

Conflicting Representations of Maghrebi-French Integration in France: a Spectrum of
Hospitality from Derrida to Foucault, as Seen in Contemporary Novels, Films and the
Magazine *Paris-Match*

DISSERTATION

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Abstract

In this dissertation, Michele Gerring analyzes scenarios in which the integration of the Maghrebi-French occurs in contemporary French settings, to a variety of degrees, as seen in several works of *Beur* novels and films, and select issues of the magazine, *Paris-Match*, constructing a “spectrum of hospitality,” based on the theories that best contextualize the polar ends of hospitality, Derridean hospitality theory and Foucauldian power theory.

After establishing her theoretical foundations in Chapter 1, she examines integration as it is depicted in *Beur* novels and films revealing Foucauldian-like relationships between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent in Chapter 2; integration as it is viewed in settings of mixed hospitality in Chapter 3, and integration as seen in novels and films featuring more favorable circumstances for the Maghrebi-French, akin to situations of “Derridean” hospitality, in Chapter 4, before analyzing the predominately-distrustful relationships revealed in some of *Paris-Match*'s portrayals of the French suburban riots of 1990-1991, 2005, 2007, and 2010, in Chapter 5.

Gerring's study of Maghrebi-French integration, as it is depicted in this corpus of works, demonstrates that Derrida's concept of the mutually-beneficial guest-host relationship, part of his hospitality theory, in which the “guest” and the “host” act in the best interest of the other party, can be useful in encouraging the French of European

descent and the Maghrebi-French to consider the point of view of the other party, thereby improving conditions for the other party, as well as their relationship. Additionally, instances in which hyper-ethical behavior is practiced, as individuals or representatives of larger entities take the perspective of the other party, developing empathy for them, even when there has been conflict between the parties, as exemplified by certain characters in the works analyzed in this dissertation, reveal that this exercise of seeing the vulnerability of the other party can have much value for reducing conflict, especially when applied to the practice of ethical behavior.

Meanwhile, the Foucauldian concept of *desubjectification*, as outlined in Foucault's later works on ethics, is useful for the Maghrebi-French. This process, by which the marginalized limit the power that the dominant group has to define them, thus reclaiming their ability to structure their self-image from this dominant group, is exemplified in several of the works analyzed in Chapters 2 and 3, on instances of so-called "Foucauldian" hospitality, and of mixed hospitality. Later in the dissertation, Gerring's analysis of the riots in the French suburbs that have occurred periodically since 1981, which lead most of the representations analyzed in the articles of *Paris-Match* focusing on these events to resemble instances of so-called "Foucauldian" hospitality, suggests that other means besides insurrection be used in order to ensure that the points of view and the rights of the Maghrebi-French are respected.

Based on her close analysis of these representations of scenarios of Maghrebi-French integration, Gerring discusses, in her Conclusions chapter, some factors that seem

to generally favor the integration of the Maghrebi-French within French society.

This dissertation is dedicated to all people who at some time in their lives, feel marginalized within their society, social group, organization, or other entity. May you know your inherent worth, apart from any defined group, and may you find positive, constructive, and life-affirming ways to affirm your own identity. May more people in this world become tolerant towards diversity, accepting towards difference, and amenable to understanding other people's experiences, as different as they may be from their own.

May this type of approach towards the Other become "normalized".

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Preface: Between Mutual Responsibilities and Power Struggles

In this Preface to my dissertation, I argue, based on a historical survey of events in the relationship between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French, as well as Derrida's theory about the mutual responsibilities of hospitality, that these parties have an obligation, in the interest of the common good, and in order to preserve order, to try to co-exist peacefully, although the term *power struggle* describes many of their interactions in the past. In particular, the Maghrebi-French have a duty to try to follow French laws and avoid being overly obstructive to the French, and the French of European descent have a responsibility to facilitate the Maghrebi-French quest for employment and social acceptance. The historical perspective is essential because history has significantly shaped this relationship. I acknowledge the fact that normally, there is perhaps no legal, philosophical or moral foundation to support granting immigrants anything beyond fair treatment, as long as they have the proper documents. In the case of France, however, the French of European descent requested that many North Africans come to France to fill a shortage of workers in their industries, after World War II. The invitation of many North Africans to come to France, extended by the French of European descent, implies that the latter group has some responsibilities towards their descendants currently living in France. An interpretation of Derrida's theory on extending forgiveness to the powerful would imply that the Maghrebi-French can sometimes gain advantage by making effort to be aware of the Otherness of the French of

European descent, despite the way in which the French of European descent have mistreated them throughout history.

Nevertheless, Mireille Rosello, in *Post-Colonial Hospitality*, writes that the invitation of the North Africans to France did not involve hospitality, but rather, “active recruitment” for the industries in the 1950s and 1960s. Rosello does not consider this type of invitation to be hospitality, since the French were exploiting the North Africans (9). This type of interpretation corresponds to a more “Foucauldian” version of hospitality, since mistrust and abuse, rather than cooperation, are involved. Despite the fact that my main argument lies with Derrida’s insistence on the mutual responsibilities of hospitality, I recognize that there have been many instances of a more “Foucauldian,” dysfunctional hospitality in France, revealing the fact that there is a history of challenged exchanges between the French of European descent and the descendants of North African immigrants in France. The significant perceived difference in status between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French has led history to be slanted in the favor of the French of European descent.

Regardless of the nature of this invitation, it is too late for the French of European descent to ask the descendants of North Africans to leave, since these people, to a large degree, are far more French than North African, and the countries of the Maghreb may not accept them back for many different reasons. Many have no claim to live in these countries, and they may be too French to fit comfortably in these cultures. The obligation of the French of European descent to alleviate tensions with the Maghrebi-French is

compounded by the fact that many of the Maghrebi-French are now French citizens, and cannot be counted as immigrants, in the proper sense of the term.

Introduction:
Creating a Spectrum of Contexts of Maghrebi-French Integration,
Based on Representations Found in *Beur* Literature and Cinema, and
Articles on the French Riots of 1990-1991, 2005, 2007, and 2010,
Found in *Paris-Match*

Just as African-American literature, in the United States, provides an outlet to African-Americans as they express their views of their struggle to achieve and maintain their civil rights, and their outlook on American culture and their place within it, so does the genre of *Beur* literature provide a forum for French people of North African descent, particularly the second and third generations, to depict their perceptions of their role within French society, to voice their frustrations, and to envision a better future. In the article, “Writing at the Crossroads: Cultural Conflict in the Work of *Beur* Women Writers,” Susan Ireland likens *Beur* literature to African-American literature, since in both genres, the characters seem to constantly regard themselves through the eyes of the dominant culture (as Caucasians see African-Americans, and as the French of European descent see the Maghrebi-French). Ireland refers to this phenomenon as a “double consciousness,” theorized by W.E.B. DuBois, who felt that African-Americans have “this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the type of a world that looks in on it, in amused contempt and pity” (3).

