2016


Lamm, Erin Melissa

http://hdl.handle.net/2144/14531

Boston University
BOSTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Dissertation

A TRANSLATED CRITICAL EDITION OF MAÏSSA BEY’S

ENTENDEZ-VOUS DANS LES MONTAGNES… (2002)

by

ERIN LAMM

B.A., Drew University, 2005
M.A, Columbia University, 2009

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

2016
Entendez-vous dans les montagnes…¹

¹ The line, an allusion to both La Marseillaise (1792) and Le Chant des partisans (1943), addresses either the entire French army or one of the three protagonists, Jean, particularly as the Algerian woman uses the formal "vous" to address the doctor and French army veteran.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am unsure where to begin. If faces reveal people, I have superimposed some of the faces that I remembered when working on *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...* (2002). Each face presented belongs to a specific person who deserves my gratitude and reveals a portion of my personal and professional philosophy and my approaches to the text.

To Maïssa Bey, I would like to thank you for the immense privilege of translating and critiquing your work. As I wrote to you, the author’s approval matters a great deal to me, especially when the work interweaves both rich historic and personal details. Telling another woman’s story is a delicate enterprise. I only hope I did it justice and have respected your wishes both as a woman and as an author. As a result of a disability, I use scribes to write. So many hands have touched this text. So many voices have read it. They also deserve my gratitude. Through *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*, I learned much about both Algerian and French culture, some of which I was expecting to learn, some unexpected. This is an eloquent text, and I did not want to mistranslate it because of a lack of expertise. I hope I have spent enough time on the Algerian characteristics in the text, which is something I learned throughout the process. I discovered through French and English translation writers – such as the Algerian author Ahlam Mosteghanemi, who explores similar themes to yours in Arabic, including painting a father’s portrait for his daughter – the blending of art forms, and the power of artistic expression to reveal and cure or purge emotional and historic questions. In your writing, I see both senses, but an opening to “coprésences.”
To Odile Cazenave, Dorothy Kelly, and Margaret Litvin, on a professional note, thank you for enriching the translation and critical commentary through your critiques and suggestions. They are much appreciated. The work is much more detailed because of your thoughts. Thank you for agreeing to work with me. I value your flexibility, openness, and attention.

To Kalen Valentine, to appropriately communicate the beauty of *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*..., I realized I had to become a teacher. Many individuals gave me that opportunity, notably Dr. Kline and Davina Mattox. English translation has always been a process which I approach carefully for several reasons. Through this process, I learned much about myself, both personally and professionally. My proudest moments were actually moments I spent with you.

When I did the translation I also thought of how I would present Bey’s book to you as a student. Bey’s French has several connotations, which I wanted to keep. She chose every word carefully in order to communicate specific nuances and details. I did not want to rewrite her text and accidentally write my own novel. In my view, I have even less leeway than in a film or a stage adaptation, especially as this is autofiction. My words could easily be taken for an exact rendering of *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*..., which is a fact I regard with apprehension. I have indeed tried to render her nuances in English to the best of my abilities. One of my questions was, “Why can’t readers just read the French text?” So I decided that my translation should inspire someone to do just that. In part, it is for someone who can read the text in French, but who needs the help of English commentary to understand the text on a deeper level. The
Algerian War is part of both Algerian and French culture. It has been a privilege to be your teacher for the last time, and to pass this text along to you, Kalen. Do you remember when you came to my apartment for the first time? I said I had given one of your classmates a gift and wished that I could give the same present to you. When this project was proposed to me, I decided the information in it was the best present I could give to you. Now that I think about it, you have helped me more than I helped you. As you said, “Women helping women makes the world a beautiful place.” Merci! Now, I’m going to give you one line of a story that you used to enjoy. When I went to France like you did last year, I was with a young French woman and an Algerian man. They taught me so much, and were some of my favorite teachers.

To Anaïs Chabanier, you will probably recognize yourself as the young French woman I just spoke about. You are so much more than that. Thank you for giving me a truly balanced appreciation for your culture and for making me feel at home in it. I have always tried to teach my students to do the same. The way you gently teach and strive to change violence is a quality I also found in Bey, and it is something that I admire and have tried to pass on. Personally, your friendship is one of the longest lasting ones that I have had, and your engagement in helping women around the world is one of the aspects that inspired me to work on this text. I am happily committed to feminine artistic expression. “Tout ça au hasard d’une rencontre” [Translated in this case as “By a happy coincidence, we met”].

Sometimes, talking to a friend was all I needed to do to make my thoughts public. It has been a privilege to be in your shadow, in the anthropological sense of course.
Always remember how long it is. Your commitment to women’s artistic expression is also worth emulating. Always remember to dance and laugh or reflect while doing it. Art is philosophy. As you once said, “never forget to do crazy things because those things are the most important regarding life and learning.” Translating and critiquing Entendez-vous dans les montagnes... was one of the craziest and best things I have ever decided to undertake. My heartfelt thanks for your use of English to add your comments to the translation. As you know, I have always wanted to bring a living quality to a text, and not just to reformulate a standard translation. Thank you for agreeing with me that what we learned in France was important.

To Belkacem Josiane, thank you for spending a month with me in Paris and for sharing your personal experiences. Hearing your stories inspired me to keep working on Franco-Algerian relations. You were the first one to truly put a human face on these facts and bits of history. I now realize that you came to France from Kabylia during “The Black Decade” and were affected by the Algerian Civil War. It now strikes me that you never mentioned the word “war.” The dates revealed how much I didn’t know I knew. I hope I have remembered these qualities throughout the translation and commentary. After meeting you, I decided that it would be negligent on my part to go back to France without understanding the cultural politics, as I would often see the personal implications of these. Meeting Samia Bordji and her personal involvement in my research on Colette confirmed this impression.

To Kiera Hunter Fisher, you are the one who understood the story and why I had to tell it. You also told me you liked the bittersweet combination in my story and said the
bitter part made the sweet ones even sweeter. You also understood how and why I was translating Bey. Thank you for understanding my family, and especially for coming back.

Lastly, to my father, David Lamm. Dad, thank you for supporting my choice to work on this book and for telling me how important all of the stories we heard at French back entrances, where the Algerian War came up for discussion, are. Thank you also for giving me the books to read and for always encouraging me to write and use my French whenever possible. Dad, as far as I’m concerned, this book is mostly for you. And yes, my love also goes to Mom, Kristin, Dan, Mellissa, and Mike. Now, shall we see what happens when fathers give books to their daughters…
A TRANSLATED CRITICAL EDITION OF MAÏSSA BEY’S: ENTENDEZ-VOUS

DANS LES MONTAGNES… (2002)

(Order No. )

ERIN M. LAMM

Boston University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 2016

Major Professor: Odile Cazenave, Professor of French

ABSTRACT

This dissertation comprises a critical edition of the Algerian author Maïssa Bey’s 2002 autofictional work in French, Entendez-vous dans les montagnes…, including: a translator’s introduction, a critical introduction, the translation, and an afterword.

The translator’s introduction presents my translation methodology, which adapts Jacqueline Guillemin-Flescher’s theories in Syntaxe comparée du français et de l’anglais: problèmes de traduction (1981). I rework her communicative approach to convey the complexities of Franco-Algerian “coprésences,” or the coexistence of two cultures. I pose the question: Do readers need the same cultural capital to appreciate Entendez-vous dans les montagnes… as they do to read a standard French to English translation? This specificity explains my changes to Guillemin-Flescher’s theories.

The critical introduction presents Entendez-vous dans les montagnes…, which stages an exiled Algerian woman’s physical journey through Provence to Marseilles. The three protagonists also metaphorically travel to understand their singular memories and
the multiple truths behind the Franco-Algerian colonial legacy (1830-1962). I pinpoint
the dualities in: the Algerian woman, a French Army veteran turned doctor, Jean, and
Marie, the young granddaughter of a pied-noir. An analysis of their dualities, between
conformity and rebellion, enhances the book’s political statements. I accent how a
knowledge of Bey’s “traces” or multiple connotations of euphemisms, such as “soigner,”
which means “to take care of the sick” or “to execute,” underscore these dualisms.
Finally, I highlight Marie’s comparatively small role.

The afterword presents how the translation process impacts Entendez-vous dans
les montagnes…. I contemplate how to maintain the distinctiveness of Bey’s book, in
which the figurative and literal senses of every French word communicate political and
personal content. This style conveys politics in a simple, highly relatable fashion,
partially due to the deep personal commitment underneath. Translation frames a text. It
is a complex, rewarding challenge to provide this frame when the original exposes the
volatile cultural politics behind the Franco-Algerian colonial legacy.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ........................................................................ V

ABSTRACT .................................................................................. XI

TRANSLATOR’S INTRODUCTION .................................................. 1

CRITICAL INTRODUCTION: ENTENDEZ-VOUS DANS LES MONTAGNES…: MAĪSSA BEY FACES HISTORY 9

SECTION I. PORTRAYING THE FRANCO-ALGERIAN COLONIAL LEGACY 9

SECTION II. FINDING WORDS: BREAKING SILENCES TO REWRITE HISTORY 18

SECTION III. WHAT’S IN A NAME?: POLITICALLY ENGAGED LITERATURE 28

SECTION IV. ENTENDEZ-VOUS DANS LES MONTAGNES…’S ARTICULATION OF BEY’S PERSPECTIVES 30

SECTION V. INCORPORATING THE READER IN ENTENDEZ-VOUS DANS LES MONTAGNES... 35

SECTION VI. MULTIFACETED “COPRÉSENCES” 44

SECTION VII. MARIE’S ROLE: A TANGIBLE INITIATION TO THE FRANCO-ALGERIAN COLONIAL LEGACY? 49

TRANSLATION OF ENTENDEZ-VOUS DANS LES MONTAGNES... 59

AFTERWORD: I RELAY THE WORD FOR MAĪSSA BEY 130

BIBLIOGRAPHY ........................................................................... 142

CURRICULUM VITAE ..................................................................... 152
Maïssa Bey, the Algerian author of *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...* (2002), currently resides in Sidi-Bel-Abbès, Algeria. She went into political exile in France during the Algerian Civil War known as “The Black Decade” (1991-2002) because it was very dangerous for politically engaged francophone intellectuals to remain in Algeria (33). Her Kabyle origins and profession as a French teacher, as well as her politically engaged novels, meant that she was considered a rebel (Stora, *Ils venaient d’Algérie*, 121, 136-137, Bey, *Entendez-vous...*, 33: Mortimer, 125). She also was born before Algeria achieved independence from France. *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...* primarily explores the circumstances of Bey’s father, Yagoub Benameur’s execution at the hands of the French army in 1957 and shows the extent to which the brutal history of what happened during the Algerian War for Independence (1954 -1962) has been elided. The text underscores omissions, such as Benameur’s experiences, and focuses on muted voices. In *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...*, she describes a closed train compartment

---

2 All citations marked *The Translation Studies Reader* refer to an article within the 2012 edition of this volume.
where the Algerian woman, the French veteran Jean, and Marie, the granddaughter of a pied-noir, or French colonist born in Algeria meet by accident.³

Given the complexities of Franco-Algerian cultural politics, translating this politically engaged piece of autofiction, which incorporates a myriad of art forms, requires a mixture of translation methodologies to account for cultural nuances.⁴ The Franco-Algerian relations, notably the cohabitation of French and Algerian cultural customs due to colonialism, known as “coprésences,” makes this process differ from traditional French to English translation (Bey, L’une et l’autre, 20-21). As my point of departure, I take Jacqueline Guillemin-Flescher’s theories in Syntaxe comparée du français et de l’anglais: problèmes de traduction (1981). She advocates a communicative knowledge of the broad ideas and precise nuances of French to English translation to reproduce what native speakers are most likely to say in a given context. As the examples cited in her work most often come from French classics, I extend her theories insofar as they relate to seminal works in Algerian literature in the style of Entendez-vous dans les montagnes.... I also adjust her approach to account for the coexistence of Franco-Algerian cultures, inherent in “coprésences” (L’une et l’autre, 20-21). How much knowledge of these important politics can I assume on the part of my readers? A profound silence has indeed shrouded both a civil war and a revolution for years. Periodically, this silence is broken, rendering works such as Entendez-vous dans les montagnes... particularly relevant.

³ After independence, France accorded amnesty to its citizens who committed “acts of war” in Algeria, such as executions (Djebar, Le blanc de l’Algérie, 116). Thus, they can board a train like any other passenger, and their identity papers bear no visible marks.

⁴ “Autofiction” is fiction with autobiographical features (Pibarot in Camet and Sabri, 30).
Take for example, Muriel Barbery’s 2006 novel, *L’élégance du hérisson*, as a more typical French to English translation. Barbery analyzes the standard vision of Paris and exposes the social construction of a Parisian apartment building inhabited by members of the *haute bourgeoisie*. Due to the setting, her themes are better known. Hence, Alison Anderson, who translated *The Elegance of the Hedgehog* in 2008, could conclude that American readers were well enough acquainted either through personal experiences, conversations, or textbooks with the customs, and often studied literary allusions to works such as Leo Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* (1878) and Marcel Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913-1927) to grasp the broad sense of Barbery’s commentary.

Conversely, much of what Bey underscores regarding the Algerian War, also known as the War for Liberation, is hardly taught in schools or in history books (*Entendez-vous…*, 62). I would remind my readers that a silence sometimes begins as a respectful acknowledgment of loss, but the tragic silence, which shrouds the lived experience of the Algerian War, obscures politics and complicates personal motivations (Bey, *L’une et l’autre*, 21-25). To promote a deeper understanding of *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes…*’s subtleties regardless of a reader’s native language, this translated critical edition comprises a critical introduction divided into seven subsections, an annotated translation of Bey’s text, and an afterword. These components allow readers to better understand the politics at work, the literary account, the author, the implications of the Franco-Algerian colonial legacy and Bey’s Kabyle origins, her critics, notably Alison Rice, Mildred Mortimer, and Françoise Lionnet, as well as her contemporaries, including
authors such as Leïla Sebbar, Assia Djebar, Boualem Sansal, and Ahlam Mosteghanemi. The afterword relates my theoretical approach to the book to my philosophy as a translator.

I hope my culture-to-culture translation enhances the influence of Entendez-vous dans les montagnes… (Venuti, 146). Commentaries such as a translator’s introduction, a critical introduction, and an afterword frame the original structure and content, similar to a “gloss translation.” I respect Bey’s frame as far as possible and refer to Entendez-vous dans les montagnes… as the source to judge my accuracy. Explanatory footnotes supplement this edition, designed for scholars (Venuti, 144). The analysis also “thickens” the translation, bridging the anthropological and literary senses, and distinguishes Franco-Algerian wordplay from that of standard French-to-English translation, such as Anderson’s The Elegance of the Hedgehog. The commentary should enhance American critics and readers’ appreciation of the cultural differences in Bey’s frame, which can, I hope, lead to a better comprehension of the productive parallels she draws.5 Such an approach is particularly appropriate for Entendez-vous dans les montagnes… as the text advocates a gentle political pedagogy (Bey, 54, 65; Venuti, 277).

Moreover, due to the book’s emotional resonances, at times a modified dynamic equivalence enhances the readers’ understanding of the characters’ sentiments, and makes the frame of an exiled Algerian woman in France more accessible, especially given the autofiction. I strive to communicate these effects (Venuti, 144-145). As Gayatri Spivak states in her essay “The Politics of Translation,” I do speak of “intimate things” in

5 All page numbers marked “Bey” in the annotations reference the French text, and all translations are mine unless otherwise noted.
French. Still, is my English comparable to *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*...’s style, given the specificity of Franco-Algerian relations (*The Translation Studies Reader*, 319)?

In terms of the format, the translation keeps Bey’s punctuation and paragraph spacing, except when shifts are dictated by English grammar rules. For example, in dialogues, I substitute a comma for a colon. When I change punctuation for any other reason, an annotation signals these modifications. Bey’s punctuation and line spacing underscore the importance of fragmentation in Algerian literature. Her textual layout often signals the three narrative voices. The shifts between the Algerian woman’s perspective and that of the French army veteran, Jean, are readily evident, indicated by shifts from standard font to italics. The changes between the Algerian woman’s perspective and that of Marie are not made visible through the font.

As for perspectives, the space between the personal and the political is a delicate one to communicate, especially in translation. Out of respect for this communication, my translation follows a sense-for-sense methodology. Still, when Bey’s French is semantic, interweaves a polysemy with Arabic, or is sometimes even a translation, a word-for-word rendering better communicates the text’s meaning than does a traditional French-to-English sense-for-sense approach (*The Translation Studies Reader*, 341). Her politically significant puns require the same attention. Examples include the train’s creaking that evokes the *gégène*, or the instrument used to administer electric shock torture, and on a slightly more humorous note, the French woman’s overdramatic exclamation referring to

---

6 Ben Youssef spells “Ben Ameur” in two words (Camet and Sabri, *Les nouvelles écritures du Moi*, 145-152). *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*... spells Benameur as one word, as do emails from Maissa Bey, which come through as from Samia Benameur (Bey, 81-85).
how the Arab “thugs” “got out of here” literally is “ils se sont sauvés” and implies that these individuals “saved themselves” from arrest (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 25-26). As a translator, I attempted to keep the balance between serious social commentary, and this humor, which often helps readers to grasp the author’s messages. When either a semantic or a communicative approach that was not chosen adds to the translation’s expressivity, known as the illocutionary level, I include it in the annotations. These notes allow readers to glimpse what they are missing through a blend of dynamic equivalence and semantic translation (Lefevere, 19, 36, 49, 52, 58, 78, 80).

The translation of pronouns such as the French word “on” poses particular challenges. This pronoun integrates one person into a collective group, similar to the English word “one,” and allows ambiguity between the individual and the collective. The use of “on” can communicate a positive solidarity, sometimes national, a sense of community, and a body politic. Bey supports communal solidarity in Surtout ne te retourne pas (2009, 65). She also advocates personal solidarity, notably when teaching favors mutual comprehension. Marie uses “on” on page 52 without this noticeably having anything but the collective connotation. Also, the Algerian woman uses the pronoun “on” in the same discussion about communities, with a mix of positive and negative connotations (Entendez-vous..., 65). Marie’s decision to move her seat from next to Jean to beside the Algerian woman reveals an evolution (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 71). Yet, in the context of Franco-Algerian relations, the use of “on” is most often paradoxical, as the pronoun at times attributes little or no personal responsibility, or carefully replaces “I” to mean “we,” which distinguishes people from the group while showing their
connectedness to it. Missing this subtlety sometimes leads to the assumption that all the nuances of a value are collective (Bey, *Entendez-vous*..., 61). Since the pronoun is used more frequently in French, as compared to American English, it can be translated with a variety of options such as: “one” (sometimes “you”), “we,” “they,” “people,” or “everyone.” These differences make the exact French, Algerian, or Franco-Algerian context a challenge to render, especially given *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*’s cultural politics, which specifically address the question of responsibility. Sometimes the translation overstates the collective; sometimes it understates the community. In French, particularly in the Algerian context, the use of “on” can also be a response to trauma, and Bey’s text often portrays this pronoun as negative. This especially impacts the end of the book, when the Algerian woman’s father is about to be tortured and his guards refer to themselves as “on” (Bey, *Entendez-vous*..., 67). The use of “one” in the English translation would sound so odd that the significant point would be lost. In a sense, the choice to translate “on” as “one,” “we,” or “they” depends on American English grammatical and social conventions, while at other times, it requires an interpretation on the part of the translator.

The translation also calls for a mixture of communicative and semantic approaches due to the physicality of the personal feelings revealingly expressed through body language in the autofiction. How does one translate phrases such as “la chaleur de cette haleine parcourant les couloirs” or “bien sûr, ça saute aux yeux” when both the literal and figurative senses of these expressions influence the text’s illocutionary level and make a standard translation less than adequate (Bey, *Entendez-vous*..., 23, 30)?
When the English and French idioms do not have the same dynamic equivalence and I can approximate the expression in English, I opt for a sense-for-sense approach. On the contrary, when I might change Bey’s meaningful reasons for using a phrase through an attempt at dynamic equivalence which modifies its connotation, I retain a literal translation in order to keep the text within her frame (Lefevere, 58, 93-94, 99; The Translation Studies Reader, 341). Words such as “débiter,” “farder,” “avoir les pieds dans l’eau,” and “haleine,” pose greater challenges as they are either old or have vastly different translations depending on the context. The usage may dictate one sense and possibly slightly allude to the others. The subtle interplay sometimes requires explanations even for native speakers. In these cases, I either included an annotation or, as with “débiter,” took a possible loss in translation. Even if the financial connotations relate to the French woman’s comments, I chose to give only the primary meaning referring to her choppy speech (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 25-26).

Lastly, as Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...’s beauties lie in its complexities, my translation should be partially interpreted as commentary on the text. I hope I have at least presented the spirit of the book.

Boston, November 2015
CRITICAL INTRODUCTION: ENTENDEZ-VOUS DANS LES MONTAGNES…:

MAÏSSA BEY FACES HISTORY

Her eyes lowered, Marie listens. Nothing has yet been said. But she feels in the voices of this man and of this woman who calmly, politely debate, she feels agitation, a stir come from afar, from very much further back than the words she hears. – Maïssa Bey, Entendez-vous dans les montagnes…, 62.

Portraying the Franco-Algerian Colonial Legacy

The Algerian author Maïssa Bey’s 2002 autofictional work in French, Entendez-vous dans les montagnes…, stages an exiled Algerian woman’s physical journey through Provence to Marseilles. The book also stages the three protagonists’ metaphorical voyages to make sense of their singular memories and the multiple truths behind the Franco-Algerian colonial legacy (1830-1962): a middle-aged Algerian woman; an older, low-ranking Algerian War (1954-1962) veteran now doctor, Jean; and the adolescent Marie, the granddaughter of a pied-noir, a French colonist born in Algeria. The book takes place around 1996 between France and Algeria, and between two politicized historical frames. The Algerian Civil War (1991-2002), often called “The Black Decade,” led many Algerian intellectuals such as Bey, who were under death threats, to seek exile in France. The author also incorporates her father’s, Yagoub Benameur’s, execution at the hands of French soldiers in Kabylia in 1957, during the Algerian War. These autobiographical scenes mesh with the Algerian woman’s, Marie’s, and Jean’s equally striking fictional experiences. The braiding of fiction and reality renders the border between the imagined and the real immaterial and creates space between the Algerian

---

7 Before the novel opens, the Algerian woman travels from Kabylia to Provence.
woman and Bey. The title’s association with Kabylia’s well-known mountainous region reveals the embedded story’s implied setting (Mahé, 20-21).

The plot is simple. After an apparent theft on a train, the three protagonists from different generations converse about Franco-Algerian relations in a relatively isolated compartment. In the text, they travel together by accident, and Bey does not distinctly reveal that Jean executed the Algerian woman’s father until the end of the book. Her carefully crafted cast symbolizes the Franco-Algerian colonial legacy. As Bey’s Algerian woman observes, the depiction lacks only a *harki*, or Algerian who collaborated and fought with the French army during the Algerian War (*Entendez-vous…*, 43). An altercation, sparked by the theft attributed to “Arabs” and a French woman’s ensuing racist behavior, actualizes the cultural politics related to the Franco-Algerian colonial legacy. The text then metaphorically slides back to the Algerian War, which revivifies the Algerian woman’s memories of her father and Jean’s wartime recollections of Algeria.

As an uninformed listener, Marie allows the Algerian woman and Jean to articulate their complex perspectives on the volatile cultural politics surrounding the Algerian woman’s father’s torture and execution. The engaged adolescent’s interest encourages communication between the apparently opposed French army veteran and the Algerian woman (Achille, 255: Bey, *Entendez-vous…*, 25-26, 43). Their conversation reveals that the four protagonists, including the Algerian woman’s father, contemplate rebellion in *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes…*. So, I pose three questions: how does

---

8 In her article, “The Algerian War Revisited,” Susan Ireland, also depicts Marie as a catalyst for the story (in Hargreaves, 208). Yet, Ireland never analyzes her communicative touch.
the story frame rebellion? Does reframing the rebel’s portraits change our perceptions of individual rebellions? How do silences fragment and distort memories to reveal only one dimension of rebellion?

The representations of Franco-Algerian cultural politics frame the Algerian woman’s character and emphasize the perceptions of her nationality: rather than being anonymous, she is Algerian. The title of Louisette Ighilahriz’s autobiography Algérienne (2001), which exposes the torture that occurred during the Algerian War, emphasizes a similar framework. This intricate method of framing allows Bey to express a great deal through a single word’s multiple figurative senses. Hence, Claire Etcherelli notes that Bey’s writing in her first novel, Au commencement était la mer (1996), is “a terse, sparse writing style to the point of absolute purity,” which aptly portrays “a modest, banal crime” (in Bey, Au commencement était la mer, 170). The same remarks can characterize Entendez-vous dans les montagnes..., as this work sensitizes readers to the Algerian woman’s, her father’s, Jean’s, and Marie’s experiences through an efficient and compact spatial symbolism. The train compartment, a paradoxical closed yet mobile space, confines Bey’s Algerian woman and facilitates her mobility, creating a theatrical representation of society where the four passengers’ cultural memories take center stage.

As Mildred Mortimer’s 1990 study, Journeys through the French African Novel, underscores, journey and initiation symbolism mark Algerian and French literatures. Her definition makes Entendez-vous dans les montagnes..., “un itinéraire de lucidité.” (Mortimer, 1). The dual inward and outward journeys promote an understanding of the self through an analysis of related dualities in other characters. Indeed, the Algerian
woman understands herself as she pieces together her father’s story. Her own political exile, another type of journey, engenders a reflection on the personal side of her father’s rebellions, which stresses his paternal role and his suffering.

The Algerian woman’s, Jean’s, and Marie’s internal journeys are circular. The French woman’s racism incites the Algerian woman to travel in memory from Provence in the present, to Kabylia in the past. After Jean defines “corvée de bois,” – a euphemism for execution – for Marie, the Algerian woman discovers that he executed her father. She then returns to the Provence of the present. The account ends just after she achieves understanding of the circumstances of her father’s death. This understanding is plural, as it also impacts her own sense of her identity and her country’s history. Likewise, Jean travels. After meeting the Algerian woman, who asks him to explain a “corvée de bois” to Marie, he confronts his past crime and then returns to the present with a new comprehension of his actions (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 75-77). Marie’s circle begins near her grandfather’s and Jean’s apparently colonialist viewpoints, and ends after she crosses the threshold from naïveté to maturity, initiating her to the Franco-Algerian legacy. Her new awareness of the significance of Algeria in her family history also leads her to touch the Algerian woman, thereby articulating a palpable, evocative understanding of her perspective and hospitality (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 75: Mortimer, 102, 106: Rice, 32). When juxtaposed with the end of the book, when Jean takes the Algerian woman’s suitcase, Marie’s touch becomes symbolic. Yet, the veteran protects himself from his wartime reminiscences and cannot communicate his feelings in the same way as Marie.

---

9 “Corvée de bois” is loosely translated as “firewood duty.”
Still, in the final scene, Jean grabs the Algerian woman’s suitcase in his hand and remarks that the Algerian woman’s eyes resemble her father’s, indicating an understanding of how he shot an Algerian man with a daughter, not a simple rebel, which makes him personally assume the weight of the responsibility and guilt (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 77).

When the racist comments about the theft break the three protagonists’ isolation, Marie’s thirst for knowledge encourages communication. Through this tension among racism, isolation, and openness to others, Bey’s characters can embody the effects of biopolitics, which allows her to portray Algerian and “French hospitality,” comparable to the Moroccan writer, Tahar Ben Jelloun’s “French paradox,” between openness to political exiles and daily racism (Entendez-vous..., 33). Still, while the cultural politics Ben Jelloun analyzes in his essay, Hospitalité française republished in 1993, are relevant to Bey’s work, she is an Algerian citizen staging a character in exile. Conversely, Ben Jelloun is a Moroccan author and French citizen. So, Bey’s status and the differences between Franco-Algerian and Franco-Moroccan relations lead her to articulate a different perspective. Her particular negotiations of Algerian and French societies allow her text to present balanced critiques of both countries (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 33, 55). Furthermore, following this interpretation, the book illustrates an inclusive perspective towards French youth. The fiction thus weaves in different types of subtle politics, such as those behind a “blouson noir,” a black leather jacket, which connotes political activism. The récit also

10 Biopolitics focus on the intersection of the biological and the political when asserting power. They can either control the population as a body or an individual human body. They reveal features of the political body through the human body (Garrison, “Biopolitics: An Overview”).
openly addresses torture in telling the story of a more nuanced comprehension of experiences linked to the Algerian War’s history.

