Remembering the Algerian War: Trauma, Women, Diaspora and Aftermath in *Cartouches Gauloises*, *Hors La Loi* and *The Battle of Algiers*

Zixuan Zhao

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Supervisor: Prof. May Telmissany

Department of Modern Languages and Literatures

Faculty of Arts

University of Ottawa

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Introduction

The Algerian War is one of the most important decolonization wars after World War II. Started in 1954, the 7-year war led to a total of 1.5 million deaths, while millions of people were wounded or tortured (Horne 358). There were both Arab Algerians and French descendants (*Pieds-Noirs*) on each side of the Algerian and French troops, which made the war more complex and crueler. Apart from the casualties, the war exerted an even more severe influence on the whole Algerian nation because the nation was divided. While the Arab Algerians won the war and established their independent regime, those supporting the French side, including *Pieds-Noirs* and *Harkis* (the Arab Algerians who fought for France), were forced to leave their home-land and lead a diasporic life. Countless Algerians generate questions about their multiple identities because they are perceived as traitors in Algeria and as foreigners in other countries; they do not belong to either side. This in-betweenness even continues until today.

As an artistic way to memorialize this history, film plays a vital role. Films do not simply reproduce the traumatic history but also show directors' attitudes towards the war. In my research paper, I will analyze representations of the Algerian War in three films: *Cartouches Gauloises* (2007) by Mehdi Charef, *Hors La Loi* (2010) by Rachid Bouchareb and *The Battle of Algiers* (1966) by Gillo Pontecorvo. My research questions for the three movies are the following:

a. In *Cartouches Gauloises*, how do the French-Algerian people (*Pieds-Noirs*) as well as pro-France Algerians (*Harkis*) show their in-betweenness in cultural identity during the war?

b. In *Hors La Loi*, how is the persecution of the Algerian people in France represented through the depiction of the protagonist Abdelkader and the director's cinematic language?

c. How are female characters, especially Aïcha in *Cartouches Gauloises* and the mother of three brothers in *Hors La Loi*, represented?

d. What influences do the directors' multicultural backgrounds, their voices, and their attitudes bring to bear on the films?

Mehdi Charef and Rachid Bouchareb are two Algerian-born French directors; thus, in their cases, it is interesting to perceive how a mixed cultural background can affect a director's point of view in representing history. In *Cartouches Gauloises*, unlike other movies, the images of *Pieds-Noirs* are generally positive, and the whole story is told through an Algerian child's perspective to reveal the French descendants' sorrow and trauma. As most of these French descendants eventually unwillingly leave Algeria for France in order to avoid the revenge from the Algerian people, the film links their trauma to their diasporic condition. I argue that it is Charef's unique Algerian-French identity that enables him to depict the *Pieds-Noirs*' in-betweenness without prejudice and/or any cultural preference.

The story of *Hors La Loi* starts on the eve of the war and continues until its end. Bouchareb sets the stage outside Algeria (in Paris instead) and tells three brothers' story of fighting for Algerian independence. Thus, the audience is introduced to the Algerians fighting abroad and their persecution by France.

In these two films, it is also necessary to look at the important roles that women played during the war. On either side, in the FLN (Front de Libération Nationale, the principle nationalist party during the Algerian War) and within the French colonial forces, women became active participants during the war, operating both as combatants and in non-combatant missions as spies, fundraisers, nurses, and so on (Turshen 890). It is estimated that more than 11,000 women took an active role during the whole war (De Groot 247). I analyze how the directors depict images of female characters and their functions in the narrative. Also, to read these female

characters in a more representative way, I analyze the broader images they stand for in that specific historical period. For example, I put the images of two mothers in *Cartouches Gauloises* and *Hors La Loi* into a broader context and argue that they are the representation of millions of mothers during the war; their devotion represents the sacrifice of the whole nation. It is the country that demands of its people to fight against the colonial power, just as the two mothers urge their children to stand against the colonizer.

Compared to these two films, Gillo Pontecorvo's work is in a more documentary style. As a non-Algerian, the Italian director uses a neo-realistic approach in order to reproduce the cruelty of the war and the violence on both the Algerian and the French sides. As a result, the film is an excellent complement to my research work because of its greater degree of objectivity in showing historical scenes and describing the war process, compared to the other two artistic/fictional representations.

Cartouches Gauloises and Mehdi Charef

The film *Cartouches Gauloises* (2007) does not present a general picture of the war; instead it concentrates on the last period of the conflict in 1962, when both sides were desperate to control one another and win the war. The main plot of the film can be summarized as follows: Ali, a native Algerian boy, is experiencing the last year of the war with his three French friends. At the start of the film, Aïcha and Hassan, Ali's mother and father respectively, become separated as Hassan has decided to join the FLN. With the end of the war approaching, the two sides, both the French army and the FLN, begin using every merciless method to take revenge on one another. Through Ali's eyes, we witness bombing attacks on both sides. For example, innocent civilians are killed randomly due to the suspicion of the French troops. Many families are separated

because some have decided to leave for France while others choose to stay, resulting in the abrupt end of friendships for children. The film ends after Algeria has finally gained its independence from France. In the last dramatic scene of the film, Ali hears a sound of shooting, which might be the execution of his father, and the audience sees him through the perspective of a very long shot, running wildly through a vast landscape and then up a hill towards a hamlet at the top. I contend that the film *Cartouches Gauloises* reflects the director's complex relationship with both countries through the incorporation of scenes of Algerian and French life. In fact, equal time on screen is devoted to Algerian and French characters, such as the train station manager, the owner of a local cinema, and the senior *Pieds-Noirs* couple who confess their sorrow. It is through this two-dimensional portrait of the war, and the inevitable decolonization, that the film underscores interethnical bonds. Thus, the film clearly aims to provide a balanced perspective of the tragedy of the war for all involved, one which corresponds to Charef's complex cultural identity.

Mehdi Charef is an Algerian-French director and screenwriter. He was born in 1952 when Algeria was still a French colony. Charef and his family left Algeria for France after the Algerian war. This French-Algerian duality complicates Charef's national identity, especially as he always thought of himself as belonging to both countries. Despite his Algerian origins, Charef struggled to overcome his Algerian past and managed to carve for himself a place of prominence among France's artistic elite (Xavier 328). His sense of belonging to both countries also gives him a unique perspective to empathize with both Algerian and French characters. As a result, Charef can be viewed as a liminal artist, an artist between countries and cultures. Although Charef spent his childhood in Algeria, his films and novels are produced for a French audience in France. His most prestigious production is his first film, *Le thé au harem d'Archimède* (1985), based on his

book published in 1983. As Michel Frodon describes, the film made Charef "le fondateur de la culture beur" (Frodon 134). *Beur* is a French slang standing for the second-generation immigrants from Maghreb in France. In Venturini's perspective, Charef's films not only reflect the Algerian nation but also move beyond the issue of national identity. He argues that, "Cependant, son œuvre est faite de bien d'autres choses que la simple retranscription d'un questionnement identitaire propre à ce que l'on a appelé, plus ou moins complaisamment, la génération beur" (Venturini 16). His filmography also includes: *Au pays des Juliets* (1992); *Aime-moi toujours* (1995); *All the indivisible children* (2005) and *Graziella* (2015).

The Battle of Algiers and Gillo Pontecorvo

One of the most influential films on the subject of the Algerian war is the neo-realistic film *The Battle of Algiers* by Italian filmmaker Gillo Pontecorvo. According to Pontecorvo himself, the film speaks about the "dictatorship of truth" (O'Donoghue). Edward Said thinks *The Battle of Algiers* is one of the "two greatest political films ever made" (283). *The Battle of Algiers* recreates a critical year in the tumultuous Algerian struggle for independence between 1954 and 1957 when guerrilla fighters of the FLN regrouped and expanded into the Casbah, the citadel of Algiers. The protagonist Ali La Pointe is originally a pickpocket thief. Fortunately, his courage is appreciated by the FLN leader Djafar, and Ali then becomes one of the mainstay figures in the organization. Confronting the vicious massacres from the French colonizers, Ali insists that FLN should actively resist the colonial suppression through riots rather than fantasizing about solving the problem peacefully. From the perspective of both Algerian and French sides, the cruelty of the war is reproduced. For instance, both sides have carried out bomb attacks in areas where innocent civilians live in retaliation against each other. In 1957, the independent

revolution under Ali and Djafar's leadership is failed under the encirclement and the suppression of the French troops. However, the story does not end yet. Stimulated by Ali and other FLN members' sacrifice, several nationwide anti-colonial protests break out in December 1960, demanding the independence. The film ends in 1962 when Algeria finally gains its independence from France. Furthermore, Pontecorvo directs the film with a neutral and objective point of view without preference towards either side. As a result, I contend the film is a "double-depiction" as it is about the organization of guerrilla movements and the recourse to torture by both sides. Shot in the streets of Algiers in a documentary style with nonprofessional actors, the film is a case study in modern warfare, with its terrorist attacks and the brutal techniques used to combat them. The value of *The Battle of Algiers* is more than producing history, but it is also introspection and reflection towards the colonial history. The film has had a generally positive reception. As Kaufman explains, "The film offers historical insight into the conduct of French operations in Algeria and was intended to prompt informative discussion of the challenges faced by the French." Darragh O'Donoghue reckons the film "is full of stark binary oppositions pitting the colonized Algerians against the colonial French, starting with the extraordinary prologue," and he further appraises the film's even-handedness and its willingness to show the atrocities committed by each side. The film won the Golden Lion at the 1966 edition of the Venice Festival, but it was not granted to be distributed in France until 1970 (Stora 250).