While African-American literature has a much longer history than *Beur* literature does, this lack of longevity of *Beur* literature is primarily due to the different historical realities that North African immigrants to France faced after World War II, as opposed to the much longer history of African-American populations in the US, dating back 200 or 300 years. *Beur* literature, which was inaugurated by the publication of 1983's *Le Thé au Harem d'Archi Ahmed*, by Medhi Charef, fits neither into the larger categories of metropolitan French literature, nor extra-metropolitan French literature, for it consists of novels and short stories that are generally written by residents of France (defying the Francophone literature genre), about issues that are closely associated with North Africa (corresponding more closely to Francophone literature). In this sense, it is largely unlike literature written in French about those living in the Caribbean, Canada, Asia, and the United States, since most of the authors of these works continue to reside in these countries, and not in France.

In fact, while *Beur* literature addresses the lives of the descendants of North Africans living in metropolitan France, not only is it heavily influenced by aspects of North African culture, such as Islam and patriarchal practices, but the literary tradition of *Beur* literature, itself, is a spin-off of Algerian fictional writing, according to Farida Abu-Haidar, in the article, "The Algerian Novel in the nineties." Abu-Haidar traces the lineage of *Beur* literature, which originated in the early 1980s, and flourished in the 1990s, to the tradition of fiction written in Algeria, which had the mission of communicating the stance of Algerians during the colonial and post-colonial conflict between France and the Maghreb. Algerian literature, during this time, was seen as a way to equilibrate the imbalance between the powerful and those who were struggling,

not only in Algeria, but also across national borders. In this light, Abu-Haidar suggests that there is a lineage between this internationally-minded, justice-conscious literature from Algeria, and modern *Beur* literature, both of which aim at restoring dignity and human rights to the disadvantaged in society, whether it is in North Africa, France or elsewhere (393).

An out-growth of *Beur* literature, *Beur* cinema is, indisputably, well-established as a cinematic genre, proven by Mireille Rosello in the article, “The Rachid System in Serge Meynard’s *L’Oeil au Beurre noir*.” Rosello holds that more than 30 films were created by *Beur* directors between 1980 and 1990 (148). This assertion is ostensibly made in the face of objections doubting the validity of the keen definition of the genre.

Concerning the General Situation of the Maghrebi-French in France

It will be helpful to briefly discuss the general context in which the Maghrebi-French live in France, with respect to French society. According to Hugh Scofield’s article on BBC, “France’s invisible minority, » dated June 6, 2002 (coincidentally, also the 58th anniversary of D-Day), France has the largest population of Muslims in Europe: roughly 5 million (1). After World War II, the French government encouraged young men from the countries of the Maghreb (Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco), to come to France to work in the industries, after the loss of population incurred during the war. Thus, many North African men moved to France during the « Trente Glorieuses, » the period of economic growth in France, from 1945 et 1975. According to Tony McNeill, in the article, «Les *Beurs* en France, » published on the website for the University of

Sunderland in Australia, in March, 1999, the children and the grandchildren of these immigrants from North Africa came to be referred to as the « *Beurs* » (2). Anissa Talahite, in the article, « Identity as ‘Secret de Guerre’ : Rewriting Ethnicity and Culture in ‘*Beur*’ Literature, » published in the work, *Cultures transnationales de France : Des « Beurs » aux... ?*, edited by Gafaïti Hafid, writes that this term, « *Beur*, » seems to have appeared during the 1970s (58). This word means « Arab » in French pig Latin, or *le verlan*, evoking negative images for many French people at the time of the word’s conception, in the 1970s. Although many French people of European descent often used the word « *Beur*, » originally, the Maghrebin-French community refused to use this term. I note that Soraya Nini entitled her 1993 work, *Ils disent que je suis une Beurette*, instead of using her editor’s suggestion, *La Beurette*, since she wanted to attract public attention to the fact that the word, the feminine version of the term, « *Beur*, » is a term created and used primarily by others, according to Alec Hargreaves in the work, *Immigration, ‘Race,’ and Identity in Beur Fiction*, published in 1995 (178). In the same work, Hargreaves argues that many young Maghrebi-French people reject the use of the word *Beur* because it tends to characterize their community as a monolithic group, ignoring its diversity, and also because it seems to declare a solid line of division between French society and the Maghrebi-French community (173).

The French descendants of Maghrebin immigrants to France have difficulty defining and securing their position in society, due to the demands of French society, and those of their families. As is demonstrated in many of the novels and films that I discuss in Chapters 2-4 of this dissertation, the issue of being perceived as immigrants is contentious for many in the Maghrebi-French community. Most of the younger

generations of Maghrebi people in France have French nationality, since they were born in France. Moreover, they consider France to be their homeland, since many of their parents were also born in France, according to H el ene Jaccomard, in the 1997 article, "French Against French: The Uneasy Incorporation of *Beurs* into French Society," from the journal, *Mots Pluriels* (1). Additionally, most of the Maghrebi-French attend French schools, and, as is manifested in many *Beur* artistic works, they seem to favor resisting the expectations of their family, and of Muslim traditions (Jaccomard 1). Simultaneously, they struggle to achieve full integration into French society, according to Tony McNeill's article, « A issa B ena issa: N ee en France, » published in March 1999, on the website for the University of Sunderland, Australia (2). The Maghrebi-French often carry the inappropriately-placed stigma, and the false reputation, for being the cause of exacerbated unemployment levels, economic difficulties, vandalism, drug trafficking, and the dysfunction of the social security system; likewise, they are often considered or treated as if they were unequal to the French of European descent (Jaccomard 1-2). Jaccomard maintains that it is not the differences between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent that perturb many of the latter group, but rather, their similarity to the French of European descent on many levels, since they seem to threaten the definition of French nationality (1).