These experiences have both personal and wider political dimensions, which become most clear when we take into consideration that Bey’s Algerian woman reads Bernhard Schlink’s Der Vorleser (1995), translated as The Reader in 1997.11 This novel opens a conversation among the three protagonists after the altercation. An understanding of Hanna Schmidt’s dual roles as both former Nazi guard and lover in The Reader helps in the interpretation of Entendez-vous dans les montagnes…. This intertextuality enriches an analysis of Jean’s dual portrait as a former medical aide at an Algerian prison camp and a doctor willing to help the distressed Algerian woman. The German novel’s excerpts also link Jean’s image to that of Mr. Berg, Michaël’s father. Schlink’s philosophical questions about the Holocaust bring out the Algerian woman’s perspectives on war and initiation, which helps her to construct her narrative (Fanon, Peau noire, masques blancs, 118).

Three narrative voices – centered on the Algerian woman’s journey – structure Bey’s text. The Algerian woman narrates in the third-person. Yet, at times, the autofictional parallels to Bey make this perspective resemble a kind of misleading first-person narration. Moreover, the French genre récit refers to a blending of truth and fiction, blurring the line between the real and the imaginary (Lionnet, Writing Women, 58: Le Petit Robert, 1624). This term’s duality marks Bey’s highly politicized yet deeply personal autofiction (Lionnet, Writing Women, 233). Still, the only aspects that she has

---

11 The Reader was translated as Le liseur in 1996. I use the book’s English title. Citations refer to Le liseur, as all my translations are from the French.
publicly affirmed as true are her father’s execution after torture and her exile. So, it is critical to reveal both the autobiographical thread and the hazy border or space between the author and the fictional protagonist. This analysis accents the space created by the fiction, which differentiates Bey from the Algerian woman. This space also separates the term récit from autobiographie.

The autofiction melds the Algerian woman’s and Marie’s narrative voices. This intertwining implies their latent similarities and accents the importance of the hidden subtexts between the Algerian woman and Jean, and between the Algerian woman and Marie. Conversely, italics set off Jean’s reminiscences from the Algerian woman’s perspective. When juxtaposed with the Algerian woman’s recollections, his memories reveal most of the circumstances of her father’s death after torture and Jean’s role as his executioner. The revelation of one’s identity was very dangerous during the Algerian War, which explains both the Algerian woman’s and Jean’s reticences. Marie is the only character clearly named in the text. Yet, due to the intertwining of the two female protagonists’ narrations, her perceptions do not at first seem distinct from the Algerian woman’s. As with this woman who looks out the window and reads to be alone, when Marie enters the compartment, she puts in earphones to isolate herself. Still, subtle accents differentiate the two protagonists’ voices:

There, she [Marie] sees two people, a woman of a certain age, gazing out the window, who did not even turn her head, and an old, silent gentleman who barely raised his eyes. She will definitely be able to isolate herself… With them, the trip will be uneventful, she is sure. She takes off her backpack and settles in next to the man. Right away she pulls her Walkman out of her jacket pocket, puts her earphones into her ears, leans her head back into the crook of the seat, and closes her eyes.
In this scene, the adolescent describes her impressions of the Algerian woman and Jean. She gives details absent from previous scenes. Qualifiers such as “old,” “silent” and “woman of a certain age” differentiate Marie from the Algerian woman, who notes, but does not as yet voluntarily describe, more than superficial images. The description of Marie’s perceptions communicates slightly more of her personality and points of view, such as “she leans her head back into the crook of the seat and closes her eyes.” Her closed eyes illustrate that she as yet perceives no opposition between the Algerian woman and Jean. She notes only that they both barely notice her: Marie “settles in next to the man,” which symbolizes her initial political position beside him. The young woman’s perspective reinforces the argument that she and Jean double for the Algerian woman’s dual nature (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 14). Jean also confronts painful experiences linked to the Algerian war, and Marie is more similar to the Algerian woman than she at first appears. In fact, the structure of the last sentence in this description: “She is a blonde, bland young woman, in jeans and sneakers, confident, visibly self-assured, the image of almost all the young women here,” links her as the apparently typical young woman to the Algerian woman and the qualifiers “bland,” “visibly,” and “the image of almost all the young women here” make the transition to the Algerian woman’s perspective (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 14). These three qualifiers which reveal stereotypes and apparent willingness to conform and fade into the background link the two characters.

The theft and the French woman’s racism incite the three protagonists to share their private impressions. When the wartime reminiscences destabilize Jean, the loss of his apparent habitual control leaves a space, where muted voices, including his own, can
speak. Once the conversation begins, the text reveals that the three protagonists are both inside and outside the dominant French imaginary. To shift from the prevailing discourse Jean at first embodies to reveal concealed perspectives, such as the viewpoints of the two female characters and Jean’s more rebellious tendencies, Bey privileges the Algerian woman’s perceptions. Hence, *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes* ... juxtaposes the Algerian woman’s gazes with French gazes, such as those of Jean, the French woman, and Marie, rendering the Algerian woman an outsider in Provence and in Kabylia (Bey, 33). Thus, the text’s apparent cultural politics reveal her initial place in opposition to the other characters, and she suffers because of it: she meets Jean and “descends into hell” (Mortimer, 17-18). Yet, this encounter also liberates her, allowing her to know her father’s executioner. Similarly, her divergent presence also sensitizes Jean and Marie to the Algerian War’s muffled effects, notably her father’s death (Mortimer, 17-18). This triple effect symbolizes an initiation, an uncommon narrative accomplishment. Its one polyphonic story initiates an Algerian woman, a French young woman, and a French man to diverse parts of the same history, using suggestive traces that usually remain unsubstantiated. These traces imbue Bey’s œuvre with meaning and represent an important theme throughout this analysis. Finally, the revelations about her father’s death allow this woman to fill a significant dual blank in her own personal story and more broadly in Algerian history, and to begin to fill a similar blank in Marie’s family history. Likewise, Jean rediscovers a silenced part of his identity.
Finding Words: Breaking Silences to Rewrite History

The Algerian woman breaks the silences gradually, initiates people to the war’s implications, and never denies the war itself. Jean’s initial warning to Marie and his response to her question about why no one talks about the war are his attempts to comply with a widely practiced silence. The beginning of the book thus contains a loaded observation about his initial attitude: for him, “Forty years have passed… we can’t forget, it’s true. But… we can… we can be silent.” The ellipses after “but” and “can” visually represent the fragmentation that these silences cause in the text. Forty years of silences obscure the war and engender fractured memories, as well as the next generation’s forgetfulness (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 47-48, 62-63, 65, 72-73). In this way, Entendez-vous dans les montagnes... stages a politically charged debate. Jean’s stance as the text opens reflects a collective response to this trauma, in part triggered by the French military’s and government’s global refusal to confront the realities of Franco-Algerian history, and particularly the torture perpetrated during the war. These pervasive silences were first broken only recently, in the late nineties, and then in 2001, when France officially recognized the systematic use of torture in Algeria (Cole in Hargreaves, 127). Still, silences overwhelmingly prevail. Jean’s confrontation of his demons, especially as a veteran, is an impressive, provocative act of recognition (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 30, 75-77).

Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...’s publication in 2002 is also an important break in this silence, as it distinguishes the Algerian Civil War, known as the “Black Decade,” from the war’s aftermath, called the “Years of Ashes.” Bey’s Algerian woman
revivifies Jean’s memories, and her presence forces him out of his silence. When she converses with Jean and Marie, she articulates her perspective and then vehemently confronts Jean about his own wartime activities. The woman thereby indirectly supports Marie’s desire to know. The text’s artful, “calm,” “polite” conversation achieves courteous, informed communication (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 65). The four protagonists’ voices express “coprésences,” or the coexistence of cultures, and give voice to forgotten histories. These voices underscore the significant (bio)political omissions that individual experiences reveal. The rarely-recorded experiences brought forth in the text expose overlooked and repressed perspectives. Once these individual memories are retrieved, they fill significant gaps in the historical and personal records. Indeed, in Entendez-vous dans les montagnes..., one common oversight is that Benameur could well have been executed by Algerian partisans due to his role as a French teacher, yet he was instead executed by French soldiers; in both cases it would have been for rebellion (Bey, L’une et l’autre, 20-21). Bey also humanizes this contradictory portrait, when she sensitizes readers to his role as the Algerian woman’s father. The tension, similarities, and differences between French and Algerian perspectives on their shared history frame the portraits of her father and, by extension, of Algeria’s past.

The following synopsis from French-language sources expresses French and Algerian perspectives. On June 14, 1830, French troops landed at what was then Sidi-Ferruch. The first assault, the battle of Staoueli, happened on June 19, 1830. June 24 saw the battle of Sidi-Khalef. On July 3, the French launched a naval siege. On July 4, they took the Algerian fort, renamed Fort de l’Empereur. On July 5, Algeria officially
surrendered and became a French colony. In 1848, authorities annexed Algeria to the Republic as three French departments.

Colonial propaganda encouraged colonists to settle in Algeria with their families. These policies engendered French people born in Algeria, known officially as “French from Algeria,” colloquially called “pieds-noirs,” due to differences in éducation (meaning both “education” and “upbringing”) between them and the Metropolitan French. As with most Algerians, biopolitics—which should be viewed here in relation to a stance on colonialism, whether for or against French rule—affected this population. Pieds-noirs generally wanted to display their power and the force behind La Mission Civilisatrice, the civilizing mission.

The realities of their experiences, however, complicate this simple image of assimilation into the population. The French stigmatized them as savages, akin to preconceptions about the Native American tribes, known as the “pieds-noirs” [“Black Feet”] (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 36). In fact, pieds-noirs were not offered the same employment opportunities as Franco-French people, and government policies hindered their return to France just prior to independence. These differences became more exacerbated after the war, which explains Marie’s grandfather’s reluctance to share his actual memories with his granddaughter and his preference for evoking nostalgia (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 52: Loiseau, 12). This discrimination caused pieds-noirs to make special efforts to display their loyalty to France, and they documented their memories of Algeria through carefully presented photographs to highlight certain parts of their

---

12 The word “pied-noir” is pejorative. In French, I would use the term “repatrié” or “re-patriated;” I use “pied-noir” to facilitate my Anglophone audience’s understanding.
experiences, whether real or imagined (Loiseau, 175). While official discourse characterized the colony as French departments, most authorities feared erasing the practical and legal differences between the French and Algerian populations (Mahé, 9). Algeria’s status reflected coprésence and rendered the Algerian War, also called the War of Liberation, a particularly thorny revolution, due to its duality; from a French perspective, it was a civil war. These unresolved tensions between former departments and the new nation remain problematic today.

The 1871 Kabyle insurrection supported the province’s stereotypical characterization from the French and the dominant Arabic points of view: Rebellious. This perception symbolically introduces Entendez-vous dans les montagnes..., which, through its intricate juxtaposition of past and present, links rebellions during the Algerian War to those during the “Black Decade.” Franco-Algerian hostilities worsened with the massacres of Sétif on May 8, 1945. Open war began on November 1, 1954, ending on July 5, 1962. The French officials and the army forced native Algerians to see propaganda films. These films stress the strength of the French hold on Algeria, notably the military. To dissuade rebellion, these movies often show Algerian rebels in handcuffs after arrest (Megherbi, 46, 52-53). Furthermore, the French often arrested suspected “terrorists” during brutal roundups, called “ratonnades” or “ratissages,” detaining them in camps in Algeria and in France.¹³ Military tribunals administered these camps to allow torture not officially sanctioned by the justice system. Prisons offered detainees a better

¹³ The quotes around “terrorists” challenge the term’s validity in this context, by which I mean “the role assigned to these resistance fighters in the common French vocabulary.” The absence of prisons in Kabyle tradition rendered the implementation of these camps by the French to combat “terrorism” particularly striking (Mahé, 102).
chance than camps, as the camps usually meant “enhanced interrogations” and executions without trial (Aussaresses, 152). Bey’s father participated in the *Front de Libération Nationale*’s (FLN) week-long strike on January 28, 1957, to bring the United Nations’ attention to the “Algerian Question,” a euphemism for the war. Bey’s story implies that Benameur’s FLN affiliation caused his arrest after the strike (Bey, *Entendez-vous*..., 66). He was tortured in one of the special camps. Stora’s presentation of Algerian history in his 1992 study, *Ils venaient d’Algérie* supports that Bey’s father’s status as a Kabyle teacher involved in the FLN exposed him as a particularly vulnerable target (355).¹⁴ As Benameur is married, the soldiers in Bey’s *récit* threaten “those dearest to him,” his wife and children (Stora, *Ils venaient d’Algérie*, 454). Ighilahriz’s *Algérienne* and Paul Aussaresses’ *Services spéciaux*, which initially contributed to breaking the silence on torture during the Algerian War, came out in 2001. *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*..., published in 2002, also subtly incorporates euphemisms used at the time for execution and the war, notably “special camps.”

The text compellingly relates the Algerian War and the “Black Decade” from an exiled perspective. In the 1990s, terrorism and the *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS) made it hazardous for intellectuals, especially politically engaged authors such as Bey, Leïla Marouane, and Yahia Belaskri, to remain in Algeria, particularly in 1995 (Ighilahriz, 247).¹⁵ The cultural and military affiliations of Sidi-Bel-Abbès (where Bey taught

---

¹⁴ The annexes of *Ils venaient d’Algérie* comprise an authentic FLN report on how to respond to French torture (Bey, 65-66: Stora, 432, 454-460).

¹⁵ As with *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*..., the Algerian author Assia Djebar’s *Le blanc de l’Algérie* (1996: translated as *Algerian White* in 2003) fleshes out the omissions after assassinations, which portray the victims both as private people and public figures. Indeed, Djebar’s text constitutes her subjective responses to three of her close friends’ deaths during this period: the psychiatrist Mahfoud Boucebcï, the
French), such as the *Légion Étrangère*, politicize the city even today (Loiseau, 18-19). Teaching French in this former colonial stronghold and Kabyle center of learning targeted her for persecution due to her gender, to the important Arabization of the curriculum, and to the militant student protests on university campuses. Arabic often overshadows the Kabyles’ close relationship to their own culture. Bey’s Algerian woman remembers her father’s experience as a French teacher executed during the Algerian War while she is in exile. The split in how Benameur was viewed by the French officials as a “rebel” and by the Algerian officials as a “martyr of the revolution” would strike the Algerian woman, given the resemblances between these images of her father and the persecutions in Algeria during the “Black Decade.” At this time, rebels could again be honorable resistance fighters depending on the context from which they were viewed (Mahé, 506). So, Maghrebi individuals in France, often underprivileged, seen as “Arab thugs” in *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*..., represent the trace of the stereotypical use of the term “thugs” in both countries, and evoke people’s opposed perspectives on resistance.

The Algerian woman’s observations on history also relate the two time periods. The character shifts from the laudable national ideals that fortified her father’s final rebellion to the current repression in Algeria, which justifies her own rebellion: “We’ve sociologist M’Hamed Boukobza, and the playwright Abdel Kader Alloula. She details each of their last moments and articulates their unique history, omitted by official reports, such as their personalities, family lives, and her deep friendship with them. Her grief gives greater significance to the play-on-words in the French title. The word “blanc” refers to both “the color of mourning” in Algeria and “blank,” as a space where something is omitted. Likewise, Bey’s altered portrait of her father adds a softer nuance. While reflecting on the wrongs committed during the Algerian War, the Algerian woman also comforts Marie, rendering her reflection more poignant. She recognizes that comparable abuses happen in Algeria and in France, which reveals her own humanity (*Entendez-vous*..., 65).
come full circle! (…) fundamentalist craze.” The Algerian woman comments on how French people use the word “events” when they inquire about the Black Decade in Algeria. She remarks: “Some even talk about ‘the events in Algeria,’ a venerated expression, as in the past.” (Entendez-vous…, 32). Also, her darkly humorous remarks on the stereotypical cast of characters in Entendez-vous dans les montagnes… emphasize the ironic comparability of the Algerian woman’s and her father’s French paradoxes. The coincidence that these passengers would travel together seems almost unbelievable and contrived, so that overeager journalists could portray the “painful” Franco-Algerian colonial legacy. She is an Algerian woman and daughter of a “martyr of the revolution,” Jean is a veteran, and Marie is the granddaughter of a pied-noir. The only absent character is a harki. And above all, even as a daughter of a “martyr of the revolution,” the Algerian woman was still in France as an exile under death threat after “rebellion” (Ben Jelloun, 33: Entendez-vous…, 25-26, 32, 43).16

During the “Black Decade,” the recent influx of immigrants from Algeria to France sparked reflections on the Algerian War. Stora’s Imaginaires de guerre (2004) notes the preponderance of nostalgia in French film and literature in 1991 and 1992. This nostalgia is an apparent attempt to fill historical gaps. He mentions that some intellectuals felt the necessity to repair these omissions through increased accuracy. Films such as Brigitte Rouan’s, Outre-mer (1990), dedicated to her mother, individualize the pieds-

16 The quotes around “rebellion” should call attention to my use of the word. Bey symbolically sets Entendez-vous dans les montagnes… in Provence, near the Mediterranean Sea, where the Archives Nationales d’Outre-Mer render this irony palpable to initiated readers. Provence is also a stronghold for the Front National, or French extreme right. Jean-Marie Le Pen played an active role in the French “Services Spéciaux.”
noirs’ roles. Bey also sensitizes audiences to the singularity of common Algerian perspectives such as her father’s (Stora, Imaginaires de guerre, 247). Marie’s touch as a pied-noir’s granddaughter also symbolizes a shared will to fill in gaps (Bey, Entendez-vous…, 75-77).

Moreover, this necessity again highlights Jean’s rebellious decision to break his silence and admit to meeting the Algerian woman’s father. His portrait partially contradicts the traditional depiction of a French soldier and fills a gap as readers see Jean’s personal sentiments. The text powerfully depicts Jean, an average Frenchman, not as a care-free colonist, but as a suffering foot soldier (Bey, Entendez-vous…, 35, 75).

This image counters the standard one usually projected by colonialist films, notably the 1938 version of L’Occident where a tall, strong, handsome French officer destroys his lover’s village in order to pacify a rebellion. He therefore puts colonial security above personal sentiment without hesitation. Jean’s portrait calls into question this type of depiction. It also evokes the film Sidi-Bel-Abbès (1954) where a doctor, a member of the Légion Étrangère, dies on the battlefield, with his Algerian mistress, who shares his ideals and his patriotic love for France. Both movies relate to the Algerian woman’s preconceptions about Jean’s Algeria as being one made of postcard-like images, which Bey’s text contradicts (Bey, Entendez-vous…, 35: Megherbi, 149-165).

Stereotypes portrayed French soldiers as unified patriotic combatants who never contemplate rebellion (Megherbi, 13, 17, 109). Conversely, Jean has rebellious moments and doubts. He is a low-ranking soldier whose misgivings about the war lead him to become a doctor. The Algerian woman also shows ambivalent feelings when she lets the
veteran take her suitcase briefly after he admits having looked into her father’s eyes. One interpretation is that in so doing, he assumes for a moment her cultural heritage and exposes his humanity (Bey, Entendez-vous…, 77). Interestingly, the author does not fully overturn the standard colonialist portrait of a soldier, as Jean still dutifully kills Benameur (Entendez-vous…, 75). Yet, Bey’s status as “an Algerian rebel’s daughter” makes her images, notably the final scene between the Algerian woman and Jean about her father’s eyes, particularly impressive.

An analysis of the archetypical positions of the Algerian woman, her father, Jean, and the French woman in Entendez-vous dans les montagnes… underscores their politics. Marie’s role, although more subtle, is, for that reason, just as politically engaged. The girl adds a communicative touch to the tension between the Algerian woman and Jean. The woman is at first disinclined to talk to the veteran due to the recognized opposition between the two characters. Still, Marie’s lack of knowledge and interest outweigh the Algerian woman’s scruples. This conversation makes the book an effective tool to change perceptions.

The paradoxical tension between the Algerian woman and Jean is key to understanding the cultural politics at work. Bey depicts Jean as:

...a man of around sixty years, in a suit of dark wool, grey shirt with a half-open collar, white hair carefully trimmed and parted, very bright eyes, his face with marked features, covered with tracks of delicate craquelures, yet still vigorous movements. (Entendez-vous…, 12, 53, 68).

He embodies the effects of colonization on the colonizer. The symbolism of the verb “marquer,” meaning “to write down” and “to mark,” captures how Bey foreshadows
events through a word’s connotation, while still giving a clear meaning for a first-time reader. The Petit Robert (1981) defines “marquer” as “laisser des traces,” which relates to her overarching theme of “traces” (1158). Regarding Jean, “marquer” implies “being marked as a convict.” So, the Algerian woman’s first look at him subtly prepares the revelation that he has been an executioner (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 11-12, 68, 76-77). The more obvious emphasis on his age and his parallel to her father veils this significant wordplay.

“Marquer” also gives an Algerian cultural reference. Bey often guides both her French and Algerian readers from a known marker to an unknown one through a shared connotation. Here, she uses the importance of faces to signal her characters’ motivations through their expressions, a significant technique in both French and Algerian literature. Twice more, she accomplishes similar shifts from dominant French culture to concealed traditions. Her title Entendez-vous dans les montagnes... slips the cultural context from the Provençal countryside to Kabylia. For an Algerian audience, the mountains obviously refer to Kabylia’s mountainous geography. This paradoxical duality through “traces” and “marking” characterizes Bey’s book. These common indicators facilitate readers’ comprehension of her various hints. Traces found in such details as the Algerian woman’s silver earrings and Marie’s necklace, which identify the two characters, are at times subtly deliberate on their part. Conversely, Jean’s facial “craquelures,” which

---

17 In English the primary definition of “marqué” is: “laisser des traces,” “to leave traces.” Le Petit Robert also defines “marqué” as: “Pourvu, empreint d’une marque. Briquet marqué : estampillé. (Personnes) Être marqué : porter la marque du forçat. Fig. Être marqué : être compromis, engagé ou désigné (comme suspect, coupable)” (1981, 1157).
betray his age and his crime, are involuntary on the part of the character, but represent important symbolism for the author (Bey, *Entendez-vous*..., 11, 30).

**What is in a Name? : Politically Engaged Literature**

As with many Algerian authors, Bey adopted a pseudonym in part due to the politics behind *Au commencement était la mer*. “Maïssa” reworks the name “Samia” (Ben Youssef in Camet and Sabri et al, 147). Her mother’s choice of the *nom de plume* and a maternal grandmother’s surname “Bey” acknowledges autobiographical nuances (*A contre-silence*, 32). The pen name also places her œuvre in a Franco-Algerian literary tradition by revealing some of her textual themes. As with her model’s pseudonym, “Assia Djebar,” the name “Maïssa Bey” expresses her positions on identity and her textual problematics (Valat, *Regard sur la littérature écrite par des femmes*, 8). “Maïssa,” from the Arabic ‘*Maysan*’ (“shining star”), depicts a dreamer, keenly aware of others’ sensibilities, thus her status as author (“*Prénom Maïssa*”). The surname “Bey” refers to traditional Maghrebi authorities, honors Islam and Algeria, and links the author to a subtle patriotism. (*A contre-silence*, 32, 39-40).

On the one hand, the name “Assia Djebar,” meaning “female healer” and “the intransigent woman,” unveils the late author’s strong dual political positions. On the other, Bey’s choice to work from Kabylia entails encoding her messages more subtly than does Djebar, who left Algeria to write from the further removed context of New York and Paris (Rice, 183). Bey’s pseudonym does not show a comparable split. Despite this difference, the œuvres of both authors develop related problematics derived from the French-language canon, such as the importance of the father figure, the feminine
condition, sexuality, physical and metaphorical body language, rebellion, and postcolonial writing. Djebar’s *Nulle part dans la maison de mon père’s* (2007) final passage expands the tradition analyzed in Michel Foucault’s essay “Qu’est-ce qu’un auteur?” (1969), placing female authors of autofiction alongside their male counterparts (451-452). Djebar depicts a body of writers, including Bey, who consciously or unconsciously mingle the real with the imaginary to create subjective portraits (*Nulle part...*, 451-452). Hence, *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...* opens with a photograph of Benameur and his daughters and closes with his identity papers. An analysis supported by Judith Butler’s theories in *Frames of War* (2009) asserts that, whereas Bey searches to prove her father’s character objectively, these documents, presented as objective, and the fiction surrounding them, actually add subjectivity to the altered textual portraits by stimulating readers’ affectivity. These memorable images, which present him as a flesh and blood individual, reframe and problematize his somewhat impersonal execution (Lionnet, *Writing Women*, 233).

Bey’s portrayals of Benameur also imply that the Algerian woman remembers her father as if through a sequence of photos. In another way, she also recalls him while reading *The Reader*. These scenes of the Algerian woman’s father also support Mark Seltzer’s idea of “memory pictures.” According to him, in novels, characters who have experienced trauma after a death of a loved one unconsciously recall these very visual responses to this trauma (*Bodies and Machines*, 43). These scenes, which resemble photographs, fragment *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...*, since the preceding and following descriptions both concern Jean’s face and hand, but a hidden textual link also
becomes evident, as the images that the Algerian woman describes are of her father’s face and hand (Bey, *Entendez-vous...* 20-21). This kind of fragmentation inserts the book into a Franco-Algerian tradition which is often polyphonic. Due to the use of visual imagery to underscore this polyphony, the book resembles *La femme sans sépulture* (2002: Martin in Hargreaves, 161). Multiple images of Benameur connect the Algerian woman’s father to the text, while exposing the fragmentation of her memories: Bey’s Algerian woman regrets remembering neither the tone of her father’s voice nor the sound of his words (*Entendez-vous...*, 20-21). Her images of him come from photographs. As his voice is missing, she cannot articulate his affectivity through a family member, as in Djebar’s text, where the absent Zoulikha, also a rebel executed by French forces, describes her experiences, including multiple rapes, to her daughter Mina, who was the last person to see her just before her death. This style allows Djebar to underscore Zoulikha’s role as a loving and worried mother, which adds affectivity to the known portrait of her crushed flesh (*La femme sans sépulture*, 67-74, 129-136, 183-198, 217-234). Rather, Bey presents Benameur’s last moments through an executioner’s eyes, suggesting that someone similar to Jean probably witnessed his death and probably poignantly remembers these circumstances. The text presents Jean’s portraits so as to reveal actively the veteran’s perspectives without condoning his crimes.

*Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...’s Articulation of Bey’s Perspectives*

As we have seen, *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...* reflects a contentious duality between conformity and revolt. Indeed, her Algerian woman not only daringly breaks silences; she is also “modest.” As the story begins, this woman is self-effacing and
very attentive to conventions. As the book is autofiction, Bey’s biography is fruitful in exploring her own dualities in relation to those of her characters. The following sketch in a sense separates the woman from the author yet connects Bey’s life to *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*.... As we saw above, she was born Samia Benameur in 1950, her father a primary school teacher in Boghari. Even though her writing comes through as rebellious, still, as a woman in a conversation with Boualem Sansal, she uses the French word “lisse” or “bland.” Bey’s generation lived through independence, and as we have seen, her œuvre often explores the Franco-Algerian colonial legacy and the “Black Decade.” Her father’s execution, which underpins her corpus beyond *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*..., happened when she was six. Afterward, her family moved. Her childhood memories resurface in her fiction. She married at twenty, had four children, and taught in Sidi-Bel-Abbès.

After her retirement from teaching, she began to publish under a pen name. *Au commencement était la mer* appeared in 1996 soon before her exile. In this work, Bey revivifies her best friend’s portrait, comparable to how she documents her father’s in *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*.... Interviews with her reveal that real people’s sentiments inspired most of her œuvre (*Conversation avec Maissa Bey et Boualem Sansal*, 2013). The supporting characters in *Cette fille-là* (2001) are all based on real women’s lives (*Conversations avec Maissa Bey et Boualem Sansal*).