Gillo Pontecorvo was born in 1919 to a Jewish family. He began his diasporic life with his elder brother in France in 1938, after the passing of Mussolini's anti-Semitic laws. Because of his communist brother, Pontecorvo had connections with Communism and later became a Communist himself (Behan 24), which exerted a significant influence on his future career as a

director, including his take on the Algerian War. His other main filmography includes: *Kapò* (1959), *Queimada* (1969) and *Paras* (1963).

Hors La Loi and Rachid Bouchareb

Different from the other two filmmakers, Bouchareb sets the main stage of *Hors La Loi* in France from an Algerian standpoint, which gives the audience an opportunity to observe the independence struggle experienced by the Algerian immigrants—a widow and her three sons (Saïd, Messaoud and Abdelkader)— in Nanterre in the 1950s. The film starts with the authorities' confiscation of the family's land in 1925. Later in 1945, in Sétif, the Algerian Constantine region, Bouchareb reproduces the historical Sétif massacre, in which the brothers' father is killed. One of the brothers, Abdelkader, is arrested and sent to a French prison for 11 years, where he has contact with the FLN. Upon his release, he soon involves himself in organizing the Algerian immigrants to fight for the Algerian independence. The youngest brother, Saïd, decides to distance himself from the political turbulence, and he believes that the only way to liberate Algeria from the French colonization is through "other options," such as boxing. Therefore, he sets up a boxing club and decides to train an Algerian triumph in the French national championship, which, in his opinion, will show the Algerian superiority over France. The eldest brother, Messaoud, fought in the French army in Indonesia for several years. After his return, he is more interested in setting up his own family. However, he finds himself caught up in Abdelkader's political work. As Abdelkader eventually becomes the leader of the FLN and the notable target of the French government, the violence between both sides escalates, resulting in street gunshots and Messaoud's death. The film ends on October 17, 1961, when the peaceful march through the central streets in Paris demanded by the FLN leaders is going to happen. After saving Saïd from

assassination, Abdelkader is shot and killed by the French police in the end. Eva Jørholt praises the film as "the first [movie] that tries to explain and validate the Algerian freedom fight to the general French audience" (56). *Hors La Loi* is also an example of *beur* films as it focuses on the story of North African immigration to France. *Beur* films, as Dayna Oscherwitz comments, seldom engage the past directly, and they are rarely set in the past, only infrequently representing or referencing the past (104). However, in addition to the fixed identity as North African, Bouchareb also recasts the French heritage genre altogether to make it encompass colonization and immigration (Jørholt 56). Similar to *The Battle of Algiers*, the film is resisted by some protesters as "historically revisionist" and "anti-French." Jacques Peyrat, the former senator, says, "it is intolerable that public money from France can be used to sully the French army and France's action in Algeria" (Mackenzie, "Algerian independence film stirs protest at Cannes").

The Algerian-French film director Rachid Bouchareb was born in Paris in 1953. His debut began in 1985 with *Baton Rouge,* and his later production *Poussières de Vie* received Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Language film in 1995. The 2006-film *Indigène* (*Days of Glory*) earns him fame worldwide, winning prizes at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival and nominated Best Foreign Language Film in 2006 again. Bouchareb's other productions include *Cheb* (1991), *Little Senegal* (2001) and *London River* (2009).

Literature Review

Nicole Beth Wallenbrock examines the depiction of both French and Algerian losses in *Cartouches Gauloises* through the vision of the child witness in her dissertation *The Algerian War Era Through a Twenty-First Century Lens: French Films 2005-2007*. She claims the most remarkable feature of this film is expressing the horror of the war through a child's eye, in

keeping with Michael Rothberg's concept of "traumatic realism[1]." Wallenbrock contends that Julie, one of the *Pieds-Noirs* young victims, is represented as an innocent child witness of the war. I will further read Julie as a young female victim and argue that she is the reflection of a female who is exploited by the war, despite her young age. In the article "*Cartouches Gauloises*, de Mehdi Charef," Claude-Marie Trémois proposes that the core of the film is a "double déchirement": Nico's fear of leaving Algeria and Ali's fear of the separation from him (242). She reads the film as "une histore d'amitié" (ibid.). She also suggests that the film does not depict too many violent scenes, which is "beaucoup plus forts que la scène d'horreur qu'on vient de voir" (Trémois 243). However, the film conveys what I would call a 'tender violence' because although not so many horrific scenes are shown in the film, the audience can still feel the sorrow and the trauma through the breaking down of friendship and familial connections. Compared with the use of scenes of bloody massacres, the depiction of daily life, such as separating from family and friends, is more potent in representing the cruelty of the process of colonization and decolonization. To the ordinary audience who have not experienced the warfare, the bloody scenes may merely be the representation of visual effects. However, by viewing the sorrows of the ordinary people during the war, the audience will combine their personal experience with the film so that they can better understand the cruelty of the film.

In the article "To Remember in Order to Be Able to Forget: Rachid Bouchareb's *Outside the Law* and the Construction of a New, Inclusive French National Identity," Eva Jørholt argues the film attempts not only to encourage the audience to forgive the violence but also to accept the

[1] According to Michael Rothberg, traumatic realism provides an aesthetic and cognitive solution to the conflicting demands inherent in representing and understanding genocide (9).

war as a shared heritage in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the French national identity (52). Furthermore, the film reminds people of the massacre itself, and it also calls on the public to reconcile with the haunted past, and to create a cohesive society with a difference (Jørholt 61). Contrary to Jørholt's positive evaluation, Ian Merkel provides a more critical assessment of *Hors La Loi* in the article "Rachid Bouchareb's *Outside the Law*: Aesthetics and Reception in France." He contends that *Hors La Loi* is "pure" entertainment, compared to Bouchareb's previous works, thereby simplifying the complicated historical process (63). He argues that instead of telling "truth," the film sacrifices too much for the purpose of entertaining (66). I disagree with Merkel and contend instead that the film does not make a concession in terms of truth. Instead, from the eve to the end of the war, the film is a tense re-enactment of some main battles and scenes of war crimes. *Hors La Loi* is not a documentary; thus, the simplification of some complicated histories is necessary in order to avoid making it tedious. The simplification of the history does not mean that Bouchareb's attitude is vague. Instead, Bouchareb's intention is trying to express that no one is exactly 'right 'or 'wrong 'in the war. Both sides in the war have killed civilians, so they are not innocent. Although *Hors La Loi* is Bouchareb's artistic interpretation of the Algerian War, I would say it is still a trustworthy one in the aspect of history.

The documentary-style film *The Battle of Algiers* succeeds in both representing the colonial era from the perspective of native people and showing the French colonizers' cruelty to preserve their sovereignty, with a balanced voice, showing the atrocities carried out on both sides. In her article "Poaching Within the System: Gillo Pontecorvo's Tactical Aesthetics in *The Battle of Algiers,*" Nancy Virtue praises the realistic depiction and undistorted historical facts (318). She

also contends that Pontecorvo's neo-realistic style is expressed through his realistic representation of the historical events in emphasizing the voice of anticolonialism, along with his use of non-actors (319).

There is little scholarship on *Hors La Loi* and *The Battle of Algiers*. The majority of articles about them are film reviews rather than scholarly articles. The few existing articles on the two films (notwithstanding the fact that the authors have given a general depiction of the films in terms of plot and certain other aspects) fail to provide a deeper insight into the in-betweenness of the characters, and into the influence on the films of their directors' multicultural background. Where there are some analyses from a cinematographic perspective, they are not closely associated with the film plot but offer isolated analyses, such as in Virtue's article. Therefore, my research from the perspective of post-colonialism, cultural identity and feminism, combined with the methodology of film analysis, will fill a gap in scholarly research on the films. Cinematographic research in the area of the Algerian War is still insufficient at present; most of the existing studies focus on film techniques or the debate of historical accuracy. My work will not only focus on the cinematographic representation of the characters, but I will also put them in historical contexts. Moving from parts to the whole, the analysis of the characters in the films will give me the opportunity to gain insights into the sorrowful and traumatic life of people living in that epoch. Moreover, my study will help better understand the trauma of Algerians, their parting with their homeland and the in-betweenness of their identity. Last but not least, my research aims to encourage scholars to pay more attention to this area since this difficult past should not be neither ignored nor forgotten.