With pertinence to politics, the right, in particular, tends to oppose the integration of the Maghrebi-French, often treating them as if they were illegal immigrants. In 2002, the Front National, on the extreme-right, earned record numbers of votes (between 15 and 20 percent) in the Presidential elections, represented by Jean-Marie Le Pen, according to the article, "Jean-Marie Le Pen---a Right-Wing Feminist and His Party," posted in April,

1997, on the Anti-Defamation League website (1). More recently, in April of 2014, Marine LePen, the new representative of Le Front National, and Jean-Marie Le Pen's daughter, also did well in the municipal elections, and many National Front candidates were elected as mayors of French cities. Consequently, many Franco-French began to fear that the National Front was making significant inroads in French politics, and that the strict approach to immigration and the presence of minorities in France that this party advocates will have significant effects on the political future of France.

Another factor that complicates the position of the Maghrebi-French in France is that the French census takes into account in no way the ethnicity or religion of its respondents, unlike the American census, which asks respondents to indicate their ethnicities. By tradition, the French expect these characteristics to be protected information, even from the government. The difficulty of quantifying the number of people belonging to various ethnic groups makes it even more challenging to address the problems that are related to ethnic difference in France. While this approach, that of not including this type of statistics on the census, is understandable within the context of French *laïcité*, it can prove difficult for some people not to have these characteristics taken into account by the government, and not to be able to have them acknowledged and addressed, since these characteristics are undeniable parts of people's identities.

Additionally, as I will expound upon in Chapter 5, when I discuss the urban riots in France, of 1990-91, 2005, 2007, and 2010, the suburbs (*banlieues*) of the major French cities (such as Paris, Lyon, Marseille, Grenoble, and others), in which many Maghrebi-French live, are often characterized by difficult conditions, as many *Beurs* live in these H.L.M.s (*habitations à loyer modéré*, low-income housing apartment buildings), where

they are confronted with high unemployment levels, the delinquent behavior of some of their peers, and discrimination from the French of European descent majority (Scofield 1).

Silverman, cited by Hargreaves in his work, *Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in Contemporary France*, explains that Algerian-French people are most frequently the targets of the most hostile opposition of the French of European descent community, for several reasons. First of all, they were, as of 1995, the time when Hargreaves wrote this article, the most assertive and dynamic country in the Third World. Second, the Algerian War, of 1957-1964, evokes many painful remembrances for the French of European descent, due to the brutality of the conflict, the « dirty hands » that the French government has because of this war, and the emotionally-intense struggle of France to retain this colony (Hargreaves 164).

There are several means that the Maghrebi-French use to establish their identities within French society. First, some express their views through politics, as shown through protest through groups such as « SOS Racisme, » and collective movements such as *la Marche des Beurs et la Marche pour l'Égalité*, in 1983 (McNeill, « Les Beurs en France 1 »). Other Maghrebi-French use their pens to demonstrate which changes have to be made in order to achieve a more egalitarian society. These texts include *Ils disent que je suis une Beurette*, reflecting the alienation that many young Maghrebi-French feel as they navigate their way through French society, according to McNeill (« Aïcha Benaïssa : Née en France » 3). Lastly, some Maghrebi-French use violent means to express their disappointment in their lack of integration (Jacomard 2). Thus, according to Daniel Singer, in the article, « Battle of Algiers on the Paris Métro,» printed in *The*

Nation, in 1998, several people of Algerian descent had a bomb detonated in a metro station in Paris, St.-Michel (1), the same year, coincidentally, that I visited France for the first time, as a high school student. Three years later, in 2001, I spent a semester in Paris, as a student at *les Cours de civilisations françaises de la Sorbonne*, through l'Université de la Sorbonne, and I often used the metro station at St.-Michel, which is located in the Latin Quarter, where many of the universities in Paris are found.

The Roles of *Beur* Literature and Cinema, with Respect to the Plight of the Maghrebi-French

Speaking of *la littérature engagée*, which I evoked in my last paragraph, this genre, *Beur* literature, can be seen as a byproduct of the greater dilemma of the struggle for equal treatment with respect to civil rights, respect, and hopeful social, housing, and employment prospects, that North Africans who settled in France between the mid-1940s and the mid-1970s, and their children and grand-children, have faced for decades. While the first generation of North Africans was generally welcomed into France, due to the value that they added to the economy, which had been devastated by World War II and the ensuing loss of population, by 1974, during the oil crisis and period of family reunification, in which North African men's families joined them in France, the North African community came to be resented by many Franco-French people. This population was not only of a darker complexion than most Franco-French, but they also were generally Muslim, as opposed to earlier immigrants to France, for example, the Portuguese, Spanish, and Italians, who were mostly Catholic. The North Africans were blamed for France's increasingly high unemployment rate, which was actually caused by

the change in France from an industrial to a service economy, and aggravated by the shortage of oil in the mid-1970s.

The early 1980s ushered in an era of both turbulence and constructive change in the *Beur* community, culminating in the genesis of *Beur* literature. 1981 saw the first significant riots within the North African community, to be later followed in 1990-91, 2005, 2007, and 2010. In addition, the second generation organized themselves into a community, marching from Marseille to Paris in 1983, in *la Marche des Beurs*, demanding that laws be enacted in order to protect the *Beur* community from discrimination, and forming associations in the early 1980s, during Mitterrand's first term. These associations were created in order to group North Africans together, in order for them to become more effective in advocating for their civil rights, respect and protection within France. While the associations ultimately did not prove permanent, the initial organization of the North African community into groups lent power to the developing movement to improve their position in France.

Around this time, in the early 1980s, the term *Beur* started to be used to describe the descendants of North Africans, a development that would provide a name for this new genre of literature. According to Carrie Tarr in the article, "Maghrebi-French (*Beur*) Filmmaking in Context,"

The term *Beur*, initially invented in the early 1980s by a new, assertive ethnic minority to protest its treatment by the white majority, has proved to be a problematic label. While it originally expressed an awareness of, and refusal to be trapped by, the negative meanings of the word "Arab" in the French imaginary,...its subsequent patronizing, ghettoizing, appropriation by dominant discourses, notably in the media, quickly became unacceptable to many of those to whom it referred. A self-designated slang variant, *les rebeus*, has developed in the *banlieue*, but while many now refer to themselves as being Maghrebi..., some

choose rather to identify themselves as Maghrebis in France...there has been no question of adopting a hyphenated designation such as Maghrebi-French...

