach; however, the author nonetheless recognizes the presence of inevitable impermeability. Echoes of theories of the second generation advocating identification from a distance, and recognition of opacity, are not involuntary. Modiano's works are indeed composed of similar dichotomic movements, consisting of oscillations around as well as through lacunas and paradoxes.

Despite being strongly influenced by actual events, often with autobiographical aspects, most of Modiano's texts are fictional. Nonetheless, one in particular is striking in its differences. Firstly, because it is not fictional; secondly, and above all else, because of its complex form characterized by convolutedness and hybridity. *Dora Bruder*, published in 1997, is simultaneously a biography (Dora Bruder's), an autobiography, and a narrative about writing that encompasses diverse creation processes, including the fictionalization of possible past events as well as the recounting of an investigation during a recent past (from 1988 to 1996) and the present of writing (1996 and 1997). In Modiano's composite text, the main storyline is that of Dora Bruder, a young girl who was deported and died at Auschwitz. The author first encountered Dora through an archive: a missing person's appeal published in the newspaper in 1941, following the girl's flight from home. As a runaway himself, Modiano uses this shared experience to draw numerous

similarities and points of encounter between Dora and himself, as well as with his father Albert Modiano. Several instances of "identification" appear through connections and superimpositions. Both are intrinsically linked to the temporal structure of the text. Ultimately, it is through the melding and blurring of time periods – between the past, present, and future – that Modiano reaches out to the young girl and reconstructs history – his, hers, and a more general French and Jewish History.[44] The different movements of his text come to trace the workings of memory, demonstrating how the writing of a literary text can construct an associative memory which represents afterness and expresses remoteness.

The interweaving of genres (fiction, autobiography, and biography) in *Dora Bruder* links different time periods in addition to altering their chronological deployment and definitional limitations. These variations are established through the exposure of various life stories: Dora's story, Patrick Modiano's story, and that of the writer's father, whom he does not know well. All three are the main protagonists of *Dora Bruder*; their lives are written and developed in parallel by Modiano himself. However, the text almost always remains homodiegetic, as it mainly consists of Modiano writing about himself (autodiegetic, the autobiographical "I") and composing the stories of his father and of Dora. There are very few instances of a heterodiegetic narrative voice;[45] moreover, these are usually surrounded by Modiano's self-reflective narration. The different central figures, along with the genres and time periods that are introduced with each, represent the investigations that Modiano undertakes. Presented as analogous lives, the three stories are written through real and potential points of encounter. These points constitute the leads in Modiano's enquiries and quests (*[en]quêtes*, the difficult search for missing pasts), as it is through his known

[44] I use the ambiguity that exists between the terms *histoire* (story) and *Histoire* (history) in French, as expressed in my chapter on Raczymow (see note 1).
[45] Two of which I will analyze below.

past based on actual experiences (the autobiographical part of his text) that the author tries to uncover the unknown past of his father and Dora, in the hope that they may shed light on his own situation as well as on History. In spite of opening up different paths and expanding to include a stranger and her family as well as references to many other strangers ("Suzanne Albert," Syma Berger, Fredel Traister, Albert Graudens, Nelly Trautmann, etc.) and less inconspicuous individuals (Mr. Jacques Schweblin, Friedo Lampe, Felix Hartlaub, Roger Gilbert-Lecomte, Robert Desnos, etc.), *Dora Bruder* can be read as a highly personal account, thereupon illustrating the predominance of (homo/auto)diegetic narration.

Real or even possible stories are developed through various narrative approaches and hybrid genres: all culminate in and clash with Modiano's style. Even though *Dora Bruder* unfolds different layers of narration and genres, its words remain, in contrast, rather simple. This disparity becomes meaningful: the simplicity of the author's style contrasts with the complexity of the form and the content, as Dominique Viart has rightly emphasized,[46] noting that stylistic and linguistic economies do not coincide with epistemic ones. The contrast contaminates the account, emblematizing the ambiguity as well as the incertitude at the heart of *Dora Bruder*. Amid the preciseness of the archival documents Modiano finds and the blurring that the textual form underscores, the significance of the text is present precisely in the movements between these two poles; in other words, between the possible and the impossible. *Dora Bruder* appears to be a testimonial text, since it testifies to the intricacies and paradoxes at the core of the genre, and in particular to the aporetic binary opposition between possible/impossible, which Giorgio Agamben

[46] Viart suggests that Modiano is fascinated by the dark years of the Occupation of France, and "plus largement encore pour les isotopies du 'trouble' et l'incertain,' de 'l'ambiguïté,' cultivées avec le talent d'une phrase paradoxale, *simple et dépouillée*, dont le sens cependant semble toujours sur le point de se défaire" [emphasis added] (45).

describes in *Remnants of Auschwitz*[47] as being the expression "of an impotentiality and potentiality of speaking" (151).

The dichotomous structures of *Dora Bruder* illustrate the workings of history and memory in a literary text, with one engendering the other and vice versa, since it is "pour affronter la difficulté, sinon l'impossibilité du dire littéraire de l'Histoire désastreuse du siècle que ses livres construisent une telle ambiguïté narrative" (Viart 46). A certain reconstruction of history and memory is sought, through the obsession with the past and Modiano's quests. This translates into an unsettling act of writing across different temporal strata. The shifting narrative perspectives and genres add to and resonate with the blurring of time periods. The circle is complete; history and memory resurface once again, inscribing themselves onto the form of the text.

The blurring of temporality conveys and exemplifies the blurring of the boundaries between literature, memory, and history, creating zones of tension in the definitional boundaries of the three realms. Pierre Nora states that an essential dialectic exists between history and the novel, and that it has progressed toward a more-pronounced obscuring of their boundaries in the transformation of an "against" into a "with" or an "inter-." This last point is further emphasized in the case of Modiano's *Dora Bruder*, considering that the French author mixes genres that pertain to both history and literature, joining biography and autobiography in perturbing ways as well as creating multiple layers of a "zone de recoupement particulièrement sensible entre le factuel et le fictif, l'historique et le romanesque" ("Histoire et roman: Où passent les frontières ?" 8). While this quote describes the genre of memoirs, I would maintain that the same can be said of Modiano's interrelating of biography and autobiography, given that both transmission (usually pertaining to a

[47] Agamben states that the subject of testimony is fractured, as it expresses "the intimate dual structure of testimony as an act of an *auctor*, as *the difference and completion of an impossibility and possibility of speaking*, of the inhuman and the human, a living being and a speaking being" [emphasis added] (151).

memoir) and self-knowledge (representative of autobiography) unfold at the same time. In this sense, Modiano's biographies of Dora and Albert Modiano function as memoirs-alterity, the writing of the life story of another (a biography) through the inclusion of that other as a part of one's own history. What French scholar Jean-Louis Jeannelle calls *égohistoriques*[48] become *allohistoriques.* Moreover, Modiano goes even further by introducing the self as well as the other into historical and memorial perspectives. He thus opens up autobiographical boundaries and develops a testimonial endeavor, a point of convergence between individual memory and history. The process of writing about an "I" and about an event with a collective significance is apparent. Playing with different complex genres, all with hazy boundaries, is disruptive to an even greater extent; hence, it also introduces many layers to Modiano's imbrications and grey areas. *Dora Bruder* allows for the author's self to face the other and History, and these ultimately help in the (re)construction, or rather, the (re)creation of his memory.

Connections: The Melding of Time Periods

Dora Bruder is a text characterized by an ambiguous and complex temporal structure. The intricacy of the time periods present involves the realms of the past, both recent and distant, as well as the present, expressed as the present of writing and as Modiano's words on the page. Each time period is associated with an individual: the distant past belongs to Dora and Modiano's father and refers to the years before and during the Second World War; the more recent past to Modiano and his father, the years after the war, and during the author's youth; and the present is focused on Modiano in terms of his quest and the writing of *Dora Bruder*, which can potentially open up

[48] In his important study *Écrire ses mémoires au XXe siècle*, Jean-Louis Jeannelle refers to memoirs as egohistorical narratives in which the personal and the memorial are presented alongside the historical. The narrative becomes that of an individual who is "emporté dans le cours des évènements, à la fois acteur et témoin, porteur d'une histoire qui donne sens au passé" (13).

toward the future. The present remains essential in that Modiano is the narrator-writer and therefore the creator of temporal (dis)connections. As such, the first chapter of *Dora Bruder* refers almost exclusively to Modiano's life and exposes his own point of view. It mentions the distant and recent past, from 1941 to 1988, and addresses the time of the act of writing that connects all other time periods. Therefore, while the text starts with Dora's missing person's appeal, introducing her from the very beginning, the whole chapter pertains to Modiano's discovery and the links that he immediately observed between himself and Dora. These connections specifically relate to the spatial domain, referring to a shared geographical space of inhabitance: Paris. This explains in part why this classified ad in particular caught his attention and haunted him for years after the fact.

In order to express the connections observed and experienced, Modiano (en/de)velops them around the point of view of the narrating "I." Modiano's first person singular pronoun "je" therefore prevails as the predominant shifter; it appears seventeen times in the short introductory section (three pages). The pronoun "I" is accompanied by other indications of the autobiographical narrator: the possessive determiner "ma/mon" appears three times and the first person plural pronoun "nou*s*" appears once, referring to Modiano and his mother. Through the recurrent utilization of first person indicators, Modiano expresses the feelings that emerged out of his finding the classified ad through the mention of Ornano Boulevard. This location triggered the author's interest in many ways, which range from memorial to affective. Therefore, it allowed for a personal reading of the notice, while encompassing the recognition of an other. This connection is expressed directly after the recopying of the text of the ad in which the address appears ("41 boulevard Ornano, Paris" [7]): "Ce quartier du boulevard Ornano, je le connais depuis longtemps" (7). Modiano then lists the memories which he associates with the neighborhood, composed of the different occurrences in this area of Paris in *his* past. The text starts in 1988 with the author's first encounter with Dora through the reading of a 1941 classified ad in the newspaper *Paris-Soir*. It

then jumps backwards (with respect to 1988) and forwards (from 1941) to Modiano's childhood and how he used to go to this area of Paris as a child ("Dans mon enfance, j'accompagnais ma mère au marché aux Puces de Saint-Ouen" [7]). Next, it introduces a particular afternoon in 1958 when, as a teenager, he witnessed events concomitant with the Algerian war ("Je me souviens du boulevard Barbès et du boulevard Ornano déserts, un dimanche après-midi de soleil, en mai 1958" [8]). Next, directly below, it invokes 1965, when as a young man, he used to visit a female friend of his ("J'étais dans ce quartier l'hiver 1965" [8]). All of this, of course, relates to his writing years, the time period when all these references were assembled.

This prompt listing, almost like an inventory, of Modiano's memories of this part of the eighteenth arrondissement reflects the connections that are established, and almost sought out, between Dora and himself. These evocations relate Modiano's past with Dora's through spatiality, as well as through images, as Régine Robin suggests: "L'auteur va procéder par associations, images-souvenirs" (95). Images induce memories and offer a point of entry into Dora's story. From this first contact and association and from his own recollections, Modiano slowly reconstructs Dora's memorial space, composed of information but also of imprints left on Paris. These marks can only be read by Modiano through his own story and the similarities that he uncovers. The process acts on multiple, consequent levels: the appeal establishes potential connections, which Modiano transforms into images-memories that draw him closer to Dora. The closeness established results in the possibility of himself remembering Dora and permits her existing once again in his memorial frame of reference.

In relation to the subject of images and memorial construction, Hirsch, in *Family Frames*, closely links postmemory with photographs in that photographs allow for "familial looks" (2) which are able to connect generations. As an "emanation of a past reality," citing Barthes, Hirsch emphasizes how they construct family history in addition to transmitting it: "photography quickly

became the family's primary instrument of self-knowledge and representation – the means by which family memory would be continued and perpetuated, by which the family's story would henceforth be told" (*Family Frames* 6-7). These images do not have to be maintained in an exclusively familial environment, caught within the perpetuation of a closed and/or reductive ideology. In fact, Hirsch is interested in the verbalization of these images in narratives, whether fictional or not (8). This emphasis on the narrative aspect attached to these images, which Hirsch calls "imagetexts,"[49] echoes in many aspects the ways in which such images are narrated in Modiano's text, and highlights a different sort of attribution of meaning. While the attribution of meaning is physical and specific for Hirsch in terms of representation (photographs of actual people who become the referents) and memorial transmission (the perpetuation of family stories, etc.), Modiano reintroduces the individual, in this case himself and Dora, into real or remembered images of spatial references. These places become the referents in Modiano's memorial construction. There is a shift in meaning from the collective and the geographic, which are neutral and almost cold realms, into the specific, composed of the stories of the main protagonists of *Dora Bruder*, thus developing into a highly affective realm. Moving from the general to the specific, Modiano reconstructs a memory based on the absence of a family history linking the Modianos and the Bruders. Ultimately, Modiano constructs memory from the void surrounding the extermination of Jews during the war, opening up narration to various constructive memorial associations.

The scheme of drawing similarities through specific images continuously appears and reinforces the connections between Patrick Modiano and Dora Bruder. To return to the first chapter of the book, after having listed some of his memories of that neighborhood, Modiano reconsiders the information in the ad, in particular the address of Dora's parents, a location that never caught

[49] Defined by W. J. T. Mitchell as "[a] term [which] designates composite, synthetic works (or concepts) that combine image and text" (89).

his attention but that he passed by many times over the time span of three years (1965 to 1968). He ends the chapter by citing, without quotation marks, the last sentence of the missing person's appeal: "Adresser toutes indications à M. et Mme Bruder, 41 boulevard Ornano, Paris" (9). In a single paragraph with no line breaks, the last one of the introductory chapter, Modiano joins his story with Dora's, connecting two destinies through one address (and its vicinity):

> À partir de neuf heures du soir, le boulevard était désert. Je revois encore la lumière de la bouche de métro Simplon, et presque en face, celle de l'entrée du cinéma Ornano 43. L'immeuble du 41, précédent le cinéma, n'avait jamais attiré mon attention, et pourtant je suis passé devant lui pendant des mois, des années. De 1965 à 1968. Adresser toutes indications à M. et Mme Bruder, 41 boulevard Ornano, Paris. (9)

The asyndeton, this particular lack of connectors, seems to serve as the opposite of its purpose: instead of creating a separation between Modiano and Dora, it actually establishes a bond between them. The dates are specified clearly so that the different strata of the past appear to be joined by their continuous juxtaposition, through the singular clear connection of a place. Moreover, Modiano repeatedly uses this trope to illustrate the passage of time and the state of memory through the city of Paris and its architectural evolution. Consequently, memory of places is transformed into places of memory.[50]

Like Ornano Boulevard, the twelfth arrondissement also allows for connections in spatial terms through a relatively clear division of time periods. Modiano mixes[51] time periods once again when referring to the fact that Dora was born in the neighborhood where the religious boarding school Saint-Cœur-de-Marie was located. After pointing out this particular return of Dora to her arrondissement of origin, Modiano narrates his knowledge of this neighborhood. The author

[50] Paris occupies a primordial place in Modiano's corpus, and is present in almost all of his novels, almost constituting a character in its own right. Paris exerts itself as a marker of time as well as is beyond time, since it changes over the years while nonetheless maintaining an unchanging aura and image, as well as certain places caught in timelessness. It embodies a sort of complex evolution, and as such, expresses paradoxical movements of (dis)appearance. My utilization of Nora's term "place of memory" accounts for those "unchanging" places that acquire social meaning over the years. For Modiano, the meaning starts as personal and familial.

[51] The verb "to mix" is used here as "fraternizing with."

manages to meld several time periods in a single paragraph: after mentioning the area in relation to Dora's birth (1926) and her adolescence (1940-1941), Modiano speaks of a long walk he took there in 1971, from the point of view of the act of writing in 1996. All these differents periods are joined in one sentence: "Il n'avait pas changé quand je m'y suis promené, il y a vingt-cinq ans, au mois de juin 1971" (49). The appositions of the author's and Dora's experiences of a place is indicative of the existence of particular memorial traces. These are recognized in the time of representation, offering a retrospective interpretation of feelings from the past, from 1971 ("Cet après-midi-là, sans savoir pourquoi, j'avais l'impression de marcher sur les traces de quelqu'un" [49]), and from the early 1940s. The act of writing becomes primordial in the associations made and the reading of traces. On the following page, Modiano alludes directly to his writing in one of the most self-reflective passages of his work: "J'ai écrit ces pages en novembre 1996" (50). He emphasizes the temporal gap between his rendition of Dora's story through his status of writer-indirect witness and the events of her life. Fifty-five years have passed, and yet, links still exist provided that they are maintained and created, hence, the necessity of writing. To compensate for this lack, writing permits the melding of the pasts of Dora, Albert Modiano, and Modiano, as well as articulates them in writing so that they may serve as a trace of these people.

Interestingly, the notion behind the word *trace* underscores its intricacies regarding the establishment of connections between different individuals through the multiplicity of its definitions. According to Alexandre Serres, *trace* can simultaneously convey the idea of a mark left, an intersection, and a possible reference to a minuscule quantity. However, while *trace* can convey these multiple connotations, what remains consistent is the fact that a *trace* is a trace *of* something, whether this thing is a subject or an object ("la trace se caractérise par son génitif intrinsèque"). Therefore, it needs to be read, interpreted, or put into context; in other words, its genitive relations need to be actively established. Serres continues his examination of *trace* through

the meanings of its polysemic ambivalence, in particular in relation to historiographical processes. Hinging his argument on that of Ricœur, Serres demonstrates that *trace* can be affective and therefore a source of our memory. I would suggest that the definition of *trace* itself conveys this affectivity through the inevitable necessity to interpret it, which Modiano seems to do in *Dora Bruder*.

Superimpositions[52]: The Blurring of Time Periods

In *Dora Bruder*, the outwardly transparent mixing of different time periods quickly transforms into their complete blurring. The act of writing, including the author's role and his *don de voyance*,[53] in the words of Modiano himself, allows him to obscure time periods in his search for and attempt to reconstruct or (re)create a past of which he is ignorant. As mixing evolves into blurring, it announces an identificatory process pushed to its limits. Therefore, the superimpositions of time periods underline the consequences that textual devices have on more abstract matters, such as the feelings and memories summoned and shaped. How does this shift regarding time appear in Modiano's text, and how does the author manipulate it for literary and memorial purposes?

[52] The title of this sub-section is inspired by Modiano himself and the fictional counterpart of *Dora Bruder*, *Voyage de noces*, published in 1990. The narrator of *Voyages de noces*, who is himself conducting an inquiry into the past of a woman (Ingrid is actually inspired by Dora Bruder and represents Modiano's first attempt to make sense of the missing person appeal he found and of his obsession with it and Dora), notices this blurring of time periods and remarks that "le passé et le présent se mêlent dans mon esprit par un phénomène de *surimpression*" [emphasis added] (*Voyage de noces* 26).

[53] Modiano describes the "*don de voyance*" of an author as a way of writing that itself calls into question the linearity of time: "les efforts d'imagination, nécessaires à ce métier [romancier], le besoin de fixer son esprit sur des points de détail […], toute cette tension, cette gymnastique cérébrale peut sans doute provoquer à la longue de brèves intuitions 'concernant des événements passés ou futurs,' comme l'écrit le dictionnaire Larousse à la rubrique 'voyance'" (52-53). He continues by adding that he experienced such an instance of clairvoyance when writing *Voyages de noces*, the fictional text written based on Dora Bruder in which he sets one scene of the novel in the twelfth arrondissement, without knowing that this area of Paris is intrinsically connected to the real Dora Bruder, a link he would only discover years afterwards.

Returning to the first chapter of *Dora Bruder*, even though many different time periods are introduced, they are explicitly and evidently stated. The impact that these evoked time periods have on the evolution of the memories related to the mentioned neighborhood and to Modiano's recollections is also clear, hence justifying my reference to the enterprise of "melding." However, all instances of the intertwining of time periods have certain consequences. At the beginning of the second chapter, when juxtaposing yesterday and today, or expressing the passing of time from yesterday to today, Modiano states that past and present become blurred: "D'hier à aujourd'hui. Avec le recul des années, les perspectives se brouillent pour moi, les hivers se mêlent l'un à l'autre" (10). What start as possible connections become superimpositions, in Modiano's past as well as potentially in Dora's. Interestingly, the first sentence without a verb is itself a superimposition of a theme and an object, considering that it refers to the temporal movement expressed in Modiano's writing *as well as* to the headings under which the classified ad appeared in the newspaper *Paris-Soir*. Without quotation marks, it pertains to Modiano's environment and its words; with them, it refers to Dora's world (the heading with quotation marks first appears at the beginning of the text when describing the classified ad: "Il y a huit ans, dans un vieux journal, *Paris-Soir*, qui datait du 31 décembre 1941, je suis tombé à la page trois sur une rubrique: 'D'hier à aujourd'hui'" [7], and later reappears in the text: "Ou bien un employé du journal, chargé des 'chiens écrasés' et de la tournée des commissariats, a-t-il glané au hasard cet avis de recherche parmi d'autres accidents du jour, pour la rubrique 'D'hier à aujourd'hui'?" [77]). The reference to these temporal markers, which concern Dora directly, as they constitute a trace of her disappearance (both due to her *fugue*[54] and her death), illustrates a connection that takes place across time periods: starting in 1941, an

[54] I decided to use the French word *fugue* here because it does not have an equivalent in English, and for linguistic economies. I would have to use a periphrasis expressing the action of running away in order to express what the French language implies in one word.

evolution is set in motion in which "hier" comes to refer to Dora's time period and "aujourd'hui" to Modiano's. The transposition is both textual and referential, both stated (cited) and shown (played out). The missing person appeal functions as a means of linkage, emblematizing the temporal de/formations carried out by Modiano in his act of writing, distortions aimed at bringing the two closer together despite the grey areas *surrounding* their pasts.

Superimpositions through Tenses

Another literary device pertaining to narrative forms, or rather, narrative manipulation, that expresses Modiano's and Dora's deep connections and borderline indistinctness, is the time frame – through verb conjugations – of the narration itself. Hinging on the abovementioned unknown, both as Dora's life and as part of his own past, Modiano plays with narrative tenses in order to express further possible points of encounter between Dora, Albert Modiano (his father), and himself. If the author uses traditional narrative tenses in the indicative, such as different forms of the past (the *passé composé*, *imparfait*, and even the *passé simple*) and the present (the present of narration and present of writing), often mixing the two, he also makes use of other tenses and moods that complicate the chronological progression of the narration. These tenses, in particular the *futur antérieur* and the present conditional as well as structures related to it such as the *irréel du présent* and *irréel du passé*, announce the possibility of a thematic and temporal point of superimposition. Moreover, these blur the distinction between present and past as well as introduce the realm of the future, as they create links between different temporalities and involve displacements. These transpositions are not only written as guiding principles; rather, they also echo the structure and hybridity of the text.

In one particular passage of the text, namely when discussing Dora's four-month disappearance, Modiano decides to describe the weather, which is interestingly called *temps* in

French, a homonym of the word "time" (as well as of "tense"). As both time and weather, *temps* implies absence and points to the gap that expresses and results from Dora's vanishing. By making a play on the double meaning of the word in French, Modiano attempts to recover time through the weather (the latter becoming another marker of passage). Detailing the weather emerges as a derisory way not to lose trace of the young girl and to regain lost time: "Le seul moyen de ne pas perdre tout à fait Dora Bruder au cours de cette période, ce *serait* de rapporter les changements du temps" [emphasis added] (89). The verb "to be" (*être*) appears in the present conditional form (*serait*) to express a possibility, a condition that permits the compensation for a lack. Complex temporal references are created, given that the above paragraph is in the present, the tense of the narration, whereas the sentences below it are in the past tense, since Modiano actually lists the changes in the weather over those four months. Linking the present to the past is the conditional tense, which incongruously also pertains to the future, to something to look forward to in the present of narration, or even during reading, while nonetheless relating to the past. This use of the conditional is particularly charged with this reference to the future especially since after its use to assert the bond with Dora, Modiano details the changes in the weather. It is not just a possibility anymore: the future is made concrete. "*Serait*" superimposes a past onto the present through an abstract, yet potentially real, futurity, which is both textual and extra-textual.

For these reasons, I would maintain that beyond a simple resurgence of the past in the present, *Dora Bruder* conveys the blurring of all time periods, whether past, present, or future. The erasure of boundaries calls for new relations between these time periods, highlighting the reconstruction of a different bond between the past and present. Regarding these complex time relations, Nicolas Xanthos argues that a new regimen of historicity evolves out of Modiano's play, which is both continuous and separative, with the past and the present. He highlights that it is necessary to constitute "un ordre du temps à contrecourant de ceux qui prévalent et qui puisse voir

et accueillir ces empreintes en creux laissées par ceux qui ont disparu" (231). An "order of time" would normally mean that it encompasses all realms of time, in the sense of all temporal universes. However, Xanthos excludes the future in his subsequent argument, stating that Modiano's present directs itself completely toward the past, and is solely used to clarify the past (in opposition to the official regimen of historicity in which the present is turned completely toward the future and is based on the rejection of the past [amnesia]). I believe that Xanthos's argument transforms the author's enterprise into a reductive and rather negative instance of being caught in the past; in other words, into an impasse. By denying any possibility of futurity to Modiano's text, Xanthos simplifies the potential scope of literature and overlooks the fact that it is the superimposition of time periods that actually renders this future possible in *Dora Bruder*. Temporal porosity indeed becomes a way to integrate the past into the present and for the future. Moreover, this fluidity allows for a future potentiality, which is the recognition of many elements to come. In fact, verbs conjugated in the future are omnipresent in *Dora Bruder*; they open up possible pathways for Modiano to continue his quest into Dora's past ("Un jour, j'irai" [14], "Un jour, j'irai à Sevran" [19], "Un jour, je retournerai à Vienne" [22], "Peut-être retrouverai-je l'acte de naissance" [22], and "Je saurai les lieux de naissance de ses parents" [22], to cite only a few of the many examples of the future tense present in *Dora Bruder*). Even though Modiano will never know the full story, nor will he rediscover those missing four months, a point to which I will return below, he manages such a gap through his proposition of a different historical regimen founded on the reevaluation of all chronological order through the rupture of temporal barriers.

Through Futurity and Superimpositions: Weblike Temporal Relations

Michel Cournot uses the image of the circle to express time relations in Modiano's works, while nonetheless clarifying that this circle does not impose a single direction of movement, since "[p]assé, présent et avenir se tournent autour" (41). I would add that beyond being just a circle in which no way out exists, in which one would be continuously retracing her or his previous footsteps, this circle can be conceived as consisting of several circles linked together by tangent lines. This would permit the past to be projected toward the future through the present act of writing, as exposed by Philippe Forest in his designation of "*le roman futur.*" In his essay bearing in its title this reference to a "future" novel, accepting the ambiguities that this phrase conveys (the future as a subject and an actual time period, both written and to be written), Forest bases his argument on Aragon's statement that all literature is about "détourner tout le passé vers l'avenir" (cited in Forest 74), and defines all novels based on what is to come: "[C]e grand mouvement de bascule par lequel le passé fait la culbute par-dessus le pivot du présent et, au-delà de la dernière phrase écrite, se projette fictivement en direction d'un futur dont le livre désigne seulement dans le lointain la grande et vertigineuse disponibilité vide" (76). Literature should offer a different vision of time which opens itself up to infinite possibilities (to use Joyce's phrase), therefore representing reality by considering the circle of temporality as a sort of "*archi-roman*" in the words of Milan Kundera.[55] Time periods are reconciled because they are in fact porous and indeterminate.

Furthermore, returning to this complex temporal superimposition, it would explain why the author is haunted by the missing people who appear in *Dora Bruder*, who constitute the empty

[55] The arch-novel (*archi-roman*), as defined by Milan Kundera in the short essay "L'Archi-roman, lettre ouverte pour l'anniversaire de Carlos Fuentes" published in *Une Rencontre*, is the modern novel which: "primo, […] se concentre sur ce que seul le roman peut dire ; secundo, […] fait revivre toutes les possibilités négligées et oubliées que l'art du roman a accumulées pendant les quatre siècles de son histoire" (90). The arch-novel therefore appears as the point of encounter between the past, present, and future, enabling a representation of the three temporal realms.

spaces in history that he tries to expose through writing. He therefore establishes an empathic relationship with absence, trying to (re)trace these lacks and convert them into a memorial perspective. The result is a complex narrative structure which mimics the novel's textual organization; this complexity contaminates forms and movements, from literary and historical to memorial. More specifically, as a writer-indirect witness, Modiano builds webs of memory that operate through associations – "con-" as well as "super-" and "sur-" processes – echoing the series of circles connected by tangent lines I discuss above. Claude Burgelin develops the same spider web image in order to connect the text, and more specifically the process of resorting to imagination, with memory: "Pour décrire ses allées et venues [de l'invention], on pourrait utiliser l'image de la toile d'araignée dans les interstices de laquelle le narrateur brode tout en revenant sans cesse se rattacher à l'infrastructure première" ("'Memory Lanes'" 136).

However, even though Burgelin develops the image of a text as constituting a web in relation to certain of Modiano's fictional works, I would suggest that the image of the web can also apply to *Dora Bruder* (a work of non-fiction). In this case, its primary structure is that of Modiano's own memory, identity, and quest, all of which are homodiegetic narrative moments. The secondary branches are multiple, pertaining to the lost worlds of Albert Modiano and Dora. It is possible to witness the deployment of a sort of associative memory through which Modiano articulates the complexity of his endeavor. The idea of superimpositions can be justifiably applied to this whole process or weblike formation, as memorial layers echo the literary devices utilized by the author. Memory leaves its imprints on the text; nonetheless, the opposite can also be said to exist, as writing allows for the resurgence of memory. Consequently, a memorial-literary web emerges, exposing the mechanisms of construction and deconstruction of all stories, whether present or absent, or always already lacunar.

A Fugue *of Time: The Constructiveness of Impossibility and Anachronism*

One can observe the role of the writer in manipulating time as well as Modiano's emphasis on memory and its temporal continuity. The purpose of the deployment of such devices is to construct a different regimen of historicity, introducing futurity through the reshuffling of the past. If one were to assume, like many other scholars, that Modiano simplistically unites the past and present, then, the author would be guilty of developing an incoherent and reductive continuity, one that the French philosopher Alain Finkielkraut condemns. In *Le Juif imaginaire*, Finkielkraut argues that Jews who have inherited the suffering of others, individuals he refers to as "imaginary Jews," do so from the "sécurité de l'anachronisme" (20). Finkielkraut advocates a move beyond fictionality (the *romanesque*) toward memory and consequently understanding. However, he himself reduces the experience of the second generation to that of reliving the past in the present. In Modiano's text, futurity, in that it pertains to presence (the possibility of knowing more) and absence (the gaps that will never be elucidated), transforms anachronism into the formation of a new relationship with the past and a transformation of history and memory. By accepting the superimposition of all temporal strata, Modiano actually gives new meaning to the dilemmas of the second generation, and uses its downfall for creative literary aspirations and productive memorial purposes. While the author may be subject to Finkielkraut's criticism regarding anachronism, he manages to appropriate this apparently negative approach and transform it into a positive and even jarring enterprise. In this text, time out of sync appears to be fully constructive. Furthermore, Modiano also manages to do this through the revival of the interrelations between writing ("*romance*") and memory, creating a new way of relating to the past through imagination, albeit in a productive, and more importantly, non-appropriative way.

In relation to notions of unsettlement, Nadine Fresco expresses in "La Diaspora des cendres" that blurring indeed characterizes *emprise* and comes to represent the psychological

workings of the post-Holocaust generation. As two kinds of *emprise*, nostalgia and proxy disrupt clear distinctions/limitations; namely, that of time and that of individuality. When examining the complex case of nostalgia (which is related to temporal structure, of particular interest here), understood as a feeling that one cannot escape but that one should not acknowledge fully for obvious ethical reasons (how can one be nostalgic of genocidal times?), Fresco also makes use of images of spatiality. She argues that nostalgia challenges identity through the expulsion of any sedentary position: war has displaced these children who have not experienced the conflict first-hand, a paradox that justifies the description of this as a sort of exile, not from a place, but from an elapsed time period. The vocabulary associated with such a displacement further emblematizes that breaking of (narrative and memorial) boundaries, considering that Fresco describes nostalgia in terms of the limitless lexical field of spatiality: "errer" (211), "pas droit de cité" (211), and "éloignement" (211). This vocabulary also pertains to a lack, a mobility that is forced and unsettling. Fresco continues by stating that exile resembles amnesia. This is because, similar to how a person cannot inhabit a place and is expulsed from the space of the victims of the Holocaust, that person is forced to wander. This wandering often results in that person occupying a paradoxical stance, expressed through a litotes: "on se rappelle seulement qu'on ne se souvient de rien" (212). A certain blurring of temporality reappears: the present seems to be regulated by a past that it is impossible to know or remember. The void at the core of remembrance drives the second generation toward perpetual movement. In this vein, I would maintain that Modiano shows exactly this through the textual hybridity of *Dora Bruder*. As a work about multiple forms of *emprise*, *Dora Bruder* places dispersion at its core. Or is it *fugue*?... In any case, temporal dispersion allows for multiple integrations, including a reinterpretation of the past and a projection toward the future, as well as everything that these entail along with the individuals represented, scattering remembrance as if it were ashes, as suggested by Fresco's title ("La Diaspora des *cendres*").

Futurity recurs through the present conditional in relation to Dora's *fugue* and the weather. Escaping the uncertainty around such a flight produces the technique of resorting to the traceability of past changes in weather and the general impressions these can create in individuals (generally based on clichés and the author's personal interpretations). In another passage in which Modiano discusses Dora's *fugue*, he first exposes his idea of resorting to the weather to find out more and to fill the gap in his knowledge:

> Il *faudrait* savoir s'il faisait beau ce 14 décembre, jour de la fugue de Dora. Peut-être l'un de ces dimanches doux et ensoleillés d'hiver où vous éprouvez un sentiment de vacance et d'éternité – le sentiment illusoire que le cours du temps est suspendu, et qu'il suffit de se laisser glisser par cette brèche pour échapper à l'étau qui va se refermer sur vous. (my emphasis 59)

This use of the conditional tense is particularly interesting because, as a part of an *irréel du présent*, it introduces a structure with the conjunction "if" (conditional present, if + imperfect). The fact of knowing the weather may therefore convey some meaning and provide clarifications justifying the non-return of Dora to the religious boarding school. In this sense, if it were sunny, it might explain the *fugue* based on the feelings that the sun can trigger on a winter day, a sentiment probably based on Modiano's own emotions on such days. This scheme further connects the two central characters. At the same time, it also expresses the futility of such a suggestion, as Modiano overlooks it and assumes haphazardly what sort of weather would have created that particular feeling in Dora, hence the explanatory use of an *irréel du présent*: founded as simply an assumption, the real, concrete knowledge of the causes of the *fugue* remains nonexistent. This process highlights the complexity of the author's quest as well as illustrates how such enterprises can never fully be executed and knowledge can never be fully attained, due to Dora's dual disappearance (*fugue* and death). The *irréel du présent* epitomizes this absence, the void in the remembrance of Dora's life, and the writing about and awareness of these particular four months of her *fugue*. It also leads to his actual listing of weather changes during this gap of four months, suggesting a textual future (see page 89

of *Dora Bruder*). Impossibility seems to characterize futurity, calling for this unfeasibility to be managed by Modiano through writing.