Theoretical Approach and Methodology

The core theoretical concepts I use in my research paper are individual trauma and collective trauma. It is apparent that the Algerian War itself has brought about a collective trauma through massive killings and tortures. Andreas Hamburger proposes in his *Psychoanalysis and Holocaust Testimony: Unwanted memories of social trauma* that individual trauma deals more with a person's inner emotion such as stress and memory shutdown, meaning the refusal to remember the traumatic situation (80-1); social trauma, on the other hand, expands those personal feelings to the whole group or society and it is revealed when the whole of the social environment is under threat of persecution or actually experiencing persecution (80). Social trauma is not limited to war and genocide and it requires a substantial involvement of the social environment. Thus, trauma can be individual and collective at the same time, since individual traumatic events may imply a social factor (80). In his definition, if killing and violence are committed privately, it would be regarded as individual trauma. Although the Algerian war was affecting the whole society, the Algerian people, as individual members in the society, were traumatized by separating from relatives, witnessing slaughters and losing their family members.

I also use the concepts of "acting-out" and "working-through" as defined by Dominick LaCapra. "Acting out," as Dominick LaCapra specifies, "is related to repetition, and even the repetition compulsion…Victims of trauma tend to relive occurrences, or at least find that those occurrences intrude on their present existence" (142-3). As a result, acting out can be seen as a manifestation of trauma as it releases the often-repressed emotions and affects from the past that are locked in the unconscious. On the other hand, the process of "working-through," according to LaCapra, means coming to terms with the trauma, including its painful elements, and critically engaging with the tendency to compulsively relive the past rather than avoidance , simply

forgetting the past or submerging oneself in the present, which, the author contends, would diminish the ethical and political agency a trauma survivor has in particular in relation to other victims of a shared traumatic event (144). Importantly, LaCapra points out that in working through, the trauma survivor tries to gain critical distance to the traumatic event so as to arrive at a distinction between past, present, and future (143).

Due to the young age of some of the films' protagonists when witnessing the war, I would also like to adopt the theory of the "1.5 generation". According to Susan Suleiman, it initially refers to the child survivors of the Holocaust who were too young to have had an adult understanding of what was happening to them, but old enough to have been there (Suleiman 277). However, this concept is not only constrained to the Holocaust but can also be applied to any situation where children survive conflicts. The 1.5 generation's shared experience is that of premature bewilderment and helplessness.

In this paper, I combine film analysis with close attention paid to the cultural and historical context of the period of French colonization and its aftermath both in France and Algeria. I analyze the way in which the film constructs its characters by focusing on their facial expressions, dialogues, movement, as well as the use of cinematographic techniques to generate aesthetic effects that dramatize their plights. In terms of cultural and historical context, as the war interrupted the normal flow of the French-Algerians, the majority of them chose to leave for France, and thus became part of a large and complex diaspora, which I argue is addressed in the film through the dramatic representation of the characters' experience of the violent uprooting from their home and country.

The Historic Context: French Colonization of Algeria

France first came to Algeria with "l'expédition d'Algérie" (Cahnmam 346). It was in 1830 that French soldiers conquered the city, and later spread their control over the surrounding territory (Goutor 3). France at that time was under the reign of Charles X, who was trying to deviate the attention from the turbulent July Revolution in France. At that time, the so-called *Bureux Arabs* were established in each of the three provinces in Algeria to deal with the customary native authorities. In fact, French Algeria was initially under a variety of governmental systems. It was not until 1848 that France declared Algeria an integral part of France and ruled over it from Paris (Goutor 347). However, even with the advent of the Constitution, in which the Algerians were given the same rights as metropolitan French people, they were still categorized as second-class citizens. Obtaining French citizenship for them was conditional on renouncing their Muslim religion and culture (Debra 43). On the other hand, Algerian Jews were granted citizenship under the Crémieux Decree (Weil 253). In 1881, the advent of the *Code de l'indigénat* enabled district officials to issue summary punishments to Muslims without due legal process, and to extract special taxes and forced labour (Steel 51). The hegemony of colons (*Pieds-Noirs*) was finally confirmed by the French Senate in 1892. The *Pieds-Noirs* owned privileges in the colonial system, which were not granted to the native Arabs, such as the access to the French National Assembly. Taking agriculture, for instance, 25% of all the farming land was owned by only 2% of the total farmers by 1954 (Horne 62). What's worse, the agricultural workers were paid as little as 22 cents a day (Horne 63). The bulk of Algeria's wealth in manufacturing, mining, agriculture, and trade was also controlled by the *grands colons*. The tensions between Algeria and France finally came to a head in 1954, with the explosion of the Algerian War.

Apart from the series of tragedies brought by the French colonization, one of the greatest inheritances from France was education. Although the shortage of money prevented most of the native Arabs from attending schools, it did set an excellent French standard of education in Algeria. Furthermore, with its traditional emphasis on the liberal principles of the "Great French Revolution," French education provided an admirable breeding ground for the Algerian rebellion (Horne 61). The French language was viewed as a language used to increase access to science and technology and to improve one's socioeconomic status, among other purposes. Modern Standard Arabic and French were prevalent in education (Belmihoub 146).

As mentioned, the historical background of the three films is the Algerian War, which was fought between France and the FLN from 1954 to 1962, and which led to Algeria gaining its independence from France. It is an important decolonial war as well as a complex conflict characterized by guerrilla warfare, maquis fighting, and the use of torture. The conflict also became a civil war that galvanized both interethnic and intra-ethnic conflict. Upon independence in 1962, more than 900,000 French-Algerians left Algeria for France in fear of the FLN's retaliation. According to historian Alistair Horne, Algerian casualties during the span of eight years came to be around 700,000 (60). The war uprooted more than two million Algerians, who were forced to relocate in French camps or to flee into the Algerian hinterland.

Chapter 1: Colonization, Hegemony and Women

Representation of Hegemony

At the beginning of *Hors La Loi*, Bouchareb chooses several clips showing the French people's celebration of the victory of World War II in 1945. It is apparent that, while the clips are all in monochrome, Bouchareb especially emphasized the French national flag in its three colours on purpose, in addition to the words "victoire" and "capitulation sans conditions" on newspapers in red. Besides, the stars and stripes on the little boy's shoulder indicating the American flag are also expressed in the same way, in stark contrast with the monochrome surroundings. Since the national flag is a symbol of a country, I contend that the chromatic national flags of France and the US indicate their sovereignty as independent countries after the war, an expression of what Gramsci has identified as *hegemony*[2]. At the end of the film, after Algeria finally gains its independence, Bouchareb colours the Algerian national flag, declaring its solemn sovereignty.

The main part starts with the march in Sétif. Thousands of Algerians take to the street against the colonial ruling, with the "V" gesture for peace. However, this peaceful march is ended by the incursion of the police. The suited policeman walks directly to a young man, who is considered to be the "aim," and tries to wrestle the Algerian national flag from his hands. After the unsuccessful attempt, the policeman takes out his gun and shoots the young man down directly through the flag. The national flag is the representation of sovereignty whereas the policeman's intention to grab the flag and, failing to do so, his shooting of the young Algerian, are both

[2] Hegemony is an arrangement of domination accepted by those who are dominated. Ruling groups dominate not by pure force but through a structure of consent, and culture is part of this structure that legitimizes current social arrangements (Culler 50)

gestures that imply the desire to maintain French hegemony and colonial power in Algeria. Bouchareb also gives a close-up to Abdelkader as he takes the flag with him before running away. Abdelkader's action can be regarded as one to save the embodiment of the independence of Algeria, which cannot be possessed by France.

In the next scene where the French policemen shoot at the marching people, Bouchareb also gives the representation of the colonizing power over Algeria. The policemen's position for shooting from the balcony implies their superior identity in relation to the Arab Algerians, which is another form of cultural hegemony. The policemen's shooting at the unarmed Algerian civilians who are running for their life visualizes yet again the colonizer's superiority. As the Algerians flee, their fear of not knowing where the shots are coming from reinforces the supremacy of the French colonial ruling.

The suppression, or massacre, ends being a success from the point of view of the French police force. The long line of surrendered Algerians with their hands over their heads at dusk ironically echoes the red "victoire" and "capitulation sans conditions" in the newspaper in the opening clips, even the winner is the same. But with a different defeated side, the legitimacy of this operation is questionable. The Algerians' bodies placed on both sides of the road seem like trophies for the French army, as well as a silent warning to those dreaming of the independence of Algeria.