Besides being a novelist, Bey also worked as an actress. Furthermore, she is a well-known playwright and activist, who co-founded the cultural association *Paroles et écritures* in 2000 to help individuals artistically express their experiences through
literature and theater. As such, the well-received *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...* can be seen as her own attempt to perform the salutary process advocated by *Paroles et écritures*. As a result, besides autobiographical traces, *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...* reflects her experience as an actress and playwright. The text braids together the novelistic and the theatrical to explore politics and history through the theater. As we have seen, as an author, Bey is publicly daring, since her texts appear rebellious and broach sensitive political issues such as torture. In her theater, she also stages characters in situations that put established social constructions into question. The articulations between politics and selfhood shape identitarian perspectives in Bey’s literature (Lionnet, *Writing Women*, 233). In *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...*, gazes are communicative, suggesting a reference to how some resistance fighters conveyed sentiments through glances during the Algerian War (Ighilahriz, 58). Thus, her depiction of characters’ eyes communicates both the importance of looking and philosophical stances, notably the similarities between the Algerian woman and her father (Bey, *Entendez-vous...*, 77). Likewise, images of body parts and female sexuality often expose biopolitics.

Her experience with theater influences the shape of her prose text as well. French drama’s three unities: action, time, and place, structure this tale’s representation. On the three protagonists’ chance encounter, the narrative voice also states: “Someone could even write a play about it, by choosing a commonplace title, with intentional banality, for example: ‘Conversation in a train.’ “Act I. Characters in place” (Bey, *Entendez-vous...*, 43-44). These brief lines resemble stage directions. Furthermore, the narration
underscores the astonishing nature of the conversation between an Algerian rebel’s
daughter, a French army veteran, and a pied-noir’s grand-daughter. Puns, humor, and
irony stress the absurdity of stereotypes and render them banal. Thus, in *Entendez-vous
dans les montagnes*…, Bey creates autofiction with these familiar stereotypes.

Given this binary between the personal and the collective, I view the book as an
“*autobiographie désaxée*” as Bey makes a “fable” out of her “personal tragedy” (Assier
in Riéra, 16, 42). As such, the *récit* illustrates both a singular and plural suffering to
make its individual subjectivities relatable to a wide audience, thereby displaying another
duality, between the personal and the collective. Furthermore, the text frames these
experiences quasi-objectively, since Bey links her personal story to the objective facts of
Franco-Algerian politics and history. The Algerian woman’s dizzy spells also blur the
public and the private as they reveal more of the character’s carefully veiled suffering
than she wishes to disclose to Jean as they first meet. A symptom of what the text
represents as a form of her Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), the character’s
dizziness is caused by her traumatic memories of her father’s death. In this case, the
disorder’s physicality dramatizes biopolitics, fusing the personal and the political, as its
intense manifestations recall the torture that occurred during the Algerian War and the
“Black Decade” (Bey, *Entendez-vous*…, 28). Textually, the vertigo also formally signals
narrative movement. When the character is dizzy, the plot unfolds and uncovers new
revelations.

---

18 “*Autobiographie désaxée*” translates loosely as “unhinged autobiography.” “Axes” in the French
“*explication de texte*” structure the composition.
Material objects also link the personal to the general. Benameur’s identity papers link Bey’s story through her father’s to the récit (Valat, Maïssa Bey: L’Écriture..., 21: Bey, Entendez-vous..., 81-85: Lionnet, Writing Women, 233). The Algerian woman’s silver earrings connect her and her author. These earrings bear cultural meaning, which mingle individual style with ethnic belonging to suggest the personal, political, and collective implications of marking one’s identity. The character’s comments about her earrings imply that silver, an important resource in Boghari and Sidi-Bel-Abbès, as well as the style and workmanship of the jewelry, identify her as Kabyle (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 30: Marye and Wierzejski, 46):

Her country? How did he know? Of course, it jumps out at you, especially since… but I could have been…maybe it’s the silver earrings… for someone who knows the country well, Kabyle jewelry is readily identifiable… but that’s it, that’s also why she wears them, yes, never to forget who she is, and especially not to make others forget what she is, a foreign woman, that’s all.

These earrings again accent a duality: her wish to signal subtly her identity when she is in exile. Yet, even though she retains traces of her ethnicity, she fears that this act publicly labels her as “Other” in Jean’s eyes, and reduces her to a foreigner. She is ambivalent towards revealing her identity since she is apparently making her foreignness so obvious. This realization sparks a nuanced reflection on just why she marks (Seltzer, 53). The private trace from Boghari reassures the vulnerable Algerian woman, whereas the public labelling as “Algerian” and “Kabyle,” through the same jewelry, in revealing her liminality, appears to be bellicose “armor.”
Her private contemplation on marking, however, is erroneous as Jean simply identifies her through the tag on her suitcase (Bey, Entendez-vous... 30-31). The narration reveals a mistake, which is one of the moments when the author identifies a misjudgment by the characters that exposes their shortcomings and the flaws in their thinking. The warlike reference contained in the word “armor” relates to the Algerian woman’s rebellious origins. As we saw above, her Kabyle ethnicity implies rebellion, since her province houses a minority and is a hotbed for political resistance in the country.

During the Algerian War, Kabylia was known for training the maquis (Stora, Ils venaient d’Algérie, 121, 136-137, Bey, Entendez-vous..., 33: Mortimer, 125). Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...’s lines, “She lets herself be carried from exile to exile; first back there, a foreigner in her own country because she refused to abdicate, to let herself be swept away by this enormous wave that submerged one after another so many men and women,” reveal that her refusal to abandon her political positions and follow the masses causes her exile (33).

**Incorporating The Reader in Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...**

Intertexts, such as Victor Hugo’s À l’obéissance passive (1853) and Schlink’s The Reader, enrich Entendez-vous dans les montagnes... The main intertext, The Reader,

---

19 Stora’s Imaginaires de guerre (1997) mentions the army’s use of napalm to suppress Kabylia uprisings (49).

20 Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...’s epigraph comes from À l’obéissance passive, published in the satirical collection Les châtiments, composed during Hugo’s political exile in Jersey (1852-1855). The circumstances reflect the parallel between À l’obéissance passive and the Algerian woman’s political exile. The poem relates to Bey’s work as it underscores the politically significant omissions in the dominant historical discourse. Puns indicating these gaps suggest Hugo’s influence on Bey. Stora’s theory in Ils venaient d’Algérie implies that she models her style after Hugo’s. Les Misérables may also inspire Entendez-vous dans les montagnes.... Hugo’s character Marius Pontmercy’s rediscovery of his rebellious
corroborates Bey’s reflections on war, responsibility, and teaching, and presents Hanna as a dual character, both a former Nazi guard at two concentration camps and a sympathetic woman without schooling. A comparison of Schlink’s Hanna and Bey’s Jean is crucial to understand how this analysis portrays the male protagonist in Entendez-vous dans les montagnes…. As with Hanna, Jean is not super-human, but rather represents the average soldier who would have been drafted and sent to Algeria as cannon fodder. Bey implies that Jean waivered about the war, but he is also a young man involved in executions (Bey, 35: Megherbi, 13, 17, 109). Creating a similar dualism, Schlink analyzes how, when those trying war criminals have an intimate knowledge of the criminals’ motivations, this insight attenuates the verdict. More directly, Entendez-vous dans les montagnes… incorporates the image of Michaël Berg’s father’s face that appears in the The Reader during a thematically significant discussion between father and son. The Algerian woman actually reads this scene when Michaël observes his father’s facial features as he stares at him to ascertain his opinion on the outcome of Hanna’s trial (Le liseur, 160). As Hanna’s ex-lover Michaël knows, despite appearances, this illiterate and sometimes sympathetic character did not single-handedly write the report on the guards’ actions with the prisoners, for which the court condemns Hanna to a life sentence. Rather than admit to her incapacity, she details her crimes more than the other defendants and

father, and the group “les amis de l’ABC” would be particularly significant for Bey (Rosa, XIV). Moreover, the 1985 edition’s introduction analyzes one interpretation of Hugo’s work, where he mourns his daughter Léopoldine through writing. As with Les Misérables, Entendez-vous dans les montagnes…, central to Bey’s corpus, is a journey embodying a reflection on history and a daughter’s relation to her father who was unjustly treated by the justice system.
confesses to sole responsibility for the report (Le liseur, 146). Should Michaël speak out? He recognizes her atrocious crimes, but should Hanna be condemned on a false charge?

Schlink’s condemnations of Hanna’s actions as a Nazi guard suggest a comparable duality in her and Jean. The “special camps,” akin to concentration camps, enhance the brutal analogy between the two works, and, by extension, between the Algerians and the Jews (Fanon, Peau noire, masques blancs, 118). Bey implies that Jean was charged with shooting the eight prisoners, a suggestion that can be inferred from his reflections on desertion. Indeed Claude, the soldier who drives the Jeep, wonders about Jean’s silence and insinuates that his poorly concealed doubts had become public. At that time, failure to shoot meant execution as a traitor. Jean’s earlier denial about his reticence to fight suggests a kind of self-protection (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 58, 74). While not excusing the murder of the Algerian woman’s father, Jean’s duality nuances his character, as Hanna’s illiteracy and femininity deepen her portrait (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 74: Schlink, 155).

Juxtaposing Jean’s face with the meditation on the trial in Schlink enhances Bey’s character (Entendez-vous..., 11-12: Loiseau, 59). The Algerian woman notes Jean’s “white hair” and the tracks of “delicate craquelures.” When Jean describes his wartime duty as a medical aide at one of the Kabyle camps, he uses the verb “soigner” [“to take care of”] (Bey, Entendez-vous... 41). The Algerian War renders this verb enigmatic. “Soigner,” French military slang for “to execute,” lends gruesome ambiguity to his otherwise humanitarian sentence: “Men... It’s true; at times I happened to take care of
them…,” and foreshadows that he executes. The textual references to the French railroad, their means of transport, and to his profession as a doctor involved in executions, are symbols of colonization that merge with “craquelures,” to reveal his nationality and the violent context of his indifference, the violent meaning of “soigner” (Bey, *Entendez-vous…* 11, 41:[emphasis mine.] Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, 38: Ighilahriz, 119-120: Khanna, 82).

From a colonialist perspective, technology such as the railroad and medical care, was supposed to modernize Algeria. Moreover, after Jean states why he studied medicine, Marie identifies with him and affirms that she finds his choice “fitting” and thus suggests a potential reparation, the positive meaning of “soigner” as “caring attention”:

I find that fitting… Medicine… That’s what I’d like to do too. That could be a response… well… a way of… repairing, I mean… to make oneself useful… perhaps… yes… a doctor… or a teacher.

The words “fitting,” “response,” “repairing,” and “useful,” separated by the phrase “I’d like to do that too,” characterize the profession as positive. The doctor is also juxtaposed with a “teacher” to further deepen the humanitarian sentiments and responsibilities for the next generation. Marie fully appreciates this meaning of “soigner”, as none of the characters contradicts her understanding.

---

21 The boldface words found throughout the translation, such as “soigner,” are my emphasis to give English-speaking readers clues that the original provides to a French-speaking reader. These references usually impact untranslatable expressions like “fait tomber” or references to biopolitics such as “peau” where the literal and figurative senses of the word both apply.
Yet, after Marie’s remark on the humanitarian interpretation, the scene changes to Jean’s memory of the Algerian woman’s father before his “enhanced interrogation,” which brings forth the euphemistic reference to torture in the verb “soigner” and emphasizes its brutal connotation. In this context, technology and medical care often ended up as symbols of war and mourning, given some of the more nefarious consequences of the French presence in Algeria, such as torture. Bey presents mourning through the eyes both of the colonized Algerian woman and those of the colonizer Jean. This ability to relate these opposing perspectives is one of the achievements of her text. Some references to torture are marked, as are mentions of the gégène or the dynamo used to administer electric shock. Other traces of interrogation are more subtle and may escape a first-time reader, notably the double meaning of the verb soigner. Even Schlink’s excerpts require knowledge of The Reader to grasp fully their intertextual significance for Bey. Hanna’s indifference resembles Jean’s when she takes the sickest prisoners to read to her before she and the other guards deport them to Auschwitz. During her trial, Schlink portrays Michaël while he contemplates this split image of his ex-lover (Le liseur, 132, 165-166). Hanna affirms that the ghosts who haunt her after the trial awaken her memories of the camps. These specters make her conscious of her crimes, which she can no longer repress. They provoke Hanna’s desire to make reparations, and her eventual suicide (Le liseur, 221, 226). Similarly, the Algerian woman’s presence conjures up Jean’s memories of the men that he and the other French soldiers tortured in the special camps, which the veteran can also oddly no longer suppress. Once the Algerian woman metaphorically puts him on trial, her father’s ghost elicits his final confession (Entendez-
vous dans les montagnes..., 16-17, 76-77). As with Jean’s choice to become a doctor, Hanna also makes comparable reparations when she leaves her money to the woman who survives the concentration camp (Schlink, 230, 239). Bey’s text allows readers to engage in similar reflections in order to appreciate fully the implications of Jean’s duality, seeing him as a partially sympathetic and rebellious man.

Thus, in The Reader and in Entendez-vous dans les montagnes..., this moral dilemma on torture broaches the question of how to humanize soldiers without condoning crimes. Jean’s “marked” features also imply that he executes. The juxtaposition of Schlink’s description of Mr. Berg’s face with Jean’s begins and ends the récit, when most of the revelations have been disclosed. Thus, the scene completes the text (Bey, 12, 68). Bey also quotes The Reader’s dialogue on an executioner’s motivations in which killing is not obeying “orders,” rather, it is “working.” Schlink’s archetypal executioner expresses no antipathy towards his victims, who do not “bother” or “aggress” him. He does not seek “revenge.” Indifference causes him simply to “eliminate” them (Schlink, 171). The textual connection between the dialogue with Michaël’s father, which the Algerian woman reads and contemplates as Jean enters, and the conversation between Michaël and the truck driver in Schlink subtly suggest Jean’s involvement in executions (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 12). The word “interroger” from Schlink helps interpret The Reader’s excerpts in Entendez-vous dans les montagnes..., and links the two passages. Jean and Claude, the soldier who drives the jeep in Bey’s récit, execute Benameur after the violence inherent in “interroger.” The numerous times that Bey’s subtle wordplay hints at French military slang for torture and the seemingly unexpected revelation about
Jean’s identity support the emphasis in the analysis (Aussaresses, 154, 155). Once aware of the book’s ending, readers can anticipate Jean’s at first surprising crimes. Moreover, the connection to Benameur explains why the Algerian woman’s father’s death resurfaces while she reads *The Reader* (Bey, *Entendez-vous*..., 18-19). The question: “Why does one execute?” relates the executioner’s description near the end of Schlink’s work back to the earlier allusion to the philosophical discussion between Michaël and his father on criminal motivations. When compared to Schlink’s executioner, Jean’s reflections reveal an indifference to the Algerian woman’s father at the time of Benameur’s death, despite the young soldier’s reservations about the war (Bey, *Entendez-vous*... 68).

Self-expression through *The Reader* evokes Fanon’s comment in *Peau noire masques blancs* (1952): “In France, they say: to speak like a book” (36). The use of scenes from books out of context to allude to other frames to which the author or character is emotionally attached, called “slippage,” often problematizes a writer’s reliability. Yet, “speaking like a book” through Schlink’s scenes helps articulate the Algerian woman’s personal and political engagement with her history. This incorporation interweaves Algerian politics and the Algerian woman’s sentiments about her father’s torture. When the woman drops Schlink’s novel, the text suggests a subtle manipulation of *The Reader* (Fanon, *Peau noire*..., 36, 118):

— You dropped your book, Madame.

The man leans over, picks it up, and holds it out to her, not without having cast a glance at the title, *The Reader*, by Schlink (Bey, *Entendez-vous*..., 27).

---

22 Translated as *Black Skin White Masks* in 1967.
Marie’s French phrase, “vous avez fait tomber votre livre, Madame...” implies that the Algerian woman intentionally dropped the book, which allows Jean to “glance at the title.” Here, he represents the archetypal Frenchman whom she faces in a political sense (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 12). Intertextuality from The Reader renders Bey’s question on responsibility understandable to casual readers (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 27, 68). After the scene in which Jean contemplates desertion, the Algerian woman rereads Schlink’s discussion between father and son. Her father, a teacher, like Michaël’s, could also have delivered a lecture on personhood, akin to the father’s dialogue with his son in the German novel. According to the German father’s philosophy, which apparently mirrors her father’s, the Algerian woman must treat the veteran opposing her as a “subject.” His “dignity and liberty” as a “person” give her no right to objectify him (Schlink, 155).

The cultural context of music also supports Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...’s theme of responsibility. Changing La Marseillaise’s (1792) well-known question from “Entendez-vous dans les campagnes?” to the fragment of the question Entendez-vous dans les montagnes... reveals a historical omission and an alteration of cultural references, which modifies the French national anthem’s conventional meaning to express the opposite. The ellipsis signals the significant blank, implying that the armies should hear the consequences of their inglorious pillages in the Kabyle mountains. After the Nazi Occupation (1940-1944) banned La Marseillaise, “Le chant des partisans” (1943) became the official anthem of the French resistance. The Bolsheviks killed the song’s composer, Anna Marly’s father, Georges Bétoulinisky, during the 1917 Russian
Revolution. She depicts him as an intellectual more concerned with justice than as a rebel, which evokes Bey’s description of Benameur. As with Bey’s text, Marly’s songs also interweave her personal experiences and politics. Even as the “Singer of the Resistance,” she did not receive immediate recognition for her work due to her nationality and gender. The resemblances between Marly’s and Bey’s biographies constitute one explanation for the presence of “Le chant des partisans” in the text, given the way Bey’s characters, such as the Algerian woman, identify with their reading materials (de Broissia in Marly, 8: Marly, 15-17, 87-98).

Additionally, Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...’s allusion to the verse of “Le chant des partisans”, “Ami, entends-tu le vol noir des corbeaux sur nos plaines?” [Friend, do you hear the dark flight of the crows over our plains?], juxtaposes the exiled Algerian resistance and the French resistance, similarly exiled during the Nazi Occupation. These references mesh with The Reader. Critically, the use of “Le chant des partisans” in the text makes two opposing points. First, the allusion emphasizes that French resistance to Nazi collaboration and Algerian resistance to French colonization had similar motivations. Colonial authorities condemn Algerian resistance fighters for the kind of resistance that these same authorities celebrate in defense of France. Secondly, the French FLN supporters in the Jeanson network also at times compared themselves to the earlier resistance fighters. The trial of the Jeanson network put the Algerian War on trial. When Entendez-vous dans les montagnes... condemns Jean’s crimes, the text echoes this earlier judgement through the song, which again dovetails with Bey’s allusions to Hanna’s trial in The Reader (Marly, 94: Ulloa in Hargreaves, 112-124). La Marseillaise’s
verse translates as “In the countryside, do you hear the roaring of these fierce soldiers?” Bey’s line is “Do you hear in the mountains…” The grammatical question “Do you…” is a direct parallel, to both La Marseillaise’s verse and that of Le chant des partisans. Also, there is an obvious allusion to Le chant des partisans’ lyrics, which runs as follows, "Do you hear the dark flight of the crows over our plains? …do you hear the muffled clamour of enchainged countries?" Musical references, such as the ones in the song “Petite Marie” (Francis Cabrel, 1974/1977), also evoke other related themes in Bey’s text, such as the question of audience and the younger generation’s responsibility for Algerian war crimes, which is discussed in the final section of this introduction. As preparation for this analysis, it is important to pinpoint significant dualities in “coprésences”.

Multifaceted “Coprésences”

The 2009 autobiographical essay L’une et l’autre depicts Bey’s childhood as a time spent in one exceptional milieu cut down the middle, with “two [‘copresent’] languages, lifestyles, and cultures.” The young girl learns to appreciate two traditions: one from her grandfather’s farm and the other from the French school where her father taught. Unlike Djebar and Sansal’s depictions of “coprésences,” Bey’s presentation of her memories in L’une et l’autre reveals that, as a child, coexistence caused no problem. Djebar’s Nulle part dans la maison de mon père, and Sansal’s novel Rue Darwin (2008) accent the antagonisms and present traditional interpretations of the lines from Fanon’s

---

23 Still it is important to note that not all of the people affiliated with the Jeanson network, an organization with French members who supported the FLN, embraced this parallel with the resistance.
24 Mahé’s explanation of the colonialist stereotype that Kabyles would be more assimilable to French culture than people of Arabic descent suggests a reason for this difference (L’histoire de la grande Kabylie, 262).
famous 1961 study *Les Damnés de la terre*: “The colonized world is a world cut in two: The dividing line, the border, is indicated by barracks and police checkpoints” (41).  

Bey’s 2006 novel *Bleu blanc vert* reinterprets the colonial split with little accentuation of “barracks or police checkpoints” (Fanon, 41) and rather reflects her affirmation that she went back and forth between her two worlds without experiencing any antagonistic incompatibility. The juxtaposition of the words “antagonistic” and “incompatible” emphasize their opposing perceptions. Conversely, *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*... does stage a traditional antagonism between an oppressed Algerian woman and a French man, as well as methods of control, such as airport screenings and torture (Bey, 18, 31-32, 39, 65-67).

Still, in Bey’s recollections, blue-eyed and blond-haired French dolls surround her and are just as relevant to her experiences as the homemade dolls on her grandfather’s farm. She considers her playmates, Geneviève, Nicole, and Martine, as “comrades.” She learns both French and Arabic. A natural, non-antagonistic “double imprint” determines Bey’s “behavior,” “taste,” and “world vision” (*L’une et l’autre*, 20-21).

Bey’s study of Albert Camus’ oeuvre, entitled *L’Ombre d’un homme qui marche au soleil* (2004), reflects that she draws on his already famous corpus “to identify, name, and listen to humanity” (Valat, *Maïssa Bey: L’Ecriture*..., 13). A comparable non-antagonistic duality marks Camus’ œuvre. Moreover, as with Camus’ work, *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*... subtly stresses “coprésences” to expose and resist a false one-

---

25 Translated as *The Wretched of the Earth*.

26 The author hardly mentions the Kabyle language and culture, but affirms that she spoke Arabic with her aunts and cousins, thus omitting a third conflicting presence.
dimensionality. The text also acccents oppositions such as the contrast between “shadow and light.” As the story begins, the Algerian woman silently seeks understanding in the literal and metaphoric shadow of night while she visibly conforms to others’ expectations related to French perceptions of her nationality. (Valat, Maïssa Bey: L’Ecriture…, 21).

This apparent conformity makes her look one-dimensional. At first, she notes only that Marie is an average French teenager. Yet, when Jean reminds the Algerian woman of her father, and again, after the theft, when he speaks to Marie about Algeria, the woman is torn between revealing her quest and satisfying social expectations (Valat, Maïssa Bey: L’Ecriture…, 21). Her attempts to remain aloof and one-dimensional, while she is also eager to fill a blank in her family history and to teach Marie the truths behind the Algerian War, accent the Algerian woman’s contradictions. A paradoxical light also puts the Algerian woman on center stage, and often reveals only what others expect to see: her nationality. Yet, this light also elucidates her complex self-identification. In Nouvelles d’Algérie, Bey affirms that Camus simply calls the Algerian, killed by Meursault in L’étranger (1942), “‘the Arab’ as if it were his name” (46). Similarly, the Algerian woman’s nationality names her (Entendez-vous…, 30).

As in The Stranger when Meursault shoots the Arab, a meditation on the sun precedes Benameur’s execution (Camus, 90-93). Yet, in Entendez-vous dans les

---

27 I will use the well-known English title of Camus’ work throughout this analysis. The English titles for the other works in this section are The Guest (1960), and The First Man (1994). As with Bey’s Algerian woman, Jacques in Le premier homme [The First Man] (published posthumously by Camus’ daughter in 1994) resembles his author. Both protagonists search for information about their fathers, killed in combat. The two men acquire mythical status as martyrs. Le premier homme also reveals similarities in Bey’s and Camus’ lives. The Algerian woman is a school teacher’s daughter, and Jacques considers his teacher as a surrogate father. Like Bey, Camus also describes a love of reading, contributing to Jacques’ world vision. Unlike the Algerian woman, Jacques learns little about his father’s life, while rediscovering his own.
montagnes…, the sun is setting and the forest is somehow sanctified: “Above him, the
trees’ foliage merges and forms a canopy pierced with beams of light. It could’ve been a
beautiful jaunt!” In French, the word translated as “canopy” is “voûte” which refers to
the ceiling of a holy place. Also, the image of the sun beams which pierce the foliage
juxtaposes the beauty and ugliness of the scene. The line: “could’ve been a beautiful
jaunt” intensifies the sensory imagery in the scene (Bey, Entendez-vous…, 74). The
sunset shows a comparable interrogation of “coprésences,” but a difference in
perspectives. Bey uses the symbolism behind the paradoxical sun, common in Algerian
works – such as Djebar’s Ombre sultane (1987) – to heighten her evocative composition
(L’étranger. 90-93), (Entendez-vous…, 74). 28 Camus dreamed of the fusion of France and
Algeria, and of the erasure of any incompatibility, born of prejudice, among modernity,
progress, and Islam; this reminds readers of L’une et l’autre’s non-antagonistic depiction
of this split colonial milieu (Béji, 28). Yet, her image never fuses the two homelands.
Moreover, it is compelling that The Stranger also develops the traditional antagonism
between a French and an Algerian individual as noted in Entendez-vous dans les
montagnes….

Bey’s photographic images of Benameur also allude to Camus’ contradiction in
L’Hôte (1957) between rebellion and collusion, showing a duality that again puts into
question what constitutes a rebel. The teacher, Daru, rebels when he frees the Algerian
prisoner whom he is ordered to deliver to the authorities after a murder. He disobeyes the

28 This text was also translated into English as A Sister to Scheherazade in 1993 by Dorothy Blair.
French officials, as he does not support the death penalty. Camus’ well-known short story simply illustrates the irony that, due to the threat of reprisals from Algerian partisans who believe he has obeyed the French government and his failure to submit to colonial officials, “[He] was alone” (Bey, Entendez-vous…, 20-21: L’Hôte, 11). This is ironic since both sides consider Daru an outcast. For the French authorities, the teacher is a rebel since he does not fully support colonial law, and for the Algerian partisans, Daru is a traitor to the community who merits death. Daru affirms that the duties of his profession exclude a mission resulting in an execution. The Corsican Balducci contends that “in war we do all professions”: he acts under orders, which must be obeyed.

*Peau noire, masques blancs* portrays the schoolteacher as the enemy of the African planter (Fanon, 48). Léïla Sebbar also notes that Algerian and French partisans targeted her father as an Algerian teaching French, who represented both “an agent of colonization,” and a rebel (*Je ne parle pas la langue de mon père*, 11, 53). Likewise, Bey’s allusion evokes the enigmas of her father’s dual rebellions both for and against French éducation. *L’une et l’autre*’s portraits reveal that Benameur fell under the same paradoxical situation:

Rebellious, that is what he had been, very young, through his choices and his commitments. First of all, in standing out among the others. Standing up against family tradition, he decided to study at a time when at the heart of conservative families, the simple fact of going to primary school already constituted an act of submission (23-24).

According to this memory, Benameur rebels against his family to study French and to become a teacher at a time when even attending primary school would be interpreted as a gesture of support for colonialism. Thus, Bey’s text brings out the sad irony that her
father, executed as a rebel – or a “fellaga” – by colonial authorities, originally stands up to his family to gain an education which opens him to French culture. His subsequent resistance to colonialism and execution hide his original rebellion, but appropriate initiation into the colonial legacy elucidates these contradictions.

Marie’s Role: A Tangible Initiation to the Franco-Algerian Colonial Legacy

The conversation in Entendez-vous dans les montagnes… is apparently a debate between the Algerian woman and Jean, to which Marie listens. Still, the young woman’s subtle contributions at crucial moments in the plot give greater significance than would at first seem to belong to her comparatively small role. Her coat, her fashion sense, her name on her necklace, and her hair convey subtle political meanings. From the Algerian woman’s perspective, the adolescent in “jeans and sneakers,” first appears to conform to the image of almost “every French teenager” (Bey, Entendez-vous…, 14). Yet, one interpretation is that a subtle narrative shift to Marie’s perspective puts this image into question. The nature of her fashionable accessories exposes the duality in her character between conformity and rebellion. Marie wears a “blouson,” which in the context of this work, implies a blouson noir (Bey, Entendez-vous…, 14). As with many of Bey’s terms, the polyvalent word blouson carries both personal and political implications, which in a sense hide Marie’s political stance. In this analysis, her coat and hair significantly reveal a comparable duality to Shérazade’s, the protagonist of Sebbar’s 1982 novel, Shérazade: 17 ans, brune, frisée, les yeux verts.29 Shérazade also wears a “blouson.” Both teenagers

29 Translated into English as Shérazade in 2014.
voluntarily mark their families’ cultural affiliation. While Shérazade has an Algerian scarf, Marie’s necklace implies Frenchness, connoting her grandfather’s political position on identity and assimilation as a *pied-noir*. She would be particularly apt to suggest her nationality when she wears a stereotypically French name around her neck, as most *pieds-noirs* and their families wanted to mark visibly their cultural integration in France after independence. Hence, her name, blue eyes, and blond hair superficially label her as typically French (Mortimer, 184). Thus, Bey’s subtle portrait differs from Sebbar’s, who clearly accents Shér azade’s atypical nature, whereas Bey introduces Marie’s atypical traits more subtly.

