

Revealing Silence: Harki Daughters and the Literary
Representation of Identity

by

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Chapter One: Discovering Harki Identity.....	18
Chapter Two: Writing and Fighting for a Collective Harki Identity.....	53
Chapter Three: Beyond the Father: Giving Voice to Silenced Women.....	83
Conclusion.....	108
Bibliography.....	115

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INTRODUCTION

I. History of Harkis

On November 1, 1954, the Algerian War for Independence officially began. Almost immediately afterwards France, who had been in Algeria as a colonial presence since 1830, began employing Algerian men in its struggle against organizations like the FLN (Front de Libération Nationale) that were pro-Algerian independence. While France had a history of employing soldiers from its colonies during both world wars against other countries, it was the first time they employed locals to fight for a continued colonial presence. These Algerian men in the French army were labeled Harkis, a term that has separated them and their descendents from the rest of Algerians ever since. While Muslim Algerians filled many roles on behalf of the French army, they all were labeled Harkis, meaning that they belonged to harkas, or movements. The term implies that Harkis made an ideological choice by enlisting with the French army. However, most Harkis enlisted for complicated, often life threatening, reasons, such as a shortage of food or threats from the FLN. However, after the Evian Accords of March 19, 1962 ended the war and marked Algeria's independence from France, the word Harki immediately came to signify traitor.

Harkis, viewed as enemies of the newly formed Algerian nation by most Algerians, faced imprisonment, torture, and murder, with little to no protection from their former French commanding officers. Against the will of the French Government

and Louis Joxe, the Minister for Algerian Affairs, some Harkis succeeded in boarding boats intended for pieds-noirs¹ and French soldiers leaving Algeria. Though all people born in Algeria were legally considered French, Harkis lost their French legal status after the Evian Accords were signed and Algeria was considered an independent nation. However, Algerians considered Harkis traitors and were not willing to accept them as citizens. Those Harkis who succeeded in leaving Algeria were referred to as “Français musulmans rapatriés” (French Muslim repatriates) or “Français de souche nord africaine,” (French of North African roots), while pieds noirs were referred to as “Français de souche européenne” (French of European roots). Upon arrival in France, Harkis were placed in camps such as Saint Maurice l’Ardoise, Bias, and Rivesaltes that were isolated from the rest of the population. These camps were intended to be a home while Harkis were in transition to life in Europe, and Harkis were often housed in tents or other similarly temporary housing units. Camps were intended to help acclimate Harkis to life in France, as well as to protect them from other Franco-Maghrebis who might be hostile towards Harkis. They also served as a marker of difference, implying that Harkis were not fit to mingle with the rest of the French population.

Many Harkis were moved from transit camps to forest camps where they worked for the Office National des Forêts. Living conditions in these camps were often inadequate. Healthcare and schooling in camps were often separated from the general public. Pieds-noirs, by contrast, were given priority for jobs and lodgings (such as HLM, public housing units in cities) intended to integrate the recent “repatriates” into the metropolitan population, and did not face the same

¹ Pied noir is the French term used to designate Europeans born and raised in Algeria.

discrimination and segregation as Harkis. Harkis were given second priority for such programs.

Many Harki families eventually succeeded in finding lodging and employment outside of the camps, though many Harki families still live near former camps today. The French government is reluctant to provide extensive support to Harkis to this day, and has also been reluctant to acknowledge their significant contribution to the Algerian War, or more generally, French history. France has historically been reluctant to acknowledge the Algerian conflict as a war or discuss its shameful events (most notably the use of torture) in the public sphere. The reluctance to speak about this period is particularly pronounced in the case of Harkis. Around the turn of the century, things began to change. In 1999, the Algerian Events were officially acknowledged and named the Algerian War by the French National Assembly. Public knowledge of Harki history was affected by this significant change, and some monuments and memorials, such as one outside the Invalides in Paris, were established to acknowledge Harki history in the public sphere. Some ceremonies were held to pay tribute to Harkis and other veterans of the Algerian War. However, their history remains widely unknown among the general French public, and Harkis still suffer greatly from social and economic disadvantages.

II. Socioeconomic Conditions in France

While Maghrebi immigrants living in France have traditionally faced poverty upon arrival, Harkis, who are themselves Maghrebi, were particularly disadvantaged.

Harkis often immigrated to France knowing little or no French, and subsequently faced difficulties finding employment. Further, many Harkis suffered from the trauma resulting from their particular experiences of the Algerian War and were not mentally stable enough to keep consistent employment. Some Harkis found employment through the Forestation camps in which they lived, but were often poorly paid. Additionally, stores located on site charged exorbitant prices for groceries and other goods. Harkis often did not have the ability to travel to nearby villages, either because it was forbidden by the heads of camps or impossible due to lack of transportation.

Often Harkis were afraid or unable to claim more from the French government than citizenship. Shame resulting from their alliances during the war, fear of reprimands, and sometimes illiteracy kept Harkis from claiming their due.² Often Harkis stayed in camps, where they were surrounded by other former Harkis and life more closely resembled the communities they had left behind in Algeria. Unfortunately, this precluded Harkis from potential economic opportunities outside the sphere of their communities. Camps rarely prepared Harkis with the skills they would need to seek employment in France, and most Harki adults remained illiterate.

Harki children were better prepared for life in France than their parents through the education system, but often did not receive the same quality of education as their peers, Franco-Maghrebi or Franco-French. Placed in schools where they were segregated from the rest of the population, Harki children did not receive adequate education. Harki classrooms were often overcrowded, making education all the more difficult. As a result, unemployment rates are particularly high among young male

² Benjamin Stora, La Gangrène et l'oubli (Paris: Éditions La Découverte & Syros, 1998).

children of Harkis. Though some Harkis have succeeded in achieving higher education and successful careers, the cycle of poverty in which Harkis are inscribed largely continues.

III. Harki voices

While Harki men remained silent about their experiences of the war and the suffering they faced in France and Algeria, their sons began to speak out against oppression in the 1970s. Despite the explosive political activity of May '68 in Paris, which touched on such diverse issues as immigration, higher education, and the rights of women, Harkis were not represented or engaged in this critical political moment. In 1971, the first organization for Harkis directed by a former Harki was established. While this was certainly a significant step in Harki visibility, the group achieved little. May of 1975 marked an important moment for Harkis as inhabitants of the camps Bias and Saint-Maurice-l'Ardoise revolted, under the slogan, "Après la trahison, l'abandon ; après l'abandon, l'exil ; après l'exil, l'oubli."³ As is evident in the slogan, the young men fought for visibility. They saw the forgetting as linked to a chain of events, beginning with the war, but ultimately connected to exile. While these Harki sons fought for recognition, they also fought for the homeland they had been denied for thirteen years. These revolts were led mostly by the sons of Harkis, born in Algeria in the final years of the war. Sixteen years later in 1991, a younger group of Harki sons, mostly born in France, revolted again in the Cité des Oliviers in Narbonne, and in other areas with high concentrations of Harki families. While these

³ "After betrayal, abandonment; after abandonment, exile; after exile, oblivion."

movements contributed to Harki visibility, they rarely created lasting movements that continually fought for Harki rights in the public sphere.

Harkis had difficulty instigating a sustained collective movement for various reasons. The trauma cited above was certainly a crucial factor, as was the silence surrounding the Algerian War. Additionally, Harkis were not a homogenous group aside from their actions with the French army. In his thorough work on the history of Harkis, Et ils sont devenus harkis... (1993), Mohand Hamoumou claims that the heterogeneity of the Harki population had an important impact on a lack of organizing among Harkis: “Malgré le nombre croissant d’associations, les Français musulmans rapatriés [Harkis] n’ont pu ni vaincre l’oubli ni briser leur silence. Cette situation s’explique autant par l’hétérogénéité de la population que par la persistance de comportements issus de la période coloniale” (304).⁴ Harkis engaged for a variety of reasons, and came from diverse ethnic and class backgrounds: some were Kabyle or Berber and thus did not speak Arabic, for instance. Additionally, their lives in France followed different courses. Some Harkis comprised the colonial elite, and were well prepared for success in France, while others were illiterate and spoke no French. This diversity of background, in addition to different demands in organizing, posed challenges for those interested in organizing the Harki population.

A lack of Harki organizations was certainly one reason that the population remained so invisible, a situation that was underlined by the lack of texts by or about Harkis. While the term “Harki” was commonly known among Algerians and French,

⁴ Hamoumou, Et ils sont devenus harkis... “Despite the growing number of associations, Repatriated French Muslims [Harkis] were not able to either conquer forgetting or break their silence. This situation is explained as much by heterogeneity of the population as by the persistence of behavior born out of the colonial period.”

few instances of self-representation by Harkis existed. Indeed, the first real history of the Algerian War, La Gangrène et l'oubli by Benjamin Stora, was produced only in 1991, almost thirty years after the end of the hostilities. As histories of the Algerian War began to emerge, histories of Harkis came out as well, but Harkis often did not write these works. Certain scholarly works emerged, some produced by Harkis or pieds noirs such as Mohand Hamoumou (the son of a Harki) or Jean Jacques Jordi (a pied noir). Until the eighties, this absence of text held true for all Franco-Maghrebis. Representation of non-Harki Franco-Maghrebis, however, began to change with the rise of the Beur generation, young French men and women of Maghrebi heritage. This generation advocated for equality, against the racism that Franco-Maghrebis had suffered from for as long as they had lived in France. Their generation produced a corpus of literary work and engaged in direct political action, participating in annual marches beginning in 1982. These Marches came to be known as the Marches des Beurs, and succeeded in drawing attention to Franco-Maghrebis living in France and the oppression that they faced. These literary texts and political actions spurred academic work on France's immigrant populations, but Harkis remained absent from this rise in attention.

The first Marche des Harkis occurred in Paris in 1987. This march expressed a significant distinction between Harkis and other Franco-Maghrebi communities, demonstrating that Harkis had unique needs and a unique history. Harki advocacy continued through the nineties, and still exists today. Numerous organizations, such as AJIR (Association Justice Information Réparation), Harkis et Droits de l'Homme, and Coalition Nationale des Harkis et des Associations de Harkis, still advocate today

for visibility and justice for Harki communities. These organizations were accompanied in breaking Harki silence by a few academic studies in sociology and history: Et ils sont devenus les harkis... by Mohand Hamoumou (1993), La France honteuse: le drame des harkis by Abd-el-aziz Méliani (1993), Les combattants musulmans de la guerre d'Algérie: des soldats sacrifiés by Maurice Faivre (1995), and Les harkis: une mémoire enfuie by Jean Jacques Jordi and Mohand Hamoumou (1999). Overall, however, works on Harkis remained rare and did not provide the intimate study of Harki identity that fiction makes accessible. Emergent literary texts about Harkis provided an entirely new perspective on Harki identity. The first such text was Le harki de Mériem (1989) by Mehdi Charef, a prominent Beur author but not, himself, the descendent of a Harki. Literary self-representations of Harki descendents did not appear in France until the 21st century.

IV. Texts

This thesis is a study of three texts written by the daughters of Harkis, representing a range of generations and narrative styles. All three of the texts were published in 2003. These texts follow the 2000 visit to France by the Algerian president, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the first such visit made by an Algerian president since independence. During his visit, Bouteflika announced that Algeria was not yet ready to welcome Harkis on Algerian soil. Further, President Bouteflika compared Harkis to collaborators in the Second World War, men and women who came to epitomize betrayal in France. This announcement was a painful shock to Harkis and

their families, who had long fought for free circulation between Algeria and France. Evidently, such a pronouncement brought questions of identity and belonging to the surface of the minds of Harkis and their descendents.

The three texts examined in this thesis explore seemingly conflicted identities, and each of them comes from a different personal history on the part of the writer. Of the three women who wrote these texts, two (Hadjila Kemoum and Zahia Rahmani) were born in Algeria. The third, Dalila Kerchouche, was born ten years after her family's arrival in France. While Rahmani and Kerchouche speak directly of their personal experience, Kemoum narrates a fictional text from the third person perspective. The diversity of these texts strengthens their ability to address a number of issues in breaking Harki silence. Furthermore, these texts allow the reader to experience self-representations of Harki descendents in depth. Literature grants the authors great liberty to present history and identity with the emotional richness that other formats often preclude. Through the use of narrative to illustrate the lives of individuals, the reader is asked to empathize with Harki history as both a force that touches individual families, and a set of circumstances that affected a large number of families in similar ways.

Zahia Rahmani, author of Moze is the oldest of the authors examined in this work. Rahmani was born in 1962 at the very end of the war, and lived the first five years of her life in Algeria while her father was imprisoned. The family escaped to France in 1967. Rahmani writes Moze in 2001, ten years after her father's 1991 suicide. The text is divided into five distinct sections. The first section consists of a conversation between a social worker and Moze's family in regards to his suicide,

and serves to construct the family's relationship to Moze for the reader. In the second section, Moze's daughters return to Algeria to attempt to bury him. It is in this section that the protagonist/narrator decides to testify on Moze's behalf in front of a national reparations committee. In the third, the daughter testifies, and speaks her critique of the French government's treatment of Harkis. The fourth chapter is a conversation between mother and daughter, narrated as a sort of fever dream. In the fifth, the daughter speaks with Moze's ghost. The novel's trajectory demonstrates the daughter's newly acquired ability to speak: that is, to break Harki silence, one of the most important aspects of all three texts. Moze is largely autobiographical, though the author changes the name of her father and often writes in a surrealist style.

Hadjila Kemoum, author of Mohand le harki, also left Algeria as a young child but was not raised by her Harki father. After immigrating to France with her family, Kemoum was placed in foster care due to her father's alcoholism and her mother's depression.⁵ The novel tells the story of a Harki named Mohand who, after the death of his wife, takes a French minister hostage. The text is set in 2001, after all of Mohand's children have moved out of the house. Mohand's dramatic actions bring the family together, where they must confront their history. The novel is narrated in the third person omniscient, and focuses on the perspective of multiple characters, including Mohand, his children, the French minister, and two law enforcement officers involved in the hostage situation. While Mohand ultimately dies in the conflict, his actions inspire two of his children to be more active in advocating for Harki rights and history. As a work of fiction, her text can be seen as a reconstruction

⁵ Nina Sutherland, "Harki Autobiographies or Collecto-Biographies? Mother Speak through Their Daughters," Romance Studies 24.3 (2006).

or imagining of the history she was never able to hear from her father. Further, Kemoum's perspective on silence gains a new significance when the reader considers that her father was taken from her at a young age, not only by trauma but by the state.

The third text is Mon père, ce harki by Dalila Kerchouche, a Harki daughter born in France in 1973, just before her family stopped living in camps. She has no direct experience of Algeria, or even memory of life in the camps, but views her memoir as an opportunity to discover her family's unspoken history. She travels to all of the different camps her family inhabited during the first section of the work, speaking to different people whom her family encountered, from kind French neighbors to cruel heads of camps. In the second section, she returns to Algeria to uncover yet another piece of her family's history: that of the Algerian War. In the process, she visits her parent's home and uncovers family secrets about her father's involvement in the war. Upon her return to France in the third section, she finally speaks to her father about the history he has kept secret even from his wife. Kerchouche develops a newfound respect for her father, and describes a movement in her Harki identity from shame to honor.

While these three texts represent a broad range of age and experience in Harki history, they represent a distinct corpus in Franco-Maghrebi literature. Like Harki texts, Franco-Maghrebi texts speak of the difficulty of poverty, discrimination, identity, and migration. Franco-Maghrebi literature, specifically the Beur literature of the '80s and '90s, discusses the desire to leave the racism of France for North Africa, which ultimately is not a welcoming home due to cultural differences. Instead, Beurs fight for recognition of their multicultural French identities in France. Harki texts

have several distinct differences. Added to Harki text is the difficulty of shame due to the father's past, and the silence resulting from this shame and trauma. Harki children also have a more fraught relationship with Algeria, which violently rejected their families at the end of the war. While Harki children identify with Algeria, and feel isolation due to racism in France, claiming Algerian identity becomes more complicated considering that they and their families are not legally welcomed there. Harki children also express isolation from Franco-Maghrebi communities, telling stories of a double, if not triple, marginalization coming from Algeria, France, and Franco-Maghrebis. These authors tackle such issues for the first time in the public sphere, speaking not only objectively of Harki marginalization, but subjectively, by portraying the interpersonal dynamics of Harki families. Texts by Harkis about Harki experience demonstrate all of these realms of experience. To this day, there is no comprehensive literary analysis of these texts.

V. Chapters

While all three writers are very different, they tell stories with common themes of silence, shame, abandonment, and thirst for justice. To help understand and highlight the important aspects of these three Harki works as representative of an important corpus⁶, I have chosen to organize this thesis into three chapters. The first chapter will outline how in the three texts Harki children first come to recognize their

⁶ To the best of my knowledge, there are four literary texts written by Harki children about their family's experience. While this number seems small, it is nevertheless a significant corpus in highlighting the multiplicity and heterogeneity of Franco-Maghrebi identities and experiences in postcolonial France.

history through the silence surrounding their relationship with the Harki father. Importantly, children first become aware that their families are different because of the silence surrounding their history. The first chapter will explore how it is that the child comes to address and conquer silence within her personal history, reforming her broken family and sense of self.

I examine the daughter's discovery and exploration of a collective Harki identity in the second chapter. Having learned that their family's story is not unique, but part of a historical moment, Harki daughters insert in their narratives a deep examination of Harkis as a collective. This chapter examines how the daughters confront the stereotypes that have long imposed a collective identity onto Harkis from the outside and transcend these stereotypes, as well as Harki silence itself, by writing texts that offer the first self-representations of Harkis. With a new understanding of the collective generated by their very personal understanding of Harki history, Harki daughters do not just break the silence by writing and publishing their texts. Within the texts, their protagonists also portray Harkis and their families as active participants in advocating for Harki interests and voices.

My third chapter examines the role of the mother in the child's discovery of speech and of Algeria. While Harki fathers are necessarily the dominant figures of Harki literature, their wives play an important role in the development of the daughter-narrators in this literature. While fathers rarely spoke of the past, mothers appear in all three texts as the source of knowledge and longing for Algeria. It is through the mother that the child learns an important dimension of her history. The third chapter explores the significance of the transmission of history that occurs

uniquely among women. This transmission of history is heavily dependent on the gendered spaces of Muslim households. With daughters and mothers occupying the same space, what has served to silence women's voices in the public sphere has become a privileged space for daughters who receive histories that their brothers may not have access to. Harki texts as written by women take on a multigenerational and multinational significance for all genders. They do not simply give a voice to Harki fathers and their descendents, but also mothers.

Harki texts bring to the forefront of French culture voices that have long remained silent. The texts of Harki daughters go beyond the political action of Harki sons to create a historical record of personal Harki history, as represented by Harki descendents themselves. This record conveys not only the painful history of Harkis in France, but the importance of the ways in which it has been silenced. Harki texts are not just history, but resistance. They not only represent silenced voices, but protest the silencing of voices, drawing the public's attention to the way that memory is constructed and history is erased.

Chapter One: Discovering Harki Identity: Silence, Violence, and Personal Speech

Harki fictions are stories not only of a history of the Algerian War for Independence, but first and foremost stories of the writer's personal confrontation with what it means to be a Harki. This personal confrontation begins with the protagonist's relationship to her father. In all three works, protagonists go through a similar trajectory in their stories: firstly, the protagonist identifies the discomfort surrounding her relationship to her family, specifically through her relationship to her father. The silence surrounding the family history becomes palpable in the narrative. As the child protagonists suffer the mockery of peers, both French and Franco-Maghrebi, and as the family endures harsh treatment at the hands of the French state, the narrator identifies the father as the source of the family's suffering. The discovery of the father's actions during the Algerian War leads to a violent rebellion, often against both her father and the French state, which have become inseparable to her. Rebelling against silence, Harki children set out to reconstruct the history that has been hidden from them, both publicly, through the silence of French culture, and privately, through the silence of their fathers. Eventually, investigating her personal history leads to a more complex understanding of her father's actions during the war. The protagonist can then reject the stereotypical understanding of her father as a traitor, conveyed to her in her initial discovery of her father's history. As she returns to the father to speak to him, she reconstructs the unity of the broken family. In confronting their personal Harki history head on, the Harki daughters of these texts

are able to construct and claim a Harki identity for themselves, personally discovering the significance of their history and present lives in France.

I. Writing the silence: Paternal silence and the absence of identity

Familial silence is the first sign to Harki children in this literature that their families are not normal. Before the protagonists of Harki literature are aware of their families' histories, they are aware of the discomfort in their families. The discomfort arising from silence is the discomfort of a child who grows up with no understanding of her history. With no information given to her about her family's history, she initially grows without an identity. The father is quickly presented as the source of the silence, through evasion of questions about the past and lies told to his children. In her youth, the child does not realize that her lack of history is abnormal, but merely accepts silence as an uncomfortable part of her family's identity.