Through the characters of Behi and Aïcha, we are able to take a closer look at the colonized people in the film. The film introduces Ali's first relative Behi, his uncle, at the market. He first stands far away from Ali, who instantly catches sight of him, and leads him to a hidden staircase outside the market, without saying anything during the process. Behi asks for the reason for Ali's absence from school, which may mislead the audience to think of him as a caring uncle

for Ali. By contrast, he demands Ali to empty his pocket and to hand him all the money that Ali earned by carrying wares for *Pieds-Noirs*. Judging from his shabby clothes and his indifferent attitude towards Ali, it is hard to tell whether the uncle would use this money for funding the FLN or for his own leisure. The camera only focuses on the two of them and, even if Ali is standing two stairs higher than Behi, he looks far tinier than his uncle; thus Behi's "autarchy" over Ali conveys that the latter has no choice but to obey. The icy expressions on his face, as well as his short sentences, reinforce our impression of a "perpetrator" towards the boy. As Ali's uncle, he should have taken care of Ali rather than extract money from him. However, it is through the following turning-over of this stereotype that Charef reveals the first traumatic event happening in the colony. Behi is soon caught by French troops and then brought to a suburb where Ali's family members live. Hearing the news, Ali and his mother Aïcha immediately stop their work at hand and run wildly across the bare farmland. Their desperation is conveyed through an extremely long panoramic shot, and the resonating sound of the gunshots fired.

Upon their arrival at the suburb, the French army is continuously dragging the FLN members from a shack and forcing them into a large truck, and Ali's uncle is among them. All the relatives of the Arab men are crying relentlessly and requesting their release. The voice of "Vive l'Algérie" is also heard. However, instead of listening to the desperation of the families, the French troops respond by a threat to shoot in order to disperse the people away from the truck. Aïcha, along with Ali, feels confused at first as she is unaware of the situation, continuously asking her father what is happening. It is not until Behi is taken out by two French soldiers that Aïcha and Ali's emotions express themselves. When the soldiers are trying to hold him still to the truck from his back, Behi somehow breaks free and runs a few steps ahead. He is shot dead

immediately by the French soldier, with hands to the sky and his back to the camera. His arms are stretched out before collapsing, suggesting cowardice and vileness. Behi's instantaneous falling to his knees symbolizes the colonial troop's cruel and unjustified oppression, one that is only realized through the demise of the Algerian people. What's more, his stretched arms also imply his surrender as he is defenceless, a fact that renders his shooting all the more criminal. Immediately after his falling down to the ground, the camera focuses on Aïcha's expression, as she finally bursts out crying, as an expression of her grief and shock. It is noticeable that she is trying desperately to push through the crowd and break free from the soldiers' arms, while her father is yelling "Martyr" and "Vive l'Algérie!".

After all the FLN members are on the truck, Charef then uses a perspective from the colonizers —a point of view from the car. The high-level camera here not only expands the point of view but also indicates the power of the French troops over the Algerian people. However, the soldiers' figures are blurred in the image, the camera is focused on the background instead, from which we can observe that Ali and his mother are chasing after the truck, yelling and sobbing. The image of Aïcha represents all the ordinary Algerian women, and her chasing also stands as a symbol of a brave rebellion against French colonization, with the added connotation of maternal love and suffering. In contrast, the merciless massacre by the French military reinforces the occupation and oppression of the colony. Also, the identification with the colonized is generated through the individuality of the victims versus the impersonal French troops, who are not individualized but rather a single body wearing the same green uniforms. The background music here is featuring an emotive female vocalist, accompanied by the scream from Ali and his mother. As Wallenbrock indicates, the non-diegetic North African music heightens the scene's

emotion and nationalism by culturally relating it to the pro-Independence family (246). The war along with colonial hegemonical power does not impact only men but also women and children. In addition to war and colonization, women in traditional Arab society suffer from patriarchal hegemony as well.

Women's Role in the Algerian War

Women played a significant role in the Algerian War. The war marked the awakening of female consciousness in Algeria (Amrane-Minne 62). After the war broke out, women in Algeria took part in active combat, not being excluded from the or remaining in the private sphere any longer. On either side of the FLN or the French, women became active participants in the war, operating both as combatants (*mujahidat*) and in non-combatant missions such as spies, fundraisers, nurses, cooks and so on (Turshen 890). However, despite their active participation, the representation of women by the three directors are quite different. Some of them are as determined as male combatants while others are still constrained by traditional notions of the family, i.e. staying away from public life and living in the shadow of male power.

In *Cartouches Gauloises*, Charef depicts some Algerian women forced to become prostitutes for the French military. Tracol-Huynhn argues that colonization is strongly gendered because the male colonizers have political, economic, racial, and masculine power at their disposal (10). Furthermore, As Ann McClintock emphasizes, "knowledge of the unknown world was mapped as a metaphysics of gender violence ... in these fantasies, the world is feminized and spatially spread for male exploration, then reassembled and deployed in the interests of massive imperial power" (23). While the male characters can still have their agency to fight for their independence, women are seen as powerless. Although some women choose to side with the men and

fight for freedom, many of them can only stay at home, praying relentlessly, or even choose to sell their bodies to the enemy to make a living. As in Zina's case, fate for women seems more miserable as they are considered the possession of men. In the film, Zina is depicted as a typical woman who provides "shameful services" to the French troops. She does not seem to have an agency as a woman or person but is rather rendered as a mere body or sexual tool. She is imprisoned in a French brothel with other Algerian women, where any French colonizer can drop by and (ab)use their sexual services. They don't dare to step out of the brothel, as one of the elderly prostitutes tells Ali that they will all be killed after the French troops' departure. They are categorized and stigmatized as "disgraceful traitors," and none of the Algerian people want to talk to them. What awaits the latter after the war is the cruelest punishment in the name of the nation. The second time Ali meets Zina, the point of view is Ali's as he looks through the bars, which suggests a perspective from prison, and suggests that she has been deprived of her freedom and her dignity. Even when Zina's mother is ill, her two brothers are just standing outside the brothel indifferently, seeking anyone to deliver the message to Zina on their behalf. As Tracol-Huynh indicates:

> This [the prostitute's] body clouded the racial borders upon which the colonial order was based, and it was the site of venereal diseases. Prostitutes' bodies were therefore to be managed, monitored, and sometimes locked up to protect public health, and more specifically, the health of the colonizers. (Tracol-Huynh 13)

The "health of the colonizers" mentioned by Tracol-Huynh may not necessarily indicate physical health only; it also may refer to the "purity" of the Algerian land. As Foucault suggests, sexuality is a highly charged "transfer point of power," both between men and women and between an administration and its population (136). Thus, for the Algerians, these prostitutes have not only

sold their bodies to the colonizers. Their sexual contact with the men of the colonizing power stands as a painful reminder of the colonized past of their nation and its former powerlessness. Therefore, the prostitutes are stigmatized and have to be expelled from their community in order to restore the illusion of the purity of the national body, a purity that is always negotiated between men through women's bodies.[3] Thus, while they are locked up in the brothel, the women cannot speak for themselves, and there is nowhere else they can go. In other words, they live in the shadow of the colonial country, in fear of losing economic sources (which help support their families that subsequently reject them) and also of being persecuted by the native population. While McClintock proposed the concept of "the symbolic bearer of a nation" (354), I would propose to call them "the symbolic bearers of colonization" in the sense that the female bodies are directly marked by the burden not only of foreign oppression but also of the native revolt against it.

Women under Pontecorvo's depiction are totally different from Charef's. They are female warriors since they are masqueraded and sent on secret missions such as placing bombs. Pontecorvo alternates between scenes of women resisting attempts by the French to unveil them, of veiled women hiding weapons, of men disguised as veiled women to escape from the police, and of unveiled westernized women planting bombs, like the one in Mathieu's surveillance film (Virtue 330). On the battlefield, women are no longer deemed as feminine but real revolutionaries as men are. For example, at the beginning of *The Battle of Algiers*, a woman waiting next to the café is disguised in her hijab in order to assist Ali's mission—despite the fact that the gun which she hands to Ali is unloaded. Even when Ali misunderstands her as a spy who teases him, she

[3] According to Rada Ivekovic and Julie Mostov, "Women as mothers are reproducers of the nation; but they are also thought of as potential enemies of the nation, traitors to it." Therefore, the authors argue, women's sexuality "presents a potential threat to the nation, as an 'entry' point for invasion" (11).

keeps calm and guides him to Djafar, another head leader of the FLN. Women in brothels serve as informers for the revolutionists and guide Ali (and maybe other FLN members) to accomplish his assassination, unlike Zina and other prostitutes in *Cartouches Gauloises,* who are regarded as national traitors. Under Pontecorvo's camera, they act as night owls, watching over every sign of disturbance. While Ali is searching for traitors, the audience can perceive the prostitutes' determination to the revolution through their carefully watching eyes on the streets. They seem to be watching every passerby and ready to fight at any time. As a result, even women whose social status is as low as prostitutes are positive, and they are making their own contributions to the independence.

It is also worthwhile to look at the other three *fidayate*[4], who place bombs at different places in Casbah. On their first appearance, when they are having make-up and putting on European-style clothes, the camera switches among them continuously, allowing the audience to watch them watching themselves in the mirror. Some scholars see it as a reproduction of the colonial gaze on them. For example, Lindsey Moore, contends this scene,

> resorts to a sexually inflected viewing position. This is ironic, given the fact that the film parodies the specular vulnerability of the French male authorities to Algerian women…the film forces the spectator to breach the privacy of the changing room and to be complicit in a voyeuristic relation to these women (67).