“*Visiblement bien dans sa peau*” also establishes a superficial opposition between Marie and the Algerian woman through their physical appearance. Contrary to Marie’s apparent calm conformity, this woman’s dizziness affects her “*à fleur de peau,*” exhibiting her discomfort on her skin (Bey, *Entendez-vous*..., 29; Lionnet, *Writing Women*, 76-79). Visual perceptions are misleading in Bey, and Marie is a character in whom the interplay between the visible and the real is telling. Marie’s and the Algerian woman’s one-dimensional, intentionally banal images hide their dualities (*Entendez-vous*..., 14). Paradoxically, these two characters resemble each other in the sense that their nationalities name them. On the surface, the name “Marie” connotes “common Frenchness,” and suggests a Christian background. A detailed analysis of the name also reveals that in Hebrew it means “drop from the sea,” hinting that, as with the sea, she reconnects the Algerian woman to Kabylia (Bey, *Entendez-vous*..., 47, 50, 75, 76:...
“Prénom Marie”). These subtleties are crucial for a nuanced reading of Marie’s duality between conformity and rebellion.

Given her initial images’ evident potential to communicate simple Frenchness, applying the adjective “atypical” to Marie integrates the understated meanings and the gradual revelation of duality to show her complex rebellion. Moreover, the analysis of the book’s dual Franco-Algerian cultural context exposes the intricate connotations of the accessories, and this mixed context expresses Marie’s emphasis on a smooth, uncomplicated appearance, which integrates complex politics (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 14). Expressing politics through clothing is subtle, as these choices also represent personal fashion statements. The decision to call Marie’s coat “blouson” and not “blouson noir,” understates her rebellion for casual observers, but renders it tactfully palpable for informed readers. Those acquainted with the symbolism behind a blouson noir perceive both her rebellious politics and her willingness to integrate into French society. People with a blouson noir also commonly wore jeans and sneakers (Bourré, 23, 31). Additionally, the jacket has been associated with politically engaged music since the 1960s and connects to the Algerian War (Bourré, 3, 12, 98). One textual juxtaposition suggests such an interpretation, as Marie’s Walkman is in the “pocket of her coat” (Entendez-vous..., 14). The removal of her earphones also signifies that she listens to “new” voices on war, crossing the threshold into adulthood.30

It might appear unlikely and unrealistic that a French adolescent such as Marie would witness such a meeting between an Algerian woman and her father’s executioner.

30 The quotation marks around “new” imply that these figures have always been present, even in silence.
However, France accorded amnesty to its citizens for acts of war in Algeria progressively in 1962 for apparently pro-French combatants such as Jean, in 1966 for FLN supporters, and more generally in 1968. So, nothing differentiates the participants in this story from ordinary travelers. Given the granting of amnesty, this meeting might be more commonplace than it would seem at first (Entendez-vous..., 44: Djebar, Le blanc de l’Algérie, 116: Ulloa in Hargreaves, 112, 127).

Marie’s grandfather’s conventional choices to alter his experiences of colonialism as a pied-noir in Algeria rather than to recount his actual memories create significant blanks in the Franco-Algerian history that his granddaughter knows (Entendez-vous..., 47-48, 52, 72-73, 75). The Algerian woman’s and Jean’s opposed first-hand perceptions initiate Marie (Entendez-vous..., 47-48, 62-63, 65: Valat, Maïssa Bey: L’Ecriture..., 19). Their conversation exposes her to the two sides of the politically-charged discussion that manipulates silences. She “feels the agitation” under this “calm, polite” debate. Marie’s “lowered eyes” symbolize her initial lack of perspective (Entendez-vous..., 65).

Conversely, her ultimate decision to move from her seat next to Jean to the one next to the Algerian woman symbolizes Marie’s newfound rebellious political position. She articulates her awareness by touching, speaking to, and smiling at the Algerian woman (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 25, 26, 43, 71-73, 75, 77). Ben Jelloun asserts that by the 1980s and 1990s, French youth had become depoliticized (Hospitalité française, 63). Alternatively, Bey’s portrait of Marie as a young pied-noir who is not typically Algerian, nor simply French, reveals a different public who would have been interested in these cultural politics and who appear at first glance more integrated into French society. Yet, a
non-confrontational approach, such as the one Bey’s text advocates, can sensitize this audience to these issues due to their family connections and curiosity (Entendez-vous..., 47). Their families’ silence makes them largely unaware of these cultural politics, although a blouson noir tactfully signals a political position. Moreover, Bey’s use of sleep symbolizes a need for awakening. Neither Jean nor the Algerian woman sleeps. Marie naps peacefully as the altercation begins, exposing her youthful unconsciousness, but she wakes in the middle, removing her earphones to listen attentively to the adults’ conversation. Once she perceives the agitation, she too cannot sleep (Entendez-vous..., 24-26, 52, 67).

When Marie initially speaks, the Algerian woman supports her right to understand the Franco-Algerian legacy. She answers Jean’s questions partially since he begins conversing with Marie about Algeria (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 45). Bey’s decision to have the Algerian woman “kindly teach” the adolescent about the true nature of her experiences communicates her willingness to bridge gaps. The Algerian woman knows Marie is unaware, since she underscores that the young woman’s grandfather perpetuates nostalgic stereotypes. Nevertheless, Marie’s enthusiasm incites the reserved Algerian woman to talk about the Franco-Algerian colonial legacy and her father’s experiences. (Entendez-vous..., 43).

The Algerian woman remarks that her father and Marie’s grandfather were both teachers. She gradually exposes the adolescent to what she can grasp. The lines, “My

---

31 See the line, “she doesn’t know if she wants to let him continue to talk” (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 45).
32 “Enseigner doucement”
grandfather too. He talks about it all the time. He was born back there,” reveal that Marie is a catalyst for the story and provides a reason for her curiosity about Algeria. Showing a similarity first does not hide the differences between the two men. This clever strategy represents Marie as a character who becomes more and more receptive to these differences (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 75). Bey depicts the Algerian woman turning to Marie, affirming, “And it’s to her the woman desires to speak.” This decision reflects her understanding of Marie’s openness to Algerian culture (Entendez-vous..., 43, 47). In the passage, “no, you have no part in this, little Marie. You don’t have to be sorry. You have nothing to do with it!” the French passes from “vous” to “tu,” marking increased closeness between the two protagonists (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 54). Furthermore, Schlink and Bey significantly underscore adolescents’ lack of responsibility for their grandparents’ crimes.33 Significantly, German high school curricula incorporate Schlink’s novel for their adolescent students. In Entendez-vous dans les montagnes..., Bey’s Algerian woman affirms that Marie should know the truth, but “should not be sorry” at all (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 54, Mahlendorf, 458-459). Conversely, she vehemently forces Jean to elucidate the meaning of a “corvée de bois,” doing her part to make him face his crime in front of Marie (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 75). This polémique concerns teaching history when torture is involved and when it impacts sensitive subjectivities.

Marie now evolves. Her use of the word “dommage” in the quote translated as “Maybe they… It’s really too bad, I don’t know the name of the village where my grandfather lived,” reveals that the adolescent sees the regrettable damage perpetuated by

---

33 Schlink, a judge like Michaël, contemplates his generation’s responsibility for the Holocaust’s atrocities.
her inability to fill in her grandfather’s blanks (Bey, *Entendez-vous*..., 25: [emphasis mine.]). She then wakes after the theft, attributed to “Arabs.” Her reaction to the racist French woman and her blushing when she is on the verge of using the word “Arabs” are two steps towards her political and personal awareness. In this analysis, she subtly becomes increasingly similar to the Algerian woman. Blushing reveals her discomfort physically on her skin, comparable to the other character’s physical dizziness (Lionnet, *Writing Women*, 76-79). Furthermore, her “blouson” prefigures her awakening, and the idiomatic meaning of “*la jeune fille reprend*” is “the young woman corrects.” (Bey, *Entendez-vous*..., 11, 52-54, 65). One interpretation is that, given this idiom, after Jean warns Marie not to visit Algeria, she subtly corrects him through her hints, as his warning does not impress her much. (This sentence contains the most palpable use of the verb). Her correction of three other similar statements shows her increasing awareness (Bey, *Entendez-vous*..., 50-51, 58, 75).

Marie’s ability to articulate her impression of how the description of an obscure “*corvée de bois*” impacts Jean, while she touches the Algerian woman, reveals her newly acquired perspective:

Marie has remained silent. Then she abruptly sits upright. She lays her hand on the woman’s arm, who shrinks at this contact.
— He doesn’t understand. He doesn’t understand you. Look, he cannot even speak anymore…
The woman murmurs,
— Like all the others. First blind and deaf, and for a long time… mute… and who even suffer from amnesia… (Bey, *Entendez-vous*..., 75).

Marie’s “capacity to speak” fulfills one of Alison Rice’s important criteria for bearing witness. This critic maintains: “While a witness may be a bystander, in many cases she is
much more, precisely because of her capacity to speak and to therefore turn a passive visual act into an active verbal one” (Polygraphies, 32). Up to this point, Marie perceives the conversation’s agitated depths, communicated through nuances such as Jean “nervously crumpling his newspaper.” Her questions unobtrusively seek information (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 62). The young woman now actively verbalizes her newly informed understanding. Due to her other subtle contributions to the conversation, this articulation of her perspective renders her much more than a simple bystander. Jean’s perceived inability to hear while he engages in the self-evaluation, which the text promotes, strikes Marie. His visible reactions imply that he also does not understand the Algerian woman and that he suffers from the common social amnesia surrounding the Franco-Algerian colonial legacy. The verb “entend”’s repetition in the French text, “Il n'entend pas. Il ne vous entend pas.” underscores his visible incapacity to understand up to this point in the story.34 Marie’s second affirmation, “he does not understand you,” moves from the collective Franco-Algerian cultural memory to the woman’s individual perspective. Furthermore, the teenager notes that he is now mute, portraying his apparent inaptitude to face the crime. Marie gives the Algerian woman her protective “anaya.” According “anaya” palpably demonstrates an honorable, welcoming protection to a foreigner. Now, a woman’s “anaya” is particularly powerful as it solicits the protection of her entire village and can change violent behavior, specifically after murders (here, Benameur’s execution). This tradition also allows a woman to show her support actively without breaking with her accepted role, adding to Marie’s paradoxically “smooth”

---

34 In French, “entend” connotes both “hear” and “understand.”
character. The young woman may not be aware of the full obligations of her comforting touch and the custom, but Bey definitely is, which explains the symbolism behind the character’s gesture. These implications are that, due to Marie’s nationality, French citizens should know the circumstances of Benameur’s death (Mahé, 61-62). Marie’s decisions to move her seat next to the Algerian woman and to touch her convey a soft solidarity. Marie’s judgement and direct question to Jean about torture again incite him to face his crime, which reveals that the author transcends the characters. In fact, his silence masks his inner turmoil, which leads Jean to articulate the resemblance between the Algerian woman and her father (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 75-77).

One interpretation of the sisterly solidarity between Marie and the Algerian woman is that it reveals a more profound evolution in Marie’s awareness. The young woman’s touch implies that after an appropriate initiation, adolescents can develop a different political understanding than the one apparently held by previous generations. (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 75-76: Mahé, 111-113). In “L’une époque et l’autre: Une étude de l’altérité dans deux textes de Maïssa Bey,” Thomas Byron contends, “Touch can reveal the surface, but the mere regard remains insufficient” (14). Marie moves explicitly past the simple glance. In Memory in the flesh (1985), Ahlam Mosteghanemi also affirms that to become truly conscious of a memory requires touch. A person understands an experience’s import only through feeling it (77: Mémoires de la chair, 103). The young woman’s brief touch implies contact and that she feels a new, deeper understanding of the Algerian woman. She now comprehends the sentiments that the memories evoke (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 75).
Marie’s youth allows her to speak without being sharply sanctioned. The adolescent’s hair also reveals latent rebellious tendencies: “As if to rouse herself, Marie shakes her head, making her hair swirl in a movement full of grace, before fastening it with a barrette, which she pulls from the pocket of her jeans.” This scene subtly compares the girl to a rebellious animal shaking its mane. Her swirling hair is a graceful rebellion (Bey, *Entendez-vous…*, 76). The unveiled curls in *Les nouvelles d’Algérie* also link hair to rebellion. Bey affirms that the act of an unveiled young woman who freely lets down her hair often remains unseen in Algeria. She describes the sensation that “floating” hair evokes as “precious,” which by extension characterizes Marie in *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes…* (*Les nouvelles d’Algérie*, 48-49). The adolescent’s control over her rebellion differentiates Marie from the Algerian woman. This ability to manage rebellion subtly enables the adolescent’s smooth social integration. The word “*attacher*” has the negative connotation of “to tie” or “to restrain.” This recalls the duality in her *blouson* and in the word “*lisse,*” connoting the negative, boring appearance and the positive calm (Bey, *Entendez-vous…*, 13). The transmission of the Algerian woman’s story to Marie, now that she has given honorable “*anaya,*” makes her an appropriate witness. This story also impacts an Algerian woman and a French army veteran, who breaks his political silence in order to express his latent private misgivings, which make him rebellious. This dual “intimate” and “political” history articulates the social, biopolitical, historical, and personal (Bey, *Journal intime et politique*, 1).
TRANSLATION: ENTENDEZ-VOUS DANS LES MONTAGNES…

To him, who will never be able to read these lines.

To my sons.

Oh, soldiers whose cheek Africa browned

Could you not see that it was mud

Splattering you?"³⁵

Victor Hugo,

_A l’obéissance passive_ ("To passive obedience"), 1853.

³⁵ Unlike the English “splattering,” “éclabousser”’s figurative sense accents humiliation. As “splashing” captures Bey’s meaning in _Entendez-vous dans les montagnes…_, I opted for the more colloquial rendering.
The only picture of Maïssa’s father, summer 1955.\footnote{Since the current caption excludes school pictures, perhaps a more apt one would be “the only picture of Maïssa’s father with his children, Samia and Anissa Benameur, summer 1955.” One of the class pictures showing Bey’s father as a teacher is in \textit{A contre-silence} (83). This picture reframes Benameur’s paternal role rather than his professional one, justifying the caption only.}
She closes the compartment door behind her in hopes of not being disturbed, of traveling alone. She takes off her coat, carefully folds it, places it close to her. She sits close to the window. She pulls the book begun the night before out of her bag, opens it and begins reading. The train is almost empty; there is no crowding on the platform. No reserved seats in this compartment. She checked before entering. She lets her reading absorb her little by little, only mildly conscious that the train is still at the station.

She starts at the noise of the door softly opening.

She raises her eyes.

A man has just come in. He barely casts a glance at her. He ignores her. He closes the door behind him. He takes the seat facing her, close to the window.

He is a man of around sixty years, in a suit of dark wool, grey shirt with a half-open collar, white hair carefully trimmed and parted, very bright eyes, his face with

---

37 In the older trains and still today, some French train cars are divided into “compartiments,” seating up to six passengers, thus isolating groups from other people. The three repetitions of “elle” and the word “voyage,” often translated as “journey,” place greater emphasis on the Algerian woman’s perspective. A journey captures larger implications for her symbolic interior and physical voyage. According to Mortimer, the train compartment is both a closed and mobile space (Journeys through the French African Novel, 148). The closed space permits the Algerian woman to focus on her perception of French social construction and her unique position in between French and Algerian societies. As the account begins, she feels trapped and wishes to travel alone.

38 Another translation for this sentence is “she looks up,” but “raises her eyes” might better capture the character’s action, as this expression does not imply that the protagonist wants to establish a relationship with the man. She simply looks at him. Jean’s action in the following sentence mirrors the Algerian woman’s look. Here we see the first link between the body and political power. The French man possesses more political power than the Algerian woman. He can act as if he is alone in the compartment without greeting her. This behavior unsettles the Algerian woman, increasing her isolation. The narrative voice portrays the female protagonist as very aware of the link between the body and political power. On bodies and politics, Seltzer defines biopolitical analysis as “an investigation of the disposition of the subject at the point of intersection of bodily and cultural forms and practices, what amounts to a cultural logistics” (Bodies and Machines, 88). Bey analyzes social practices such as interactions with other passengers followed by their effects on a character’s body, which become even clearer in the following pages.
marked features, covered with tracks of delicate craquelures, yet still vigorous movements.\footnote{“Yeux très clairs” translates as “bright-eyed”. The French and Arabic behind it allow Bey to play with this expression to surprise her readers with the connotation of “marquer,” but I would like to have chosen another translation to remove the positive connotation of bright. The expression also allows her not to attribute a color to Jean’s eyes, whose perceptions are skewed. Mosteghanemi affirms that colorless people are stupid and perceive as true only what they see with their own eyes, without looking further. Bey’s contribution to Journal intime et politique, describing her green notebook and blue and purple ink, suggests that she uses similar color psychology in Entendez-vous dans les montagnes... (Entendez-vous..., 10; Journal intime et politique, 10). I kept the translation “bright eyes” to render the opposition between Jean and the Algerian woman. Jean’s hair is also white, which, following Mosteghanemi’s logic, implies that the character is dishonest and does not appreciate mystery (Memory in the Flesh, 30: Mémoires de la chair, 220). The two authors blend art forms. “Craquelures,” depicting Jean’s wrinkles, is an artistic term for chipping paint, and weathering on a painting, or “façade.” In Entendez-vous dans les montagnes..., these “craquelures” divulge that Jean’s true character is slowly being revealed, as the doctor’s respectable “façade” cracks. One impact of the biopolitics presented is this slow revelation of his bodily reactions, as he is confronted with involuntary memory and analepses, or flashbacks. In Entendez-vous dans les montagnes..., “craquelures” also subtly oppose Jean and the third protagonist, Marie, described as “lisse.” “Lisse” translates as “smooth,” “well-balanced,” and “even-tempered,” implying “blandness.” The French passage is at once long and fragmented; I kept this expression to render the opposition between the choppy style in the previous paragraph and the lengthy description in the present one, illustrating the Algerian woman’s altered perception. The word “réseau” also describes French train routes, thus the sentence is a reference to the “Société nationale des chemins de fer français” railway system. Through this allusion to the French presence in Algeria, Bey evokes colonization and mourning. Changing the word order renders a similar rhythmic flow in English.} Why did she have the thought “he must have been handsome in his youth,” furtively watching him while he was settling in!\footnote{“S’installer” has a negative connotation, similar to when American farmers settled on the Native American territory. To suggest this, I chose the translation “settle in,” eliminating the positive connotation of “settle down.”} Probably because of the sentence she has just read. That face that just superimposed itself over that of the father, described by the narrator.\footnote{In this and the preceding passage, Bey alludes to the father as a philosopher. She continues her preoccupation with faces and biopolitics. As Mortimer notes, French-language novelists, such as Mahoua Bakayoko, use the Balzacian technique of revealing characters’ psychological traits through their physical appearance (Journeys through the French African Novel, 75). As with Balzac’s Vautrin in Le Père Goriot (1835), Jean is marked as a convict. Here is another instance where Bey links both French and Algerian literature.}
I was observing him with his grey hair and always badly shaven beard, his deeply furrowed brows, the deep lines running from the sides of his nose to the corners of his mouth. I was waiting.”

He is not looking at her. Ever since she has been here in this country, she still has difficulty getting used to not existing in others’ eyes. A bit as if she has become transparent.

She turns her head to look the other way. Captures a reflection in the window.

He, too, has deeply furrowed brows and bags under his eyes. He seems tired. He will certainly fall asleep as soon as the train leaves the station. Oh she would also like so much to sleep, even if only for a few minutes!

He has only a small, black, leather tote that he opens to pull out newspapers, before getting up and putting it in the luggage rack above his seat. Then he sits down again.

Only a few minutes left before departure. The schedules’ exactness, still a mystery to her! Departure: 5:48 PM. Arrival time as listed. Unless there is an unpredictable

---

42 My translation explores the nuance of viewpoints. Others do not take the Algerian woman into account when looking at their surroundings. Franco-Algerian cultural politics and gendered behavior would lead to French passengers generally not looking at the Algerian woman. This behavior could also be due to the fact that she and Jean are alone. Jean would therefore feel uncomfortable and be making a special effort not to stare. This looking-without-looking makes the Algerian woman feel uncomfortably “transparent” (Bey, Entendez-vous…., 14).

43 In French, the ambiguous possessive adjective “son” foreshadows revelations such as the doubling and antagonism between Jean and the Algerian woman. Since English is not gendered, a possessive pronoun does not render this important ambiguity. I opted for “a”, implying that Jean’s face reflects the Algerian woman’s.

44 Juxtaposing “lui aussi” and “son reflet” accents the notion of the double.
contretemps. She is only now beginning to get used to this precise organization of time, and is still astonished that the French complain about the least minute of tardiness.

At the very moment when the train’s departure is being announced, a young woman opens the door. She glances into the compartment, smiles vaguely, stops for an instant on the threshold, and then decides to enter. There, she sees two people, a woman of a certain age, gazing out the window, who did not even turn her head, and an old, silent gentleman who barely raised his eyes. She will definitely be able to isolate herself… With them, the trip will be uneventful, she is sure. She takes off her backpack and settles in next to the man. Right away she pulls her Walkman out of her jacket pocket, puts her earphones into her ears, leans her head back into the crook of the seat, and closes her eyes. She wears a chain around her neck from which the letters of her first name: Marie, hang. She is a blonde, bland young woman, in jeans and sneakers, confident, visibly self-assured, the image of almost all the young women here.

The young woman didn’t say hello either. A brief smile, to which no one responded. It’s often like that. She, the foreign woman, is the only one finding this

---

45 The formal English word “contretemps,” meaning “incident” or “hindrance,” accents an ambiguous blend between the reality of the plot in Entendez-vous dans les montagnes... and the fiction in The Reader.

46 This type of scene when characters cross a threshold as a rite of passage, either into adulthood or between two social milieux, marks French novels of initiation such as Colette’s Le Blé en herbe (provisional title Le Seuil: 1923) and Algerian texts such as Djebar’s Nulle part dans la maison de mon père (14, 2007), thus inscribing Entendez-vous dans les montagnes... into the genre of novels of initiation.

47 “Calme” also means calm.

48 Given the end of the book, her choice to sit next to the man connotes apparent sameness between Jean and Marie. They are both French, thus her place is initially next to his, facing the Algerian woman. The French descriptions applied to each of the characters, “craquelures” and “lisse” falsify their appearances, opposing Jean and Marie. The opposition foreshadows Marie’s final decision about her position.

49 I contend that Marie wishes to blend into her surroundings, by appearing bland hence her polished appearance. Similar to “lisse,” “bland” has three meanings: tasteless/undistinctive, friendly/gracious, and mild/temperate. Despite “bland”’s rarity in English, given its similarities to “lisse” and its comparable implications for Marie’s character, I retained the translation. I also translated it using “bland” since “lisse” expresses an opposition between Marie and Jean, comparable to “craquelures,” without connoting a color. Another option, “plain,” connotes the color white.
abnormal. She will have to get used to it. Rare are those who trouble themselves to regard and greet strangers.

A few minutes ago, the train left the station. She barely noticed. Warehouses have replaced the platforms, and out the window, already, in the coming darkness buildings move past drowned in fog, then come houses almost all the same, with already lit windows, deserted yards, and dull back courtyards, cluttered with bicycles, folded umbrellas, and abandoned chairs. Groves carefully-pruned, ornamental flower beds, hedge-rows carefully trimmed and squared, shrubs with pruned foliage, immobile under a metallic sky. Geometric severity. Worry about order. Cutting off everything that overshoots. Disposing of everything bothersome. For long hours, the sun has been relegated behind the clouds.

She closes her eyes.

---

50 The sexual tension between the Algerian woman and Jean renders gendering of “étrangère” important. “Obscurité” means “obscurity,” foreshadowing the plot, in which several secrets gradually emerge from the shadows. Moreover, as a translation for “défiler,” “move” would not ordinarily be my first choice, but I attempted to keep “défiler”’s connotation of army movement. “Défiler” also commonly evokes passing sceneries seen out a window while travelling. The French passé composé in this paragraph accents the journey’s open-ended nature. I contend that the imparfait is not used to carefully give readers points of reference. On another note, French homes often have back courtyards where residents sometimes put gardens; they also at times throw out their trash in these areas. On a translator’s note, I made minimal changes to the word order in this passage to keep the English flow.

51 Professional French decorative pruning is a carefully regulated art form. Provence is traditionally known for its flowers, gardens, and sun. Here, the images have a negative connotation, reinforcing the impression of exact conformity. The Algerian narrative voice reveals the existence of another important tradition from a perspective in exile.

52 This sentence symbolically suggests that the French have forgotten or at least contained their past relationship with Algeria. A valid interpretation for this passage makes the sun appear positive and the clouds negative. However, before applying this reading uniformly, it should be noted that the sun is paradoxical in Algerian texts, such as Sous le jasmin, la nuit and Djebar’s Ombre sultane. This paradox appears later in Entendez-vous dans les montagnes… Here, we see Franz Fanon’s influence on both Djebar and Bey’s oeuvres in Peau Noire Masques Blancs. He writes, “C’est une histoire qui se passe dans l’obscurité, et il faudra bien que le soleil que je transhume éclaire les moindres recoins” (43). He reaffirms that the sun should shed light on the behaviors and social constructions learned through the colonial situations, particularly their psychological consequences (Fanon, 43).
Maybe another journey or other landscapes fill her head.

Behind her lowered eyelids, stretches of pebbly, dust-covered landscapes move, ceaselessly wind-swept. Then some forests, some underbrush, some paths invaded by brambles. And, every once in a while, in the wastelands on the outskirts of cities and villages, there are little stacks of white or grey stones resembling unnatural growths, piled carelessly to delineate graves, filling the cemeteries having neither fences nor hedges in her homeland’s countryside. With splashes of red. Red, the color of wild geraniums that grow and bloom on the burial mounds, without anyone ever being able to know who planted them. Here and there, only a few scrawny old abandoned trees, randomly dispersed at the whim of a miserly nature, too frugal with her favors. Rare are those that give shade. The skies back there are almost always cloudless.

---

54 The Algerian woman’s criticism of French order continues, particularly regarding the idea of foliage from the previous passage. Moreover, white is the color of mourning in Algeria. In Au commencement était la mer, Bey also uses burial stones to foreshadow the main character, Nadia’s death (141-142, 152).

55 Red is the color of blood and survival, foreshadowing both the violence in the account and positive nuances (www.code-couleur.fr). Here, Bey evokes the geraniums first and then the graves. Thus, the red flowers bloom from loss linking life to death, and evoking the theme of “Blessure nécessaire,” also in Kateb Yacine’s novel Nedjma (1956). Yacine’s book refers to, “Les pères tués […] mal nécessaire” (111). Sebbar recounts in Je ne parle pas la langue de mon père that geraniums are common near Kabylia, and that women usually plant them on graves (124). With this in mind, the uncertainty Bey notes about the planter’s identity reveals her themes, implying that a woman’s story is unknown. Moreover, in this passage, red geraniums symbolize “happily spending time with someone” and love sick-hearts (http://www.signification-fleurs.com/geranium.html). In Entendez-vous dans les montagnes…, this person is Benameur.

56 The figurative meaning of “poussiéreux” is old or abandoned. I assert that the text privileges this sense over the more common “dusty.” “Squelettique” also has a figurative meaning of too schematized, recalling the Algerian’s woman’s musing about rigor in plantings in Provence, which subtly enhances an analogy or contrast between the two countries. A more obvious comparison would be the menace contained in the rain clouds in Provence and sun in Algeria.
This may be the end of a long somnolence. Why now, as he looks at the face of this silent woman, leaning against the window and seeming aloof from everything happening around her, why are those men’s voices recurring in his ears, with a frightening shrillness?”