However, when Modiano does describe the weather in the passage examined earlier, he does not mention whether it was indeed sunny; rather, he only alludes to the temperature and the snow (which do not exclude the presence of the sun). One of the answers to such a case of oblivion or instance of silencing relates to the temporal gap that Dora's disappearance creates, as an entity in itself, as well as through its role in the author's mind and text. However, no matter its importance for Modiano the individual and Modiano the author, the *fugue* remains the essential link between him and Dora and is the strongest point of encounter between the two, since it stands as a shared experience and as a present superimposition of two pasts. Consequently, it is around this event in common that futurity prevails, constituting the source of a perpetual quest and the possibility of finding more answers to elucidate on the mystery of the girl's disappearance. The gap in time is the unknown, yet can potentially be elucidated, or partially filled.

Diegesis and Fictionality: Displaced Identification through Gaps in Time

The weather, as a literary topos, regulates the blurring of temporalities, the gap in time that *temps* can reveal and open up. Superimpositions therefore proliferate, and this proliferation allows for the suspension of time and an escape, as Modiano suggests (59). However, in literary terms, the temporal breach introduces the possibility of drawing further similarities between Patrick Modiano and Dora Bruder. The construction of similarities is accentuated as the reader witnesses the few moments of complete superimpositions between the two main protagonists of the text. The *fugue* usually controls these heterodiegetic moments when the first-person narration seems to give way before a quasi-fictional account that focuses only on Dora; it is around the common experience of being a teenage runaway that Modiano dares to turn his writing into fiction, becoming Dora

through the utilization of his reminiscence of the past for reconstruction purposes. The first instance of such fictionalization relates to feelings, in this case hers, as she is forced to go back to Saint-Cœur-de-Marie each Sunday:

> C'était comme de retourner en prison. Les jours raccourcissaient. Il faisait déjà nuit lorsqu'elle traversait la cour en passant devant les faux rochers du monument funéraire. Elle suivait les couloirs. La chapelle, pour le Salut du dimanche soir. Puis, en rang, en silence, jusqu'au dortoir. (46)

Modiano's "je" gives way to Dora's "elle" and to her sole presence in the past, on a specific Sunday night. This transformation is more apparent in a second instance of diegetic change, in which the fourteenth of December potentially becomes all Sundays, creating a generalization of these feelings:

> J'ai marché dans le quartier et au bout d'un moment j'ai senti peser la tristesse d'autres dimanches, quand il fallait rentrer au pensionnat. J'étais sûr qu'elle descendait au métro à Nation. *Elle retardait le moment où elle franchirait le proche et traverserait la cour. Elle se promenait encore un peu, au hasard, dans le quartier. Le soir tombait. L'avenue de Saint-Mandé était calme, bordée d'arbres.* J'ai oublié s'il y a un terre-plein. On passe devant la bouche de métro ancienne… [emphasis added] (129)[56]

Permitted by the gap in time created and to counteract this very void, Modiano transforms himself into Dora to try to express the missing motives pertaining to the youngster's disappearance. In these two cases, one observes instances of identification and complete surperimposition: Modiano writes based on his feelings at the time of his *fugue*, extrapolating and suggesting that this may be mapped onto Dora's own emotions. However, even though these textual and actual situations are the prime examples of identification pushed to its limits, I would argue that even then, these identificatory processes respect the differences between Patrick Modiano and Dora Bruder. The boundaries between "je" and "elle" remain in a questionable state; yet, a single rapprochement of experiences

[56] There are only four sentences in the cited passage which fit the diegetic change; the paragraph begins and ends with the first-person (homodiegetic) narrator I analyze this setting (Modiano's surrounding presence) below.

can be observed due to the lack of the complete blurring of the two pronouns (as "je" and "elle" appear distinctively).

In her essay "'Oneself as Another': Identification and Mourning in Patrick Modiano's *Dora Bruder*," Susan R. Suleiman shows that instances of such fictional narration illustrate the instability of the text and the identifications observable, namely appropriative and empathetic identifications. The former seems of particular interest in relation to the moments of fictionalization discussed above as it conveys a process of assimilation of the self and the other, yet one which remains self-centered (Suleiman 330, 331). However, these two identificatory moments (cited above; *Dora Bruder* 46, 129) are far from being complete appropriations: Modiano does not identify with Dora for self-serving purposes, taking over her story of disappearance; on the contrary, he does so to serve *her* missing voice. These are thus allo-centered moments and examples of empathic identification (Suleiman 334-335). However, Suleiman adds that "the difference between what I am calling appropriative identification (where it is Modiano's story that dominates) and empathetic identification (where Dora's story is the focus) is not always clear" (336). It is true that it remains uncertain who is the focus of many passages of the text, since Modiano plays with the apparent clarity of narrative structures. These two heterodiegetic passages (out of a total of three) do not just illustrate a shift in narrative voice, but rather also come to emblematize how the connections between Modiano and Dora are represented in Modiano's text. These moments take on their full significance based on their subject (i.e. the *fugue*) and on the elements surrounding them, especially the constant presence of the narrator's "je." Even though "je" and "elle" both occur and are clearly distinguishable, they are blurred through fictionality and heterodiegesis. The important aspect in terms of meaning is what appears between the shifts in narration. The heterodiegetic moments superimpose these two kinds of identification, breaking any reductive delimitation and complicating the author's enterprise. In this sense, the heterodiegetic moments of *Dora Bruder*,

which can also be considered incursions into fictional mode, further disrupt clear boundaries and question such limitations.

By examining the different processes of identification highlighted by Suleiman, it is possible to observe that the focus constantly shifts, as she herself notes. Even though the heterodiegetic instances of narration introduce a change in narrative mode (fiction) and focalization (Dora), suggesting a negative instance of taking over a person's experiences, they nonetheless pertain to allo-identification; that is, identification *with* the other while emphasizing the fact that the self and the other are clearly different. For instance, the pronoun "elle" is introduced in juxtaposition with the "je" of the narrator: "J'étais sûr qu'elle descendait du métro à Nation" (129). One witnesses the slow superseding of the "je" by the "elle," consisting of the movement from one to the other. However, the three entirely fictional sentences are followed by a direct question; in other words, the expression of a potential alternative that may erase the author's previous certitude: "Peut-être sortait-elle parfois de cette bouche de métro?" (129). Here, the differentiation between "elle" and "je" is fully reinstituted. In terms of focus, it is double: it includes Modiano's focus, through the questioning of another itinerary; as well as Dora's, through her metro trips. These mechanisms pertaining to fiction maintain identification in the safe zone of similarity.

Regarding the aforementioned question of identification, Hirsch introduces Silverman's notion of a "heteropathic" process of identification as "a way of aligning the 'not-me' with the 'me' without interiorizing it or, in her [Silverman's] terms, 'introduc[ing] the "not-me" into my memory reserve'" (*The Generation of Postmemory* 85). The idea of identifying with the other at a distance, that is, through carrying out a displacement, is primordial in my analysis of the fictionalized passage of *Dora Bruder*, as the idea of displacement is at the core of Modiano's enterprise. Furthermore, Silverman allows for a connection between identification and memory through their shared structure of displacement. I have already mentioned that Modiano's text works through

associations in which the author elaborates his experiences in relation to specific pieces of information that he has gathered about Dora's life. Associative memory works exactly in the same way, through displacements in meaning from various memory pools, both social and individual, as well as through temporal movements from numerous moments in history. In many ways, Modiano's text illustrates the process of memory through the associations established. Consequently, *Dora Bruder* becomes a sort of palimpsestic text, expressing these movements of associations and identifications.

Writing with Archives: Temporal Disruption and the Memorial Endeavor

In *Dora Bruder,* archives are varied, relating to Dora's life as well as to history in general (French and German literary history, legal and law enforcement history, urban history, etc.); they therefore carry out the process of opening up to broader realms than those of simply personal and familial accounts. The project of *Dora Bruder* comes into existence because of a piece of archival documentation, and starts – both in Modiano's life and in the text – with it: the missing person's appeal, published in 1941 in *Paris-Soir*. While this specific archive introduces one of the most important dates and periods in the life of Dora (that of her mysterious and unresolved *fugue*), it also enables the insertion of many other dates that pertain to the author's existence. Archives play a role in establishing a person's relation to time, as well as in expressing the interrelations between different time periods. In this sense, archives act as markers and as recurrent tropes of the blurring of temporality so characteristic of Modiano, illustrating a contamination between the past, present, and future. As documents of the past, archives enter into the dimension of the present through their interpretation and manipulation by the author, as well as through their presence in the text (since they have been recopied by Modiano). Therefore, they operate as temporal

windows(/abnormalities), as "une brèche dans le tissu des jours" (Farge 13). Arlette Farge does not only underscore the interruption that archives introduce in connection with the normal – in other words, chronological – passage of time; she also suggests that they tell the story of an episode that is usually not told, the "non-dit" (13) of a brief past occurrence. Through both their nature and the content that they unearth, archives provide access to a realness which is otherwise concealed or made available with difficulty. The presence of archives is disruptive, both in terms of content as well as temporally.

The Disruption of Content, Reality, and Fiction

First, as an effect of the real ("effet du réel" [Farge 12]) the accessibility of which remains restricted, archives create a state of tension within any type of narration, formatted discourse, or fictionalization: "C'est en ce sens qu'elle [l'archive] force la lecture, 'captive' le lecteur, produit sur lui la sensation d'enfin appréhender le réel. Et non plus de l'examiner à travers *le récit sur*, *le discours de*" (14). Farge sees such realness as being unacceptable within the narrative order as archives permit an encounter that cannot be fully incorporated and expressed. Interestingly, Modiano's text offers a duality in terms of "presentation," since realness and narration, fiction at times, occur concomitantly. His text is characterized by the effects of reality (archives) *as well as* by an elaborated written discourse and a comprehensive recounting process, both of which guide archival insertions. Nonetheless, there are variations in this concomitant occurrence. Modiano varies his usage of archives, and because of this, there exists a large degree of heterogeneity in the presentation of documents. Some are narrated in detail (such as the numerous photos of the Bruder family he has found over the years, which he describes in detail without inserting them physically into his work [31, 32, 33]), whereas others are simply mentioned, for the purpose of leaving behind a raw trace and undermining the illusion of the homogeneity of narration (such as the letter from

Robert Tartakovsky, which Modiano recopies without any narration or reading, "Je recopie sa lettre, ce mercredi 29 janvier 1997, cinquante-cinq ans après" [121], thus interrupting the revelation of Dora's fate). Moreover, the author alternates between moments of extreme precision and blurring actions. Both relate to the form of the past and to parts of it that have disappeared and which cannot be discovered even through documentation. What the author seeks, through the repeated insertion of archives into the text, follows a logic of fragmentation: a textual fragmentation is able to express a memorial one, conveying the splitting up of a perception. Moreover, the act of obtaining knowledge solely through documents is questioned, since archives can disappear, by being destroyed or lost, and are also open to misinterpretation. Narration seems to be a necessary component in making sense of certain information and attempting to reconstruct an unknown past; yet, at the same time, archival insertions rupture the causal storyline of *Dora Bruder*.

The intrinsic and ever-present duality of archives is doubled in *Dora Bruder*, in that Modiano further complicates their presence and use, a *complex*ification which is even more marked by the presence of meta-archival discourse. For instance, Modiano alludes to archives and his utilization of them at the beginning of the third chapter. For him, archives leave traces that are hidden in records and that need to be excavated from oblivion (13).[57] A list of discoveries made by the author within those hidden registers follows such a negative, and almost defeatist, statement, showing that the effects of the real can be brought forward with a certain amount of patience ("Il suffit d'un peu de patience. / Ainsi, j'ai fini par savoir…" [13]) and thus overcome silence. The role of the writer-indirect witness is to highlight this process of excavation and to inscribe traces so that they are remembered. This may possibly explain why Serge Klarsfeld's role is effaced in

[57] "Il faut longtemps pour que ressurgisse à la lumière ce qui a été effacé. Des traces subsistent dans des registres et l'on ignore où ils sont cachés et quels gardiens consentiront à vous les montrer. Ou peut-être ont-ils oublié tout simplement que ces registres existaient" (13).

Dora Bruder. Klarsfeld provided many of the archives Modiano uses in his text. However, his discoveries are taken over by the author Modiano, becoming his alone; he is the sole agent in the process of reconstruction. Modiano is the indirect witness who writes the story of Dora Bruder and creates her "memorial," joining archives and history with literature.[58]

In this sense, contrary to what Farge seems to suggest – although both statements are not incompatible; rather, they highlight the paradox of archives – archives almost never stand on their own. Archives do not possess epistemological autonomy, as a process of excavation and interpretation is required, particularly in the field of history. What is the difference between Modiano the author and the work of a historian? Marielle Macé proposes that a shift, or perhaps a return to a different vision of the writer is present: "où l'auteur est témoin et restaurateur, plutôt que fabulateur, et prend modèle sur l'historien" (47), echoing in many ways Fresco's vision of the writer as a keeper of records, almost an archivist or restorer, in relation to the textual representation of the Holocaust by the second generation. However, as shown above, despite a more historical approach, Modiano is affectively involved with Dora Bruder as archives and literature simultaneously alter the status of the writer. Literature is positioned on a more historical and therefore factual level of representation. The change of the status of the author pertains to her or his transformation into the position of an indirect witness. The literary purpose of the work therefore appears more testimonial.

Regarding factuality and fiction in *Dora Bruder*, archives reinforce the perpetual movements of the text and incorporate shifts into its core. Unsurprisingly, because of their very nature, archives likewise come to symbolize the textual/memorial movements of *Dora Bruder*. In

[58] In his last letter to Modiano (dated April 3, 1997), Klarsfeld himself points out the erasure of his role, describing it as a literary device: "Je ne sais si cette disparition que j'évoque dans ma lettre à [Pierre] Lepage est significative d'une trop grande présence de ma part dans cette recherche ou si c'est un procédé littéraire permettant à l'auteur d'être le seul démiurge" ("Correspondance").

L'archéologie du savoir, Michel Foucault points out a similar conjunction between discourse/writing and archives: if a person perceives discursive formations, and more precisely utterances, as archives based on their essentialist similarity, then these archives become characterized by analogous processes of re-combination as utterances (*les énoncés*[59]). Archives, considered as verbal masses, are actually systems (of utterances) that have established utterances as events and things (Foucault 177). Foucault continues by stating that through their connections with events, archives offer points of multiple statements and interpretations:

> Entre la *langue* qui définit le système de construction des phrases possibles, et le *corpus* qui recueille passivement les paroles prononcées, l'*archive* définit un niveau particulier : celui d'une pratique qui fait surgir une multiplicité d'énoncés comme autant d'évènements réguliers, comme autant de choses offertes au traitement et à la manipulation. (178)

These belong to a system: "C'est *le système général de la formation et de la transformation des énoncés*" (178-179). Therefore, a structural echo appears: like writing, archives engender "a dynamic of constant modification" in the words of Michael Sheringham (50), which takes on particular importance given that specific histories are already concerned with discontinuity and "des transformations qui valent comme fondation et renouvellement des fondations" (Foucault 13). As they are prone to manipulation and change as well as are intrinsically double, it is understandable that Foucault suggests that archives evolve in dual time, in a time frame that is close to us and which is nonetheless beyond the scope of the current moment, introducing a break or an edge: "c'est la bordure du temps qui entoure notre présent, qui le surplombe et qui l'indique dans son altérité" (172). This border of time allows for time periods to be blurred through the

[59] In his attempt to explain what an utterance (*l'énoncé*) is, Foucault comes to the realization that interrelation and dynamism define an utterance and its function: "Or, en revenant sur mes pas, je me suis aperçu que je ne pouvais pas définir l'énoncé comme une unité de type linguistique (supérieure au phonème et au mot, inférieure au texte) ; mais que j'avais affaire plutôt à une fonction énonciative, mettant en jeu des unités diverses (elles peuvent coïncider parfois avec des phrases, parfois avec des propositions ; mais elles sont faites parfois de fragments de phrases, de séries ou de tableaux de signes, d'un jeu de propositions ou de formulations équivalentes) ; et cette fonction, au lieux de donner un 'sens' à ces unités, les met en rapport avec un champ d'objets ; au lieu de déterminer leur identité, les loge dans un espace où elles sont investies, utilisées et répétées" (146).

introduction of a different time period into the present, in particular, that of a more or less distant past. Temporal alterity conveys a multiplicity of meanings, applying otherness to the author and his text.

The Disruption of Temporality, History, and Memory

Archives illustrate and reinforce the melding and blurring of temporality present in Modiano's text through the very features characteristic of them, as Marie-Pascale Huglo highlights: "mais l'intérêt de la figure de l'archive vient aussi du fait que s'y *condense*, peut-être même s'y *dépose* un rapport complexe à la temporalité et à la trace chargée de tensions" (6). Archives introduce a piece of the past, a "ça-a-été" in the words of Roland Barthes (*La Chambre claire*), into a different temporal dimension. Therefore, they are characterized by a "hétérochronie constitutive" (Huglo 7). In the same way, Paul Ricœur perceives archives or traces[60] as being a *connecteur* between "two temporal perspectives" (Sheringham 51). These documents join presence and absence, a statement expressing the connection made between the past and the present. In *Dora Bruder*, absence is even further emphasized, as it is double: many archival documents relate to Dora's *fugue*, her absence in the past. In this sense, the archives that Modiano finds express her disappearances and absence, as well as introduce a certain attempt at presence, as the author bases his writing on them. For instance, Modiano finds the entry for Dora in the records of Saint-Cœur-de-Marie boarding school. After recopying it (36), he utilizes it to speculate (why did her parents send her there?), a consideration which starts as familial (perhaps it was hard for three people to

[60] Ricœur connects archives and traces by stipulating that the latter leave a deposit, which in turn refers to the action of archiving and preserving such a rem(a)inder. The word trace refers to "leaving a trace," and is therefore caught within the institutionalization characteristic of archives. Both pertain to the past and its traces, and that fact that "le passé a *laissé* une trace" (217). Archives are institutionalized traces, and that is why Ricœur opens up his examination to all traces, choosing the latter term.

live in one room in the eighteenth arrondissement) and subsequently becomes more historical (maybe to protect Dora). Next, it also allows him to imagine Dora's life before and in the school. Modiano manages to speak of the past through the breach in time that that specific archive engenders: as a present (contemporary) mark of her past presence at the school, the record encompasses both the past that pertains to Dora and the present of Modiano.

However, the use of archives also underscores the impossibility of fully making a temporal connection, since it is impossible to find out retrospectively how these documents were produced and how they were brought to the present; in other words, how they were passed down. Paul Ricœur emphasizes the peculiarity of the trace, since "c'est toujours *un passage*, non une présence possible, qu'elle indique" [emphasis added] (*Temps et récit, Tome 3 – Le temps raconté* 227). In addition, Ricœur also refers to the homonymic notion of "être passé" in its double meaning to express the temporal paradox of the trace:

> D'une part, la trace est visible ici et maintenant, comme vestige, comme marque. D'autre part, il y a trace parce que *auparavant* un homme, un animal est passé par là ; une chose a agi. Dans l'usage même de la langue, le vestige, la marque *indiquent* le passé du passage, l'antériorité de la rayure, de l'entaille, sans *montrer*, sans faire apparaître, *ce qui* est passé par là. On remarquera l'heureuse homonymie entre "être passé," au sens d'être passé à un certain endroit, et "être passé," au sens d'être révolu. (217-218)

More than just a state of "être passé" in the sense of existing in the past, archives point to the idea of their passage into a different temporal dimension, of "être passé" from one point to another. The idea of (perpetual) movement seems essential: it denotes unsettlement, as it involves neither absence nor full presence. It also indicates a process of transmission that ultimately remains obscure and unknown. Archives connect the past and present through a non-connection, a link that is moving, blurred, and incomplete.

The temporal disruption does not only concern the realms of the past and of the present. As shown above, futurity is an important temporal dimension in *Dora Bruder*. In the same vein,

archives also hold this future at their core, since they constitute a token that takes on symbolic value in the future: "l'archive a toujours été un gage, et comme tout gage, un gage d'avenir" (Derrida, *Mal d'archive* 37). In *Mal d'archive*, Jacques Derrida emphasizes the importance of futurity when it comes to archival documents. Archives' role into the future pertains to a "question d'une réponse, d'une promesse et d'une responsabilité pour demain" (60). Interestingly, the possibility of relating to the future necessitates the act of looking at and speaking to the past, and even daring to speak to a ghost, as Derrida claims (64). The order of time results in a sort of dislocation, as it is molded into a process of perpetual conditionality. This is directly connected to my previous analysis of Modiano's play on conjugations and his utilization of the present conditional. This tense attempts to answer and to make sense of some uncertain facts; yet, its utilization itself problematizes such an attempt. Derrida also underlines the problematic and almost paradoxical potentiality of futurity, mentioning: "l'ouverture de ce futur dans lequel la possibilité même du savoir restait suspendue au conditionnel" (61). Moreover, Derrida adds that this opening of and toward the future appears to be an instance of speaking for the other, from the place of the other, therefore welcoming a certain alterity. This alterity is as ontological as it is temporal, linking the content with the means. For Modiano, the matter at hand remains partly about Dora as well as partly about history and what the young girl's fate comes to symbolize for others and for historical and memorial endeavors. Therefore, the essential aspect of writing Dora's past story ought to be how her story will be remembered in the future, wondering "ce qui aura été et devrait ou devra être dans l'avenir" (Derrida 72). Archives call attention to both absence and a certain lack that must be filled in, if this is ever fully possible. Hence the pertinence of the notion of hypomnesia in relation to archives: they permit remembrance and reveal deficiency at the same time. Archives are intrinsically linked to memory and yet, they change the very process of remembering. Memory becomes supplemented, replaced by an apparatus consisting of external documents. Archives both

conserve and erase memory (implying hypomnesia instead of anamnesis). An aporia characterizes the memorial movements linked to archives in relation to any direct or indirect testimonial endeavor.

The aporia which archives introduce in relation to memory, in the sense that they themselves bear the impulse to remember through documentation *and* the destruction of a certain memory, is principally due to the fact that they prevail in their role as a supplement. As such, their movements comprise supplementing and inevitably subtracting, almost erasing. Moreover, one can observe a passage from internality (memory) and externality (archives) toward a process of historiography. An echo of the question of temporal movements is created, leading to the blurring of strict and clear definitional boundaries. Therefore, while the different temporal manipulations, emphasized as pertaining to actions of either melding or blurring, symbolize and enact mnemonic phenomena, history can evolve simultaneously with memory, and often stands as a way to replace and reconstruct a memory that has disappeared or that is deficient. These manipulations can also illustrate the associations they are both founded on, associations present in the text as literary tropes and processes, in addition to internal and external relations.

As I discussed above, Modiano constructs a literary narrative based on associations between himself and Dora, thus creating echoes that generate a sort of associative memory, based on the use and creation of palimpsests. But archives too are a kind of palimpsest. Derrida argues that this palimpsestic characteristic, through his image of the supplement, is linked to the death drive, and therefore bears a certain annihilative drive, a "*mal,*" that should be perceived as a disease or symptom and as evil. However, it is also a source of production, and in the case of Modiano, of literary production. Archives, since they relate to historiography, permit two processes – the production and recovery of history – which are articulated in writing by Modiano. In this sense, the author resembles a historian, as he must place what he reads in a narrative to assimilate the

information unearthed. However, he goes even further than that through the use of literature and the deployment of memory. He enables a dialogue between history and memory. This dialogue has the purpose of creation, since it manages to reconstruct through blanks, the lacks of both memory and history. The lacunar characteristic of archives comes to signify the historical and memorial construction made possible through literature. Modiano works against the destruction drive. The temporal melding and blurring that Modiano manipulates allows for gaps in time to fill the blank in, through associations and supplements/palimpsests, and above all, through writing.

In the End, Impossibility and Absence: Dora as a Ghost

The main subject matter of *Dora Bruder* are the traces of a young girl caught in the upheaval of the Second World War. This constitutes the core of the text both as a thematic isotopy and as a literary form: it is a text about Dora's fate, which also literarily embodies this disappearance, the historical and memorial void resulting from her situation, and her place in collective remembrance and history. This absence is present in both concrete and figurative ways: it is concrete in that her disappearance during her *fugue* and her death appear as themes represented by Modiano; it is figurative since the hybridity and unsettling nature of the text actually mirror reality, and thus illustrate the concrete manifestations of the absence of Dora and of information about her disappearance. This text is a case of the written deployment of historical and memorial tensions: Modiano shapes his text as an echo to the stories he attempts to tell, transforming Dora's real and historical disappearance into textual tensions. The opposite is also true: historical tensions and memorial strains between individuals and collectivities inscribe themselves in the work. These tensions, which should be recounted and represented, produce jarring pieces of literature in those that try to express them. Best and Robson suggest that memory and innovation are mutually linked,

and that the resurgence of memory in post-Holocaust France has actually driven authors to find inventive and unconventional ways to write, represent, and propagate memory: "these tensions remain as crucial elements in the quest to find new forms of representation of memory" (Best and Robson 1). In this regard, Modiano plays with time in order to express, both concretely and figuratively, the ways in which an event such as the Holocaust challenges our understanding and perception; he does so by way of a synecdoche established through Dora's fate and other traces.

At the end of *L'Illusion de la fin*, Jean Baudrillard connects poetics and history by suggesting a different approach to the latter: given the chaotic nature of poetic language and literature, history can be approached through the same muddled lens of creativity, that of a "jeu d'enroulement" (169) instead of through a linear progression of events: "Contre la simulation d'une histoire linéaire 'in progress,' il faut privilégier ces retours de flamme, ces courbures malignes, ces catastrophes légères qui désemparent un empire bien mieux que de grands bouleversements" (169). Modiano seems to suggest exactly that through his manipulation of time periods. He resorts to a poetic relationship to memory and history, in which the literary form traces the workings of history, and in which complexity and hybridity characterize memory. This succeeds in expressing the co-existence of the possible and the impossible.

In the last paragraph of *Dora Bruder*, Modiano states that despite his quests and despite the answers he has found, a certain sense of mystery prevails when it comes to the young girl: he will never know what happened to her during her *fugue*. It is and will remain her secret. This secret is ambivalent; it is insignificant (compared to the tragedy of her death) and yet precious. The value placed on this mystery pertains to the possibility of resistance against the people who have tried to erase her. Moreover, it is she herself who has concealed this part of her life, and who has preserved this secret:

> J'ignorerai toujours à quoi elle passait ses journées, où elle se cachait, en compagnie de qui elle se trouvait pendant les mois d'hiver de sa première fugue et au cours des quelques semaines de printemps où elle s'est échappée à nouveau. C'est là son secret. Un pauvre et précieux secret que les bourreaux, les ordonnances, les autorités dites d'occupation, le Dépôt, les casernes, les camps, l'Histoire, le temps – tout ce qui vous souille et qui vous détruit – n'auront pas pu lui voler. (145)

Even Modiano does not have access to the privacy of the young girl in the end. He, too, is maintained at a distance. Paradoxically, the author does not try to "soil" or "destroy" her, leading to the question of the reason behind this impossibility. I would argue that it is because full knowledge is ultimately impossible. By letting Dora keep her secret, Modiano recognizes that "postmemory" has its limits, and that a real difference exists, which is imposed on others and on externality. Of course, this state of not knowing does not prevent understanding: Modiano clearly recognizes why he can never and should never know, and understanding stems from this recognition. For the author, not fully knowing and respecting this lack shows a respectful and true understanding of memory as an indirect witness.

Modiano's text presents a mitigated form of "postmemory," exemplifying and countervailing the workings of "postmemory" as defined by Hirsch. This, of course, is more clear through the insistence on absences and the poetics of absence developed through literary means. Absence, or rather, the presence of absence, occurs through the fragmentation of temporality and narration. It lets Dora resurface within those abrupt changes: Dora inhabits the present through the similarities that Modiano draws and her presence in the city of Paris. The disjunction of time periods that develops in *Dora Bruder* indicates the fragmentary nature of memory linked to genocide, in particular because of rupture and loss. Nonetheless, while rupture can be perceived as symbolic, it remains above all very real: millions of people perished in the Holocaust. The dead, or the *drowned* in the words of Primo Levi, represent that rupture in terms of memorial transmission. Of course, these disappearances have repercussions on the living. The consequences

of genocide still resurface today. Therefore, the fragmentary nature of the text examined here also indicates a certain "hauntology" which defines afterness. Dora becomes representative of this haunting. She is indeed a *revenant*: having been a part of the past, she comes back to the present. She is a non-being as well as a being, due to the role that she still plays and the weight of her (non)presence, thus echoing Jacques Derrida's play on the hauntology/ontology (*hantologie/ontologie*) duo and their similarities in pronunciation in French. The term "revenant" introduces some interesting connotations regarding the deployment of specters: it emphasizes the idea of a movement that is uncontrollable and divergent, but which must nonetheless be discussed. Moreover, it is addressed through another paradox, as hospitality and exclusion coexist when faced with a specter. Ambivalence and ambiguity seem to define not only the ghost, but also the ways and the meanings behind its return as well as the means of approaching it.

Literature functions as a mediation process, as a sort of passage through a "middle-voice" as defined by the American scholars Hayden White and later James E. Young. Dora cannot come back to life per se; she returns through Modiano's acts of writing. She is a revenant thanks to the living, brought back to consciousness by them: "la relation d'un sujet apparemment non fantomatique à un fantôme est directement liée à la capacité de faire un texte littéraire" (Chaudier 210). Hence, Modiano develops a "poetics of spectrality," a term that encompasses the temporal and narrative movements observable in *Dora Bruder*. I would suggest that the way in which Modiano portrays the presence of the absent Dora, notably through the blurring of temporality, illustrates this "poetics of spectrality," a writing for, and a reverence of, ghosts. It is therefore not surprising to observe that Derrida understands the question of spectrality through the famous line from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, "time is out of joint": "le temps est désarticulé, démis, déboîté, disloqué, le temps est détraqué, traqué et détraqué, dérangé, à la fois déréglé et fou. Le temps est hors de ses gonds, le temps est déporté" (*Spectres de Marx* 42). Writing has allowed for

time to become disjointed in *Dora Bruder*, through the figure of the ghost that Dora has become for Modiano: this ghostly force is responsible for the temporal breach that permits her return. Derrida highlights that this disjoined time maintains the opening of the open (111). This opening permits the recognition that one does not possess his or her time period, and that this dispossession is a chance: "la chance qui nous rend accueillant à l'immaîtrisable de l'événement" (Chaudier 217). A certain uncontrollability accompanies the appearance of a ghost, and this is a fact that Modiano has experienced: despite his writing, Dora cannot be "controlled" or fully represented. She flows over the brims of the text, surpassing its edges. She is controlling yet uncontrollable. Derrida affirms that in order to ensure that different voices speak in a literary text, an author must let disorganization do its work. Fragmentary writing allows for plurality, in terms of voices and also, I would sustain, of memory.

Temporality is important for *Dora Bruder*'s spectral logic. I have tried to show how the blurring of time periods opens up breaches of time from where or around which Dora can "appear." The fact that a disjoined temporality maintains an opening incorporates the idea of a projection into the future, for that opening to be subsequently sustained. The messianic force is "résurrectionnelle" and "ré-insurrectionnelle" (*Spectres de Marx* 66), transforming what has been (past) into a something that has not yet been realized (future). In "Petite enquête sur le désir contemporain de spectralité," Stéphane Chaudier discusses this in terms of an inexhaustible margin (a never-ending border area) "qui vient d'un passé non encore passé et fait surgir l'aujourd'hui comme attente de l'à venir, de la promesse projetée depuis le passé" (217). In writing about the past, and about Dora as a revenant, Modiano manages to create a space where the past can re-appear and continue in the future. I would moreover maintain that its remembrance can be projected onto the future. *Dora Bruder* is the testimony to such futurity. In an almost oxymoronic expression, specters open up the horizon of memory and the "témoignage devient visionnaire" (Blanckerman 147). While

nonetheless remaining an other, never fully assimilated or "owned" by her writing counterpart, Dora leaves a trace, through that opening, for future generations to remember the *drowned* and the past. It appears as if her very resistance to being fully discovered is the only way that she can re-enter the realm of memory. As others who have their story written by someone else and who yet struggle to remain an other, Dora illustrates how paradoxes most adequately portray the dilemmas of afterness. Maurice Blanchot has expressed this paradoxically about the other, who despite the writing process, remains an other: "L'autre n'est jamais en rapport qu'avec l'autre: il se répète sans que cette répétition soit répétition d'un même, se redoublant en se dédoublant à l'infini, affirmant, hors de tout futur, présent, passé (et par là le niant), un temps qui a toujours déjà fait son temps" (59). Blanchot shows that there always exists the possibility and impossibility of encountering the other as such; of understanding her or him, as she or he has already escaped, changed through an unchronological passing of time periods (one in which the past, present, and future do not exist). Nonetheless this temporality has already passed, and is outdated. I would therefore suggest that despite Modiano's best efforts, and despite his playing with time periods and narration, the writer is unable to "possess" the memories of Dora. As a ghost, she is beyond his reach, and can only appear in the temporal and narrative breaches opened for her, before disappearing once again, thus reiterating her absence.

Part II

Chapter 3

Flight, Transmission, and Paradoxes: The Heritage of the Haunting Victim in Koulsy Lamko's *La Phalène des collines*

> But the butterfly's attractiveness derives not only from colors and symmetry: deeper motives contribute to it. We would not think them so beautiful if they did not fly, or if they flew straight and briskly like bees, or if they stung, or above all if they did not enact the perturbing mystery of metamorphosis: the latter assumes in our eyes the value of an incompletely decoded message, a symbol and a sign.
>
> **Primo Levi – "Butterflies"**

> Il y a parfois des césariennes dans l'acte de parturition d'accouchement, "ma phalène" était née sous césarienne ; il fallait que j'apaise les parois de mes entrailles endolories, que je répande du baume sur les plaies. C'est aussi un acte rituel lorsque l'on se fait porte-parole des morts, de ceux qui ont désormais une autre parole que celle de la colère.
>
> **Koulsy Lamko – "La Parole des fantômes"**

> Nous ne pouvions espérer sortir indemnes d'un pays-cimetière qui a choisi de laisser exposés, à la vue de tous, les restes des victimes du génocide. C'était bien autre chose qu'un contact livresque avec la réalité. Il nous a fallu apprendre à écouter des êtres brisés à jamais nous raconter nos propres romans avant même que n'en fût écrite la première phrase. Étrange bataille entre nous et personnes de chair et de sang, nos futurs personnages à peine plus vraisemblables que leurs histoires…
>
> **Boubacar Boris Diop – "Génocide et devoir d'imaginaire"**

It was through his participation in Fest'Africa's project "Rwanda: Écrire par devoir de mémoire" that Chadian poet and playwright Koulsy Lamko came to write his first novel.[61] Composed in 1999 and first published in Rwanda in 2000 and then in France in 2002,[62]

[61] "Avec le Rwanda, mon premier roman je l'ai écrit sur le Rwanda" (Lamko, "Le Gos au Rwanda" 271).