However, I would argue that their determination on the mission is revealed. As Pontecorvo hides the camera behind the mirror, the audience can perceive three *fidayate*'s anxiety towards the task from their expressions in the mirror—whether they are capable of being chosen to perform the mission. Feeling her two braids way too Algerian, one of the women cuts them off without hesitation to make herself more French looking. Coincidentally, this is consistent with the common

[4] Meaning "female bomber" in Arabic

Chinese saying of "cutting off the hair to reveal one's ambition." Indeed, to some extent, three *fidayate* are under the male gaze—or Djafar's gaze—because it is Djafar who can decide their "fate" of performing the task, which, in three *fidayate*'s perspective, is a sacred and glorious mission to show their loyalty to the country. Nevertheless, I contend that the action of unveiling is essential in understanding Pontecorvo's intention of expressing female power. Traditionally, wearing a *hijab*, means isolation—and also protection—from the gaze of males outside of the immediate family. At the same time, I would argue that it also stands for separation from the rest of the world since the women's autonomy is constrained under the veil. The unveiling of the *hijab* is potentially a moment of intimacy between women (Virtue 330). Furthermore, under Pontecorvo's camera, two *fidayate*'s ears and eyes are duplicated in the mirror's bevelling, which corresponds to what Omar, the young boy Ali meets at the beginning, uses to identify himself as an FLN member: "Men have two faces. One smiles, and the other cries." If the past unjust restriction exerted on women makes them miserable, the pride in taking an active role in the war brightens them and grants them unique value. With a tense atmosphere created by the background music, the audience is witnessing female awakening with an awareness of independence. The lack of dialogue and the watchful, intent expression on their faces that mitigates the scene's voyeuristic quality and underscores the role of the women as revolutionary agents, is further revealed by the mirror as a revolutionary tool rather than an instrument of *vanitas* (Stam 643). The women all succeed in performing their duties eventually, through which they obtain a new sense of self-worth and widen their horizons (Mortimer 104), as well as build the pride in fighting for Algerian independence (Benosmane 179-80). Despite the numerous restrictions, forms of deprivation and degradation, and depersonalizing elements (Mortimer 104), I argue that these missions also help women to recognize the bonds of community and solidarity at the same time.

Despite the fact that Donadey reckons that in *Hors La Loi* the women are represented as flat characters, full of stereotypes and archetypes, and that little space is given for female agency (49), I argue that Bouchareb successfully highlights the female perspectives through the role of Hélène. Hélène is a French woman, but she helps Abdelkader and makes a contribution to the Algerian independence. On her first arrival, she comes to Abdelkader's house to deliver some funds. Both of them speak at a reasonably fast speed, which intensifies the atmosphere. Standing behind Hélène looking her up and down, it is Mother who proposes the question in the audience's mind: is she trustworthy since she is French? Hélène drops by out of the blue without any background explanation. However, with the development of the plot, I contend that Bouchareb's aim of the setting is deliberate: it reveals that even among French people, there are unstoppable justice forces that oppose French colonialism. If Hélène's background were made clear, the audiences might think she is a "tool" developed by the FLN so that she ought to aid the FLN. If Abdelkader's words are not sufficient for us to determine Hélène's position, in the following scene, the contrast between her attitude, which she puts up more for the revolution, and another male's, which he thinks it is only the Algerians' own affair, eventually reassures us. Besides, the haze also exists between Hélène and Abdelkader. Contrary to Donadey's opinion that Hélène sexually pursues Abdelkader (52), I argue that it is Abdelkader's devotion to the independence of Algeria that moves Hélène to regard him as her soul mate and to actively pursue him. However, Abdelkader keeps suppressing his feelings towards her until the eve of her death. In fact, it is her death that pulls the audience out of the illusion that any reconciliation between France and Algeria may be possible. It reminds us again of the cruelty of the revolution. By the creation of her character, the supposed-to-be clear line between justice and evil is made vague, which enriches the storyline and, furthermore, makes the audience have more sympathy for the Algerians. In addition to

the setting in France, Hélène's story is an embodiment of what Eva Jørholt terms "a reconciliation with the haunted past" (61). Compared to the *Pied-Noir*'s story in *Cartouches Gauloises*, Hélène's French identity is more persuasive in encouraging the audience to forgive the vicious past and reconstruct a French national identity (Jørholt 52) because it is more associated with the conflict between two nations.

In conclusion, Charef, Bouchareb and Pontecorvo portray their female characters in very different ways, which further indicates women's differences in status: the socially weak position of prostitutes, the valor of *fidayate*, and the fraternity of the French woman. Their roles may seem contradictory; on the one hand, they all demonstrate their patriotism during the war and fight in their own ways for their homeland, which demonstrates their autonomy. On the other hand, their patriotism, to some extent, is to meet men's expectations of them, which we can perceive from the *fidayate*'s and Hélène's story. They are still under patriarchal domination. However, unlike usual war movies which focus mainly on men, I would argue that women have a significant role in three directors' productions. More or less, they propel the process of winning the war.

The Role of the Mother

Mothers play a central role in *Cartouches Gauloises* and *Hors La Loi*. On the one hand, the images of the two mothers are similar: both Aïcha in *Cartouches Gauloises* and the nameless mother[5] in *Hors La Loi* are preserving, loyal to the cause of national independence and leading an impoverished but honest life. Both women sacrificed a lot for the revolution. At the beginning of *Cartouches Gauloises*, before her husband's departure to join the FLN, even if she knows that

[5] I will name her Mother with a capital M in the following part.

the chance of his safe-and-sound return is rather small, the mother still lets him go because he is fighting for their nation. "Go, my man," says Aïcha says, following him with her eyes as he is disappearing in the distance. Aïcha's silhouette deepens the atmosphere of solitude and desolation. I contend that the environment of dawn that Charef sets also implies Aïcha's concern about her husband's safety—whether he can survive the battlefield as it will be an arduous and protracted war. She is also concerned about whether they can reunite in the end. After the sunrise, which stands for their separation, and before the sunset, which stands for their reuniting, this will be "the longest day." In order not to expose the family to danger, her husband can only drop by secretly at midnight. After a simple kiss—without any hugging or talking—they separate again and again.

Similar to Aïcha, Mother in *Hors La Loi* also undertakes a great sacrifice during the Independence War. She is portrayed as the salt of the earth, a courageous and self-sacrificing mother (Donadey 52) who spurs her sons on. She witnesses the massacre that the French policemen exert on the Aran Algerians. However, she is too old to offer any substantive assistance to support them. Even after witnessing the death of her husband and her relations, what she can do is only stand on the balcony, asking God for his peace in heaven. In order to avoid the revenge from the French colonizers as her sons are more or less involved in the protest against the French ruling, she has to go into exile where she lives for the rest of her life. After arriving in France, she has to live in dire poverty in the shantytown with her son Saïd, enduring the piercing wind. She tells her other two sons Abdelkader and Messaoud, "don't worry about me" when she is diagnosed with tuberculosis. Furthermore, she is the only woman who serves as an interlocutor between the brothers. For instance, she is the only person in whom Messaoud can confide his internal ethical doubts regarding the assassinations he has carried out for the liberation struggle (Donadey 52).

Similar to Aïcha, Mother does not complain about hard life but chooses to bear it because she knows that compared to the achievement of the great independence of the Algerian nation, what she is tolerating now is not worth mentioning at all. It is also worthwhile to note that the actress Chafia Boudraa has participated in the Algerian War as a militant with her husband who was killed during the struggle for independence (*Avec Hors La Loi: La Croisette entre cinéma et polémique*).

Furthermore, as indicated in the English word "motherland," the concept of country and its citizens is associated with the figure of the mother and her children. As the Algerians keep fighting for their country, the image of mother in the film is further abstracted, and she becomes a representation of motherland. Millicent Marcus explains that "the topos of the female body politic, which makes of female characters personification allegories for the course of the nation, goes at least as far back as Dante's anguished lament (428)." Under Charef and Bouchareb's camera language, Aïcha and Mother are not only the personal images within familiese but they also represent the "national" mother. Not only are they the protagonists' mothers, they also become allegories for the fight for Algerian national independence. In *Hors La Loi*, for example, when Abdelkader, Mother's second son, is in jail, Mother visits him and encourages him saying that he is not a thief, murderer or criminal but a man who fights for his ideas, i.e. the independence of Algeria. I contend that the dialogue between them can be deemed that it is Algeria that motivates its people to be tough and strong in this battle against the colonial power. It is also interesting to perceive that, during their conversation, both Abdelkader and Mother's images are shown behind prison bars. I would argue that by setting this environment, Bouchareb wants to convey that both the country and its people are in a dilemma: the country is in danger as a French colonial dominion, and the Algerians struggling for independence are captured and tortured by

the government. Before Mother's leaving, her reiteration that Abdelkader should be a strong man is the last appeal that Algeria conveys to its warriors. The camera switching back and forth between them also creates a tragic—the warriors are captured in prison—but at the same time heroic—they are not discouraged but choose to continue the fight—atmosphere.