While Harki families remained silent for different reasons and in different ways, silence is written as a predominant feature of Harki literature, and is in fact a component of Harki experience historically. In *Moze*, the daughter claims that Moze simply did not speak. She does not speak of him avoiding questions, or making unexplained allusions to the past, but simply of his silence: "Moze n'a pas parlé. Il a cessé. Il ne parlera plus. De ce qui l'a tué, de ce qu'il a compris, il n'a rien dit" (20)⁷. Moze is a living dead, what the narrator calls a "soldatmort" [sic], a soldier dead from the moment of his enlistment. The war killed Moze, though he technically survived it.

⁷ Zahia Rahmani, *Moze* (Paris: Sabine Wespéiser, Editeur, 2003). "Moze didn't speak. He stopped. He will never speak again. Of that which killed him, of that which he understood, he said nothing."

After the war that killed him, he becomes incapable of speech, and never conveyed his experience to his children. The narrator does not profess that she asked Moze questions or sought out his history in any other way, but states that speech on his part is no longer possible.

The real silence of Harkis is often portrayed as so pervasive that Harki fathers act as if the past never occurred. Jacques, the son of Mohand in the novel Mohand le harki, accidentally learns of his father's history through a hostile encounter at a café between his father and other Algerian immigrants, who attack Mohand because of his past. Mohand fights these attacks with pride, but requests that his son not just keep the struggle quiet, but rather forget it entirely: "Tu vas oublier ce qui s'est passé dans ce café, ouldi... Tu ne peux pas comprendre pourquoi et tu es encore trop jeune pour que je t'explique" (130).⁸ Instead of promising to explain when the child is old enough to understand, or provide some primary explanation of the term used as an insult against his father, Mohand wishes to pretend that both the encounter in the café and the history preceding it had never happened. This willed amnesia affects the child's understanding of history beyond the conflict. While the moment could have been a powerful teaching tool for the child, who must learn how to respond to the violence he himself will come to face, he is told to forget it. The child is asked to forget not only the important self-defense demonstrated by his father, but also the history of the Algerian War enacted through the conflict.

The violent encounter at the café becomes symbolic of how violence, silence, and amnesia combine to transmit the family's Harki history. Firstly, the aggressive

⁸ Hadjila Kemoum, Mohand le harki (Paris: Editions Anne Carrière, 2003). "You will forget what happened in that café, ouldi... You couldn't understand why and you're still too young for me to explain it to you."

words of the patrons who attack Mohand reveal details of Harki history. On a more subtle level, the encounter in the café resembles the traumatic event that triggered the father's silence, and is thus one of the symptoms of trauma. Indeed, silence is not only the result of the conflict at the café, but also its cause. Dori Laub, in his writing on the silence of Holocaust survivors, speaks of how a traumatic event cannot be spoken, yet nevertheless plays out in the lives of survivors of trauma:

The continued power of the silenced memory of genocide as an overriding, structuring, and shaping force, may be, however, neither truly known by the survivors, nor recognized as representing, in effect, memory of trauma. It finds its way into their lives, unwittingly, through an uncanny repetition of events that duplicate- in structure and in impact-the traumatic past.⁹

Indeed, the quarrel in the café between Mohand and the other Algerian immigrants can be seen as a repetition of the violence following the war. Repressed history intrudes in the lives of Harkis specifically because they do not speak, leading their children to experience violence without ever understanding it, shrouded as it is in silence. Harki children do not learn about the violence their parents experienced as testimony, but rather as lived experience that does not explicitly state the events of the past. They not only learn the experience of the parents' trauma, but also must suffer the added dimension of a personal encounter with violence.

The silence of Harki fathers was historically often accompanied by violence at home, aimed either at themselves or at their families. Harki fathers are often portrayed as having violent outbursts related to traumatic experiences of the war. The

⁹ Felman and Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Listening in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992). Note to the reader: By using trauma theory written about the experience of Holocaust survivors, I do not mean to equate the massacre of Harkis with the tragedies of the Holocaust. Trauma theory as a field is predominantly concerned with the Holocaust as a case study, but trauma theory is crucial to understanding other traumatic historical and political events, the massacre and exodus of Harkis among them.

narrator of Moze tells of her own father's traumatic flashbacks, during which he attempts to shut himself away and fails, instead lashing out at his wife and children: "Le jour, quand sa tristesse l'envahissait trop, il se cachait. Il s'isolait. On entendait qu'il était là, derrière une porte... Il pouvait être dangereux. Dans ce cas, il fallait fuir ou s'enfermer jusqu'à ce qu'il se relâche, qu'il retrouve une attitude plus normale. Une nuit, il nous a réveillés pour nous tuer" (74)¹⁰. When the Moze's memories of the war return, he isolates himself instead of speaking the memory. The daughter characterizes trauma as "sadness" in this passage, expressing to the reader that silence has prevented her from directly naming her father's emotions and the actions resulting from their lack of expression. His trauma has been passed to her, as has his inability to name it. The father's silence has kept him confined within a cycle of repeating the events of the war, within his own family, action that transmits trauma to his children.

In spite of the trauma-induced silence of the father, Harki children discover pieces of their family's story that reveal their difference. The narrator of Mon père, ce harki acknowledges that the details of her childhood originally seem normal: "J'ai grandi là, à Saint-Étienne-de-Fougères, parlant arabe à la maison et français à l'école, persuadée longtemps que tous les enfants venaient, eux aussi, des camps" (25).¹¹ Since no one has told her that her family has lived under exceptional circumstances, she has no narrative to explain the circumstances of her childhood. She grows up

¹⁰ Rahmani, Moze. "The day, when his sadness became too much, he hid. He isolated himself. You heard that he was there, behind the door... He could be dangerous. In that case, you had to flee or close yourself in until he regained himself, till he was in a more normal mood. One night, he woke us p to kill us."

¹¹ Dalila Kerchouche, Mon père, ce harki (Paris: Éditions Seuil, 2003). "I grew up there, at Saint-Étienne-de-Fougères, speaking Arabic at home and French at school, persuaded for a longtime that all children also came from camps."

without a sense of her history or geography, but has no reason to believe she is different from anyone else. She knows only that her family comes from a camp, a non-space that is constructed only for temporary use. She also does not know why or how her family came to live in the camp.

For many Harki families, this normalizing of life in the camps was part of a broader effort to heal the wounds of the war. Mohand Hamoumou, in his sociological analysis of the silence of Harkis, speaks of the relationship between feigned normalcy and the aftermath of trauma specific to Harki families:

Le silence d'abord : heureux d'avoir échappé aux massacres qui suivirent l'indépendance, meurtris par l'exil forcé, préoccupés pour beaucoup par leur famille laissée en Algérie, les anciens supplétifs acceptent l'isolement dans les hameaux forestiers et l'assistance des camps, somme toute sécurisants. En état de choc, la population se replie sur elle-même, panse ses blessures, tente d'oublier le cauchemar. (295)¹²

Silence served as self-protection for Harki families, who did not have to directly confront some challenging aspects of daily life while in isolation and silence, occupied as they were by the traumatic past and ongoing concerns about life in Algeria. Surrounded by other Harkis, families were more able to forget, having no alternate ways of life by which to compare themselves. While the quality of life in camps was certainly not sufficient for the families who lived there, camps facilitated silence, which was comforting to parents who were happy to have escaped the immediate dangers of the war.

¹² Mohand Hamoumou, *Et ils sont devenus harkis...* (Paris: Fayard, 1993). "First, silence: Happy to have escaped the massacres following independence, wounded by forced exile, many preoccupied by their family left in Algeria, the former suppletive soldiers accepted isolation in forest camps and the assistance of camps, all in all comforting. In a state of shock, the population folded in on itself, bandaged its wounds, and attempted to forget the nightmare."

The suffering that Harki families tried to heal through forgetting was nevertheless palpable to their children. The narrator of Mon père, ce harki demonstrates this palpable suffering, saying that she believed other children came from camps, she is aware that something about her family's history is if not different, then not quite right. Suffering is present in her family, giving her a hint that her family is hiding something: "Je savais que mes parents ont souffert, mais j'ignorais pourquoi. J'ai grandi dans cette mythologie familiale" (26).¹³ The child recognizes that something unusual is happening within her family, both from the specific experience the family has undergone and the suffering it produces. However, the situation is never directly explained to her, so she assumes it must be normal. Nevertheless, she senses the unique suffering of her family. This normalcy assumes the status of myth, further confirming to the reader that silence is not passive, but rather actively shapes family life.

The silence of the father's trauma, and its replication through violence, takes a toll on the family's internal coherence. Even when the father does not behave violently towards his children, his silence can drive his children away, even well into adulthood, as in the case of the narrator of Mon père, ce harki: "Aujourd'hui, quand je viens en week-end chez mes parents, je lui parle à peine. Je lui dis 'bonjour' en arrivant, 'au revoir' en repartant. C'est ainsi depuis des années. Je l'ai peu à peu rejeté, exclu de ma vie, banni à mon tour" (25).¹⁴ Often a lack of communication creates alienation between father and child within these narratives. While this narrator

¹³ Kerchouche, Mon père, ce harki. "I knew my parents had suffered, but I ignored why. I grew up in this familial mythologie."

¹⁴ Kerchouche, Mon père, ce harki. "Now, when I spend a weekend at my parents' place, I speak to him only when necessary. I say 'hello' when I arrive and 'goodbye' when I leave. I rejected him little by little, excluded him from my life, banished him in my own way."

declares that she has taken the action to alienate her father from her life, she roots her actions in the lack of communication between her and her father. While she has elected to stop speaking to him, she eventually realizes that it is History, and not *his story*, that has separated them: “L’Histoire, à laquelle se sont ajoutés les problèmes familiaux personnels, m’a séparée de lui. Je refusais de le regarder comme je refusais d’affronter *mon* histoire. Lui, encore une fois, s’est résigné” (25).¹⁵

However, if History rather than his story has separated father and daughter, their shared story is also a root cause. The daughter begins to attribute responsibility to both her and her father. The reluctance to speak that has separated them is in part her responsibility. Both parties have failed to initiate the speech necessary to maintain a healthy relationship.

The father’s inability to transmit history to his daughter is thus perceived as a two-way interaction, or lack thereof. The narrator of Mon père, ce harki characterizes her father’s silence by speaking of her own personal fear of asking her father questions: “Qui est-il, au-fond ? ... Toutes ces questions, je n’ai jamais osé les lui poser” (24).¹⁶ Narrating the text as an adult, the Harki daughter states that she does not truly know her father. Silence exerted pressure on her relationship with her father that she didn’t have the courage, as a child, to break. She thus frames the silence in terms of her own hesitation to ask her father questions. Her fear is inspired by a strong code that has been established between her and her father. She has never dared to ask him these questions, implying that speech would be a transgression against an

¹⁵ Kerchouche, Mon père, ce harki. “History, which has added to personal family problems, separated me from him. I refused to see like I refused to confront my family history. He resigned himself again.”

¹⁶ Kerchouche, Mon père, ce harki. “Who is he, at the root? ... All of these questions, I never dared to ask him.”

unspoken family tradition. While the child cannot necessarily name the reason for this force, it deeply influences her relationship with her father, keeping her from fully knowing him.

The narrator of Mon père, ce harki depicts her awareness of this responsibility shared between father and child. Mohand, le harki, on the other hand, provides the father's own perspective on and consciousness of the brokenness of the family through narration from a third person omniscient perspective. Contemplating his lack of relationship with his children, Mohand recognizes the degree to which his silence has put his family through hell: "Peut-être aurait-il dû leur parlé de son passé à cette époque, leur dire d'où ils venaient, combien il étaient miraculeux qu'ils soient là. Sortis de l'enfer..." (26).¹⁷ This hell he refers to seems to be, for him, the one they escaped from in Algeria. If the father could explain to his children the reason for immigrating to such a harsh environment in France, his children would see that they had left the hell of reprisals in Algeria following the war. However, the hell of this passage can also be read as the hell imposed by, and simultaneously causing, the family's silence. The ellipses ending the phrase imply a present-day traumatic flashback. Thinking of hell, the father finishes his sentence, but his thoughts go on, as if he were aware that hell, in fact, continues, and that they are far from out of it. He is not even sure that speaking in the past would have liberated him and his family from the hell of silence: he preceded his "I should have spoken" with the hypothetical "may be", highlighting his powerlessness, in front of the silence he knows he caused. Much like the Harki father of Mon père, ce harki, Mohand is portrayed as aware of, but

¹⁷ Hadjila Kemoum, Mohand le harki (Paris: Editions Anne Carrière, 2003). "Perhaps he should have told them of his past in that age, told them where they came from, how miraculous it was that they were there. Left hell..."

unwilling or unable to alter the silence that has imprisoned his family and constituted that family's hell. While the father is clearly still suffering from the traumatic hell of the war, his children are experiencing trauma for the first time through the silence of their father. This silence nevertheless leaves its mark on the children. Unable to break through the family's silence and malaise, Harki children eventually take on the suffering of their fathers.

Silence damages the child doubly, first by creating a non-identity, and second by transmitting the pain that instigated the silence. While Harkis, and most victims of trauma, wish to protect themselves and their children by refusing to recount the past, the harm of the past is transmitted by the silence. Nadine Fresco, in her psychological analysis of the children of Holocaust survivors, notes the impact of the silence of trauma survivors on their children: "Aux enfants, à qui la mémoire était refusée, on transmettait seulement la blessure. Ils ont grandi dans le vide compact d'une parole impossible" (208).¹⁸ Children are not protected by their fathers' silence; in fact, they are given the burden of silence. If the child is not taught to speak to their parents, the child cannot confront the father about the painful past. Thus the child's identity is a void, and the child is given no tools with which to confront the void. In fact the child spends much of her life unable to articulate the void: "Mettre un nom sur ce que le silence des autres rendait proprement innommable demeurait le plus souvent impossible à l'enfant—et seule une reconstruction du passé lui permettait, des années

¹⁸ Nadine Fresco, "La Diaspora des cendres," *Nouvelle revue de psychanalyse* (1981). "To children, to whom memory was refused, parents transmitted only the injury. They grew up in the compact void of impossible speech."

plus tard, de regarder ces temps-là comme celui d'un monde de silence" (208).¹⁹

Fresco, like Harki authors, addresses silence surrounding an event that has greatly shaped the family's experience. Lack of speech about trauma deprives children not only of family history, but of an understanding of the family's oppression as a part of an identity group. Children of Holocaust survivors lack understanding of an important piece of their history as Jews. Analogously, children of Harkis are deprived of an understanding of their history as a particular group of Franco-Maghrebis. Thus the trauma of one historical moment is left silent, along with all of the identity markers surrounding that particular moment in time.

As children inherit their father's silence, they also inherit their trauma. The trauma of the war, though unspoken, is directly transmitted to Harki families, and their children in particular. In *Moze*, the narrator explains this transmission of trauma from parent to child: "Il nous apprenait à vivre avec son mal. À devenir son mal" (74).²⁰ Children experience their father's trauma not by hearing memories of his past battles, and thus sharing them with him. Silence does not protect children from the horrors of war, but rather transmits them in such a way that children cannot separate themselves from their father's pain. Hearing a story would allow a child to recognize that the pain is caused by an experience that occurred in the past, and thus is separate from her. With no speech to separate the past from the present, children undergo the trauma of living the war not as adults engaged in battle, but as children living through the consequences of the father's traumatic past. In these texts, the war weighs heavily

¹⁹ Fresco, "La Diaspora des cendres." "To put a name on that which the silence of others rendered un-nameable remained most often impossible to the child—and only a reconstruction of the past, years later, to understand those times as a world of silence."

²⁰ Rahmani, *Moze*. "He taught us to live with his evil. To become his evil."

upon Harkis and their families, and with no outlet of speech, Harki fathers transmitted their suffering to their wives and children.

Harki fathers as represented in these texts also transmitted suffering to their children through their anxiety about the perception of Harki children outside the home. This anxiety was most frequently expressed through pressures put on Harki children to assimilate. Like many Franco-Maghrebi families, Harkis felt an overwhelming pressure to assimilate upon arrival in France. However, Harkis' unique history made this pressure more pronounced and more desired by Harki men themselves. In Harki families, the drive for assimilation revealed a desire for painful history to be made invisible. This desire for invisibility is partially strategic, considering that Harki families continually feared the possibility of violence from the French and Franco-Maghrebis. Further, having lost their ability to return to Algeria, assimilation in French society became all the more urgent for Harki families. Moze, the Harki father in Moze, forces his children to recite a list of polite phrases spoken in perfect French: "Un merci mal dit, une gifle ! Chaque soir, il fallait s'effacer et tenir debout, le regarder dans les yeux se faire gifler, ne pas pleurer et rentrer toute cette triste chose en soi" (66).²¹ Perfect execution of such mundane phrases allows Moze's children to go completely unnoticed. In some ways it is assimilation itself that asks the child to stay standing, without crying. However, the child does not understand the source of her father's brutality and only sees an antagonistic father attempting to erase the family's history, signified by accented speech and mannerisms. Although Harki identity is a void- something that can be neither articulated nor expressed- it is

²¹ Rahmani, Moze. "A thank you said badly, a blow! Every night, we had to erase ourselves and stay standing, look him in the eyes and be slapped, not cry, and put back all of this sad thing in yourself."

significant enough to inspire the father's desire that his family change, that it become more French, that it come to resemble a family that has not lived through the war.

The father's attempts at erasure of history through assimilation are not successful because of other Franco-Maghrebis in the family's community. ThIn all of these texts, narrators speak of Franco Maghrebi families that know the history of the Harki families in their midst, and are still so impacted by the War that they mock Harki families. This mockery, especially in contrast with the uncomfortable silence of the Harki home, causes a traumatic experience in the lives of Harki children. Name calling, insults, and violence directed at Harki children because of their fathers' past introduce them to the concept of a Harki. Children of Harkis, like Mohand's daughter in Mohand le harki, were often confronted through rejection: "Elle se souvenait de tout : de ses bagarres avec les autres mômes, des insultes des Arabes du quartier qui la traitaient soit de 'putain', soit de 'fille de traître', et qui interdisaient à leurs enfants de la fréquenter parce qu'elle voulait vivre 'à la française'" (162).²² The memory of childhood mockery, from both children and adults, has stuck in the memory of the character and shaped her own unique trauma. The violence with which Harki children are treated is never fully explained. Harki children do not learn history from these interactions, but are made to understand that their father is the explicit reason that they are harassed and isolated at school. At the same time, these children are expected to assimilate at home. Not only do children have painful familial relationships with their fathers, their fathers also cause them suffering outside of the home.

²² Kemoum, Mohand le harki. "She remembered all of it: her fights with other kids, the insults of Arabs in the neighborhood who treated her either as a 'whore,' or as the 'daughter of a traitor,' and who forbid their children to see her because she wanted to live 'the French way.'"

With no alternative narratives to counter the stories of their peers, Harki children often revert to the same silence as their parents in these texts. Much like Mohand's daughter, the narrator of *Mon père, ce harki* learns shame of her family's history from other children at school, who do not mock her but instead reveal their own knowledge of and pride in their families' history: "A l'école, mes copines, des filles d'immigrés, se pavanaient devant moi, si fières de leurs pères moujahidin (combattants du FLN) que je mourais de honte de parler du mien... Muette, je ravalais ma colère. Comme mon père, j'étais incapable de me défendre" (24-5).²³ As she feels shame for her father and reverts to silence, the daughter takes on both the identity and self-representation of her father. While she is not directly tied to his past, she assumes his shame and silence in her interactions with other children.

Susan Suleiman, a prominent trauma theorist, writes about the difficulties specific to children who have encountered trauma. While adults often have firmly established narratives through which to understand oppression based on identity, children do not. The children of traumatized adults cannot explain the family's history with trauma, and are thus even further removed from an understanding of their family's history. In many ways, Harki daughters are too young to understand the complexities of the identities other children ascribe to them: "They were persecuted because of an identity that they could not fully claim, since disaster hit them before the formation of stable identity that we associate with adulthood" (181).²⁴ Since being

²³ Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki*. "At school, my friends, the daughters of immigrants, strutted in front of me, proud of their fathers in the moujahidin (fighters for the FLN), that I would die of shame to speak of mine... Silent, I swallowed my anger. Like my father, I was incapable of defending myself."

²⁴ Susan Suleiman, *Crises of Memory and the Second World War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

a Harki has never been explained to the Harki daughter, she has no narrative with which to defend herself. She mimics her father, as of yet unable to rationalize and explain her identity- or for that matter, fully claim it.

Harki children gain only a limited understanding of their father's involvement in the Algerian War through their interactions with their peers. Having no narratives that run counter to those presented by their peers, they are unable to respond with a sense of personal history. This further strains an already broken relationship between father and daughter. Not only has the father caused suffering within the family, he has failed to provide his children with a history that would foster the self-knowledge necessary to counter their peers.