[62] *La Phalène des collines* was first published in 2000 by the Rwandan publisher *Kuljaama* because Lamko refused to amend his text as requested by French publishers. The novel was finally published in France by *Le Serpent à Plumes* in 2002. In "La représentation romanesque de la violence génocidaire," Véronique Porra states that "Koulsy Lamko a refusé de retravailler son texte ce qui l'a contraint, dans un premier temps, à le publier à compte d'auteur" (160). Lamko recounts the story in his interview with Chantal Kalisa: "Le premier éditeur l'a refusé en me disant qu'il fallait le rendre un peu plus fluide et en faire un conte. Ce que je lui ai refusé. Avant de l'avoir écrit, j'avais dit à la presse que personne n'en changera mot, qu'aucun éditeur n'imposerait son point de vue par rapport à la question du Rwanda" (272).

La Phalène des collines is an exceptionally poetic text. Indeed, the work is often described as a long poem following a novelistic form. The text also contains a certain fable-like quality, which is most clearly apparent in the tale's surrealism and anthropomorphism — aspects that I will discuss at length below. This hybridity in the form of the text acknowledged by Lamko himself, who admits that "[il] ne sai[t] pas trop ce que c'est" (*Africultures*), allows the author to tackle the task of recounting genocide from the point of view of an indirect witness.[63] Moreover, it facilitates the preservation of a balance between the aestheticism of literary representation and a strong sense of realism and accuracy. The particularity of *La Phalène des collines* resides in the juxtaposition of the strong antonyms of fiction and reality, demonstrating their marked combination, and at times, their collision.

Factuality remains fundamental to the fictional depiction of the *itsembabwoko* – a representation offered by indirect witnesses – since it constitutes the basis of any secondary recounting of genocide. In her essay "Y a-t-il une spécificité africaine dans la représentation romanesque de la violence génocidaire?," Véronique Porra identifies three ways in which the indirect writers of Fest'Africa establish real facts: first of all, "les connaissances théoriques" leading to "la 'restitution' des faits"; secondly, testimonies that become "traces mnésiques" (Todorov's phrase referring to the vestiges of events and the marks they leave on people); and thirdly, through "traces matérielles," or rather, the physical vestiges and sites of events (153). The last of these methods is particularly significant in the case of Lamko, not only because his involvement with Fest'Africa meant that he visited Rwanda with his fellow African writers in order to produce his work, but also because these material traces have greatly influenced him

[63] This aspect of indirect testimonies will be examined in Chapter 4 of this dissertation in the context of two other texts from the project "Rwanda: Écrire par devoir de mémoire": Abdourahman A. Waberi's *Moisson de crânes* and Véronique Tadjo's *L'Ombre d'Imana*.

and have provided the very subject matter of *La Phalène des collines*. In the representation of these authors, sites emerge as anchor points, *points de capiton*. While Boubacar Boris Diop focuses on Murambi[64] in the book that stemmed from his involvement in the Fest'Africa project, Lamko decided to concentrate on Nyamata, echoing Tierno Monénembo's choice.[65]

Located in southeastern Rwanda in the Bugesera district, the town of Nyamata has a history that can shed light on how it became the site of extensive massacres in 1994. Alexandre Dauge-Roth mentions that on the eve of the genocide, Nyamata was characterized by the impressive size of its Tutsi population as "a result of forced displacements that had occurred in the 1960s when the newly elected PARMEHUTU government of Grégoire Kayibanda massively deported Tutsis to this hostile and inhabited area" (130). Unlike other towns in Rwanda, Nyamata had an equal number of Tutsis and Hutus in its population of 120,000.[66] This specific ethnic composition was completely changed over the course of one month. The first sentence of Jean Hatzfeld's *Dans le nu de la vie* presents this terrible scenario:

> En 1994, entre le lundi 11 avril à 11 heures et le samedi 14 mai à 14 heures, environ 50 000 Tutsis, sur une population d'environ 59 000, ont été massacrés à la machette, tous les jours de la semaine, de 9h30 à 16 heures, par des miliciens et voisins hutus, sur les collines de la commune de Nyamata, au Rwanda. (7)

The focus on Nyamata – whether in Hatzfeld's work or in Lamko's – establishes, through a synecdoche, a sense of the scale and of the striking rapidity of the 1994 massacres.

One site has had a particularly strong effect on the Chadian poet: that of the church of Nyamata. Churches are filled with meaning in the context of the genocide. It was common for Tutsis to take refuge in official buildings (schools, administrative structures, etc.) and more

[64] Diop, Boubacar Boris. *Murambi: Le Livre des ossements*. Paris: Éditions Stock, 2000.
[65] Monénembo, Tierno. *L'Aîné des orphelins*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2000.
[66] "At the eve of the genocide, 120,000 Rwandans lived in Nyamata, an equal number of Tutsis and Hutus" (Dauge-Roth 130). To compare, the total population was 18,966 in 2002, a number which was nonetheless on the rise in 2012, with numbers reaching 34,939 according to the *2012 Population and Housing Census* of the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda.

particularly, in churches. This situation was partially due to the fact that Tutsis believed that they could not be harmed on government property and in places of worship, since it would go against state and religious principles, respectively. Moreover, they were told to assemble at these locations, "recommendations" which became part of the genocidal project. In *L'Ombre d'Imana*, Véronique Tadjo explains why and how so many people came to gather in one place: "Les autorités avaient demandé à la population de se regrouper: 'Rassemblez-vous dans les églises et les lieux publics, on va vous protéger'" (21). Such tactics were an attempt to overturn symbols since cultural and political colonialism along with the Church were associated with Tutsis (a connection performed by Hutus). The association was inspired by the so-called Hamitic myth promoted by the colonial powers, which ascribed superior status to Tutsis.[67] Additionally, for the perpetrators of genocide, assembling a large number of Tutsis in one place allowed for faster mass extermination. While recounting the massacres at the Church of Nyamata, one survivor not only describes how the perpetrators proceeded, including their violence and cruelty, but also the time frame of the killings:

> Les *interahamwe* sont arrivés en chantant avant midi, ils ont jeté des grenades, ils ont arraché les grilles, puis ils se sont précipités dans l'église et ils ont commencé à découper des gens avec des machettes et des lances. Ils portaient des feuilles de manioc dans les cheveux, ils criaient de toutes leurs forces, ils riaient à gorge chaude. Ils cognaient à bout de bras, ils coupaient sans choisir personne. […] Les *interahamwe*

[67] The colonial powers, along with religious officials, were responsible for the propagation of the Hamitic myth; that is, the belief that Tutsis are superior beings, who came from Ethiopia and possibly even Northern Africa, because of their physical traits (fairer skin, thinner noses, etc.) and tall stature. The diffusion of this myth was carried out for political as well as religious purposes, since Tutsis embodied a certain sense of attractive traditionalism and ancestry. However, in his essay "Bwiza ou la beauté: Quelques documents à propos d'une fascination," Pierre Halen describes this fascination and its use in both local and European political discourses for what it is: "Pour en revenir au Rwanda, il serait plus juste de dire que le colonisateur a surtout projeté ses valeurs, ses récits, ses fantasmes si l'on veut, sur une société qui existait avant son arrivée avec ses propres catégories et ses propres récits ; le mythe hamitique est une combinaison interprétative lui a permis, sous une forme qu'on peut juger contestable, certes, une première organisation moderne au Rwanda, mixte de 'territoires' coloniaux et de juridictions 'indigènes', à l'enseigne de l'*indirect rule*" (64). The Hamitic myth therefore justified granting power to the Tutsis and the formation of a strict hierarchical structure. It was through the Hutu Revolution in 1959 that this discourse was overthrown and openly used against the Tutsis.

> ont terminé la tuerie à l'église en deux jours ; et tout de suite ils sont sortis sur nos traces en forêt, avec des massues et des machettes. (Hatzfeld 17)[68]

Due to conglomeration and organization, thousands of Tutsis were killed in a matter of merely two days, illustrating the ways in which the Rwandan genocide was a planned affair as well as an institutionally-backed and guided outburst of violence.

The numbers point to a dreadful reality: "[S]ome claim that 35,000 were slain in the Nyamata church, which appears to have a capacity of some 3,000" (Des Forges 16). Similar figures appear in Tadjo's *L'Ombre d'Imana*:

> ÉGLISE DE NYAMATA
> + ou – 35 000 morts. (19)

How can such inconceivable data be represented in literary works? How can one comprehend what happened on the grounds of a church, where thousands of people sought safety, only to encounter death in the end? How is it possible to transform these events into communicable stories that give way to understanding? Statistics alone cannot help us grasp what occurred in Nyamata and its church. This recognition becomes the point of departure of Lamko's *La Phalène des collines*. In the short preface entitled "Exorde,"[69] Lamko starts by adding and multiplying numbers linked to the genocide: he counts how many days the killings lasted and how many people were massacred during that short time period.[70] However, as soon as he obtains the semblance of a result, Lamko denies its importance, stating that it obstructs the real meaning of the Rwandan genocide. In this case, the generalizations produced by legal and

[68] *Interahamwe* refers to Habyarimana's milice and stands for "ceux qui se tiennent/attaquent ensemble" (Des Forges 9).
[69] The "Exorde" section is less than two pages long.
[70] "Trois mois font trente jours à multiplier par trois. Ensuite il faut y ajouter trois ou deux jours selon que l'on est en année bissextile ou non… si l'on prend en considération le mois de février. Si l'on sait bien calculer, trente fois trois font nonante. Si l'on ajoute à cela dix pour avoir un chiffre rond, la somme est égale à cent. Si l'on entreprend de multiplier cent par dix et encore par dix et encore, on finira par atteindre le million et puis l'on pourra diviser si l'on veut pour trouver une moyenne honorable" (Lamko 11).

journalistic vocabulary are rejected by the author in order to fully grasp and communicate the distinctiveness of the event. Poetry enables transmission of the traumatic event, and lyrical language holds the power to recount such a story of horror: "Là-bas s'arrête l'histoire mathématique; ici l'ère du poète: la vocation d'une polyphonie sur des arpèges de cacophonies douloureuses" (Lamko 12). However, this does not mean that facts are to be overlooked. On the contrary, they need to be put into perspective and incorporated into relatable accounts, through what Lamko refers to as the paraphrasing of history ("Cependant, ici, je n'ai qu'un seul droit: celui de la paraphrase de l'histoire" [12]). In this sense, he seeks to establish a real connection between individual and collective memory; a convergence of the personal and the historical/political. These are established on similar grounds, to be taken into consideration equally. *La Phalène des collines* attempts to engage opposites in a dialogue that creates bridges between various perceptions and experiences, which Lamko refers to as a polyphonic vocation and which takes shape in literature.

The focus on the church of Nyamata allows for this blending of opposing forces into a different narrative space. The church becomes a symbol, used as such in *La Phalène des collines*. It also provides an opportunity to address another time period: the years after the genocide. Since 1994, the church of Nyamata has been a memorial site. In 1998, when the artists participating in the Fest'Africa project visited Rwanda, the memorial site of Nyamata was distinguished by its policy of extreme memorialization: the church had been transformed into a memorial and had lost its religious function ("Nyamata, par contre, a été la seule église désaffectée et transformée en lieu de mémoire" [Blum]). Furthermore, corpses were publicly exposed, sometimes even exhumed from mass graves to be displayed and shown to everyone

(Vidal 578).[71] The violence of the genocide became visual violence for visitors, as they could walk among hundreds of bodies left untouched as a silent and shocking reminder of what happened in 1994. Nocky Djedanoum, one of the organizers of the writers' residency, emphasizes the violence, both subjective and objective,[72] of these places: "L'église de Nyamata, et plus encore l'ex-école technique de Murambi, sont des lieux hallucinants. Quand tu as vu ça, tu n'es plus jamais le même. L'inhumanité est sous tes yeux. Le Rwanda est le seul pays au monde où les corps sont exposés comme cela" ("Le Partage du deuil"). The violence is visual and moral to the extent that the brutal confrontation with death instills a haunting vision in those who visit the memorials.

This graphic memorialization has given rise to much criticism, not only from intellectuals, but also from Rwandans themselves, including both victims and perpetrators. In "Le Partage du deuil," Djedanoum questions the viability of the display of corpses, a belief reformulated numerous times by various individuals for both ethical and practical reasons. First untouched, the cadavers were left where the people had died, as described by Philip Gourevitch in *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families*:

> They had been killed thirteen months earlier, and they hadn't been moved. Skin stuck here and there over the bones, many which lay scattered away from the bodies, dismembered by the killers, or by scavengers – birds, dogs, bugs. The more complete figures looked a lot like people, which they were once. (15-16)

[71] However, after 2005, corpses are no longer exposed (Blum).

[72] In *Violence*, Slavoj Zizek identifies two sorts of violence: subjective violence and objective violence. He defines the former as visible violence "performed by a clearly identifiable agent" (1) and which "is experienced as such against the background of a non-violent zero level" (2). On the contrary, the latter is characterized by its invisibility. As a normal and inherent phenomenon, it cannot be measured and understood in a way similar to subjective violence. In his conceptualization of objective violence, Zizek further distinguishes between two types of invisible violence: symbolic violence, which is that of language; and systemic violence, which is "the often catastrophic consequences of the smooth functioning of our economic and political systems" (2), a rewriting of Bourdieu's symbolic violence.

Additionally, some cadavers were preserved in lime, in order to further maintain a resemblance to the humans they once were. These conserved corpses are still being exposed in certain memorials, often in a staged manner; a framing which "invite[s] us [the visitors] to speculate" (Clark 169). Naturally, most cadavers decayed over time and became skeletons and mere bones: "[A]t Nyamata, in a clinically tiled room below the clothes-filled church pews […], some skulls and femurs can be found in glass cases, and many, many more are stored in the underground 'crypts' that have been constructed alongside the church" (Clark 169). These types of memorialization become a source of hostility, which seem to prolong conflictual relations. Dauge-Roth highlights the tension between public and personal interests, especially between the government and the families of victims, since "survivors' needs to mourn sometimes conflicted with the official institutionalization of memory" (132). He adds: "Nyamata's church too, in its transformation into a memorial, had been the scene of some tensions, since, despite the desire of some relatives of the victims, the government insisted on keeping several bodies on display" (132). Along with the development of diverging practices in the natural process of mourning the dead, the exhibition of bodies also raises the question of the intentions of these memorials and their helpfulness.

Numerous scholars have inquired into Rwanda's policies regarding the memorialization of the genocide by reflecting on the reactions triggered by the display of corpses and bones. Moreover, this inevitably leads one to wonder how to induce a process of remembrance which aims to unite people rather than dividing them further. Many researchers have evoked the possibility that the exhibition of the victims' corpses does not counter the rhetoric of erasure and massification of genocide, but rather has a contrary effect. Claudine Vidal describes the negation of humanity (through mass anonymity) and of veracity (through the partial obstruction of historical comprehension) generated by the "voyeurisme du cadavre"

(585), a sentiment that Sara Guyer further develops. In her essay "Rwanda's Bones," Guyer specifies the non-anthropomorphizing qualities of Rwanda's memorials. As opposed to countering the extermination and consequent annihilation of a race (*γένος*) entailed by genocide**,** the type of commemoration established seems to replicate it by further reducing the victims to a nameless mass. She argues that these memorials produce a conflation of genocide – a specific occurrence of systemic violence – with death: "this intensely non-anthropomorphizing style of commemoration, that is, these acts of commemoration that recover neither individual persons nor proper names, render the memorials indistinguishably as memorials to a population (genocide) and to the dead in general" ("Rwanda's Bones" 40). The Nyamata memorial, by reproducing the massification that constitutes the basis of genocide, thus does not permit understanding: no sense of what has truly happened emerges.

To counter the massification produced by flawed memorials, Lamko chooses to go beyond numbers and the nameless mass by focusing on a victim whose body is displayed at the church-turned-memorial of Nyamata. Contrary to Guyer's claim that the dead woman's identity is unknown,[73] she actually has a name: Thréza Mukandori.[74] Thréza Mukandori was tortured and killed by machete in April 1994, with a wooden stake impaled inside her: "On lui a ligoté les poignets, on les a attachés à ses chevilles. Elle a les jambes largement écartées. […] Elle a été violée. Un pic fut enfoncé dans son vagin. Elle est morte d'un coup de machette

[73] She uses the adjective "unknown" to describe the woman's body (40) and adds that "this is someone whose identity must remain unknown […] so that this body can stand in for all the others" ("Rwanda's Bones" 41). However, the woman does have a name, which was communicated to the authors of Fest'Africa during their visit in 1998. Interestingly, Guyer seems to be doing the very thing she deplores; that is, not naming the dead, by stating that the woman remains unidentified.

[74] Also written as Théresa or as Mukandoli because of Kinyarwanda, Rwanda's official language. Interestingly, Thréza Mukandori and her story appear in almost all the Fest'Africa writers' novels. Boubacar Boris Diop explains that: "Et en vérité, le cas de Thréza Mukandori revient dans tous les romans. Au fond, cela donne le sens profond de cette démarche. [...] Quelqu'un a demandé le nom de Thréza et je me souviens quand il a demandé comment s'appelait cette jeune fille. […] Et quand on nous a dit qu'elle s'appelait Thréza Mukandori, j'ai vu tout le monde prendre note. Au fond, cela voulait dire, et l'on s'adressait un peu aux tueurs: 'vous vouliez la tuer, mais nous, nous allons la faire revivre'" (*Aircrige*).

à la nuque" (Tadjo 20). She comes to represent the crude reality of the atrocities of the Rwandan genocide. Lamko's focus initiates a process of individuation through the restitution of a name and by giving a voice, which consists of "faire surgir le particulier au milieu de l'indistinct" (Porra 159). Lamko chooses to recount (a) personal trauma(s) through a fictional narrative by creating a character based on a real victim, thus obscuring the fiction/reality dichotomy: Thréza Mukandori becomes Reine, the main narrating voice of *La Phalène des collines*. However, Reine is not only the literary representation of Thréza Mukandori, she is also the incarnation of a real queen: Gicanda, the last queen of Rwanda. Widow of the King Mutara III of Rwanda who was assassinated in 1959, Queen Rosalie Gicanda was killed on April 20th, 1994. Reine is a composite character: she takes the title of Queen Gicanda as her name, as well as her age and physical traits ("'Reine, même à soixante and, vous avez conservé intacts votre beauté et votre charme légendaire… sans faille.'" [Lamko 33]); and she becomes Thréza Mukandori through her death and her corpse exposed in the Nyamata memorial ("Ici, dans cette église, sur cette grande table, gît un corps sec momifié poudré de talc. Sur ce corps, il y a un sexe de femme. Regardez ! Le morceau de bois que vous voyez là… [Lamko 30]). Lamko forms his character on two women who signify the violence of the genocide: therefore, as both Thréza Mukandori and Queen Gicanda, Reine becomes a symbol, a way of bringing together public and private, and of speaking both individually and collectively about the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

Lamko further complicates his literary approach by portraying how a dead woman comes back to life and how the wound of her trauma is embodied by the figure of a butterfly. Reine is the *phalène*, she reincarnates into the body of a butterfly who wanders and tries to recount her story. The figure of the butterfly is itself complex, notably in relation to the question of its appellation: a *phalène* belongs to the heterocera classification of the lepidora

world; and as such, the term refers to a moth. In French, a moth is a *papillon de nuit*; the composite expression is usually used over *phalène*. Moreover, the use of the term *papillon de nuit* in French introduces the possibility that not much distinction exists between a moth and a butterfly. In this chapter, along with the term *phalène,* the word butterfly will be used to describe Reine for the aforementioned reason, in addition to the fact that the translation of Lamko's novel also favours butterfly over moth.[75] Furthermore, Lamko himself uses the terms "papillon" and "phalène" interchangeably: Reine describes herself as a "une phalène, un énorme papillon de nuit aux couleurs de sol brûlé" (13) and is repetitively referred to as "un papillon" (28, 60, 91) by other characters, and especially by Pelouse, Reine's niece and the other main narrator of the novel. The shift, slippage even, in naming remains pertinent as it brings forth the plurality characteristic of Reine and further emphasizes her ontological ambiguity.[76]

The *phalène*, the reincarnation of the violently murdered Tutsi wom(a/e)n, haunts the living and speaks through her reincarnation, her status as a living dead. Reine attempts to communicate with her niece Pelouse, to transmit the true story of her death and her after-life, as well as of her country. Pelouse is the second narrative voice of *La Phalène des collines*: she is Rwandan, but an exile, a member of the diaspora: "Pelouse ! Que ne l'avais-je sentie plus tôt ! […] Pelouse ma filleule, née des couches de ma sœur cadette ! Pelouse, fille d'exil et qui n'avait jusque là jamais connu l'odeur du pays maternel" (Lamko 25). She comes back to Rwanda, visiting her country for the first time, to participate in the creation and filming of a documentary movie about the 1994 genocide and to find the body of her aunt, Reine. Reine

[75] The English translation by Arthur Greenspan of Lamko's text is entitled *The Butterfly of the Hills* (2013).
[76] Butterflies and moths also carry symbolic values that are different. I will examine this divergence below in this chapter.

and Pelouse are therefore linked by familial ties, a kinship which regulates their interactions in the novel. I mentioned Nadine Fresco's essay "La Diaspora des cendres" in the introduction and in the first part of my dissertation[77] in relation to the children of Holocaust survivors and transgenerational transmission. While *La Phalène des collines* is written by an indirect witness who has no immediate connections to the genocide, whether familial or personal, I would argue that Lamko nonetheless tries to reconstruct these links by describing a similar instance of transmission between family members, in this case, Reine and Pelouse, an aunt and her niece. Fresco's observation that transgenerational trauma has the power to blend and blur antonymic notions seems to echo Lamko's intentions. In her essay, Fresco notes that the annihilation that genocide enacts is total because of its duration; that is, through the permanent invasion of life by death: "Le succès de leur [les nazis] entreprise d'éradication résidait ultimement dans cette colonisation de la vie par la mort, dans cette entreprise anachronique du présent sur le passé" (209). Death contaminates life and the past surges into the present. The figure of the talking ghost embodies this blurring of death and life, as illustrated by the oxymoronic phrase the "living dead." The reincarnated Reine, a primary witness of history and a victim, links the past and the present and creates complex yet fruitful temporal relations: "La présence [d'un] mort-vivant engendre une structure du temps qui entraîne une confrontation constante entre le présent et le passé qui s'éclairent ainsi mutuellement" (Wardi 57). Through the point of view of the *muzimu*,[78] Lamko aims to describe a potentially positive instance of transmission that focuses on the present and the future, and on a possible reconstruction of Rwandan society.

[77] Chapters 1 and 2.
[78] The name given to the spirit of a person after her or his death.

What is apparent here is the plurality and the paradoxical nature that constitutes the basis of *La Phalène des collines*. Through a connection between fiction and reality, between surrealism and realism, between life and death, and through personal and familial memory as well as cultural memory, Lamko's work aims to engage these opposites in a single and singular representation. In one of his recent talks entitled "What is *Francophone* Literature?,"[79] Achille Mbembe states that:

> French is a major language but Francophone literature, as opposed to French literature, is a minor literature, in most of the sense given to this term by Deleuze and Guattari. A minor literature: what is it? It is, according to Deleuze and Guattari, a literature of paradoxes, impossibilities, and potentialities.

In their definition of minor literature, Deleuze and Guattari insist on the impossibilities and paradoxes that characterize such forms of writing. Above all, minor literature allows for a combination of the poetic and the political, as "chaque affaire individuelle est immédiatement branchée sur la politique (30)," giving a collective value to a single work of art. These paradoxes, in turn, become possibilities for creative, social, and political expression. Therefore, as a Chadian author who writes in French, Lamko creates a text which does not deviate from the ambiguous tendencies of minor literature. On the contrary, Lamko himself reinforces and complicates them through surrealism: his text contains paradoxes such as "[l]a phalène malgré tout est née de toutes ces contradictions" (Lamko, "La Parole des fantômes") and transforms them into potentialities, expressing the complex reality of genocide. In this sense, the figure of the ghost becomes a way of juxtaposing the binary realities of the actuality of the event and the ideality of the recounting by an indirect witness.

[79] Talk at Harvard University on March 10, 2014.

Entomological Re-Appropriation: The Symbolic Power of the Butterfly

The Dehumanization of Propagandist Rhetoric: Insect Images

In the years leading up to the 1994 genocide, a system of propaganda against Tutsis was organized more or less overtly. Hateful discourses could be heard on the radio – for instance, on the infamous *Radio Libre des Milles Collines* – or read in specific newspapers, such as the influential *Kangura*.[80] This bimonthly journal was created in May 1990 under the sponsorship of the National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development (MRND) party, and later under the supervision of the Coalition for the Defence of the Republic (CDR), a radical faction of the Hutu MRND.[81] *Kangura* was the first to officially publish the Ten Commandments of the Bahutu, setting the tone of an extremist anti-Tutsi discourse. It was thus one of the primary sources of the formation of a genocidal project, which advocated the (re)building of an improved community, "one that would supposedly be authentic and pure" (Kabanda 62). *Kangura* facilitated the propagation of a specific rhetoric based on fear as well as on ethnic stereotypes and fragments of collective memory (Krüger 203). This type of discourse had already been widespread throughout the colonial period (as resentment for Tutsis' supremacy), culminating in the Hutu revolution (1959) and even lingering during and after independence (1962 - 1964).[82] In the early 1990s, *Kangura* (re)grouped a set of pervasive ideas into one journal. It considered itself to be enlightening the Rwandan population, namely

[80] "La *Radio télévision libre des mille collines*, comme son homologue de la presse écrite *Kangura*, avait rompu un tabou en évoquant les ethnies au Rwanda, et en appelant de plus en plus ouvertement à 'l'auto-défense' des Hutu" (Chrétien et al. 80).

[81] *Kangura* was a response to the journal *Kanguka*, sponsored by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) party, formerly called the Rwandese Alliance for National Unity (RANU) which was a political party formed by Tutsis in Uganda. The RPF is the ruling political party led by President Paul Kagame.

[82] Even though anti-Tutsi sentiments culminated and were openly expressed during the Hutu revolution, they nonetheless existed before 1959. Gourevitch notes how Kangura's rhetoric clearly draws on previous discourses, notably the Hamitic myth of the colonial period and the Hutu discourses of 1959: "Ngeze [Kangura's editor starting in 1990 and author of "The Hutu Ten Commandments"] revived, revised, and reconciled the Hamitic myth and the rhetoric of the Hutu revolution to articulate a doctrine of militant Hutu purity" (87-88).

the Hutus: "Sa [*Kangura*'s] devise, '*ijwi rigamije gukangura no kurengera rubanda nyamwinshi*' est claire: 'la voix qui cherche à réveiller et à guider le peuple majoritaire' – une expression codée qui désigne la catégorie hutu de la population" (Chrétien et al. 32). Through its anti-Tutsi militancy, *Kangura* paints a clear picture of the supposed enemy of Rwanda: the Tutsi population is portrayed as power-hungry invaders and colonizers. The presence of the Tutsis defies the notion of Rwandan purity and their right to remain in the country is therefore questioned. Consequently, opposition and violence become justifiable, and even warranted, through the words of the political party MRND along with the CDR, and in *Kangura*. Despite Rwanda's illiteracy rate, the journal circulated in the country through a process of word of mouth, as "ceux qui savaient lire lisaient les articles à des amis et à leur famille" (Krüger 207). These ideas became prevalent and were used to construct a common discursive system.

The arguments put forth by extremist Hutus were accompanied by a set of references and a distinctive vocabulary that was recognized and used by everyone. This lexis put emphasis on the Tutsis' inhuman features. A complex system of referentiality was established through the image of animality, which aimed to strip the Tutsis of their humanity as a way to justify their treatment: "En les rabaissant au statut d'animal, les présentateurs allaient encore plus loin. Ils excluaient ainsi les Tutsi de l'espèce humaine" (Krüger 217). Animal metaphors were widespread, but one representation prevailed: the *inyenzi* or the cockroach, an image charged with symbolic meaning.[83] The pejorative term *inyenzi* refers to the shady nature of the Tutsi: "In our language, the Tutsi bears the name cockroach (Inyenzi), because under cover of

[83] In April 2016, Léon Mugesera, a former member of the MRND, was sentenced to life-imprisonment for his rhetoric against Tutsis: he notably referred to them as cockroaches in one of his speeches in 1992 and incited Hutus to exterminate them (*Jeune Afrique*).

darkness, he camouflages himself to commit crimes" (*Kangura*). First introduced after the Hutu revolution, this term has a political connotation, referring to a turbulent history:

> Le terme *inyenzi* signifie littéralement "cancrelat". Introduit dans le discours politique dans les années soixante, il réfère aux différentes attaques des réfugiés, en majorité des Tutsi. Et par extension, il signifie tout Tutsi en tant qu'il est considéré comme une menace à la République hutu. (Semujanga, *Récits fondateurs du drame rwandais* 176)

The past structures the metaphor of the *inyenzi* and also highlights how this discourse is based on deep-rooted feelings, as evoked by the statements constantly uttered by extremist Hutus. According to the latter, the Tutsis perceive all matters nostalgically, as they desire to return to the monarchical government in which they were a part of the dominating class. This supposed aspiration enters into conflict with the Hutus, who want to keep the country under the control of the majority; or rather, the people, a word which covertly yet undeniably refers to the Hutu people.

The metaphor of the insect, and particularly of the cockroach, shows how a clear causal discourse emerges from an ideology of difference and its propaganda. In his essay "Métaphore du cafard ou discursivité du génocide dans le style de Scholastique Mukasonga," Arsène Elongo discusses one of the semes of the cockroach metaphor used in hate discourses, describing it as linked to the notions of foreignness and invasion. The negative "étranger/invasion" (46) seme places humans on the same level, metaphorically, as insects through the similarity of their actions: cockroaches forcefully invade and occupy a place, one that is "privé et civilisé" (46) and which is not rightfully theirs. Like the cockroach, the Tutsis become a parasite. Assumpta Mugiraneza, when describing the different levels of her cognitive-discursive analysis of the claims of genocide, places the register of parasitology justifying genocidal actions under the category of hatred and dehumanization: "Sa destruction devient un acte quasi obligatoire mais surtout, ce n'est pas un homme que l'on tue. Il n'a pas

été qualifié seulement de non-humain ou d'humain dangereux, il est désigné être le mal biologique absolu du moment" (108). The development and utilization by Hutus of the cockroach metaphor recalls Nazis' use of a similar metaphor before and during World War II: Jews were portrayed as either vermin or rats – animals which are very close, semantically, to cockroaches.[84] Completely transformed into an inferior *Other*, the Tutsi should be annihilated, like the Jew was before her or him, because of the abjection of her or his existence, or according to the Hutus, *its* existence.

Another seme of the *inyenzi* metaphor emerges: that of filth and disgust, two elements which engender a sentiment of rejection caused by the cockroach's abject appearance and its very existence. By quoting Underhill's explanation of how metaphors of disgust are linked to filth and pollution as well as his explanation of how these aspects are used in racist discourse,[85] Elongo demonstrates how the association between the cockroach and the idea of repugnance is linked to culturally ingrained references; that is, to a co-text and a context: "la métaphore […] touche la sensibilité du destinataire rwandais, parce qu'il connaît les sèmes du sémème 'cafard', puisque la source métaphorique du cafard relève de son environnement identitaire" (50). Interestingly, filthiness as associated with the cockroach and as causing abjection recalls some of the attributes of Kristeva's theorization of the latter term. As neither a subject nor object, the *abject* relates to a space of ambiguity populated by non-subjects. As Judith Butler notes apropos of Kristeva:

[84] In her description of *Kangura*, Linda Melvern draws attention to the similarities in tone and content between Hutus' discourses and that of the Nazis: "This group [a 'fanatical Hutu' group supporting a 'final solution'] had a propaganda weapon, a journal called *Kangura*, which published articles reminiscent of Nazi literature in the thirties" (49).

[85] "Souvent le dégoût est sollicité par des métaphores qui nous rappellent la saleté, la pollution ou les fonctions corporelles (la défécation par exemple). Le racisme français ou anglais se régale de ces formes, tristement prévisibles mais efficaces par leur capacité à solliciter une réaction forte, primaire et irréfléchie" (Underhill, cited in Elongo 50).

> The abject designates here precisely those "unlivable" and "uninhabitable" zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of subject, but whose living under the sign of "unlivable" is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject. (3)

This space of abjection in which non-subjects are defined, in this case through the insect metaphor, is dependent on the space of subjectivity through a complex system of power relations. An inferior *Other*, the Tutsi needs to exist in opposition to a superior *We*, the Hutus. The dehumanization established by means of such a metaphor supports a political motive "as a specific praxis that involves, and dramatizes, a purposeful and self-justifying application of power against the Other" (Hollingsworth 267). The entomological metaphor sets the tone through syllogistic reasoning: through the deployment of the actions of invasion and occupation, and due to its filthiness and abjection, the *inyenzi* needs to be expelled and exterminated, placed in alterity and separate from the communal One.

The insect imaginary does not rest on the sole image of the cockroach. In the establishment of a value system, the cockroach is placed in opposition with the butterfly, negative versus positive. In issue number 40 of *Kangura*, an editorial establishes the differences between the two insects in its title alone: "A Cockroach Cannot Bring Forth a Butterfly." The article repeats the aspect that distinguishes the cockroach from the butterfly: "From the outset, we said that a cockroach cannot bring forth a butterfly, and that is true. A cockroach brings forth a cockroach," and "Indeed, the cockroach cannot bring forth a butterfly." Through the justification of a segregationist vision, the reiteration of what is perceived as a fact highlights a permanent historical feature: nothing has changed and the Tutsis' wickedness is still very much present in the eyes of *Kangura*'s writers.[86] For them, this

[86] "The history of Rwanda tells us that the Tutsi has remained the same and has never changed. His treachery and wickedness are intact in our country's history" (*Kangura*).

permanence is further reinforced by the Tutsis' plotting to regain power, as well as by their interbreeding: the idea comes full circle through the historical argument emphasizing the non-evolution of the Tutsis and, consequently, their ontological status as cockroaches. The affirmation that they are indeed *inyenzi*, which results in the impossibility of their ever being butterflies, fully transforms them into despicable insects in the eyes of Hutu extremists.

The image of the butterfly represents undeniable positive qualities. While the cockroach amounts to parasitism and disgust, the butterfly symbolizes beauty and change. The cockroach and the butterfly stand as opposites in an array of references, through a carefully constructed extended metaphor which emphasizes the inferior status of the *inyenzi*. A "Hutu/butterfly > *inyenzi*/Tutsi" spectrum establishes the power relations and hierarchy at play in the genocidal rhetoric. It is interesting to note the type of lexical permutations and stylistic devices used: they pertain to mythology, follow a literary construction, and develop into an ideologeme.[87] As a process that is more than just ideological and political, building mythical tales in order to explain the hatred directed towards Tutsis and to justify violence requires a specific aestheticism and *poiesis*. I propose that Lamko takes possession of the Hutus' images and this specific metaphor to transform it in a true creative process: he uses genocidal rhetoric and inverts it. His fable becomes about reversal and re-appropriation.

[87] Hollingsworth sees the connection between the cockroach metaphor and Jameson's notion of ideologeme: "Writing in *The Political Unconscious*, Fredric Jameson defines the ideologeme as 'a historically determinate conceptual or semic complex which can project itself variously in the form of a 'value system' or 'philosophical concept,' or in the form of a protonarrative, a private or collective narrative fantasy'" (265). It is the "collective narrative fantasy" aspect of ideologeme that I want to emphasize here.