(Tarr, "Maghrebi-French (*Beur*) Filmmaking in Context" 32)

These young people created *Beur* FM, a radio station designed to allow them to express their views, recorded *rai* and rap music, and gradually started publishing novels that collectively became the genre of *Beur* literature, starting with the seminal work, 1983's *Le Thé au Harem d'Archi Ahmed*, by Medhi Charef, about a disadvantaged pair of youth, one a *Beur*, and the other, Franco-French, and the common struggles that they faced, despite their differences in origins and cultural backgrounds, discussed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

Abu-Haidar, in the article, "The Algerian Novel in the nineties," comments on the conflict that *Beur* writers address in their novels, in the following quotation:

The fictional contribution of these young writers ["this vastly popular group of French writers of Algerian descent, known as *Beur* writers"] draws attention to the contradictions many of them have to face, torn between a strict North African home and a relatively permissive French environment, which is not ready to accept them. They express themselves in French street jargon, honed in the slums where they grew up. Their works show anarchic tendencies which are in constant conflict with conventions. They reflect, besides, a feeling of uncertainty and agony about who they are, where they belong, and what gives them their identity.

(Abu-Haidar 392)

In this quotation, Abu-Haidar illustrates the critical *enjeu* of *Beur* literature, on which all of its novels are based. *Beur* youth, in general, feel caught between the extremes of

liberal, secular, and modern French culture, which extends freedoms to youth and women to a much greater degree than the other extreme, that of North African tradition and heritage, which prescribes strict adherence to moral and social codes associated with Islam and the more conservative, rural, and agrarian lifestyle of the Maghreb. These youth grow up, in general, following these conservative codes, and fearing the influences of French culture, which is seen as tending to tempt and corrupt them, but eventually come into contact with these modern influences later, namely, when they attend high school, and observe practices that their French classmates follow, which sharply contrast with those that their parents have modeled for them. This intense *va-and-vient* between two cultural traditions can produce much angst, confusion, and resentment in these youth, and this uncomfortable situation, which many *Beur* youth experience, has been translated into *Beur* literature, which consists of representations of the difficulties and triumphs of these youth. Accompanying this cultural roller-coaster, are the use of *argot*, *verlan*, and Arabic, which the youth use themselves, references to Islam, and depictions of an ailing job market, violent suburbs that most of these Maghrebi-French call home, nostalgia and/or alienation towards the home country and the past, tendencies in some of these characters towards drug use and delinquency, and generally conflictual relationships with both their elders and representatives of Franco-French society, such as their teachers, employers, and friend's parents.

Despite the nostalgia that exists in some North Africans and their children and grandchildren, for their African heritage, according to Ireland, a return to Africa is not always productive for them, a dilemma referred to in several of the *Beur* novels that I discuss:

...the second-generation women are no more welcome in North Africa than they are in France. There, too, they are seen as the Other...Far from solving the women's identity crisis, their return to North Africa thus only emphasizes their feeling of rejection. Since each culture defines them in terms of the other, they are left swinging like a pendulum from one to the other.

(Ireland 1026)

Assouline calls the *Beurs* "acrobats de l'identité" (121); many Maghrebi-French youth swing back and forth between these two identities, hiding parts of their behavior from their families and their Franco-French classmates, as Ireland notes (1028).

In the article, "Ethnicity and identity in the cinema de *banlieue*," Carrie Tarr writes that the French concept of integration clashes with the realities of post-colonial relationships in France, another theme often evoked in *Beur* literature:

...the French approach to integration is to assume that ethnic minority Others must assimilate to the dominant culture, rather than acknowledging and accepting minority cultures within a multicultural society, cultures which, given the historic relationships between France and its former colonies, also have a diasporic dimension. French people of Maghrebi origin are in a position to maneuver in and between 'territorial, local, diasporic, national, and global cultures and identities,' as Marie Gillepsie describes the cosmopolitan state of mind of young British Punjabis in Southal" (Gillepsie 1995: 21).

(Tarr)

The natural extension of *Beur* literature was doubtlessly *Beur* cinema, beginning with 1985's film adaptation of Charef's novel, *Le Thé au harem d'Archimède*, also directed by Charef. Tarr, in the article, "Maghrebi-French (*Beur*) Filmmaking in Context," comments on the problematic evoked by the term "*Beur* cinema":

The term “*Beur* cinema” has been equally, if not more, problematic [than that of “*Beur* literature”]. It was first coined in the mid-1980s to describe a series of films addressing the problems of identity and integration facing second-generation immigrants of Maghrebi descent in France, a category which included films by majority French and North African *émigré* filmmakers...But it was also used, in a more restricted way, to refer just to films made by Maghrebi-French (*Beur*) filmmakers, whose work did not necessarily address issues relating only to the *Beurs*...The notion of *Beur* cinema itself has virtually disappeared from contemporary cinematic discourses in France...Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that individuals of Maghrebi descent in France...still experience social inequalities and racism in ways which potentially differentiate their cinematic productions from that of their white peers....Through their first short and documentary films, made on shoestring budgets, the *Beurs* signaled their recognition of the need to make their own images to counter the way they were marginalized, stereotyped, or demonized by the French media industry. Their early films protested at their treatment by the host French society...but also documented tensions between the generations...and the second generation’s lack of belonging.

(Tarr, “Maghrebi-French (*Beur*) Filmmaking in Context” 33)

As of the publication of Tarr’s article, “Maghrebi-French (*Beur*) Filmmaking in Context,” in 2007, there had been a great increase in the number of *Beur* filmmakers since the mid-1990’s seminal *La Haine*, directed by Matthieu Kassovitz (who is actually a French Jew): “Some twenty-five Maghrebi-French (*Beur*) filmmakers, including five women, have now released a full-length feature film, though many have to date only been able to make one film...” (33).

Not only have *Beur* films become more numerous, they have also become of higher quality, and more sophisticated and diverse, as Tarr writes: “From the vantage point of 2007, a year which saw new films by Ameer-Zaïmeche, Charef, and Kechiche, and the promise of a follow-up to *Days of Glory (Indigènes)* from Bouchareb, it is clear that Maghrebi-French (*Beur*) filmmaking cannot be identified with low-budget films,

addressing everyday life in the multi-ethnic French *banlieue*” (37). In fact, Tarr finds that a great accomplishment has been achieved in *Beur* cinema: “The exploration of the histories of the parents’ generation, breaking the silence about the legacy of France’s colonization of the Maghreb, and working towards the restoration of a collective memoir which would give the *Beurs* a coherent identity, and legitimate their presence in France” (“Maghrebi-French (*Beur*) Filmmaking in France” 35).