She has closed eyes.

He had the time, in a brief flash, to see her eyes without seizing her gaze.

In those dark eyes and that evasive gaze turned toward the night, suddenly form the shadowy reflections of distant nights that jumble together in a clamor of shouts and supplications.57

The outstretched hands of these men, who no longer believe, who no longer trust mankind.58

Yet, the taste for the sun still remains with him. A blaze, like an unbearable acuity, giving to men, to all men, a dark stare. Yes, that is it. Obsession with the sun beating in that vein in his temples, making them ache.59 Which darkens today the contours of his

57 The plural form “ciels” carries no religious connotation and refers to a practice in painting. In the pre-Renaissance, painters would replace golden backgrounds of heaven with blue skies and would model biblical landscapes after those of Italy to render biblical scenes more accessible to the spectator and to humanize Catholic allegories, dovetailing with Bey’s themes of humanizing history. One reading of the passage suggests that she makes a subtle analogy between Catholic practices and the place of Islam in contemporary French society (http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paysage_dans_l%27art). “Cieux” would have played into the latent emotion of the text while privileging a religious connotation, which Bey downgrades regarding Islam. Yet, note the use of “stigmates” to describe the lines on Jean’s face, again subtly revealing the influence of Catholic religious symbolism in French society (Entendez-vous..., 20). “Lointaine” suggests Bey’s blend of art forms since it also refers to “l’arrière-plan, le fond, l’horizon,” in painting, English translations would be: “the background, the depth, the horizon” (Petit Robert, 1109). When referring to the horizon, this word also has the connotation of “brewing or impending,” thus raising a paradox of a distant menace coming closer. This hint is not present in the translation. The reference to sketching through the verb “esquisser” deepens the allusion to painting.

58 “Trust” is not the most common translation for “espérer,” but seems to have most of the nuances mentioned in the Petit Robert’s definition (Considérer (ce qu’on désire) comme devant se réaliser, 690).

59 This is a common expression for a migraine in French and Arabic. I accent the textually significant figurative nuances.
memories. Even through closed eyes. Even in sleep’s illusory void. Even in the vain confusions and ramblings of drunkenness. Even in silence’s throbbing echoes.

Pounding.

One! Two! March!

Their feet sink into dust. Into mud, at times. Crusted mud weighing down their pataugas. Smudging the back side of their pants.

March!

“We are the Africans who come back from afar...” Snippets of songs stuck like burrs in the innermost recesses of consciousness.

Let’s go! All together! Louder! I can’t hear you!

“We comin’ from the colonies to defend our country...”

Men stumble over loose rubble. They get stuck in the underbrush. Yomping.

Roundups. By day or by night. Keep your nerves! Keep your nerves! Company... forward, march!

“No! hear... in the countryside, roa-a-a-ar these ferocious soldiers”

---

60 The verb “obscurecir” denotes “to obscure” and “to darken.” The English “obscure” puts more emphasis on the first definition and does not allow for the nuance that what becomes clear in this passage is the darker side contained in Jean’s involuntary memories.

61 “Pataugas” are traditional Basque linen shoes. They are used by scouts and hikers of all sorts.

62 During the Algerian War, the pieds-noirs used “Le Chant des Africains” (The Song of the Africans: 1914), composed during World War I, as a patriotic song identifying themselves as “Africans”, justifying their presence in Algeria. The line “C’est nous les Africains qui revenons de loin” (we are the Africans who come from afar) conveys an Africans’ duty to combat for France. During the Algerian War, the pieds-noirs changed the song’s original context slightly. This song, commonly sung in the colonial period, justifies their “sacrifices” (quotations are mine) to maintain their presence in Algeria.

63 The French slang is hard to render in English. The Petit Robert’s definition is “pierres cimentées utilisées avec des coquillages, etc. pour construire des grottes artificielles [...] caractérisées par la fantaisie des lignes contournées rappelant les volutes des coquillages” (“rocaille,” Petit Robert, 1723). The implication is that artifice, fantasy, and dissipation make the soldiers slip.

64 “Yomping” is American army slang similar to “crapahutages,” connoting difficult movement or slogging.

On the ground, puddles of blood, urine and shit, mixed with splashes of soapy water that they can no longer swallow. The funnel fills up and sloshes over the edge without being able to empty itself inside their stomachs, immeasurably bloated beyond recognition. Bitter smell of blood and vomit... sometimes of burned flesh.

Sometimes the neon light flickers, almost going out, and their faces are fractured with flashes from the lights outside.

Perhaps it’s due to the screeching of the wheels on the rails each time the train, going at high velocity, slows. And in the wake of this train travelling through the peaceful night, slowly rises

the noise of the gégène, the crank that a man’s hand had to turn, or that had to be turned on with a pedal, like one of those country telephones- a constant noise, a creaking similar to the creak of a well’s pulley. At times covered by long howls that die in rales and resonate for a long time in the night.

---

65 A more common translation for “la haine” is “hatred.” However, the anger is often turned inward, penned up, and poorly expressed, giving the word nuances of rage.
66 The phrase “lancé à grande vitesse” probably refers to a TGV- train à grande vitesse.
67 This passage contains another example of biopolitics. Bey again compares the Algerian woman’s body to the train’s engine. The train’s creaking recalls the “gégène,” or dynamo used to produce the electricity for torture. Given Seltzer’s affirmation about similarities between the steam engine and the dynamo, this association is not surprising. Torture is a supreme example of biopolitics, where political power can modify or eradicate a human body via a dynamo. The coupling of masculine and feminine forces is mirrored by the doubling of the Algerian woman and Jean. Moreover, “actionner” has the sense of being politically or legally astute. It can also mean the help of a political official or of the legal system, as if the French justice system were also activating the “gégène,” along with the individual “man’s hand” (Bey, Entendez-vous...,
She does not feel very well. The screeching of the train as it slows from time to time, sets her teeth on edge, as would an acidic taste. Maybe it is also due to what she just read. To what this book tells, this book that she chose at random while going through a bookstore, no, not really at random, but because of a few passages read while flipping through it, questions asked by this man who interrogates his father to understand the past.\textsuperscript{68}

She lets her thoughts wander… not very far, in rereading the answers… Due to a chance encounter, an answer to a question which is not even clearly posed.\textsuperscript{69}

“No, I’m not talking about orders received and obedience. The executioner doesn’t obey orders. He does his work. He doesn’t hate those whom he executes, he doesn’t take revenge on them, he doesn’t eliminate them because they are bothersome to him or threatening towards him or aggressive towards him. He is completely indifferent to them.”\textsuperscript{70}

\textsuperscript{18} As a result of this politicized memory, the Algerian woman’s body is again affected (\textit{Bodies and Machines}, 18, 27, 43). As Bey implies, the stimulator used for electric shock torture originally powered country telephones. “Gégène” is military slang, so it is consistent with Bey’s style and her habit of bringing out the nuances of French vocabulary. This term, hard to render in English, is similar to the expression “Old Sparky.”

\textsuperscript{68} In this passage, “stopping by” might change Bey’s meaning. As the account begins, the Algerian woman is not allowed to stop. “\textit{En passant}” expresses her continual movement (see the line “Quand donc pourra-t-elle se poser, souffler un peu?,” \textit{Entendez-vous}…, 29). The wording of this sentence has also slightly modified for clarity in English.

\textsuperscript{69} “\textit{Au hasard}” emphasizes the randomness of chance. The exact expression is difficult to render in English even for native French speakers fluent in both languages as “\textit{au hasard de}” has no literal translation. “\textit{Rencontre}” means meeting or encounter. Thus, my paraphrase tries as far as possible to convey her meaning through a similar expression. A more semantic translation would be a “coincidental meeting.”

\textsuperscript{70} The contractions emphasize the informal character of \textit{The Reader}’s dialogue (Schlink, 171).
One question, the same, always, comes to mind while the man across from her looks for his glasses in his jacket pocket, before unfolding a newspaper. How old must he be? Over sixty, that’s for sure…

This obsession… the question she often asks herself when she finds herself facing men of that age, a question she always attempts to suppress.

Those wrinkles etched like stigmata at the corners of his lips. My father would be nearly the same age. No, he would be even older. He would not look like that… he was much smaller… maybe he would have ended up looking like his father…

The conditional comes automatically in the sentences that just sprang into her mind, even as she is drifting into a light doze.

She has often tried to recreate her father’s face. Fragment by fragment. Yet, she only knows of him what she sees again in pictures. A younger man, content, smiling at the camera. All of her memories crystallize around the sparkle of his glasses, behind which his smiling or serious eyes seem tiny.  

---

71 The word “stigmata” refers to Christ’s stigmata, which underscores the influence of Catholic tradition on French society.
72 The original version mixes the first person pronoun “mon” with the third person pronoun “son” to describe the Algerian woman’s father.
73 Given the references to painting and photography in this account, the word “fragment” connotes an incomplete work of art. This sentence literally fragments the text.
74 “Objectif” can be translated as either “camera lens” or “goal or objective.” In this context, “camera lens” is the clear translation. Yet, the French illocutionary level allows Bey to play with two different meanings, implying that Benameur was determined and ready to meet a goal. It also implies that photographs are objective proof of Benameur’s character.
75 The passage begins by referring to Jean’s glasses from the previous paragraph, which triggers a spiral of linked memories, a common side effect of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. One of the effects given to his family was Benameur’s pair of glasses. Thus, this passage, would suggest that the Algerian woman suffers from PTSD too. In this context, “on” is a better translation for “sur.” However, since this analysis is specific and this text addresses a wider audience, I have kept the translation “around” (Hermann, 37). Spirals and this type of circling back are important, as they can be read as symbols for completeness. This shift from the gentleman’s glasses to the Algerian woman’s father’s pair lends an ambiguity to the sentence.
his smell, nor his stride, she remembers nothing. Yet, certain words are still present, bits of sentences that still linger in her memory. However, not the sound of his voice. Not the tone he used when speaking to her. Other very brief images: her father standing in front of the door into his class, in his grey teacher’s uniform, then in shirtsleeves, sitting in an armchair on the terrace, totally relaxed, his face offered to the sun, or standing alone, with his back against the schoolyard wall during recess. She never understood how and why his glasses remained intact. They were the only “personal effects” that could be recovered, with his wedding ring that someone–but who?–removed from his finger.

The man is resting his hand on the narrow window sill. A very white hand with brown spots, crisscrossed by very apparent veins, gnarled fingers, closely clipped and ribbed nails. An old man’s hand, immobile and close, with a finely wrought white gold wedding band on his ring finger.

From time to time, he casts a curious glance at her. An inquisitive gaze. As if he was searching for something on her face.

She does not like trains with compartments. She does not like overnight trains. Fear is there, present, beating in her stomach; has not left her for years, so present that it has become a familiar companion for her that she still cannot manage to tame. What is

similar to the one in the previous paragraph between “il” and “il” and resembles the superimposition of Jean and Benameur’s faces.

I would have translated “un regard curieux” as “a curious glance,” except that “regard” is repeated in the following phrase. Also, the illocutionary level brings up the notion of “inquisiteur.” As for “stigmates,” “regard inquisiteur” has a religious connotation, referring to the Inquisition. Yet again, the text suggests Catholic extremism.
she afraid of in this train that is taking her towards the Old Port City? This train is going towards the sea. That should make her a little bit happier. There, she will recover the light of days, the smell and the tumult of the sea. At least that.

The man suddenly turns to look at the young woman seated near him. He stares at her with a smile that abruptly softens his features.

The young woman with the Walkman has fallen asleep, her mouth open. Relaxed, confident. Of whom, or of what, would she, Marie, have to be afraid?

She cannot fall asleep. In a state of half-consciousness, she lets herself be rocked gently by the even cadence of the advancing machine.

A slight shake. The train just pulled into a station. Three-minute stop.

Passengers get off. Others get on, noiselessly, without jostling. Then, again, the streets of the city slowly crossed. Her face flattened against the window, she gazes.

So that is France.

These men and women free, so free, so different…

Women’s confident gestures as they walk down the street at a brisk pace, heads held high, gazing straight ahead. The twinkling lights from shops’ display windows, the rain, the puddles that reflect lights turned on sometimes in broad daylight. Men and

---

77 The Old Port City or la ville du Vieux-Port refers to Marseille (http://www.marseille-tourisme.com – English version). Boats from there regularly take passengers to and from Algeria.

78 “Shake” has a double meaning of both “bump” and “wake-up call,” although it does not keep the softer rhythm of “secousse.”

79 The expression “regard bien droit” also implies that the women are looking straight ahead. However, the juxtaposition of “assurés” and “regard bien droit” renders this meaning secondary because the passage describes their way of looking and their psychology.
women always in a hurry, the subway’s very specific smell, the heat of this breath travelling through the underground tunnels, bearing dust and gloom. Graffiti-covered walls, colors and shapes of letters tightly nestled as if to mask the concrete in powder make-up. Posters, everywhere, nude bodies, offered, entwined, in an unseemly embrace. And all of these couples holding each other so close, the need they have to touch each other, to caress each other, and to kiss each other, everywhere, anywhere, as if seized at every moment by an imperious necessity to assure themselves that they really belong to one another. Sweet France…

Deep in thought, gently rocked by the train’s cadence, she ends up dozing off. Barely.

She is abruptly wrested from her doze, by shouts, shrieking voices, and calls. She starts, sitting up straight, worried. She gazes at the man who does not move, as if he had heard nothing. He has his eyes fixed on his newspaper. The young woman is awake. She

---

80 I reversed the sentence construction, as this flows better in English. Furthermore, after consulting the Petit Robert, I arrived at “breath” as a translation for “haleine.” This privileges the sense of “respiration humaine” while alluding to the other meaning “la brise.” Bey implies that people’s breath and hurried perspiration composes the breeze in the subway.

81 The French word “farder” is old and requires careful translation. I would have liked to use a one word translation to retain Bey’s style. “Farder” is not used anymore, but used to mean “to apply white facial powder,” which gave European and African women fashionable pale skin due to the French conception of femininity. “Fard” is associated with the white facial powder and “fard à paupières” meaning “eye shadow,” which links back to Entendez-vous dans les montagnes…’s important images of the eyes and the face. The Petit Robert also mentions the sense of “enveloper,” which I have kept in the translation as a synonym for “to cover” and “to hint at an intimate embrace.” “Enlacé,” fits with the intimate atmosphere and also means “to be held in an embrace,” and thus continues the description of the posters and lovers (Chabanier: Bey, 24).

82 Since “offert” also has the connotation of “being publicly advertised,” sexuality is on display.

83 The popular song Douce France, written in 1943 and first-recorded in 1947, evokes childhood movies and traditional postcard-like scenes of France. Notice the juxtaposition of “Sweet France” and the fight in the train, as if to state that these unrepresented scuffles are also common.
still has her earphones in her ears. Without rising, she gazes at the closed door, as if she expected to see someone come in. People run in the corridor. And, in a loud screech of wheels, the train breaks then stops. At that instant, the man raises his eyes. He leans over, gazes out the window and turns to look towards her.

He must be slightly deaf, she thinks. He almost did not react.

She probably has a strange expression on her face, because he looks at her with astonishment.

— You are not feeling well?

She shakes her head,

— No… it’s fine, it’s this noise.

Her voice is hoarse, as if she had a sore throat. She has not spoken for a long time.

Behind the door, running can still be heard, then the door opens.

A woman bursts into the compartment. She steps forward then backward, and freezes on the threshold. She seems beside herself. First she looks at them, without saying anything. The young woman sits up straight now.

Something truly abnormal is happening. Shouts are heard, then whistles blow.

Doors open or close again violently. People call to each other.

84 Bey connotes an “erupting volcano” that disrupts the isolation of the three protagonists.
85 This character’s prejudice and fear keep her outside. Remember that the other three characters cross the threshold, beginning their initiation.
86 The word “affolé” recalls the adjective “folle.” “Beside herself” has the same connotation but not the visual cue.
87 Here we see the first clue that Marie is choosing to react after the confrontation. Like the Algerian woman, she straightens up.
She gazes out the window. All is dark. They are stopped in the middle of nowhere. She sees nothing except her own reflection.

The woman ends up coming in and remains standing in the middle of the compartment. She breathes noisily and splutters in one go,

— Thugs! Thieves! They got on the train… they tried to attack passengers that were sleeping in the first class cars.

The young woman removes her earphones from her ears. She rises.

— What happened?

The woman repeats,

— Thugs… on the train! They tried to attack passengers in the next car. Haven’t you seen anything?

The teenager does not seem very impressed. She goes towards the door and takes a few steps in the visibly deserted corridor.

The woman clasps her hand to her heart; she has difficulty catching her breath.

---

88 I have translated the French word “on” as “people” because of its collective nature. See the translator’s introduction on the importance of “on” in Algerian literature written in French and its changing translation throughout the text.

89 Bey’s phrase “en pleine campagne,” connotes “in the middle of nowhere.” Yet, the narrative voice carefully gives a point of reference by mentioning the word “countryside.” The Algerian woman does not want to be in the middle of nowhere. I retained this in the translation because of the psychological connotation.

90 These last lines are highly symbolic. In The Journey Through the French African Novel, Mortimer writes that night is the time for storytelling in North African literature (6). The night and the halt in the outward journey facilitate the Algerian woman’s inward journey. Actually, looking outward permits her not to see the other three passengers and focus inward. Like Djebar in L’amour, la fantaisia (1985), Bey juxtaposes two linked settings: Algeria in 1956 and contemporary France. Her paternal language juxtaposes the memory of her father, and the presence of her father’s executioner. The story is one of initiation for all three characters, but the night permits a single focus (Mortimer, 126).
— I was asleep, but I heard them… I was sleeping with one eye open. With everything that’s happening, one just never knows. And then, all of a sudden, everyone started shouting. Fortunately! They got out of here! I saw them go right in front of me… Arabs, I’m sure! I saw them! We should not open the doors now, they have to be arrested! They have to be arrested! They really have to… they really have to be caught! Oh my God! I was so afraid!

She has a sharp voice, speaking very quickly, repeats again.

— I saw them… they should not be allowed to escape… they… they should be arrested! They shouldn’t get away with this one! All the same, it’s unbelievable! One can’t even travel in peace anymore… I hope the doors haven’t been opened.

The train is still stopped but one can no longer hear anything.

---

91 I looked beyond “clasp”’s first meaning to privilege the word’s archaic sense. I sought to keep this style that was at once modern and nuanced. In Je ne parle pas la langue de mon père, Sebbar mentions that to place one’s right hand on one’s heart is an Islamic salutation. Thus, the French woman ironically unknowingly greets her fellow passengers.

92 Bey uses the French “on” and “il faut” quite a bit to accent these collective stereotypes. This is not transferred well into English as this passage is in dialogue form.

93 A semantic translation of “ils se sont sauvés” as “they saved themselves” is important here, since the French woman’s perspective implies that, by running, the supposed “thugs” literally saved themselves from arrest. Yet, like “débiter,” this translation would take away from the phrase’s primary meaning in English. “They got out of here” is an attempt to reconcile the two meanings.

94 In his article “‘Des Arabes, j’en suis sûre’: Rompre le silence dans Entendez-vous dans les montagnes… de Maïssa Bey”, Achille characterizes the racism of the French woman’s phrase as a catalyst for the revelations that will follow. French society erupts into the car along with this character forcing the three protagonists out of their silent isolation. The woman’s comments create an uneasiness and intensify Marie’s desire to know and the other protagonists’ need to recount (252, 255). I contend that Marie’s desire to know is also a catalyst and that these two factors are linked.

95 “Arrêter” also means “to be stopped.”

96 The sentence construction, beginning with “she,” incorporates the woman’s voice into her character. The voice is something she possesses rather than simply an attribute that is. Bey uses a fragmented construction, as if to mimic the overanxious sound of her voice.

97 One interpretation is that in the original text, Bey uses common imperatives to accent social construction.
The woman is presently standing in the doorjamb. She hugs her bag very tightly to her chest. She turns her back on them, looks into the hall, to the right and to the left, shakes her head nervously, on pins and needles. Then she blurts out,

― My suitcase! My suitcase!

She dashes into the corridor.

The man looks at the woman seated facing him. He has an embarrassed smile on his lips, as if he wanted to excuse what has just been said.98

He knows, he has understood.

The young woman comes back. She tells them evenly,

― I don’t see anything.99 Everything’s calm! Maybe it was just… a simple scuffle.

She returns to her place, sits down with her legs curled underneath her, and turns to the woman sitting facing her.100

― You dropped your book, Madame.101

98 “S’excuser” also has the connotation of “to apologize,” so the nuance is more subtle. The absence of “s” is important because Jean does not want to apologize for, but simply to excuse, the woman’s statement (Bey, Entendez-vous…, 12).

99 Marie is unaware of the cultural politics, thus she is unable to “see anything” (Bey, Entendez vous…, 26). At first, she, similar to the French woman from the previous passage, is misinformed and wrongly believes in her own perception, which leads her to conclude that it is just a simple scuffle. However, her calm, the use of the word “maybe,” and her age permits the conclusion that she is uninformed.

100 “Place” also translates as “seat,” but this removes the connotation of “place,” especially if readers are supposed to reflect on social norms.

101 “Madame” is the polite way to address a woman you are not acquainted with. “Ma’am” does not always have the same polite connotation in English.
The man leans over, picks it up and holds it out to her, not without having cast a glance at the title, *The Reader*, by Schlink.

He nods his head. In a barely audible voice, she thanks him, without even looking at him.

That’s how it is… it always has to happen that way.

How can this woman be sure that they are Arabs? A rapid glance in the semi-darkness of the train was enough for her. Obviously, as soon as there is a theft, a fight, an assault, it could only be them. No need to go looking further. She tries to convince herself that they were not Algerians… as if that could change anything.

She takes her head in her hands pressing very hard against her forehead, as if to eradicate all the thoughts she could no longer manage to put in order. She truly feels ill. She can no longer bear any allusion to violence, and now she finds herself caught up again in everything she has been attempting in vain to flee.

He rises, approaches her, bends over,

— I am a doctor. Maybe I could…

She shakes her head.

— No, no, I’m fine…

He is very close to her. She detects his scent. A scent she recognizes. A very subtle fragrance. She turns her head once more to look away.

---

102 “*Coup d’œil*” literally means “eying,” which in this context connotes a “sharp glance.” Thus, the expression continues Bey’s figurative use of body parts and connects to the fight through the literal meaning of “*coup*.”

103 Recall Achille’s observations on racism as a catalyst in “*Des Arabes, j’en suis sûre*” (252, 255).
— It’s nothing… just a passing dizzy spell. I am used to this… it’s going to pass very quickly, don’t worry!  

He keeps looking at her. This attention, this insistent gaze fixed on her, unsettles her. She would like to get up, to go out in the corridor, or rather to take her suitcase and get off the train that just started again very slowly at that same instant. She plans a move and then lets herself fall back onto the seat. What for? Where could she go?
— Are you sure that…

She again lifts her head, forces herself to smile.
— I was only a little… dizzy, only a bit lightheaded. This often happens to me. I am fine, there, it’s going away, it’s better now!

He insists,
— Maybe you need a quite strong coffee with a lot of sugar. Would you like a…
— No, no I assure you there’s no need, I don’t want to trouble you, everything is fine.

She leans her head against the back of the seat, then closes her eyes, troubled by that look that seems to express more than simple solicitude… a real desire to come to her aid.

104 This translation is communicative. Still, the repetition of “passage” and “passé” is important because the Algerian woman wants to reassure the doctor that these episodes will go away.

105 The dizzy spell is symbolic. Every time the Algerian woman is dizzy, her inner journey moves to a new phase and her outer journey recommences. Every time the train starts, readers move into a new phase of the story. Here, Jean will eventually ask her if she is from Algeria, which begins the conversation that forms the plot of the book and will reveal the character’s true identity.

106 The expression “esquisser” implies that one can see the outline of the movement.

107 In English, the expression “Do you want” would probably be followed by a question mark. But since Bey uses an ellipsis, I chose “Do you want a,” which implies the question mark and needs an ellipsis.
The man sat back down. He has taken up his newspaper again, but he does not seem very focused on his reading.\textsuperscript{108} He raises his eyes from time to time in order to observe her.

It was only a dizzy spell. She no longer feels anything but an immense distress, and especially the desire to arrive at her destination very quickly. She still has to spend several hours there, in that car. No! She has to get a hold of herself.\textsuperscript{109} She is going to be fine. She is eager for this trip to finally end. All of these departures, all of these layovers… When will she be able to settle down, to breathe a little?\textsuperscript{110} She does not understand what is happening to her. In the past, she has always been stable.\textsuperscript{111} It is certainly the fatigue accumulated over the last few days, the tension of the last few months… an emotionalism burgeoning on the surface of her thin skin, a sensibility that she did not recognize within herself. To flee… to leave everything behind without looking back, to try to find a link, a friend, a place to hole up… to reconnect those who came here before her, settled for a few years already. How did they manage? How were they able to acclimate themselves? She is unable to get used to the idea that she will probably be there for a long time. Yes, this risks being a temporary residency…

\textsuperscript{108} I changed the word order slightly in order to partially keep the sense of “\textit{sa lecture},” which could also mean “his interpretation.”

\textsuperscript{109} Bey uses “\textit{il faut},” which is an impersonal expression suggesting the social expectation that anyone in this situation should know how to control their emotions. The Algerian woman’s ethnicity, class, and dizzy spells would render this character highly conscious of this expectation as these qualities would make her different from others.

\textsuperscript{110} The expression “\textit{se poser}” connotes “having a comfortable routine,” and “being physically and socially poised.” The character would like to get off the train and resume daily activities. The expression “settle in” does not exactly render the same meaning.

\textsuperscript{111} “\textit{Solide}” connotes “solid,” “stable,” or “balanced.” Notice the opposition in this passage between what she told the doctor and what she feels when she concentrates on the dizziness. There is a paradox between the two states: the first describes public appearance. In the second, she is privately explaining to herself.
indefinitely prolonged. She has not really felt well since she has been there. She has the sensation that the earth, which carries her, is moving under her feet. For several weeks, she has been attempting to keep herself balanced in order to move forward… putting one foot in front of the other; that appears simple. Her head is heavy… so heavy from the effort of rehashing all of these thoughts. She feels exhausted, breathless, there… suddenly, as if she had made a great effort.

He is in the midst of speaking to her. However, entirely absorbed in this weakness that she cannot quite overcome, she does not listen; then, she grasps words, a sentence that makes her lend an ear:

— I’m a doctor, but… I have not been practicing for some time. I know your country well.

Her country? How did he know? Of course, it jumps out at you, especially since… but I could have been… maybe it’s the silver earrings… for someone who knows the country well, Kabyle jewelry is readily identifiable… but that’s it, that’s also why she wears them, yes, never to forget who she is, and especially not to make others forget what she is, a foreign woman, that’s all.

---

112 “Séjour temporaire” also means Temporary Resident Permit, such as the one given to a political exile, so I retained “residency” to accent the repetition on page 34, “J’ai droit à un séjour temporaire, c’est écrit sur mon passeport” “I have the right to a Temporary Resident Permit, it is written on my passport.”

113 See the parallel with the earthquake in Surtout ne te retourne pas (2009). Here, we see another example of biopolitics. First, the earth appears to be moving under the Algerian woman’s feet, and then we learn that it is because she is disoriented as a result of the social customs in France.

114 In On dirait qu’elle danse (2014), readers find a comparable use of “équilibre” in the avertissement (Bey, 9). On a translator’s note, I changed the comma to a semi-colon to Americanize the punctuation.

115 Here we see yet another example of biopolitics. What manifests itself as dizziness is actually caused by her weighty preoccupations which are both political and personal.
As if he had heard her pronounce those words, he pointed to her suitcase above her in the luggage rack.

— There… your suitcase.

She raises her head and looks. Her address back there, her only real address, is still written on the tag hanging from the handle of her suitcase. Quite visible. Her name also. He knows my name, where I come from, maybe even… and yes, that I am just passing through…

He repeats, in a hesitating voice,

— It’s just that… I knew Algeria well.