Lamko's Appropriation: Reine as a Butterfly

Koulsy Lamko uses the ontological transformation carried out by extremist Hutus and displaces it through the figure of the *phalène*. He reappropriates the image developed in *Kangura*: his Tutsi woman, Reine, actually becomes a butterfly, embodying a figurative image that was once denied to her. As Dauge-Roth notes, "[t]he rebirth of this Tutsi queen as a butterfly must indeed be read as a symbolic rebuttal to one of the most hateful metaphors used by the pro-Hutu extremist journal *Kangura*" (136).[88] Lamko performs a militant *détournement*: he appropriates the positive metaphor and uses it to designate Reine, not the Hutus. By using the Lepidoptera image, he primarily aims to show how reductive and unethical the *inyenzi* designation was to begin with. He formulates an act of resistance and of counter-violence: a "cockroach" has become a butterfly due to the genocide.

The butterfly has a variety of connotations which allow for a meaningful appropriation and re-investment. The first chapter starts with the words "Je m'envole" (13). This short sentence sets up the literary device that constructs Lamko's text. The lexical field related to movement and flight is omnipresent: "Je *m'envole* ; un *vol* gracieux de phalène" (14), "Je *vole* dans le vent brumeux" (14), "Je *m'élève* vers les hauteurs" (14), "Je *vole*. Hardiment." (15), "Je *m'envole* pour éviter…" (18), "Je me mis à *tournoyer* sur moi-même en émettant un petit vrombissement" (28), "Je continue de *voler*" (54), "Je *vole* à l'assaut des hommes…" (54), "Je *m'envole*, moi aussi" (135), "Je *me pose*" (186), to cite only a few of many examples. The recurrence of movement verbs, which necessarily pertain to actions, introduces the idea that

[88] Interestingly, Ahimana also points out that the connection between the cockroach and the butterfly might also be a case of intertextuality, recalling two novels by the author Tchicaya U Tam'si: *Les Cancrelats* (1980) and *Les Phalènes* (1984). As further evidence of such intertextuality, he states: "Le rapprochement des deux titres n'est pas une simple coïncidence d'autant plus que Koulsy Lamko évoque cet écrivain congolais au milieu de son livre: 'Elle [Pelouse] traverse le patio aux ornés d'affiches publicitaires, attarde son regard sur l'une d'entre elles où s'étale en lettres de feu l'inscription : *Le Bal de Ndinga de Chikaya U Tamsi, mise en scène de Gabriel Garran*. Incongrue la vieille affiche à cet endroit ! (93)'" (166).

flight is equivalent to a sense of freedom. This freedom is by no means fortuitous, given that the insect is a recurring figure in Lamko's works of prose, symbolizing the persona of the traveler: "Il signifie la métamorphose, la légèreté, l'inconstance, mais aussi la polyvalence, l'adaptation à toutes les situations. Il aspire à faire prendre conscience, à dénoncer la situation qui prévaut pour initier des solutions" (Taboye 44). Lamko uses similar vocabulary when describing his butterfly in the short play "Papillons de nuit," a portrayal which transmits this sense of freedom and carelessness: "Il lui pousse alors des ailes par la magie d'une nuit. Papillon, la larve mûre, possède des ailes saupoudrées d'or multicolore et qui l'élèvent vers le suc parfumé des fleurs, vers le ciel au-dessus des flaques boueuses et nauséabondes. Le papillon vole, propre et libre […]" (36). The image of freedom associated with the butterfly is represented by the character of Reine, who can fly wherever she desires in Rwanda. She manages to gain access to a type of freedom that she was denied in death: a clear opposition is drawn not only between her being called a cockroach by her murderer and her current existence as a butterfly, but also between her being tied down during her cruel murder[89] and her newly-acquired lack of restraints.

Furthermore, the combination of the connotation of life and of death, including her life-in-death, appears in antique representations of the allegory of the soul, which is usually depicted with butterfly wings: "The butterfly and moth, the 'psyches' of the Greeks, have long been seen as representations of the soul freed from its mortal casing" (Brown xi). Lamko manages to give meaning to his re-appropriation of the image of the butterfly by showing the relevance of such an insect to his character: Reine embodies both a type of denied status and a mythological history, two states aimed at further countering the ideologeme of the *inyenzi*.

[89] "Lorsque je reviens à moi, je réalise que je suis solidement amarrée à de grosses pierres disposées en croix, pieds et poings liés" (Lamko 36).

Interestingly, a *détournement*, through diverting and subverting a subject, leads to a return to that existing subject, a reiteration that could be perceived as problematic. However, I believe that Lamko's *détournement* is obliged to acknowledge and actually shed critical light on the heritage it stems from, not just to cite a propagandist lexicon, but to demystify it and to create a different ethical relationship to it: "le détournement permet de remettre en movement ce qui s'est fixé en idéologie" (Trudel 79). The idea of movement appears once again, marking the text, and the figure of the butterfly becomes its epitome.

Change is also related to an important part of the butterfly's particularities: through its multiple metamorphoses, the butterfly comes to embody a non-static being, characterized by ontological, or rather entomological, movement. The butterfly undergoes three metamorphoses: starting as an egg, then from caterpillar to chrysalis, and lastly to its final ephemeral form, the butterfly (also referred to as imago). Repeatedly, Lamko refers to the intrinsic fluctuation that characterizes the *phalène*, associating the insect with a certain sense of wandering, which is both literal, as detailed above, and figurative. Flight and freedom are metaphorically connected to the metamorphoses of the butterfly: "Maintenant que j'y pense. La vie d'une phalène n'est rien d'autre qu'un destin d'émigré perpétuel, confectionné d'un chapelet d'aléas, un tourbillon de métamorphoses. Œuf, larve, chenille, chrysalide, papillon et ensuite… poussière de papillon" (Lamko 20). In a sense, the butterfly actually mirrors the Tutsis who have been expelled from their country to the neighboring countries of Burundi and Uganda numerous times during Rwanda's history. The previous quotation connects the image of the *phalène* and its metamorphoses with the figure of Fred R.,[90] a Tutsi fighter killed in

[90] Fred Rwigyema was a FPR soldier (*Front Patriotique Rwandais*) who had to seek refuge in Uganda and who took part in underground actions until his death in 1990. The nature of being Rwandan is examined in the actions of this character, since more than half of the Tutsi population lived outside Rwanda in 1994 and had to deal with the questions of identity associated with displacement. Lamko demonstrates this both poetically and ironically:

1990 who appears as a leitmotiv in Lamko's work. Points of connection and similarities with the lot and history of the Tutsis justify the use of the image of the butterfly: as constant exiles, they represent the idea of denied rootedness, of defining flight.

I have discussed one of the symbols Lamko tries to reconstruct and to displace positively and creatively; however, the metamorphoses also allude to a more enigmatic subtext, that of the shadow of a past life. As can be observed in the quote from Primo Levi that opens this chapter, the butterfly's metamorphoses appear to be a message that needs to be decoded, a part of a mystery which fascinates and transcends our understanding. Levi adds that this mystery is all the more puzzling given that the insect is transformed from the ugliness of the caterpillar into the majesty of the butterfly. Once again, life and death connect through these transformations: "it is a second birth, but at the same time it is a death: what has flown away is a psyche, a soul, and the ripped-open cocoon left on the ground is the mortal remains" (18), Levi claims while alluding to the butterfly's final metamorphosis. He thus introduces the possibility that the butterfly foreshadows something cryptic, which is not necessarily positive and which is not in accordance with its apparent beauty. Far be it from me to imply that genocide is a mysterious subject or a cryptic event beyond our understanding; nonetheless, it contains an unspeakable aspect and implies an incomprehension of the utter dehumanization that took place. Not only does Lamko's poetic style illustrate this hermeneutics, but the very figure of the butterfly embodies the difficulty of speaking, as it is an insect that cannot communicate directly and whose existence remains fleeting.

"Fred R. court toujours. Fred R. court encore" (49). Once more, Lamko mixes true characters and events with inventions through his fictionalization and oneirism.

The butterfly is itself paradoxical: it opens and unsettles, and yet is subject to the limits it tries to breach. Lamko defines the metamorphosis into a *phalène* as Reine's imperative need to communicate her story to Pelouse, her niece:

> L'enjeu était monumental et mon histoire ne pouvait pas supporter d'être travestie. J'avais donc décidé de pousser instantanément une tête, un thorax, un abdomen, des yeux composés, trois paires de pattes et… des ailes de papillon. Je choisis d'habiter le corps d'une belle et grande phalène rousse avec des stries foncées, couleur sol brûlé. Simple opération de métamorphose pour passer de l'invisible au visible, du corps aphysique à l'incarné. (28-29)

However, while inter-species communication exists,[91] no communication seems possible outside the Lepidoptera world. The transformation from the invisible to the visible, and from the *muzimu* to a physical entity, remains surrounded by silence. Even though "[l]es échanges entre l'extérieur et l'intérieur, la limite et l'illimité, le *je* et le *tu*, le visible et l'invisible sont profus" (337), Ayélévi Novivor claims that all of this becomes questionable and complicated because of the butterfly's very existence, due to "la posture imprécise de cet être hybride, à la frontière entre deux mondes, l'un psychique et l'autre sensoriel" (338). Nonetheless, it is this very hybridity which speaks and which tries to link the two worlds. Reine as a butterfly inhabits an in-between space of meaning which remains unreached. The nature of the text and the entity of the butterfly seem to echo each other, transmitting a similar paradoxical aspect while nonetheless being potentially fully open and readable.

The connotation of movement is not solely linked to the entomological and mythological being of the butterfly. I have already mentioned Deleuze and Guattari's perception that minor literature is full of paradoxes; to this I would add the notions of openness and movement, which are typical of such works. In the two French philosophers' analysis of

[91] "Literature is about language and sound, and many insects are unusual among living creatures, particularly among invertebrates, in that they share the human capacity for acoustic communication" (Berenbaum 5).

Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, they qualify Gregor's metamorphosis as being synonymous with flight. The *devenir-insecte* becomes a *ligne de fuite*, an open path full of passages and transformations. This *devenir-insecte* is pushed to the extreme in the case of Reine, as death has changed the *devenir*'s characteristics. However, a similar shift is present in Lamko's butterfly. Even though Deleuze and Guattari's concept of *devenir* remains complex and cannot be summarized in full here, it refers to a change in oneself due to an encounter with an exteriority. It requires a process of evolution in which "[i]l […] faut beaucoup d'ascèse, de sobriété, d'involution créatrice" (*Milles Plateaux* 342) and during which one is faced with alterity. In a sense, it requires a crossing of boundaries. The aspect of perpetual composition and change is particularly interesting in relation to the butterfly, both as an insect and as a character in Lamko's text. Reine herself mentions the perpetual movement that characterizes her afterlife as an insect: "Je brave, je défie le temps normal concédé à une vie de phalène" (162). She *is* perpetual movement, made of possible successive transformations. In a sense, Lamko has communicated Reine's *devenir-animal* in concrete terms. Literature becomes the open book which gives meaning to Reine's metamorphosis and her ultimate message, which needs to be understood as "[l]a métamorphose est le contraire de la métaphore" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka* 40). In his attempt to positively divert [*détourner*] and to recover an image, Lamko manages to fully displace genocidal metaphors by transforming them into a metamorphosis, a *devenir* which fluctuates and destabilizes.

Through the previously mentioned idea of playing with limits, Lamko uses the butterfly to give meaning to the 1994 genocide and to express how such an event and its rhetoric – that is, its dangerous metaphors – can help in understanding how such an event occurred: "c'est dans l'animal qu'il faut creuser pour déterrer les limites de l'homme" (Lamko, *La Phalène des collines* 48). Perhaps this is exactly how to decrypt the message that Levi refers to: it must be

decrypted through Reine's *devenir-insecte* and its inscription into *La Phalène des collines* as well as Lamko's other minor literature texts. For Lamko, the recurring figure of the butterfly represents subversion: "Il [le papillon] aspire à faire conscience, à dénoncer la situation qui prévaut pour initier des solutions" (Taboye 44). Through his act of indirect witnessing, Lamko re-appropriates the image of the butterfly and induces change. Lamko's writing becomes an *écriture-phalène* so to speak, moving beyond the self in a movement of alterity. As neither *One* nor the *Other*, the butterfly deterritorializes and, I would argue, reterritorializes.

Wandering and Spectrality: The Figure of the Ghost

The Muzimu *and Wandering*

La Phalène des collines is characterized by ambiguities and by a sense of movement, both of which are inscribed figuratively in the *écriture-phalène* quality of Lamko's writing. The butterfly emblematizes multiple changes, transitions, and passages: its status represents the uncertainty and the complexity of speaking genocide, especially when it is an act of recounting performed by an indirect witness. The narrative is transformed alongside echoes of the nature of the *phalène*. Transformation also relates to Reine's status of *muzimu* or "âme de l'Ancêtre" (Semujanga, *Le Génocide, sujet de fiction?* 231), the ghost she has become after her brutal death. Indeed, the *muzimu* involves another type of metamorphosis, as "a muzimu is the spiritual transformation of a man after his death" (Doom and Vlassenroot 66). The adjectival form "spiritual" illustrates the transformation into a spirit, passing on from the body to the soul, and presenting an entry into a different ontological and epistemological position.

This stance is complex, made problematic by the many influences it manifests. First and foremost, Lamko's use of the term *muzimu* is by no means fortuitous: it is ingrained in

traditional Bantu beliefs. Using the term in more than just a lexical way, Lamko also refers to the rites associated with *bazimu*[92]: "Un peu de bière de banane par terre, du lait dans une corne de vache, du haricot, une pâte de sorgho rouge dans un pot d'argile…" (144). To ensure that a spirit becomes "good" and does not linger on Earth to torment the living, certain rites need to be performed, such as *guterakera*: "In traditional Rwandan culture there is a ceremony called *Guterekera* dedicated to the ghosts to assure that they do not harm the living" (Dauge-Roth n16 150). These rites remain intrinsically linked to the ghostly entity and Lamko's knowledge of such facts highlights that he has done research on the subject. The pouring of beer shows respect for the dead as it establishes a positive enduring lineage and insures a case of proper transmission: "beer brewed from a family's grain is poured on their doorstep" so that "ancestors see that their lineage will endure" (Cliggett 120). Lamko chooses to incorporate facts about the culture he writes about into his text, introducing a certain sense of factuality and of respect.

The idea of what a *muzimu* actually is remains nevertheless problematic due to the differences in local definitions and the lack of written documentation on the subject. The *muzimu* is like a ghost; however, it is not exactly the same, since "the *muzimu* is the metamorphosis of the *igicucu*, the shadow cast by the body in the sunshine" (Maquet 174). Therefore, "the living man is said to be made of three components: the body (*mubili*) which, after death, becomes a corpse (*murambo*); life (*buzima*), which disappears; and the shadow (*igicucu*) from which the surviving spirit (*muzimu*) emerges" (174). Considering that it originates from a person's shadow, the *muzimu* conveys the impression of darkness and

[92] Plural form of *muzimu*.

bleakness. This murky sense is expressed by Lamko through the affirmation that his *phalène* is born out of anger:

> Moi, je suis désormais une phalène, un énorme papillon de nuit aux couleurs de sol brûlé. Je ne suis née ni d'homme, ni de femme, *mais de la colère*. J'ai surgi d'un néant de fantôme et d'une dépouille sèche de femme anonyme au milieu d'autres cadavres amoncelés dans une église-musée-site du génocide. [emphasis added] (Lamko 13-14)

The sentiment of wrath is not only linked to her violent death; it can also be perceived as a consequence of her current and enduring spectral state, which is a direct result of the incompleteness of burial rites and the lack of sepulcher. The powerful phrases "néant" and "dépouille sèche," which are used by Lamko regarding a particular instance of death, imply negativity and a bereft state. Added is the sense of a nameless mass, as Reine is described as an anonymous dry corpse among many others. The importance of burial rites was a recurrent argument against the exhibition of corpses at some genocide memorials, as highlighted by the saying often uttered by Rwandans: "un slogan tel que 'Tukabahamba mu cyubahiro, tukababuza kuba abagwagasi,' ce qui signifie 'nous vous enterrons en dignité, nous vous empêchons d'être des mauvais esprits,' a ainsi plusieurs fois été utilisé" (Korman). Lamko criticizes the exhibition of corpses, which prevented rites from being performed and mourning from occurring. Reine's appearance as a ghost seems to not only be a direct result of the genocide, but also a consequence of the inadequate memorialization carried out in Rwanda.

By being born out of anger, Lamko's *muzimu* is caught in uncertainty, as she is mighty and mysterious at the same time. Her reincarnation as a butterfly and her existence as a ghost in that particular body further characterize that ambiguity: the body is both beautiful and ugly, unfettered and cryptic, recalling the adjectival expressions used to describe the insect. Her being a butterfly also becomes a signifier for her violent death, which has nonetheless freed her and her vision: she arises from her body, like a butterfly that flies away and is freed from

its cocoon. Lamko uses the term "shell" to describe her corpse at the moment of her death: "Me voici partie ! Hors de ma *coquille*" [emphasis added] (45). The use of the word "coquille" is destabilizing, as it does not pertain to the register of human beings: it is usually used to refer to animals, insects, and shellfish, as well as plants. Lamko creates disparity between Reine the human being who is presently dying and her future state as a ghost. This lexical dissonance announces a change, the passage into a different realm: "Je passe la frontière entre l'être et le néant pour ce territoire de l'illimité où l'on participe immédiatement des réalités non visibles" (Lamko 45). She finds herself between being and nothingness, caught in a boundless space as she is transformed and enters into a territory of paradox, emblematized by the oxymoronic phrase "non-visible realities."

The moment of transformation is taunting, violent in actions and in words, crude in the blunt way it is described:

> L'abbé continue de bougonner, en s'acharnant sur ma carcasse. J'entends tout, je vois tout, non seulement dans la sacristie où je gis mais aussi dans la grande salle où se tordent encore quelques corps à l'agonie. Je distingue nettement la tête de mon chauffeur qui tangue sur deux touches de l'orgue et fait émettre à l'instrument tout à tour deux notes, aiguës, plaintives. A dix mètres de là, sa main gauche que je reconnais, semble fermer la bouche d'un fœtus que les fauves ont enlevé de l'utérus d'une mère sauvagement césarisée, fendue de la bouche au nombril. J'ai la conscience claire et nette que plus rien ne peut plus m'échapper. Invisibilité, ubiquité, bilocation, immenses portiques d'accès à tous les univers de deux mondes. (Lamko 46)

Two groups of people are contrasted: On one hand are the perpetrators who have slayed violently, much like the priest "s'acharnant sur ma [Reine's] carcasse," who convey the image of vehement relentlessness, as observable through the alliteration of "s," "ch," and "c." On the other hand are the victims, who have been killed and are lying lifeless and dismembered. The images which Reine describes while leaving her body are enduring in their gruesomeness: limbs lie everywhere; wombs have been cut open; unborn babies have been torn from their mother's womb. It is through this horror that her *muzimu* arises in clarity and in openness,

further contrasting the two states. The final nominal enumeration expresses the completion of her transformation as well as the nature of her different "being," which is characterized by fragmentation and indefiniteness.

Reincarnation allows for an existence between two realms: that of the living and that of the dead. The resonance between the entities of the butterfly and the *muzimu* expresses how death can be compared to a sort of exile: the perpetual movement granted to the butterfly remains intrinsically linked to her status of *muzimu*, the wandering specter. I believe that Lamko turns this wandering, which could have negative connotations, into something productive. The *muzimu* flies away, captured in in-betweenness; caught between death and life, between the visible and the invisible: "La phalène, reine du 'milieu de vie,' volette entre l'univers des vivants et celui de l'intemporalité sans réellement partir" (Ouaga-Ballé 89). Multiplicity is Reine's feature, and these "deux mondes" (Lamko 46) that lie in front of the deceased Reine become primordial in the text, as they organize the approach chosen by Lamko. Not only does he write a text influenced by both Western and African universes, thus adopting a highly transcultural approach, but he also chooses to position his character as a specter, which destabilizes and fragments all representation through her perpetual wandering.

Hauntology of the Butterfly: Transformations and Passage

The ambiguities and unsettling aspects that characterize the *muzimu* introduce the different ontological status of the specter caught between two worlds. For Jacques Derrida, this status pertains not to ontology, but to *hantologie*, a play on the French word *ontologie* and the verb *hanter* (to haunt). Described as being "sans domicile fixe" ("Esquisse d'une fantomologie" 228) by Claude Burgelin, the specter is caught in a state of roaming which comes to symbolize its status and the consequences of its (non-)existence. It wanders, unable

to stay in one place; and consequently, it is impossible to define the specter simply and clearly. Moreover, Reine describes her own wandering in terms of an active invasion based on choice and her own will: "j'investissais tous les espaces qui m'offraient un peu de fantaisie et de liberté" (Lamko 29). She then lists those "spaces," which range from actual living bodies to more abstract materials, further highlighting a sense of indeterminacy and motion: "les corps d'animaux, d'oiseaux, de reptiles et d'insectes, la brise, la pluie…" (29). The last two are emblematic of an added sense of movement, as the breeze and rain are natural elements which constantly shift, blow, and ultimately pass. The specter's existence remains focused on movement; it is a fleeting apparition (here) which has always already disappeared (there), ephemeral like the butterfly. One can repeatedly observe the simultaneous existence of two states and two perspectives, "deux mondes" as Lamko calls them, which are normally perceived as being opposed and mutually exclusive. Always already undetermined, and always here and there, this state evokes the path of exile as a "*destinerrance*" (Derrida, *La Carte postale*), a desire or even a need to travel, to be faced with the other and with another world, "une infinie pulsion de déracinement" (Birnbaum).

Derrida identifies the specificity of the specter in its ontological indetermination: neither alive nor fully dead, the specter is both present and absent; it cannot be temporally determined. In reality, it desynchronizes: a verb to be understood not only in relation to time, but also in relation to unity. The specter is contradiction: "Les fantômes sont de n'être pas" (Burgelin, "Esquisse d'une fantomologie" 227), a nothingness which is almost indiscernible and unspeakable, but which nonetheless exists. Lamko repeats the word "néant" (13, 45) several times when describing Reine's death; however, she is there, still present. As a specter, she pertains to paradoxicality: "le spectre est une incorporation paradoxale" (Derrida, *Spectres de Marx* 25). The use of the term "incorporation" raises the question of Reine's reincarnation,

her corporeal apparition, which is different from her living body. Derrida considers the specter a "forme phénoménale et charnelle de l'esprit" (25). This incorporation, here through reincarnation, remains difficult to characterize because, once again, it is indeterminate and cannot be properly named: "ni âme ni corps, et l'une et l'autre" (25). Its form has already disappeared once one sees it; it is both visible and invisible: "Le spectre, c'est d'abord du visible. Mais du visible invisible, la visibilité d'un corps qui n'est pas présent en chair et en os" (Derrida, "Spectographies" 129). Reine can be seen as a butterfly but not visibly as Reine. One body and Reine's soul, that is her defining corporeality. In *La Phalène des collines*, the specter is constantly portrayed as hybrid: it is a spirit attached to a person, a narrating figure, and a butterfly. A certain sense of porosity remains, as the butterfly exhibits human features. For instance, it/she laughs: "je ris. Un rire de phalène…" (215). Anthropomorphism defines the heterogeneity of the specter. Always already a world of in-betweenness, the domain of the specter is multiple and varied, neither one nor the other, and yet both at the same time.

The heterogeneity that qualifies the specter appears to be linked to the specificity of *hauntology* through its deconstructive power. The specter disrupts via its very existence and what it comes to signify through its indeterminacy: "La logique spectrale est *de facto* une logique deconstructive" (Derrida, "Spectographies" 131). Since the specter is neither one nor the other, and is both at the same time, this sort of destabilized duality encourages the perpetual questioning of categorical definitions. The specter thus symbolizes the breakdown of all-encompassing classifications. While for Derrida the specter is and is not, Lamko emphasizes the idea of passage from one to the other in his *muzimu*: Reine is one then the other, and actively chooses to move from one to the other. I have already listed some of the entities her soul likes to inhabit, and these types of enumerations are common in *La Phalène des collines* (29, 162, etc.). However, Reine's reincarnations are also expressed in immaterial terms,

following a more conceptual approach to explaining the consequences of her various materializations. For instance, Reine herself states how she goes from the invisible to the visible: "Simple opération de métamorphose pour passer de l'invisible au visible, du corps aphysique à l'incarné" (28-29). A lack of confining limits makes this transformation possible: "Un muzimu n'éprouve aucun obstacle, aucune limite" (29). Therefore, her reincarnation options are numerous, and her haunting "keeps turning up, turning into, and returning in unpredictable and not always easily demarcated ways" (Blanco and Peeren 32). Reine's flight echoes the perpetual movement of her transformations:

> Je m'envole; un vol gracieux de phalène. Clore le futur sur le pont des transformations… Traverser le pont des transformations vers l'étourdissement, le divertissement. Ne plus rien attendre de la tyrannie du temps, cet impitoyable conjoint prompt à imposer la férocité de son inaltérable course et qui modèle insidieusement la glaise, durcit les évènements, entraîne vers la vermoulure, l'inéluctable destruction. (Lamko 14)

Flight and transformation become the symbols of passage: the vocabulary used above alludes to the idea of change and openness. The words "vol" and "pont" are joined by the action verbs "s'envoler" and "traverser" to further highlight the idea of passage. Moreover, "transformations" are associated with "étourdissement" and "divertissement," two acts linked to euphoria, an emotion which also pertains to the domain of the soul. The paragraph ends with the affirmation that even time is to be overturned, as Reine does not have to submit to its domination.

Reine's perpetual transformations express defiance and a reversal of constraining conceptions. As a deconstructive force, the specter as a butterfly equates wandering with rambling [*errance*], an escape from constraining order and norms: "Je vole […]. Je m'élève vers les hauteurs. Baguenauder, fructifier l'errance d'une vie de phalène. Et que le monde me foute le camp avec ses conventions, ses normes, ses compartiments, ses casiers, ses étagères,

ses armoires, ses labyrinthes, ses couloirs, ses polices !" (Lamko 14). The use of the verb "baguenauder" is interesting because it refers to the action of wandering, but can also denote playing, frivolity, and a sense of mockery.[93] It pertains to an informal register, adding to the playfulness of its reference. The various connotations of "baguenauder" not only describe the movement of the specter-butterfly, but also what it does to the strict order of things: it aims to destroy it. The enumeration of the attributes that should "get lost" ("foutre le camp," another informal expression) emphasizes the deconstructive aspect of her return and her haunting. In contrast with established temporality and monolithic reasoning, the deconstructive force of the specter induces a reconsideration of one's knowledge of the event. Derrida connects *hauntology* with a different way of thinking about an event:

> Si nous insistons tant depuis le début sur la logique du fantôme, c'est qu'elle fait signe vers une pensée de l'événement qui excède nécessairement une logique binaire ou dialectique, celle qui distingue ou oppose *effectivité* (présente, actuelle, empirique, vivante – ou non) et *idéalité* (non-présence régulatrice ou absolue). (Derrida, *Spectres de Marx* 108)

In *La Phalène des collines*, the rejection of a clear differentiation or any dual vision of effectivity versus ideality destabilizes a totalizing knowledge of the 1994 genocide.

Spectrality and Testimony

For Derrida, *hauntology* points to the indeterminacy and multiplicity of knowledge, characteristics which also come to be transferred to literature on ghosts. In this sense, the act of writing about the spectral effect presents a different perception of testimony and relationship to representation for the indirect witness and/or following generation, since this "generation […] attempts to reconcile the actuality of an event with its codification, conceptualization, and

[93] According to *Le Trésor de la langue française*, the verb "baguenauder" means "passer son temps à des choses frivoles et sans importance," "se promener sans but précis, flâner," as well as "jouer, railler, moquer quelqu'un."

potential distortion as it takes its place as a (mere) chapter in history" (Mandel 363). Spectrality creates a gap between the event and the relationship people have with it *a posteriori*. It is in this gap that representation appears, as adequate as it can ultimately be(come). Lamko designates this phenomenon through Reine: she allows for the passage between the event and its enunciation and between experience and representation, as she symbolizes "une réalité qui inverse le rapport de la vie à la mort, en inversant ce rapport à [son] tour" (Coquio 23). Lamko's text poetically creates an echo between its structure and its content, as spectral writing emerges as "un geste poétique, une (dé)construction en abyme par laquelle le texte signifie sa structure fondamentale, à savoir l'incomplétude du monde produit par des énoncés en nombre limité" (Mandel). All recounting of genocide is incomplete, including that of Reine. Moreover, Reine's f(l)ight attempts to establish this very recognition of incompleteness and multiplicity.

Testimony is a paradoxical form of re-presentation, a fact illustrated by the kind of testimonial genre developed by Lamko. Reine is the narrating agent of *La Phalène des collines*: the pronoun "je" is the first word of the novel: "*Je* m'envole" [emphasis added] (13). This affirmation, uttered at the start, alludes to the necessity of speaking and of telling one's own story. The insistence of the first-person narration, emphasized through the proliferation of the pronoun "je" (which often begins a paragraph) is a sign of self-assertion. The scene that best represents this declaration of possession and of authenticity takes place at the Nyamata memorial during a tour. The guide, Védaste, recounts the story of the woman whose corpse is exposed, eliciting disbelief from a *musungu*, a white visitor who doubts the veracity of what he is seeing and hearing. Faced with the incredulity of visitors, Reine tries to interrupt the guide's narration several times because "[l]'enjeu était monumental et mon histoire ne pouvait pas supporter d'être travestie" (Lamko 28). First, she interrupts the narration by flying between

the visitors, scaring Pelouse. When this fails to disturb the guide's speech, she goes even further, throwing Védaste to the ground, causing him to have an epileptic seizure and shattering her dry cadaver in two. The violence of Reine's actions aims to carry out an act of recovery, since she seeks to affirm that her story is hers and hers alone to tell:

> J'avais décidé d'arracher le verbe et l'imprimer directement à la conscience de ces deux visiteurs hors du commun : version originale et intégrale dans une édition non expurgée. Je ne pouvais plus tolérer un speech adapté, trafiqué, mièvre solo auquel je trouvais un air de contrebande et de requiem. De toute façon, depuis les temps immémoriaux du règne de Lyangombe, l'adage l'avait déjà édicté : l'on est seul vrai témoin de son histoire et seul véritable miroir de son visage, puisqu'on sait de quelle fatigue est née la cerne sous l'œil. Mon histoire est bel et bien mienne, une histoire de reine, et, surtout celle de mon sexe : un vagin rempli d'arbre. (Lamko 31)

Her violent re-appropriation intends to counter the stylization of her story,[94] a formalization which reduces her experience to a mere conventional and acceptable format, ultimately minimizing her brutal death.

The chapter that follows tells the story of Reine's death, in her own words. It starts by setting the place and time of the events. This clarification aims to show that this chapter is a flashback: "Gikongoro. 1994. Un midi d'avril… Cinq ans plus tôt qu'aujourd'hui" (Lamko 32). The pronoun remains the first-person singular, a "je" which this time refers to Reine as a living human being. Her interactions with Abbot Théoneste confirm her identity, as the priest calls her by her first name and describes her as a beautiful sixty-year-old woman (33). This chapter is an explicit and extremely violent depiction of her death: it describes her rape, her repeated beatings, the torture her body had to endure. The use of the pronoun "je" throughout her tale and the brutality of her death are unsettling, and create a feeling of discomfort for the listener/reader: "She uses the first-person narrative, which generates a disturbing intimacy for the readers and multiplies vivid metaphors to render her suffering palpable to the readers'

[94] "Je n'avais cure qu'on me confectionnât une légende vibrante, larmoyante et émotionnée" (Lamko 26).

imagination" (Dauge-Roth 140). Biological and geological vocabulary represents these violent acts, creating vivid and unusual descriptions: "Des rigoles baveuses de sperme grimpent sur mon pubis, descendent dans l'entrejambe, […] grimpent sur les broussailles sentinelles noires jamais rabattues par une quelconque maternité, se liquéfient chaudes, se coagulant froides, s'encroûtent saumâtres" (36-37), "Ses testicules glacés hérissés d'épines teigneuses…" (37), "Mon vagin volcan vomit des rivières écarlates vultueuses" (37), "Ma vulve a l'âge du soleil, l'âge de la mousse jaunâtre qui s'englue…" (37). Despite being strangely poetic at times through the images invoked, the descriptions remain extremely shocking, destabilizing the reader and reinforcing the testimonial vein of the chapter (showing how Reine's own words try to transmit her experience). There is a clear change of status for Reine, here: by actively telling her own story, she stops being a passive victim and becomes a witness.

This is yet another transformation that takes place in *La Phalène des collines*: "Or cette métamorphose surnaturelle est aussi celle de la victime en témoin" (Coquio, *Rwanda: Le Réel et les récits* 148). A passage from silence and from the guide Védaste's revision to speaking occurs. In addition to bearing witness, the act of speaking is linked to the issue of fidelity and of the non-appropriation of the stories of victims. Another character in the novel, the survivor Muyango, explains this preoccupation:

> On vous l'a certainement déjà racontée ; je vous la raconte à mon tour. L'histoire ne souffre jamais de redites lorsqu'on la délivre avec fidélité. Ce dont elle répugne, c'est d'être prise en otage par la vérité des puissants qui la torturent, lui rognent les ailes et les pattes pour la faire entrer dans une petite marmite et l'accommoder à leur profit, c'est-à-dire au détriment des victimes. (Lamko 116)

Interestingly, the story is personified and referred to by the pronoun "elle," which highlights the fact that she [the story] has feelings: she is repulsed and experiences a strong sentiment of disgust. This personification is even more troubling given that the story has wings and legs: indeed, the story has the attributes of a butterfly. Therefore, the reincarnation of Reine the

specter in the body of a butterfly is not fortuitous: as a visible invisibility, it allows for the recounting of Reine's death, becoming its symbol or its incarnation. The specter finds its voice though the entity of the butterfly after scaring the tourists and making Védaste stop his inadequate recounting of the events. A clear opposition between Reine and the guide as narrators emerges at the end of chapter where she tells her tale, when the guide stands up after his seizure and is left voiceless: "Il était devenu presque aphone" (Lamko 47). Through her flight and her rebellion, it is *she* who gains a voice. In *Spectres de Marx*, Derrida lists three "things" (*choses*) that can help in the analysis of "the thing" (*la chose*) that the specter is: mourning; language and voice; as well as spirit (30). The involvement of a voice alludes to an instance of speaking that ought to be allowed: one lets the specter speak ("surtout de *faire ou de laisser parler* un esprit"[95] [32]). The specter is this voice of testimony.