Charef also conveys something similar in *Cartouches Gauloises*. First and most importantly, Aïcha follows Islamic tradition and prays regularly. Even when Gino's mother comes to bid farewell to her, Aïcha still makes time for her prayers. When Behi, who fights for the Algerian independence, is captured and killed in the suburbs, Aïcha, along with her father, calls him a "martyr." I contend that Aïcha's extolment of Behi as a martyr is not only personal but also represents a country's praise to him—his sacrifice is witnessed by the homeland, and it will be remembered by its people forever. Also, at the end of the movie, when the Algerian people have gained their independence, it is Aïcha who proudly shows the Algerian national flag to Ali for the first time. The concrete and the abstract concepts of the mother merge in this scene. Since Aïcha is celebrating the Independence with joy, it seems as if after years of arduous fighting and incredible suffering, the country is smiling at its people, and Algeria can finally stand proudly among nations in the world as an independent nation.

Chapter 3 Diaspora, Identity, and Commemoration

Diasporic Cinema and Diasporic Directors

The term "diaspora," according to historian and anthropologist James Clifford, is initially a "travelling term, in changing global conditions" (302). The term was historically used in the study of the exodus and exile of the Jews from Palestine, the slave trade and forced migration of West African (Martin and Yaquinto 22), and later Greek and Armenian displaced groups (Clifford 3). Since the 1950s, "diaspora" has been frequently used in reference to African forced migration and has evolved into a term to describe a variety of peoples, such as immigrant, refugee and exile communities, and related experiences (Tölölian 4-5). As Clifford contends, "the term diaspora is a signifier … of political struggles to define the local, as distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement" (308). Similarly, William Safran, a political scientist at the University of Colorado Boulder, defines "diaspora" as "minority communities that maintain a memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland" (83).

As a result, when it comes to the concept of "diasporic cinema," some scholars contend it refers to the filmmaking of any community of exiles or immigrants who do not live in their homeland and have settled in other countries. Eva Rueschmann contends that diasporic films constitute "a truly international genre of contemporary cinema … in a variety of national and transnational contexts … in a world on the move" (ix). Hamid Naficy contends that diasporic films constitute "a mammoth, emergent, transnational film movement and film style," (18-19), and he further indicates that "diasporic, exilic, and postcolonial directors and films are in conversation with dominant and alternative cinemas" (10-11). Similarly, Laura Marks emphasizes in her book *The Skin of the Film* that diasporic film is not the property of any single culture but

mediates in at least two directions. Thus, themes such as ethnicity, race, culture, identity and colonialism are usually associated with diasporic cinema. It addresses issues of being exiled, belonging to different cultures and communities, which often face xenophobic hate, the clash of identities, etc. In conclusion, diasporic cinema focuses more on the collision of two different cultures, which is, at the same time, usually accompanied by "a dynamic relationship between a dominant 'host' culture and a minority culture" ("Diasporic Cinema").

In the case of *Cartouches Gauloises*, *Hors La Loi* and *The Battle of Algiers*, it is apparent that the French colonial culture dominates over the native Algerian culture. Under the European-centred colonial ruling—or dictatorship—, the Arab Algerians are trying hard to find the answer to the question "who they really are." Taking the example of *Pieds-Noirs*, on the one hand, they are the descendants of the French, so they are biologically attached to France; on the other hand, they are born and raised in Algeria, so they regard this land as their home. This kind of emotional conflict is especially obvious in *Cartouches Gauloises,* which will be discussed in the following section. In my opinion, Charef's identity as a *beur* director, as well as a diasporic one, may account for conflict. Roy Armes holds the opinion that *beur* directors, or North African filmmakers, view Europe as the Other:

> On the other hand, there is the work of those filmmakers, of North African origin or born in Europe of Maghrebian parents, who operate broadly within the cultural and production context of the immigrant in Europe…Since the mid-1980s the perspective has changed, however, with new directors—such as Abdelkrim Bahloul, Rachid Bouchareb, and Mehdi Charef—coming from within the immigrant community. Their first features –Mint Tea (1984) Bâton Rouge (1985) and Tea at Achimede's Harem (1985) respectively –are key works of a new kind of immigrant cinema. (125)

Armes identifies these directors as French immigrants, or outsiders, rather than an integrated group. Thus, a different categorization is granted to Charef and Bouchareb as their productions are outside the scope of French cinema. I argue that the two directors' films are French-Algerian

productions, in terms of what they try to convey. In their films, neither side is black-or-white but human, and the audience tends to have sympathy for both sides because they all share something to admire as well as something to be ashamed of.

As *beur* cinema has found it place in contemporary French film over the last three decades since the 1980s, it expresses a commitment to "a future in the EU for, and claims a stake in European culture for, children of Maghreb immigrants and other ethnic groupings traditionally marginalized by French society" (Mahjoub 37). In his interview with Jamal Mahjoub, Charef admits that his initial intention for creating is not for the Algerians, but for a divided and stateless personality—a personality who belongs to neither France nor Algeria, which Charef imputes to the sense of living without existence in *banlieu* during his childhood (Mahjoub 38). I contend that the equal division of time in depicting the Arab Algerians' and the *Pieds-Noirs*' sorrow is precisely the embodiment of Charef's split recognition of "where he belongs to." It is distinct that in his cinema productions, Charef shows a balanced voice for both the French and Algerian people, which I will further explore in the following part. Similarly, Bouchareb and Pontecorvo also reveal their sympathy for different ethnic groups in their productions. For example, in *The Battle of Algiers*, in the scene where three *fidayate* have placed the bomb in public places which mainly serve French customers, before the bombs explode the camera focuses on several innocent French people's faces; even children are included. The emotional background music also exaggerates the atmosphere of grief. Despite his communist preference, I argue that Pontecorvo still reveals some of his disapproval towards the FLN's atrocities during the war (even though the FLN's behaviour is in reaction against France for their murder of Algerian civilians). Like Charef, Pontecorvo tries to takes a neutral stand to depict the war and how it affects ordinary people.

Exile and Identity: Pieds-Noirs and Harkis

In addition to the trauma that the Arab Algerians bear, *Cartouches Gauloises* also reveals the pain and sorrow of *Pieds-Noirs*. *Pieds-Noirs* and *Harkis* were two unique groups in the war; both suffered the war directly as we can perceive from Julie's story during the war, but also after, as it is reflected in the melancholic state that characterizes their lives in France. Similar to *Pieds-Noirs*, *Harkis* were the Algerian soldiers who chose to side with France during the war. In the following, I will analyze how the film depicts the trauma of exile and the issue of "cultural identity" for the *Pieds-Noirs* and *Harkis* characters.

Pieds-Noirs first arrived in Algeria in the late 1830s. By the end of the 1950s, more than one million *Pieds-Noirs* were living in the colony, comprising approximately 10 percent of the population, many of whom had never set foot in France since their birth. Although they were of French origin, I argue it is inappropriate to define them merely as "colonizers" who oppressed the native Algerian people. In terms of cultural identity, *Pieds-Noirs* shared the same history with the metropolitan French people, and this same ancestry provided them with a stable and continuous identity of the "French people." However, for the *Pieds-Noirs*, the nature of daily life in Algeria meant that their identities as French-Algerian had taken root (Wise 123). After living in Algeria for over a hundred years, they regarded themselves and the land both Algerian and French. After the outbreak of the war, most of these *Pieds-Noirs* held the firm belief that they stood on the victorious side. However, after the retreat of the French military, almost one million people left Algeria during the summer of 1962, deeming that their life would be untenable under the FLN rule (Eldridge 124). One of the main characteristics of historical trauma is the collective experience of those whose identities, ideals and interactions were thoroughly altered (Gone 23). It

is also difficult for the exiles, many of whom had lost spouses, relations and friends, to go through a normal grieving process (Smith 170).

According to the aforementioned notion of Charef's double identities—being both Algerian and French—, *Cartouches Gauloises* explores the suffering on both sides of the war. Charef divides the screen time equally to narrate the *Pieds-Noirs*' miserable situation. In the title of the film, *Cartouches Gauloises*, the word "cartouches," originally meaning "bullets" in French, refers to the children. Ali, the protagonist, is a native 10-year-old Arab boy. His tiny figure, ragged undershirt and slippers imply that he was born in a lower-class family in Algerian society. The domestic financial burden seems to befall on him because he has to sell newspapers in dangerous areas and run errands for people. His dramatic life can be summed up this way: seconds before the bombing attack by the FLN, he hides in a bathroom; he has to deliver newspapers to the French military base where later he finds his father being tortured inside. He also witnesses random killing by the French troops at the market; and, at the end of the film, he overhears the execution of his father. Traumatized by the conflict, whenever he witnesses violent incidents, he hides or runs away thus acting out his trauma. Besides, there is no way for him to pour out his shock and sorrow; he is forced to digest all the violence alone. According to Hamburger, it is this continuous confronting with the violence that triggers trauma. Also, the exposure to the suffering of the victims and the inability to acknowledge the suffering causes Ali's inability to show feelings (Hamburger 68). Partly due to the exposure of so much suffering, his frame seems much skinnier and slimmer. However, he is also exceptional as he attends the French school where the descendants of the upper-class French-Algerians study, and he always socializes with these *Pieds-Noirs* boys. Furthermore, he also enjoys the special connections with the senior *Pieds-*

Noirs, such as the local train stationmaster, who states his sorrow of leaving Algeria, and the elderly Jewish *Pieds-Noirs* neighbours who deny their decampment.