II. Rebellion: Undoing father, self, and nation

After learning such a skewed history of their father's engagement in the war and living with the misery of their fathers' traumatic and traumatizing experiences, the Harki children of these texts internalize the stereotypes attributed to their fathers by non-Harkis. Encounters with other Algerians immigrants and French natives, with both populations reluctant to speak about the Algerian War, give Harki children a limited vocabulary for the history that causes the family to suffer. Through these encounters, they come to understand that their father fought for France. Although they are hurt by the insults, Harki children come to internalize the non-Harki narratives of the Algerian war, believing their fathers to be traitors. They believe that their father chose to fight for the French, and that he is fully responsible for the

family's present suffering. Instead of turning to their fathers for more information, the children initially rebel against their fathers and go out in search of what it is they have hidden. In this search for knowledge, she completely disavows her father, thinking that his story is something she must rebel against to attain true information about her past. The child even begins to group her father and France together, thinking of them as one and the same oppressive force. Harki children rebel not only by seeking out the information that was hidden from them, but also by attempting to rid themselves of their fathers, eventually rejecting both the father and France.

Having internalized the term Harki and its shameful undertones through interactions with others, Harki children seek out more information about their family histories. The narrator of *Mon père, ce harki* goes on an exhaustive journey through France, visiting every camp her family has passed through, speaking to other Harkis or other people who had contact with her family during their stay in numerous camps. Even after having gained first hand knowledge of her family's history, the narrator is left with important questions about the path her family's life has taken: "Puis je m'arrête, brusquement et leur demande : 'POURQUOI ?' ...Je lâche enfin la question qui me hante depuis des mois : 'Pourquoi vous avez été traités comme ça?' ...Oui, pourquoi mes parents ont-ils tant souffert en France, alors que mon père s'est battu *pour* ce pays, finalement ? Les harkis ont-ils eu tort de choisir la France ?" (183).²⁵

Her line of questioning, instigated by her deeper understanding of the history of

²⁵ Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki*. "Then I stopped myself, suddenly, and asked them, 'WHY?' ...I finally let out the question that has haunted me for months: 'Why were you treated like this? ...Yes, why did my parents suffer so much in France, after my father fought *for* the country, after all? Were harkis wrong to chose France?'"

Harkis in France, establishes that she believes the reason for her family's mistreatment was a decision made by her father. Her logic implies that her father is responsible for her family's suffering and that she, put in the same position, would not repeat his course of action. Asking such a question distinguishes her from her father. As the daughter of a Harki, she has been identified by the actions her father took, an identification against which she rebels.

The narrator is rebelling against her father's perceived choice of the French state, which has come to signify racism in light of its treatment of Harkis. Racism is interpreted as being the true hidden component in the repression of Harki history, a fact made secret because of all the family has sacrificed for France. The narrator of Mon père, ce harki makes reference to her brother, who committed suicide at a young age, implying that the racism with which Harkis were treated was the motivation for his death: "Racisme... voilà ce que je n'entendais pas depuis le début de mon aventure. Voilà ce que mon frère Moha avait compris. Voilà ce qu'il n'a pas supporté" (183-4).²⁶ Racism is the unbearable secret buried at the core of the family experience, a secret that is destructive to Harki families who have no other home to turn to. The only member of her family who she claims has understood this secret dilemma ended his own life. The narrator is framing French racism as something that makes life unlivable, and drives Harki children who understand it to suicide. Now that the narrator has also understood racism, the reader is invited to ask how she will be different from her brother, and how she will face the seemingly unlivable contradiction of being French and Harki.

²⁶ Kerchouche, Mon père, ce harki. "Racism... that's what I hadn't heard, from the beginning of my adventure. That's what my brother Moha understood. That's what he couldn't bare."

Through his perceived choice of France, it becomes difficult for Harki children to separate the father from the country, ‘père’ with ‘patrie.’ After the overwhelming, brutal violence enacted against Harkis in Algeria, some 60,000 “Français musulmans rapatriés”²⁷ left Algeria, swearing never to return. Having lost his homeland, the Harki father has no other home and comes to identify himself with France. Mohand, the protagonist of Mohand le harki, responds to his son’s desire to emigrate to Canada with a fierce defense of the country his son wishes to leave: “C’est moi que tu attaques ! Quand tu attaques la France, c’est moi que tu attaques” (40).²⁸ Mohand’s son claims that he wishes to leave a country that treated his family so poorly, which Mohand takes as a direct personal attack. However, by leaving France Mohand’s son also attempts to leave his father in the past.

Harki daughters, whose mobility is often significantly limited as compared to that of their brothers because of constraints on women, do not see emigration as an option. Their rebellion against their fathers thus often takes on a different form. The Harki daughter protagonist of Moze articulates her rebellion against her father in an attempt to destroy him. She speaks of wishing her father’s death as the epitome of the unique suffering of children of Harkis: “De quelle douleur je parle ? De celle qui donnait envie de le voir mort !” (70).²⁹ The protagonist reaches this climax of suffering and rebellion, turning a gun on her father, Moze, only when Moze attempts to kill his wife, her mother. Her father’s turn against her mother is a very literal moment of a broader destruction of the family for which the father is responsible.

²⁷ “Repatriated French Muslims,” ie Algerians of non-European origins; Harkis and their families

²⁸ Kemoum, Mohand le harki. “It’s me that you’re attacking! When you attack France, its me that you’re attacking!”

²⁹ Rahmani, Moze. “What suffering do I speak of? Of that which makes you want to see him dead!”

Through his silenced trauma, the father has prevented communication and brought about the silence and isolation that has destroyed the cohesiveness of the family unit. In two of the texts, Mon père ce harki and Moze the family's destruction is most evident in the death of a sibling, and in Mohand le harki the attempted emigration of a brother. The child's act of rebellion, attempting to rid him or herself of the father, is both a reaction to and furthering of the family's destruction. Having recognized the father as the source of the family's fragmentation, the child does not attempt to heal the family, but rather seeks to destroy the cause.

While Moze's daughter points a gun at her father, and Jacques threatens to emigrate, neither of these characters follows through with the destructive actions they could take against their fathers. Even if the child were to murder the father or leave behind the racist country, the traces of these traumatizing figures would still be present. While the child comes to understand that France has exhibited racist policies towards Harkis, she also understands that she has been shaped by her experience growing up in France, and in many ways is French. In her movement through the three 'h's of Harki identity, "honte," "haine," and "Honneur,"³⁰ the narrator of Mon père, ce harki arrives at hate after her discovery of her family's history in France:

Oui, je suis une fille de harkis. J'écris ce mot avec un 'h,' comme haine... J'en veux à mon père aussi, de m'avoir condamnée à vivre dans un pays que je déteste. J'ai l'impression de reproduire sa malédiction : vivre et travailler dans un pays qui m'est odieux, sans avoir d'autre choix. Je me sens envahie par un immense dégoût, un dégoût de moi-même, la honte d'être française (180-1).³¹

³⁰ Shame, hate, and Honor

³¹ Kerchouche, Mon père, ce harki. "Yes, I am the daughter of a harki. I write this word with an 'h' like hate... I want it for my father also, for having condemned me to live in a country I hate. I seem to reproduce his malediction: to live and work in a country that is vile to me, without having another choice. I feel invaded by an immense disgust, a disgust with myself, the shame of being French."

The author articulates that the source of her hostility for her father is the life marked by racism that he created for his family. Instead his children are bound to a country that would commit atrocious crimes against its citizens. In this sense she is reliving the trauma of her father on yet another level: that of the experience of brutal racism. Further, she inverts the language usually associated with Harkis, claiming that she is ashamed of France, rather than of being the child of a Harki. She hates the French identity she is necessarily tied to, and her father for making it her life.

The narrator of Moze is so disgusted by France and her father who has chosen it that she wishes to rid herself entirely of both. However, like the narrator of Mon père, ce harki, she recognizes that she has already been “infected” by her father and country, and that her desire for separation from them both can only be just that: “Ceregardinsoutenable [sic], cette figure extrême de la culpabilité, je veux m’en défaire. Je ne veux pourtant pas l’innocenter... La faute de Moze, je veux dire qu’elle est ma chair et mon habit” (23-4).³² The wish cannot become reality because ridding herself of the father is necessarily undoing a part of herself. However, she explicitly states that she doesn’t wish to redeem her father- she only wishes to literally undo a part of herself. Ridding herself of her father’s fault is a way of attempting to erase the whole complicated history, and create an identity that is free of guilt, pain, and silence.

Frantz Fanon describes the phenomenon of wishing to undo a part of the self in Black Skins, White Masks, where he describes rebellion against the identity ascribed to a marginalized person. The black intellectual, upon arrival in France, finds

³² Rahmani, Moze. “Thatunbearablegaze, that extreme face of guilt, I want to undo myself from. I especially don’t want to make him innocent... The fault of Moze, I’m saying its my flesh and clothing.”

himself immediately assaulted by stereotypes of the ignorance and stupidity of black men. According to Fanon, his first action is to rebel against the identity being ascribed to him by changing his speech patterns: “The first impulse of the black man is to say *no* to those who attempt to build a definition of him... the first action of the black man is a *reaction*, and, since the Negro is appraised in terms of the extent of his assimilation, it is understandable why the newcomer expresses himself only in French” (36).³³ While there is nothing essentially ignorant or backwards about the speech patterns of the province that the black man has traditionally used, he abandons them to become invisible. In regards to assimilation, Harki daughters have a similar reaction. Daughters rebel against the history of their fathers so as to remove the cultural mark of Harki history, and thus become invisible in French society. In other words, their rebellion against the father strangely serves the French policy of assimilation that made Harki families suffer.

After rebelling against what little she knows of her history, the Harki daughter must look to alternate sources for that history. She does not identify with her father, who has chosen France, and thus she is left with a troubling question: “Ou est-elle, mon histoire?”³⁴ Importantly, she does not ask what her history is, but rather where. Her history is not that of her father or her family, but rather a location other than the one in which she has lived. She looks for a history that will displace the geography of her entire life. The only location remaining for her to turn to is Algeria.

The child has heard little of the family’s life in Algeria, and thus turns to the country as a possible source for alternate history. The protagonist of *Moze* visits

³³ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York City: Grove Press, Inc, 1967).

³⁴ Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki*. “Where is my history?”

Algeria after her father's death, wishing to both symbolically and literally rid herself of him through burial: "Je ne lui dois rien. Lui, il me doit de me quitter, de quitter mon esprit, il me doit de partir. Il me doit de ne plus revenir. Je suis venue ici pour m'en débarrasser !" (85).³⁵ Burial, often seen as a last respect paid to the dead, is not something that the daughter owes to her father, but rather something he owes her. She is putting his spirit to rest for her own sake, but doing so in Algeria is laden with significance. Burying Moze in Algeria is getting rid of the Moze who is attached to France. Placing her father in the ground from which he came is an attempt to undo his traumatizing exodus, and perceived betrayal of the land that bore him. Revisiting Algeria is also revisiting the site of her family's trauma, attempting to rid herself of him and her family's suffering forever through confrontation of the past and departure from France.

Ridding herself of the father through an exodus to Algeria is an incredibly significant act, as the child is trying to take on a country that has cut all ties to her family. Visiting Algeria is its own rebellion against her father and her family's history, as the child chooses to ignore the pain Algeria has caused her family. The narrator of *Mon père, ce harki* seeks a new parent, personified by Algeria. Algeria literally becomes the parent of the Harki child, who has orphaned herself: "Ces collines arides qui ont vu naître, se battre et mourir mes ancêtres, ces mamelons de terre rouge devant lesquels je me tiens aujourd'hui" (215).³⁶ The author becomes attached to the historic importance of the hills, which have witnessed the lives of the

³⁵ Rahmani, *Moze*. "I don't owe him anything. Him, he owes it to me to leave me, He owes it to me to never come back. I came here to get rid of him!"

³⁶ Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki*. "These arid hills that saw my ancestors born, fighting, and dying, these breasts of red earth before which I find myself today."

people she identifies as her family. Since the daughter has received no history of these ancestors from her parents, the land becomes a source of knowledge about her family's past. She is turning to Algeria not only for a fresh history free from France, but also a history that isn't silent. Algeria is depicted as a place that can nourish her in ways that have been lacking from her birth.

Returning to Algeria, the daughter attempts to learn and adopt the customs and history of the new nation as parent. However, this "adoption" is not mutual—Algeria appears to reject them. The narrator of *Moze* returns to Algeria with her sister to bury her father, though their goal is technically illegal, since he is a Harki. The impossibility of burying the father is the first rejection by Algeria that the daughter experiences. She cannot undo her father's history by placing him back into the ground that he came from. The narrator experiences a second rejection by Algeria, which is cultural. Since she has never learned to pray in her family's Muslim tradition, she must listen to tapes to learn, a sign that Algerian culture is not hers: "Si tu continues à écouter ces bandes, tu repartiras. Tu t'es trompée. Tu ne peux pas vivre dans ce pays.' '... Ces bandes, c'est parce que je ne sais pas prier. Tu comprends ce que je veux dire. Je ne sais pas prier et je ne veux pas apprendre. Mais je veux être près de lui" (102).³⁷ She attempts to find her place in Algerian culture through the symbolic act of praying, but finds that the act is forced. This practice does not fill in the gaps of the family's personal history, but is simply a gesture that attempts to create a life in which the traumatic event never existed. She listens to recordings of Arabic prayers she doesn't understand in a country that won't welcome her father's dead body,

³⁷ Rahmani, *Moze*. "If you keep listening to these tapes, you'll go back. You're wrong, you can't live in this country.' '... These tapes, it's because I don't know how to pray. You know what I mean. I don't know how to pray and I don't want to learn. But I want to be close to him.'"

representing that in actuality, she is both culturally and legally alienated from Algeria. The pre-war Moze she wished to come close to in Algeria is not the father she knows, and she understands that her efforts to find this father will fail, because history cannot be rewritten. Not only does Algeria not want her father's body, it is no longer her family's homeland.

By returning to Algeria, Moze's daughter is also attempting to fill a void in her identity created by her father's silence. Nadine Fresco, in her psychological study of the children of Holocaust survivors, outlines the ways in which children learn traumatic histories that have been silenced. Often children find themselves drawn to cultural symbols such as language in an attempt to come closer to an understanding of their parents' past: "Certains, essayant d'anéantir le génocide, s'emploient à faire revivre ce qui a disparu. On apprend le yiddish, on recueille les témoignages des anciens, mémoire orale, ethnographie-la yiddishkeit comme province" (210).³⁸ Revisiting the customs of the past is a way of attempting to erase it by making it known. When the past is no longer taboo, it no longer holds its power. The child is both attempting to fill in the gaps of an absent history as well as reducing its power as taboo. This is in a sense its own rebellion against the fear and protective silence of the parents.

Instead of attempting to mimic the patterns of a culture that has been lost to her family, as in *Moze*, the narrator of *Mon père, ce harki* seeks out information from her family who still lives there to reconstitute her past. However, she doesn't find what she expects, which is a story of her father's betrayal of country and family.

³⁸ Fresco, "La Diaspora des cendres." "Certain ones, attempting to crush the genocide, attempted to revive that which had disappeared. They learn Yiddish, they gather testimonies of the old, oral memories, ethnography-the yiddishkeit as province."

Enlisting with the French initially seemed to be an act of cowardice; however, stepping into the context of Algeria, the daughter finds that it was strategic: “La seule cause que cet homme défend est la survie des siens. L’oncle Ahmed aurait pu, indifféremment, devenir harki ou moudjahid : au fond, cela lui importait peu. Comme mon père, probablement...” (222-3).³⁹ Most of her male family members who remained in Algeria fought for the FLN in some capacity. In speaking to them of their actions, she learns that most Algerian men made the same honorable decision-protecting their families as best they could, regardless of the forces with which they fought. Throughout her return to Algeria, male family members appear to the narrator as possible fathers- men who were able to stay, and lead the life she would have been a part of. She encounters her father’s brother, who has lived in the desert as a sort of Muslim monk, and her cousins who have established families in rural Algerian villages. Most of these men live in poverty, as compared to her family’s relatively prosperous life in France. Speaking with these men only highlights the absence of her true father’s voice. In searching for a substitute for her life in France, she finds that she must address her own individual past, and find a way of speaking to her father: “Je suis déçue par la France autant que je le suis par l’Algérie. Les deux pays ont trahi leurs idéaux... J’ai hâte de rentrer chez moi, en France. Pour parler, enfin, à mon père” (270).⁴⁰ The author in this moment is able to separate her suffering from her father, attributing it instead to the two countries that have disappointed her. It is not her father’s choice, but the leadership of two governments that have broken her

³⁹ Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki*. “The only cause this man was defending was the survival of his family. Uncle Ahmed could have, indifferently, become a harki or a modjahid: in fact, that mattered little to him. Like my father, probably...”

⁴⁰ Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki*. “I’m disappointed by France, as much as I am by Algeria. The two countries betrayed their ideals... I’m eager to go home, to France. To finally speak to my father.”

family. Choosing a country will not repair her broken past, because looking to Algeria will not reveal her father's history to her. She must reconstruct the family that has been so harmed by History by speaking to her father, and learning his story.

Rebellion is not a surprising turn for Harki children, but it never completely functions in creating a new identity through rewriting history, or learning it from an alternate source. While Harki children are righteously enraged by the way their families were treated in France, the past cannot be undone, and children have been shaped by their relationships with their fathers and their relationships to France, no matter how much they wish to be free of both. The lack of history spurred by silence is not solved through rebellion as a rejection of the father and France. Nor is it solved by returning to Algeria, whose culture and politics eventually end up alienating Harki descendants. The Harki child must instead turn to her father.

III. Returning to the father, constructing identity: speech

The Harki children in these texts undergo an important transformative process in seeking out their history. They learn about the war, long hidden through trauma and intentional silence in their families. However, the daughter has not learned the precise circumstances of how or why her family came to France. Although she attempts to rid herself of the painful parts of her identity, she fails to do so, and instead must learn how these different but central pieces of her identity can fit together. In order to fully understand how her identity can hold together despite its complex, poorly explained history, she eventually feels the need to turn to her father.

Only her father can explain how it is that the family came to live in France, a crucial element in the daughter's integration of the elements of her family's history.

In the process of turning to her father, the narrator must first break her own silence. In *Moze*, after returning to France from Algeria Moze's daughter must first break her own silence by speaking to a national committee on reparations for Harkis about her father's service in the Algerian War. The text makes it unclear whether such a committee is fictional or not, but the section of the novel is structured as an official conversation between the narrator and the commission. The commission claims that it wishes to collect as many Harki testimonies as possible. For Moze's daughter, speaking about her father to the commission acts as an important precursor to her speaking to her father. She first fights to break her father's silence for him to an official state body, fighting for fair treatment that has been denied him: "Je vais rendre visite à tous. Et, à chacun, je leur dirai pourquoi nous sommes revenues. Je leur parlerai de lui. Je leur dirai qu'il était avec eux mais qu'il n'a rien pu faire. Qu'il était condamné. Que c'était un homme. Mais dis aux gens de cette commission que mon père était un homme" (104).⁴¹ Speaking about her father is an important step in the narrator's process of coming close to her father again. Speaking to the commission is breaking a silence for her father in the public sphere, proclaiming him to be a man. In a sense, she is forming the father that she must learn to speak to, an act that is important considering that he is dead. She must learn to reinterpret her understanding of her father, thinking of him as a human rather than a monster or a ghost, so that she might have a figure to whom she can speak.

⁴¹ Rahmani, *Moze*. "I'll visit all of them. And, to each one, I'll tell them why we came back. I'll tell them about him. That he was with them but he couldn't do anything. That he was condemned. But tell the people in that commission that my father was a man."

Speaking on behalf of her father, the narrator of Moze learns a new way of perceiving her father, as well as the transformative power of speech. Testifying about her father not only refashions her father as a man with whom she wants to speak, but teaches her that speech will ultimately change her relationship to him: “Parler pour dire la mémoire, parler pour ne plus avoir honte, parler pour pouvoir se regarder, parler pour ne plus avoir peur, parler pour ne plus être seul pour ne plus souffrir, parler pour ne plus haïr, parler pour vouloir vivre, pour ne plus oublier son père. Parler pour ne plus salir les tombes. Pour faire taire la mort” (136).⁴² It is in speaking that she realizes how deeply her relationship with her father has been, and will always be, affected by silence and speech. However in the past she had assumed a passive role, allowing silence to continue, she actively chooses to speak about her father and sees the potential that such an action opens to her. While she initially went to Algeria to rid herself of her father, she returns to France and learns to speak so as never to forget him. Having spoken about the father, she speaks to silence death.