That’s quite often how discussions begin here, as soon as they learn that she is Algerian. Already a few years ago, during her first stay in France, upon her arrival, the customs’ agent who screened her was a Frenchman native to her village, one of the repatriated. So tremendous a coincidence that she remained speechless for a long moment. She did not even know what to respond when he listed the names of students who had been with him at the lycée, names that were all familiar to her. She had to promise to give a telephone number to one of her neighbors, who happened to be one of the classmates of the tireless customs’ agent, with such a vivid memory, so moved to

\[\text{\footnotesize 116 Here, Jean enacts the typical scene between the colonizer and the colonized that Fanon describes in }\]

\[\text{\footnotesize Peau Noire Masques Blancs. Since she is sick, he is being paternalistic towards the Algerian woman and speaks to her of her country (Fanon, 44). As a result of her illness, the character originally responds positively to this solicitude while fearing the reenactment of the colonial situation that follows.}\]

\[\text{\footnotesize 117 In order to retain the word play with body parts, this could also be translated as “eye-catching.”}\]
have news from the country. He bombarded her with questions about everything: the streets, the houses, the village square, the newspaper stand, the school... and about everyone: from the old cleaning woman, a little maid who must be quite old by now, to the Mozabite corner grocer, before letting her leave with visibly heart-felt reluctance.

And then... there is also the particular curiosity of all those who sympathize...

“How is it back there?” With pitying or worried countenances. And right away, they inevitably add: “With everything that’s going on” Some even talk about “the events in Algeria,” a venerated expression, as in the past. She expects the question now. He is going to say those words, he is going to say them, that’s for sure.

Yet he seems to be elsewhere, he does not want to talk anymore. Fortunately. She doesn’t either.

She could have thanked him anyway for his solicitude, he is going to take her for a...

— Thank you... thank you.

She has not stopped thanking everyone ever since she has been there. Thank you for your understanding, your support, your often sincere desire to come to my aid or the

---

118 The expression “du pays” implies that the Frenchman considers this as his homeland, while the article used is “du” instead of the possessive pronoun “son,” which subtly differentiates her attachment from his.

119 “À contrecœur visiblement” literally means “visibly against one’s heart.” We see another instance where Bey uses body parts and vision to communicate the importance of emotional perceptions.

120 The French verb “consacrer” means both “to establish” and “to consecrate or sanctify,” and rendering both these meanings in English was difficult. My formulation sounds odd but retains the important religious overtones. The literal translation is most appropriate in this passage, “les événements d’Algérie” is a French euphemism for the Algerian War. During the hostilities, certain French people refused to call this conflict a war, but simply events. Bey’s vocabulary compares the Algerian War for Independence and “The Black Decade.” A similar tactic was employed by certain Americans during the Iraq war when the conflict was merely called “events.” Moreover, the word “autrefois” refers to a subject with which the reader is already familiar.
way you elegantly, shut the doors in my face, softly, thank you for your pity, your
sometimes perfidious interest, thanks to those who sympathize, who ask questions about
“what’s going on,” so many questions that I do not know how to, I cannot answer,
because they are the same questions I ask myself.

Defensively shielded, she wears her difference like armor. She is not from there.

She lets herself be carried from exile to exile; first back there, a foreigner in her
own country because she refused to abdicate, to let herself be swept away by this
enormous wave that submerged one after another so many men and women. She does
not know, no she does not know which shoreline she should hail to finally feel free from
this solidly-anchored anguish that has been pursuing her all the way here. She does not
want to, she no longer wants to talk about what she has left behind: her house, her work,
her daily bearings. Not to think about her loved ones, about the sun, about the light and
about the smell of the days, about this intolerable suffering around her such as…

Weary, she lets herself fall on the seat.

— You’re…

She interrupts him,

— Yes. Algerian, that’s it.

This said without smiling.

---

121 Even though the first meaning of “to abdicate” is “to relinquish the crown,” which is, according to the
Petit Robert, the second sense of the French verb “abdiquer.” The first definition is “to renounce an action,
to declare oneself vanquished,” which is the second sense of the English verb (3). Due to Entendez-vous
dans les montagnes...’s political message I retained a semantic translation, as the order of the meanings
may be a result of common usage.

122 In French “siens” can just mean “those that are hers,” thus, connoting a level of intimacy, that is hard to
render in this way in English. It can be family, friends, or just one’s people, the people that form her
identity. This implies a close acquaintance.
— That’s not what I meant…

To have done with the questions, the explanations, she adds,

— I live here now.

Why did she specify “now”? I am not an emigrant, that’s what she meant. But what difference does that make, especially in their eyes? I am an exile, nothing else. Or rather a refugee. I have the right to temporary residency, it’s written on my passport. During the time that…

— I have a lot of trouble picturing what’s happening over there.

There, it is said. Of course, how could he? She too, for a few years, has had a lot of trouble opening her eyes to the reality each morning. Even here. She didn’t come looking to forget. Only for a respite. But how could she, when all they bring up is her country’s bloody front?

— Such a beautiful country…

---

123 “Séjour temporaire”, translated here as “temporary residency,” a reference to a Temporary Resident Permit (Bey, Entendez-vous, 30). In the sense of “political asylum,” France grants “cartes de séjour temporaire” to political exiles. However, Algerian nationals are subject to a special set of regulations: http://vosdroits.service-public.fr/paprrticuliers/F302.xhtml. Bey was granted the status of a political exile or refugee.

124 The French juxtaposition between “imagination” and “réalité” should not be overlooked. However, in French, “imaginer” is slightly idiomatic. “Picturing” perhaps captures both senses of the word.

125 The word “face” is difficult to translate because Bey manipulates multiple nuances, such as “face” as “façade” or “artifice” and “face” as “side.” The word also means “what is being displayed.” See the translator’s introduction on the importance of “on” in Algerian literature. “Front” is not the most common translation, but connotes both “face” and “façade.” The first meaning of “face” as “visage” or “figure” is important. This also connotes chance and ambiguous perception.
What country is he talking about? That nostalgia in his voice. No, much more than nostalgia, suffering, something stemming from his face, in his eyes, his way of averting his eyes, of pronouncing his words without looking at her.\footnote{I chose “stemming” since “affleurer” comes from “fleur,” “flower.” This word choice connects to the expression “à fleur de peau,” which Bey uses on page 29. I could not render all of the literal connotations earlier.}

— I remember it… I remember it very well… It was… It was… a long time ago, a very long time ago.

She looks at him, a little surprised by the slight crack she just detected in his voice. That’s what they always say about Algeria: what a beautiful country! With an exclamation point and of course, a verb in the past tense, even if it is implicit! This sentence, she has heard it everywhere, for such a long time, said in a tone of regret during the first few years that followed independence, but now colored by commiseration. Yes, the beaches, the desert, the hot sand, the sun, the light…\footnote{Here, Bey is referring to characteristic French clichés about Algeria: the sun, the desert and the hot sand have been present in both Franco-Algerian literature and film (Bey, \textit{Entendez-vous…}, 36). Concerning the translation, the word “regards” is a bit more formal in English than it would be in French, but carries the connotations of “regarde.”}

Yet in this country, there are men. In every country, there are men. It is they who make it into a homeland. Who make it into a hell. Or a country in which it is nice to live.

\textit{His} Algeria: these are certainly the beaches of Fort de l’Eau and La Madrague, the rounds of \textit{anisette} at evening fall, the odor of Kémia, of Mouna, and of Merguez kebabs, tanning sessions with feet dangling in the water, rounds of pétanque in the paths of Bab el Oued Park, the Saturday night dance parties in the village squares, spins around the
Ruisseau des singes, fairs, open-air bars… happiness… lost happiness… nostalgia, that is certainly what he means.\textsuperscript{128}

— I spent eighteen months there, I was drafted.

*The privates walk on the path, neck crushed under a leaden sun. The weight of the rifle on the shoulder, the grenades on the belt. They have sore feet, backs in shreds, eyes irritated by sweat.*\textsuperscript{129} *They are racked with fear.*\textsuperscript{130} *Behind every bush, they conjure up an enemy, in ambush, ready to spring and slit their throats. They have been warned. They are fierce, bloodthirsty. They have been shown photos as soon as they got to the barracks. The little guy from the contingent, with his throat cut, his testicles in his mouth. He will never forget. And those who never came back… The list is long. Medals and citations. Died for France. Killed in their prime on the field of honor. Their names are*
engraved in the squares of the villages of France.\textsuperscript{131} Heroes dead in order to defend their homeland. Which homeland?\textsuperscript{132} Their fathers’ land?\textsuperscript{133} ...And what could one say of the others?

\textit{One morning, Bernard is missing from roll call. Gone AWOL. During the night, he has joined the maquis, the fellouzes over there in the djebels, taking arms and munitions with him.}\textsuperscript{134} He has crossed the line. Without saying anything to anyone. As for Jean, he stayed in the barracks.\textsuperscript{135} More alone than ever. All those nights of talking ceaselessly, trying to understand, to tame the horror.\textsuperscript{136} In vain. Bernard ended up choosing the other camp. No one ever saw him again.

Jean never saw the others either... those who like him came back...

But does one ever come back from there?

She says nothing. Why does he want to talk about Algeria? Simply because she is Algerian? That’s not really a unique type around here.\textsuperscript{137} She has nothing to say, nothing to say to him. She takes up her book again.

\textsuperscript{131} This is a semantic translation, but the rhythmic construction and repetition of of recalls carving. Each syllable is very literally cutting the sentence, forcing the reader to take a breath. Many French villages have various war monuments in their main square.
\textsuperscript{132} Although, in French, the word “\textit{patrie}” seems less pejorative and more widely used, the connotation of “homeland” should be rendered in this context with all of the recent American undertones.
\textsuperscript{133} “Their fathers’ land?” recalls the earlier discussion with the repatriated customs agent born in her town (Bey, \textit{Entendez-vous…}, 31, 36).
\textsuperscript{134} “\textit{Fellouze}” is a strong racial slur in French for which many French dictionaries do not have a translation. It is short for “\textit{Fellagah}.”
\textsuperscript{135} The passage suggests that Jean and Bernard were at least roommates and discussed desertion, and we can infer that Jean is hiding something because of the later information that Bernard never said anything to anyone, meaning that he never actually told anyone he was going to leave.
\textsuperscript{136} I reversed the order of the sentence to make it dryer and shorter, to better communicate the mood of the passage. However, a more literal translation of the sentence reads “All of those nights spent talking, ceaselessly…” This order also seems important because it emphasizes the number of nights.
\textsuperscript{137} Literally meaning “it’s not a rare species.” This expression is more common in French than in English, although it carries some slightly negative connotations. The expression would have the implication “it’s not
A sentence jumps out at her.\textsuperscript{138}

“When he spoke, he gave me a lecture on the person, liberty and dignity, on a human being as subject and on the fact that we don’t have the right to treat a human as an object.”\textsuperscript{139}

Such a beautiful country! Bled out at present. Victim of too many celebrations or cursed by the gods, residing there regardless of the season – not only in spring time.

Of course, the days are still bathed in sunlight, but the nights are presently haunted by deeper and deeper shadows, as if permitting men to give free reign to their inner demons. And, night and day, the doors are shut, bolted over the stunned silence that has fallen upon beings, a silence charged with immeasurable anguish that liquidates the echoes of shouts and calls that remain unanswered.\textsuperscript{140}

She fled under threat. She left that country in order to come find refuge here.

What an irony of history! She, the daughter of “a glorious martyr of the revolution,” of a man executed for having wanted to chase France from his country, here she is, seeking

\textsuperscript{138} Due to the connotation of perception, this could be translated as “jumps off the page,” or “catches her eye.” However, “jumps out at her” puts more emphasis on how these words impact the woman or how they become obvious to the woman rather than how these words are framed on the page. In order to retain the play with body parts, I contemplated keeping “catches her eye,” because when reading, this is a common phrase in English, and is fairly close to the text. Then, I decided that “jumps out at her” would both communicate the character’s perception and imply vision.

\textsuperscript{139} “La personne” could have been translated as “personhood,” but I preferred to keep a semantic translation of “the person,” as the connotations are significant and more individual.

\textsuperscript{140} “Abattu” also has the meaning of being slaughtered. Thus, people fall because of silence, it kills. “Liquidation” means to produce fragments of sound, commonly used in music. Here, Bey juxtaposes two traditions discussed earlier so as to accent the second. These “echoes” are now becoming part of the Algerian literary tradition.
refuge among those whom he, the teacher, the hero honored during so many commemorations and whose name the village’s school bears, had fought!\textsuperscript{141}

She no longer wants to bear the shock of daily executions, massacres and accounts of massacres, landscapes disfigured by terror, innumerable funeral processions, mothers’ howls… menacing stares… She fled to attempt to protect herself from fear that crushes, that shatters, that petrifies, and especially that ends up diverting one from all human feeling, because it blinds to the point of giving birth to rage, violence, the irrepresible desire for vengeance, the temptation to kill before being killed…

She has fled. And now, she definitely does not want anyone to speak to her about her country. Neither in the past, nor in the present.

She looks at him without saying a word. But he does not expect any response. He continues, as if he were talking to himself.

— Yes… I spent several months there, first working in an office and then as a medical aid, in an infirmary.\textsuperscript{142} In a military camp. A special camp. And then…

\textit{The camp is surrounded by walls topped with barbed wire and guard towers. Men that they bring there day and night, cuffed or already nastily battered are fearsome terrorists. In any case, all terrorists are fearsome… The zone is particularly dangerous.}

Not only because of the configuration of the landscape… Captain Fleury hammers home:

\textsuperscript{141} Recall the note on Kabylia’s reputation as particularly rebellious. Keep in mind the autobiographical nature of Bleu blanc vert and L’une et l’autre.
\textsuperscript{142} In some cases, “préposé” specifically refers to a postman but also has several other meanings describing employees who do low-level office work. Therefore, I changed the sentence’s construction so that American readers understand the nuances (Petit Robert, 1518).
you have to know this, here, there are no suspects. There are only the guilty. Guilty of
remaining silent, of opening their door to fellagas, of furnishing them with provisions, of
giving them money, by choice or by force, it doesn’t matter, and of informing them. They
know how to make them talk... You hear? All... they are all accomplices! You have to
make them talk whatever the cost! Otherwise, you are the ones we’re going to find on the
roadside, ratted out by these bastards, with your balls torn out! Get that through your
thick skulls!

He pauses for an instant. Then he takes up the charge again,

— Do you live in Algiers?

She nods her head. He did not use the imperfect. Yet …

She corrects, mechanically,

— Yes, Algiers… well… I used to live in Algiers.

— And… do you know Boghari? A village near the Portes du Sud. Not very
far from Algiers. Well… not really a village… rather a large market town.

143 In English, “martèle” would be more commonly rendered as “drills,” but I kept the translation
“hammers home” because of the Franco-Algerian connotation behind the French “martèle,” “pounding,”
which can refer to a migraine in both French and Arabic.
144 This refers to the solidarity networks implemented to assist other Algerians in danger, often considered
as “brothers” or “sisters” (Stora, Ils venaient d’Algérie, 149).
145 In French there are two past tenses. The imperfect is usually used to describe memories. Jean did not use
this tense as if to imply that the woman still resides in Algeria. The Algerian woman takes care to use the
imperfect when responding.
146 The full name of the town on Google Maps is Ksar Boukhari.
147 “Portes du Sud,” meaning “Southern Gates,” is a tourist attraction near Ksar Boukhari.
148 Although small, “bourgs” are larger than “villages”, so even though the translation says “large,” Bey
suggests that Ksar Boukhari is quite small.
She starts, her breath cut off. She cannot help but clench her fists very tightly, so tightly that her nails bite deeply into her palm and finally pain forces her to react.

He seems not to have noticed anything.

No, no… she will ask no questions.

She was born in Boghari. She lived there. Until her father’s death.

He did not notice the pallor that invaded her face. He wants to talk. It is the first time. The first time since… He stares at a spot behind her, as if he were staring at a screen and continues in a low voice.

Why does he want to talk? He does not know. He does not know if she is listening. It matters little to him. He repeats one more time,

— I’m a doctor. I finished my studies after the war. Over there, I was stationed at the camp infirmary. Occasionally… I really believed that they needed medics to take care of men…

He resumes slowly,

— Men… It’s true; at times I happened to take care of them…

---

149 In English, this would probably be most commonly translated as “gasp,” but I retained the semantic translation because of the violent context.

150 “Invaded” is not the most common translation for this expression. However, I retained the literal meaning because of the military language used in the rest of the passage. If we follow Mosteghanemi’s logic about the power of the face to reveal, Jean misses a significant revelation.

151 Literally, ‘envie’ characterizes “impulsive wishes.”
He has noticed nothing, entirely engrossed in his memories. She is suddenly cold… very cold. A breath of icy wind has just engulfed her that makes her shiver from head to foot.\textsuperscript{152}

She often pictured THE scene. But for as long as she has been here, paradoxically, she ended up no longer thinking about it. Probably because other scenes, quite real ones, have come to supplant the images she was trying to manufacture from other accounts.\textsuperscript{153}

From other scenes described by those who had survived. Already, as a little girl, she was trying to put a face on the men who had tortured and finished off her father before throwing him into a ditch.\textsuperscript{154} But she could not manage to give them a man’s face. They could be only monsters… like those who today, for other reasons and in almost the same places, are slitting children’s, women’s, and men’s throats.\textsuperscript{155} She then saw masked men, clothed entirely in black in order to better fade into the night, a little bit like the images of executioners portrayed in books and history films.\textsuperscript{156} Faceless men who had long haunted her dreams. Later, fortified by her certainties, she added: men who had nothing human about them.

\textsuperscript{152} In Arabic, a Muslim woman’s private parts encompass the area from the top of her head to her feet (“The Thousand and One Nights in Venuti”, 98).
\textsuperscript{153} Bey is playing with the connotation of fabrication. However, this notion is paradoxical. At times, in history books, fabrication is negative, as their truth is supposed to connote mastery. On the other hand, a writer, through fiction, can communicate a truth using the unreal.
\textsuperscript{154} “Achever” is used in what is known as “cultured French” giving the passage a distinctly literary tone. “Fosse commune” also has the connotation of a “pauper’s grave”, meaning that these victims were considered as low-class outcasts. Regarding faces’ power to reveal motivations, she was trying to figure out who executed her father.
\textsuperscript{155} This phrase would most commonly be translated as “men, women, and children” but the order seems specific here, so I retained it.
\textsuperscript{156} Bey uses this word which refers to a specific type of black mask, worn to conceal someone’s identity either as a spy or as an executioner during both the Algerian War and “The Black Decade”. 
She does not want to, she does not want to hear anything more about it. And what if she got up now? What if she went out, changed compartments, got off at the next station? What if she asked him softly, but firmly, to be quiet? She would very much like to be able to say... excuse me, I have a headache... so much more since she feels a real physical malaise, she just became conscious of it. Her head is caught in a vice and painful stabbing gouges her temples.\textsuperscript{157}

As if looking for a means to stem the suffering that has just reemerged, she looks to the young woman who, seeing them speaking, took her earphones out a little while ago, certainly to take part in the conversation.\textsuperscript{158}

— I have a lot of Algerian friends. Really... they all say it’s a very beautiful country. My grandfather too. He talks about it all the time. He was born back there.

And there! We’ve come full circle! A pied-noir’s granddaughter, a veteran, a fellaga’s daughter.\textsuperscript{159} It’s almost unreal. Truly, who could have imagined such a scene? It resembles a television studio, gathered for a show by journalists in search of truth, desiring to lift the veil to shed light on “France's painful past.” All that is missing is a harki\textsuperscript{160}. And especially, to emphasize this situation’s absurdity and strangeness, they should not neglect to introduce her not only as a fellaga’s daughter, but herself obliged to flee her country to escape the fundamentalist madness. Someone could even write a play

\textsuperscript{157} The French sentence clearly delineates a pounding headache, but there is hardly any way to render the exact connotations with Bey’s precision.
\textsuperscript{158} “Ressurgir” is more emotionally evocative, thus I have played on the connotation of “reemerge.”
\textsuperscript{159} “Fellaga” is a pejorative term referring to Algerian resistance fighters during the Algerian War. It also carries the connotation of “terrorist.”
\textsuperscript{160} A “harki” Algerian who collaborated and fought with the French army during the Algerian War.
about it, by choosing a commonplace title, with intentional banality, for example:

“Conversation in a train.” Act I. Characters in place.

In a strange doubling, she hears herself say,

— I… I know Boghari well. I was born there…

Encouraged by this answer, the man seems to want to continue his evocation. He runs his hand through his hair several times, leans towards her and resumes, in a firmer tone,

— I spent the whole training period there. There were large barracks, seven kilometers from the village, in the mountains.\textsuperscript{161} It was called… Boghar. It was… the end of 1956, beginning of 1957, during the events. Things happened over there… Strolling in the vicinity was not highly recommended…

He stops for an instant then, as if to make her act as a witness, he turns sharply towards the young woman, who is also listening to him.\textsuperscript{162}

— But… it was a very beautiful region… if…

Her heart is beating a little faster. Her hands are icy. The date… She does not dare to take full stock of what is actually happening at this instant. And there is that “if”… followed by a silence. Why is he hesitating? She would like him to… no, she doesn’t know if she really wants to let him continue to talk, without telling him anything. But the conversation is launched now.

\textsuperscript{161} The French word used here is “\textit{hauteur},” literally “heights.” I chose “mountains” as Boghari is in Kabylia.

\textsuperscript{162} “Started” would perhaps be better but would remove the connotation of having been thrown. The sentence implies that the Algerian woman continues to participate in the discussion because of what Jean is asking of Marie.
— I don’t know if it’s always like that. There were trees, a lot of trees in the region. A magnificent forest… pines and larches, I think. Then… winding paths… and a terrible cold in winter! Never, I would have never ever thought that it could be that cold over there! They didn’t prepare us for that. We patrolled all over, it seemed like everywhere. Do you know the region well?

— A little … a few vague memories. My father took us there sometimes in the car on Sundays.

Her voice trembles. She is not sure he heard her.

She does not really remember much about the region, its beauty. She was too young. She does not know if it is still “like that.” These last years, many forests have been burned because they served as havens for terrorist groups, many trees on the roadsides were also cut down to forestall ambushes. She remembers only having read in a newspaper, not so long ago, that the barracks at Boghar were attacked one night, by armed groups presented by certain foreign journalists as “presumed” Islamic fundamentalists. A bloodbath. All the victims were young men drafted for military service. A frightening number of deaths. At that time, she had asked her mother if it was really there that they strolled in the past, trying to remember the Sunday outings from her childhood. She recaptured only the sensation of nausea that submerged her every time

---

163 “Un peu partout” is difficult to translate in English. The standard translation is “everywhere,” but the best rendering if possible for the expression would be somewhere between “everywhere” and “all over the place.”

164 A more semantic translation of “elle a la voix qui tremble” would be “her voice is trembling.”
they had to go up there in the car. She was apprehensive about the trip because of the windy narrow road, a real torture.

*It is as if they had opened the floodgates to let muck flow out, all the mire from a past that appears very close and still sensitive. As if running your finger over or touching an old scar whose edges had scabbed over, or so you thought, you felt a slight oozing, which was transformed bit by bit into pus, which ends up flowing more and more abundantly, without having an ability to stop it.*

— You were young, certainly too young… you can’t remember all of that, of course.

One would almost think that he is looking to… to reassure himself. Should she now tell him her age? Or talk to him about places from her childhood?

She is not looking to correct him, to tell him that if she doesn’t remember the trees, the beauty of the region, she remembers all the rest of it.

The young woman moved closer. Without really grasping what is going on between this man and this woman seeming to be peacefully discussing, in search for common memories, she is listening; she wants to be told about this country that she does not know but that is part of her family history.

And it’s to her that the woman desires to speak. She turns towards her,

— And you? Haven’t you ever been there?

---

165 These scabs have not yet healed, which allows the pus to flow.
Marie shakes her head,
— No, no. My parents were born here. My grandfather… it’s my maternal grandfather… he left Algeria in… I don’t remember when, after the war, like all the other French. He never set foot there again. But he talks about it all the time. He still has his photos… a lot of photos that he never stops bringing out when we come. I would very much have liked to…

The man interrupts,
— It is perhaps not the best time to go there!

He pronounces these words drily. It is nearer to a warning than to a piece of advice.

The woman feels hurt. She feels that there is a reproach in his voice, a reproach that he addresses to her, as if he did not approve of her question, or… yes, it rather seems to her that he wants to get to her, to hurt her.

What he wants to tell her and what he does not dare to, perhaps because she, the foreign woman, is there, is certainly this: No, little Marie with such bright eyes and such blonde locks, it’s not the time to go over there… especially not you. There is no reason to put your life in danger. For tourism, there are many other countries to discover.

---

166 To understand the images that Marie is speaking about, please see Jean Loiseau’s *Pied-noir, mon frère: témoignage d’un francaoui* (1963) describing the author’s impressions of Algeria. Although he states that he was born in France, he identifies with the pieds-noirs, and affirms that his experiences were similar to theirs. This book is enhanced by photos of such scenes as airplanes, landscapes, and leisure activities. Hence, the account is comparable to Marie’s grandfather’s habits.

167 Italics render the repetition of “elle.” I reversed the phrase “elle est là, elle, l’étrangère” to keep a comparable flow when recreating the repetition in English. What Jean may also mean is that Marie would easily be recognized as a French girl and perceived as vulnerable due to her appearance.
Countries where you can walk in the streets and tan in the sun without fear of being singled out and slaughtered. Some calmer countries, some more… orderly people, where they know how to properly receive tourists in search of folklore, a change of scenery and exoticism. Did you know that that one is listed among the ten most dangerous countries on the planet? Very dangerous, even and especially for those who live there! And if you’re really set on going, you will still need to wait a long time before discovering this country that is beautiful, in the end, only in the memory of those who left it!

Mission accomplished. They just left the small hamlet nestled in the hollow of a valley. What one calls here a mechta. Or rather what remains of it. A few clouds of smoke rise over houses. Or rather what remains of them. The guys in the chopper did a good job. The planes returned to base. Everything is silent around them now. A silence that crackles in their ears and seems still to resonate with the moans of those they left behind. The lieutenant gave the order to slaughter the dog whose howls would be the death of them ever since they went in. Jean prepares to use his rifle. The dog hiding behind a bush scented danger. He bolts yapping and zigzagging. Jean lowers his weapon. They all burst out laughing.

168 “Policés” literally means “policed,” and Jean is clearly referring to a country where law-enforcement is more visible, especially as the word “civilisé” is also commonly used.
169 “Mechta” is the Arabic translation for hamlet (Petit Robert, 1171).
170 The reference to the “chopper” refers to a particular kind of torture, in which people were at first menaced with being thrown out of the helicopter, and sometimes when they did not talk they were actually thrown out (Bey, Entendez vous..., 49).
The conversation has to continue, and especially, must go back to the past, whatever the cost. It is too easy to pity oneself because of the present. To get out of the game unscathed.\textsuperscript{171}

At the moment when the woman opens her mouth to respond, the teenager resumes, not at all impressed by the warning,

— I know, of course, I know. But because I’ve heard my friends… and my grandfather talk about it so much, I really want to go there…

— Why not? As soon as possible, I will go back there, too.

It is the woman who just spoke, in a very calm tone, herself astonished by the brisk determination with which she affirmed what now seems obvious to her. Of course, she will go back to her home, and earlier than she had until then thought; she is certain of it.

And since he evoked Boghari, Boghar, since he has given dates, here, now, he must speak. He has to see it through. She also has to see it through to the bitter end. Nothing seems more important to her at this instant.

She addresses him in a conversational tone,

— And you, haven’t you returned there since…?

— No, never.

— You could have… in war time you cannot discover all of a country’s beauties.

— I know. But what I saw of…

It is now the young woman, who resumes,

\textsuperscript{171} “\textit{Tirer son épingle du jeu}” is a bit different than “to get out of the game unscathed” because it connotes winning against unfavorable odds. Another possible translation could be “to play one’s cards right”.
— You were in the war? Back there?
— I was twenty… fit to serve.
— And…

Twenty years old, sometimes a little less, sometimes a little more. Blonde hair cropped by the barrack’s barber, from enlistment, even before departure, watch out, it’s infested with lice over there, with crabs too, eyes reddened by apprehension, yes, his tender heart still shaken up by the vision of a mother in tears on the dock, the memory of a distraught fiancée, waving her handkerchief, and then the photos in order not to forget, photos sorted the night before, in his fatigues pocket all the time, right against his heart… this woman’s face that he looks at every night before going to sleep, or that of a child with chubby cheeks, with blue eyes, blonde hair, as light as a feather, the very portrait of his father… how he misses those pudgy little arms around his neck, the warm breath against his cheek, the odor of innocence…

Marie awaits the rest. The man, who never finishes his sentences, has turned his head away; he looks out the window. He sees nothing but a procession of far-off lights that rush past in the night. Around them are deep shadows.