I contend that Charef's *Cartouches Gauloises* can be categorized as what Michael Rothberg calls "traumatic realism," which describes a type of Holocaust literature. As Rothberg explains:

> By focusing attention on the intersection of the everyday and the extreme in the experience and writing of Holocaust survivors, traumatic realism provides an aesthetic and cognitive solution to the conflicting demands inherent in representing and understanding genocide. Traumatic realism mediates between the realist and antirealist positions in Holocaust studies and marks the necessity of considering how ordinary and extraordinary aspects of genocide intersect and coexist. (9)

The film reveals the atrocities of the war through Ali's eyes in his everyday life, along with his *Pieds-Noirs* classmates Paul, David, Gino and Nico. With the approaching of the end of the war, all of Ali's *Pieds-Noirs* friends have to leave Algeria with their parents. However, what is waiting for them is an entirely exotic land, where they have to rebuild their lives from the ground in addition to facing racism for their *Pied-Noir* background. As a result, all the young characters show their unwillingness to leave. Charef arranges all the children's departures during their soccer games, which bring them all together. Paul is the first one to leave right after the beginning of the film. His mother uses the word "le bateau ne nous attend pas" to force him to get going. As he walks reluctantly towards his mother, the camera focuses on all the children, all of whom are too shocked to react. Similarly, David is picked up by his father during the soccer game on a countryside lane. What is different for David is that he is repeatedly urged by his friends to stay. It is also noticeable that he is in tears when he walks towards his father. His stretched shadow under the setting sun also reinforces the sorrow of separation. The long shot used here associates his small and helpless figure in the car with the surroundings in the same frame, indicating

David's attachment to his friends and to the land where he grew up. By contrast Gino shows his resistance as he sneaks out on the day of departure. The moving train in the background, however, indicates his inescapable fate of leaving with his family.

Julie's tragic story in the film points to how the nationalist sentiments during the war had an impact on the innocent *Pieds-Noirs* families. The most representative scene is when Ali, along with his *Pied-Noir* friend Nico, witnesses a bloody killing of the *Fellagha* attack on a *Pied-Noir* family.[6] The boys accidentally find Julie, Nico's *Pied-Noir* friend, when they are cutting bamboos for their hut. Julie is totally naked and stands shivering alone in the field. It is told later that when she was showering, the *Fellagha* broke into her house, and she had to run away before she could get dressed. In the film, Julie's youth affects the audience, and the violence she survives induces sympathy for blameless French children orphaned by the revolution. After Nico gives his coat to Julie, they gallantly head back to her house to see if the *Fellagha* have left, only to find that Julie's whole family was murdered ruthlessly in the backyard. The use of a high angle from the second floor not only shows us the entire miserable scene, but also signifies the ordinary *Pieds-Noirs*' smallness and powerlessness in front of the war. The death of Julie's family, who are of a high social class and own a luxurious home, is more like a declaration of revenge from the FLN: the white colonizers are responsible for what they have done in this land, no matter whether they are innocent or not. In contrast to this miserable scene is the turntable in the backyard, which continues playing light Arabic music. It is ironic that even though the *Pieds-Noirs* are attached to Arabic culture and recognize themselves as part of the Algerian people, they are ruled out as intruders during the war.

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[6] The *Fellagha* were groups of armed militants affiliated with anti-colonial movements in French Algeria.

Nico, one of Ali's best friends, often shows his reluctance and dread of leaving. Nico was born in an upper-class family in Algeria and led a far more superior life than others. When Ali asks him "Tu ne partiras jamais, n'est-ce pas?", Nico replies, "Non." His avoidance is exactly one characteristic of trauma: denial. He denies the upcoming independence of Algeria and holds the firm belief that this land will always be French-Algeria. Both boys are ignorant of the extremity of the war and of the reality which will tear their friendship apart. At the end of the film, when Algeria finally gains its independence, Nico and Ali come to their hut where Nico notices the national flag hanging, and he insists that Ali bring it down thus emphasizing his colonial instincts, which conform to his *Pied-Noir* identity. As he shouts at Ali "Maintenant, sois obéi!," Nico's behaviour can be interpreted as his expression of the hegemony of the *Pieds-Noirs*. That was the way that French colonizers oppressed the colonized Algerian people for so many years. However, I propose to interpret this command as the "acting-out" of his fear of exile. "Acting-out," according to LaCapra, means to release the traumatic emotion captured inside (142), and Nico's trauma originates from the betrayal of his nation. Realizing that his persistence is in vain, his long-suppressed trauma finally acts out. As he feels betrayed by his nation and by his belief that he is superior to the Arabs, he can never work through his trauma until his departure for France. After the quarrel with Ali, he runs past the farmland where the two of them used to cut bamboo for their hut, and where they meet Julie, the *Pied-Noir* girl. I argue that Charef uses these familiar but related scenes to imply Nico's unwillingness to accept the trauma of exile. The feeling of trust betrayed, or fidelity broken (however unjustified the feeling may in fact be) is one of the greatest impediments to work through traumatic experiences (LaCapra 144). At the end of the film, before leaving for France, Nico gives his soccer ball to Ali, which can be seen as a symbol

of his adhesion to French-Algeria. It is difficult for him to handle the trauma of separation and the war, in other words, to "work out" the trauma at this point.

About one million *Pieds-Noirs* left Algeria after independence. In the film, Rachel and her husband Norbert were born and raised in Algeria but refused to leave. Ali serves as their grocery boy, and Rachel would give him some extra food as a reward. Therefore, they are depicted as positive images of *Pieds-Noirs* in the film. At the beginning of the film, Ali asks Rachel whether she still needs pies from the bakery every Sunday, because the majority of *Pieds-Noirs* are leaving Algeria. She shrugs and thinks the baker is "stupid" because they have no intention to leave. Even when their son urges them to leave for France as a whole family, she insists that Algeria is her home. She says: "Je préfère mourir de la main des arabes, plutôt que d'être humiliée là-bas," leaving their son crying and begging them to leave. However, before Independence Day, Norbert is killed ruthlessly by the rebels. In Algeria, they were not considered Algerians, but intruders as before, even if the victory belonged to the Algerian nation. With equal time divided, the film also depicts other French descendants' sorrow: the train station manager and the local theatre owner. As a result, the film is not merely an ode to the Algerian Independence. To some extent, it also reveals Charef's regret of the bloodshed of the French descendants and Algerians (but on the hostile side) during the war, which is comparable to Pontecorvo's depiction of the French in *The Battle of Algiers*.

Another group that suffered displacement as a consequence of the war were the *Harkis*. If the *Pieds-Noirs'* attachment to France can explain the reason for their support for France, the motivation that drove the Algerian soldiers to fight for France was more complicated. The most significant motivation for the recruitment of *Harkis* was to take revenge on FLN's violence (Evans 124). By joining the French side, *Harkis* could not only get the promise of food and regular

income to feed their impoverished families but also taste a small measure of power, which they had never previously been accorded under colonialism (Evans 125). According to Charef, "they did this (joining the French military) in order to eat, to earn a living … because that was their job, to fight against the Algerians" (qtd. in Mahjoub 38). In *Cartouches Gauloises*, it is the *Harkis* that play the role of the executioners, while the French commander usually stays behind, granting them privilege. It is also the *Harkis* that seek out young Arab girls and force them to work at the brothels.

Similar to the fate of the *Pieds-Noirs*', after the independence, tens of thousands of *Harkis* faced revenge at the hands of their compatriots. In the summer of 1962, when the climate of hatred and violence reigned, countless *Harkis*, even their children, were tortured mercilessly, aiming to humiliate them and stress their separation from the Algerian nation. The effects of trauma and loss are often experienced more intensely under the conditions of isolation, loss, and displacement that forced migration entails (Wise 2004). Menaced by the violence that claimed the lives of tens of thousands, an estimated 25,000 *Harkis* and their dependents began their journey to diasporic life in France officially between 1962 and 1967, while a further 68,000 entered the country by unofficial means (Cohen 169), which created a terrible situation because families were divided and torn apart. At the end of *Cartouches Gauloises*, thousands of *Harkis* are begging the French lieutenant to take them to France. The perspective is again from a high angle, looking down at *Harkis* and implying the French troop's defiance of these non-French soldiers.