On the other hand, the picture that these *Beur* novels paint is not entirely hopeless. Namely, there are some saving graces from which they draw hope, such as their solidarity with other people of North African descent and even their French peers, and progress in their ability to voice their concerns and make inroads towards securing their civil rights and better employment and housing conditions.

In fact, the progress that has been exemplified for *Beurs* in these novels is a result of the way in which these issues have been put on the table as valid and real, as suggested by Ireland:

Although *Beur* women’s attempts to construct a unified identity met with varying success, they have clearly begun to find a voice, and to respond to the ways in which others portray them. By speaking out, they seek to redefine the place of *Beur* women in post-colonial France, and to question the automatic opposition of French and immigrant, colonizer and colonized. Such a move involves their rejection of images imposed on them from the outside, be they the racist stereotypes prevalent in French society, or the traditional Islamic views of their parents.

(Ireland 132)

These signs of progress, described in *Beur* literature, are symptomatic of, if not proof of, outright improvement of the rights of the Maghrebi-French in France, but also indicate a

much more open approach to, and dialogue about, the position of the Maghrebi-French in France, than was manifested at earlier points of time. While there are still riots in France occasionally, and there was, as of the spring of 2014, a regular slew of articles in the French press about manifestations of racism towards minorities, the expanding array of works relevant to *Beur* culture, among them, novels, short stories, TV programs, and films (in the genres of *Beur* or *banlieue* cinema), has provided people of North African descent with myriad avenues through which to express themselves, and forums in which to discuss these issues with other people.

This openness and ability to discuss their sentiments with regards to French culture and integration is in sharp contrast to the nature of what Tahar Ben Jelloun calls, in *Hospitalité française*, “la génération du silence” (57), according to Ireland, when she writes:

Most women of the first generation were illiterate and learned very little French, which meant that they had no means of expressing themselves in France, and this loss of voice was compounded by their position as subordinate Muslim wives. Their daughters have inherited this tradition of silence, and they continue to be silenced in the home, where their role is to “souffrir, et exécuter silencieusement, ce que ces ‘sultans’ [ostensibly, their husbands and fathers] veulent de nous” (Boukhedenna 56).

(Ireland 1030)

Freedom of expression, and the sentiment that one’s position is represented somewhere, opens the channels of dialogue towards improving difficult situations, and resolving tension. It is important that the Maghrebi-French feel that their opinion is taken into

account in some way, and these novels and other artistic works have provided opportunities for this type of representation.

Literature Review

Next, I will briefly discuss other works that deal with integration. Most recent scholarly works on this topic, however, are semi-sociological, whereas mine will be a reading of cultural representations in light of political theory. Among these works is Laurence and Vaisse's *Integrating Islam*, which examines the way in which the relationship between the descendants of North African immigrants and the French of European descent has shaped the rapport between French people of all origins, and their religion and political culture (x). This work also focuses on Islam's role in integration. Laurence and Vaisse write that integration is very difficult to measure, due to a lack of a sociological metric (30). Although the need to measure integration is real, no matter how challenging it is, my goal has nothing to do with measuring or quantifying social and political change. Based on their inconclusive findings, it is largely because of this difficulty in defining integration and measuring it, that I will study signs of it and what they may say about French society, rather than attempting to quantify integration.

Besides Lawrence and Vaisse, a number of other semi-sociological works published in the years since 2000 involve integration in France. I will offer a brief overview of these works, as a sampling of the current dialogue on integration in France. For example, Nacira Guénif-Souilamas, in the 2000 work, *Des "Beurettes" aux descendantes d'immigrants nord-africains*, sets the stage for a contemporary dialogue on

the evolution of integration, from the perspective of French *Beurettes*, or female *Beurs*. She sees some indications of their integration and holds that despite this, some *Beurettes* feel confused over their identity, seemingly caught between French and North African cultures (342). Yet another work, Azouz Begag's 2003 book, *Intégration*, part of the collection "Idées reçues," which challenges stereotypes about cultural issues, reinforces Guénif-Souilamas' findings about progress in integration, asserting that there has been progress in integration on the individual level, but that the French of European descent have had difficulty accepting the Maghrebi-French as a group (19). In comparison to these two works, the book that is the most suggestive of progress in integration, and is even utopian in its outlook, is journalist Philippe Bernard's 2004 *La Crème des Beurs: de l'immigration à l'intégration*, which highlights several examples of *Beurs* who have achieved success in France, and holds that the number of high-achieving *Beurs* will only grow with time. Bernard's work, however, is mostly anecdotal, since he merely offers stories and testimonies of *Beurs* who have become famous or made significant accomplishments in France, and his work offers a simplistic portrait of the position of the *Beurs* in France. A work that is more skeptical in its approach to integration, recognizing its potential in France, but also its limitations, is Yvan Gustaut's *Le Métissage par le foot: L'Intégration, mais jusqu'à où?* (2008), a work which posits that soccer is instrumental in this process, and is centered around the landmark contributions of the 1998 soccer team to French patriotism and pride in progress in integration and its decline, as of the 2001 incident between the French and Algerian teams and the 2002 loss at the Coupe du monde.

Additionally, three recent works, which have appeared in 2013 and 2014, witness to current and past realities concerning the state of *Beur* integration in France, and two of them harken back to the time of the birth of the *Beur* movement. First, Élise Vincent's and Louis Imbert's article, published in *Le Monde* magazine on May 3rd, 2014, entitled, "Ils sont la minorité agissante," creates a portrait of the "New Black French Élite," young professionals, from 25 to 40 years old, and of African or Antillean descent, living in France, who have managed to secure top positions in French society, despite the obstacles to their integration (Vincent et Imbert 35) and who, unlike some of the members of the group coined *la Bourgeoisie* by Philippe Bernard in his 1999 book, *La Crème des Beurs*, evoke pride and confidence in themselves, making it known that they will not accept passive roles as members of French society, a philosophy that corresponds largely to the mentality displayed by Kery James in his song from 2008, "Banlieusards," which I discuss in Chapter 4 of this dissertation. The journalists summarize the difference between the old *Bourgeoisie* and the current *élite noire* in the following remarks:

Des élites noires, la France en a toujours eu. Mais il s'agissait de cercles restreints de diplomates, de "fils de", ou d'intellectuels et de hauts fonctionnaires. Ceux qui s'affirment aujourd'hui sont plus nombreux et ont des profils plus variés: avocats, ingénieurs, pharmaciens... Ils en ont 25 et 40 ans. La moitié est née en Afrique et arrivée en France pour ses études... Des jeunes bien nés, mais pas uniquement. Beaucoup sont issus de la classe moyenne et n'ont réussi que grâce à des bourses et la sueur de leur bachotage. L'autre moitié est née en France. Parmi elle, il y a des enfants de réfugiés, d'Africains, d'eux-mêmes venus plus jeunes, comme étudiants. Une grande partie a aussi des origines antillaises... A la différence de ses parents, elle ne partage plus forcément l'idée qu'une intégration réussie, c'est se fonder dans la masse. Les filles ont jeté les produits éclairissants de leur mère. Elles sont noires et veulent que cela se voie.