Suddenly, with a slightly stiff smile, he interrogates,

---

172 The original passage “le coeur tendre […] tout contre son coeur” gives the impression of a series of departures, which are at once individual and collective, because the one man, in this instance comparable to Jean, is an archetype of all the departing soldiers. This construction was hard to render in English. The phrasing “ce visage de femme” emphasizes the face. Thus, Bey brings out Jean’s humanity and by extension that of young French soldiers.

173 I changed the sentence construction slightly in order to keep the English flow.
— So they talked to you about… about the war, about the Algerian War?

— Of course. My grandfather talked to me about it… but… he, he says “the events…” and I often feel like he doesn’t really like when we ask him questions. He says that it was very hard, yes… and… he doesn’t really like talking about it. But he… he lived in a village. He was a teacher. He never had problems with the…

She stops suddenly and bites her lips.

That’s right, how to say it? The Arabs? But surely after the way in which this word was just pronounced in this very spot by a woman terrorized by a scuffle, a purely French woman without any doubt, it is difficult not to see hints of racism. But after all, one has always needed classifications for living species, animal as well as human. So why not designate men by their race? Or by their religion, even if many of them have grown distant from it? They say “the Jews” too. They can vary this by specifying one’s belonging to a people, a human grouping, a region, a tribe. You have to have points of reference in order to be able to situate someone! Why would this be insulting? Would the insult be contained in the word, or only in the intention, or even in the representation that one has of the race, of the group so designated?174 How many words, expressions must have been invented for them! Depending on the historical context. All sorts of figures of speech, of compound expressions, a profusion of words: indigenous, Muslim Frenchmen from Algeria, wogs, bougnoules, métèques, melons, moukères, Fatma for women, all women, North African or even better, to mark the strides of official colonial vocabulary:

174 The Algerian woman notes Marie’s hesitation and makes an important distinction between usage and intention. She implies that the usage is insulting if the intention is insulting. The next part of the passage is important as it evokes daily racism, but I would ask readers to go back to the Algerian woman’s distinction when analyzing the continuation of the dialogue between the two protagonists.
Pure-bred French of North African origin… PFNAO for short. All of these terms are dully inventoried at length in the dictionaries, with, for certain among them, a necessary qualification: insulting terms, racist. For Arabs, the French – and by extension all Europeans – are *rumis*, which, from a historical, etymological, and in a certain way…

The young woman blushed slightly. In order to come to her aid, the woman finishes the sentence smiling,

— With the Arabs you mean…

She continues in the same detached fashion,

---

175 It is interesting that Bey does not choose the word “*mots*” to qualify this vocabulary, but instead includes the vocal “utterance.” Usually, when there is a distinction between written and spoken language, Bey emphasizes “*parole*” because it has often not yet been recorded. The passage gives the impression that these racist ideas are ingrained and transmitted both through speech and in writing. Moreover, referring to Algerians, or more generally to people from the Maghreb, this vocabulary is highly pejorative. I define these words in the order they appear in the text: 1) “*Bicot*” translated as “wog” and “*métèque*” do not have one accepted translation. “*Bicot*” means kid goat. It also is derived from the Arabic word “*arbi*” and means “*arab*.” In everyday French, it has taken on a vulgar connotation and is highly pejorative (Petit Robert, 181). 2) “*Métèque*” comes from the Greek “*metoikos*” meaning migrant or one that does not have the right of the citizen. Again, in everyday French, this expression has taken on a pejorative connotation referring to an immigrant with an unpleasant appearance (Petit Robert, 1191). 3) In wolof, “*bougnoul*,” means “black,” and has various spellings: “*bougnoul*,” “*bougnoule*,” and “*bounioul*”. This name was given to Native Africans by European Senegalese. In everyday French, this is an insulting term for North Africans used by European colonists, or more generally, by Europeans. This has a similar meaning to “*bicot*” or “*raton*” (Petit Robert, 205). 4) The first two meanings of “*melon*” are similar to the English word, it means both the plant and the fruit. The plant is a climbing vine that sticks to wherever it grows. The third and fourth senses require more explanation. The third definition refers to a student at the military school of Saint Cyr. Since the fourth definition refers to a Maghrebi man, the complete meaning of the word would apply to both Jean and the Algerian woman’s father (Petit Robert, 1178). However, the passage’s context makes the fourth definition most relevant. 5) From the Spanish “*mujer*,” “*moukère*” is a slang term meaning woman (Petit Robert, 1235). Bey makes a similar comment about the name “*Fatma*” later in the passage. 6) This is a stereotypical name for a Maghrebi or more generally African woman. 7) FSNA is a French acronym meaning “*Français de souche nord-africaine*,” an English equivalent would be PFNAO (Pure-bred French of North African Origin).

176 Recall the Algerian woman’s distinction between intention and racism. The usage is only racist if there is a racist intention.
— My father was a teacher, too.

— Oh, really? That’s unbelievable! And in the same country! Maybe they… It’s really too bad, I don’t know the name of the village where my grandfather lived. I only know that it was at the seaside. He was passionate about fishing. As a matter of fact, he still fishes for days on end… until now… he lives in Marseille. Ever since he retired, that is the only thing he does… but it’s been such a long time… your father is…

— He is dead.

— Oh, excuse me! I am…

Yes… she is… sorry. That is what is said in such circumstances.

She continues to look at her smiling as if to tell her, no, you have no part in this, little Marie. You don’t have to be sorry. You have nothing to do with it!

_He’s doomed. There is nothing more to get out of him. Take him away! Two of them pull the inert man’s body lying on the ground. All the same, he took the hit, says the lieutenant with a kind of admiration. He is a tough cookie! Well… he was… Cleanup duty now. Let the others finish the job! Day is just beginning to break. With a heavy step, they come back up to the surface. Outside, the air is fresh. Pink clouds scatter what remains of the night. Jean fills his lungs with air before lighting a cigarette. The first of the day. Or rather the last of the night. It is time to go to sleep. He stretches, with a large yawn. He has only a few hours to recuperate before his turn at guard duty._

Encouraged by the friendly smile of the woman facing her, Marie continues.
But whom is she really addressing now?

— Tell me, this war was it really so terrible? Was it a real war? It’s because my grandfather… no one really talks about it… I don’t even know if he was in it… no, I don’t think so… we would have… \(^{177}\) He prefers to tell us about how it was before.

Before the events, as he says.

The man does not answer right away. He seems plunged in a painful reflection.

*That was his war. Yes, it was a real war. His father too, also had had his war.*

*And he had gone to it singing the “Marseillaise.”* Like him. And before him, his father’s father, and thus numerous generations caught in the often tragic snares of history. Yes, he had turned twenty, and he had himself experienced war, too… a real war, too… yes… as appalling as the preceding ones.\(^ {178}\) All wars are terrible in the eyes of those who make them, of those who have to make them – in the name of God, of civilization, of the homeland, of liberty, of revolution… Only the epithets change: war of religion, Great War, war of liberation, war of occupation, civil war… and whatever side you’re on, you have to convince yourself that it is the good side, the good cause, and that violence, acts of violence are at times necessary… Don’t ask too many questions… Battlefields are always riddled with heroes… Go to death while singing, while holding up, proudly, the beautiful flag… otherwise… Dirty war! But has there ever been a clean war, other than in the language of those who, in the comfort of parlors, meeting rooms, and under the spotlights, never needed to wear camouflage outfits, never held a man at gunpoint?

\(^{177}\) The phrasing “*il nous aurait…*” is difficult to render in English. It is close to “he would… us.” In French, it is possible to render both “he” and “us” without sounding illogical, “*il nous aurait.*” In English, a similar sentence construction is not possible, so there is a loss.

\(^{178}\) “*Aussi*” which I translated twice as “too” and once as “as” is repeated three times. The repetition emphasizes the connotation of “also.”
In war, in all wars, the enemy always has the same face. The face of our own death. And no one can bear to find themselves confronted with their own death. So we have to annihilate the one who is facing us, because he releases our hidden fear, so we recognize ourselves in him – so he recognizes himself in us. And it is this image of ourselves that we want to eradicate. To tell oneself that evil is no longer evil when it is necessary to prevent the worst... And all the rest is just deceit, verbiage, needless suffering.

— It was... It was... a war... like all wars. A lot of hatred, injustice, suffering. There were those who... gave orders... and those who... executed. That is always the way it happens.

He quiets an instant and then goes on, in a low voice, as if speaking to himself.

— Useless to ask yourself questions... to look to debate orders. It was necessary to serve and obey. Even if... and at times...

He does not finish the sentence. He now has his eyes fixed on the ground. He seems to be looking for his words, to advance with caution, as if he were on the edge of an abyss and he had to pay very close attention so as not to lose his balance.

She is there, near him. She is following him. She too advances with caution.179 She begins again carefully,180

— It was simply necessary... to believe, to obey and... to combat... is that it?181

179 There is a hunting metaphor in this sentence. Furthermore, the expression “elle le suit” can be translated as “she is following him.” “Poursuivre” can also be translated as “to pursue.”
180 “Doucement” also means “softly,” “carefully,” and “slowly.” Here the last two meanings probably are most important.
— Of course... well... no, I don’t think so. They asked us only to serve and to obey, but... to believe... no. It did not go that far. One was not there to debate. We were doing our duty, that’s all.

— You mean that you didn’t believe in it? That you didn’t believe in that war? In the utility, in the necessity of that war?

— No, that’s not what I meant. I had never set foot in Algeria before, that’s all.

... November 1956. Arrival in the port of Algiers. The “Ville d’Alger” is docked. The crossing was rough. One by one, they emerge from the hold, getting off the boat their legs still shaky and their stomachs upset. With a faltering step, they join in the square set up for assemblies. In the glare of winter’s incomparable light, the detachment lines up on the docks. Present... arms! The trucks start up, the convoy forms. Of the white city perceived from afar as a mirage, for him there remains only the shock of the first images. First of all, these phantoms veiled in white who glide through the streets hugging the walls; the colorful, noisy crowd, the sirens’ long howl... and then, in the barracks, meeting the officers.

---

181 If one accepts the translation of “reprendre” as “to correct,” this would imply that the Algerian woman wants Jean to admit that he does not believe in the war. Bey suggests this elsewhere.
182 “Ville d’Alger” is a French passenger ship that was on the seas from 1935 to 1968. Throughout this time, it was the biggest passenger ship constructed for the North African lines. It could go from Marseilles to Algiers in less than 20 hours (http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ville_d%27Alger_%28paquebot%29).
183 Literally, “le coeur” means “the heart,” so the play with the soldiers’ emotions is more evident.
184 Connotes a military parade ground.
... The words float, burst like bubbles on the surface of his consciousness...

Maintaining order. Pacification. Your mission, our mission: crush the rebellion. By all means! Dismissed!

Then, everything mixes up. Orchards and rich plains of the Mitidja, sharp rocks cutting into the gorges of Chiffa, going through villages so similar to villages of France, down to the sound of church bells resonating in the evening sweetness, shaded squares, town halls with the tricolor flag flying over them... Algeria is a French department, who could doubt it?

Yet at times, immobile on the roadside, barefoot children, in rags, watch the military trucks pass, and men, most of them old and dressed in their ample earthen colored burnous, turn their heads while they pass. And then, here and there, perched on peaks, at the end of torturous paths, a few small squalid-looking houses tightly assembled; the douars.

... And finally... first round-ups... Preceded by armored tanks and jeeps, they advance before the fearful looks of women standing on the doorsteps of their houses, and who, seeing them approach, cover their heads, gather their children around them, in a pathetic reflex to protect...

---

185 “Surnager” also means “to survive.”
186 Literally, “Rompez” means “to break up.”
187 In French, the expression “tranchant les gorges de la Chiffa” connotes “trancher la gorge de,” which means “to cut someone’s throat.”
188 “Misérable” also literally means “miserable,” but has several other connotations. “Douar” means “city,” “village,” or “town,” in Arabic and this organization was set up by the French. French soldiers had a tendency to use Arabic words to mark a difference between themselves and Algerians and North Africans, often resulting in pejorative connotations, fitting with the tone of this passage.
The night is racked by the motors of armored tanks and trucks, which cross the village in uninterrupted processions. Her eyes open, she is on the lookout, listens, and falls asleep a very long while after the noise has dissipated. At times, flurries of machine gun fire or flare shells shot from the mountain right across from the house, and that makes fleeting menacing gleams of light suddenly surge into the room before fading out in a long whistle. She gets up in the dark and goes to join her mother who hugs her very tightly against her. The next day, while going to school with her classmates, she follows the traces of the treads left by the wheels of tanks on the asphalt.

She continues to advance slowly prudently.¹⁸⁹

— But it’s very far off now… you must not be able to remember any more… and then it had to be… so…

— No. Everything is still there. But you know… we… no… no one… no one ever…

They were not “one.” They were a whole. They were all caught up in a tornado...

The ceaseless impression of falling into an abyss, deeper and deeper, without any other possibility except to attempt to hold on to… to what?¹⁹⁰ To the necessary and virile fraternity of men in combat. To orders received and to obligatory obedience. To the certainties that end up settling in and that very quickly sweep away all the other

¹⁸⁹ I changed the word order slightly in this phrase to make it flow in English.
¹⁹⁰ “De plus en plus profond” could also be translated as “more and more profound,” but this takes away from the text subtleties because of the multiple French uses.
certainties. So quickly that one does not even have time to look around and to remember who one was in another life, in another world.

And it is in the strength of these new convictions, very quickly consumed that one draws strength hereafter and especially the ineffable sentiment of belonging to a community of courageous men, resolved and ready to confront the eyes of these men, eyes full of... of what? The eyes of these coarse unarmed men, taken in a roundup after an attack, and whom in the guise of a reprisal, one keeps on their knees for hours, hands on their heads, in the sun or in the rain. With, from time to time, a kick in the ribs to help them straighten up when they flag. Or a hit with a gun butt so that they lower their head. All, yes, they are all cut-throats...

Her eyes lowered, Marie listens. Nothing has yet been said. But she feels in the voices of this man and of this woman who calmly, politely debate, she feels agitation, a stir come from afar, from very much further back than the words she hears. She turns her head slowly towards the man who nervously crumples the newspaper he has in his hands.

— But... I don’t understand... I don’t understand why no one wants to talk about it. To talk... simply... to tell... even in the lycée... you’d think that... I don’t know, for such a...

He interrupts her softly,

— Marie, your name is Marie, right? Forty years have passed... we can’t forget, it’s true. But... we can... we can be silent. We have the right... maybe it’s our only one...
In almost the same tone, the woman finishes the sentence,

— The only recourse… or if you prefer the only remedy… you could put it that way, practice the culture of silence… to protect oneself. Maybe… but that doesn’t change anything about each other’s suffering; we can simply try to hold it at a distance, that’s all, don’t you think? And when the moment comes to… because it ends up sooner or later coming back up to the surface, doesn’t it?

He doesn’t answer the question. He slowly shakes his head.

— There are other means to… As for me, I got out. All I can say is… it’s this war, these few months, which determined my life, which changed the course of it. Returning home, I decided to go back to school; I wanted to be a doctor. I worked for years, night and day. And it wasn’t easy. But I took the hit. As for the rest…

As he talks, Marie stares at him. She picks up on the spasmodic shiver of his right eyelid – a slight contraction that extends bit by bit over the entire right side of his face. She waits. And as he does not finish his sentence, almost timidly, at the end of a long silence, she suggests in a very calm voice,

— I find that fitting… Medicine… That’s what I’d like to do too. That could be a response… well… a way of… repairing, I mean… to make oneself useful… perhaps… yes… a doctor… or a teacher.

191 “Des uns et des autres” is a bisector in French, which bisects the sentence emphasizing two categories: those of the “ones” and of the “others.”

192 “Dévisage” (“stare”) has the word “visage” or “face” in it, meaning, given that faces reveal character traits, that Marie’s action will reveal an aspect of Jean’s identity.

193 “Figure” also means “figure.”
The man responds with an impressive calmness. He expresses himself in perfect French, almost without an accent. Astonishing for an Arab! He is a robust, squat man, with a plump face, with round glasses ringed in black behind which his eyes seem tiny. He is a robust, squat man, with a plump face, with round glasses ringed in black behind which his eyes seem tiny. The very appearance of a family man, tranquil and debonair. Sitting behind the little table that serves as a desk, Jean finishes filling out the form. Then he raises his head and observes him. Suit of dark grey wool, white shirt... A little too assertive, he says to himself. Different from the others. From those who arrive quaking with fear even before it begins. He could not address him informally, as he quite naturally could with the others. He cannot even explain to himself why. He blames himself a little for that. The man standing in the middle of the dimly lit room looks around him. They are alone. They have nothing to say to each other. Introductions are over. His colleagues are not down yet. They are busy with the others. A choice cartload, they warned him. That one there, that guy is one of the two teachers. The intellectual of the group.

---

194 “Cerclé” also means “circled.” On a critical note, recall the word-for-word repetition from the Algerian woman’s description of her father’s eyes behind his glasses, except that, in her memory, the sentimental adjectives “severe” and “smiling” qualify his eyes (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 20).

195 “Tutoyer” means to use “tu,” or the informal “you” in French, and this sentence connotes that Jean is not able to be as superiorly insulting with him as he would be with the others.

196 In French, “une charretée” is “a cartload.” Here, the usage refers to “la charrette,” the cart that brought people to the guillotine, thus, foreshadowing their imminent deaths, reinforcing the double meaning of “sont descendus.”

197 In English, I reversed the slang terms. “Insti” is short for “instituteur” and there is no common English equivalent.

198 Recall Fanon’s discussion of the teacher’s particular importance as a rebel when analyzing the following passages (Peaux noires, masques blancs, 48).
The lieutenant pokes his head through the door, *We are going to keep him for the end, that one. Give each man his due! That way, he may perhaps have the time to think!* Then he closes the door.

Without getting what has just been said, the woman starts to speak. She turns to the young woman seated across from her and who is listening to her attentively.

— In our country, there have also been… there are still silences… our history is full of blanks, even the history of this war. For years, we have heard only one refrain, sung to the same tune. A patriotic tune, surely. And it continues… Our fathers were all heroes. Well, almost all of them… let’s say… an overwhelming majority. Yes, overwhelming. By the weight and the place it still occupies today. And who knew how to erase all that could stain the glorious revolution. Only the heroes have the right to talk. Our heroes have all the rights… they can permit themselves everything. And they were well schooled… at least those who are still alive. And they speak so loudly that they may think we hear only them. And that cuts through the silence and the lies of the torturers, and the complicit silence of those who cannot look their history in the face.

---

199 “Réfléchir” has the connotation of “to reflect,” but is more colloquial in French than its semantic English translation.

200 “Se mettre à parler” is more colloquial than “commencer à parler”. Hence the translation “starts” vs “begins.”

201 “Blanc” has a double meaning in French, of “blank” or “white,” the color of mourning in Algeria.

202 “Dit sur le même air” could also mean “said in the same way.” I have chosen to substitute “sung” for “said” because of the next line. The French “air” brings out this connotation strongly without substitution.

203 “Écrasant” means “crushing,” which gives the sentence a more forceful connotation.
Around the man now seated, they are three. Captain Fleury settled himself on the edge of the table. Standing near the door, a soldier in khakis, fingers in his belt loops, observes the scene with an air of indifference. Jean holds the sheet out to the silent man. He has drawn an organigram, a pyramid composed of several triangles. Names are logged and boxed in the angle of each line. Some of the boxes have no note.204

Hey teacher, you know how to write, don’t you?205 You’re not like the others. Okay fine, you were on strike, but that... We’re not asking you to talk. Here, take the pen! Write! You see? There... and there! We know you know the names! Fill in the blanks. That's all we’re asking you. That way, no one can say that you talked. Tomorrow morning you will be reunited with your children, you can hold your wife in your arms. Your wife, what’s her name? You don’t want to say it? That’s true, Arabs, they don’t like talking about their wives. That doesn’t mean that they don’t love them any less than we others do, huh? It’s good, a warm little woman in a bed... at this hour, she has to be shedding all the tears in her body, poor thing... and your children? Aren’t you thinking about your children? No, of course not... you didn’t think about them before, I don’t see why you would think about them now... and this one wants to make a revolution.206

Jean attempts to catch the eye of the man who keeps his head obstinately lowered. The captain straightens up. He lights a Bastos that he holds out to the man.207 Here, you smoke? Oh, excuse me! The gentleman does not smoke. It’s forbidden by the fellagas, it’s

---

204 These types of flowcharts or organigrams were common during the Algerian War. The French authorities made them to help determine who was involved in resistance cells.
205 As we have seen, “Institi” is a hard to render slang term for “instituteur,” “teacher.”
206 The “ça” in French is idiomatic, sometimes referring to people in a group, when more emphasis is placed on their belonging to the stated category, speaking of people as a thing.
207 Bastos is a brand of cigarettes.
true, I had forgotten! They don’t smoke, they don’t drink... I tell you... all saints! Haven’t ya seen men with cut noses and split lips? That’s what they do to them, your friends, isn’t it? And it’s not pretty to see... So! Listen to what I’m proposing to you. We’re all going to take a walk next door and we’ll leave you alone. You’ll have the time to think it over calmly...

As he rises, a terrible howl coming from a neighboring room makes them all shrink. With an air of annoyance, the captain shrugs his shoulders. Before going out, he looks back at Jean who has gotten up to follow him. You, you’re staying here, I’m going to see what’s happening... The man finally raises his head and looks at Jean, right in the eyes.

The journey continues. Broken up by stops that they do not even seem to notice anymore. Silence has now settled in. The woman has taken up her book again. She continues her reading, without retaining or understanding a single one of the sentences that she nevertheless studiously rereads several times. The young woman is wedged in the corner, curled up. Her eyes are closed, but she is not sleeping. From time to time, she half opens her eyes and looks at her two neighbors. The man has not taken up his paper again. He stares fixedly at the darkness behind the window, perhaps attempting to capture a few glimmers of light. The woman observes the man’s reflection in the

---

208 The placement of “tes copains” (“your friends”) renders “ils” ambiguous. The pronoun could either refer to the Algerian resistance torturing the French or to the French torturing the members of the FLN.

209 The Algerian woman cannot make sense of her reading, due to the circumstances.

210 “Se caler” also has the connotation of “to snuggle.” Since Marie chose her position, “wedged” seems a bit harsh but is otherwise most appropriate. Notice the reference to the fetal position, at once indicating trauma, and significantly foreshadowing Marie’s subsequent actions.
windowpane. The dark circles have become deeper, and his eyes now seem more sunken. The wrinkles at the corners of his lips are more marked and his emerging beard shadows his face in places with bluish stains. How tired he looks!

“I was observing him with his grey hair and always badly shaven beard, his deeply furrowed brows, his wrinkles running from the sides of his nose to the corners of his mouth. I was waiting.”

She waits, without impatience. They have not yet arrived at their destination. She knows it. She does not need to look at her watch.

She brusquely feels far away… far away from all that.

She is seated on the edge of a pond. Leaning over the water, she observes the boiling that time and again comes to trouble the stagnant surface. Bubbles burst here and there, all the way across, resolve themselves in concentric waves and almost at once the water closes in on itself again, for an instant. Under the thin greenish film, she guesses at the depths, the underground life, the secret swarming, the palpitations that skim the surface with a slight stirring very quickly erased, and in no way disturb the apparent calm that reigns in this place.

He finally decides to turn his head. He seems infinitely weary.

— Your father was a school teacher in Boghari, is that it?

Note that the word “Stigmates” is no longer used to describe Jean’s wrinkles. This usage would establish an analogy between him and Christ. Note the importance of “marquer,” he is being more and more marked as a convict (Petit Robert, 1157). Jean’s true character is not yet fully revealed. His beard shadows his face slightly (Memory in the flesh, 29).

This is the same passage from The Reader that Bey quotes at Jean’s first appearance, reconnecting him to her father (Schlink, 160).

It is interesting to look at the water as a metaphor for history. The new revelations are bubbles, which disturb the water’s “stagnant surface” (Bey Entendez-vous..., 68). These revelations require a strange circling, described as doubling back in English, hence the concentric waves.
— Yes.
— And he… he died…
— During the war.
— Ah!

He pauses a few seconds before adding,
— I did not stay over there for long.
— But you remember what you saw in the camp, don’t you? The few months you spent over there, you remember them quite well, I believe… That’s what you said. You were over there in February? February 1957. During the strike decreed by the FLN…
— …
— Maybe you even met him… You might have…
— Who? Your father?
— He was kidnapped with his brother, his cousin, and still others… Eight men in all… taken out of their homes in the deep of night, by military men.
— Many men were taken to the camps… every day…
— We never saw them again. Maybe even… but no, that would be too much…
— You know… there were so many arrests during all the time that I was over there. I know that… I was in charge of registering the incoming ones.
— Only that? So you never saw anything, never? Never heard anything? Tallying up the entries and watching those who kept up enough strength to try to flee after the torture session, that was your work, nothing but that, right? And yes… among those who were arrested there were not many who got out again, or well…
— Those who were taken to us were suspects. It was necessary to take the time to... to interrogate them... for the investigation’s needs.

— Of course, it was necessary to make them talk. But that had nothing to do with you, of course...

— No one got out of this war unscathed! No one! You hear!

The exclamation resounds like the noise of a door being slammed. He abruptly raised his voice, as if he wanted to convince her, to make her shut up maybe. But is this the only object of his anger?

Marie has straightened up. She rises abruptly and goes to sit next to the woman. She softly tells the man, who is now facing her,

— And those who refused to talk... to say what they knew. Is it true that they were tortured?

— There were special sections in the intelligence service. It was war...

He takes his head in his hands, in the same gesture as the woman a few instants before. All that they can see is the top of his head, slightly balding, shoulders sagging.

Go on! And especially don’t let yourselves be had if they claim not to know anything. They all end up talking... They give names, most often, just any old one. The shitty thing is, we can’t even take the time to check. Not right away. First of all the job

---

214 In French, “le ton” means “the tone,” so Jean raised the tension in the compartment.
215 “Affaissées” has the connotation of “collapsed” and “destroyed” and also contains a reference to the railway system. Unfortunately, the English translations do not play with the same expression. “Derailed” can be used in this context, but seems a bit farfetched if one is not already acquainted with the meanings mentioned.
has to be done. Some are tougher than others.\textsuperscript{216} And then, we have to pull out the big guns. Mustn’t hesitate!

He again raises his head,

— Yes. Some. We couldn’t do otherwise. But only if they refused to collaborate.

It was necessary, to…

He interrupts himself just before saying… he was going to say… “to crush the rebellion.” Thus, the words are still imprinted in his memory. After so many years, he effortlessly retrieved the same words, the same arguments: refusal to collaborate, rebellion, pacification, interrogations, prioritized investigations for intelligence, prevention, protection of European civilians… thus nothing is erased.\textsuperscript{217} But that word… never!\textsuperscript{218} One never spoke of tortures, of personal injuries… no.\textsuperscript{219} These interrogations were… harsh, some would even say… vigorous. To obtain the maximum information.

That was the consecrated formula.\textsuperscript{220} Interrogations pushed sometimes until…

Marie looks at the woman.

— Your father was…

\textsuperscript{216} “Coriace” has the connotation of being resistant and stubborn, and is more poetic and stronger than “tougher.”
\textsuperscript{217} This expression also has the common connotation of “printed,” which I want to play with as the published histories still characterize the Algerian War as a rebellion.
\textsuperscript{218} The italics render a connotation similar to “ce mot-là.”
\textsuperscript{219} “Sévice” connotes that these injuries are abusive and directly affect a person. The translation is usually one of the four longer English expressions: “serious personal injury,” “physical harm,” “assault,” and “torture.” I did not choose the translation “assault” or “torture” because of the repetition with the previous word, which the French implies but does not render visually evident. Jean distinguishes between “torture” and “sévice” in this line.
\textsuperscript{220} Note the intentional religious connotation in “consacré.”
— He was tortured.221 With his companions. For a night. An entire night. And then executed… with several bullets. That’s what they told us. “Shot down while he was trying to flee.” Official version. Retold by the newspapers of the era. That’s what they called “firewood duty.” That’s how they used to get rid of…

She turns to look at the man and stares at him fixedly, straight in the eyes. She gestures towards the young woman,

— You have to know what it is, right? Explain to her what “firewood duty” was, explain it to her, tell her since she knows nothing about this war, since her grandfather told her nothing more than about his thrilling fishing excursions in Algeria.