Transmission for the Purpose of Creating an "*à-venir*"…

Prosopopoeia: Communication and Vision

The butterfly-specter becomes a symbol of communication, guiding the beginning of the utterance of genocide. The rhetorical device prosopopoeia underscores the intentions of Reine's haunting process and is related to her complex nature and its multiplicity. Etymologically, prosopopoeia is the granting of a face: in Greek, *prosôpon poiéô* means "to confer a mask or a face" (De Man, "Autobiography as De-Facement" 76). The face that is conferred is to be viewed and recognized. Consequently, it must be associated with another individual, a person who will be summoned. It comes as no surprise that prosopopoeia is

[95] Derrida is here using "esprit" as synonym for "spectre:" "Or on a bien envie de respirer. Ou de soupirer : après l'expiration même, car il y va de l'esprit. Or ce qui paraît presque impossible, c'est toujours de parler du spectre, de parler au spectre, de parler avec lui, donc surtout de faire ou de laisser parler un esprit" (*Spectres de Marx* 32).

generally associated with the vocative case (Culler, Riffaterre), as it calls for the involvement of at least two individuals. The granting of a voice to the entity of the specter highlights the action of speaking, all the while also alluding to an act of listening. In *Les Figures du discours*, Pierre Fontanier defines prosopopoeia as a device "qu'il ne faut pas confondre ni avec la *Personnification*, ni avec l'*Apostrophe*, ni avec le *Dialogisme*, qui l'accompagnent presque toujours," and which:

> consiste à mettre en quelque sorte en scène, les absens, les morts, les êtres surnaturels, ou même les êtres inanimés ; à les faire agir, parler, répondre, ainsi qu'on l'entend ; ou tout au moins à les prendre pour confidens, pour témoins, pour garans, pour accusateurs, pour vengeurs, pour juges, etc. (404)

This description explains the different levels involved, including the staging of an absent entity in a situation of exposition and action as well as the possibility of interaction. This interaction can start with an apostrophe, as it does in Lamko's text following recognition ("Pelouse! Pelouse!" [25]). However, this mostly occurs in convoluted ways in the novel, as it is unclear who is the origin of the apostrophe. While Reine states that she had been waiting to be called or hailed – "En réalité, j'attendais depuis des dizaines de lunes qu'un Nègre vaillant et viril daignât m'appeler, héler la Négresse morte mais qui continue de rôder…" (57-58) – this awaited call is never uttered, due to "oubli" and "ignorance" (58). Reine is not called; rather, she ends up being the one who summons by looking at Pelouse (Derrida's *regard*). In any case, the use of an apostrophe in prosopopoeia can lead to an instance of exchange. The beings involved act and try to speak, and can respond to others and interrelate with them from various stances.

The dialogue initiated remains intrinsically ambiguous, as it is charged with the different aims and possibilities of speaking and listening. In *Spectres de Marx*, Derrida emphasizes the necessity of speaking to the specter and of having a conversation. However,

this verbal exchange is complicated by the nature of one of its participant, the specter. The voice of the specter is neither present nor absent: "c'est une voix entre-deux, ni morte ni vive, qui affirme, qui fait circuler la parole et qui fabrique de la différence" (Delain). What sort of communication is possible when one of the individuals contributing to the dialogue exists in an in-between space of ambiguity and indefiniteness? How can interaction occur when the *regard* of the specter conveys the impossibility of symmetry and reciprocity?[96] How can a specter speak to a human being and how can a living person listen to a spectral voice?

The difficulty of communication is reinforced by Reine's appearance as a butterfly: her niece Pelouse is afraid of butterflies, and screams when she first sees her/it ("Pelouse, hébétée, glapit: 'Un pap… un papi… un papillon! J'aime pas les papillons!'" [28] and "'Au secours! J'aime pas les papi…!'" [28]). Pelouse later admits that it is a phobia: "Je vous avoue que je suis allergique au papillon… C'est ma phobie!" [60]), thus further emphasizing the difficulty of communication. Insects and human beings both possess the ability to communicate acoustically; there exists a correlation between humans and Lepidopterans in this regard. In *La Phalène des collines*, however, it is interspecies communication that is sought; or rather, semi-interspecies communication, for Reine was originally a human. Heterogeneity complicates the possibility of conversation between Reine as a butterfly-specter and the living human being Pelouse.

Different means of communication are developed, paths which follow a convoluted route in order to express the ambiguity of the process. Communication is often veiled and

[96] In "Spectographies," Derrida argues that there is always a visor effect (*effet de visière*) in the acts of looking at and being looked at by the specter: "Le spectre, ce n'est pas simplement quelqu'un qui nous voyons venir revenir, c'est quelqu'un par qui nous nous sentons regardés, observés, surveillés, comme par la loi: nous sommes 'devant la loi,' sans symétrie possible, sans réciprocité, là où l'autre ne regarde que nous, nous qui l'observons […], sans même pouvoir croiser son regard" (135). The idea of the visor effect seems to forfend true exchange, a fact that I will address below by showing the alternative means developed to establish communication.

unclear, or even opaque. Its "signes brouillés" (Coquio, *Rwanda: Le Réel et les récits* 152) need to be decoded and its symbols interpreted, passed down to the listener. The *passage de témoin* can occur only through a process of deciphering. In *La Phalène des collines*, the delivery of a message relates to the idea of passage which I believe is at the heart of Lamko's spectral logic: the *here* and *there* as well as the *here* to *there* and *back* of Reine's flight, which is both literal (flying and wandering) and figurative (metamorphosis and transmission), encourage the passage from one's experience to another's knowledge.

Reine's messages appear in indirect ways and refer to hidden information and unspoken events. The butterfly-specter interacts with Pelouse through paranormal means which are connected to an idea of porosity and beyondness that adds to the enigma of these means. These intricate modes of transmission are multiple; they range from prophecies to corporeal sensations, from dreams to fantasies. Interestingly, they seem to echo symptoms of trauma as experienced by the *superstes*: "the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (Caruth 4). The symptoms are passed down to Pelouse; they are transformed, used as modes of communication. And despite their multiplicity, they are all connected through the theme of vision, of being able to *see*. The term "vision" can have various meanings, three of which are of importance in the context of *La Phalène des collines*: that of perception, of what can be seen; that of a hallucination, of seeing what is not present; and that of representation, the way reality is perceived and understood.[97] Vision seems primarily to underscore the ideas of perception and realization: it emphasizes a passage from invisibility to visibility and from being hidden to recognition, as well as a connection between the worlds of the dead and the

[97] In *Le Trésor de la Langue Française*, vision is defined as "action, fait de voir;" "vision d'un objet qui n'est pas présent;" and a "manière de voir," "d'appréhender la réalité."

living. The abovementioned *passage de témoin* needs to follow different paths in order to be accomplished, and those paths are manipulated by Reine: she plays with the passages that she wants Pelouse to follow in order to deconstruct sensationalist stories and to transmit a more accurate vision of the genocide and what happened to her.

Reine tries to upset Pelouse and undermine her position by manipulating her consciousness. She performs this in the literal sense through vertigo in order to produce more figurative changes: "J'entre en action et je suscite le vertige. La terre tourne autour d'elle. […] Elle s'écroule. Elle s'évanouit" (125). There are two clearly distinct participants in the passage: Reine, the "je" who inflicts vertigo and Pelouse, the "elle" who is the recipient of the fainting sensation. The reflexive verbs describe the consequences felt by Pelouse, referring to the role she must assume in the exchange. The figurative changes sought by the butterfly-specter relate to the domain of difficult topics, subjects that are not easily accessible but are not unattainable. For Reine, it is a question of consciousness, of being aware of something beyond that which can simply be seen and heard: "Je décide d'armer Pelouse d'une double vue et d'une double écoute" (102). Because in order to perceive, "[i]l faut qu'elle possède un peu plus que deux yeux et deux oreilles. Pas d'avantage, puisqu'elle n'est pas de notre monde invisible de fantômes ; mais juste assez pour être un peu plus sensible au murmure des êtres et des choses" (102). The message to be heard is a whisper: it is not fully formulated nor spoken. "Clairvoyance" (102), which is also described as a type of doubleness in hearing and seeing, would permit Pelouse to hear the murmur. As a consequence, Pelouse's ability to listen and hear would enable her to form her own *view*point. The need to be clairvoyant symbolizes Reine's desire for Pelouse to perceive and understand the implications of the narration of her death.

Vision also relates to the oneiric medium. Dreams, nocturnal visions, are particularly important in the novel because of their very nature. They consist of the residue of a person's day incorporated into a different narrative, that of the dream, which is linked to a latent desire.[98] Dreams are fleeting, occur during sleep, and are often unclear. As a result, they must be interpreted *a posteriori*, and must be translated, in a sense. They also relate to the unconscious and how it is able to pass indirectly and briefly into consciousness. Ayélévi Novivor claims that dreams belong to "un espace aux frontières perméables" (337), since they link consciousness and the unconscious; in Lamko's text, they connect the two main female characters. Passing dreams on to Pelouse is Reine's way of tormenting her niece through the affirmation of the necessity to rethink the event and her relation to it. In one of the oneiric worlds established by Reine, a phone rings and a multitude of voices can be heard: one saying that it is too early, another stating that there is no one to pick up, one encouraging Pelouse to pick up the phone since it might be a call for her, and another telling her that no one knows her here and that she should go back. One of the voices juxtaposes two people, a "je" and a "tu": "Tu es sortie de toi pour rejoindre le territoire de l'illimité, par le rêve. Je t'ai déjà pourtant dit qu'il faut observer la distance avec moi. Tu es toi. Tu n'es pas moi. Je ne suis pas toi" (191). Even though dreams relate to porous levels of the psyche and in this instance offer a possible entrance into the world of the unlimitedness of death, they are also used to affirm a difference, an impermeability between Reine and Pelouse. To counter total identification, Reine reaffirms this difference and the differentiation to be carried out between "je" and "tu"

[98] According to Laplanche and Pontalis's explanation of Freud's theory, day's residues are "éléments de l'était vigile du jour précédent qu'on retrouve dans le récit du rêve et les associations libres du rêveur ; ils sont en connexion plus ou moins lointaine avec le désir inconscient qui s'accomplit dans le rêve" (423).

as well as their respective worlds: passage is allowed and encouraged, but not a permanent and inadequate superposition of individuals.

Finally, visions also pertain to the domain of hallucinations; that is, of seeing something that is not actually present. During a late stroll following a bird, Pelouse arrives at a cemetery and experiences a hallucination. It is in fact Reine who implants a vision in Pelouse's mind, making her "see" a dance of specters: "Je lui imprime une vision. Une danse de revenants" (201). The vision is complex, both poetic and unsettlingly comic, grotesque even. The dance is marked by a strong sentiment of euphoria (experienced by the dead) and by contradictions: "Ils [les spectres] ont soif mais dansent devant un fleuve, ils ont froid mais font la ronde autour d'un grand brasier de flammes hautes" (201). The specters participate in an intense ceremony which calls for action and for a rite in return: that of their burial. One of the specters speaks for all the wandering spirits of the cemetery through an act of ventriloquism. Ventriloquism refers to "the art or practice of speaking or producing sounds in such a manner that the voice appears to proceed from some person or object other than the speaker, and usually at some distance from him" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). As the prefix "ventr-" indicates, the sounds usually originate from the abdomen. However, in this hallucination in Lamko's text, the ventriloquized voice comes out of the specter's rectum: "Celui qui ferme la marche ventriloque ; une voix caverneuse, rauque, à caisse de resonance bidonneuse, citerne, grotte. La voix surgit de son rectum" (Lamko 201). Furthermore, the ventriloquized voice delivers a discourse full of bizarre images and which seems to function as a series of free associations:

> "Sur le chemin gaiement nous sommes, sentant le vent des sueurs malodorantes. Que les vivants aux poitrines bossues tissent la toile de leur trou et se cachent. Une épine blanche plantée dans le pied accompagne le célibataire dans la tombe. A boire, désaltérez les gorges en feu." (201)

The discourse remains perplexing, and this incomprehensibility leads to uncertainty, as the reader does not know if she or he does not understand because she or he does not possess sufficient information about Rwandan culture and burial rites, or because there is no discernable meaning behind these words. The medium is grotesque, so is the message; the incongruous language and vehicle become signs of the specters' despair about ever being able to communicate the horror of their story and, above all, about ever being heard. The idea of resonance further points to that need of being heard: as a sound box, the rectal ventriloquism is a desperate attempt which aims at being amplified not only in order to englobe all the dead and to speak for them, but also and especially in order to reach the ears of the living.

The act of ventriloquism is not only deceptive, but also introduces the idea of distance in relation to transmission and speaking for another. The subject of ventriloquism is often brought up in relation to testimonial literature, as it represents a way of indirectly representing and discussing genocide. The ventriloquism is thus usually performed by the indirect witness, who testifies through speech or art. In *La Phalène des collines*, ventriloquism pertains to the dead themselves, alluding to the long-lasting perception of ventriloquism as a means of communication for spirits.[99] The ventriloquism of the dead expresses distance and, because of its grotesque origin and content, a paradox. Both seem to be here considered constitutive of any post-(a *post*eriori and *post*humous), speaking of genocide. Lamko adds a further dimension to this paradoxicality: it is the dead who try to communicate with the living *and* the specter's ventriloquized discourse is inscribed into Pelouse's mind by Reine. The testimonial chain itself is represented as being further complicated. I believe that Lamko is trying to

[99] In the nineteenth century, ventriloquism was often associated with supernatural occurrences. In this sense, the dead were perceived as using human bodies to communicate with the living: "the notion of ventriloquism such as this, of a *spirit* having his lodging in *the body* of a man…" (152) writes Trench in 1847 in his *Notes on the Miracles of Our Lord*.

characterize the sort of relationship one has with the dead in post-genocide Rwanda, notably in relation to the memorialization of genocide. Through the unexpected medium and the complicated message, they express their current state: their wandering, their "gorges en feu" as a result of lack of burial rites. The message ends with the only part which can be clearly understood: the ventriloquist voice demands that their thirst be quenched. Once Pelouse is released from this vision, she finds herself in the graveyard with Muyango, a survivor of the genocide, and both have come with food items used to carry out a burial ceremony. More specifically, Pelouse has brought banana beer in order to satisfy their thirst: "Les revenants fondront sur la bière comme des mouches assoiffées. Ils s'en gaveront à satiété, se saouleront et passeront le temps à la folie" (202). Pelouse has finally heard their message: "Ils [les spectres] ne se doutent pas que nos oreilles quoique percées sont encore suffisamment longues pour traverser les palissades" (202). She has acquired vision, and through her act of listening to the dead, her ability to hear overcomes obstacles.

The instance of hallucination raises the question of transmission and of the ways in which the genocide is both spoken about and remembered. Lamko symbolizes such questions by creating a sensation of complexity and paradoxicality. Only certain aspects can be understood while others remain unknown as observable above in the ventriloquized discourse of the dead; for an indirect witness, a part of the experience can never fully be known, a fact which defines transmission. However, the process undergone and the passages followed become that which is actually important. The progression is observable at the end of the chapter with the cemetery scene examined above when Reine decides to fly away after the affirmation that they have heard the dead and understood the signs. Pelouse sees the butterfly and notes its beauty: "Regarde, une phalène, une magnifique phalène !" (203). She has changed: she is no longer scared and recognizes the insect's magnificence, meaning that the

messages have been (partially) deciphered. Semujanga argues that "[l]e récit de la tante explique, clarifie, ordonne les secrets de la vie, de la mort, du mal, dévoile les symboles, révèle les liens établis à l'origine entre l'ordre humain et l'ordre surnaturel" (236). I disagree: Reine does not explain nor clarify; rather, she guides a convoluted process without giving any definite answers. She actually calls for the active participation of Pelouse, a process of "working through." While Reine is the transmitter, Pelouse becomes the receiver as well as the transcriber and translator of her aunt's story.

The Agency of the Heir

Pelouse emerges as an important participant in the transmission process initiated by Reine. Despite being Rwandan, Pelouse had never been to her home country: she is an exile traveling with a delegation as "une sorte de script-photographe-guide-traductrice" (93). She is the recorder of memory for the expedition; she takes notes and photographs for the investigation into the genocide and in order to illustrate the state of affairs in post-genocide Rwanda. However, all her pictures and records are lost, erased and dispersed by Reine: her first photos show only blackness (111), and she loses "sa trousse de photographe dans laquelle elle avait son appareil et ses pellicules" (160) and "toutes ses notes d'enqête… lessivées par la pluie" (161). The repeated losses symbolize the need to go beyond simple observation. In order to grasp the sort of memorial construction desired by Reine, one of Reine's messages encrypted in a dream can shed light on Pelouse's role. The dream details three modes according to which the young woman can fulfill herself: "Tu hésites entre trois modes de réalisation de toi-même: le premier s'appelle *il faut*, le second *tu dois* et le troisième *tu peux*" (88). *Il faut* is a mode of protection which preserves the self from hurtful participation and fear; *tu dois* locks the self into one's interior and disconnects it from others. These two modes

equal negation of herself. However, *tu peux* summons an exercise of self-achievement and also pertains to vision: "Par contre – et c'est là que se plante 'la philopoèsie de la regardance' – *tu peux* est enfoui dans l'illimité, t'invite au miracle" (89). *Tu peux* and its "philopoetry" create a shift of limits and the possibility of experiencing the unrestricted, two characteristics which recall the world of limitlessness deployed by Reine the specter-butterfly. Through an examination of this dream in connection to the destruction of the various documents/elements Pelouse gathered, it is possible to see that self-development and assertion become crucial.

At first, the documentation brings about an instance of misinterpretation and likewise misinformation ("Initially, [she] misinterprets and overlooks the traces of the genocide, constructing a false or incomplete record of what happened" [Applegate 52]). By erasing the notes and photos taken by Pelouse during her tour with the delegation, Reine wishes for Pelouse to transform herself and her understanding of the violent events of 1994 by thinking subjectively and affectively about them. Objectivity cannot fully represent the past, as is observable through the inadequacy of the photographic medium and its use by Pelouse: while she is taking photos of a beautiful river, the driver warns her not to be deceived since "[i]ci, elle [the river] a eu ses menstrues, elle a rejeté la vie" (63). As opposed to Pelouse's declaration, water does not equal life in Rwanda; it can also signify death, given that the bloody water of the river carried hundreds of bodies.[100] Because of the duality of elements and situations, Reine requires an active and progressive process of recognition which alone can bring about understanding. Even though Germanotta presents this as being more affective than political ("sa prise de conscience a une connotation plus affective que politique" [13]), a fact

[100] Abdourahman A. Waberi, one of the Fest'Africa authors and who is discussed in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, wrote a short story specifically on the bodies being carried by rivers during the genocide. "L'Équateur du cœur" is a daunting yet beautiful text which recounts the journey of one of these corpses.

reinforced by the necessity of the *tu peux* mode, I would argue that the affective and the political, and even social aspects of such a process should be considered together, a merging process that Germanotta herself covers later in her article. Pelouse's stance deals with the passage from exteriority and interiority, and from one to the other and back: she needs to connect her story with that of Rwandans. This story is at once affective and social, personal and communal, hence her growing involvement and the creation of a clinic to deal with pain: "Finalement elle se déplace de sa position extérieure, encore détachée du destin des autres Rwandais, pour se charger de leur douleur : elle fonde, avec le veuve Epiphanie, la Clinique de l'Espoir, où on va pratiquer 'la chirurgie esthétique des âmes'" (Germanotta 14). Because of her gradual process of understanding and self-realization, Pelouse can finally recognize the necessity of being involved affectively and empathically with her people.

Reine guides Pelouse's changing stance by calling for active involvement and transformation. This dual recognition process, composed of self-achievement and understanding others, relates to the concept of heritage: being an heir involves both the memory of the event *and* one's adaptation of this memory. In "Choisir son héritage,"[101] Elisabeth Roudinesco and Jacques Derrida argue that being an heir implies a double injunction of being faithful and unfaithful to a heritage, and of receiving it and reaffirming it differently. Dauge-Roth points out the duality of being an heir in Pelouse's case: "She doesn't fear seeing herself interrupted or forced to re-envision how she sees herself and the past as she tries to respond *to* and *for* the legacy that is passed on to her by signing *in* her own name" (143). The idea of "signing *in* her own name," as put forth by Dauge-Roth, includes simultaneous processes of acceptance and transformation, both of which include respect, which is all the

[101] Derrida, Jacques and Elisabeth Roudinesco. "Choisir son héritage." *De quoi demain… Dialogue*. Paris: Flammarion, 2001. 11-40.

more significant considering that "respect" is the anagram of "specter" in French and in English. Moreover, it involves agency: the verb "choisir" does not imply that one actually chooses a heritage, but rather that one chooses to keep it alive and maintain the modalities of this legacy. The heir is therefore a free subject: "il faut d'abord savoir et savoir réaffirmer ce qui vient 'avant nous'; et que donc nous recevons avant même de le choisir, et de nous comporter à cet égard en sujet libre" (15).[102] This definition of heritage and the heir's free relation to such a legacy recalls Reine's encouragement for Pelouse to fulfil herself according to the *tu peux* mode; Pelouse can answer Reine and live up to her heritage through *actions*.

These actions are intrinsically connected with the temporal dimension of the future, of matters to be constructed for and over the long term: *avenir* requires a matter to be developed, *à venir*. Derrida explains how heritage should open itself up to expectations, dislocating all temporalities in what's-to-come, as an "héritage commande pour sauver la vie (dans son temps fini), de réinterpréter, de critiquer, de déplacer, c'est-à-dire d'intervenir activement pour qu'ait lieu une transformation digne de ce nom: pour que quelque chose arrive, un évènement, de l'histoire, de l'imprévisible à-venir" (Derrida and Roudinesco 16). In *La Phalène des collines*, these transformations relate to Pelouse and appear first as personal. At the end of the novel, Pelouse desires to conceive a child with Muyango in the cemetery. The infant will be inhabited by the wandering souls of the dead that surround them at that particular moment, thus allowing him or her to become a cemetery: "J'engendrerai alors un enfant qui sera possédé de toutes les âmes en divagation et qui grouillent dans l'obscurité" (203). Pelouse decides to evoke death through birth, as a new being comes to symbolize the young woman's recognition of the

[102] In "Spectographies," Derrida unites free will and freedom through the idea of respect and responsibility: "C'est pourquoi je suis dans l'hétéronomie. Cela ne veut pas dire que je ne suis pas libre, au contraire, c'est là une *condition de liberté*, si je puis dire: ma liberté surgit à la condition de cette responsabilité qui naît de l'hétéronomie au regard de l'autre, sous le regard de l'autre. Ce regard est la spectralité même" (Derrida 137).

unbearable weight of death and its personal implications. Furthermore, this personal decision has political ramifications, as she decides to remain in Rwanda: "Je reste. Ici. Pour être sûre du nombre des victimes qu'on n'a jamais réussi à déterminer avec exactitude et certitude" (205). The decision to stay demonstrates a desire for a complete knowledge of the exact number of people that have been killed: Pelouse aims to do what Lamko rejects in the exordium; however, this counting process is reinvented positively by Pelouse. Because of her transformation, she accepts being affectively involved in the act of remembrance of the genocide, moving beyond sensationalist and overwhelming mass exposure. The memorialization carried out is reversed, as Pelouse has gone beyond the limits imposed, reaching a point where no questions are left, only actions to be performed. Living, remembering, and constructing a future are the incentives of Pelouse's new life in Rwanda with Muyango.

Prosopopoeia and Reading

To conclude, I would like to return to the notion of prosopopoeia with which I started the last part of this chapter. Prosopopoeia is a figure of speech which brings back the dead and plays out an exchange. There is a clear connection between the living and the (living-)dead involved with the trope, notably in its literary use and inscription. The figure of prosopopoeia presents complex ramifications in relation to genocide literature. Amy Hungerford, Sara Guyer, and Susan Gubar have expressed the different aims and results, both positive and negative, of using prosopopoeia when examining the literature of the Holocaust. Prosopopoeia introduces a multitude of paradoxes: it enables transmission and becomes the representative literary device for writing as an indirect witness (Guyer); it creates "a personification of texts" that runs the risk of annihilating the otherness of the others and favors identification over

imagination and memory over learning (Hungerford); it interrupts the voice of the dead instead of restoring it, deals with survival and a "failure of ends," and can even engender a fetishization of suffering (Gubar). These approaches to and analyses of prosopopoeia all offer starting points to address the subject of the indirect representation of violent events. Despite their criticisms of each other's theories, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive, a point which I will return to below. Nevertheless, they do point to the ambiguous and often puzzling nature of prosopopoeia.

Prosopopoeia essentially relates to fiction:[103] it refers to the fictive voice of a dead person. De Man draws attention to "the fiction of the voice-from-beyond-the-grave" ("Autobiography as De-Facement" 77) to further emphasize the duality of the trope: it confers a face which results in defacement; it figures and disfigures (76). As it pertains to language, prosopopoeia has the ability to render the hidden and the unknown visible and accessible (De Man 80): it figures. However, because of its linguistic nature, it is indirect, only a representation of a thing or person, and therefore does not "speak." Like an image, it is mute: "it is silent, mute as pictures are mute" (De Man 80). It disfigures through its very figuration. Indeed, ultimately the dead cannot speak, no real dialogue is established per se. The representation of such a dialogue remains mute, making us mute and deaf. However, this very muteness is meaningful, as it calls for involvement through intro- and retrospection. Colin Davis maintains that this dialogue hinges on a breach of meaning which is nonetheless significant, based on its surprising consequences; there is "a possibility of attending to signs

[103] The need for fiction is often asserted in relation to the indirect depiction of genocide. In an interview, Lamko states that his choice to write a work of fiction can be explained by the necessary distance that one needs to respect: "Lamko justifie l'intrusion de la 'fiction' par la 'distance critique' nécessaire à 'l'objet d'art' et à 'l'action constructive' et par les traditions africaines de ritualisation théâtrale du deuil" (qtd. in Coquio, *Rwanda: Le Réel et les récits* 146).

from sources outside the self on the basis of a profound modification of the status of the speaking, interpreting subject" (82). Prosopopoeia, through its demand for answerability and relatability, instils a bit of the other into one's self. It disrupts.

The idea of disruption is, I believe, an interesting consequence of prosopopoeia in relation to the subject of genocide. However, as if echoing the nature of prosopopoeia itself, it presents as many questions and warnings as possible answers. In relation to the approaches I mentioned above and their critiques of each other, I would suggest that they are not mutually exclusive when examined in relation to the being who remains alive. Whether perceived as potentially positive or as dangerous, prosopopoeia allows for its inherent paradoxicality to be posited and questioned through the figure of the reader. The verb "to read" refers to multiple related processes, though they do contain subtle differences: "to consider, interpret, discern," "to scan writing, so as to take in the sense," "to make out, discover, or expound the meaning or significance of (a riddle, dream, omen, etc.)," "to foresee, foretell, predict (a person's fortune, the future)," and "to asses precisely any indications or clues given out by (a location, situation, etc.) in order to decide on a course of action" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). The differences pertain not only to the various read mediums, but also to the ways and ultimately the outcomes of such an act of discernment.

Reading happens on different levels when prosopopoeia is at work. On an intratextual level, the person towards whom a message is directed and with whom a dialogue is initiated reads the utterance and the signs left by the ghost; through an extratextual approach, it is the person who produced the messages as well as the actual reader of a literary text who are mobilized. Both textual planes remain connected, as extratextuality is dependent on the intratextual instances of reading. Moreover, both aim to achieve a similar result: a disruption

which engenders acknowledgment and understanding, along with a process of thinking about one's position. De Man sheds light on the consequences of reading in relation to prosopopoeia:

> And to read is to understand, to question, to know, to forget, to erase, to deface, to repeat – that is to say, the endless prosopopoeia by which the dead are made to have a face and a voice which tells the allegory of their demise and allows us to apostrophize them in our turn. No degree of knowledge can ever stop this madness, for it is the madness of words. (qtd. in Davis 79)

This madness of words occurs because one is dealing with fiction (because prosopopoeia *is* fiction), though it is a fiction that is inevitable and which maintains the belief that a dialogue with the dead is possible. Prosopopoeia is the figure of reading itself, as J. Hillis Miller has claimed, since as a reader, one personifies the text and adds a voice. One exposes one's self to the speaking ghosts and lets oneself be haunted. Reading opens *hauntology*'s space of in-betweenness and enables a "con-versation" with the dead.

In *La Phalène des collines*, numerous readers have the task of "reading" Reine's messages. The most important of these is, as expected, her niece Pelouse. Reine's haunting intends to force the young woman to read: she needs to interpret the butterfly's signs in order to discern the truth and to understand what this knowledge entails. While Reine is the true mirror of her self at the beginning, as she states that she is the "seul véritable miroir de son histoire" (Lamko 31), her figuration slowly disappears into Pelouse's reading. Indeed, the act of reading, as observable in the various definitions above, also has consequences. By having deciphered the signs, changed, and acted on these changes, Pelouse welcomes a part of her aunt Reine into her self, an absorption stated by Reine herself: "Je suis avec elle… en elle" (Lamko 207). A process of disfiguration is thus slowly instigated. This incorporation occurs only after Pelouse has worked through her grief and is thus able to mourn her aunt. Prosopopoeia initiates a process which requires active involvement and caution.

A similar process awaits the reader of *La Phalène des collines*: by reading about Pelouse's slow process of *réalisation* with all that it entails, that is, the fulfillment of her self, her perception, *and* as performance, the reader is encouraged to do the same. Lamko's text requires that we, the readers, participate actively, as we must follow various passages which makes us question our perception of genocide as well as go beyond the simple shock of being faced with extreme violence. Beyond pure reception, we must incorporate the facts while nonetheless letting ourselves be surprised by the opening of meaning that one encounters when faced with a specter and through reading: such an opening is productive because it requires agency and engagement since "[i]l y a une lecture active, productive – produisant texte et lecteur, elle nous transporte" (Blanchot 157). Boubacar Boris Diop encourages the same active involvement of the reader in his text written with Fest'Africa when he states that "Ça passe par un travail personnel intense" (*Aircrige*). In fact, all the indirect depictions of the Rwandan genocide connected to the project "Rwanda: Écrire par devoir de mémoire" demand this type of active involvement of the reader, both imaginatively and as a consequence, ethically:

> by engaging the imaginative capacities of the reader, by drawing on their capacity to engage with a text and to participate imaginatively in a process of attempting to comprehend something which might last a lot longer and go a lot deeper than the bare, shocking, incomprehensible facts. (Small 96-97)

Reading is therefore equivalent to understanding and mourning, the slow integration of historical facts and the dead into one's self. As I have tried to demonstrate in relation to Pelouse, while identification is the first process which comes almost naturally to the reader, this identification slowly turns into transformation: "The act of reading begins with identification, but it ends in the awareness of distance and difference, not only from what we read but also from the person we used to be before we started reading" (Pieters 126). One opens up to others and a variety of perceptions; one is challenged, constantly engaged. The

poetics of reincarnation in the words of Lamko leads to a *trans*-process of meaning and of one's self: the deconstruction of how people represent and think about the genocide and a re-incorporation and inscription into a broader realm of interpretation and relation to the event. The idea of *trans*- echoes the characteristics of minor literature, which welcomes paradoxes and movement, both instances of border-crossing. The agency linked to going beyond highlights the opening up that indirect literary depictions of extreme violence may accomplish. The others, victims and survivors, as well as the perpetrators, penetrate the reader's self and perception. In this sense, a feeling of participation is developed, a combination of many different streams and visions in order to create a polyphonic representation, created by the author in order to be passed down and complemented by the reader.

Chapter 4

Listening, Polyphony, and Multidirectional Memory:
Abdourahman A. Waberi's *Moisson de crânes* and Véronique Tadjo's *L'Ombre d'Imana*

> Ma bouche sera la bouche des malheurs qui n'ont point de bouche,
> ma voix, la liberté de celles qui s'affaissent au cachot du désespoir.
> **Aimé Césaire – *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal***

> La vérité se trouve dans le regard des hommes. Les paroles ont si peu de valeur. Il faut aller sous la peau des gens. Voir ce qu'il y a à l'intérieur.
> **Véronique Tadjo – *L'Ombre d'Imana***

> Le langage est, on le voit à chaque crise, inadéquat à dire le monde et toutes ses turpitudes, les mots restent de pauvres béquilles mal assurées, toujours à fleur de déséquilibre. A maintes occasions, sous divers cieux, ce langage reste un luxe rarement accessible. Et pourtant, si l'on veut qu'un peu d'espoir vienne au monde, il ne nous reste comme armes miraculeuses que ces béquilles malhabiles. Que faire d'autre sinon évoquer un instant les âmes et les êtres disparus, les écouter longuement, les effleurer, les caresser avec des mots maladroits et des silences, les survoler à tire-d'aile parce qu'on ne peut plus partager leur sort? [...] Dire le nom de tous ces humains empoisonnés très tôt, tous ces cours taris par la haine et l'égoïsme. Se transformer en donneur d'échos.
> **Abdourahman A. Waberi – *Moisson de crânes***

Abdourahman A. Waberi's statement stands as a compelling depiction of what Fest'Africa writers want to accomplish with their project, "Rwanda: Écrire par devoir de mémoire," based on an initiative set in 1996. The Fest'Africa group is linked to an African association for the arts and media organized by and around the Ivorian journalist Maïmounia Coulibaly and the Chadian writer Nocky Djedanoum in Lille, France. The African artists who were asked – by Djedanoum – to write about the 1994 genocide travelled to Rwanda twice in order to hear the testimony of survivors as well as to see the remains of the Tutsi massacres through visiting memorials and memory sites such

as churches and schools. The artists participating in Fest'Africa aim to create literature in order to reveal, to denounce, to make known, and consequently to remember[104] the Rwandan genocide.

Of the ten works produced through the memorial and literary project launched by Fest'Africa, I have chosen to focus on two in this chapter: Abdourahman A. Waberi's *Moisson de crânes* and Véronique Tadjo's *L'Ombre d'Imana – Voyages jusqu'au bout du Rwanda*, both published in 2000. The apposition of these two texts is based on their similarities in form and style: they are both self-reflective novellas composed of assembled parts that express different perspectives. They are also characterized by uncluttered writing. Consequently, their general aspect is concise and fragmented, characteristics that are significant aspects of the author's testimonial endeavor. Through such similarities, these two texts echo one another. However, they also develop divergent narratives, focusing on different subject matters and approaching them through contrasting lenses. It is precisely those similarities and dissimilarities that allow for an in-depth and productive analysis.

When examining this Fest'Africa literature, the role of the listener[105] becomes a complex one: who is the listener/receiver of the primary testimony? What relationship exists between the survivor and the writer who witnesses indirectly; that is, the *auctor* who becomes the witness of a *superstes* (to use Agamben's terminology)? How is it possible to approach the writing and the testimonial vein of these texts all the while recognizing the indirect depictions of violent events, which add various layers of remoteness? How do these authors manage to express the multitude of

[104] Because "se souvenir, c'est aussi, et peut-être d'abord faire connaître" (88), suggestion cited in Olivier Lalieu's "L'invention du 'devoir de mémoire'" and which is itself extracted from Louise Alcan's "Rapport d'activité" of the number 165 of *Après Auschwitz*, published in November 1973 – January 1974.

[105] The listener here is different from the reader that I examine in Chapter 3. Because of the nature of their works, Tadjo and Waberi are the direct listeners to the testimony of *supertites*, and appear as such in their texts.

perspectives and the different voices of the actors of the Rwandan genocide and to incorporate them into their literary works in order to enable said transmission?