In some cases, speaking to the father is the ultimate turning point in repairing the damaged family. After learning both speech and the multiplicity of histories leading to her father’s decision to enlist, the daughter can confront her father’s actions not as destruction brought upon the family, but as the result of a complex situation. After returning from Algeria, the narrator of Mon père, ce harki can finally ask the question she has discovered at the center of her family’s suffering:

“Apa, pourquoi tu n’es pas monté au maquis?” “Parce que j’ai manqué de courage.” Cet aveu me touche profondément. D’une voix douce, bouleversée,

⁴² Rahmani, Moze. “Speak to say memory, speak to no longer be ashamed, speak to be able look at yourself, speak so as to no longer be afraid, speak so as not to be alone anymore and not suffer, speak so as not to hate anymore, speak to want to live, speak to not forget your father again. Speak to never again sully tombs. Speak to silence death.”

je lui murmure: “Apa, je trouve au contraire très courageux de me le dire à moi, ta fille.” Je réalise à quel point j’aime sa douceur, son humilité, son bon sens. Je sais, maintenant, pourquoi j’ai écrit ce livre: pour parler à mon père. (275)⁴³

Speech doesn’t provide an answer that heals the family; nothing the father could say would undo history or change the course of his family’s suffering. However, the relationship she has begun to build with her father opens new possibilities for the family. A different interpretation has illuminated their broken past. The essential change is the entry of speech into their lives. The author didn’t undertake writing to find answers, or to change history, but rather to speak to her father. Further, she has gained a fuller understanding of the context in which her father made his decision. She can hear his reason for fighting with the French army, and understand that his reasons were no more or less honorable than the reasons of her family members who joined the maquis.

Writing is not only a manner of speaking to the silent father, but also speaking to the self. The narrator of Mon père, ce harki comes to speak to her father through the journey, including her thorough investigation of her father’s silence and her attempts to revisit the past which only her father held the key to. While the daughter cannot unlock the past, as she has not lived it, she can bring together the disparate pieces of the family’s history in her book. Henri Raczymow, the child of Holocaust survivors, speaks of the process of writing “Memory Shot Through with Holes,” an essay on writing about his lost Jewish history: “Writing was and still is the only way I could deal with the past, the whole past, the only way I could tell myself about the

⁴³ Kerchouche, Mon père, ce harki. “ ‘Papa, why didn’t you join the maquis?’ ‘Because I lacked courage.’ This confession profoundly touched me. In a soft voice, deeply moved, I murmur to him, ‘Dad, I actually think it’s very courageous to say that to me, your daughter.’ I realize how much I love his gentleness, his humility, his good sense. I now know why I wrote this book: To speak to my father.”

past—even if it is, by definition, a recreated past. It is a question of filling in the gaps, of putting scraps together” (103).⁴⁴ Raczymow describes writing as a kind of speech that serves to create a whole when previously there had been only holes. The whole that is created is, most obviously, the text produced, but it is also symbolic of a whole identity that is no longer tattered and risks falling apart.

Wholeness as a phenomenon created through the act of writing and speaking also extends to the Harki family. Hearing her father’s testimony begins the process of knitting together the broken family in numerous ways. Firstly, it is transformative in the daughter’s understanding of her history and identity, but also in her father’s relationship to his traumatic past. Speaking trauma allows him to externalize the event, transmitting it to the listener and freeing him from its endless psychological reproduction:

To undo this entrapment in a fate that cannot be known, cannot be told, but can only be repeated... a process of constructing a narrative, of reconstructing history and essentially, of *re-externalizing the event*- has to be set in motion. This re-externalization of the event can occur and take effect only when one can articulate and *transmit* the story, literally transfer it to another outside oneself and then take it back again, inside. (69)⁴⁵

Transmitting history to his daughter gives her a history and frees the father from trauma. This freedom from trauma allows him to take on the history as exactly that, rather than an internally present reality in which he is trapped. Further, the daughter is speaking the trauma of her own history to her father. Asking about the past can even be seen as an articulation of the daughter’s trauma. She is seeking out the history that can begin to put her father’s abuses in the past, along with the mockery of Franco-Maghrebis. In a sense, the act of speech has created a new family. Father and

⁴⁴ Henri Raczymow, "Memory Shot through with Holes," *Yale French Studies* 85 (1994).

⁴⁵ Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Listening in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*.

daughter now share a history, as well as their own individual traumatic experiences of history.

Although speaking to the father can cast a different light on the past, in some cases, it is too late to transform the family: either the father has already died, or has become inaccessible to his children. The protagonist of Mohand, le harki is such an example. After Mohand takes an ex-Minister of the French government hostage, Mohand's daughter must speak to him as an attempt to convince him to surrender: “ ‘Je n'ai plus envie de demander pardon. Je n'ai pas envie que les uniformes français m'imposent le silence. Quarante ans, ça fait quarante ans que j'étouffe, tu peux le comprendre, ça? ‘Je le comprends. Pas au point de te laisser mourir pour le passé. Sors avec moi. Rends-toi. S'il te plaît...’ ” (194).⁴⁶ Unfortunately, it takes the danger of losing her father for Mohand's daughter to learn to speak to him. It is not a choice to attempt to reconcile the family, but rather the point at which she realizes the importance of her family, and risks losing it. In speaking to her father, Mohand's daughter also recognizes the consequences of silence. It is too late for her relationship with her father to be salvaged, but it is not too late for her understanding of her father.

Mohand's dramatic actions and death serve as a manner of speaking to his family and his country. His actions reunite the family that had been broken by his silence and repression. Mohand's funeral serves as a bookend to the funeral of his wife, Milouda, at the beginning of the novel. However, at Mohand's funeral the family is united, when before each child was eager to leave and return to their

⁴⁶ Kemoum, Mohand le harki. “‘I don't want to ask forgiveness any more. I don't want for French uniforms to silence me anymore. Forty years, it's been forty years that I've been bottled up, can you understand that?’ ‘I understand it. Not enough to let you die for the past. Leave with me. Give yourself up. Please...’ ”

respective lives: “Ils entrent dans le bistro où, après l’enterrement de Milouda, ils étaient réunis- très brièvement, avant de repartir, sans se rendre compte alors que *leur* vie était aux côtés de ce père qu’ils commencent seulement à découvrir. Et à aimer” (230-1).⁴⁷ Through the deaths of both of their parents, Mohand’s children have learned that running away from the silence of their father did nothing to mend the broken family. In many ways, his death was a way of speaking to his children, communicating to them the dangers of distance. Mohand’s children thus begin the difficult work of repairing their relationships with each other in the wake of his death. Mohand’s son Jacques, who had originally wished to immigrate to Canada, changes his plans in response to this displaced conversation with his father:

‘Qui te dit que je rentre au Canada ? Il y a des choses à faire ici.’ ‘Je ne voudrais pas te décourager, intervient Arezki, ‘mais je dois très honnêtement te prévenir que le métier de bûcheron en France, même dans les Vosges...’ ‘Qui te dit que je veux être bûcheron ? Tu oublies que j’ai une licence d’histoire. J’ai bien compris, depuis quelques jours, qu’il y a un sacré boulot à faire dans ce secteur’ (226).⁴⁸

Jacques has recognized that he has no desire to run away from his family’s history, but rather that he must work to make it known. His father’s actions, which ultimately end his life, have nevertheless created new potential for his children. Mohand has communicated to his family the importance of their history and identity, and the importance of fighting for it.

⁴⁷ Kemoum, *Mohand le harki*. “They entered the bistro where, after the burial of Milouda, they were together, very briefly, before leaving, without understanding that *their* life was next to the father they were only beginning to discover. And love.”

⁴⁸ Kemoum, *Mohand le harki*. ‘Who said I was going back to Canada? There are things to do here.’ ‘I don’t want to discourage you,’ intervened Arezki, ‘but I have to honestly warn you, the lumberjack trade in France, even in the Vosges...’ ‘Who said I wanted to be a lumberjack? You’re forgetting I have a diploma in history. I’ve realized over the past few days that there is a sacred work to do in that sector.’

Historically, Harki fathers are too often lost to their children through self-destructive actions before communication is ever possible, either because of an early death, insanity, or the abuse of alcohol. The author of Moze represents such a case in her semi-autobiographical text: Moze's daughter does not learn to speak to her father before his suicide- she only speaks to him twelve years afterwards. Even then, the narrator reminds us repeatedly that Moze was dead before his death- his daughter had no way of speaking to him. At the end of the novel's five sections, mimicking the form of a tragedy, is speech; the section is entitled "MOZE PARLE: La voix de Moze glisse en sa fille" (173).⁴⁹ Interestingly, the daughter is speaking both to and for her dead father, and herself. She has taken on his voice, but also directly addresses him: " 'Père je n'ai plus peur.' 'Tu ne m'as pas parlé.' 'Je ne voulais pas t'entendre.' 'Je t'ai quitté avec tristesse.' 'Je ne l'ai pas su.' 'Tu es ma fille.' 'Je méritais une autre vie'" (175).⁵⁰ Moze's daughter learns to speak to him, years after his death. She creates an opportunity to reconstitute her relationship with her father even after his death, through choosing the action of speech. She also speaks to her father about her dead brother, a death for which she has blamed her father. Despite the liberating effects of speech, the narrator's pain is not erased. At the end of her conversation with her father's ghost, Moze's daughter accuses him of having dirtied the family: " 'Ton frère est avec moi.' 'Lui n'était pas sale.' 'Je l'ai souillé.' 'Et moi?' 'Faut-il pourrir la terre de toute notre pourriture?'" (180).⁵¹ Father and daughter confront each other about

⁴⁹ Rahmani, Moze. "MOZE SPEAKS: Moze's voice slips into his daughter."

⁵⁰ Rahmani, Moze. "'Father I'm not afraid anymore.' 'You didn't speak to me.' 'I didn't want to hear you.' 'I left you with sadness.' 'I didn't know that.' 'You're my daughter.' 'I deserved another life.'"

⁵¹ Rahmani, Moze. "'Your brother is with me.' 'He wasn't dirtied.' 'I defiled him.' 'And me?' 'Must we rot the earth with all of our rot?'"

the pains of their relationship and the reasons they have each caused each other to suffer.

Nevertheless, Moze ends with an image of fertility, sprouting from rotting meat. The image of rotting earth reappears in the epilogue as an unexpected symbol of fertility. In the family garden, Moze once buried beef that had been mistakenly brought to him for the festival of Aïd:

“Il a marché jusqu’au jardin avec le boeuf, il s’est renversé et l’a déchargé dans le trou. Il avait osé cette folie. Tant de viande jetée là. Il a tout recouvert. Il a fait taire tout le monde.” “Et l’arbre, ils l’ont planté quand?” “Ils disent qu’il est venu tout seul.” “Si les fruits sont meilleurs avec de la viande dessous... on se prend tous les cimetières comme vergers!” (187)⁵²

Moze’s insanity has left its mark on the family, as a symbol of rotting meat that produces a tree. However the rot hasn’t ruined the earth, but instead has produced the best fruit. The dialogue is taken even further, suggesting that all deaths can make life. While Moze’s daughter has not made peace with her father, she continues to be surprised by the things produced by the rot of their life together.

Deciding to speak to the father opens up a new understanding of both the family and the self for Harki children. In speaking to, or for, the father, Harki children learn not to blame him for the oppression that the family has faced in France. The act of speaking releases both father and child from the silence of trauma, allowing them to move forward as a family. After reconnecting with their fathers, Harki children decide not to abandon either their father or their country, but to fight for justice. Harki children do not reject the two identities that seemed incompatible in the past, but

⁵² Rahmani, Moze. ““He walked to the garden with the beef, he turned it over and threw it in the hole. He dared be so crazy! So much beef thrown out there. He covered it all. He made everyone be quiet.’ ‘and the tree, when did they plant it?’ ‘They say that it came all by itself.’ ‘If fruit is better with meat underneath... we’ll make all the cemeteries into orchards!’”

rather fight to articulate their unique understandings of both, free from the stereotypes and silences that historically repressed them.

In this process of coming to understand her family's personal experience, Harki children discover that the family's suffering is not predicated upon the choice of the father, but rather a series of events for which both France and Algeria were responsible. Their father as an individual is not only a part of the family's difficult and painful life, but also part of a collective that has been oppressed by both France and Algeria. Having discovered that neither France nor Algeria welcomed their family, Harki children look to the collective group to find identity. Therefore, an explanation of collective Harki experience becomes necessary to understand the identities with which they live.

Chapter Two: Writing and Fighting for a Harki Collective Identity

Discovering the father's personal history of the Algerian War and its effects on his family's life points Harki daughters to examine how such stories apply not only to their own families, but to many other Harki families living in France. While Harki daughters recognize that their stories are not unique, they find that there are no self-generated representations of Harkis in the public sphere. In writing family stories, Harki descendants often spend significant segments of their texts speaking not only from personal experience, but also from an awareness that Harkis and their descendants comprise a unique population within the French nation that has not been accurately or sufficiently represented. Further, this lack of representation is indicative of France's reluctance to admit the crimes committed during the Algerian War, and the human lives it has neglected. Harki collective is more specific than national identity, as most surviving Harki families originated in Algeria and migrated, most for lack of options and some against their will, to France. Harkis occupied an ambiguous legal status: as non-Europeans born in Algeria, they did not have French citizenship after 1962, but did not have the option of Algerian citizenship, as they had to leave in the early days of the Algerian nation. Harkis are also unique within Maghrebi culture: although culturally a part of the Franco-Maghrebi community, history and politics set them radically apart, marginalizing Harkis doubly within French society, firstly as Franco-Maghrebis, second, as Harkis. They were also

stereotyped in two interconnected ways, firstly by Algerians as traitors, and by the French as devoted, albeit foreign, patriots- that is when they were not intentionally forgotten. The self-representations generated by Harki daughters challenge these stereotypes.

In writing the collective, Harki daughters also reveal the extent of the historical silence that rendered the community invisible at the national level. Before these texts, no commonly known narratives existed to counter the French and Algerian stereotypes that afflicted Harkis. At the end of the war, Algerian Nationalists began to purge the country of all traces of colonization, including former Harkis. Harkis were considered enemies of the state, and were often brutally tortured, if not murdered. Historians estimate that anywhere from 100,000-500,000⁵³ men and members of Harki families were murdered. French soldiers were ordered to disarm Harkis, leaving them with no resources to protect themselves. The brutal violence that followed the war was traumatizing to Harkis, who had already endured the bloody war for independence. Trauma led to a heavy silence on the part of Harkis. Their silence persisted for years, heavily encouraged by repressive policies from the French government that kept Harkis out of the public eye, such as secluded camps, and a general reluctance to address the history of the Algerian War.

⁵³ This disparity in numbers is due to lack of documentation of Harki deaths. Not only did many deaths occur in regions of Algeria that were far from cities and difficult to access, there was great indifference about the loss of Harki lives.

Breaking the silence and speaking about themselves as a group allowed Harki descendents firstly, to define their collective experience so as to situate the personal within a historical framework. Organizations run by Harkis advocating for their interests first appeared in 1971, and grew rapidly throughout the 1980s. In the '70s many Harkis turned to direct action. Violent revolts in the camps of Bias and Saint-Maurice-l'Ardoise in 1975 spurred hunger strikes among Harkis all over France throughout the late seventies. Despite these movements, Harkis still remained largely unrecognized as a group. Further, for a long time, less than ten studies of Harkis or writings by Harkis existed either in academic writings or more accessible media. The three texts studied in this work thus mark an incredibly important moment in Harki self-representation. These writers tell the collective history of Harkis one that never fit in predominant narratives of immigration or war. These texts refuse stereotypes traditionally established by French and Algerian narratives, thus creating a new collective identity. Through these texts, Harkis are presented as a heterogeneous group of people with a shared history, overcoming enormous difficulties to live in an unwelcoming society.

I. Stereotype as predominant representation of the collective

Harki daughters, having recognized that their fathers' stories do not line up with the ways in which Harkis are represented in the public sphere, do not immediately dismiss the stereotypes that stole their voices. Instead, they confront

these stereotypes, examining the ways in which these stereotypes function to shape an understanding of Harkis as a group. These stereotypes are born out of a political necessity to marginalize Harkis so as not to challenge a firm national identity for France on the one hand, and Algeria's new identity as a nation on the other.

When Algerian men enlisted with the French during the Algerian war, they had no idea that their actions would place them in a group that would force them into exile, and mark their families as traitors. As stated by the narrator's uncle in Mon père, ce harki many Harkis were motivated strategically rather than ideologically, thinking of what was best for their individual families and livelihoods. This was not, at the time, considered a shameful decision. The father in Mon père, ce harki enlists with the French Army without realizing that he will be considered a traitor: "Pour mon père, c'est un travail comme un autre. Il ne sait pas, au moment où il appose une croix en guise de paraphe en bas de son contrat, qu'il devient un 'harki,' un traître à une cause qu'il ne connaît pas et qui le dépasse" (246).⁵⁴ The narrator implies that Harki is a term that he has not yet become. While the term "Harki" means "movement" or "armed group" in Arabic, it only gained its connotation, of traitor, at the end of the war.

It was not until after the war that Harkis became a marginalized and stereotyped group. The end of the war saw the birth of a new Algerian identity as independent from French colonial rule, which needed Harkis, as connected to the colonial rule, to serve as the marginalized other. Harki daughters insist in their texts

⁵⁴ Dalila Kerchouche, Mon père, ce harki (Paris: Éditions Seuil, 2003). "For my father, it was a job like any other. He didn't know that at the moment he affixed an x in place of a signature at the bottom of his contract, that he was becoming a harki, a traitor to a cause that he wasn't familiar with and that was beyond him."

that Harki identity was socially constructed in a particular historical moment in which Algeria wanted to appear nationally united. The young Algerian nation, eager to rid itself of all traces of French rule, stereotyped Harkis as traitors as a way to expell them. In discovering the history and establishment of these stereotypes, Harki daughters begin to understand where their family's identity finds its origins.

The Harki's position as other to the newly formed Algerian nation was most clearly made manifest in violence demonstrated towards Harkis. These widespread threats and acts of violence committed against Harkis as a group marked the first time that they were acknowledged as a collective entity. As Benjamin Stora states in his history of the Algerian War, La Gangrène et l'oubli (1991), Algerians threatened Harkis because they were stereotyped as traitors to the new nation:

Le mot 'harki' apparaît dans le vocabulaire politique (et... quotidien) pour désigner les 'complots' dirigés contre la difficile marche de la révolution. Et la violence du verdict contre ce 'harki' s'exacerbe encore par les luttes de factions pour contrôler du pouvoir, la recherche d'une légitimité nationaliste. Trente ans après, Mohammedi Saïd, ancien responsable de la wilaya III, réaffirme cette logique, avec conviction : 'Le harki, c'est l'homme indigne de vivre, d'exister.' (200)⁵⁵

Algerians painted Harkis as traitors at the end of the war in the interest of creating a stable nation state and national identity. Stora states that this judgment manifested itself through violence. Harki identity and stereotype were born out of this mental and psychological violence at the end of the war. Such violence is traumatizing and leaves its traces not only on the victims, but also on the nation, which needed alterity to

⁵⁵ Benjamin Stora, La Gangrène et l'oubli (Paris: Éditions La Découverte & Syros, 1998). "The word 'harki' appeared in the political (and... quotidien) vocabulary to signify the 'plotting' directed against the difficult course of the revolution. And the violence of the verdict against this 'harki' was exacerbated by the struggles between factions for control of power, the search for national legitimacy. Thirty years after, Mohammedi Saïd, the person in formerly in charge of wilaya III, reaffirmed this logic, with conviction: 'The harki, that's a man who doesn't deserve to live, to exist.'"

establish itself. Though Harkis were defined as traitor and enemy at a historical moment that occurred almost fifty years ago, the significance of Harki identity persists at the nation's core.

The threat of violence and the force of stereotype are still menacing to the children of Harkis. Returning to Algeria to research her family's history in the country, the narrator of Mon père, ce harki fears the reactions of people who hear of her heritage: "Comment les Algériens se comporteront-ils quand je leur dirai : 'Je suis une fille de harkis' ? Devrai-je affronter la haine que mes parents ont fuit il y a quarante ans ?" (205).⁵⁶ Despite the passage of time, and the simple fact that it was her father who fought in the war and not her, the Harki daughter senses the alterity of Harkis that lies at the Algerian nation's core. While the threat of physical violence has largely passed, the narrator demonstrates the psychological violence that continues to haunt Harkis and their descendents. Indeed, this violence was so necessary in establishing the Algerian nation that its impact rests at the foundation of Algerian national identity. Though it has shifted, violence against Harkis has by no means disappeared; it appears powerful enough to the narrator for her to fear the same treatment her parents were subjected to.