(Vincent et Imbert 37)

Vincent and Imbert characterize these professionals as striving to shatter the proverbial glass ceiling, and they seem to be achieving more and more, thanks to the dining clubs, business clubs, and lobbying that some of them organize, and stress that these people take care to intentionally use the word “black” “(*noir*)” to describe themselves, regardless of the lexical taboo associated with it. Additionally, some of these young professionals are sought after by companies looking to expand into Africa, according to Vincent and Imbert: “Très prisée, cette nouvelle élite suscite les convoitises des grands groupes qui cherchent à se développer en Afrique. Des chasseurs-de-têtes spécialisés [Specialized headhunters] se sont même créés pour recruter les cadres [managers] et les ingénieurs nés sur le continent [l’Afrique] avec diplôme française” (Vincent and Imbert 37). Among the professionals in this group, are the upper-level manager for the Orange phone company, Ferninand Tra; Angélique Zettor, the boss of Genymobile; Daniel Herso, the founder of the Outre-Mer Network, and Adam Ndiaye, the stylist and founder of Black Fashion Week, all of whom are pictured on the first page of the article (Vincent and Imbert 35). Listed in the 2012 version of *Le Gotha noir*, a *Who’s Who des personnalités afro-françaises*, according to the authors of this article, are the current Minister of Justice, Christiane Taubira, and TV personality, Karine Le Marchand (Vincent et Imbert 37).

The second contemporary work that I find it necessary to take note of in this section is the French film from 2013, *La Marche*, known in the US as *The Marchers*, directed by Belgian Nabil Ben Yadir, supported by Luc Besson’s EuroCorp company, and starring Moroccan-French actor, Jamel Debbouze, who had roles in Jean-Pierre

Jeunet's 2001's surprise blockbuster hit, *Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain*, and Rachid Bouchareb's 2006 *Indigènes*, which I will analyze in Chapter 4 of this dissertation. This film, depicting the struggle of the original *Beur* generation to make political strides in their own defense in the France of 1983, focuses on the period of time in which some of these *Beurs* marched from Marseille to Paris, in an effort to insist on better conditions for their people, with their spokespeople negotiating with then-President, François Mitterrand, for such strides as having a 10-year resident and working permit granted, a law punishing racist crimes passed, and a project aiming to guarantee voter rights for minorities, created. Although the first two promises materialized, the third never did. Thus, it seems that this movement, while giving *Beur* leaders visibility, did not fulfill the vision that some of their leaders probably had for it. Although much of the progress made by the *Beurs* in this period was temporary and limited in scope, many current Maghrebi-French take pride in the way in which their parents' generation claimed their rights with respect to the French government, as shown by the great anticipation that preceded this film, released in November, 2013, in France.

Peter Bruge's article, "Film Review: *La Marche*," published in December 2nd, 2013's *Variety Magazine*, gives an overall favorable review to this film, which was released on July 29th, 2014, in the United States. Debruge characterizes this film as conveying a message of racial tolerance, and as a testament to the values cherished by the founders of the *Beur* movement, claiming that this film will do well in other countries besides France. According to Bruge's review, the film begins with a violent encounter, and finishes on a peaceful note, with the depiction of *La Marche contre le racisme et pour l'égalité* in Paris. Bruge feels that the film's release date, November of 2013, was

expressly chosen because of current intercultural relations in France (although, overall, relationships between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent have been tense for decades).

Bruges is insightful, however, when he notes that the racial progress achieved in the US during the era of the Civil Rights Movement (during the 1950s and 1960s) obscures the nature of the true challenges faced by minorities in France and other countries, where these issues surfaced later than they did in the U.S. Unlike France, the U.S. saw the consequences of slavery on its own territory very early on, while the French experienced the fall-out of centuries of exploitation of Africans and Antilleans, starting after World War II, and the brunt of the work needed to improve racial relations in France has occurred since the 1980s, at the start of the *Beur* movement, the inauguration of which this film, *La Marche*, celebrates.

Bruges observes that the protests made visible in the film were sparked by the shooting of an Algerian man by police in the Lyonnais suburb of les Minguettes, where, two years earlier, in 1981, the first large-scale riots by minorities occurred, riots that I discuss in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

Unlike in 1981, however, which saw explosive riots in les Minguettes, the incident in 1983, while kindling the anger of those involved, led to peaceful protest and resistance. In the film depicting this incident, Debbouze's character, Hassan, is shot as he tries to defend Mohammed, played by Tewfik Jallab, the fictional equivalent of real-life organizer, Toumi Djaida. Instead of deciding to throw Molotov cocktails at police, or to burn cars in the streets of les Minguettes, as was done during the "rodeo riots" of 1981, Hasan and Jallab resolved to lead a march from the south of France to Paris, and to speak

to then-President François Mitterrand in Paris, in order to insist on the need for better treatment of minorities by the police, and several other necessary reforms for the protection of minorities in France.

In this review, Debruge points to the legendary moral and spiritual leadership provided by Catholic priest, Christian Dubois (based on the real-life priest, Christian Delorme), who insists, in the film, that Hasan and Jallab pursue peaceful methods towards achieving their ends, although he is portrayed as being fully aware of the dangers implicit to demanding the equal treatment of people of all backgrounds during this time period in France.