Even before he reacts, she begins in the tone of a person telling a story,

— There was wood in the forest of Mongorno… a few kilometers from Boghari, not very far from the forest of Boghar… beautiful timber… and as winters were very cold, it was necessary to warm yourself in the barracks and in the camps. The problem is that all the prisoners that were sent to get wood would never come back. You know why?

Do tell, you who remember the winters back there.222 Unless …

_The jeep just started. At the steering wheel, Claude hesitates a few seconds about which path to take. It matters little, all of the zone is secured. He starts down the first path on the right and curses about the numerous ruts that shake the vehicle and slow his_
Above him, the trees’ foliage merges and forms a canopy pierced with beams of light. It could’ve been a swell jaunt! He turns to look at his silent companion. Too taciturn, Jean! He barely lets a sound escape his lips. For the last few days, he has changed… he isolates himself… You’d say he was doing too much thinking. Should keep an eye on him! Until we send him for disciplinary actions…

He comes out into a clearing, stops and turns off the ignition. One hand on the steering wheel, he turns to look at Jean. Your play now! You getting out?

In less than a quarter of an hour, it is all over. Jean has unloaded the eight bodies that now lie on the ground. Claude gives him a friendly punch on the shoulder. Don’t worry about it, old boy, we will find them tomorrow! Eight fellagas taken prisoners, shot down in the forest while they were attempting to flee during firewood duty. Nice catch, right? You can even add that they did not respond to the summons… if that does you good… Jean gets in the jeep again and settles on the seat next to him without responding.

The rest of the sentence gets lost in the abrupt intake of air at the tunnel’s entrance, which makes them all jump. The train slows. The compartment appears

---

223 A nearly semantic translation retains the military language.
224 “Voûte” also means the ceiling of a holy place. See the contrast between beauty and ugliness in this passage. I attempted to retain the paradox. The sun is not always clearly positive, but can shed light on events which deserve to be recounted. Also, Djebar uses this technique in several of her works, such as L’Amour, la fantasia and Ombre sultane.
225 “Balade” is much more poetic, musical, and literary. It develops the contrast noted earlier with the image of the sun. The “beams of light” could have also literally been beautiful (Bey Entendez-vous…, 74). The musical connotation of balade is also important because French soldiers often muffled the sounds of torture using classical music.
226 Even though this is a correct translation in English, I do not think this captures Bey’s meaning. A more semantic but indirect translation would be “It is the bare minimum if he unlocks his lips.”
227 “Déboucher” refers to “la bouche,” “the mouth” in French, thus continuing the earlier word play with silence.
suddenly brighter.\textsuperscript{228} In the neon lights, the face of the man is ashen. The woman is now hunched over.

Marie has remained silent. Then she abruptly sits upright. She lays her hand on the arm of the woman, who shrinks at this contact.

— He doesn’t understand. He doesn’t understand you. Look, he cannot even speak anymore…

The woman murmurs,

— Like all the others. First blind and deaf, and for a long time… mute… and who even suffer from amnesia…

Presently, she is quiet. Even if all has not been said, even if a painful palpitation still makes her shiver, something has come unknotted in her.\textsuperscript{229} Whether it is he or someone else, it does not matter. She tells herself that nothing resembles her childhood dreams, that executioners have man’s faces, she is sure of it now, they have a man’s hands, at times even a man’s reactions and nothing allows them to be distinguished from others.\textsuperscript{230} And this idea terrifies her a bit more.

Marie begins again,

— I think we will be there soon.

\textsuperscript{228} The French “éclairé” belongs to a more formal register than does the English “brighter.” However, the slang “brighter” renders “éclairé”’s double meaning of being both lit up and enlightened. I would have liked a more literary turn of phrase to render both the connotation and register.

\textsuperscript{229} In English, “unknotted” might have the implication of going crazy, and my interpretation is that Bey means the opposite. Even if the knowledge of her father’s final moments and the conversation with Marie makes her more emotional, it ultimately leads to the Algerian woman’s self-understanding. See the connotation of “blessure nécessaire” (Bey, \textit{Sous le jasmin, la nuit}, 21).

\textsuperscript{230} For “man’s hands […]” the singular within the collective is important. I could not render this juxtaposition in English without slightly changing the balance between the singular and the plural. The implication is that an executioner is an individual man with feelings.
Travelers with loaded luggage pass in the corridor while debating in loud voices.231

“Next stop… last stop! The train is coming into the station.”232

As if to rouse herself, Marie shakes her head, making her hair swirl in a movement full of grace, before fastening it with a barrette, which she pulls from the pocket of her jeans.

She rises, goes to open the door, takes a few steps in the corridor.

Face to face, the man and the woman do not move.

She expects nothing. She knows there is nothing to wait for. She looks at him, she observes him, she analyzes him, attentively, minutely, as if she wanted to fix in her memory each trait of this face.233 He has lowered eyes, hands placed on his knees. He is not trying to steal away.234 She closes her book again, and puts it back in her bag. She counted on finishing it during the trip, but she has not progressed very much in the discovery of this story that issued from another war. Slight matter. She has time to read, to look for answers. A lot of time… she will be somewhere else perhaps. It will be another day perhaps. She will make other journeys.

231 This is symbolic. Even though the travelers still have metaphorical baggage, they are debating openly, which makes their conversation intelligible.
232 “Rentrer” also has the connotation of “going back” or “going home,” which is important for this passage since the Algerian woman has reconnected with her home and the past. In the context of Mosteghanemi, she no longer has to worry about her own death (Memory in the flesh, 128: Mémoires de la chair, 164).
233 The English verb “to detail” would sound odd in this context. Yet, through the narrative, the Algerian woman has exposed who Jean is: her father’s executioner.
234 “Dérober” communicates a paradox semantically. It appears to mean “to disrobe,” which is the opposite of what it communicates.
She gets up to slip on her coat. She says loudly, as if she were alone in the compartment,

— Too bad… it’s dark. We can’t see the sea.

Marie comes back. She takes her backpack, gives the woman a smile, and points her finger at the suitcase.

— May I help you?

— No, no, thanks… it’s not that heavy…

The man has already grabbed the suitcase.

— May I?

She does not respond.

On the doorstep, Marie waves her hand and goes away with a light step.

In her turn, she grabs her handbag and makes for the exit. Carrying the suitcase and the tote bag, he follows her. She descends the steps and stops on the platform. She looks back. He is behind her and holds the suitcase out to her.

Before she even has the time to open her mouth to thank him, he says,

— I wanted to tell you… it seems to me… yes… you have the same eyes as… the same look as… as your father. You resemble him very strongly.

---

Note the parallel with the beginning when Jean acts as if he were alone in the compartment (Bey, Entendez-vous…, 12). Here, she appropriates the space to speak.

The word “regard” would sound odd in a dialogue. Yet, as we have seen, the full import of this word is significant.
Certificate of nationality

The administrator of the mixed community of Boghari, undersigned, certifies that

the individual named Benameur Yagoub, Mohammed, Yagoub born on

November 10, 1919 East [place illegible], of French nationality. (Muslim

native not naturalized French). To attest good faith the present certificate has been
delivered to assert the worth of his rights.

Boghari, December 23 nineteen forty.

For the head administrator

The vice-minister

B. de [name illegible]

---

237 As ordinary American citizens do not possess these common identity papers, equivalence would be a
driver’s license, a birth certificate, and a passport.

238 There is a symbol here that I cannot reproduce.
Certificate of Good Social and Moral Standing

Mixed community of Boghari

We, administrator of the mixed community of Boghari, certify that the named Benameur Yagoub [name illegible] Mohammed pursuing a career as School Teacher residing at [place illegible] is in good social and moral standing and his conduct has always been proper and irreproachable during his stay in the mixed community of Boghari.

In good faith of which we have accorded him the present certificate to justify fair request.

In Boghari, December 10, 1940.

For the Head Administrator,

The vice-administrator.

239 “Certificat de Bonnes Vie et Moeurs.”
240 In French, “régulière” has the connotation of conventional, which would contradict Benameur’s reputation as a rebel.
Algiers, September 25 1946

The Inspector of the Académie d’Alger

To Monsieur Benameur Teacher [word illegible] in Boghari

I have the honor of informing you that, by rectoral decree of September 25, 1946, you were named in the capacity of Assistant-Teacher in the school of g. M.M. de Boghari temporary position replacing M. extended.

Could you please arrive at your new position on October 1, 1946.

You will be briefed by M. le [name illegible] to whom you will communicate the present notice, which will serve as your nomination.

The Minutes relative to your nomination, established on the attached printed sheet, and signed by M. le chef de la commune, should be addressed directly to me the day following your arrival, in the absence of which, it would be impossible for me to compensate you financially during the desired period.241 You should, therefore, take care to notify M. l’Inspecteur primaire of your district in writing about the date of your official arrival.

For the personnel of Alger-ville, the formalities will be performed by the School’s Principal or Director, who will see to the necessary correction of the attached printed document and append the school’s seal.

241 “Chef de la commune” is a public official; a simplistic translation not considering cultural politics would be “mayor.” The document is more formal and common in French than English translation permits.
Loving kisses and see you soon.

Mlle Anissa Benameur

Mabakma de Ténès

Department of Algiers (Algeria)

---

242 In *L'Amour, la fantasia*, Djebar mentions that it was uncommon for a father to address affectionate greetings to his wife in a postcard that could be publicly read by many officials. One could extend a similar tradition to a father’s communication with his daughter (Djebar, 56). Bey’s father uses a slightly more intimate closing but he is writing to his daughter, not to his wife, which may not carry the same sexual connotations. The word, “le dos” refers both to the back of a postcard and the back of a knife, which would imply that Bey is fighting for her father’s reputation (Khanna, 23).
AFTERWORD: I RELAY THE WORD FOR MAÏSSA BEY

Red, the color of wild geraniums that grow and bloom on the burial mounds, without anyone ever being able to know who planted them (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 15).

First, I would like to underscore what a privilege it was to translate Maïssa Bey’s Entendez-vous dans les montagnes... (2002). I have a profound respect for Bey’s work as an author and an advocate. My translation methodology, in part, maintains the distinctiveness of her text and relates to the specificity of how the author evocatively creates her father’s portrait in a contemplative text that includes profound political statements on the Franco-Algerian colonial legacy (1830-1962) and personal affirmations on identity. Translation in some respects causes translators to universalize and to remove the individual character of a text. As this is one of my principal questions about translation, I wanted to avoid generalized, reductive connections throughout the work. I posed the question: “How do translators frame a text, and how should they communicate this frame?” My translation includes multiple meanings without eliminating Bey’s style: the political, the personal, and the everyday. In Entendez-vous dans les montagnes..., the Algerian woman comes to terms with a painful memory in order to survive and let a positive outcome grow out of it, symbolized by the geraniums growing from the graves (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 15). Through the interaction of four protagonists, including the Algerian woman’s father, a profound political representation of the Franco-Algerian

colonial legacy grew out of *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*.... The geraniums, the blood, and the graves should all be remembered. Also, women often planted these flowers on graves in Algeria; so, the story of a particular woman is worth passing on (Sebbar, *Je ne parle pas la langue de mon père*, 124). Thus, I decided to translate Bey’s story, even if the geraniums had to lose a couple of petals along the way. So, I wanted to bring out my quiet appreciation for the stunning beauty in *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*.... The intense personal and symbolic significance that Bey was able to infuse into her political text is incredible. Every word can and should be appreciated in both its literal and figurative senses. This was the quality I attempted to keep in the translation out of respect for both the author and the work of art.

I gained knowledge of Franco-Algerian relations when doing research for my Master’s thesis on Colette, since the curator of the *Musée Colette*, Samia Bordji, with whom I worked closely, grew up in Algeria during the Algerian War (1954-1962). She and her family subsequently immigrated to France. In addition to my education through my conversations with her, I often enter into conversations with workers of Maghrebi descent when I go into French buildings through the back door where there is wheelchair access. They often discuss questions related to Franco-Algerian cultural politics while opening the door for me. I hope these conversations gave me insights which enriched my translation of Bey’s text. In any case, while in France I learned to listen carefully to this discourse, and to pay attention to both its private and public nature. These exchanges enabled me to gain a deeper appreciation of *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*...
The translation of *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*... required a combination of semantic and communicative approaches. Bey’s unique writing style communicates political messages in a simple, highly relatable fashion, partially due to the deep personal commitment underneath. My methodology resembles Jacqueline Guillemin-Flescher’s theories in *Syntaxe comparée du français et de l’anglais: problèmes de traduction* (1981). Her analysis of how to translate slang and the importance of contemporary language use has now become standard in the twenty-first century. Her communicative approach advocates translating as if native speakers of both French and English were each reading the text within each of their cultural contexts. This strategy privileges a cultural sensitivity to meaning over replication of the exact word on the page. The multiple connotations in Bey’s prose mean that this approach has some advantages for the translation of *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*.... Furthermore, Guillemin-Flescher analyzes how to use idioms, slang, and classical language. I adjusted these theories to fit the Franco-Algerian “coprésences,” or coexistence in two cultures, which engender particular dualities, including French inflected with Arabic. Bey makes her reader aware of this dualism while proposing a way of teaching her public to negotiate these liminal spaces between cultures through the eloquence of a single word. These insightful words frame her audience’s understanding of this liminality. My translation seeks to recreate her frames for Anglophone readers, and not to modify them. My approach also privileges the transmission of her intricate puns, wordplay, and musicality. I aimed to keep the text’s simple, yet complex style. Hence, although this critical edition is intended primarily for scholars, I hope it will also be accessible to a general public.
Questions I have had to face range from how to translate idioms to how to frame Franco-Algerian relations for an Anglophone audience. One of my questions for instance is how to best replicate Bey’s language, which often interweaves both French and Algerian perceptions of what constitutes “hospitalité.” As human sweat and breath compose the breeze in the subway, describing them as “haleine” makes perfect sense in French due to the double meaning of both “breath” and “breeze” captured in a word. The English translation “breeze of human breath” is awkward at best, losing either the evocative physicality or the “breeze.” Moreover, it does not reflect Bey’s concise style. After commentary from two native speakers, I connoted the “breeze” and accented the “breath.”

Other literal and figurative meanings, such as those of the verb “marquer,” also central to Bey’s style, pose comparable challenges. No one English word captures the meanings of “to write down” and “to mark” and identifies Jean as a convict. The inclusion of all of the French figurative meanings in one English word was a challenge. The old-fashioned infinitive “farder” also embodies several senses in a word. These include “to powder or whiten your skin,” “to beautify,” and “to envelop” (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 30). The verb also refers to “fard à paupières,” eye shadow, and subtly alludes to how eyes reveal characters’ perspectives in Entendez-vous dans les montagnes.... In this case, I regretted my lengthy translation and the necessity of a note due to Bey’s concision. I also understand how she plays with French conceptions of beauty in order to put them into question. For example, the whiteness of the powder makeup subtly refers to how Algerian women were expected to conform to French ideals of beauty, which made
pale skin very fashionable, especially during the colonial period (Chabanier: Bey, *Entendez-vous...*, 24).

My second question: “How do I familiarize American readers with Franco-Algerian archetypes, such as the closed train compartment and the three passengers who embody the colonial legacy and meet by accident?” These settings and situations appear very different from the postcard Paris that American tourists traditionally discover and tend to associate with France. I chose to address the second part of my question through what I am hoping, was a clear presentation of the Franco-Algerian frame. Moreover, my approach to this critical edition owes much to my teaching experience. My final drafts convey my perspectives on *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...* much as if I were teaching a course. I pictured future students reading the text. Pedagogical strategies helped me determine what information best framed the portrait of Yagoub Benameur sketched in the text. For instance, I focus on succinctly introducing readers to the significance of Franco-Algerian cultural politics and their influence on Bey’s fiction.

As a critic, I took the time to step back and regard *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...* as a piece of autofictional art. I developed what I could support theoretically in the text, such as the adolescent passenger, Marie’s subtle politics. I enjoyed arguing with pejorative stereotypes of the “blouson noir” which include delinquency, once I figured out my critique could call attention to this erroneous association. Jean-Paul Bourré’s 2009 work, *Quand j’étais blouson noir*, also perpetuates extreme perceptions of the jacket, which are today largely inaccurate. In *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...*, viewing the blouson noir as a sign of solidarity would enhance an analysis of Marie’s
character. Yet, I could not place the accessory alongside other fashion statements with comparable political implications to develop this point due to Marie’s small role.

I had a more personal attachment to some parts of the translation, as this work constitutes Bey’s response to her father’s execution at the hands of French soldiers when she was six. Although I sought to remove myself from *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*..., and frame the text as Bey would have, the translation did not permit me to step back from the intensely emotional motivation behind the work of art in the same way that I had learned to do when writing the critical introduction. The act of translation encourages you in some ways to “slip” into the author’s skin. In her 1998 essay, “The Politics of Translation,” Gayatri Spivak advocates “surrendering to a text,” which I attempted to accomplish (*The Translation Studies Reader*, 313-321). I was happy to exchange emails with Bey, as I find it important to work closely with authors, especially since her book deals with delicate subjects such as torture, which have profound personal and political implications. These matters need to be communicated carefully since the emotions influence the frame. It was important for me to translate *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*... in a way that is culturally sensitive to the distinctiveness of the Algerian context while connecting it both to the United States and to France. I also aimed to treat the book as a work of fiction while still remaining sensitive to the traces of lived experience within it.

A translator’s invisibility, which I am shedding in this afterword, is also a common theoretical problem in translation studies, and I would like to bring out other facets of this issue, related to exposing another woman’s life, which is very different from
self-exposure. *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*... is a récit in which the author nevertheless partially unveils her autobiography and reveals both her father’s portrait and identity papers. My questions concern the text’s intimate autobiographical traces, which are sometimes impossible to differentiate the fiction due to their subtle incorporation into the text. Even though my name will appear on the book, as I wrote the commentary, I did not want to reword any significant content, as Bey is reacting to her father’s execution. I never forgot what an impressive undertaking writing this book must have represented for her. Given the author’s history and personal engagements, the scenes she describes in the récit must have taken an immense amount of introspection. This is one of the aspects that drew me critically to the text because of my commitment to feminine artistic expressivity. I sought Bey’s consent since the autofictional Algerian woman resembles the author but, as with her silver earrings, does not always publicly portray her (*Entendez-vous*..., 30).

Another concern for me was that sometimes the transposition between languages entails slight modifications to the context, although these are not supposed to occur. I did not want to risk mistranslation, especially given the complex duality in Bey’s récit, which I had trouble expressing in English due to a lack of a comparison to the Franco-Algerian politics and the vexed area between the personal and the political. Bey alludes to this space in the passage from the *Journal intime et politique*, which begins:

As if I had gone through this summer in solitude. I did not want to make my loved ones fathom this part of my life, which is foreign to them, and also strange… And if they know that I am a novelist … they also know that this can only be done from my life experience, from my relationship with the world, with others. (Bey, 49)

This excerpt explores her children’s reluctance to read her writing because they
could distinguish the reality from the fiction, and might be able only partially to “fathom” its intensity (Journal intime et politique, 48-49). These reminders of the personal and Bey’s reticence made me extremely careful.

Moreover, expressions such as “à fleur de peau” potentially reveal the vexed area between the personal and the biopolitical, which here alludes to women’s bodies as reflections of the Franco-Algerian colonial legacy. Thus, this phrasing would be important to Bey’s writing philosophy regardless of any personal connection to her lived experience. Translation made this expression’s physicality particularly complex. A standard rendering risked removing the reference to biopolitics and potentially highlighting the personal within the fiction. I would either have to eliminate the physicality or underscore it due to English connotations.

I was extremely cautious when translating the scene in which the Algerian woman and Jean first speak, when she has her dizzy spell (Bey, Entendez-vous..., 28). As my reading supports, these dizzy spells often unveil post-traumatic stress disorder, which triggers some very intimate responses embodied in Entendez-vous dans les montagnes...’s line:

It is certainly the fatigue accumulated over the last few days, the tension of the last few months... an emotionalism burgeoning on the surface of her thin skin, a sensibility that she did not recognize within herself (Bey, 29).

Lines such as this one are complex to translate because the English is not as cryptic or suggestive as the French. The French expression “à fleur de peau” keeps the dizzying effect in both the psychological and physical realms, focused on the emotional and psychological components, and hints at their corporal physicality through a direct
reference to the skin (Bey, *Entendez-vous...*, 30; [emphasis mine]). The Algerian woman’s discomfort is visible, but Bey infuses her text with this sensory imagery so that her words appear succinct, but have a very profound depth. Hence, I blended a communicative and semantic translation to encapsulate the multi-layered nuances of her writing. PTSD would be a normal response if your father were executed when you were six. Also, this disorder is a particularly good example of biopolitics and can be analyzed as purely fictional. So, I wanted to keep Bey’s exact phrases, as much as possible. When I was in doubt, I used a more literal translation.

Conversely, when I was sure I was dealing with an important personal and political perception and would have lost only a detail by using an appropriate dynamic equivalent, I did not hesitate. For example, I translated the phrase “ça saute aux yeux,” regarding the Algerian woman’s silver earrings, with the dynamic equivalent “it jumps out at you.” This expresses her ambivalence about marking her Kabyle identity in exile through jewelry, and makes it “so obvious” (Bey, *Entendez-vous...*, 30). I was also challenged when certain fairly common French tenses or concepts, such as the imperfect, did not have easily understandable English equivalents. In these cases, I resorted to a note. In French, the past can be described with elements that resemble the present tense. As in Bey’s use of the expression “vient de” in the line where the Algerian woman first wonders why she thought Jean was handsome and concludes: “Sans doute à cause de la phrase qu'elle vient de lire. De ce visage qui vient de se superposer à celui du père, décrit par le narrateur” [“Probably because of the sentence she has just read. That face that just superimposed itself over that of the father, described by the narrator”] (Bey,
Entendez-vous... 12; [emphasis mine]). This style juxtaposes past and present, especially in lines such as this one, which expose the Algerian woman’s memories of her father.

Yet, this juxtaposition would not strike a French reader, nor would it necessarily emphasize a specific stylistic choice, because the passé composé and “venir de” incorporate elements that resemble the French present tense to express an action in the recent past. So I did not want to make this common usage seem bizarre to my Anglophone readers, nor did I necessarily wish to remove the stylistic choice.

I was privileged to work with Odile Cazenave and Alison Rice, who helped me to pinpoint the politics behind the Franco-Algerian colonial legacy and to become more precise in the terminology that frames the Algerian context. On the theoretical importance of framing, Judith Butler’s 2009 study *Frames of War* asserts:

> The frame does not simply exhibit reality, but actively participates in a strategy of containment, selectively producing and enforcing what will count as reality. It tries to do this, and its efforts are a powerful wager. Although framing cannot always contain what it seeks to make visible or readable, it remains structured by the aim of instrumentalizing certain versions of reality. This means that the frame is always throwing something away, always keeping something out, always de-realizing and de-legitimating alternative versions of reality, discarded negatives of the official version. (Butler, *Frames of War*, xiii)

Translation frames a text and cannot simply reflect the original. The process renders only a certain version of its reality “visible or readable.” It rearticulates sentiments that are supposed to “reproduce” the author’s. Still, it also participates in containing expression: by that I mean that the transposition of one language to another constrains the translator to select certain meanings, when the original, such as Entendez-vous dans les montagnes..., blurs multiple literal and figurative senses. The translator must therefore
privilege portions of the text as particularly meaningful and “make the version count,” to
structure what the audience “can and cannot see” without becoming the author.
Translation is “a powerful wager” and often legitimizes texts in another culture.

A living author, such as Bey, can fully appreciate the reverse side of this power, which brings me to the second part of the quote: “What do ‘frames’ ‘discard’ or ‘de-
actualize’?” This question was most problematic for me because I am not sure how much
the choice of certain meanings – “gaps in translation” – would matter to Bey since this is
a work of fiction, yet I did not want to risk any misinterpretations. Entendez-vous dans
les montagnes... explores how to frame the self and the other. I doubted whether I would
cloud her ‘messages’ on war, feminine self-expression, and public and private
responsibilities by accidentally “keeping something out.” What if I “discard” the “version
of reality” that the author communicates in her work? What if I unwittingly delegitimize
a point that she would have desired and that was contained in my other drafts, and thus
provide a false understanding of her themes? I constantly told myself to “remember the
geraniums” and to keep going.

Finally, I attempted to take stock of all of these “discarded negatives” (Butler,
Frames of War, xiii). I have never personally experienced this type of intimate violence
where political and personal motivations mix, but I am deeply respectful of women who
have. I therefore sought to critique and translate in a way that would both underscore the
torture Bey discusses, but also depict an author who writes with “very much pleasure”
(E-mail correspondence with Maïssa Bey). I am not Algerian, and although a deep love
for my father connects me to Bey, I cannot imagine what it would be like if he were
executed. Personally, I tried to remain sensitive to this because I felt it could theoretically infuse the translation. I often shy away from trauma, except when collective or individual efforts produce a constructive response to it. In *Entendez-vous dans les montagnes*..., the author’s desire to reframe her father’s portrait and the relationship between the Algerian woman and Marie illustrate just such responses. Bey’s group, *Paroles et Écritures*, also embodies constructive activism. Due to this engagement, I undertook the translation. I cannot tell you how many women and men have worked with me to articulate a version of Bey’s voice in English. To those of you who gave me personal support, “Thank you to all – it was heart.”
BIBLIOGRAPHY


---. “*Re: Payment*.” Message to the author. 10 Jul. 2015. E-mail.


---. *L’hôte*. Western Kentucky University, 1957. PDF file.


Chabanier, Anaïs. “*Re: question*.” Message to the author. 10 Dec. 2014. E-mail.


Mathieu, Mireille. “Chant des partisans.”

---. “La Marseillaise” (France National Anthem).


CURRICULUM VITAE

ERIN M. LAMM

534 Beacon St. Apt #205
Boston, MA 02215
emlamm@bu.edu

EDUCATION

Boston University
PhD French Literature
Teaching Fellow
First reader: Odile Cazenave; second reader: Dorothy Kelly; third reader: Margaret Litvin.

Columbia University
M.A. French Literature, GPA 3.67
Dissertation title: Gigi: ou comment une fille devient femme.
First reader: Dr. Elisabeth Ladenson Second reader: Dr. Phillip Watts
Analyse des adaptations cinématographiques: les Gigi de 1948, 1957 et 2005
School of Continuing Education

Drew University
B.A. French Cultural Studies, Magna Cum Laude GPA 3.66
History minor with concentration in European history
Pi Delta Phi French Honor Society 2003-05
Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society 2005

PUBLICATIONS


PRESENTATIONS, CONFERENCES & PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

MIT Conférence : Graduate Consortium on Women’s Studies Symposium
Talk: Contemplating Rebel’s Faces: Autofiction in Maissa Bey’s Entendez-vous dans les montagnes…

Participant: Colloque Colette : Complexités et Modernités.
L’abbaye d’Ardenne, 12-14 mars 2009

Columbia University French Graduate Association Conference
- Panel chair: “Circulation: Networks, Knowledge and the Literary” 2009
- Organization committee 2009

**Organized the Tournée Film Festival, Boston University** 2012-14
2014 Film Festival included the participation of director Mariette Monpierre Monti

**Modern Language Association** 2012-present

**Société des Amis de Colette** 2008-present

**TEACHING**

**French 3**
**LF 211 Third Semester French**
   Boston University Teaching Fellow; sole teacher of class for intermediate French learners.

**French 2**
**LF 112 Second Semester French**
   Boston University Teaching Fellow; sole teacher of class for first-time French learners.

**French 1**
**LF 111 Introductory French**
   Boston University Teaching Fellow; sole teacher of class for first time French learners.

**French 1202**
**Intermediate French Conversation**
   Guest film analysis lecturer for intermediate French class

**Tutoring French I**
**Freelance translation:** Academic, literary, and international relations.
   Most recent project: PhD Dissertation in field of Anthropology, French-English,
   Sylvia De Zordo, 600 pgs.

**LANGUAGES**

**English** – native speaker, **French** – fluent, **Spanish** – proficient

References available upon request.