Widespread violence organized by Algerians established the Harki as a stereotyped other through the trope of the traitor, but the stereotype was enforced and given new significance by actions the French took against Harkis as a group. The French refused to protect Harkis by providing them a welcoming home in the metropole, which was provided for *piets noirs*. The author of Moze reproduces a

⁵⁶ Kerchouche, Mon père, ce harki. "How will Algerians act when I tell them that I am the daughter of harkis? Must I encounter the hate that my parents fled 40 years ago?"

memo in her text written by Louis Joxe, the minister of Algerian Affairs from 1960-2, at the end of the war, strictly forbidding aid to Harkis: “Télégramme 125-IGAA du 16 mai 1962, ultrasecret : demande à haut-commissaire [sic] de rappeler que toute initiative individuelle tendant à installation métropole français musulmans est strictement interdite. En aviser d’urgence tous chefs SAS et commandants d’unités –Louis Joxe” (42).⁵⁷ The declaration is an abandonment of an entire group, stating that Harkis do not belong in France. Thus he is not only identifying Harkis as essentially incompatible with French culture, he is enforcing an idea of the value of Harki lives, which are not worth saving. Further, the narrator uses a historical document to demonstrate the ways in which Harki identity finds its roots in a specific history. The moment at which the author chooses to insert the telegram in her own text is also significant. The narrator is attempting to establish her father’s mental state before his suicide to a social worker. The author tries to establish that the father’s suicidal actions were directly influenced by such a telegram. The telegram tacitly endorses the physical violence of the end of the war, which clearly traumatized her father. The narrator/author demonstrates to the reader the impact of such a telegram on her father’s life; it is nevertheless a document concerned with a mass group, and has by implication affected any number of men in a similarly violent way. The telegram also reinforces the psychological violence enacted upon Harkis through the devaluation of their lives.

⁵⁷ Zahia Rahmani, Moze (Paris: Sabine Wespèiser, Editeur, 2003). “Telegram 125- IGAA of May 16, top secret: request that the high commissioner to remember that all individual initiative intended to move French muslims to the metropole is strictly forbidden. Notify all heads of the SAS and combat units. –Louis Joxe.”

Evidently, some Harkis were able to leave Algeria and succeeded in establishing homes in France, but found that they were still treated as third class citizens upon arrival. The narrator of Mon père, ce harki remarks that Harkis are made invisible as a reflection of their subordination to other French citizens: “J’ai le sentiment que les harkis n’existent pas. Ou seulement quand on en a besoin... Les harkis, qui croyaient avoir gagné l’égalité citoyenne en se battant aux côtés de la France, restent des indigènes... Se sont-ils trompés, finalement ?” (68).⁵⁸ Despite their dedication and sacrifice for the French nation, Harkis were still not granted the equality they believed they were owed. To the narrator, it is clear that the French only valued Harki lives at times that were convenient, such as during the war when their service was invaluable. She underlines the gaping difference between how Harkis had come to identify as individuals desiring French citizenship, and how the French treated them as subhuman. At the end of the war, Harkis thought that they were equal citizens, having fought the same war as their European compatriots. Not only were they still considered “natives,” a term laden with stereotypical significance suggesting savagery and lack of intelligence, Harkis remained stereotyped in such a way as to perpetuate the colonizer/colonized relationship, despite the war’s end.

Segregation reinforced the French conception of Harkis as natives, or simply as an other to the French citizen. In La Gangrène et l’oubli, Stora highlights that historically, camps were used to isolate Harkis from the broader French population, often under the guise of aiding them with adjustment into French life: “Autre argument avancé: Épargner un déracinement brutal, ce qui sous-entend qu’il est peut-

⁵⁸Kerchouche, Mon père, ce harki. “I had the feeling that harkis didn’t exist. Or only when needed. Harkis, who believed they had won equality as citizens by fighting side by side with the French, were still natives... Were they wrong, after all?”

être plus facile pour eux de ‘vivre en Algérie’ qu’en France, où ils risquent d’être dans une situation de choc” (262).⁵⁹ Clearly, Harkis were seen as being essentially different because they were Algerian. Further, Harkis were not granted the agency to make such decisions for themselves. Assuming that life in France would be shocking is equivalent to saying that Harkis were not prepared to gage such a situation for themselves. Not only were Harkis marked as essentially different through segregation, Harkis were infantilized through the mandated necessity of adjustment. The narrator of Mon père, ce harki goes further, using a literary voice to emphasize that the camps in which Harkis were placed highlighted what that perceived difference was: “Pourquoi installer les harkis dans les endroits si rudes, si isolés ? En arpentant ces lieux sordides et inhabités, je ressens à quel point les harkis étaient indésirables” (58).⁶⁰ The narrator uses the camps specifically to illustrate the degree of difference and degradation of Harkis. Harkis were perceived not only as essentially different, but also as less deserving of the quality of life most Europeans were accustomed to.

What makes Harki invisibility all the more frustrating is the way in which the French represented Harkis, on the rare occasions they were spoken of. Mohand Hamoumou describes the influence of the portrayal of Harkis as loyal patriots who fought to preserve French rule in Algeria: “La presse, des personnalités politiques ou des associations de rapatriés parlent, à propos des Français musulmans rapatriés, de ‘fidélité à la France’, elles projettent plus qu’elles ne constatent. Ce faisant, s’opère

⁵⁹ Stora, La Gangrène et l'oubli. “Other idea put forth: To spare a brutal uprooting, underneath which was that it was easier for them to ‘live in Algeria’ than in France, where they risked being in a situation of shock.”

⁶⁰ Kerchouche, Mon père, ce harki. “Why place harkis in such basic and isolated locations? In exploring these sordid and uninhabited places, I feel the degree to which Harkis were undesirable.”

un glissement du ‘domestique’ au ‘politique’ qui contribue à renforcer le silence des Français musulmans rapatriés” (312-3).⁶¹ Hamoumou states that political figures perpetuated the inaccurate idea that Harkis acted ideologically, as opposed to domestically, that is to say for the survival of their families. By attributing choice and ideology to Harki enlistment, they contributed to a stereotype that masked Harki voices, as well as the reality of Harki lives and concerns.

This portrayal of Harkis as faithful French servants highlights a discrepancy between the portrayal of Harkis by the French government and their self-perceptions. Mohand, le harki expresses shock at the treatment he has received, from a country he used to respect: “Entre 1962 et 1975, les harkis vivent en silence dans les camps ou les hameaux forestiers, véritables ghettos où ils sont confinés... ‘Où sont les soldats que nous étions ? Nous sommes tous devenus les ‘rapatriés’ et nous avons découverts que la France n’est plus celle dont nous parlions là-bas avec tant d’amour et de respect’” (95-6).⁶² The third person narrator first assumes a statement of historical fact, establishing for the reader that Mohand’s statement has an implication that goes beyond his personal experience. Mohand expresses a shift in status between the war and his arrival in France, speaking not only of his personal experience but using the first person plural “nous” or “we”. Isolation, as one of the manifestations and continuations of stereotype, has made Mohand a different man. He is not free to

⁶¹ Mohand Hamoumou, Et ils sont devenus harkis... (Paris: Fayard, 1993). “The press, political figures, or associations of repatriates, by speaking of French Muslim repatriates as ‘faithful to France’, projected more than they recorded. In doing so, they gloss over details, linking the ‘domestic’ and the ‘political’ which reinforced the silence of French Muslim Repatriates.”

⁶² Hadjila Kemoum, Mohand le harki (Paris: Editions Anne Carrière, 2003). “Between 1962 and 1975, harkis lived in silence in camps or foresting villages, veritable ghettos where they were confined... ‘Where are the soldiers we were? We all became “repatriates,” and we discovered that this France isn’t the one we talked of there with so much love and respect.”

determine his identity and destiny, confined as he is by stereotypes that mark him as less than a soldier, indeed, less than a human.

The stereotype of Harkis as traitors held by Algerians traveled to France, tied as it was to the Algerian nation. The narrator of Mon père, ce harki demonstrates how the word Harki and her own history shape her relationships with other young Franco-Algerians. The word is used casually as an insult in conversation, when her friends momentarily forget her presence: “Quand j’ai commencé à fréquenter des Algériens, à Paris, j’ai déchanté. ‘Espèce de plouc, harki, va !’ a dit un jour l’un d’eux en s’énervant, oubliant de ma présence... Devant moi, les exilés utilisaient le mot ‘harki’ comme une insulte” (30).⁶³ In spending time with Algerians, one would think that the narrator would be able to escape some of the essentialized difference imposed through French racism. However, she finds that her Franco-Algerian peers perpetuate the stereotypes held by their parents. Even outside of the historical moment of the Algerian war and its importance to the Algerian nation, the word Harki is used to signify a person who is less than human. “Harki” becomes an insult stripped of its specificity, making it all the more wounding to someone for whom the term has great personal relevance.

The overwhelming influence of stereotype along with the absence of a self-narrated Harki collective identity is presented in these texts as uncertainty in the identity formation of the second generation of Harkis. With no visible collective that represents Harki experience, the second generation of Harkis often feels robbed of an identity: “On m’a défigurée. Qui suis-je ? Quel visage dois-je présenter... On a

⁶³ Kerchouche, Mon père, ce harki. “When I began to spend time with Algerians, in Paris, I became disenchanted. ‘You hick, harki, get out!’ one of them said one day, getting riled up, forgetting I was there... In front of me, these exiles used the word ‘harki’ as an insult.”

malmené mon identité” (114-5).⁶⁴ The narrator doesn't know what face to represent because she cannot name the group to which she belongs; in some ways, it is excessively present through the segregation that has always been a part of her life, and in others it is stifled, silenced, and left unexplained by her father and the society that surrounds her. While Harki stereotypes present two ideas of what it means to be a Harki, the narrator has no narrative generated by other Harkis by which to identify. Nor can she claim either French or Algerian identity. Both groups have established themselves by negating Harki experience. The narrator is left with no collective to claim.

The influence of these stereotypes, namely the isolation from French and Franco-Maghrebi communities, leads to a marked lack of belonging to the two dominant national collectives that reinforce one another at the end of the Algerian War. However, the exclusion of Harkis is a result of dominant images of Harkis as traitors, or as mimic men who are perpetually less than their French peers. The marginalization of Harkis by both nations leaves Harkis without the important components of an identity- history and geography. Excluded from narratives and geographies of both France and Algeria, Harkis have no identity but the stereotypes attached to them.

⁶⁴ Rahmani, Moze. “They defigured me. Who am I? What face should I present... They mistreated my identity.”

II. Silence as absence of collective identity

As established in the first chapter, Harkis were largely silent because of the traumatic experiences they underwent during the war. However, Harki silence is not only an individual, but a collective phenomenon. One of the most prominent effects of trauma is an inability in the victim to speak about the traumatic experience he or she has undergone. Instead victims of trauma replay memories in their minds, unable to end the painful repetition of memory because, fearing speech, silence becomes a refuge. Though Harkis clearly remember the past, regardless of whether or not they speak of it, silence feels safer. While silence has ramifications in the personal lives of Harkis, the consequences of silence as a collective phenomenon are different in a number of significant ways. Not only was silence the result of a traumatic event that affected a group, silence was the result of the ongoing oppression of that group. Isolation in camps prevented Harki visibility, and Harkis were often culturally not able to express their stories in France. Many Harki families arrived in France speaking little or no French, and were illiterate. Few resources were provided to educate Harkis, and as a result they remained invisible to the French public who certainly did not understand Arabic, much less the Berber or Kabyle dialects often spoken among Harkis. With no public sense of Harkis as a collective, they have no grounds on which to advocate for themselves as more than just individual parties. This collective silence perpetuates the absence of self-generated narratives about Harkis in the public sphere.

While the Harki daughters declare the silence of their fathers and its roots in trauma, their analyses mostly lack an important element of the broader context that keeps Harkis from speaking. Dori Laub, in his work on the testimony of Holocaust survivors as victims of trauma, highlights that telling the story of a traumatic event requires not only speech from the traumatized, but also a listener. His theories about listening add an important lens through which to examine the lack of Harki speech: “The testimony to the trauma thus includes its hearer, who is, so to speak, the blank screen on which the event comes to be inscribed for the first time” (57).⁶⁵ While this quotation has great relevance on an interpersonal level, it can also be extended to fit the national or collective level. There are few collective entities who, when listening to a Harki testify about the war, can truly serve as what Laub calls a blank screen. Both France and Algeria as nations were not ready to listen, as both nations went to great lengths to keep Harkis silent, either through death or seclusion. Thus two important national collectives shut out Harki stories. With no collective group capable of hearing testimonies of their trauma, individual Harki silences became a collective phenomenon that mutually reinforce the silence of their nations, resulting not only from a collective traumatic experience, but from an inability to find neutral listeners.

Because of the collective inability to listen on the part of France and Algeria, those Harkis who did attempt to speak, either to their families, political figures through letters of protest, or media sources, were almost always ignored. The narrator of Moze claims that Harki silence stems from an unwillingness of people to witness

⁶⁵ Felman and Laub, Testimony: Crises of Listening in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History (New York: Routledge, 1992).

Harki testimony: “On n’a pas voulu nous voir. Nous, ceux de cette petite politique honteuse. Si seulement on avait parlé” (66).⁶⁶ Not only are there few people adequately prepared to bear witness to Harki stories, few people want to. The narrator uses an ambiguous pronoun to speak of the people who do not want to see Harkis and their descendents. By using the collective “on,” she doesn’t specify if she means French governmental officials, ordinary French citizens, Algerians, or even other Harkis. Degraded and abandoned, Harki voices are not encouraged to speak by a receptive listener. No one wants to listen, and further, they wish to pretend that Harkis don’t even exist. Nevertheless, this silence is not produced exclusively by those who do not wish to see Harkis. She implies that Harkis could have spoken, using the conditional “si” or “if.” She implicates a collective complicity in this silence, using a singular pronoun “on,” that can be used as a plural “nous” or “we”, to speak of those who did not speak, whether they be French, Algerian, Franco-Maghrebi, or Harki. She did not say “if only I had spoken,” or point to specific silent Harkis. Harkis are not speaking as a collective partially because the collective doesn’t want to be heard, but also because the collective was unable to articulate self-awareness, surrounded as they were by two nations working to erase their history.

Indeed, shameful histories, such as the treatment of Harkis by the French and other circumstances surrounding the end of the war, have been repeatedly covered up through the action of the French government. In his analysis of “L’oubli institutionnel,” Stéphane Gacon traces the connection between legal amnesty granted to parties involved in the Algerian War and cultural forgetting. According to Gacon,

⁶⁶ Rahmani, Moze. “They didn’t want to see us. Us, those of that shameful little politic. If only we had spoken.”

Amnesty allows a society to act as if certain events had never occurred:

“L’amnistie décrète que l’événement n’a pas eu lieu... Mais l’amnistie ne représente ni un pardon des fautes ni la réhabilitation des condamnés. Ils retrouvent simplement leurs droits pour pouvoir reprendre une vie ordinaire, sous la protection de la loi qui garantit le silence” (88).⁶⁷ With no institutions to recognize the events that took place, the event is essentially removed from the national landscape. In fact, amnesty seems to be harmful to those who have committed crimes, but moreover to those who have suffered from them. By erasing victims’ histories from the official record, the crimes committed against them are forgotten and justice can never take place. With amnesty, criminals and victims are not reintegrated into society through a reckoning process. They simply resume life as if nothing had happened.

At the end of the Algerian War in 1962, the French president Charles de Gaulle granted amnesty to those involved in the war, bypassing a debate in the National Assembly. At this time, the bloody history of torture and massacre by both the French and Algerian forces was largely unknown to the general public. In 1968, the French National Assembly also voted to grant amnesty to people involved in the Algerian War. Those responsible for the abandonment of Harkis could not be condemned; in fact, the war itself practically disappeared from the face of French history. Gacon goes on to explain how the shame of the war instigated this stunning absence by erasing what was considered un-Republican: “L’amnistie réaffirme que la nation est une dans la République, dans une République qui ne peut pas

⁶⁷ Stéphane Gacon, "L'oubli Institutionnel," *Oublier nos crimes: L'Amnésie nationale: Une spécificité française*, ed. Dimitri Nicolaïdis (Paris: Éditions Autrement, 2002). “Amnesty decrees that the event didn’t happen... but amnesty represents neither a pardon of faults nor the rehabilitation of the condemned. They simply have the right to take on a normal life, under the protection of the law that guarantees silence.”

s'accommoder de pratiques en rupture avec les droits de l'homme et les visions concurrentes. L'amnistie est chargée d'évacuer tout ce qui pourrait être centrifuge et de réaffirmer la vision jacobine de la République" (91-2).⁶⁸ Amnesty is not only interested in allowing people to return to ordinary life with no reckoning process, it plays an active part in maintaining the idea of the Republic. As put quite simply by Pierre Vidal-Naquet, "Nous sommes donc le pays des droits de l'homme, et cette particularité implique de glisser sur les choses: le pays de droits de l'homme ne peut pas torturer en Algérie" (188).⁶⁹ Silence is imposed by the government with the interest of protecting not only the people who committed crimes, but also the purity of the idea of the French Republic. Gacon's work states that histories that contradict the foundations of the French Republic can simply be erased, in the interest of preserving the idea of the Republic as a strong and unified entity. The erasure of these histories, however, has consequences. While the image of the French Republic might be preserved for some citizens, for others it is tarnished. The effects of history cannot be erased, though they might be silenced.

The protagonist of Mohand le harki, a Harki himself, declares through his actions the influence that forceful silencing has had on his identity as part of a Harki collective. Mohand states that Harkis have been repeatedly represented by the French, and never given an opportunity to publicly represent themselves. Mohand rebels against the ways in which Harkis have been silenced when he takes Philippe Janard

⁶⁸ Gacon, "L'oubli Institutionnel." "Amnesty reaffirms that the nation is one in the Republic, in a Republic that cannot accommodate practices out of keeping with the rights of man and concurrent visions. Amnesty is responsible for getting rid of anything that could be centrifugal for reaffirming the Jacobin vision of the Republic."

⁶⁹ François and Alfred Grosser and Pierre Vidal-Naquet Bédarida, "La Morale De L'histoire," Oublier nos crimes: L'Amnésie nationale: Une spécificité française, ed. Dimitri Nicolaïdis (Paris: Editions Autrement, 2002). "We're the country of the rights of man, and that particularity implies that you can gloss over things: the country of the rights of man can't torture in Algeria."

hostage, a character created by the author who is modeled on the real figure Louis Joxe, who orchestrated the Evian Accords. Mohand cites his actions as an opportunity taken to speak, by silencing one man who has always spoken on behalf of Harkis, without their consent: “On parle pour nous. On a toujours parlé pour nous” (124).⁷⁰ The speech Mohand is reclaiming is multilayered. Janard, in speaking about the treatment of Harkis at the end of the war, is preventing Harki voices from being heard on a mass level. Regardless of how much Harkis personally speak about their experiences, to family members or loved ones, they do not participate in the formation of a dominant narrative of their own experience. Despite the fact that Harkis are clearly more knowledgeable about their experience of the Algerian war than ex-ministers of the French government, their voices are completely ignored. Harki narratives don’t match with that which is most often presented to the public. Further, the ignorance of first person Harki stories also shows a lack of societal appreciation for Harki voices. Though this kind of silencing means that Harki voices aren’t spoken to a broad public, it also translates into a devaluing of Harki voices on an individual level.

Stereotypes constitute and continue the ways in which Harkis have been spoken for in collective contexts. Stereotypes existed in the collective sphere as the only representation of Harkis, attributing disdain for the Algerian Nationalist movement and pro-French sentiment as their primary reason for engaging with the French army. Mohammed Hamoumou, in his extensive 1993 study of Harkis, disproves this idea, and even speaks of the ways in which shame resulting from stereotypes contributed to the silence of Harkis:

⁷⁰ Kemoum, Mohand le harki. “They speak for us. They have always spoken for us.”

On ne pourra en rendre la complexité qu'en acceptant d'analyser des inhibitions psychologiques, notamment le sentiment de culpabilité produit souvent par l'appellation de 'traîtres...' Il faudra esquisser ici une réflexion sur les fonctions sociales du traître pour mettre à jour le carcan idéologique utilisé par le FLN afin de culpabiliser les anciens harkis et de renforcer leur silence. (296-7)⁷¹

While Hamoumou focuses on the portrayal of Harkis perpetuated by the FLN, the French were equally culpable in their portrayal of Harkis as loyal citizens. Indeed, these portrayals prevented Harki voices from speaking, and, as Hamoumou states, bred feelings of guilt that inhibited speech. After participating in such a bloody history, and being repeatedly deemed traitors through the violent actions of the FLN and more common everyday violence, Harkis often felt undeserving of a voice.

Exploring silence as a collective phenomenon among Harkis and, subsequently, their children, Harki daughters present this silence as a result of numerous actions beyond Harki control. Shame and trauma, along with historical, political, and cultural forces enacted upon Harkis as a group have kept them from speaking and asserting a Harki collective. The discovery of these silencing forces leads Harki daughters to hate the forces that have kept their families silent, rather than their father as the origin of silence and suffering. Recognizing the silence that their parents have lived under, Harki daughters are pushed to take action on behalf of the silence that has weighed heavily on one of the collectives they identify with. However, Harki daughters also write the silence as something stemming from and affecting another collective by which they identify- that of French citizenry. Action thus has consequences for both collectives.

⁷¹ Hamoumou, *Et ils sont devenus harkis...* "IT is impossible to render the complexity except by analyzing the psychological inhibitions, notably the culpability often produced by the naming of 'traitor...' It is necessary to sketch a reflection on the social functions of traitor to update the ideological straitjacket the FLN utilized to make former harkis culpable and to reenforce their silence."