This chapter analyzes the exhaustive polyphony created by Waberi and Tadjo who illustrate the importance of comprehension processes and of *listening* as per Jean-Luc Nancy (*À l'écoute*). These eclectic texts are personal while nonetheless characterized by a great plurality, which tends towards an accepted and even claimed contamination, opening the sense of this writing to movement and sharing. My suggestion is that both authors create "methexic" texts (Nancy), the adjectival form of methexis (μέθεξις), which can be translated as participation. Waberi's and Tadjo's works propagate voices, both direct and indirect, from the inside and the outside, in an echo; that is, a resonance of sense. Moreover, through the complex systems of references they develop, Waberi and Tadjo widen the "methexic" vein of their works: they both refer to other events characterized by violence. Through becoming pan-African and even "Afropolitan" – a term which is itself hybrid (African/cosmopolitism) and which was formulated by Achille Mbembe in *Sortir de la grande nuit* – the two authors conceive a space in which memory of the Rwandan genocide can potentially exist. They unveil a collective voice organized around previous memorial spaces (the Holocaust) and spaces of African origin. This plural voice is intrinsically linked to the idea of "multidirectional memory" developed by Michael Rothberg, which advocates interaction between different memorial traditions. Abdourahman A. Waberi's *Moisson de crânes* and Véronique Tadjo's *L'Ombre d'Imana* exemplify this polyphonic and multidirectional work of memory, creating a series of echoes and justifying the plurality of Waberi's expression "donneur d'écho*s*."

A detailed description of these two texts will help in understanding this chapter's arguments. Waberi's short text is difficult to classify: as a literary exercise characterized by hybridity and shift, it is caught between the form of the essay and that of fiction. The juxtaposed

fragments that compose it, whether fictional or factual, all display and address a common theme of violence. The work is composed of a preface, three short stories, and three testimonial narratives.[106] *Moisson de crânes* begins with a preface in which Waberi explains the aims of his project and the complexities of his authorial position in relation to the subjects broached, namely genocide and violence. The preface relates the work's composition; the "je" of the author remains the dominant pronoun. Waberi examines the difficulties of writing about genocide, raising philosophical questions about language, representation, and memory.

Part I, entitled "Fictions" (21), consists of literary fictions written by Waberi. Nonetheless, these narratives remain strongly anchored in factuality, as real portraits and precise references are continuously inserted. Three main stories compose this part: "Terminus" (23), "La Cavalcade" (43), and "Et les chiens festoyaient" (51). All three try to represent a facet of genocidal violence by focusing on a variety of points of view. "Terminus," a title whose explanation is given at the end of the preface (linked to the verb "exterminate"[107]), describes the rise and the staging of violence by mixing real historical facts, discourses, and processes along with stories from the perspective of its perpetrators. Composed of a large number of fragments, this sub-section develops a sense of connection and continuity through singular transitions: quotations from the Martiniquais poet and intellectual Aimé Césaire interrupt each fragment and consequently create contact between different instances of violence across time periods and locations. "La Cavalcade" recounts the history, mainly through oral transmission, of the country and its people. However, it is a history that has been manipulated in order to justify ethnic segregation and non-mixing: it is a call for a massacre by a narrator-executioner. The last story, "Et les chiens festoyaient," focuses on dogs,

[106] On his website, Waberi describes his text as being comprised of "trois nouvelles (fiction donc) et trois récits de témoignage" (*Abdourahmanwaberi.com*).
[107] "Encore un mot, le titre de la nouvelle principale, *Terminus*, vient du latin *exterminare*, 'chasser jusqu'à la frontière'. Ce qui a donné le terme français actuel 'exterminer', c'est-à-dire faire périr jusqu'au dernier" (Waberi 19).

although it remains unclear to whom the dogs actually refer: the perpetrators who had a "feast" killing or the actual dogs that proliferated during the massacres, feeding on the corpses of victims. The dog becomes at the same time both a symbol of inhumanity and a sign of the non-intervention of the Minuar forces sent by the UN[108] (through giving Marie-Immaculée's dog the name Minuar). Moreover, the dog represents the aftermath of the genocide and the fact that the targeted Tutsis now live next to their former torturers. This is further symbolized by Marie-Immaculée, who has decided to keep the dog that "ate" her dead family. By recounting the story of Marie-Immaculée and her dog over different time periods, "Et les chiens festoyaient" also acts as a transition to Part II of *Moisson de crânes*.

Part II, "Récits" (61), encompasses what appear to be true accounts told from the omnipresent point of view of Waberi, the traveler *engagé*, through, once more, three sub-sections: "Non, Kigali n'est pas triste" (63), "Retour à Kigali" (71), and "Bujumbura plage" (87). All three focus primarily on the period following the genocide. The first sub-section describes Waberi's first trip to Rwanda in July 1998 for the Fest'Africa project. It details his observations in the city of Kigali and how even through urbanism, vegetation, and the daily life in the capital, people can still feel the effects of the genocide. At the same time, it is possible to observe how these traces are slowly disappearing. "Retour à Kigali" recounts Waberi's second trip to Rwanda in 1999. Waberi's approach is Afro-centered: he refers to other African cities and to the similarities that exist between Rwanda and other African countries. He also alludes to other African intellectuals and their writings, in addition to some of their reactions to the Rwandan genocide. This introduction of a certain pan-Africanism, or "espoir panafricain" (75) as referred to by Waberi himself, allows the

[108] This reference is further emblematic as the Minuar (standing for 'Mission des Nations unies pour l'assistance au Rwanda') force had not used their arms, except after the genocide to shoot the dogs that were eating human flesh and who therefore could be potentially dangerous as expressed by the General Roméo Dallaire himself.

author to refocus on Rwanda and certain consequences of the genocide such as a certain disinterest in cultural matters, the nineteen prisons in which thousands of Rwandans are held under the charges of "*génocidaires*," the press, the different humanitarian projects linked to the genocide and their excesses. Once more, fragments typify this sub-section: Waberi jumps from one subject to the next, thus demonstrating the complex situation and evolution of Kigali and Rwanda during the aftermath of the genocide. Finally, the last section, entitled "Bujumbura plage," deals with the case of Burundi, an adjacent country which mirrors in reverse the ethnic situation of Rwanda. Waberi travels to the beach of Bujumbura, where he is promised a meeting with the young elite of the country and that of Rwanda (exile oblige). By choosing to focus on Burundi in this last part, Waberi questions the future of the region, as political tensions still exist and conflicts are imminent. *Moisson de crânes* ends on a note (97) in which Waberi contextualizes his text and refers to the projects it relates to, Fest'Africa and the Fondation de France, which helps artists who are "désireux de se confronter directement à des enjeux de société" (97). *Moisson de crânes* is a project that is both local and specific – Rwandan and African – as well as global: it pertains to transnationalism.

The second text examined, Véronique Tadjo's *L'Ombre d'Imana – Voyages jusqu'au bout du Rwanda*, is, first and foremost, a travelogue. The text starts and ends with two important parts that each correspond to a trip to Rwanda: "Le Premier voyage" and "Le Deuxième voyage." In both parts, the *je narrant*, that is, the "I" of the traveler and the prevailing pronoun, refers to the author herself. "Le Premier voyage" (9) recounts how Tadjo manages to go to Rwanda and why. The first sub-sections are names of cities and stopovers on her way to the Land of a Thousand Hills, which are presented as steps taken both physically and mentally as part of Fest'Africa as well as on her personal journey. Subsequently, she lists facts about Rwanda, the genocide and what remains of it today. She ends this first part with stories of Rwandans, giving a direct voice to others while nonetheless using quotation marks to clearly establish her role. "Le Deuxième voyage" (89),

which closes *L'Ombre d'Imana*, echoes the first by recounting the author's second physical journey to Rwanda. She once again describes cities and sites, writes down testimony in quotation marks, describes a prison, etc. The two parts are similar in tone and structure and are composed of short sub-sections that try to represent a faithful and complete depiction of the event. Moreover, these fragments are not chronologically organized, thus reinforcing the text's fragmentation and a sense of discomfort for the reader. The section regarding the second trip ends with the sub-section entitled "Le Deuxième retour" (it also concludes the work as a whole), which is an ethical reflection on how to consider the Rwandan genocide. Tadjo concludes that, above all, what is needed is understanding, that is, "comprendre" (133) the 1994 events and humanity.

Between these two travel narratives, four other parts are present: three short stories and a transcription of testimony from different people. The first fictional part, "La Colère des morts" (49), is a story about the ghosts that haunt the existence and minds of the living. A diviner is called to soothe the revenants, a soothsayer who advocates forgiveness and memory in order to move forward and welcome a peaceful future. The second short story, "Sa voix," is about Isaro, a woman searching for her dead husband, Romain. Slowly, it becomes apparent that Romain was incriminated in the genocide and as a consequence, has committed suicide. Unsure of what to think, Isaro looks for the reincarnation of her husband and finds him in the voice of a man whose family was supposedly murdered by Romain. The final short story, "Anastase et Anastasie" (69), also portrays the ambiguities and complexity of the genocide through the story of siblings. Anastasie has died two deaths: the first was subsequent to her rape and the second is her death in April of 1994 while a member of the resistance against the genocidists. However, at the end of the short story, it appears that it is none other than her brother, Anastase, who has raped her and that her commitment to the fight is a flight from her painful past. The final part, "Ceux qui n'étaient pas là," recounts two stories of the absent and the exiled – "Karl" and "Seth et Valentine" – while at

first remaining unclear as to whether those narratives are fictitious or real. It is only at the end of "Seth et Valentine" that Tadjo the author resurfaces ("Seth *me* raconte en détail...;" [emphasis added] [87]) and that factuality is tentatively reestablished. Both seem to be transcriptions of direct testimonies. The slow factualization of the two narratives of the last part connects the previous short stories with the final part, "Le Deuxième voyage," as the author reappears in her own work and restates her action of listening to others.

Listening to Others: Writing the Event, Polyphony, and "Methexis"

The Action of "Listening:" Sounds to Make Sense in Resonance

The action of listening as justified by the contingent stance of an indirect witness is crucial for Waberi and Tadjo in their relationship to the Rwandan genocide. The complex forms of *Moisson de crânes* and *L'Ombre d'Imana* reflect the authors' approaches to writing about such an event. The emphasis on listening appears repeatedly and recalls numerous critical approaches to genocide studies as well as to the question of testimony, starting with influential writing on the Holocaust. In his essay "Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening," the psychoanalyst Dori Laub affirms that the person listening to the narrative of an individual who has experienced a trauma faces unique concerns and positions. Laub underlines the indirectness of trauma itself: the witness testifies to an event that has not yet been registered. This absence influences the inscription of the testimony and its recounting to the listener: "The testimony to the trauma thus includes its hearer, who is, so to speak, the blank screen on which the event comes to be inscribed for the first time" (57). The listener develops into an important participant in the aftermath of the traumatic event in the way(s) it is recalled by the survivor. She or he facilitates sharing with the "primary" witness; that is, the *superstes*. However, one ought to understand that the "secondary" witness

cannot and should not replace the survivor: the listener must preserve "his own separate place, position and perspective" (Laub 58). This stance as a person who facilitates recounting ought to be re-organized around the awareness of her or his position as a witness of the witness's trauma, which enables comprehension yet not full knowledge of the event. Nonetheless, Laub puts a special emphasis on the relationship established between the *superstes* and the person listening to the testimony (one that may resemble the relationship between an analyst and her or his patient): the listener ends up being a witness to an event along with the "direct" witness, as a "participant and co-owner of the traumatic event" (57), setting up the "blank screen" that supports transmission. Articulation becomes possible through the act of being heard. Therefore, for Laub, testimony can only take shape and acquire meaning by and through another: the receiver, the *listener*.

In *À l'écoute*, published in 2002, the French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy develops a theory of listening; or rather, of relationships between "sense" and listening. The introduction of the common noun "sense" is particularly important; in French, "*sens*" pertains to the domains of reason and comprehension. It is defined as the "(f)aculté de bien juger, de comprendre les choses et d'apprécier les situations avec discernement" in *Le Trésor de la Langue Française*. Furthermore, it is precisely toward meaning and a different relationship with it that Nancy wants to move: if *entendre* (to hear), referring to the actions of perceiving and understanding, introduces a meaning ("c'est comprendre le *sens*" and "soit au *sens* dit figuré, soit au *sens* dit propre" [emphasis added] [*À l'écoute* 19]), *écouter* (to listen) does not encompass an easily accessible *sens*: "écouter, c'est être tendu vers un sens possible, et par conséquent non immédiatement accessible" (*À l'écoute* 19). The relationship between sound and meaning is problematized in the action of listening: one does not only search for a signification in sound, but also for sound in the sense (*À l'écoute* 20). The consequential and logical presence of meaning is overturned when one is listening; that is to say, it is opened up and ever-changing.

Nancy cites François Nicolas and his use of the term "intension" which, through a play on the words "tension" and "intention," refers to the tension of *écouter* and this possibility of a *sens* in an open-ended movement of *tendre l'oreille*, and to the intent of meaning. Already, one can observe the multiplicity of the act of listening[109]: it is a movement toward a possible significance and intention and an act with an aim that must be produced. For Nancy, there is resonance between sound and "sense," resulting in relationships of containment (in), of passage (through), and of interconnection (by):

> Être à l'écoute, c'est toujours être en bordure du sens, ou dans un sens de bord et d'extrémité, et comme si le son n'était précisément rien d'autre que ce bord, cette frange ou cette marge – du moins le son musicalement écouté, c'est-à-dire recueilli et scruté pour lui-même, non pas cependant comme phénomène acoustique (ou pas seulement) mais comme sens résonant, sens dont le *sensé* est censé se trouver dans la résonance, et ne se trouver qu'en elle. (*À l'écoute* 21)

Sense must be found in this resonance, in the extremity, and solely in it because "le sens consiste dans un renvoi" (21), "d'une totalité de renvois" (*À l'écoute* 22). Thus, Nancy's *sens* is always already plural through an array of possible meanings (open-ended sense). Moreover, this notion of *renvoi*, which can be understood as a return, an expulsion, and a reference, also implies that a message is to be conveyed. Therefore, it contains its own repetition and permits transmission. If meaning is to be continuously created and shaped through the act of listening, it is because *renvoi* allows sense to be caught in a perpetual movement between the agents involved in the act of listening. Thus meaning *is* resonance.

This notion of *renvoi* bears great significance not only as a sort of deferral, but also as a sending back or a return. Of course, one is bound to be reminded of testimony, as it is a text that refers back to an event (recounting it) and propagates the telling of such an occurrence. The

[109] When used in English, *écouter* will be translated as "to listen" as opposed to *entendre*, which will be translated as "to hear."

testimonial genre can be said to possess an endless resonance: the rendering of an event by the witness and to those who listen to or read the testimony. The sound made by the survivor, or rather, her or his *paroles*, comes to create a sense through an echo: "Or le son du sens, c'est comment il *se* renvoie ou comment il *s'envoie* ou *s'adresse*, et donc comment il fait sens" (Nancy, *À l'écoute* 26). The highlighted use of three pronominal verbs, which introduce the idea of a middle voice (the grammatical notion of "*voix moyenne*") and of actions being acted upon themselves, denotes the convoluted relationship between *sens* and sound. This usage accentuates resonance and introduces other potential agents: *renvoi* also relates to different movements between the speaker and the listener, the writer and the reader. The verbal reflexivity creates an echo: it presents the resonance of the event for the witness's witness. It further emphasizes the fact that significance is to be found in that very echo through an active process of "making sense." All this seems to be what being an indirect witness can and must entail (through the perpetual propagation and resonance of sense): the formation of an echo by the indirect witness, or perhaps the echo of an echo.

Waberi's Moisson de crânes *as an Echo*

Following on from Nancy's open and constantly creative process of *écouter*, Waberi himself values the resonance of sound and meaning: he believes that the indirect representation of the *auctor* is the echo of various echoes. The complex nature of this sort of paradoxical writing is observable in the quotation used as the epigraph to this chapter, in which Waberi views the writer as a "donneur d'échos" (16). Through resonance, a message repeats itself and travels, makes exteriority and interiority collide. The paragraph of *Moisson de crânes* in which this concept of "donneur d'échos" appears, even though it describes the task of such a writer, also alludes to the process of shaping a subject, one that has been listened to, through language and into a matter to

be transmitted. The lexical field of the action of listening is omnipresent and highlights an engagement: "écouter longuement" (15), "prêter oreille attentive" (16), "se faire creuset d'histoires et de récits de rescapés" (16). The latter term also presents the receptacle that the author embodies through the active act of listening. The "*creuset*," which translates as crucible, is a term that underlines refraction and fusion and also suggests a sort of melting pot (the addition of different agents and cultures). It also establishes someone (as illustrated by the use of yet another reflexive verb, "se faire"), the listener-writer, as a receiver, a "site" of resonance and of the reflection of others' stories.

The engagement results in an act of representation: transmission starts with conscientious listening. In fact, and almost uncannily, the first word of *Moisson de crânes* is the verb "écouter," which appears in the text's epigraph:

> Écoutez ceci, les anciens, prêtez l'oreille, tous les habitants du pays ! Est-il de votre temps survenu rien de tel, ou du temps de vos pères ? Racontez-le à vos fils, et vos fils à leurs fils, et leurs fils à la génération qui suivra ! Joël, I, 2-3. (11)

Referring to the *Book of Joel* – part of the Twelve Minor Prophets in the Hebrew Bible – the citation refers to a lament in the face of calamities that afflict the country. A direct connection emerges between witnessing these calamities and the imperative modality of such an appeal. Waberi performs a thematic and temporal shift and applies such an exhortation to Rwanda, one which thus evokes the oral tradition of African storytelling. Moreover, this particular epigraph stresses the processes at stake in Waberi's text: the act of "*écouter*" calls for a recounting and a repetition (an echo); that is, the transmission to others and to different generations. Therefore, the imperative of the verb "to listen," "écoutez," is followed by another imperative: the verbal form "racontez," which features an act and an obligation. The idea of a narrative associated with the act of listening also appears in the aforementioned quotation about the role of the listener-writer: it is through

writing that one constructs a memory of the victims. The monument becomes one of paper and ink: "Elever un panthéon d'encre et de papier à la mémoire des victimes" (16). The author recognizes the power of constructing and telling these stories, despite the fact that all writing is almost "dérisoire" (16) faced with an event like genocide. He perceives the healing powers of language and of literature, and that "ce qui a été défait hier […] peut être pansé aujourd'hui par la plume" (17). This incentive, or rather, Waberi's sustained obligation to recount, ends the preface with a last call to writing: "Écrivons donc" (18).

Recounting can also inscribe sound into writing, since the composition created out of listening includes its own diction. "Diction" refers to the relationship between the listener and what they are listening to, as well as what writing engenders and how it goes about doing so. As such, diction "[est] l'écho du texte dans lequel le texte se fait et s'écrit, s'ouvre à son propre sens comme à la pluralité de ses sens possibles" (Nancy, *À l'écoute* 68). Echoing in itself the "writerly text" as defined by Roland Barthes, the text created out of listening incorporates its creative process and permits a multiplicity of positions, processes, and voices to be inscribed; that is, "donner, ne serait-ce que pour quelques instants, visage, nom, voix et, partant, mémoire vive aux centaines de milliers de victimes" (Waberi 17). Nancy sustains that this sort of act of writing is about "faire résonner le sens au-delà de la signification" (67). Writing equals vocalizing, as already suggested by Waberi, hence the notion of diction. Similarly, Véronique Tadjo states that her senses are connected and that writing stems from them to unfold knowledge: "Que mes yeux voient, que mes oreilles entendent, que ma bouche parle" (18). An order of the senses is introduced: while any "indirect" witnessing starts with seeing and listening, everything ends, once again, in vocalization. It comes as no surprise that those senses/*sens* are inscribed into the text and into writing. The text then becomes truly "open" to itself as well as to various senses and voices, a crucible of "*sens*."

While the act of listening must be accompanied by narration, literary creation enables the indirect witness to connect listening and transmission, to transcribe voices into writing. This literary writing is all the more important, as it is intrinsically present in the term *sens* as used by Nancy. So far, I have translated *sens* by either "sense" or "meaning" in order to imply signification, choosing to accentuate one or the other in light of my argument. However, *sens* is not only a question of significance for Nancy. Because of its polysemy, the word also conveys the ideas of direction and sensation (or a sensibility, as in the five senses for example). While *sens* remains not easily accessible during the act of listening – an affirmation that could seem problematic – it is in fact a force in its plural potentiality: it is an artistic impression and sensuousness; then a meaning and production; and finally, a direction, a meaning to come and dynamism. In his article entitled "De-monstration and the *Sens* of Art," Stephen Barker suggests that "Nancy manages both to define and consistently reopen the sense of *sens*" (176); thus, I believe that Nancy is implying *and* exemplifying that "art […] *is* meaning, as *sens*" (Barker 177). This latent multiplicity of art puts the emphasis on an active process of production, reading, and decoding. From this stems *sens*'s link to art, a fact recognized by Nancy since for him, *sens* is radically open. The person responsible for this dynamism is the artist or the "weaver" (Barker 180). Moreover, as further sustained by Barker, for Nancy, "the artist is a conduit, *is* passage" (180), or perhaps, echoing Waberi's claim, a *creuset*. This polysemy allows for sound and *sens* to make sense *with* and *out of* each other, and ultimately, to open a work of art to plurality.

Plurality also accentuates and acts as the integration of the other in the self through the formation of a "singular plural" voice. That is why, by its nature, artistic creation goes from a sense to a meaning through a passage to the other or an opening to others. In *Être singulier pluriel* published in 1996, Nancy sustains that *sens* is always already shared, adding another aspect to the polysemic term: "Il n'y a pas de sens si le sens n'est pas partagé, et cela, non pas parce qu'il y

aurait une signification, ultime ou première, que tous les étants auraient en commun, mais parce que *le sens est lui-même le partage de l'être*" (20). The essence of being is actually co-essence and the self is "l'être-avec-à-plusieurs" (*Être singulier pluriel* 50). The simultaneous use of two prepositions illustrates an opened plurality as "*avec*" (with) and "*à*" (to) point to a community *and* to a certain porosity to multiplicity. The act of listening and its transcription into art thus expose the possibility of revealing a different ontological level. There exists a symbolic *renvoi* (Nancy 27), by/through writing and by/through a sense (signification) that opens the text to others.

While remaining on the subject of the plurality of voices that must be incorporated into the recounting of an indirect witness, one should nonetheless address how one can reconcile this view of listening according to Nancy with the telling of an experience of genocide, considering the traumatic effects that it has on the *superstes*? And how can Laub's vision of the listener in the context of the Holocaust find an echo in something such as Nancy's highly philosophical approach? How can the *testis* to the *superstes*, that is the indirect witness, actually convey knowledge about the trauma of (the) other(s)? How can one voice convey plurality when attempting to create a kind of testimonial literature? Though this experience may be dissimilar to the one of the survivor and direct witness, the act of indirect witnessing nonetheless mimics it and propagates knowledge, an incomplete one that still remains important. As explained previously, indirect witnessing makes "*sens*" in resonance (and here, I also play with the polysemy of the term "*sens*" as I include all meanings of the word in this "creation"). Resonance therefore permits representation, proposing an (im)possible link between the Real (the trauma) and the Symbolic (its representation in language). The resonance of sound as created through listening can be found at the intersection between the Real and the Symbolic, inside one and the other without being fully parts of either, "placed in the zone of overlapping, the crossing, the extimate" (Dolar 81). In *Le Séminaire livre XVI – D'un Autre à l'autre*, the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan defines "*extimité*" as a term

conjoining the intimate and radical exteriority, exposing itself on an edge: "C'est à savoir que c'est en tant que l'objet *a* est extime, et purement dans le rapport instauré de l'institution du sujet comme effet de signifiant, et comme par lui-même déterminant dans le champ de l'Autre une structure de bord " (249). This notion of "extimacy" recalls Nancy's citation discussing being at the border of *sens* while listening. Both introduce the idea of an edge or of a sort of perpetual dynamism synonymous with creation, as well as being fundamentally ajar. For Lacan, the "extimacy" of the subject is the Other, a statement which, when reversed, exposes the intimate to a radical Other, to the Real. Erik Porge defines the Real as that which "bouleverse les rapports du dedans et du dehors et crée dans le sujet une extériorité intime, une *extimité*, dit Lacan" (111). It is when faced with the Real, or rather, trauma, that the subject finds her- or himself in a position of "extimacy."

For this reason, the act of listening also appears as conducting such an externalization and urges a process of telling, an expulsion outward (perhaps resembling Bataille's "*excrit*"). The Real comes into the realm of the representation of the Symbolic, and therefore, foregrounds the possibility of being addressed. "Extimacy" seems to represent a passage, the meaningful symbolization at the border *and* through resonance. One should recall that resonance implies this exteriorization through the *renvoi* between the speaker and the listener and the formation of a dynamic (artistic) *sens*. I believe it is though this notion of a sort of "extimacy" that Laub and Nancy are to be connected, as they both suggest that listening incorporates the other into oneself and opens up oneself to others. The voice formed is both internal and external, singular and plural; it resonates.

Plurality and Dynamism: The "Methexic" Vein of Indirect Witnesses' Works

Attendant to the questions of movement and plurality, Nancy emphasizes dynamism or mobility, a crossing of sound, and the incorporation of others through his use of the term

"methexic." This adjectival term comes from "methexis" (μεθεχις), which translates as participation and has the connotation of sharing. Through a "methexic" vein, Nancy accentuates one specific nature of sound and consequently listening: resonance, which pushes the self to consider and almost incorporate others, favoring "extimacy." This necessitates a certain engagement on the part of the indirect witness, through sharing and a *renvoi*, since

> (ê)tre à l'écoute, c'est être *en même temps* au dehors et au-dedans, être ouvert *du* dehors et *du* dedans, de l'un à l'autre donc et de l'un en l'autre. L'écoute formerait ainsi la singularité sensible qui porterait sur le mode le plus ostensif la condition sensible ou sensitive (*aisthétique*) comme telle : le partage d'un dedans/dehors, division et participation, déconnexion et contagion. (*À l'écoute* 33)

The emphasis on the act of listening in literary representations actually comes to emblematize the task of the indirect witness and allows for an overlap between a traditional *mimetic* representation based on the Imaginary and a more open-ended *methexic* sonority connected to the Symbolic. This link between sonority and language can allow for the Real to appear and be incorporated into a narrative. Nancy states the potentiality of such a coming together (27);[110] Waberi's and Tadjo's texts (re)present such a connection. Tadjo and Waberi recognize the plurality of voices, to which they must listen in order to write about genocide. They are likewise aware of the different passages that their writing must take and follow. Through an active process of listening, the two authors turn their texts inside out, allowing for participation and contagion. Sharing becomes the ethical statement of their "methexic" aesthetics.

Following Laub's views on the person listening to the testimony of a trauma, the Fest'Africa writers become the blank pages on which the true testimonials can take form. They introduce this sense in the voice of the survivor through the written articulation of the event. When considering

[110] "Ou encore, en termes quasi lacaniens, le visuel serait du côté d'une capture imaginaire (ce qui n'implique pas qu'il s'y réduise), tandis que le sonore serait du côté d'un renvoi symbolique (ce qui n'implique pas qu'il en épuise l'amplitude)." (*A l'écoute* 27)

the act of listening to the *superstes*, plurality is of importance: plurality in order to express the complexity of genocide, but also plurality to give a voice to all actors and to respect the site of emergence of such narratives. The listener thus permits a *renvoi* of "sense" in the sound of a voice or of multiple voices. Plurality thus equals polyphony, with the "methexic" engagement enabling participation and therefore a plurality of emergent voices.

Such an appearance is concretely observable in *Moisson de crânes* not only in the testimonies of "Récits," and in an evident way because of their very nature, but foremost in the fictional sub-sections of "Fictions." A distinct fragmentation reigns over these short stories, creating a sense of progressive composition. The "Fictions" becomes a puzzle that the author constructs piece by piece. Indeed, Waberi includes different portraits: "le jeune officier de l'APR"[111] in the fragment "Rue de la Serpette, Nyamirambo" (30), the criminal prisoners in "Moisson de crânes, suite" (34), Marc, the old guide at one of the sites of the genocide (41), the woman with her dog, Marie-Immaculée, survivor of the genocide (55), a young perpetrator in "Portrait d'un milicien en adolescent" (60). Despite the fact that they appear in the part defined as fictional, these specific portraits are not all fictitious. In his description of Marie-Immaculée, reality, through the apparition of the survivor's actual voice, indubitably manifests itself in the unexpected and repeated use of quotation marks. Marie-Immaculée addresses the narrator-writer, who listens to her and encourages her:

> "[…] Vous pouvez écrire ça, je n'ai peur de personne à présent."
> "Continuez."
> "Tout le monde me demande…" (44)

[111] "Armée Patriotique Rwandaise," military faction of the "Front Patriotique Rwandais," political party of the President of the Republic of Rwanda, Paul Kagamé.

This dialogic format could be the transcription of a conversation between Waberi and Marie-Immaculée. In an interview with Eloïse Brezault, Waberi mentions the ways in which fiction and reality are connected through complex and above all hazy relations: "les personnages de fiction deviennent des personnages réels, on ne peut pas décider à leur place…" (*Africultures*). Reality invades fiction or vice versa. Fragments of real life contaminate the imaginary texts regarding the genocide. This fragmentary form, in which a real piece interlocks with a fictional piece, brings out the multiplicity of the work and illustrates the complexity of the situation that it is trying to represent. These "pieces of the puzzle" can create a sense through their assemblage in a succession of *renvois* of one towards/into the other. Furthermore, this plurality is the objective of the "Fictions" section of *Moisson de crânes*: the attempted comprehensiveness of the representation. It is composed of victims, perpetrators, and liberating soldiers. The possibility of making sense through the shaping of a plurality justifies the fragmentary form chosen by the writer-indirect witness.

Moreover, metaphorically, this literary fragmentation echoes the memory of survivors and the ways in which they remember. The act of writing models itself on the process of anamnesis. In the introduction to *Le Génocide, sujet de fiction?*, Josias Semunjanga compares the fragmentation accomplished literarily by the writer-indirect witness with that of all actions of remembrance:

> Comme la mémoire n'est nullement une reconstruction à l'identique au passé, mais toujours une sélection de certains fragments de l'évènement, son usage aux fins littéraires […] obéit aux mêmes procédures de transposition de l'évènement historique dans l'œuvre littéraire. (24)

Since a similar fragmentation characterizes both the memory of survivors and the writing of the *auctor*, it has a double presence in *Moisson de crânes*. Reality reappears in the text through the reminiscences of Marie-Immaculée. It is through the association of the fragmentary characteristics

of memory with the imbrication of the pieces of the puzzle of his text that Waberi approaches a fair representation of the genocide as closely as possible.

Through the juxtaposition of numerous fragments, Waberi develops a complete memorial composition; or rather, an accumulation of different perspectives. However, in the first part of "Fictions," even though different portraits answer and complete each other, this outcome is sometimes undertaken through confrontation and opposition. Indeed, the reported dialog of the survivor of the genocide is followed by the description of the genocidal adolescent. A sole lamentation links them (57-59), in which one deplores the fate of the victims and their "crainte incurable" (58), as well as the impossible reconciliation which, alone, could break the silence and the despair of a people: "Rien n'est fait encore pour désensabler les cœurs, amorcer l'élan de la réconciliation souhaitable et souhaitée" (59). This last sentence could end the first part of the text. However, Waberi choses to conclude "Fictions" with the fragment "Portrait d'un milicien en adolescent," which appears alone on a single page (60). The title of this fragment in itself is surprising: it is not a teenager who is militiaman, but the contrary. To the notion of adolescent, Waberi attributes a role that must be played. The inversion militiaman/adolescent certainly illustrates the hatred that spans the history of Rwanda and its people. However, it also shows the complexity of the situation, in which everyone is imprisoned in a precise function, different for each person despite the fact that they are all inhabitants of the same country. The meaningful organization of the fragments symbolizes the different facets of the genocide: they are portraits that introduce the voices of the different Rwandan actors. This polyphony, manipulated by the writer-indirect witness, incorporates itself into the universe of the "je narrant." Writing is shared and produced by Waberi, while nonetheless being opened to others and letting itself being contaminated by the voices of others, their memories, and their experiences. *Moisson de crânes* is the work of an *auctor*, a co-creation in which Waberi *co*pies and records the stories of others.

"Methexis" and Pronouns

The action of comprehending these multiple stories following the attentive act of listening appears as the accentuation of plurality and, more specifically, as the integration of the other into the self. The other is incorporated into the text written by a single author: the singular plural participates in the polyphonic nature of these indirect testimonials. This implies integration and respect for others, their experiences and cultures as well. The "methexic" form holds meaning and transcribes itself into the writing style and the perspectives exposed by Waberi and Tadjo. "Methexis" allows for the establishment of a possible passage between the act of listening and the act of speaking through participation. For Waberi, it facilitates movement between the different agents of the genocide. This effort even becomes unsettling and almost difficult for the reader when the use of the pronoun "on" is indiscriminately adopted for the victims and the criminals. For instance, Waberi refers to the *Interahamwe*, the Hutu militia, and the mass killings of Tutsi by somehow including himself and others in these manifestations: "On lance des grenades en veux-tu en voilà dans la foule agglutinée. On mitraille" (24). The pronoun "on," singular form of a plurality, underscores inclusion, as it incorporates an "I" into others. It also connotes a certain generality, taking the same value as an academic "we" ("*nous*").

Moreover, the narrative situation of *Moisson de crânes* is manipulated and complicated by Waberi: it remains unclear if the text's narration is autodiegetic or heterodiegetic. The author-narrator is present as such in the text and yet the line is constantly blurred between himself and the different parties linked to the Rwandan genocide. There is a constant crossing over. The inclusion of the author occurs at different levels and in different groups. First, the passage from "je" to "on" falls within the literary milieu and among intellectuals. In the "Préface," Waberi begins by speaking about the difficulty encountered when writing his text (13-14). The difficulty becomes one felt by all writers who try to represent such an event (15-17). The author is also integrated with other

Rwandans: in the sub-section “Non, Kigali n’est pas triste,” the first-person singular pronoun is dominant, since it is Waberi who describes the city of Kigali (“Pour moi, …” [63]). However, this account finishes with the repetition of the pronoun “on” (six times) and thus acquires a sense of generality (“on poursuit la tâche qu’on s’est assignée” [69]). The writer merges with the city setting and incorporates himself into this “on,” which tries to survive and continue to live despite the genocide.

Ambiguity qualifies the pronoun “on.” It is inclusive yet shifting, deictic and anaphoric all at once. The distinctions between the different narrative presences are further convoluted as reported direct discourse and free indirect discourse appear one after the other without any clear discursive, contextual, or thematic changes. At first, one use of the pronoun “on” ascertains its source with quotation marks, thus identifying it as reported speech and as direct discourse coming from interviewed criminals: “‘On n’était pas là au moment des faits !’” (34). However, right after this direct quote, the same “on” reappears without any quotation marks: “On ne mélange pas ses malheurs à ceux d’autrui.” (34). The pronoun invokes the same source of locution, the criminals, and yet any clarification as to whom it actually refers to has been lost. It is only through the repetition of such a pronoun and the context that one understands that the “on” in quotation marks remains the same as all the other pronouns “on.” Up until the end of the paragraph, “on” is used eight times and the pronoun “nous” once; this accumulation helps in the formation of a clear context. First deictic, it becomes anaphoric through the blurring of reference.