The appearance of this film suggests that, just as the study of colonial and post-colonial memories have become more common in Francophone Studies over the past decade or so, many contemporary Europeans demonstrate interest in the genesis of the *Beur* movement. Additionally, the stress that the film places on the peaceful means of resistance demonstrated by the *Beurs* and *Beurettes*, and the priest who leads them in their march from Marseille to Paris, as well as the positive consequences of this march for the *Beurs*, confirms the wisdom of searching for strategies of resistance that circumvent violence, a path that I recommend in my discussion of desubjectification in Chapter 5 of this dissertation, and that I expound upon in my Conclusions.

A third contemporary work to be discussed in this review of recent literature pertaining to the *Beurs* (in the general sense), is Sylvie Ohayon's autobiographical novel-turned-film, *Papa is Not a Rolling Stone*, which came out in French theaters on Wednesday, October 8th, 2014. Like *La Marche*, this film harkens back to the 1980s (specifically, 1986), the era of the original *Beur* generation in France, and is set in the

Parisian *banlieue* of la Corneuve, which is portrayed as troubled. Franco-French singer and actor Marc Lavoine (known for his duet with Christina Marocco, “J’ai tout oublié,” and “Toi, mon amour”) plays the abusive stepfather of the protagonist, a 17-year-old *Beurette* named Stéphanie, incarnated by actress Doria Achour, whose mother (Aure Autika) is portrayed as being irresponsible, and who manages to escape the constraints created by the traditional environment in which she finds herself through dance, reading, and listening to Jean-Jacques Goldman, whose songs are ubiquitously played during the film. Her relationship with her grandmother is also shown to be paramount. At the end of the film, Stéphanie manages to leave the estate at la Corneuve, mirroring protagonists of other *Beurette* novels and films, such as Samia in Soraya Nini’s 1993 *Ils disent que je suis une beurette* (analyzed in Chapter 4 of this dissertation), in which departure from the family home is seen as a sign of success, noted by Sally Sieloff Magnan in the article, “Young “Beur” Heroes: Helping Students Understand Tensions of Multicultural France” (921). *Papa is not a rolling stone* is an adaptation of Ohayon’s 2011 novel, according to an article on *Le Film Français Magazine’s* website, “The Film *Lance Papa was not a Rolling Stone,*” by Sarah Drouhaud, and is one of several films that Michaël Gentile has produced from other people’s novels. Gentile is cited in this article as claiming that one of his aims in producing films is to expand the horizons of subjects covered in films: “...d’ouvrir le jeu tant il n’existe plus de recettes toutes faites,” and as a director who makes many films based on contemporary issues, according to Drouhaud.

Although this film is not currently available to me, since I am writing this dissertation in the United States, this film seems to be a promising production, not only for its depiction of the *banlieues* of the 1980s in France, which seems to be an era of

increasing interest, but also for the way in which it may bring attention to the problem of domestic violence in France. While it is not stated which ethnicity Stéphanie's abusive father is perceived as being in this film, particularly since Stéphanie and her mother are portrayed as being Maghrebi-French, I find it encouraging that the issue of domestic violence and the way in which it is tolerated in many Maghrebin-French families, may come to light as a result of this film. I find that there is not much discussion of this very sensitive issue in the analyses of *Beur* novels and films that I have read. While this issue is present in several *Beur* novels and films (for example, *Béni ou le paradis privé*, by Azouz Begag, and Nini's *Ils disent que je suis une beurette*), I think that much good could come from coming to terms with this problem of violence in the home, especially since the women and children (and some men) living in these situations often feel that they have no recourse in escaping them. I acknowledge, of course, the high degree of sensitivity needed to approach this issue, especially because of the cultural differences that exist between many families of French descent, and those of North African descent.

A Discussion of Other Studies that Also Use Foucauldian Theory to Contextualize the Integration of the Maghrebi-French

As I will state in the following section of this dissertation, I relate French philosopher and theorist, Michel Foucault's (1926-1984) power theory to the situation of the Maghrebi-French. Other scholars have also done this, yet I am the first to use Foucauldian power theory in tandem with Derridean hospitality theory, to discuss Maghrebi-French integration. A seminal work that does use Foucauldian power theory to contextualize *Beur* integration is 1993's work by Michel Laronde, *Autour du roman*

Beur. Laronde uses the model of Foucault's panopticon to describe the rapport between the French of European descent and the *Beurs*:

Lorsque je pense à la place de l'immigré maghrébin dans le système socio-politique français, je ne peux pas éviter de constater la présence active des mécanismes de surveillance de la société disciplinaire que Michel Foucault systématisa pour le carcéral, dans *Surveiller et punir*... C'est le modèle vertical de l'architecture des bâtiments du pouvoir disciplinaire... qui permet au Surveillant... de voir sans être vu : prisons, établissements d'éducation spécialisée, maisons de correction, asiles psychiatriques. Or, pour le Surveillant, voir sans être vu, c'est avoir le droit de regard... avoir le droit de surveillance, donc exercer, par le seul regard, un pouvoir de contrôle.

(Laronde 95)

Laronde specifies some of the types of treatment that the *Beurs* receive from the French of European descent, in this arrangement of control and manipulation :

On l'expulse des lieux qu'on rase (bidonville, cité de transit), pour l'enfermer dans les lieux qu'on construit (HLM), on mène une politique d'expulsion du territoire national (la loi Stoléru de 1980), on cherche à l'assimiler (imposition de la nationalité française), à le marginaliser (refuse de la nationalité française), à le refouler (renvoi à la nationalité algérienne).

(Laronde 122)

This writer also remarks that the *Beurs* are restricted through a system of documentation, with authorities demanding identity papers (108). Finally, Laronde observes that the areas where minorities live have become the sites of the conflict over assimilation: "Dans le cas de l'immigration maghrébine en France, c'est là où le bidonville est, au centre d'une double dialectique de rejet et d'assimilation, dont l'ambiguïté reste entière" (94).

Mireille Rosello's *Post-Colonial Hospitality* (2001) applies Foucault's findings that laws of hospitality are a kind of power and can generate resistance, which may be condemned by the dominant community. Rosello focuses on relationships that go seriously wrong, especially when different ideas of hospitality come into contact with each other (viii). This theorist, however, addresses, almost exclusively, the pathology of relationships, rather than dialectically engaging Foucault with Derrida, as I do. My work will also be different from that of Rosello, since I also consider examples of hospitality that are neither purely pathological nor healthy, but at the mid-point.