III. Breaking the Silence to articulate the collective and advocate for justice

While Harki daughters eventually learn the importance of speech from their relationships with their fathers, speaking with the voice of a collective is a new undertaking. The central response of these writers to the collective silence of Harkis is, quite clearly, the act of writing. Though the Harki daughters writing these texts are clearly breaking the silence, they also represent to the reader their processes of breaking silence. On one level, authors use the pronoun “we” in their writing, in which case the writing itself is directly addressing its public and breaking the silence. Narrators also tell the stories of how Harkis and their children take direct action to break the silence, often by speaking to political authorities, on behalf of a Harki collective. In these instances characters in the text speak of collective injustices done to Harkis, telling specific stories in order to represent and make visible the collective.

The narrator of Moze, for instance, is asked to speak on behalf of her father before a government commission that wishes to collect the testimony of Harkis and their descendents so as to examine the possibility of reparations. The narrator is initially unsure of whether or not she should testify, and must be convinced to break the silence of her dead father. It is ultimately not her father, but the collective that inspires her speech: “ ‘Et je leur parle de quoi?’ ‘De ceux qui restent’ ” (97).⁷² The act

⁷² Rahmani, Moze. “ ‘And what will I speak to them about?’ ‘About those who remain.’ ”

of speech is not only on behalf of those who remain, but also about those who remain. The narrator is articulating the collective that has gone unspoken, as well as representing its demands. Although the commission doesn't intend for her to speak for those who remain and only anticipates a testimony specifically about her father's experience, she refuses the commission's direction, and breaks the silence in ways she deems important. Instead of allowing the commission to dictate how and what information she relates, she inscribes her father's personal story within a Harki collective, as well as within the French court system that had previously ignored it: "Je jure de dire toute la vérité.' 'C'est une commission, pas un tribunal. Nous avons pour mission de recueillir dans la transparence et l'équité votre témoignage concernant votre père. Vous n'avez pas à prêter serment.' 'Je vais dire la vérité'" (108).⁷³ To the narrator, speaking the truth means directly relating the injustices committed against Harkis as a collective, not only to inscribe it in history but also in the justice system. While the commission declares this a sermon, and discourages her from such speech, she speaks her truth, refusing to be silenced by the French government once again.

In making her demands to the commission, the narrator does not look for an action that will serve as a just punishment. On behalf of the collective, the woman

⁷³ Rahmani, *Moze*. "I'm going to say all of the truth.' 'This is a commission, not a tribunal. Our mission is to collect your testimony concerning your father, in clearness and fairness. You don't have a sermon to preach.' 'I'm going to tell the truth.'"

testifying demands recognition. The first recognition that she demands is for the suffering of Harkis and their families:

Nous savons qu'il n'y a pas de peine juste. Nous l'acceptons. Nous ne demandons aucun mort, aucune pendaison, aucun supplice, mais la convocation est là depuis si longtemps Pour ce retard, nous voulons un tribut... Nous les voulons, les jugements qui nous sont dus. Vites, des proclamations, des placards, des affiches et des livres. Des mots qui le disent ! (114).⁷⁴

Whether or not she has the authority or the knowledge to represent the “we” she speaks of is not important to her; what matters is that she voices collective rather than personal demands. She clearly feels responsibility to the collective in her act of testimony, and wishes to make clear that the injustices done to her father were not isolated events. The requests that she makes, such as public markers and testimony to Harki history, give the collective a public voice- as well as a geography and history. The placing of signs that she demands achieves both. Further, her own text fits interestingly into the demands she is making. She demands books telling the wrongs done to Harkis, which she is also actively engaged in writing. Thus, the passage must be read not as a cry from a passive victim, but as an active engagement in producing the truth that she calls for.

While the narrator of Moze speaks on behalf of the collective to the commission, the narrator of Mon père, ce harki uses an inverse technique, allowing the collective to, in a sense, speak for her family by reproducing a letter sent anonymously by a Harki asking for better treatment in the forest camp in which he

⁷⁴ Rahmani, Moze. “We know that there is no just penalty. We accept it. We demand no death, no hanging, no torture, but the call has been there for a long time. For the delay, we’d like a judgement. We want them, the judgements we are due. Quickly, proclamations, placards, posters, and books. The words that say it!”

lives. The letter is unsigned because of fear of punishment from the director of the camp, but the author's letter stresses that its sentiment is echoed by all of the inhabitants of the camp. Kerchouche, the author/narrator, extends the statement to her personal experience, wishing that her parents could have made such a claim for justice: "Si seulement mes parents pouvaient écrire les phrases que je rédige maintenant..." (186).⁷⁵ Including the letter in her text represents a collective complaint felt, but rarely spoken, by Harkis. In reproducing this letter, she demonstrates her awareness of the importance of her text, which uses the words of Harkis to tell her family's story, and also on the other end, uses her family's story to represent the many Harkis who remain in silence. Kerchouche identifies the struggle of the many anonymous endorsers of this letter with that of her parents, and the other Harkis that lived in camps with them. Further, she makes reference to her own action of writing, intentionally drawing attention to the way that she is representing this demand for justice to a broader public. In typing out the letter, and writing her text, she is continuing the demand for justice, for her parents, and the many anonymous Harkis that suffered as they did. In writing the letter, she is not only claiming history as her own, but representing voices that were silenced in the past. There is great power in numbers, and Harki writers draw on the number of people that they wish to include in their texts.

Rewriting the letter brings the narrator to an important realization about her personal voyage. While she has undertaken a voyage intended to connect her to her family's past, she finds she is discovering a past that extends beyond her family:

⁷⁵ Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki*. "If only my parents could write the sentences that I write out now..."

“Cette lettre montre, en fin, que tous les harkis... ont subi le même sort. Alors qu’au départ je ne pensais écrire qu’une histoire individuelle, je me rends compte que ce récit ressemble au parcours de milliers d’anonymes. Que de milliers d’enfants de harkis auraient pu réaliser le même voyage que moi” (187).⁷⁶ The author’s voyage has individual significance to her; she has visited the locations her family has passed through, but the History is broader than her individual discovery of her family’s story. Thus, when she does break the silence, she knows that she is speaking about injustices, stereotypes, silences, and hatreds that she has not experienced uniquely. Her text takes on a new significance as she channels her rage to fight silence and injustice facing not only her and her family, but many other families that she does not know, but are a part of the collective. Thus in writing, she is not only articulating a history, but naming and giving voice to a collective experience.

Through rewriting a letter, Kerchouche is speaking her rage using the words of someone else, creating a sense of collectivity by letting another Harki speak for her family's experience. Kemoun, in her work Mohand le Harki, shows how Mohand draws inspiration from the collective, his individual rage fueled by the oppression of other Harkis. In a sense, he is creating words and actions for those who never spoke, rather than using the words and actions of others to express his sense of rage. Unlike the narrator of Mon père, ce harki, who speaks as a daughter attempting to understand her parents’ history, Mohand is himself a Harki, and has lived the war, the camps, and their aftermath. He doesn’t need to speak through the words of others in the same way

⁷⁶ Kerchouche, Mon père, ce harki. “This letter shows that all harkis... underwent the same kind of thing. At the beginning I thought I was only writing an individual history, I realize that this story looks like thousands of anonymous ones. That thousands of children of Harkis could have had the same voyage as me.”

that a daughter does. Nevertheless, he calls upon the collective as he takes action. One evening, while watching television, Mohand sees an interview with Philippe Janard, a former French minister responsible for the treatment of Harkis. Janard attempts to excuse the actions the French government took on behalf of Harkis. After hearing the interview, Mohand begins to leaf through all of the articles and images he has collected surrounding Harkis, enraged by the interview he has just heard. One in particular tells the story of a man with whom he identifies: “Cet article, Mohand l’a relu cent fois. Non parce que le malheureux, retrouvé mort dans une rue de Paris, se prénomme Arezki comme son fils, mais parce que l’histoire de ce soldat, engagé à 17 ans après le massacre de tous les siens, c’est son histoire” (123).⁷⁷ While Mohand’s life is very different from this anonymous man’s, he nevertheless states that it is a part of his history as well. Mohand sees both himself and his child in the story of this man, who died alone and in desperation. He recognizes the same point of origin, but the multiplicity of results that can come from the catastrophic losses of a war. The two men share a collective history of abandonment by the French, but are nevertheless individuals. Further, both men exhibit signs of trauma in the aftermath of their experience of the war. While one of them ended up homeless, Mohand had a family. Nevertheless he is traumatized and relentlessly returns to these memories of the war, reading the story because it reminds him of what and who he could have become. After looking at the collection of his different memories of both personal and collective Harki history, Mohand gathers his military equipment, another sign of his enlistment in a collective, and decides to take action. His decision

⁷⁷ Kemoum, *Mohand le harki*. “Mohand had reread the article a hundred times. Not because the unhappy man, found dead in the street in Paris, was named Arezki like his son, but because the history of this soldier, enlisted at 17 years old after the massacre of his loved ones, it was his story.”

to take Janard hostage can be seen as a desire to speak by silencing those who have been responsible for making Harkis invisible.

Harki texts express a certain hope for the outcome of breaking the silence. While Mohand takes action without expecting any support from others, his action strikes a chord with many Harkis and pieds-noirs, who gather outside Janard's house to support Mohand: "A quelques kilomètres de là, on entend des explosions, des cris, des coups de sifflet. Depuis plus de deux heures, les CRS s'efforcent de repousser des centaines de harkis et de pieds-noirs qui, aux cris de 'Mohand ! Solidarité !' tentent de forcer le passage" (200-1).⁷⁸ The collective has in this moment recognized itself, coming together to support a man fighting on their behalf. The scene not only demonstrates a formation and physical assembly of a collective, which has gathered around Mohand, but a demand for justice in solidarity, among a group of people with a shared history. The collective has emerged organically, after people organized to support the actions of one man. The text is strikingly military, speaking to the history of Harki engagement as soldiers and the rage expressed by Harkis. Kemoum clearly portrays Harkis not as helpless victims, but as a righteously outraged collective seeking justice for the harms done to them and their families. One man's breach of silence inspires thousands of others to follow in his footsteps. Coming together in their rage to break the silence, Harkis are rewriting their collective history and present by breaking silence.

While many representations of the collective, especially through the action of breaking a collective silence, are narrated from a first person plural pronoun,

⁷⁸ Kemoum, *Mohand le harki*. "A few kilometers away, you could hear explosions, shouts, whistling. For two hours, the CRS endeavor to push back hundreds of harkis and pieds-noirs who, crying 'Mohand! Solidarity!' attempt to push through the passage."

indicating a collective, Harki descendents also speak of the collective from a third person perspective, without using the first person plural. This technique removes the author from the situation being described, giving the text a sense of objectivity in its analysis of the injustices done by the French to a specific group of people. The author is also able to establish the collective as something that exists organically, regardless of her personal articulation of it. In order to establish the authority of the third person narration, authors make reference to specific historical circumstances. They cite dates of important events in the Algerian War, locations that large numbers of Harkis passed through at different historical moments (such as ports of departure and arrival, and camps), battalion names and numbers, and common lived experiences, such as waiting for ships that will take Harkis to France, or living in fear in anticipation of reprisals. One method for presenting the history of Harkis is to trace the careers of individual men or families, using these characters to present factual information pertaining to the war. Telling the story of specific men and families inevitably outlines the history of the war, the circumstances under which entire harkas lived, and the circumstances of these groups' departure from Algeria. Not only are Harki descendents retelling a repressed history, which has contributed both to Harki silencing and stereotyping by preventing accurate representations of the war or climates in which they can be heard, they are establishing the historical basis for the collective they speak of. Harkis are indeed a collective group, but not because of collective cowardice. By telling their History, Harki descendents show that all Algerians faced circumstances that led to their military allegiances during the war. When history is presented as evidence, stereotypes about Harkis dissolve.

Presenting the reader with names of locations, dates, and other elements of the history of Harkis, as well as personal family accounts of the realities of these historical events, is necessary to facilitate the reader's understanding of the story at hand. The texts are not written as historical or sociological studies, for an academic audience, and thus do not assume that the reader is familiar with the circumstances of the Algerian War or the history of Harkis. In order to provide a framework for the personal stories being told, the authors of Harki texts must provide a detailed history to the largely ignorant French public. However, authors of Harki texts present a collectivity that is connected to, but not limited by, historical circumstances. Because of this departure from the limitations of historical texts, Harki writers are free to represent the collective in creative ways.

Writing a collective history that has been silenced is also a method of reminding the audience that the history represented is not just a Harki history, but a French history. Texts written by the descendents of Harkis grapple with hatred for the country that has abandoned them, but these texts do not end in defeat; none of the authors conclude that the Harki collective cannot be French. Harki texts exhume this buried history so as to facilitate a moment of collective grief for the French nation. Michael Rothberg, in his analysis of the literary representation of silenced moments in French history, highlights an allusion to Antigone found in La Seine était rouge by Leïla Sebbar. Sebbar, a prominent Franco-Maghrebi author of the Beur generation, tells the story of a repressed massacre that occurred in Paris in October of 1961. The novel addresses themes similar to those found in Harki texts, including trauma and forgetting. According to Rothberg's analysis of Sebbar's text and its reference to

Antigone, Antigone's desire to bury her brother is freeing the soul of the dead, so that mourning can begin for the living:

Antigone... bears a double lesson for the contemporary memory wars. First, the play insists that not only can the remembrance of the dead appear as terrorist, but that in certain circumstances it must assume a terrorizing position. As Sophocles and Sebbar clarify, it is the state that produces the dynamics of terror by refusing to recognize all of the dead... but, *Antigone* also insists and Sebbar implicitly confirms, the end of remembrance is the 'just entreatment' of mourning. The outcome of fidelity to the catastrophic event, as Badiou's ethics also suggests, ought to be the transformation of the situation that served as the incubator of that catastrophe. (308)⁷⁹

While Rothberg is speaking of a specific allusion in a text, parallels can be drawn between Sebbar's work and all three texts examined in this work. These Harki daughters are concerned with putting the bodies and souls of their fathers to rest, and the importance of burial is a recurrent theme in all three texts. What Rothberg helpfully highlights is the necessity of burial not only for the souls of the dead, but also for those of the living. Ultimately, breaking the silence works to create a France that openly acknowledges the diversity of its citizenship, and the complicated, and often ugly, repressed pieces of its history. In presenting this history, Harki writers are demonstrating that there is another collective at hand that must be rewritten and accordingly transformed: that of the French people. History is an important component of how a nation conceives of itself, and Harki descendants work to create a French national identity that fully acknowledges all of its history, and all of its contemporary diversity.

⁷⁹ Michael Rothberg, Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

The writing of a Harki collective is significant not only in its unique self expression of a long repressed history, but also in the shift it implies in how the French define themselves as a collective. Harki daughters write in their texts a multicultural French history, and further, a French history that must accept responsibility for its abuses of its citizens. Harki daughters write so as to facilitate mourning the dead in Harki communities, but also in the French nation. Indeed, in one sense the French must mourn the ideals of the Republic, which they have fallen short of, and also the deaths of their compatriots, both Harki and French. Texts about Harki collective experience necessitate a shift in how France thinks of itself as a collective, and begins the complicated process of healing.

Chapter Three: Beyond the Father: Giving Voice to Silenced Women

Coming to understand and claim Harki identity is largely actualized through a relationship with the Harki father, and then later with the broader network and community of Harkis living in France. However, the story of coming to be a Harki cannot be separated from Algeria. In most cases, the father has been forced to cut these roots, leaving Algeria with the knowledge that he can never return. Ultimately, this is why the daughter's attempt to discover Algeria through the father is a failed one. However, Algeria is not lost to Harki children; it remains a crucial part of their identity, not as a country to escape to, but as a culture that they grew up with and were formed by. However, the daughter can only discover these Algerian roots through her mother, who has not been traumatized by her experience of Algeria and is still able to speak of its role in the family's history. Through that intimate relationship with her mother, a Harki daughter is able to inscribe herself in another important collective- that of women of Algerian heritage. It is precisely this maternal heritage that provides the initial model for Harki daughters to speak about their history, as mothers speak freely to their daughters in the confines of the home. However, women's voices have traditionally been silenced in the public sphere, either when they immigrated to France without speaking French, or because Algerian traditions didn't allow them to speak publicly. By taking time to develop the character of the mother and her relationship with her children, Harki daughters are thus able to knit together seemingly disparate silenced experiences, precisely because they are women,

speaking for and with not just their fathers and their community, but also their mothers.

I. Establishing a relationship with Algeria through the mother

To be a Harki is necessarily to be a man. It was the father's enlistment that brought about the family's exodus. While Harki daughters are able to find a connection to Harkis as a community through their fathers, it is through their mothers that they find a connection to their Algerian roots. At first glimpse, it seems that the Harki exodus to France is the most significant factor in shaping the family's journey. However, this departure cannot be isolated from its history and its circumstances. While the family immigrated to France, it is importantly formed by its Algerian heritage. Harki children learn of this heritage not through their fathers, but their mothers. While Harkis did not necessarily side with the French because of a devotion to France, or scorn for Algeria, the war traumatized them and incurred such shame that they became extremely resistant to speaking of Algeria. As a result, the Algerian part of the family's story is transmitted through the mother, who has not been traumatized by the war and does not carry the shame of her husband. This transmission, however, is more cultural than explicitly political. In Harki texts, Algerian culture is often transmitted through household tasks usually assigned to women, such as food preparation, as well domestic labor accompanied by story telling about the past. It is this cultural heritage that offers another piece in the making of Harki daughters' identities. This piece allows Harki daughters to be Franco-Algerian as much as the daughters of Harkis.

When Harki families must leave Algeria, it is often the mother, like Lot's wife, who turns her head to watch the country disappear behind her. This backwards look is symbolic of a relationship not only to the past, but to the future, that differs from that of the father: "Pour lui non plus, il n'y aura pas de retour. Plus jamais. Milouda se tient sur le pont avec les enfants. Elle regarde s'éloigner la ville. Mohand tourne le dos à ce pays. Il regarde au loin, vers la mer, vers la France. 'Viens voir comme c'est beau, lui dit Milouda, c'est peut-être la dernière fois...' 'Je n'ai rien à voir de ce côté-là. Sinon la haine et la mort'" (90).⁸⁰ Not only does the Harki father Mohand look away as he leaves the country, he acknowledges that he will never return. He also makes passing reference to the trauma he has experienced there. In suppressing his memories of Algeria, he is suppressing his memories of the war. Milouda, his wife, not only carries the memory of Algeria with her into France, she does so with the children by her side. Milouda brings memories with her like precious cargo, making the country a place that she and her children can still explore, if only culturally or through the window of memory while living in France. Further, for her Algeria doesn't symbolize the trauma of the war. She sees the beauty of her home and her history, which will never leave her side.

Even after leaving Algeria, Mohand is reticent to pronounce the name of the country he has left. Milouda, on the other hand, dreams of Algeria:

L'hiver, lorsque le froid pénétrait jusque dans la maison, Milouda avait coutume de dire, avec cet air triste qui ne la quittait jamais: "Il doit faire chaud là-bas..." Mohand partait d'un grand rire. "Tu perds la mémoire, ma pauvre femme... Tu ne

⁸⁰ Hadjila Kemoun, *Mohand le harki* (Paris: Editions Anne Carrière, 2003). "There wouldn't be any return for him, either. Never again. Milouda stood on deck with the children. She watched the city move away. Mohand turned his back on the country. He looked far away, towards the sea, towards France. 'Come see how beautiful it is,' Milouda told him, 'This might be the last time.' 'I have nothing to see there. Only hate and death.'"

te souviens pas des hivers dans la montagne? Tu as oublié que là-bas (Mohand ne prononçait que rarement, et seulement quand il ne peut faire [sic] autrement, le mot Algérie) c'est un pays chaud où le soleil est froid?" (166)⁸¹

As Milouda introduces the subject of Algeria, her husband quickly dismisses her memory of the country through laughter, and then contradicts her. Though her husband does not validate her experience, Milouda knits memories of Algeria into the daily life of the family. This not only reestablishes the family's history, but also paints it in a positive light. Algeria is not just the war; there, the family had a life full of seasons and daily experiences, rendering life in Algeria as real as the life they currently lead in France. Algeria appears before her children, and even her reluctant husband, as a place that has not ceased to be, and is still tied to the family's daily life.

While Mohand can't understand his wife, she in turn does not share his trauma. There are several moments when the reader sees Mohand gazing into the past, with the author using details clearly associated with trauma to describe his experience of remembering. However, his wife's reaction to the trauma clearly sets her emotions towards the past apart from those of her husband: "Mohand se lève. Comme chaque fois qu'il a un coup de cafard, il se replonge dans ses vieilles photos, ses documents, ses coupures de presse. Ses 'vieux papiers', comme disait Milouda" (121).⁸² In his depression, Mohand is overcome by the compulsive replaying of memories, represented here by old documents from the war. To Milouda, who has not exhibited signs of trauma, these memories are just old pieces of paper. Milouda

⁸¹ Kemoum, *Mohand le harki*. "In winter, when the cold penetrated the inside of the house, Milouda was in the habit of saying with that sadness that never left her, "It must be warm there..." Mohand would let out a great laugh. "You're losing your memory, my poor wife, don't you remember the winters in the mountain? You forgot that there (Mohand rarely pronounced, and only when necessary, the word Algeria), it's a warm country where the sun is cold?"