Moreover, the “I” refers to multiple voices and erases traditional narrative distinctions. As the absence of quotation marks illustrates, there is a perpetual displacement through the play on the deictic entity “I.” The pronoun “je” first designates a Hutu who took part in the genocide and is now characterized as defending himself (“Je n’ai tué que trois chiots, une bagatelle, c'est tout” [38-39]), and then it is the “je” of the narrator-author Waberi (“Je me prépare, ce 19 juillet 1999, à

un voyage Paris-Bruxelles-Nairobi-Kigali long de vingt-quatre heures" [72]). A certain feeling of unease and discomfort results from this association between the author, and even the reader her- or himself, and the perpetrators of the genocide. Waberi's play on the narrative structure mirrors and evokes one of Primo Levi's remarks, which is quoted in *Moisson de crânes*: "Les exécuteurs zélés d'ordres inhumains n'étaient pas des bourreaux-nés, ce n'étaient pas – sauf rares exceptions – des monstres, c'étaient des hommes quelconques... ceux qui sont les plus dangereux..." (cited in Waberi 79).[112] Through his use of pronouns and the play on the sources of each narrative voice, the Djiboutian author points to the banality of the evil linked to the genocide, a concept developed by Hannah Arendt in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. The banality of evil refers to the part of inhumanity that lies dormant in everyone and which has the potential to express itself at any given moment. Evil can be transformed into duty under the yoke of a totalitarian regime that spreads justificatory discourses, can erase any sentiment of responsibility and any moral conscience, and, through propaganda, can reduce the other to a non-human status.

This concept of the banality of evil bears greater significance in the case of Rwanda: the militia's power rested on the diffusion of the responsibility for such violent acts committed by *all* Rwandans. If Waberi chooses to include numerous portraits of perpetrators, both in the section with testimonial accounts and in the fictional section, it is because this inclusion exemplifies the perceived "normality" of massacres during the Rwandan genocide, their repetition and their propagation. The author stages the propaganda of the genocidal power, an exhibition which culminates in the sub-section "La Cavalcade" (43). The latter starts with the historical narrative of

[112] It originally appeared in the Appendix to Levi's *Si c'est un homme* (*If This is a Man*): "Il faut rappeler que ces fidèles, et parmi eux les exécuteurs zélés d'ordres inhumains, n'étaient pas des bourreaux-nés, ce n'étaient pas – sauf rares exceptions – des monstres, c'étaient des hommes quelconques. Les monstres existent, mais ils sont trop peu nombreux pour être vraiment dangereux; ceux qui sont plus dangereux, ce sont les hommes ordinaires, les fonctionnaires prêts à croire et à obéir sans discuter, comme Eichmann, comme Höss, le commandant d'Auschwitz, comme Stangl, le commandant de Treblinka, comme, vingt ans après, les militaires français qui tuèrent en Algérie, et comme, trente ans après, les militaires américains qui tuèrent au Viêt-nam" (212).

the Tutsi people as it was perceived by the Hutu population: something similar to an invasion.[113] This unexpected narration from the Hutu perspective problematizes differences and the reasons given to justify the genocide. This chapter is a work of propaganda like the ones Rwandans may have heard or read in April of 1994. Included are the ten Hutu commandments and a specific vocabulary is used, with Tutsi being called "cancrélats"[114] (cockroaches) and being reduced to mere insects.

In "La Cavalcade," Waberi pushes the limits of historical authenticity by providing an example of a speech given by the genocidists, an example that nevertheless remains fictitious. Even though this sub-section further initiates a reflection on the relationship between reality and fiction, it also introduces a questioning of what one can write and how. Waberi seems to not be able to include such a text without commenting on it: it is through a sarcastic tonality that the author's commentary appears. The text is excessive in its justification of massacres and in the images invoked. The narrator affirms that the Hutu people are held accountable for all the evils of Africa, a fact which justifies hatred and violence. An enumeration of these miseries renders them absurd and almost comical: "le nez mutilé du Sphinx de la reine Hatchepsout, c'est nous. La sécheresse en Afrique de l'Est, c'est encore nous. La maladie du sommeil, toujours nous" (46). This exaggeration underscores how violent and dangerous such a speech is. That is why the sub-sections that precede and follow "La Cavalcade" annihilate the indoctrinating capacities that this type of discourse may have. The first is a description of the aftermath of the genocide and recounts how corpses still emerge out of the ground years later; the next exposes the remains of the genocide from the perspectives of Tutsi. "La Calvacade" exposes just one facet among many others; it

[113] As I explain in Chapter 3 in relation to Koulsy Lamko's *La Phalène des collines*.
[114] "Un cancrelat pour huit ou neuf, ou, que-dis-je, douze d'entre nous, on devrait finir la moisson en quelques jours, non? Comme dit le dicton populaire, un cancrelat ne donnera jamais un papillon" (Waberi, *Moisson de crânes* 51).

remains one section included in the general representation undertaken. Through the organization of the different sections and sub-sections that make up his work, Waberi affirms his presence and reinforces his subjectivity as a writer-indirect witness: he becomes the commentator, spreading different voices and expressing plurality through ethical means.

Waberi distances himself from generalizations and from giving answers that run the risk of reducing the genocide to an accident or an explicable event. He shows respect for the oral nature of Rwanda by reducing his writing to a more spoken style, opening his text up to others. As shown above, the pronoun "on" is specifically used when recounting testimony or analyzing the genocide: "On se dit que..." (17), "On regroupe la population..." (24), etc. Waberi rarely utilizes the pronoun "nous," preferring its oral and less formal substitute. This reduces the gap between the author and the Rwandan people who participated in or witnessed the 1994 genocide, creating a singular plural written identity. The listener attempts to position her- or himself on the same level as the witness, whether as the victim or the perpetrator, not as a way of minimizing or appropriating the event, but rather as a means of reaching out and permitting a possible recounting. The questions relating to Rwanda's violent history and how such a massacre occurred again[115] are tackled but left unanswered. The fragmentation, the diegetic manipulations, and the pronominal play between the pronouns "I" and "we" (principally "on" but also "nous") all create ambiguity. They also hold a creative power, a *sens* to be deployed through "methexis." The introduction of multiple voices in a single narrative (Waberi himself, Hutu, Tutsi, Primo Levi, etc.) points to an attempt at comprehension through incorporation. *Moisson de crânes* propagates voices, both direct and

[115] The 1994 genocide was not the first instance of mass killings in Rwanda. After the Hutu Revolution of 1959 which marked a shift in power (from the Tutsis to the Hutus), massacres of Tutsis frequently occurred. The numbers of massacres increased in the early 1990s as a result of the 1990 invasion of Rwanda by the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF; mainly composed of Tutsi refugees) and of the 1993 Treaty of Arusha in which President Habyarimana agreed to create a transition government that included the RPF.

indirect, into an echo, that is, a resonance of sense. A collective voice is formed. In this regard, Nancy would maintain that the use of "on" and "nous," two inclusive pronouns, is actually a claim: "Vouloir dire 'nous', cela n'a rien de sentimental, rien de familial ni de 'communautariste'. C'est l'existence qui réclame son dû, ou sa condition: la co-existence" (*Être singulier pluriel* 62). The preferred use of both pronouns appears as the essential or even co-essential affirmation of all writing that testifies indirectly and of the "methexis" that fuels such prose.

Tadjo's Indirect Witnessing: Interiority and Exteriority

There exists a productive encounter between the listener as a singular plural writer and others through "methexis." While Waberi emphasizes the singular plural aspects of the creation of *sens*, Tadjo features external and internal relationships and their ability to express different perspective. *L'Ombre d'Imana* is, as mentioned above, a travelogue, characterized by the omnipresence of the author (she is the *je narrant*). In fact, Véronique Tadjo makes her presence known from the very beginning of her text, as the pronoun "I" appears in the first sentence: "Cela faisait longtemps que *je* rêvais d'aller au Rwanda" [emphasis added] (11). When defining the prose of this author from the Ivory Coast, Eloïse Brezault refers to Tadjo's style as being "une écriture journalistique très personnelle" (93). The qualifying adjective "*personnelle*" underscores the assumed autodiegetic vein of the text. Tadjo's adherence to a journalistic approach stresses the importance of a progressive juxtaposition of Tadjo herself next to the direct witnesses. Both the genre of travel literature and the autodiegetic narration of the two most extensive parts of her novel – "Le Premier voyage" and "Le Deuxième voyage" – convey the image of the listener as a guide, a comparison that Laub himself proposes: "…as to be a guide and an explorer, a companion in a journey onto an uncharted land, a journey the survivor cannot traverse or return from alone" (59). The lexical field of travel applies to the author-narrator Tadjo. Likewise, the image of the guide

expresses a certain distance as a conducting agent, a separateness that she herself proclaims ("J'ai besoin de cette distanciation pour pouvoir écrire" ["Le Défi de la literature *Bambara*" 301]).

In order to act as a "guide" or interpreter and to preserve separateness, Tadjo transcribes some of her encounters with Rwandans in an interview format, interpreting and stressing the interviewee's silences, gestures, and behaviors: "Elle [Nelly] dit ça comme si elle s'apprêtait à le frapper. Sa fille prononce une phrase sans lever la tête" (45). Tadjo's precise and detailed accounts of her visits primarily situate her in the position of a listener who joins the witness in her or his endeavor to work through memories and experiences. Moreover, she perceives the effects of those testimonies on herself. It is through this dual witnessing that she performs and enables true testimonies to emerge. She exists both as "a witness to the trauma witness and to witness to [her]self" (Laub 58). This dual vantage point develops through Tadjo's external narrative point of view, which allows her to shift perpetually from indirect (the writer) to direct speech (the people "interviewed," or rather, to whom she listens). She gives survivors a voice that surfaces in the text through the recurrent use of quotation marks. In the example of the exchange with Nelly, one can observe how the woman resumes her narrative after Tadjo's interjectional observations: "Nelly nous montre son petit jardin potager dans la cour: 'Regarde-moi ça, ce n'est pas grand-chose'" (45). The slow and precise descriptions in journalistic style that shed light on the current state of the country and the daily life of survivors emphasize the necessity of remaining an outside party who witnesses *a posteriori*. Her approach is a cautious one in her respectful acknowledgement that she cannot propose "un témoignage du dedans" (Fonkua - cited in Brezault 94); that is, a testimony of/from the inside.

However, *L'Ombre d'Imana* also stands as a composite work that combines different literary forms. The personal (external) journalistic parts are intertwined with fictional stories of the genocide and its repercussions for people in the present (of listening). The first fictional section,

entitled “La Colère des morts,” recounts the haunting of the living by the souls of Tutsi who perished during the genocide and the subsequent recourse to a sorcerer who can help those spirits “cross over.” This part announces a distinctive change in genre: the subject makes it clear that it is fiction. As Brezault points out, Tadjo prefers to speak the unspeakable through her refusal to follow and be restricted by one frame only:

> C'est bien dans la ‘transgression’ des genres que se situe Véronique Tadjo pour dire l’indicible: elle a choisi un texte aux formes hybrides qui traduit l’ambigüité de son statut d’écrivain appelé à témoigner d’un ‘Mal absolu’ sans l’avoir vécu directement. (101)

This association of fiction and reality indicates both an *exteriority*, as linked to Tadjo’s status as an indirect witness, and an *interiority*, through which she struggles with and questions the ethical and aesthetic dimensions of the mass killings, along with the trauma of witnessing the trauma of survivors. Fictional stories introduce the possibility for Tadjo to directly associate her external authorial control with multiple imagined internal narrative voices, singularity with plurality.

Vocalization: How Listening Enables Speaking and Writing

Vocalization is important for Tadjo; thus the fictional section “La Colère des morts,” referred to as an apologue by Maria Angela Germanotta (21), expresses the voices of the “true” witnesses or the “drowned,” to use Primo Levi’s terminology. The lexical fields that relate to the actions of speaking and of listening recur: “ils leur *demandaient*” (51), “Les morts auraient voulu *parler* mais personne ne les *entendait*” (51), “Ils auraient voulu *dire*” (51), “le temps de *dire*” (51), “toutes les *paroles*” (51), “ils lançaient, une fois encore, les derniers *cris* de leur enveloppe charnelle” (52), “*percer les tympans* des survivants” (52), “Qui va devenir ma *parole*, mes yeux ?” (53), “Le mort *discutait*, *argumentait*, *négociait*” (53), “personne ne lui *répondait*” (53), “*se mit à l’écoute* de l’esprit” (53), “Il *entendit* l’histoire” (53), etc. In this sequential accumulation, a clear

progression establishes itself: from being spoken to not being heard, the words of the dead find a listener in the figure of the diviner summoned. The first instances that expose the action of speaking begin as attempts and wishes. The conditional forms surrounding the words pertaining to communication illustrate this unfulfilled desire. On the first page of the short story, the second mention pertaining to the vocabulary of communication is associated with the verb "vouloir" in the past conditional: "Les morts *auraient voulu* parler mais personne ne les entendait" (51). The past conditional complicates the referential and temporal situation of the sentence as it is followed by an imperfect, and as such, becomes dependent on the action of the second verb: one would have spoken if one had "been *listened* to." Hence, speaking becomes problematic, words become screams conveying rage (52).

The implied negation of the actions of speaking and of listening, including being "listened to," is reversed with the appearance of the diviner, who manages to give voice to the suffering of the dead. The diviner not only becomes the listener; he also translates the words of the dead in order to enable transmission and the passage from speaking to remembering, and thus to understanding. Words allow for memory to take over the narratives and stories concerning the genocide (55, 56). In this instance, the diviner is the one *à l'écoute*: he is the site of the resonance of narratives, linking the two worlds as well as narratively connecting interiority and exteriority in this fictitious section. He emerges as a sort of "donneur d'échos," to use Waberi's expression: the listener-guide who relays and reflects. He preaches mutuality and a balance between speaking and listening. The oxymoronic and chiasmic construction of the sentence "Nous tairons le bruit de nos voix trop fortes pour écouter les mumures du dessous de la terre" (56) underlines how one should find a middle voice between loudness and murmurs, one that enables ghosts to be transformed into memories. It also exemplifies the perpetual interaction of externality and internality in Tadjo's book, further delimitating such differences in a fictional section: the "nous" is external like

listeners, whereas "les murmures" expose the internal narratives of the victims. There exists a *mise en abyme* of externality and internality performed by Tadjo herself.

In the second short story, "Sa voix," a similar search for unheard or missing voices is undertaken. The fiction starts with the finding of a lost voice:

> Isaro était en train d'écrire quand le téléphone sonna. Elle prit le récepteur et reconnut immédiatement la voix. Après toutes ces années, il lui parlait enfin ! Et les mots qu'il prononçait à l'autre bout du fil faisaient resurgir les souvenirs en vagues déferlantes. (61)

This first paragraph introduces an identified voice, as observable through the use of the definite article. The voice, that of a man, is finally able to speak to Isaro. Furthermore, it appears that it is through this ability to speak and the opportunity for Isaro to listen that truth can be found. Voice is equal to veracity for the main protagonist, a truth all the more essential considering that it pertains to questions of involvement in the genocide. Indeed, the voice is that of her dead husband Romain, who has committed suicide because of his rumored role in the events of 1994. People say that he has brutally killed the wife and children of a man.[116] However, the situation is complicated as one discovers that the voice recognized as Romain's is actually that of Nkuranya, the man whose family has been supposedly killed by Isaro's husband. In her attempts to find certainty, Isaro has lost sight of another truth, the one uttered by Nkuranya: the complete truth will never be known. In a way similar to that of "La Colère des morts," "Sa voix" expresses the necessity for life to be rebuilt after the genocide through listening to the voices of the dead. This act of listening allows for the dead to finally be remembered. The middle voice of "La Colère des morts" and the reincarnation of the voice in "Sa voix" both illustrate the passage into memory.

[116] "Et puis, un jour, les accusations avaient commencé. Son nom était revenu à travers des témoignages. On l'accusait d'avoir participé avec un groupe de miliciens au meurtre de toute une famille. Que s'était-il passé chez Nkuranya, le 15 mai 1994 dans la soirée ? Qui avait tué sa femme et ses trois enfants ? " (65).

Listening and Writing: The Middle Voice of the Indirect Witness

The idea of a middle voice has been developed by the American scholar James E. Young to illustrate questions regarding veracity and its link to a problematic memory/history dichotomy. He stresses the importance of the commentator who must operate a link between history and memory by speaking from the stance of a middle position, both inside and outside: "the uncanny *middle voice* of one who is in history and who tells it simultaneously, one who lives *in* history as well as *through* its telling" [emphasis added] (*Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust* 280). Living in and through history does not mean that only the witness can write and use this middle voice. On the contrary, this other voice can be that of an indirect witness who manages to perform a sort of history-writing. Writing must be fed by history and vice versa, and the commentator – whether she or he be the historian, the writer, or the indirect witness – can speak and represent in her or his own voice. This voice echoes and creates resonance through what Young calls a "multivocal history" (in Art Spiegelman's *Maus)* ("The Holocaust as Vicarious Past" 668). The emphasis on multiplicity and voice in the adjective "multivocal" juxtaposed with the important substantive "history" recalls the requirements and results of the act of *listening*: it is through dynamism and plurality that the indirect witness listens to the "truth" of genocide. A reversal can also be operated, as listening also favors and creates an open-ended sense. Young's *middle voice* undeniably emerges out of *listening*.

Véronique Tadjo implies that the middle voice is that of the writer, who mimics the role of a diviner. In "Le Premier voyage," a sub-section simply entitled "L'Écrivain" describes the role of the writer faced with genocide, her or his attitude and reaction. The whole sub-section is presented as reported speech with quotation marks beginning and closing it.[117] The writer explains how the person who writes can become a facilitator of speaking and listening, a converter, and a purveyor

[117] However, Tadjo does not give any more information as of the precise source of the locution, almost giving it the weight of a universal truth regarding the engaged role of the writer.

of stories into collective memory: “L’oralité de l’Afrique est-elle un handicap pour la mémoire collective ? Il faut écrire pour que l’information soit permanente. L’écrivain pousse les gens à lui prêter l’oreille, à exorciser les souvenirs enfouis” (36). Through this transcription, which operates a chain of listening, collective memory is formed. Once more, the writer acts as a *passeur*, linking disparate realms and collecting recollections as well as knowledge. The presence of such a sub-section on the role of the (wo)man of letters is not fortuitous, since it defines what Tadjo does in the very book in which it appears. In addition, it announces the stories that will compose *L’Ombre d’Imana* and the relationships that are to be established between the different parts of the text. It therefore calls for a futurity, both in the text and in Rwanda. Operating a link between orality and writing, between speaking and listening, and toward memory, the writer also shows how fiction and reality as well as interiority and exteriority complement each other.

The presence of fictions and where they are situated in *L’Ombre d’Imana* bears significance: by being framed by Tadjo’s *voyages*, as journeys *and* textual parts, they express the movements undertaken by the writer. They allow for another side, that of interiority, to be expressed and examined by the external listener-writer. In the epigraph to this chapter, the author claims that one must go beyond spoken words: “Les paroles ont si peu de valeur. Il faut aller sous la peau des gens. Voir ce qu’il y a à l’intérieur” (19). In this sense, the author performs a shaping process of fictionalization along with her personal indirect recounting to articulate both sides. Moreover, the inquiry performed in the space of interiority and transcribed through short stories introduces narratives that shatter the normative distinctions between good and evil as well as between the different actors. Restrictive norms are questioned and an opening is sought. For instance, Tadjo tells a story that can be heard in Kigali (the story’s sub-title is “Dans Kigali, on raconte l'histoire suivante” [46]) of a woman who has lost her husband and who has seen her neighbor kill her only son. One day, that woman fell extremely ill and was left almost for dead, as

no one came to help her. Her neighbour, who was a male nurse, came to her house and took care of her. This act of generosity, probably driven by guilt related to the acts he had carried out during the genocide ("elle avait vu son voisin tuer son fils unique" [46]), became the trigger of a new love relationship. Tadjo questions the origin and purpose of such a story, whether truthful or not, and concludes by stating that death and life exist through unconventional links, as this tale seems to illustrate. The post-genocide situation appears similarly complex and Tadjo chooses to fully express the intricate consequences of such events. As observable in Waberi, the integration of all Rwandans in her text emphasizes the need for a polyphonic relationship with representation and with memory as well.

Writing and Memory Through "Extimacy"

Memory is omnipresent in Tadjo's text, as it appears as the preferable outcome of listening. Memory and especially collective memory stand as the site of convergence of polyphony, the place where people listen to all voices again and again, thus preserving them. In the aforementioned sub-section on the writer, one not only observes the importance of "diction" as the passage from oral narratives to the establishment of their permanence, but also how, consequently, writing mimics memory. The passages from interiority and exteriority also express the transformation of internal histories into memory and history, through the analysis of the listener-writer. I would suggest that the interactions between interiority and exteriority in writing echo the internal and external structure of memory. Memory is constructed through writing; writing mimics memory. Aedín Ní Loingsigh highlights the connection that exists between polyphony and memory by stressing how facts and fiction are both parts of mnemonic processes, symbolizing how seemingly incompatible forces and paradoxes compose acts of remembrance: "The multiplicity of voices incorporated into the narrative […] also has an important function: it reveals the different discursive realms that

inform memories of the genocide and highlights the dialogical relationship between fiction and the facts of violence and trauma" (87-88). Similarly to Waberi, Tadjo considers the echoing resemblances between the act of remembering and the process of writing the event as an *auctor*, inscribing them into the structure of her own text.

While Tadjo introduces the realms of interiority and exteriority in relation to her position as a listener and, ultimately, as a writer, she problematizes this strict dichotomy, resembling Waberi's shifting diegesis. Both writers manage to give their texts and their problematic actions of indirect witnessing an unsettling quality. As Laub suggests, the act of listening is not and cannot be a purely passive act: it evolves into an active process for the speaker and for the receiver. However, what does this fluctuation encompass for the act of writing as presented and examined here? Nancy identifies listening, as in *écouter*, as a movement and also as a simultaneous opening. I maintain that this flux between different voices and between the inside and the outside appears as the ultimate position of possible speaking in the act of bearing testimony as an indirect witness: an "extimate" voice that encompasses different experiences of the genocide. Dauge Roth argues that "it is ultimately our role to connect the fragmented snapshots and heterogeneous voices Tadjo stages and most often passes on without any comment, leaving us at the threshold of any possible meaning" (116). As *une passeuse de paroles*, and consequently as *une passeuse de mémoire*, Tadjo links interiority and exteriority, while leaving a space open for interpretation and resonance. The involvement of the reader seems to echo the position of the writer and indirect witness: at the threshold, engaged.

Writing about Violence: African Influences and Multidirectional Memory

Historical Violence and Memory

The two Fest'Africa novels studied here are concerned with representing the Rwandan genocide as a way to instigate a duty of memory on both a continental and international level. The introduction of links to the African continent remains of utmost importance in light of the authors' position and identity. These writers are artists from Francophone Africa and these two traits, African and Francophone identities, are played out in the novels. Connections between the representation of the genocide and the effects of other instances of violence, including colonialism, exist and appear more or less explicitly in these written works. The authors' lack of internal knowledge of the genocide coexists with their understanding of a shared violent past and therefore, identifications in experiences of violence. These common occurrences bring about a necessary process of recognition and empathy. Through the act of writing the genocide, all forms of violence are indirectly critiqued. The (multiple) critical examinations of violence rest on the relationship formed with the history of Rwanda and, more broadly, of Africa. In her essay "Engagement et esthétique du cri," Patricia Célérier insists that African literature is characterized by ideology that stems from violence:

> Le discours africain littéraire s'est développé dans un contexte de violence historique, institutionnelle, mais aussi symbolique. Engagée dans une volonté de libération et d'autodéfinition, la littérature francophone africaine est marquée par l'idéologie. (60)

That very ideological vein allows for violence to be represented in many different ways, both in form and in content, in the literature produced by Africans.

In an effort to express how an African author can address violence in the context of Rwanda, Véronique Tadjo attempts to examine this subject sensitively as an intellectual, taking all sources and expressions into account. Tadjo chooses to address the subject of the origin of violence and its

inscription into history. She progressively highlights the fact that there exists a long history of violence in Rwanda. The first mention of ancient violence appears in the sub-section entitled "Nyanza, la ville royale" and refers to the ancestral organization and tribal division of Rwanda despite the existence of one unique god, Imana, common to all. However, royalty and its subsequent strict system have been abolished, which supposedly concurs with an elimination of marks of nobility: "Les traces de la noblesse ont été effaces lors des affrontements successifs entre les 'féodaux' tutsis et les 'masses populaires' hutues" (27). Here, Tadjo suggests that it is the proclamation of the Republic that has erased such divisions, at least in theory; the author ends her fragment by questioning what sort of collective memory such people consequently inherit and what images construct their collective unconscious. Her last question inquires into the causal links that may exist between the past and the present/near future when faced with multiple displays of violence: "Qui peut savoir quelles tueries cachées sous les siècles anciens sculptent aujourd'hui le devenir d'une nation?" (28).

This first probe into Rwanda's history of violence is supplemented, several pages later with the introduction of external agents: European historians who claimed that the Tutsi people were actually foreigners in Rwanda, as they were thought to have come from Ethiopia (which, according to these "scholars," explained why they are taller, have thin noses, and lighter skin tones). This assertion had terrible consequences during the genocide, as "des milliers de Tutsis ont été jetés dans les eaux du fleuve Kagera afin 'qu'ils retournent en Ethiopie'" (31). Next, Tadjo describes another facet of the massacres, moving along the chronological plan of the deployment of violence and introducing yet another agent. She focuses on the Turquoise operation led by France at the end of the genocide, which produced both positive and negative consequences (43). Interestingly, despite several references to Europe, Tadjo does not mention colonialism directly or its possible relationship with the recurrence of violence and with the origins of the 1994 genocide. It is only

through an adverbial locution that one suspects a certain correlation and responsibility: "Ainsi, on peut dire que la France et la Belgique continuèrent *jusqu'au bout* à soutenir un régime génocidaire car pour eux, seule la majorité ethnique hutue était garante de démocratie au Rwanda" [emphasis added] (43). "*Jusqu'au bout*" suggests that there are precedents that expose these two countries' role and that the two instances she does discuss are neither isolated nor exceptional.

Through the chronological depiction of historical violence, Tadjo shows a vast picture of a complex situation which may help to explain how, and even possibly why, the genocide occurred. She illustrates the formation of a collective memory characterized by violence. I suggest that her approach shows how history should be considered in conjunction with memory, seeing how one inscribes itself on the other, how they work alongside and against each other. Moreover, the role of the author is to allow for these connections and construction processes to be articulated in an attempt to introduce productive relationships between the two. Indeed, the author remains the person who can write down history and memory in order to express the collective memory that Tadjo refers to repetitively and to encourage the formation of non-violent memory. The writer as a commentator symbolizes engagement.

African Voices and Experiences: Colonialism and Genocide

To further stress the importance of engagement, one of the particularities of the Fest'Africa literature on the Rwandan genocide is the idea of Africans writing about another African country and an event that specifically touched all Africans. Nocky Djedanoum himself uses a synecdoche Rwanda/Africa as an incentive towards reflection, which once again has an African source: "le Rwanda est devenu un lieu déterminant pour penser l'Afrique" ("Rwanda: écrire par devoir de mémoire" *Notre Librairie* 117). This representational desire in and of African literature recalls particular movements within intellectual milieux, such as that of pan-Africanism and that of

Negritude. Pan-Africanism advocates the unification of all Africans to form a global community. The erasure of borders stands as one of its key elements, as one can observe through its creation of one flag (containing the colors red, black, and green). The pan-African movement emphasizes its international status by including all black people from all continents, while nonetheless insisting on the establishment of Africa as a core and a point of reference as well as of connection. In his overview of pan-Africanism, Philippe Decraene asserts that it remains a political endeavor and that Negritude is the literary expression of pan-Africanism. He joins the two movements by their refusal of assimilation, whether political, as in the case of pan-Africanism, or cultural, as in the case of Negritude (35). The two concepts certainly stress different perspectives with their names: whereas pan-Africanism suggests the importance of the African continent as a site of convergence, Negritude refers to a skin color and an attitude. However, both notions have a similar focus on Africa and advocate an international opening. In 1959, Léopold Sédar Senghor defined Negritude as the "ensemble des valeurs culturelles de l'Afrique noire" (*Rapport sur la doctrine et la propagande du parti*), basing his argument on the essential link that exists through the apposition of "Afrique" with the adjective "noire." In the *Rapport*, he also mentions the creation of a "Nation négro-africaine," performing a geographical and racial confluence. In this sense, exclusivity does not regulate pan-Africanism and Negritude; in fact, both terms are porous and overlap with each other. They accentuate different fields while aiming to cooperate in the formation of a negro-African voice, both in source and in representation.

The creation of and emphasis on a purely African literature on the genocide are essential to the authors examined here. One reason for the importance of the idea of African creation is linked, first and foremost, to a specific instance of historical violence that all nations involved share: that of colonialism. The sharing of experiences linked to colonialism, as observable through the use of the hegemonic French language they all have in common, stresses the importance of the status of

African literature in the process of writing about genocide. The concept of the "*intellectuel natif*" developed by Frantz Fanon ("Sur la culture nationale" *Les Damnés de la Terre* [1961]) seems relevant to what Nocky Djedanoum advocates at the level of the African continent: the possibility of African intellectuals responding to the genocide and thus creating a specific historical memory that parallels the European one that arose following the Holocaust. However, one should not forget that Fanon was in fact against the generalization of the "native intellectual" in a pan-African context, as this weakens the particularities of each country. While the Fest'Africa project encompasses many of the particularities of different postcolonial movements, it calls for and creates a new approach regulated by genocide, trauma, and listening. However, violence nonetheless offers a frame in the literary approach to different historical events. Célérier qualifies Waberi's writing as being marked by reiteration, since for him, "la violence est liée à l'idée de *répétition* et à celle d'évidement" [emphasis added] (63). Repetition illustrates the chain of violence that exists, and calls for numerous acts of representation. It is the role of these intellectuals to carefully and adequately represent all instances of violence that have affected or touched Africans.

The influence of a common colonial past and its consequences for African societies has numerous implications for the act of writing about the Rwandan genocide. In *Moisson de crânes*, Waberi acknowledges his position as an African writer in his foreword by stating that he has a moral duty to write this difficult novel for both his Rwandan and African friends (13). He researched and wrote the novel in an African context. This Africanism comes out more strongly through Waberi's intertextuality, his frequent use of quotations from African or Black authors and particularly from the Martiniquais writer Aimé Césaire. Four quotations from Césaire's works are present in *Moisson de crânes* in the first half of the novel entitled "Fictions" along with three quotations from other African writers – Mia Couto from Mozambique, Wole Soyinka from Nigeria,

and Antjie Krog from South Africa. The citations used by Waberi indicate violence. For instance, a quotation from one of Césaire's poems in *Soleil cou coupé* (1948) tells of the dead whose spirits still haunt the memory and the world of the living:

> ... des morts qui circulent dans les veines de la terre
> ... et viennent se briser parfois la tête contre les murs de nos oreilles
> ... et les cris de révolte jamais entendus
> ... qui tournent à mesure et à timbres de musique. (41)

This passage precedes Waberi's recounting of Marc's remarks on how the occasional heavy rains unearth corpses many years after the genocide. In fact, Césaire's collected poetic works were published in 1947 and explored the colonial experience. Through the apposition of Marc's words with Césaire's poetry, Waberi compares the violence of colonialism with the destructiveness of the 1994 genocide. Moreover, Waberi concludes this fragment with a line of verse from the Rwandan poet Joseph Nsengimana is included. Nsengimana puts emphasis on the hatred that has contaminated the Rwandan population and which is responsible for violence: "Et coule sans répit le sang de Kanyarwanda[118]" (cited in Waberi 42). Taken from the poem "Le Pays saigne" in *Tous pour la Nation*, this quotation denotes the tumultuous past of the country, as one can observe through the adverbial expression "sans répit," which shows that violence is unfortunately a recurrent phenomenon in Rwanda. In the poem, this verse appears repeatedly (five times), with this anaphora further conveying the unfortunate state of affairs. To express such violence, Nsengimana subverts the genre of the ballad: Rwandan folklore is negative and characterized by bloodshed. Interestingly, *Tous pour la Nation* was published in Kigali in 1991, three years before the genocide. By playing with repetitions and with different temporalities – 1948 (the publication of Césaire's *Soleil cou coupé*), 1991, 1994 and 1998/1999 (the time of the writing of *Moisson de crânes*) –

[118] As explained in a note in *Tous pour la Nation*, the term 'Kanyarwanda' refers to the "Ancêtre éponyme des Rwandais" (14).

Waberi, like Tadjo, illustrates the fact that a history of violence exists while nonetheless expanding on it through the creation of echoes between different instances of violence against Black minorities.

Through his choice to incorporate quotations from Césaire's and Nsengimana's poetry together in a fragment of his text, Waberi joins different geographies in a coalescence of different experiences of violence. This juxtaposition is regulated by a certain Pan-Africanism and Negritude, since Waberi reinforces these connections between colonialism and genocide through the figure of the intellectual. An echo is formed not only through the engagement of the intellectual as viewed by Negritude, but also as expressed through Jean Lartique's preface to *Tous pour la Nation*. In it, Lartigue[119] views the intellectual as someone who, in dark times, reminds people of the principles of humanity and utters calls to action: "Joseph Nsengimana est un intellectuel et un 'homme de bonne volonté', conscient des devoirs que lui impose la brûlante actualité de son pays ; mais c'est aussi et surtout un poète dont la sensibilité a été douloureusement affectée par cette actualité" (9-10). Conveying intervention and engagement, the poems of Nsengimana poetically express the need for political and social changes. The poem "Le pays saigne" ends with the repetition of the aforementioned verse, yet with a change: "Et que cesse de couler le sang de Kanyarwanda" (16). Nsengimana articulates what he believes ought to happen to his country with the use of the verb '*cesser*.' This poem undeniably belongs to the genre of engaged literature. For this reason, Lartigue quotes Charles Péguy to illustrate this idea of the engaged intellectual that Nsengimana

[119] Jean Lartigue used to work as a cultural counsellor at the *Mission Française de Coopération et d'Action Culturelle* in Kigali, Rwanda.

embodies.[120] The intellectual filiation is complete as to the role that literary men must endorse: that of a duty to tell.

The combination of these two experiences, colonialism and genocide, culminates with the presence of a citation from Césaire's *Discours sur le colonialisme*: “Ce n'est pas par la tête que les civilisations pourrissent. C'est d'abord par le cœur” (29). This quotation follows Waberi's mention of the involved parties that supported the violence, such as the French, the Belgians, the Americans, the Catholics, and others. In Césaire’s essay, this quotation refers to the violence (mass killings) inflicted by French authorities and the government on colonies such as Madagascar or Indochina.[121] Waberi connects colonialism to genocide through his clever use of citations in strategic parts of his novel and consequently manages to create an echo between other writers' words (on colonialism) and his own (on genocide). Intertextuality highlights the polyphony so characteristic and important to the text.