Their contribution was denied by France, and their desperate requests are all refused in the film. The camera then shifts to a lower angle to highlight the *Harkis*' humbleness and desperation to climb the truck. With their guns aiming at the *Harkis*, the French soldiers' behaviour can be regarded as the last hegemonic act of the colonizers. After the failure of negotiations,

Djelloul, the captain of the *Harkis*, shoots the French lieutenant in the head and runs away, expecting that his behaviour can win back the Algerian people's trust. Quite the opposite, knowing Djelloul is still alive, regardless of his recent actions, the villagers execute him. As a result, the battle between "the patriots" and "the traitors" never settles.

Aftermath—Algerian Commemoration and French Denial

Postmemory, first used by Marianne Hirsch, is to describe the memory that the young generations, who usually do not bear the traumatic experience directly, receive by means of stories, images, and behaviours. However, the experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and profoundly that they seem to take hold of their own memories as an integral part. All three films can be regarded as a way to transcend the war memory to the young generation, and to remind them of this traumatic period. Although all of them end with Algeria's victory in the Algerian War, traumatization implies that there is an "after effect" (Linklater 22). The Algerian war has created deep fissures both in Algerian and French societies, and the need to develop collective understanding of the past is crucial to the building of a coherent community and national identity (McCormack 167), thus helping the survivors of the war to work through the trauma. The Algerian government has set Independence Day on July 5th every year. The Maqam Echahid monument (Martyrs' Memorial), a monument for those who died as fighters during the war, was erected in 1982 in the capital Algiers to mark the 20th anniversary of independence. It is built in the shape of three palm leaves that shelter the "Eternal Flame" underneath, and at the edge of each palm leaf, there are statues of soldiers. With more than 6,000 testimonies, *Le musée national du moudjahid à El Madania* was also built in 1997 with the goal to collect, preserve, and display objects and memories during the period of anti-colonial struggle.

It is also necessary to look at the consequences for women after the war, who played important roles in it. After the war, women gained impressive progress in women's rights, such as citizenship rights, equal rights to education, and free health services (Turshen 891). While little research studies the *mujahidat*'s life after the war, some evidence suggests that they are still rejected by civil society, and there is still only a small percentage of women in the paid labour force (892). Algerian historian Danièle Amrane-Minne emphasizes the mechanism of forgetting women's contribution to building the Algerian nation: "Qu'il s'agisse d'oeuvres de fiction, de témoignages ou de recherches universitaires, les écrits sur la guerre d'Algérie sont de plus en plus nombreux et divers mais tous ont en commun d'ignorer le militantisme des femmes" (13). The situation is not any better when it comes to memory, unlike the men, women are nearly forgotten in the commemoration. In the Martyrs' Memorial, none of the statues is that of a female figure. As Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry indicate, women in Algeria, regardless of their involvement and contributions to the conflict, remained in their pre-war subservient position afterwards as a result of the prevailing societal, religious, and cultural conditions (42). Although women did, to some extent, emancipate themselves from male sovereignty when it comes to entering the public sphere (Vince 97), their contribution became "invisible" after the war.

Unlike Algeria, which set festivals and established monuments in order to remember their uneasy independence, in France, participants of the war have been struggling for years after a long period of occlusion and repression of painful and divisive memories (McCormack 2). As Hamburger notes, a special aggravating factor in a socially embedded trauma is the fact that the public regularly fails to acknowledge or even actively denies its reality (82-3). At the same time, to "work through" trauma and to confront critically the past, the various subject positions such as victims and perpetrators must be distinguished and acknowledged (LaCapra 12). France,

unfortunately, denied the war for a long time, thus creating an obstacle for *Pieds-Nois* and *Harkis* to "work through." For decades, the perpetrator was unwilling to talk about the war. To block any possible way to heal the collective trauma, the French government refused to call the Algerian War a "war," instead it was referred to as "peacekeeping operation," "a police action" or "les événements d'Algérie." As a result, the French troops that were sacrificed in the war (approximately 25,000 soldiers had died, and 60,000 had been wounded) were not recognized as veterans nor honoured in any way, since officially there had not been a war (Cohen 225). Tangled up in this denial through name-fixing was the French unease with acknowledging Algerians' identity and their own role as colonizers (Lazreg 112). Although Algeria was inhabited by the French for more than a century and despite the fact that *Pieds-Noirs* think of themselves as French descendants, the French considered these French-Algerian not quite French, giving rise to the question of their identities yet again.

In 1977, 15 years after the war, a national monument was established to honour the unknown soldier in the Algeria War. However, the Algeria War was still a "taboo" for the French government. "Afrique du nord" is served as a trope to mask this reluctant and disappearing memory. It was not until October 18, 1999, thus 37 years after the war's end, that the French government finally acknowledged the term "*la guerre d'Algérie*." In Nicolas Sarkozy's first presidential visit to Algeria in 2007, even though he alluded to the cruelty of the war and the loss to the Algerian nation, he refused to offer an official apology to the victims:

> Il est aussi juste de dire qu'à l'intérieur de ce système il y avait beaucoup d'hommes et de femmes qui ont aimé l'Algérie, avant de devoir la quitter. Oui, des crimes terribles ont été commis tout au long de la guerre d'indépendance, qui a fait d'innombrables victimes des deux côtés (*Condamnation par Sarkozy du système colonial :"Ce n'est pas assez" dit Zerhouni*).

It was not until 2018 that French President Emmanuel Macron finally acknowledged that France had instigated a "system" leading to torture during the war. Historian Robert Aldrich indicates, "The Algerian war, and colonial history in general, has never before galvanized public attention as in recent years" (14). In the past decade, a great number of films and works in memory of the Algerian War has been released. Also, with more previously classified archives being made available to the public, more and more historical in-depth research has emerged. Meanwhile, in order to seek to end their status as "les oubliés de l'histoire," the descendants of the *Harkis* and *Pieds-Noirs* have begun to seek recognition for their parents'past, particularly the sacrifices they had made for France and the suffering endured as a consequence (Eldridge 88).

Conclusion

Released in 1966 during the Cold War, the documentary-style film *The Battle of Algiers* is a pioneer of European cinema's critique of colonialism as Pontecorvo gives voice to the suppressed people. Through Pontecorvo's camera, the protagonists are no longer individuals but collectivities. The most remarkable thing is that it does not glorify or degrade either side but offers a calm and uncompromising depiction of the war. While the subject was neglected in international film productions for decades afterwards, in the new millennium, Mehdi Charef's *Cartouches Gauloises* and Rachid Bouchareb's *Hors La Loi* revisit the Algerian War and the colonial era, as both directors bring back the traumatic memory of the Algerian War to world cinema. From the individual perspective, protagonists such as Behi, Aïcha, and Zina are depicted as the representatives of the Algerian victims of the war. Among the native victims, some are tortured and killed, some are forced to separate from their beloved ones, and some have to make a living by performing degrading labour. All their miserable stories reveal the permanent and indelible scar left by colonization on the Algerian nation. However, not only the natives' but also the French-Algerian people's lives are disrupted during the turbulence. In *Cartouches Gauloises*, driven by the fanaticism of victory, the ferociousness of the FLN is revealed through Julie's and Norbert's stories. In *The Battle of Algiers*, the FLN's revenge is inflicted on French civilians through bomb attacks. While Pontecorvo reproduces many cruel means of torture in a realistic style, Charef successfully reproduces the cruelty of war using everyday narration through the viewpoint of a child without bloody or violent depictions of the war.

All three films show the importance of women. The mother in Charef and Bouchareb's depiction is the embodiment of the motherland. Hélène in *Hors La Loi*, who boldly falls in love with Abdelkader, who fights for Algerian independence, is the representative of millions of

French people who are pursuing justice. Furthermore, Pontecorvo depicts women as female warriors who devote themselves to the cause of independence. Therefore, women are no longer synonymous with weakness, but they have awakened and gained agency.

Apart from the angle of national trauma, in *Cartouches Gauloises*, Charef also carefully depicts two specific groups in Algeria: *Pieds-Noirs* and *Harkis*. *Pieds-Noirs* are continuously questioning their identities as either French or Algerian or as neither one nor the other. Their leaving for France condemns them to exile and a life of constant questioning regarding their identities. The images of *Pieds-Noirs* in the film are consistently sorrowful, while the depiction of *Harkis* goes through a downward process. The status of *Harkis* dramatically shifts from high-above to traitors, which once again emphasized the national trauma in the former colony.

Finally, as a diasporic director, Charef's representation of the traumatic consequences of the war and dramatic conditions of diasporic life for both *Pieds-Noir*s and *Harkis* reflects his own autobiographical trajectory. I have argued that this nuanced representation of the impact of the war and its aftermath is rendered possible because it is also an intimate portrayal of Charef's own life experience. Meanwhile, as a specific genre in French cinema, *beur* cinema, along with the unique documentary film *The Battle of Algiers*, serves as a cultural connection between the young generation and the traumatized one. It seems as if the memory of colonization and the spirit of decolonization will continue to inspire French-Algerian filmmakers for some time coming.

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