⁸² Kemoum, *Mohand le harki*. "Mohand gets up. Like every time he has a bout of depression, he submerses himself in his old photos, his documents, his press clippings. His 'old papers,' as Milouda said."

revisits Algeria in her mind as she wishes, unlike her husband, who retreats into his private traumatic replay of the past.

While Harki wives are not presented in these works as experiencing the shame and trauma typical of their husbands, they do have unique experiences of the war. Indeed, speaking of her experience of the war is one way in which the mother introduces Algeria to her child. In the section of Moze dedicated to a conversation with the narrator's mother, the narrator relates her mother's "women's war": "Elle m'a parlé de sa guerre de femme. Les cinq ans sans Moze. Elle me dit son ardeur, celle qui lui fut nécessaire pour maintenir ses enfants en vie. Elle me dit sa joie. Celle d'avoir surmonté des temps ombrageux. Elle me dit sa patience, son assurance et sa ruse" (155).⁸³ Her mother relates to the war very differently than her father. While her mother overcame the war, she survived it without the trauma that kept Moze from speaking. Her mother is liberated to speak of the war, and consequently of her life in Algeria. Through her mother, the narrator comes to know Algeria as a place of suffering, but also as a place where she was brave and joyful. The mother is also able to demonstrate to her children how they must learn to fight to live in a world that has oppressed Harkis, transmitting important knowledge about survival.

Algeria, even considering its connection to the threat of death, is seen through the eyes of the mother as a place of growth and overcoming. The mother's freedom from trauma allows her to speak of the war without letting it eclipse the rest of her experience. She is able to speak of all the important parts of her life in Algeria:

⁸³ Zahia Rahmani, Moze (Paris: Sabine Wespéiser, Editeur, 2003). "She spoke to me of her war as a woman. The five years without Moze. She told me of her ardor, which was necessary to keep her children alive. She told me about her joy. That of having overcome such dark times. She told me of her patience, her assuredness, her ruse."

J'entends son enfance, ses enfants, sa religion, ses sœurs, ses parents, son savoir, ses contes, ses histoires et ce qu'elle dit de ses occupations d'antan... Elle dit les mots des travaux domestiques, ceux des saisons, de ses couvertures qu'elle confectionnait, de ses poteries qu'elle aimait rouler, de ses signes à peindre qu'elle avait si bien appris... Elle me parle dans la langue de son enfance. Est-ce possible cette parole encore ? Cette parole qui dit cette vie qu'elle n'a pas cédée. (154)⁸⁴

Her mother speaks to her of a whole world in Algeria, speaking not only of the war, but of her family, her daily tasks, and her unique wisdom gained through years of life and generations. Some of her quotidian tasks in Algeria clearly carry over into her life in France. Not only does she still engage in domestic tasks, she is directly relating to her daughter her wisdom, her life, and the reassuring sound of speech. The specificity of “cette vie” highlights that the mother has refused to surrender the life she lived in Algeria by assimilating or forgetting; she has not sacrificed her history to the country to which she has immigrated. She continues to speak of her life in Algeria, and continues to live in France. As her daughter, in turn, raises the question of whether or not speech is still possible, she also realizes, through her mother’s reluctance to keep her past quiet, that silence is not the only option.

The trauma of the Algerian War plays out in unique ways in the lives of Harkis, making the mother’s speech particularly important in the void left by her father’s silence. While this makes the mother’s speech particularly significant in the lives of Harki children, they do not differ from Maghrebi mothers in immigrant families who have transmitted the culture of the homeland to their children. As Patricia Geesey confirms in her article on the ways in which North African families

⁸⁴ Rahmani, Moze. “I hear her childhood, her children, her religion, her sisters, her parents, her wisdom, her stories, her histories, and what she said of her occupations of yesteryear... she says the words of domestic work, those of the seasons, of the blankets she made, of the pottery she loved to roll, the painted signs she’d learned so well... she speaks to me in the language of her childhood. Is that speech still possible? That speech of that life she didn’t surrender.”

integrate and change in France, “Sociologists and anthropologists agree that in the cultural and ethnic context of the Maghreb, women are largely responsible for the transmission of traditional cultural values and practices” (141).⁸⁵ While the father’s silence as a result of trauma is unique to Harki families, the transmission of culture through the mother is shared by other Franco-Maghrebi families. The transmission of culture itself is continuing a tradition of the homeland in teaching children cultural practices from Algeria. Harki mothers speak not only from a unique experience of the war, but from a specific gender role and a more commonly shared Maghrebi tradition.

Cultural transmission from the mother is not transmitted through words alone, but also through the daily performance of household tasks. Often words such as those of Moze’s wife accompany the preparation of food or cleaning of a house. Since domestic labor is ordinarily assigned to women, this creates a unique cultural bond between mother and daughter. On the occasion of the anniversary of her parents’ immigration to France, the narrator of *Mon père, ce harki* finds herself in the kitchen with her mother and the other women of the household as her brothers watch television in an adjacent room: “Ma mère me l’a dit, ce matin, les yeux larmoyants en épluchant ses oignons pour son taboulé géant, un peu boudeuse au fond: ‘Je n’ai pas envie de fêter le jour où j’ai perdu mon pays’” (210).⁸⁶ This intimate moment of regret, bitterness, and loss is shared only between women. Further, it is masked because her mother’s tears accompany the act of peeling an onion. While it is clear that her mother sheds tears for her lost home, her stoicism is also evident. Her mother

⁸⁵ Patricia Geesey, "North African Women Immigrants in France: Integration and Change," *SubStance* 24.76/77 (1995).

⁸⁶ Dalila Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki* (Paris: Éditions Seuil, 2003). “My mother told me, that morning, with teary eyes while peeling an onion for her giant tabouleh, seeming sulky, ‘I don’t want to celebrate the day I lost my country.’”

is also cooking a Mediterranean dish; she doesn't chop onions for a French soup or quiche, but in the very act of preserving Algerian custom and tradition. Because of gendered division of domestic tasks, her brothers and father are not privy to this intimacy. Intimate moments of heartache are shared exclusively among women, as is longing for Algeria.

Harki wives do not only resist their husbands' silence in the home, but also attempt to carry Algerian customs and traditions into the public sphere, embodying resistance to dominant French culture. In camps, which were in part intended to acclimate Harkis to French life, authority figures attempted to stop women from practicing Algerian customs of dress. The narrator of *Mon père, ce harki* recounts how her mother suffered from such a repression: "Le chef du camp interdit aux femmes de s'enduire les mains de henné, de mettre un foulard sur la tête. Son épouse s'assure que les femmes cuisinent des plats français et troquent leurs djellabas pour des robes européennes" (114).⁸⁷ While these cultural wars enacted on women's bodies were not by any means historically unique to Harkis, their significance was distinct in the case of Harki wives and daughters. Harkis, having seemingly disavowed Algeria for France, did not transmit culture in the ways that their wives did. The silence of Harki fathers accompanied with stereotypes that Harkis were loyal French patriots makes the mother's struggle to preserve her culture all the more dire. Despite the silence of Harkis and the repression of authority figures, the narrator's mother still makes couscous, speaks Berber, and dresses in a non-French fashion. The textual struggle of Harki wives implies that the Algerian culture, viewed here as

⁸⁷ Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki*. "The head of the camp forbids women to put henna on their hands, to put a veil on their heads. His spouse makes sure that women make French dishes and trade their djellabas for European dresses."

antagonistic to French culture, has been carried across the Mediterranean to France, where women must struggle to preserve aspects of their homes.

Preservation of Algerian culture is not only a form of resistance specific to Harki households and communities, where the father refuses to transmit traces of Algeria, but also in French culture as a whole, where culture that ran counter to the norm was a threat to moral order. Attempts to eradicate Algerian culture from the lives of Harkis living in France were often played out through attempts to control the lives of women. Women's bodies particularly became the sights of cultural struggles: "Nationalists ideologues and reformers have idealized women as bastions of the public order and moral respectability... In this respect, the display of Islamic belonging in the French public sphere by young women- the putative symbols of the future of the New France- symbolized by a potential threat to the moral order" (142).⁸⁸ Although Silverstein speaks of more recent debates around the veil in France, he describes a situation that was already a reality in 1960s France for Franco-Maghrebi women, and particularly for Harkis wives, whose daily lives were often observed in the confines of camps.

According to Geesey, the pressure exerted on Maghrebi women to assimilate upon arrival in France, combined with their resistance to abandoning the traditions of home, provides a model for their children to live as multicultural French citizens: "As the children of Maghrebian [sic] women immigrants in France grow into adulthood, they will not only look to their mothers for a source of identity as French citizens who are a bit 'different,' but they will rehabilitate the equivocal image French society

⁸⁸ Paul A. Silverstein, *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

currently has of North African women immigrants” (149).⁸⁹ Geesey suggests that resistance to assimilation in Maghrebi mothers will result not only in a more secure identity for their daughters, but also offer the grounds for a transformation of how France relates to its immigrant communities and how the French nation conceives of itself. This statement has unique significance for Harki children for whom resisting invisibility is particularly difficult. Harki mothers, in refusing to surrender their Algerian heritage despite exclusion from Maghrebi communities and French communities, create a model for their daughters. The Harki mother lays the groundwork for her daughter’s writing by insisting on the transmission of culture and upon not silencing the past.

Harki daughters, having grown to adulthood in France and learned to claim French identity, receive crucial knowledge of themselves through their mothers. Without the mother, Algerian roots would be missing from the daughter’s self-conception and her story of the family would be incomplete. The mother’s speech and transmission of Algeria teach the daughter a sense of herself as a multicultural person living in a society resistant to multiculturalism. Further, mothers teach their daughters to resist the push for assimilation. Maternal resistance is eventually enacted through the daughter not only through her private life, but also through speech.

II. The home as site of unity, orchestrated by the mother

The home serves not only as a location in which Algerian and French histories, cultures, and languages can coexist, but also as a location where the family

⁸⁹ Geesey, "North African Women Immigrants in France: Integration and Change."

can come together. As discussed in the first chapter, Harki families were often fragmented, which was perceived as a consequence of the father's actions, both in fighting for France and in his reticence to speak. The child then had to restore her broken connection to her father in order for the family to function as a whole again. However, moments of unity do occur in Harki families, and they are always fostered by the mother in the domain of the home. The home, as an extension of the mother, thus serves to unify both the personal identity of the child on the level of her family, and the collective identity of the child, enacted through her cultures and nationality, all of which can coalesce in the home. Further, the home has increased significance for Harki families, who disembarked in France often to be sent to reserved public housing or secluded camps. When Harki families do establish their own homes, they are symbols of freedom from the French government, places of autonomy long denied.

The home serves as a significant multicultural space considering its importance to both Maghrebi and French societies. The home at once is the private sphere for which in France religious belief and cultural difference are reserved, and the private sphere reserved for women in Arabo-Muslim families. In her article on female Maghrebi immigrants in France, Geesey highlights this separation of male and female space in Maghrebi tradition:

Arab-Muslim society has typically depended on a bipolar system in which harmonious and productive social order is guaranteed by the strict spatial division of male and female spheres of existence. In practice, this polarization stipulates that the home and its management is the domain of women, men control the exterior world-that is, public space (142-3).⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Geesey, "North African Women Immigrants in France: Integration and Change."

This reservation of the home for women, coupled with the French reluctance to embrace publicly displayed signs of difference almost force upon Franco-Maghrebi women the responsibility of transmitting culture to their children within a woman's space: the home.

In many Harki families, the home was not just the domain in which the mother transmitted culture. It was also the one in which she exercised authority, due in part to the father's traumatic past. The narrator of Mon père, ce harki shows that her father, drawn out of daily domestic life by his work selling vegetables from a cart, did not take the role of governing the home. Instead, her mother takes authority: "Elle domine mon père, qui a démissionné son rôle de chef de famille. A la maison, les rôles se sont inversés. Ma mère s'échine à l'usine et dirige la maisonnée d'une main de fer, tandis que lui ne s'occupe plus que de sa charrette" (178).⁹¹ The mother works in a factory and directs the life of her children in the house, while her husband is often too traumatized to fully participate in daily family life, or has been emasculated by his forced exodus. In her work on Harki autobiography and emphasis of the mother, Nina Sutherland describes how the mother's role in Harki families comes directly from elements common to the lives of many Harkis: "Indeed... the autobiographies place great emphasis on... the new 'managerial' role for the mother post-1962, as the fathers, so traumatized by the horrors of the Algerian war and its aftermath and by their loss of status following their arrival in France, have resigned their traditional

⁹¹ Kerchouche, Mon père, ce harki. "She dominates my father, who handed off his role as head of the family. At the house, the roles were inverted. My mother submitted at the factory and directed the house with an iron fist, while he didn't concern himself with anything but his cart."

role as head of the family” (197).⁹² Harki mothers not only transmit knowledge of Algeria, they hold the family together in the wake of loss. Mothers both maintain and create the family as a unified whole, as the father cannot assume his usual patriarchal position as the person in charge of family mythology and structure.

For the family of Mohand in Mohand, le harki, the home and its ties to the mother are at the center of the text and the center of the family’s internal order. At the beginning of the novel, the home--and the family, by extension--falls apart after the death of Milouda. Sitting alone in his home, Mohand has no one to comfort him as his old memories and rage from the war begin to overtake him: “Il sent le cafard l’envahir... Tous les non-dits étouffés durant des années explosent dans son cerveau. Il y a eu les enfants qui sont maintenant presque des étrangers. Puis Milouda, qui vient de mourir. Désormais, il est un homme sans attaches” (85).⁹³ The death of Mohand’s wife has catalyzed the disintegration of his family, and he sits alone in his home, enraged and depressed by the rhetoric of Phillip Janard, the man he is deciding to take hostage. The death of his wife, and the emptiness it symbolizes in his home and his personal life, bring him to the action that will cost him his life.

In contrast to the empty house that causes Mohand to take violent and suicidal action, the house is once again full of life and the spirit of the mother when Mohand and Milouda’s children come together to share a meal after their father’s funeral. Both parents are invoked in this moment: “Ils retrouvent instinctivement, autour de la table familiale, les places qu’ils occupaient quand ils étaient petits... Il ne manque-

⁹² Nina Sutherland, "Harki Autobiographies or Collecto-Biographies? Mother Speak through Their Daughters," *Romance Studies* 24.3 (2006).

⁹³ Kemoum, Mohand le harki. “He felt the overwhelming depression... everything unsaid, repressed for years, exploded in his head. There had been the children, who were now almost strangers. Then Milouda, who had just died. From now on, he was a man without attachments.”

mais ils sont formidablement présent dans leur cœur- Mohand et Milouda. Milouda, qui se serait activée aux fourneaux- ‘Mais reste en place cinq minutes, maman !’- et Mohand, qui aurait grogné sur les malheurs de l’époque” (230).⁹⁴ By invoking the spirit of both parents, the author invites us to imagine how all of the children will carry on their legacy. In contrast to the moments following Milouda’s funeral in which the children disperse to their respective work and concerns, in this moment they are together, united in their home and undeniably tied to the spirit of their mother. It was the disintegration of the home through the death of their mother that put their family at risk of completely falling apart. Thus it was only the home that could ultimately bring them together. Their unity as a family thus symbolizes an important personal and collective moment. The family is personally reunited in the home, and also communally reunited with a renewed understanding of their identity as the descendents of a Harki.

While the home and the mother’s organization of it hold the family together, the home is also symbolic of the personal struggle of Harki families preceding their habitation of the home. The narrator of Mon père, ce harki underlines how the home is a symbol of everything the family has passed through in order to establish a life in France. After living in camps for eleven years, the home her family lives in serves as a reminder of the years of suffering. Indeed, she, who never had to live in the camps, is markedly different from her siblings who lived through the difficulties of the camps: “Amers et moqueurs, mes frères et sœurs plus âgés me traitent souvent de

⁹⁴ Kemoum, Mohand le harki. “They found themselves around the table, instinctively in the places they occupied when they were little... Were only missing- but incredibly present in the heart- Mohand and Milouda. Milouda, who would be active at the oven- ‘But stay still for five minutes, mama!’- and Mohand, who would have growled about the misfortunes of the time.”

‘privilégée’. Eux ont connu les ‘camps’. Pas moi... J’aimerais, pourtant, à travers ce livre, abolir cette frontière avec les miens, toucher du doigt ce passé que je n’ai pas vécu. Pour me sentir, enfin, membre de ma famille à part entière” (26).⁹⁵

The two great legacies of the mother both come into play through the daughter’s wishes. Firstly, she wishes to dissolve the boundary between the years her family lived without an established home, and the years of relative security felt within the home. Secondly, the book is a manner of coming into contact with her past through speaking. The lessons she has learned from her mother bring together the fragmented pieces of her life, both personally and communally. In the unified space of the home, the daughter wishes to bring together the distinct sections of her family’s life, separated first by the Mediterranean, and then by homelessness. She also wants to bring herself into the experience of her family’s Harki past, by speaking about it. This ultimately follows the work of her mother, who, through speech and her domain of the home, has been able to draw together a more unified family and a more unified history.

Importantly, the home, once established, is the location in which Harki families are not forced to select France over Algeria, an idea that haunts Harki families, producing feelings of shame and guilt. The Harki father Moze attempted to close his home, controlling the environment in which his wife and children lived. Against his wishes, his wife opened their home to different people in her community, making the home not only a space in which the family could practice Algerian customs and speak Arabic or Berber, but also a space in which members of the

⁹⁵ Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki*. “Bitter and mocking, my brothers and sisters often treated me as ‘privileged.’ They knew the ‘camps.’ Not me... I would love, in fact, through this book, to touch the past that I didn’t live. To feel, at last, as a member of my family, one of a whole.”

community could visit: “Elle a décidé d’ouvrir sa maison, d’en faire un paradis pour nous. Le maître de l’école est venu. C’était le premier. D’autres ont été dignes... le maire adjoint, il parlait pour nous à la mairie... Eux nous ont appris à ne plus avoir peur” (71-2).⁹⁶ Through the powerful vehicle of the home, the narrator’s mother struggles to transform her family’s life. The home becomes a symbol of the family’s multicultural life, where they can have influence on their communities in France, without sacrificing the traditions that are also preserved through the home. The home is also the location in which the mother can exercise her agency. While she might not be permitted to leave the house to visit with the head of the school or the adjunct mayor, she can welcome them. Though all of these different communities can inhabit the same space, the mother must choose in individual moments which self to represent. While she can speak Berber with her children and husband, she must use French to advocate on their behalf when addressing the French

Not only does Moze’s wife invite the village to share her home, she brings a cutting of a peach tree from Algeria to her home, symbolically bringing Algeria to her life in France. Her Algerian heritage as symbolized by the tree is not a static history but a growing plant that is continually nourishing her life: “Je veux vivre jusqu’au jour où tu porteras des fruits. C’est ce que vient de dire ma mère au petit pêcheur rapporté d’Algérie qu’elle a planté près d’elle cet automne” (149).⁹⁷ The narrator’s mother wants to live in a place where her homeland can flourish. The image has importance in its direct correlation to the homeland; Moze’s wife has brought a piece

⁹⁶ Rahmani, *Moze*. “She decided to open her house, to make it a paradise for us. The head of the school came. He was the first. Others were blessed... The adjunct mayor, he spoke for us at city hall... they taught us not to be afraid anymore.”

⁹⁷ Rahmani, *Moze*. “I want to live until the day when you bear fruit. That’s what my mother just said to the little peach tree brought from Algeria that she planted close to her this autumn.”

of Algeria to her home in France. The image also connotes a relationship between mother and child, especially considering the mother's address to a "you" that is not immediately clear. It seems she could also be speaking to her daughter, who must learn to bear the fruits of the country in which she was born. The family's Algerian legacy must continue in France, but it cannot simply survive, it must also bare fruit.

In Harki families, the home as extension of the mother's authority and person is emphasized due to the father's experiences of emasculation and trauma resulting from the end of the war. The home is also heightened in its importance in Harki families. Not only have they had to fight for homes, the home provides at least a symbolic and spatial unity for the family. While the family finds itself torn between generations, cultures, nations, identities, and emotional harms, the home creates a space where all of these things can co-exist. This often leads to conflict, but importantly, the family remains united despite seeming contradictions. The mother's force keeps this unity intact, allowing for and encouraging the coexistence of her family's multiple identities. While the mother's impact on the family, both as a personal home and source of identity, is enormous, she and her voice remain visible and audible only within the home.