Though the links are essentially thematic, they also exist formally. The title of one of Waberi’s fictitious sub-sections echoes that of Césaire’s first play, *Et les chiens se taisaient*, which becomes “Et les chiens festoyaient” in *Moisson de crânes*. The change in the verb shifts the actions performed while maintaining a site of common reference. Interestingly, Césaire’s play gives a symbolic meaning to the speaking of said dogs, who used to stay silent (‘*se taire*’) but who then manage to speak, barking like the animals they have been perceived to be:

> Aboyez tams-tams
> Aboyez chiens gardiens du haut portail

[120] “Joseph Nsengimana dit avec simplicité la douleur, le déchirement, la souffrance d’avoir été trahi en amitié, la tristesse de voir à nouveau son peuple divisé, mais aussi son espoir dans la paix, la fraternité et la dignité humaine. Voilà un engagement qui mérite qu’on détourne à son profit ces vers de Charles Péguy :

> ‘Voici la seule foi qui ne soit point parjure.
> Voici le seul élan qui sache un peu monter.
> Voici le seul instant qui vaille de compter.
> Voici le seul propos qui s’achève et qui dure.’” (10)

[121] Between 1895 and 1904, 100,000 Madagascans were killed under the orders of the French General Galliéni. In 1947, 100,000 Madagascans were killed once again (French official estimates at the time were 11,000).

chiens du néant
aboyez de guerre lasse
aboyez cœur de serpent
aboyez scandale d'étuve et de gris-gris
aboyez furie des lymphes
concile des peurs vieilles
aboyez
épaves démâtées
jusqu'à la démission des siècles et des étoiles. (119)

The appropriation of an identifying label – the "dogs" – and the repeated call to action through barking (as observable through the anaphora "aboyez") illustrate how, slowly, the plot develops towards the giving of a voice to oppressed people. In Césaire's play, vocalization is performed with the help of the Rebel, the figure of the engaged militant who works to denounce the colonial system. Without any specific indications as to time and place, Césaire's play also becomes allegorical. To qualify the play, LAMECA[122] explains that the vagueness in the representation of colonialism allows for all forms of colonialism to be incorporated into Césaire's representation. Such an opened form of representation is linked to cosmopolitanism, and therefore, I maintain that it is in accordance with the movements of pan-Africanism and Negritude: "*Et les chiens se taisaient* ou la lutte contre le colonialisme présente un cadre cosmopolite quant à l'histoire et quant à la géographie." Waberi accentuates the allegorical power of Césaire's play by citing it twice in *Moisson de crânes* (33, 35). In the aforementioned interview with Brezault, he clearly states the connections he perceives between the message of the play and the Rwandan situation: "On a l'impression qu'il avait écrit cette pièce pour les Rwandais alors qu'elle date de 1956" (*Africultures*). The allegorical aspect of Césaire's play permits the correlative relationship that Waberi draws between two violent events.

[122] La Médiatèque Caraïbe.

The similarity between *Et les chiens se taisaient* and *Moisson de crânes* is double: it is thematic, linked to an anticolonial message, as well as lexical through the expression "les chiens." The connections between the two texts multiply and become meaningful: they express the connections between different instances of violence. The resulting message is one of anticolonialism (given that Césaire's play is also the rewriting of a play, Paul Claudel's *Le livre de Christophe Colomb*). In Césaire's tragedy, violence and colonial power go together: the Rebel, sentenced to death, faces, one after the other, the figures that represent different ideologies and imposing powers in his cell: religious (bishops and an archbishop), military (cavalrymen), economic (bankers and a developer), and political (tempting voices, etc.). Waberi complicates his references to an anticolonial message in addition to the symbolism given to the dogs. Like Césaire, he denounces the role of outside and hegemonic powers. As explained above, the dog becomes the symbol of non-intervention and of a certain *laissez-faire*. However, the dogs also come to imitate men: they reproduce violence, becoming caught in a repetitive history. By suggesting such a symbol, I argue that Waberi actually introduces the possibility that colonized powers are accountable for the genocide and for the aggravation of the cycle of violence in which Rwanda unfortunately remains caught.

The Role of the African Intellectual Against Violence

In *Moisson de crânes*, Waberi suggests that in order to counter colonial forces, a unified "Africanism" must be established through the construction of an African historical memory. The author proposes to help accomplish this along with his fellow African artists, uttering a call for engaged acts of writing: "Ecrivons, donc" (18). From this stems Waberi's continual emphasis on the development of an African intellectual, who could become the voice of the continent. In addition to Césaire, Waberi cites Wole Soyinka's commitment to denounce the Rwandan genocide

as early as May 1994: "Cette déclaration de Wole Soyinka, reprise par le quotidien espagnol progressiste *El Pais*, qui date du 23 mai 1994, au plus fort du génocide, est, à notre connaissance, la première faite par un intellectuel africain" (72-73). The importance of voicing concerns from the position of an intellectual, following a Sartrian and Césairean notion of engagement, takes its significance from the deployment of an African awareness by Africans themselves. However, Wole Soyinka's voice remains a sound that echoes in the emptiness of silence: Waberi writes that Soyinka remains the only African intellectual to have expressed his distress and to have condemned the genocide while it was taking place. In this sense, he is the intellectual one should strive to become.

The paragraph following Waberi's mention of Soyinka's outcry further underscores the necessity of denouncing violence on the African level despite threats and fear. Waberi cites the example of two Kenyan intellectuals who continue to write despite the repetitive instances of repression on the part of the "pouvoir autoritaire de Daniel Arap Moi" (73). Through the introduction of a post-colonial instance of violence (an ambiguously authoritarian regime in Kenya), the comparison further illustrates the temporal and geographical openings of the text. The juxtapositions through the common reference to violence reinforce the role of the intellectual as well as her or his power and duty when faced with such events. However, this African intellectual figure is different from other so-called men of culture, as Waberi clearly contrasts his vision of the "intellectuel africain" with "cette gent binoclarde et babillarde, et, plus généralement, des hommes de culture du continent" and with "tous les autres faiseurs d'opinion" (73). Clearly, the "native intellectual" conveys the idea of change and hope through denunciations and transmission that Waberi puts forth.[123] Waberi himself expresses his "espoir panafricain" (75) through his desire to

[123] Waberi is setting up an opposition between continental and native intellectuals polemically and rhetorically in order to support his argument about the necessity for African intellectuals to speak up and defend themsevles.

see actions performed *by* Africans *for* Africans, even if these remain small. He mentions possible flight connections between important cities on the continent (from Nairobi to Kigali, for example). These examples, while small, nonetheless express plurality and symbolize the acceptance of differences, as pilots, stewards, and stewardesses with various origins, accents, and skin tones come together, speaking both French and English. Small concrete actions can lead to more politically and artistically engaged ones as the links between African countries are developed and maintained.

Opening Memory and Writing: Afropolitanism and Multidirectional Memory

However, closing the African continent to itself is not Waberi's purpose either, since for him, it is through careful queries and dialogues between cultures, whether African or European, that a true intellectual figure can emerge, taking into account African and World history, considering ideas and concepts from various sources. This vision surfaces through a network of critical, philosophical, and historical references that shape the literary and artistic production of African writers. According to Waberi, the African intellectual encompasses these various influences, escaping reductive definitions. She or he manages to re-appropriate Eurocentric ideas and to express them differently in her or his own context, welcoming others (Europeans, Americans, Asians) while nonetheless expressing particularities. The African intellectual is both local and global. As an African intellectual, Waberi's memorial identity is plural: African, previously colonized, touched by violence, engaged, and a voice of Africa while nonetheless open to the rest of the world. And this openness specifically emerges through Waberi's intertextuality and diverse set of references.

The Fest'Africa project links pan-Africanism and Negritude to a more European idea of memory as well as an African background. This approach creates another opening and multiples passages. Following the movements of Negritude (with Césaire's recurrent presence) and of pan-

Africanism, it is above all an "afropolitanism" movement that surfaces. Deploring the impossibility of community due to colonization, the Cameroonian scholar Achille Mbembe examines, in *Sortir de la grande nuit*, the evolution of African identities and the decolonized community. Furthermore, he proposes a projection into the future with his own concept of a "*monde-africain-qui-vient*" (13): how one can be African in the world today and to come. He refers to this new communal identity by the name of "afropolitanism" and defines it as an open consciousness:

> La conscience de cette imbrication de l'ici et de l'ailleurs, la présence de l'ailleurs dans l'ici et vice versa, cette relativisation des racines et des appartenances primaires et cette manière d'embrasser, en toute connaissance de cause, l'étrange, l'étranger et le lointain, cette capacité de reconnaître sa face dans le visage de l'étranger et de valoriser les traces du lointain dans le proche, de domestiquer l'in-familier, de travailler avec ce qui a tout l'air des contraires – c'est cette sensibilité culturelle, historique et esthétique qu'indique bien le terme 'afropolitanisme.' (*Sortir de la grande nuit* 229)

Afropolitanism designates both a local and an international movement that is based on the recognition of hybridization and on the idea of a continual passage, whether physical or cultural. A hybrid concept in itself, "afropolitanism" joins Africa and cosmopolitism and therefore illustrates this encounter between the African continent and the rest of the world. Simon Gikandi defines "afropolitanism" as a form of cultural hybridity caught between "local experiences" and "global narratives": "To be Afropolitan is to be connected to knowable African communities, nations, and traditions; but it is also to live a life divided across cultures, languages, and states. It is to embrace and celebrate a state of cultural hybridity – to be of Africa and of other worlds at the same time." ("On Afropolitanism" 9). This confluence of the local and the global happens in both Tadjo's and Waberi's text through the figure of the author and her or his own identity as an intellectual.

Waberi incorporates the heritage of the engaged intellectual, juxtaposing himself with other important literary men. As for Tadjo, she positions herself as a traveling writer. In this sense, her

journeys to Africa are a part of her narrative: she finds herself on planes time and time again. She concretely expresses connections between different worlds through plane rides, which are flights that also signify more abstract links. The beginning of her text is divided according to the stops she has to make in her many journeys: "Johannesburg," "Paris-Bruxelles," then "Kigali." She further develops her last trip, the final connection between Brussels and Kigali in the sub-section with the title of her flight number: "Sabena vol 565." This part articulates Tadjo's state of mind as she is caught in the banal intricacies of travelling: the loss of her luggage, lack of sleep, visa concerns, etc. These trivialities signify the ease of travelling and its shared experiences, familiar to any traveler. As such, they illustrate a certain cosmopolitanism rendered possible by the evolution of modes of transportation. However, one gets the feeling that this record of trivialities is the way Tadjo prepares herself mentally for what she is about to experience and see, as suggested by a single sentence: "Mon esprit tourne à cent à l'heure" (16). This physical and mental journey calls for the exposition of more deep-rooted links between two worlds. At the beginning of her second trip to Rwanda, in reality and in the text, Tadjo starts again with the same flight, "Sabena vol 565," a recurrence that illustrates the regular connections that still very much exist between Brussels and Kigali. The journeys she undertakes to be able to represent the genocide embody a certain sense of perpetual displacement, or rather, "*passage*, circulation et frayage" (Mbembe 224), of being a part of the world as an African writer living in Europe and elsewhere.[124]

The Fest'Africa project thus binds two milieux: engaged African literature and Western philosophy. This link is already observable in its title: "Rwanda: Écrire par *devoir de mémoire*." Writing remains African while nonetheless passing through the French concept of "devoir de

[124] At the time of writing, both Tadjo and Waberi were living in France. Tadjo now lives in South Africa and Waberi in the United States. Tadjo has lived in Kenya and Nigeria, as well as in Mexico. In addition, both authors have also lived in numerous European countries (England for Tadjo, Italy and Austria for Waberi).

mémoire," a concept which, according to Olivier Lalieu, describes first and foremost "l'obligation, morale et politique, de se souvenir de la Shoah, comme de la déportation en général" (84) and which has come to be associated with other important historical events characterized by extreme violence and contempt for human rights.

The conception of "duty to remember" appeared after the Second World War and the Holocaust, following the calls for remembrance expressed by numerous associations. The formula then slowly gained general recognition at the end of the nineteen-seventies and especially in the nineteen-eighties, through a firm yet questionable popularization through media. It has not only been recognized and employed by a growing number of people, but it also has been used to describe the importance of memory in relation to other events, highlighting its referential mutations. As such, the "duty to remember" appears as an active process that "revèle à la fois la constance et les mutations" (Lalieu 83) of this imperative, the necessity of its evolution and expansion and consequently, its breadth. By focusing on a certain "passage du flambeau" (Lalieu 89) and an extensive opening, these African authors manage to adequately respond to the imperatives Lalieu states at the end of his article: the capacity to reconcile "une nécessaire innovation intellectuelle et, en même temps, le respect d'un héritage" (94). Recalling that the "duty to remember" was first introduced by associations, one can observe how heritage is further respected and continued since Fest'Africa is also an association. However, the Fest'Africa writers also develop their own "duty to remember" and inscribe the genocide of Tutsis and moderate Hutus into different fields and into a transcultural memory of genocide (Semujanga, *Le Génocide, sujet de fiction?* 23) and violence.

In order to counter instances of competitive memory in which one memorial past is valued over another and used by victims to define themselves as more hurt and persecuted than others, Michael Rothberg suggests that one should view such differences through the lens of memorial processes that evolve at the same time. In this sense, memory appears as a nexus of diverse stances

and directions; it is collective and active. Rothberg associates the term memory with the adjectival description "multidirectional": "I suggest that we consider memory as *multidirectional*: as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not privative" (3). He then emphasizes the points of contact that exist between different memories and how one can help in the articulation of another: "this interaction of different historical memories illustrates the productive, intercultural dynamic that I call multidirectional memory" (3). Rothberg wants to show that, not only is memory always already collective and a sum of other people's memories, reiterating some of Maurice Halbwachs's claims, but that this cross-referencing can also allow for memorial discourses on important events to dialogue with one another. "Multidirectional memory" becomes a composite form and relates various instances of persecution and suffering. Despite its singular form, it remains intrinsically plural.

Rothberg's vision of multidirectional memory can assist modes of expression that are potentially empowering. By juxtaposing different events and consequently different temporalities, Rothberg stresses the power of the anachronism of multidirectional memory. The multi-directionality appears as both thematic and temporal: "Memory's anachronistic quality – its bringing together of now and then, there and here – is actually the source of its powerful creativity, its ability to build new worlds out of the materials of older ones" (5). Literary and artistic creation can occur due to the plurality of approaches and, above all, the potentiality of breaking barriers and of displacing events through different perspectives and temporalities. The idea of displacement introduces a potential creativity through an opening up and therefore, a possible correlation between events and how they are remembered (Rothberg 12). Displacements divulge new perspectives and associations, justifying Rothberg's analogy between multidirectional memory and Freud's screen memory: "screen memory is, in my terminology, multidirectional not only because it stands at the centre of a potentially complex set of temporal relations, but also – and perhaps

more importantly – because it both hides and reveals that which has been suppressed" (13-14). By revealing what has been hidden, new facets and relationships can emerge out of memory and out of those displacements that characterize mnemonic and memorial work. While displacement allows for matters to be revealed and new connections to be made, it is what characterizes, intrinsically, multidirectionality: "the archive of multidirectional memory is irreducibly transversal; it cuts across genres, national contexts, periods, and cultural traditions" (18). A rhizome of possible connections surfaces, illustrating the "colonial turn of Holocaust studies" and the critical shifts that result from the juxtaposition of violent events.

In this vein, Waberi's *Moisson de crânes* raises new questions due to the author's juxtaposition of colonial violence with the violence of the Rwandan genocide. This juxtaposition expresses the ways in which both events are connected in the multidirectional memorial organization of historical references. The author manages, through numerous shifting narratives, to write a text that problematizes both subjectivity itself and the historicity of Africa. Waberi's train of thought is constantly interrupted, shifted, and spread out, referring to the Western world and to the African continent simultaneously. Waberi succeeds in the reorientation of subjectivity in an adequate relationship between genocide and colonialism, respecting these events' places, status, and differences through the act of writing. It thus comes as no surprise that both Waberi and Rothberg refer to Césaire's *Discours sur le colonialism*e to highlight the power of anachronism in joining different instances of historical violence outside of a Eurocentric frame of reference. Rothberg's analysis of Césaire's *choc en retour* underscores how the writer from Martinique manages to create a "multidirectional rhetorical constellation" (77) that "forces an encounter between centre and periphery, past and present, culture and violence" (73). This constellation is composed of negritude, anticolonialism, antifacism, Marxism, and surrealism. Through the pluralistic approach that constellational references allow, Césaire manages to reverse Eurocentric

discourse and apply it directly to colonialism, operating a *choc en retour*, that is, a counter-shock or boomerang effect, which highlights the different status of similar acts of violence ("various forms of European violence, including colonialism and Nazi brutality" [Rothberg 73]). While Césaire denounces an imbalance in the consideration of these events, he succeeds in considering these violent events performed against specific groups of people on similar and equal grounds. Similarly, Waberi presents a cautious and complete picture of instances of persecution by carefully addressing similar yet intrinsically different events and by building his own web of references, notably literary ones. For Waberi, this "multidirectional memory" takes the form of intertextuality. Intertextuality as a constructed web manages to respond to and represent genocide – the Holocaust and the killing of Tutsi in Rwanda – as well as colonial domination and violence. In a way similar to the sources he uses and to the authors he cites, Waberi connects the violent events that have shaped his identity as an African intellectual.

As pointed out by Josias Semujanga in *Le Génocide, sujet de fiction?* and more particularly in his chapter devoted to Waberi, the latter relies on the framework of the Shoah to address the Rwandan genocide. Semujanga maintains that the Shoah "– métaphore de la catastrophe absolue – acquiert dans *Moisson de crânes* la fonction d'interprétant du massacre des Tutsi pour en faire un *autre* génocide" (100). Indeed, the references to the genocide of Jews during World War II are numerous in Waberi's text: they create a philosophical and literary framework to encompass and represent this new instance of genocide. As observable in this chapter's epigraph from *Moisson de crânes*, the question of representation through language refers directly to the critical discussions and debates surrounding the Holocaust. Waberi mentions this very debate on how to write after Auschwitz by citing Paul Celan, a poet known for being a survivor and for his poems, written in German, centered on the problematic representation of the Holocaust:

> La question de Paul Celan, poète roumain de langue allemande, surgie fatalement après la Seconde Guerre mondiale, « *Comment écrire après Auschwitz ?* », était toujours là, niche dans le tréfonds de mon inconscient, du moins je le présume. (14)

The inevitable questioning of the ability of language to represent such an event influences the first part of Waberi's text, in which the author describes his artistic endeavor. He therefore begins to think of his project in terms of what has been said about the Shoah, a former genocide that helps in the understanding of this new occurrence, the *itsembabwoko*. Semujanga affirms that Waberi positions the Rwandan genocide on a continuum of already existing "littérature de la violence" (119), so that the *itsembabwoko* regains a place in history and can be remembered along with other violent events. This phenomenon of the use of an existing framework to inscribe an event in order for it to be recognized and remembered illustrates the process of non-competition and even non-comparison that Rothberg's advocates through multidirectional memory. The notion of continuum appears important, as it inscribes the Rwandan genocide on the same level as other catastrophes. It also places it as coming after, chronological evidence that renders the power of anachronism possible. Waberi himself states that the past can help to understand the present, referencing pre-existing frames that explicate and connect two events. As aforementioned, he cites Primo Levi to express the fact that the Rwandan genocide was above all what Semujanga calls "un génocide populaire" (104).[125] The points of encounter even appear lexically: vocabulary associated with concentration and extermination camps is recurrent. The word "ashes" ("*cendres*") is employed numerous times, recalling immediately the crematorium furnaces of the Nazi camps. One particular example – "Une cathédrale de sang et de cendre se profile" (36) – even links the Rwandan genocide

[125] Semujanga explains the specificity of the itsembabwoko as a "popular" genocide because "des militaires, des gendarmes et des paysans hutu sont allés, fusils, grenades et machettes à la main, massacre leurs voisins tutsis. Avec enthousiasme. Il y a eu des fêtes champêtres après le travail 'les tueries), lors desquelles on se saoulait et dégustait le butin. Une activité populaire à tous points semblables à la partie de chasse dans la tradition du pays" (104). Boubacar Boris Diop, Senegalese writer who also took part in the project of Fest'Africa, also comments on this singularity: "le genocide rwandais a eu ceci de particulier que l'État a réussi à y impliquer la majorité de la population" ("Écrire dans l'odeur de la mort" 79).

("sang") and the Holocaust ("cendre") in their imagery. Likewise, Waberi creates a temporal displacement by transposing the infamous "*Arbeit macht frei*" (an expression which could be found on the gates of certain Nazi camps) to Rwanda: "Un nouveau slogan était en vogue: 'Le travail, c'est la liberté!' Dans l'air et les esprits, il y avait une attente tout alanguie, toute passive, d'une violence pas si lointaine" (25). The same rhetoric presides over both genocides and almost justifies, in the text and as per Waberi, the reappearance of violence. However, one must note that these points of similarity and comparisons between different events do not introduce a homogenization of them: their specificity is recognized and affirmed. This referential frame brings contextualization both in historical and literary terms, without actually amalgamating these instances of violence. What follows is an ethical representation through continuity and connection, through a passage from one to the other, from the inside to the outside.

On the contrary, Véronique Tadjo's *L'Ombre d'Imana* relegates the question of (post)colonialism and the Holocaust to a position of secondary importance. As shown above, the question of the role of colonial powers appears implicitly in her analysis of Rwanda's history of violence. Such indirectness also characterizes her referential approach to the Holocaust: it surfaces in her use of specific lexical terms, including words with a strong connotation and which are often used in the context of the Shoah. To describe the sheer number of cadavers and how they were dealt with, Tadjo mentions how only identified corpses were buried; the others were left as mementos: "Tous les autres sont là, pour témoigner, et n'auront *pas de sépulture*" [emphasis added] (20). This reference to the lack of graves evokes the fact that, because they were cremated, the victims of the Holocaust could not be identified and inhumed. Another lexical reference follows, alluding to the omnipresent and haunting smell of rotting corpses: "Même plus tard, plus loin, cette odeur restera dans le corps et dans l'esprit" (21). Once more, a parallel is established, since the smell of burning corpses in the crematoriums of extermination and concentration camps

recurs in the imagery of the Shoah. Almost inevitably, the reader is reminded of the Holocaust through these images, which become traces, both in the sense of remnants and mementos, but also as calques. These subtle mentions concord with Tadjo's approach, her status as an indirect witness, and her consequent extreme respect for and sensitivity to the 1994 Rwandan genocide and of the witnesses' traumatic expressions.

However, first and foremost, Tadjo relates the Rwandan genocide to questions of responsibility at the continental level. Several mentions of the case of South Africa suggest that there exists a parallel in her visions of violent events that have affected the African continent over the same time period. This reference also bears Tadjo's subjectivity at its core: Tadjo in fact resides in South Africa (during the time of writing and still in 2016). The mentions are succinct and often under-explained. For instance, after explaining why she wanted to go to Rwanda, on the second page of the text, she highlights that South Africa can be a first step in understanding what happened in Rwanda: "L'Afrique du Sud post-apartheid pourrait peut-être apporter quelques réponses à mes questions, en particulier en ce qui concerne le problème de la réconciliation à l'échelle nationale" (12). She adds: "L'Afrique du Sud fait partie de notre mémoire collective" (12).[126] Associations are clearly established in terms of a pan-African disposition, as emphasized by her use of the possessive adjective of the first person plural, "notre." The link between the two countries is reinforced by a specific encounter: that of a Rwandan in a parking lot in Durban, which, in the text, follows her association of the two African countries. Her third mention of South Africa, through a common temporality, further underscores the parallels that are drawn: when South Africa was moving beyond apartheid by electing Nelson Mandela as President, Rwanda was experiencing

[126] Unsurprisingly, Waberi also cites the case of South Africa through his use of one of Wole Soyinka's quotes: "'Tout le monde s'était ému du sort des gorilles du Rwanda. Mais on laisse se perpétuer un massacre. Aujourd'hui, nous devons parler de l'extermination d'êtres humains. Parler d'une espèce menace, parler des Tutsis. L'Afrique du Sud est notre rêve, le Rwanda notre cauchemar'" (72).

genocide (43). The world focused on South Africa and overlooked Rwanda, a fact that the author deplores. Nonetheless, Tadjo also mentions the case of South Africa because it offers a counter example in terms of what can result from violence: from apartheid, South Africa was able to build a new nation that included all. South Africa is the model that Rwanda can aspire to become. Thinking of both South Africa and Rwanda when considering Africa is to offer a more complete picture of the plurality of influences and changing situations that characterize all continents.

By focusing on South Africa, Tadjo tries to introduce points of connection as well as dissonances between the two countries' histories. Her choice can be explained by the section that follows her narrative of her encounter with a Rwandan in South Africa and her two first references to South Africa: in her brief section entitled "Johannesburg," Tadjo deplores the fact that in order to fly to another African country, she needs to go through Europe. She has to fly to Paris and Brussels first in order to reach Kigali: "Je n'ai pas pu avoir de vol direct de Johannesburg à Kigali" (14). Countering the dominance of the West in the establishment of points of reference, Tadjo chooses to express a potentially subversive multidirectional memory through her emphasis on South Africa. Her vision of multidirectional memory is politically engaged and oriented towards the empowerment of her continent. It becomes important to build a sense of African memory in order to fulfill a "devoir," or rather, a "travail de mémoire" through writing.

Nonetheless, references to colonialism and the Holocaust creep in, appearing in the cracks that her fragmentary style creates. Tadjo herself affirms the correlation between her form and diverse influences appearing in her text: "les déplacements constants apportent des influences différentes qui viennent d'un peu partout: de la tradition, du modernisme, de l'Europe et de l'Afrique francophone et anglophone" ("Le défi de la littérature Bambara – Entretien avec Véronique Tadjo" 299). It is these displacements which illustrate her desire to orient her memory towards Africa while nonetheless being influenced by the past and the world. Tadjo gives her

narration an unsettling quality by welcoming and nonetheless shaping local and global influences in her representation of the Rwandan genocide. In a manner similar to *Moisson de crânes*, *L'Ombre d'Imana* points to the active process of creation undertaken by the writer-indirect witness and the different paths taken and written into the depiction of the complexity of such a destructive event.

Moisson de crânes and *L'Ombre d'Imana* are composite works that convey multiplicity both in their form and their content. Characterized by the polysemic dynamism of "sense," the two texts express a multitude of passages, singular and plural, external and internal. A first opening is what the action of *écouter* allows: a window connecting the self of the writer-indirect witness to others, the different actors of the genocide. Subsequently, the second opening welcomes different perspectives and points of encounter as well as the voices of other intellectuals engaged against violence, whether they are African or European. Numerous echoes are produced as well as resonances of stories. These echoes, created by the multiplicity of processes, destabilize the representation, yet it is this very instability that renders the literary writing about the genocide significant and which justifies the role of the *auctor*. This literary dynamism also allows for these texts and their echoes to reach the future. They maintain open, so to speak, the potential expressions of political commentaries and communal acts to come. The literature produced by indirect witness acquire a "valeur collective" (Deleuze and Guatarri, *Kafka* 31), both political and memorial, through the incorporation of different voices and the processes of participation they encourage. They become *littérature mineure* in the ways they express "une autre communauté potentielle, de forger les moyens d'une autre conscience et d'une autre sensibilité" (Deleuze and Guatarri 32). The writer-indirect witness manages to open up memory and to create a space of potential relations to memory, ones that are *complex-ified*.

By focusing on Africa and particularly South Africa, Tadjo calls for reconstruction and a process of working through, two acts that ought to be inscribed for the future. By ending *Moisson*

de crânes with the case of Burundi, Waberi affirms the political potential of his text. At the time of the composition of *Moisson de crânes*, Burundi had been hit by a conflict which arose in October of 1993 after the assassination of the country's first elected president and which lasted for more than a decade. The same antagonistic feelings between Hutu and Tutsi were responsible for the death of more than 300,000 people and numerous waves of displacement of people that became refugees in the neighboring countries. A new government under the presidency of Pierre Nkurunziza was only established in 2005. And the political potentiality of art is today, unfortunately, all the more relevant, as new massacres are currently taking place in Burundi as Nkurunziza is standing for a third election violating the Treaty of Arusha.[127] These recent events call for further engaged acts of denunciation from African intellectuals. A *complex-ified* relation to writing and remembering thus affirms the political power of literature in relation to violence.

[127] The Treaty of Arusha limits the presidential mandate to two elections.

Conclusion

Readings to Come

The different novels I have examined in this dissertation point to the existence of a poetics of memory which represents memory in all of its intricacies and complexities. Memory is characterized by polysemy and multiplicity; therefore, its representation is itself plural. This is because it is carried out by different individuals of diverse nationalities, and because it puts into dialogues different time periods and events characterized by violence. These representations try to express the composite nature of memory by recognizing its individual and personal features as well as its collective aspects. They also take into consideration the fact that they deal with transmitted events, adding yet another degree of mediation due to the authors' status as indirect witnesses. No single representation addresses the same issues and, taken as a whole, they demonstrate the type of *complex-ified* memory that interests me. It is through this idea of *complex-ified* memory that the works I have examined work together, echo each other, and create a memorial constellation in the representation of genocide imagined by writers-indirect witnesses.

Complex-ified memory does not advocate that people blindly accept memory as a purely necessary form of cultural heritage. *Complex-ified* memory is a sort of "intellectual memory," as defined by the *superstes* Charlotte Delbo: it affirms a voluntary process which is external and therefore needs to be initiated, constructed, and organized. It requires agency. Moreover, as in the case of Delbo's "mémoire intellectuelle," it expresses the "haunting legacies" of genocide while also inspiring an attempt to make sense of this haunting. Gabriele Schwab coins the term "haunting legacies" to acknowledge and recognize different subjects, including victims, perpetrators, *testes*, and I would also add, indirect witnesses, as well as historical events such as the Holocaust, other

genocides, and colonialism. However, for Schwab, the emphasis should be put on violence, as it is responsible for the impossibility of remembering and integrating such knowledge into one's memory: "What I call 'haunting legacies' are things hard to recount or even to remember, the results of a violence that holds an unrelenting grip on memory and yet is deemed unspeakable" (1). Once again, a certain double bind appears in the use of paradoxical terms: violent events haunt inasmuch as they are unforgettable, incommunicable, and therefore inassimilable. This complex relation to a violent past and its repercussions, trauma and its symptoms, is also susceptible to be passed down. Somatic inscription of the past introduces the necessity of a reading. Yet, under the spell of trauma, causes and effects can be problematized and an unconscious loop can be (re/de)constructed: a new instance of writing can be (re)read. Therefore, Schwab's interests reside in the action of writing that illustrates the work of "haunting legacies."

Writing and reading are shown to be of primordial importance in the case of the remembrance of violent past events. They also are recurring tropes in the novels I have examined, since they present a way to relate to and to articulate one's relations to the past. Moreover, they allow for the examination and assessment of remembering along with the dangers of remembrance. Lastly, they facilitate collaborative deployments and examinations of the multifarious links between history, memory, and identity. Actions of writing and reading in relation to memory provoke critical understanding.

While pointing out the dangers of remembrance constitutes an approach to the currently popular question of memory, I believe that these dangers do not justify overlooking the benefits that remembering can produce, especially in relation to violence. In *Le Mal de vérité*, Coquio states that she aims to study the fragmented side of memory, the side that is "plein de lignes de faille et de plans différents" (274), that is, the side of excesses and abuses. However, I believe that if one is to choose to consider the negative effects and affects of memory, one ought to also recognize its

positivity: this fragmentation both hinders and enables; it destroys and creates. I argue for the mitigation of the total denunciation and critique of memory, and contend that on the contrary, it is necessary to recognize its complexity. Memory needs to be read as well as interpreted, just like a work of literature.

These questions and concerns all appear in one way or another in the novels imagined and written by the indirect witnesses that I have examined. Their approaches all emphasize the complexities, which are often paradoxical, of the position of indirect witnesses and the fragmentation of memory itself. They "complex-ify" memory, writing and reading both its positive and negative outcomes. They articulate this very dichotomy and ultimately, the lack of suitable answers. Henri Raczymow portrays how forgetting does not necessarily mean that a subject matter or an individual is forgettable; rather, he demonstrates that forgetting is part of memory and vice versa. Forgetting can engender a blank page (both literally and figuratively) on which something different can be expressed and created. In this sense, he echoes on the individual level what the Israeli philosopher Yehuda Elkana maintains on the collective level: the opening up of memory linked to genocide and, at times, a separation from the very past a person obsessively commemorates. As a result, recognizing that forgetting certain elements is a natural process pertaining to the memory of any group or individual remains all the more relevant.

Patrick Modiano shows a similar opening up of memory by writing different (H/h)istories along one another. While the memories he (re)creates in *Dora Bruder* are primarily individual memories, they acquire symbolism and work as a palimpsest, coming to represent a collectivity: histories and History both emerge through Modiano's act of writing. Ultimately, memory becomes an open-ended process which ought to be completed in the future. The future is also of primordial importance in Koulsy Lamko's text, as it is synonymous with engagement. Lamko's main character, Pelouse, represents the future, in familial and personal terms as well as in relation to

national identity: she chooses to remain in Rwanda in order to rebuild her life and home country. However, Lamko also mirrors this engaged political act through deciding to move to Rwanda after participating in Fest'Africa's project "Rwanda: Écrire par devoir de mémoire" to open up a university center for the arts at the University of Butaré. In a sense, both Modiano and Lamko pursued their work in the future after writing their novels: Lamko did so by helping in the articulation of memory through art and performance, and Modiano did so by further constructing his memory and the histories of others through a constellation of texts. They did not only *complex-ify* memory; they also *complexi-fied* their relation to it, becoming its true heirs. The notion of heritage must be understood not only as a matter that has been transmitted and received, to which one should show reverence and respect, but also as an act of choice, of transformation, and of "appropriation," in the sense of the reaffirmation of difference.

The political aspect of the texts of writers-indirect witnesses truly shows the power of imagination and the mobilizing potential of art and literature. Tadjo and Waberi also affirm the engagement of their works by linking them to the African continent. They both create works characterized by polyphony, which not only give a voice to all Rwandans, but which also establish dialogues with other Africans and Europeans. These dialogues are not only in terms of words, but also in terms of events: various traumatic events are connected in order to show the openness of memory, and namely, how it can incorporate and unite instead of dividing individuals and communities. The term "methexis" illustrates how through participation and perpetual writing, numerous resonances of (h/H)istories create a polyphonic representation. It is open to all, and as its heirs, everyone can alter it, bringing their own voice into the mixture of memorial discourses. Indirectness – whether temporal, geographical, or generational – encourages shifts and movement. Here, I reaffirm the importance of an opening of memory in terms of agents and events.

Because it portrays a fluid memory which can evolve over time, my conception of *complex-ified memory* is itself also subject to constant change. Like memory, my concept can be opened up, fragmented, and perhaps even dismantled. It has come to incorporate the questions and concerns that I myself had while writing this dissertation, in terms of whether memory is always necessarily positive, or whether it is essentially negative. To date, I have no clear answer myself. However, given the number and diversity of the novels concerned with memory being produced today, I think it is still an issue that one must grapple with, a matter that must be addressed and worked through instead of being solely criticized, resulting in the unconditional encouragement of the act of forgetting. Further acts of writing and reading should be carried out, until the time when all of this may also become a *souvenir* of the concerns of a certain moment in time. In the meantime, literature can allow for memory to be represented as inclusive, plural, and continuously evolving.

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