III. Breaking the silence of women

As established in chapter two, Harki daughters, in learning of the communal identity of Harkis, also learn the importance of breaking the silence of Harkis. The

silence surrounding the Harki community finds its origins in trauma, as a result of the father's involvement in the war and persecution at its end. In contrast, mothers speak to their families, having not been traumatized by the direct experience of the war. However, the wives of Harkis live in a different sort of silence: the silence of women. This silence does not mean that women do not speak, but rather that their voices don't carry beyond the confines of the home. Speaking within the home has important repercussions: it brings Algeria into the life of the child, and tells her of her history, and makes the family a whole, both by creating a multicultural home and holding together some of the family's brokenness. The mother is also a part of an Algerian female collective that Harki daughters speak for. Like Harki men, Harki wives have lived the war and have also been silenced. Harki daughters refuse the silence of their fathers, as much as the silence imposed upon their mothers. Speech for the mother, and for women of Algerian origins, is transformative for daughters, as it is for many women whose voices have been ignored or suppressed.

These Harki daughters are not only breaking the silence imposed upon their mothers who are marginalized as the wives of supposed traitors, but a silence imposed on many Algerian women who have lost their lives and their voices over years of conquest, both personal and political. Assia Djébar, while not the daughter of a Harki, writes her semi-autobiography as the daughter of generations of silenced Algerian women, and thinks of her writing as a manner of resurrecting the voices of women: "Writing has brought me to the cries of the women silently rebelling in my youth, to my own true origins. Writing does not silence the voice, but awakens it,

above all to resurrect so many vanished sisters” (204).⁹⁸ Throughout her work, Djébar speaks of the way in which history has silenced Algerian women specifically. Djébar also intentionally notes that women have always rebelled and cried out, despite the fact that their cries have fallen on ears that did not want to hear them. Women who come from this lineage are breaking a silence specific to Algerian women, a collective that includes the daughters of Harkis. In writing, Harki daughters are telling stories that are both personal and collective. Through writing Harki daughters are speaking as a part of two distinct collectives that, while different, cannot be seen as separate. Though Harki women suffer a unique silencing, they are also part of a broader collective, an Algerian female collective.

Women emigrating from Algeria were raised in a tradition that did not permit women to speak in the public domain. Women in rural areas remained cloistered, generally not allowed to leave the home except to visit other women in times of crisis. Returning to Algeria, the narrator of *Mon père, ce harki* is struck by the isolation and lack of authority granted to her female relatives. Being cloistered strips them of any mobility, limiting the power they have in society: “ ‘Notre vie n’est pas intéressante. On reste cloîtrées ici toute la journée, dans la maison et dans la cour. On ne voit pas grand monde.’ Je repense au portail verrouillé: Oui, mon cousin les enferme quand il sort. Elles vivent donc comme des prisonnières” (238).⁹⁹ With no ability to speak outside of the home to anyone but women in their families, these Algerian women were rendered powerless, like prisoners. Further, even within their homes, they

⁹⁸ Assia Djébar, *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*, trans. Dorothy S. Blair (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1993).

⁹⁹ Kerchouche, *Mon père, ce harki*. “‘Our life isn’t interesting. We stay cloistered here all day, in the house and the courtyard. We don’t see many people.’ I thought of the bolted fence: Yes, my cousin locked them in when he left. Then they lived like prisoners.”

remain silent when confronted with even the simplest injustices committed by males: “Un petit garçon de 5 ans environ pénètre dans la pièce. Comme il ne reste plus de tabouret libre, il pousse brutalement une fillette d’une dizaine d’années qui manque de tomber par terre... ‘Vous ne dites rien?’ ... ‘Dire quoi?’ ‘Vous n’avez pas vu ce qu’il a fait?’ ‘Si. Et alors?’” (239).¹⁰⁰ So deeply entrenched is the hierarchy that even a male child of five years old cannot be disciplined by women. As a male child, he bullies an older girl with no repercussions, entitled to whatever he likes. The women do not even reprimand him. However, as the narrator demonstrates earlier in the work, women do share their knowledge and analysis of injustice with each other. The question is not of their awareness, but rather of their ability to act.

While the narrator of Mon père, ce harki is shocked by the code by which Algeria women are forced to live, Algerian women immigrating to France were faced with similar paternalistic attitudes, which kept them silenced:

The wives of these workers were infantilized on their arrival in France and forced to attend classes in health and household management. They rarely took a stand on issues in public for fear of being divorced, or of being repatriated to Algeria, either by their husbands or by the French authorities. They were also inhibited by their high levels of illiteracy. Although the women of the first generation of Harkis had arrived many years earlier, in 1962, they were viewed in the same manner by the French authorities of later Algerian migrants. (194)¹⁰¹

Not only did women fear the repercussions of speaking out in public, they often lacked the access to the linguistic skills needed to do so. Inability to speak French far too often precluded Harki wives and other immigrant women from participating in

¹⁰⁰ Kerchouche, Mon père, ce harki. “A little boy, about 5 years old, came into the room. Since there wasn’t a free stool, he brutally pushed a little girl of about ten years who almost fell to the ground... ‘You’re not saying anything?’ ‘Say what?’ ‘You didn’t see what he did?’ ‘Yeah, so?’”

¹⁰¹ Sutherland, "Harki Autobiographies or Collecto-Biographies? Mother Speak through Their Daughters."

broader French society. What Sutherland doesn't highlight in this passage is the high degree of risk for the wives of Harkis. While all immigrant women had to deal with the daily possibility of repatriation, and their subsequent disempowerment from the loss of a husband, Harki wives could not afford to be repatriated, facing an extraordinarily violent and hostile reaction in Algeria.

Though the daughters of Harkis are raised in France, a country with different traditions regarding women's mobility and voice in the family, they must grapple with the conflict of having their parents' ideas imposed upon them. Dehbia, the daughter of Mohand, rebels against her father, not only because of his silence, but also because of what she considers to be unfair restrictions applied because she is a girl. When Dehbia responds that she should not be restricted because she is French, her father responds, "Tu as raison, habibi, tu es française. Ça ne veut pas dire que tu peux faire n'importe quoi. Il y a des choses que les filles ne peuvent pas faire. Regarde ta mère, prends exemple sur elle" (163).¹⁰² Dehbia's father turns to her mother to teach Dehbia how to be a woman. The author shows the reader that following in a tradition of silence ultimately fails and harms the father daughter relationship, as the quotation is presented in the context of Mohand's alienation from Dehbia. The quotation as part of a published book demonstrates to the reader that the daughter is breaking not only the silence that had been imposed on her but also that imposed on her mother. Further, when Dehbia responds to her father in protest, she cites not only generational difference, but the independence that her own mother has preached to her: "Mais maman est d'une autre génération. Elle m'a dit, elle, qu'elle

¹⁰² Kemoum, Mohand le harki. "You're right, habibi, you're not French. That doesn't mean you can do anything. There are things girls can't do. Look at your mother, follow her example.

venait d'un petit village de Kabylie et que les femmes kabyles, à la différence des femmes arabes, sont des femmes libres et fières" (163).¹⁰³ Dehbia uses her mother's voice to fight for her own empowerment. Though her mother has evidently become a more subservient woman than she was in her town in Algeria, she encourages her daughter's liberty. Not only does she use her mother's wisdom to speak against her father, it is knowledge of life in Algeria that she uses to liberate her in France. As an adult, Dehbia becomes a journalist, carrying her mother's pride and independence with her as she rebels against her father.

Djebar confirms this idea of speech as rebellion, and silence as imprisonment for all silenced women: "To refuse to veil one's voice, to start 'shouting,' that was really indecent, real dissidence. For the silence of all the others suddenly lost its charm and revealed itself for what it was: a prison without reprieve" (204).¹⁰⁴ A woman who speaks highlights not only the ubiquity of silence, but how accepted it has become. Her indecency lies in the breaking of tradition. Further, her speech reveals how insidious silence is. The prison of silence has been revealed for what it is.

Women who break the silence of their mothers attempt to bring women's speech into the public realm so that it will not fade into complete oblivion and die. The narrator of *Moze* sees herself as continuing and strengthening a tradition established by her mother, which is threatened while it is cloistered. The mother speaks, and her daughter wishes to bring speech to the public:

La mémoire de ma mère n'appartient à aucune légende, elle est réelle et bien vivante. Elle est pareille à celle de toutes ces femmes dont l'expérience de vie

¹⁰³ Kemoum, *Mohand le harki*. "But Mama is of another generation. She told me, herself, that she came from a small village in Kabylie et that Kabyle women, unlike Arab women, are free and proud women."

¹⁰⁴ Djebar, *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*.

intérieure est si singulière qu'elle ne peut nous être transmise selon nos usages.
 La femme de Moze parle en ce pays une langue étrangère. Une langue mise en
 pénurie... Je veux parler de la langue des mères (159).¹⁰⁵

The narrator does not claim that she speaks in or with her mother's voice, but rather speaks about it. Her father's death is obviously the clearest subject of the work; the title is his name, and his death is cited as the event that calls her to write. But, while writing for her means writing about the past, the narrator cannot write this story of her family without looking to her mother, for whom memory continues to live internally. The narrator cannot mimic this, but must pay tribute to it. The narrator also calls attention to the fact that her mother speaks a language that is becoming increasingly rare, but that must be commemorated, and even transformed, through her daughter's writing. The narrator pays tribute to the voices of women, each unique and unrelatable, and simultaneously acknowledges her difference in her attempts to relate her experience to the reader.

The narrator's mother has taught her not only a language, but a way of life that breaks down the confinement of war, exile, and gender. The narrator states that while Harkis responded to oppression with silence and depression, their wives survived: "Il faut faire du monde un chant. C'est là son secret. Celui de toutes ses femmes. Celles qui il y a quelques années traversaient la Méditerranée, accompagnant, abandonnées et résignées, le destin tragique de leurs hommes déchus... elles ignoraient tout ce monde civilisé dans lequel elles étaient plongées"

¹⁰⁵ Rahmani, *Moze*. "My mother's language doesn't belong to any legend, it is real and alive. It is similar to that of all women for whom the experience of inner life is so singular that it can't be related to us on our terms. Moze's wife speaks a foreign language in this country. A language in shortage... I want to speak of the language of mothers."

(166).¹⁰⁶ The song of the mother is a way of being outside of the world of the Algerian War. However, the mother does not simply detach herself from the world, she makes it a song. The juxtaposition of the civilized world and the song of the mother implies something she carries from Algeria is her ability to live outside of the suffering of her husband's world. The narrator knows herself to be the product of these two parents, neither entirely separate from nor identical to either of them. Breaking the silence of both of her parents, she finds her own voice to speak about the past and her unique relationship to it. She pays tribute to the song her mother has created, though it has been invisible to the outside world.

While Harki daughters have learned to claim a place in Franco-Algerian community through their mothers' speech, they also learn to claim a place in a community of women through their mothers' silence. Speaking for their mothers becomes a way of taking the voices that have shaped Harki daughters, and carried them into the world. They subtly claim their own identity and unique space in French and Franco-Algerian cultures for their mothers, and indeed for themselves, as women. Ultimately, daughters of Harkis inscribe themselves in two distinct collectives, one originating from their fathers, and the second from their mothers. The latter is certainly more discrete- Harki daughters claim a space as female survivors of the war, of the many wars waged in which women are too often ignored or forgotten.

¹⁰⁶ Rahmani, *Moze*. "You must turn the world into a song. That is her secret. That of all these women. Those who, some years ago, crossed the Mediterranean, accompanying, abandoned and resigned, the tragic destiny of their demeaned men... they ignored all of this civilized world into which they were plunged."

While Harki daughters come to understand their place in a Harki collective through their relationships to their fathers, they come to understand their place in a collective of Algerian women through their mothers. For Harki daughters, to be Algerian and to be a woman are inseparable. Through women, as women, they learn of Algeria, and as women, for other women, they speak of Algeria. This conversation with the mother adds a layer to the daughter's act of speech. She speaks out not only on behalf of her father and her community of Harkis, but on behalf of a communal history of Algerian women. Her understanding of what it means to be an Algerian woman, like her understanding of what it means to be a Harki, is formed both by the personal and the collective. Without knowing the mother personally and hearing the mother speak from childhood on, her daughter would not know herself, or know how to know herself. Without her relationship with her mother, the act of writing would not be possible for Harki daughters.

CONCLUSION

Harki literature is a nascent field that is rapidly expanding. Though no comprehensive studies of Harki literature yet exist, it is nevertheless present in French academic institutions. I first became aware of the term “Harki” while studying abroad in Paris in the Spring of 2008. I was taking a course on literature of the Algerian War, and on the first day of class, our professor told us that she intended to teach literature that was narrated from perspectives traditionally marginalized in conversations about the Algerian War. Among these marginalized perspectives, she cited women, young French soldiers (*appelés*), and Harkis. While she included texts by and about women and *appelés* in the syllabus, Harkis were only peripherally featured in the texts she taught. This course sparked a curiosity in me that I decided to pursue through my senior thesis.

In the context of my course of study in French, the opportunity to study positions and identities that break down dichotomies intrigued me. I saw Harkis as a perfect example of this. Identities often combine and contradict each other in interesting and painful ways, making norms of gender, nationality, and race rarely true, if they ever are. However, the Algerian war has typically been used to reify distinct ideas about the French and Algerian nation through the construction of the ideal citizen. To me, Harkis perfectly underlined not only the ways in which France and Algeria were intimately intertwined during the colonial period, but also the degree to which Europeans considered North Africans to be essentially different. I considered the case of Harkis to be indicative of an important element of French history, and accordingly, French identity.

While Harkis are mentioned in many texts about the Algerian War, I wanted to look for texts concerned exclusively with Harkis. In searching for such texts, I first came across a text by Mehdi Charef, one of the earliest literary voices of the Beur generation. However, most of the literary texts about Harkis tended not to be written by the descendants of Harkis. I took this fact into consideration, and decided to focus exclusively on texts by Harki descendants. While the decision was initially made for simplicity's sake, it ultimately had a great impact on my thesis. Firstly, it highlights Harki invisibility, and secondly, it importantly allows for Harki identity to speak itself, when it has previously only been publicly spoken of as a stereotype. The emergence of self-representation in literature is an empowering moment in Harki history, as it provides venues in which to render Harkis visible in the French public sphere other than through direct political action or academic work.

I came to this body of work like many readers, unaware of the details and horrors of Harki history. I did not know about the brutal reprisals they faced from the FLN, nor the forced exodus following the end of the Algerian war. I did not know that certain Harkis remained in Algeria, nor that some were forced into secluded camps upon arrival. My familiarity with other Beur texts prepared me for some of the discrimination that Harkis faced, but the extent of their suffering astounded me. To an extent, I was able to experience the texts as their authors' intended audience. I became all the more aware of the significance of the silence surrounding Harki history, and was astounded, outraged, and incredibly excited to begin work on these texts.

The physical suffering of Harkis was only one unexpected element of the project. I did not anticipate the degree to which Harki identity was distinct from dominant narratives of Franco-Maghrebi identity, which I had learned about through texts by the Beur generation. Similar to Harki literature, much of the Beur literature I have read speaks to issues of discrimination and longing for Algeria, the unknown homeland. Nevertheless, Harki literature features elements that are decidedly distinct. While fathers of Beurs were not present in the home due to their struggle for economic success, Harkis were silent due to their traumatic histories. While Beur families long for the homeland, Harki families have a fraught relationship with Algeria due to the impossibility establishing permanent roots there. Beur fictions include accounts of Beurs who attempt to establish lives in Algeria, but find that it is not a true cultural home. For Harki families, return is impossible, and what is more, the children know little of their family's history there. This makes Algeria all the more alluring and enigmatic. Further, where Beurs banded together to fight racism in community, Harki children had much greater difficulty achieving such community, unaware as they were that such a collective even existed.

Much like the writers of the texts I examine, I didn't anticipate the extent of Harki identity as a communal phenomenon. In part, this is because the generation writing these texts is actively speaking that identity for the first time. While Harki families have undergone many of the same traumas and difficulties, Harki fathers rarely advocated for themselves as a group. That does not mean that communal identity did not exist, but merely that it was not spoken. These texts articulate, for the first time in literature, Harkis' struggle and history as a shared phenomenon.

As a result of the discovery of their shared identity, the descendants of Harkis become a generation that fights not only for recognition in France, but also for a history in Algeria as well. This active struggle precludes the tendency towards victimization. In an early presentation on my thesis, a professor asked me how I intended to avoid falling into the trap of victimization of those who write about victims of trauma. I found in my writing that such a trap was not really possible for me. Harki texts are active, demanding that a history of both oppression and struggle be written. All of the works I examined showed accounts not of passive victims, but of multiple generations of struggle in spite of a traumatic, oppressive past. Harkis are writing their place in French and Algerian history, and accordingly, identity.

While Harki silence is certainly very specific, I was fascinated to find that Harki daughters also look to a more widespread silence: that of Algerian and Franco-Maghrebi women. One of the most interesting parts of the project has been discovering that the children of Harkis relate to silence not only through the silence of their fathers and the French state, but also through their mothers. I went into the project particularly excited about the fact that I was examining works written exclusively by women. However, while the texts are dependent upon the importance of female speech, the texts are not self-consciously feminine or feminist. The importance of the relationship with the father is at the forefront of these works, and accordingly his silence is featured prominently. Nevertheless, the mother is always present in the texts. Her voice sustains the daughter's search for history. While the texts might be about the silence of masculine figures, father and state, female silence and speech play a nuanced but central role in all of these texts.

Indeed, these texts break silence on numerous levels. The personal silence between father and daughter is the first silence discovered in the daughter's life. Harki children discover silence instigated and maintained by the French state only after they leave their homes. As demonstrated by this work, these silences are broken in different ways. Harki daughters first learn to speak about their identity through speaking to their fathers in the family sphere, then break silence for their fathers and themselves in public. As demonstrated in the third chapter, however, the child does not invent speech; she has already learned and cultivated it through her relationship with her mother. Although her relationship with her mother is marked by a socially imposed silence on women voices, the private sphere allows the mother to speak to her daughter, who then conveys their voices to the public.

I am both academically and personally interested in how groups construct identity through history, and one of the reasons I was drawn to this project was the difficulty of writing a history that has been intentionally kept silent. I believe that this project was the first time I recognized the full significance of trying to draw history out of a void. Like all histories, Harki history impacted and continues to impact both French and Algerian societies, regardless of whether or not it is spoken. As mentioned in the introduction, the Algerian President Bouteflika stated in 2000 that Harkis were still considered traitors that Algeria was not yet ready to welcome. Despite this very public announcement, silence still surrounds Harki experience. Silence itself is a mark.

Just as silence is a mark, the ways in which silence is broken show how nations, individuals, and identity groups relate to the history that has been silenced.

Since the publication of the three texts examined in this thesis, actions have been taken by the French and Algerian governments and heads of state to acknowledge the histories and contemporary realities of Harki families. A notorious law approved by the French National Assembly on February 23, 2005 stated that sacrifices made by Harkis should be taught in French history curricula in public schools. A more controversial section of the law stated that the positive role of colonialism, specifically in North Africa, should also be emphasized in French school curricula. By grouping the role of Harkis in the Algerian war with an idealized telling of colonialism, the law groups Harkis with the positive impact of French presence in North Africa. This tacitly perpetuates the stereotype of Harkis as French patriots who intentionally advocated for a continued French presence in Algeria. The forces motivating Harkis to enlist with the French were in fact much more varied than the law would leave French citizens to believe. In January of 2006, the article in the law that advocated for the teaching of colonialism's positive influences was removed. However, it had a deep effect on Franco-Algerian relations. Because of that article, President Bouteflika refused to sign a treaty of friendship with France in the summer of 2005. Nevertheless, Bouteflika made yet another significant announcement in 2005 in regards to Harkis. While he did not apologize for the violence done to Harkis, he did state that Algerians had treated the families of Harkis unfairly. While he did not apologize for the massacre of Harkis, his statement was considered a major step forward. Harkis continue to remain veiled in certain kinds of silence, though their stories emerge at strategic political moments, if only partially.

Meanwhile, France slowly continues to take steps to create sites that commemorate Harki sacrifices for France, and France's treatment of Harkis. One of the most notable sites is the camp of Rivesaltes, located in southwestern France. Rivesaltes was used not only as a camp to house Harkis, but also interned Jews and Spanish republicans during the Vichy era. A memorial museum is currently being built at Rivesaltes, and is scheduled to open in 2012. Such an endeavor shows not only France's new efforts to reveal silenced Harki history, but also the French involvement in Nazism, another silent element of French history.

As they break these multiple layers of silence, self-imposed silence and state-imposed silence, these texts do the important and difficult work of revealing a collective history through disclosure of the personal, a task which is an extraordinary gift to all those implicated in the collectives in which they live. While speech is the only recourse Harki children have for fighting for their rights, it requires enormous courage. Speaking about the traumatic past shatters many illusions about France, about Algeria, and about Harkis. But it is only through recognizing the traumatic past that all parties involved can move forward. Telling their difficult history ultimately serves to benefit all of the collectives to which Harki daughters belong: French, Algerian, Harki, and female.

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