My Central Arguments

In this dissertation, I examine representations of integration in *Beur* novels, films, and music videos and the French magazine, *Paris-Match*, from the standpoints of Derrida's hospitality theory and Foucault's power theory, which I reinterpret as a theory of compulsory, dysfunctional hospitality. In other words, Foucault's theory on interactions involving subjection, subjectification, power, knowledge and resistance, is revisited in light of Derrida's late work on a range of ethical issues, including hospitality, gift-giving, forgiveness and friendship. A spectrum of hospitality results, from setting Derrida and Foucault in conversation with each other in this way, and this continuum proves to be a useful tool for comparing and contrasting diverse cultural representations of *Beur* integration. One end of the spectrum is marked by Derrida's radically Other-centric vision of politics, while the other end is characterized by Foucault's ideas of

subjection, subjectification, and resistance, concepts which, I will show, significantly complicate a political emphasis on the Other, certainly as Derrida envisions it. In terms of the cultural representations of *Beur* integration, I will ask fundamental questions: To what degree do these representations indicate a healthy, reciprocal rapport between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French? On the other hand, to what extent is there mutual distrust in these representations? How can Foucault's famous theory on the panopticon, when related to Derrida's conception of hospitality, illuminate the hazards facing the French dialogue on integration? To what extent do perceived differences in status, critical to Foucauldian theory, frustrate and stymie integration? Alternatively, what new political opportunities for the Maghrebi-French might be anticipated within Derrida's extremely radical understanding of hospitality toward the Other?

Given the questions that I explore in this dissertation, I note that I have chosen this topic because the relationship between the French of European descent and the descendants of North African immigrants to France is one of the most divisive issues in France today. There is a debate over the degree to which the French of European descent should accommodate the descendants of immigrants to France, and the extent to which the Maghrebi-French should try to become integrated into French society. It is essential to understand perceptions of integration in France, because people's attitudes drive their behavior.

Both in terms of theory and cultural representations, I argue that there is a wide range of hospitality with respect to integration in France, with some exchanges between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent corresponding to Derrida's

more optimistic conceptualization of hospitality, emphasizing a healthy guest-host connection, while others match a Foucauldian interpretation of hospitality, in which the hosts manipulate and control the guests. While perceived differences in status, essential to Foucault's theory, and the process by which perceived differences in status implicit to many types of relationships result in the subjection and subjectification of the more vulnerable party, and complicate and frustrate intercultural connections in France, Derrida's radical concept of the Other employs extreme respect for the otherness of the Other, a quasi-religious act of appreciating the value, significance and irreducible complexity of the Other, an act that also includes the possibility of a role reversal. While Hegel, Husserl, and Sartre had each conceptualized the idea of the Other, Emmanuel Lévinas was the one of the first to make the concept of the Other an explicitly ethical one. Derrida's contribution consists in applying the Lévinasian Other to political situations. By deconstructing the ethical concepts of hospitality, gift-giving, forgiveness and friendship, Derrida arrives at the radical notion of a possible reversal of the role of the Other. Derrida holds that, in relationships in which one party has greater authority than the Other, deference can flow in both directions, and the party with more authority can, in some circumstances, be viewed as the Other, thereby making the marginalized subject, often the recipient of mistreatment due to the way in which many relationships result in his or her subjection and subjectification (according to Foucauldian theory), the person in virtual authority. Derrida acknowledges that Power can never completely understand the otherness of the Other. He does not recommend an ordinary type of empathy, but rather an extreme esteem for the Other, for an absolute Alterity, a respect that includes a tolerant, non-judgmental approach. In terms of the Maghrebi-French and their role in

their own integration, their option to have appreciation for the French of European descent could actually empower them.

With regards to Foucault, I claim that his theory of power could be viewed as a theory of dysfunctional hospitality, since respect and trust at the core of Derrida are distinct from the basis of Foucault's theory. Applied to integration, a Foucauldian interpretation implies that there is no possibility of an egalitarian relationship between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French.

At this juncture, I would like to provide a clarification on an aspect of Foucauldian power theory, that is sometimes misunderstood. Namely, while some people may perceive Power as being the central concept in Foucauldian theory, and the agent of action on people within various types of relationships, his theory truly centers around the consequences that occur to people or parties within relationships that involve differences in levels of authority, clout, or financial or social status. In such contexts, a certain *regime of truth* is sustained by the production of particular types of knowledge, and the interaction between those who maintain this regime, and those who are obliged to follow its mandates, results in the production of Power and the consequences that it has on all people and parties within this hierarchy. In Karlis Racevskis' words, which encapsulate Foucault's perspective towards these relationships, "Power and its effects are produced in a given context that brings together certain practices, and a particular regime of truth that is sustained by the production of certain types of knowledge" ("Foucault and the Subject of Power," TS 1). According to Racevskis, in the typescript, "The End of Man: a Foucauldian Take on the Present Crisis," the discursive construct that is set for people in a "regime of truth" to follow must be appropriate to that regime: "...if discourse is to

function effectively, it has to fit in an overall scheme, a particular order that Foucault designate as a 'régime de vérité' ...These are discourses that have a powerful and lasting effect because, [in Foucault's words, in *Dits et écrits III* 176], 'nous sommes jugés, condamnés, classés...en fonction de discours vrais...'” (Racevskis, “The End of Man,” TS 2). Racevskis summarizes the way in which Foucault conceives of power in the following statement: “Power does not do anything, no one acquires or holds on to it: it is simply a name given to the effects derived from a particular situation or strategy” (“Foucault and the Subject of Power,” TS 1). In the article, “Michel Foucault, Rameau's Nephew, and the Question of Identity,” Racevskis writes that, in the formation of a subject, the subject is heavily affected by power: this subject is...“amenable to the effects of power...For power to be effective, humans have to be subjected in the name of their being---that is, there has to be a “being” serving as an alibi if the process of subjection is to be effective” (134).

According to Racevskis, cited in “Foucault and the Subject of Power,” several of Foucault's writings buttress this interpretation of Foucauldian power theory, as evidenced by quotations such as the following:

...indeed, too much had been made of this notion of power, as Foucault explained to an American audience in 1980, noting that, “...ce n'est donc pas le pouvoir, mais le sujet, qui constitue le thème général de mes recherches” (*Dits et écrits IV*, 306). He went on to point out that, “...le sujet humain est pris dans des rapports de production et des relations de sens, il est également pris dans des relations de pouvoir d'une grande complexité” (Foucault, *Dits et écrits IV* 223).

(Racevskis, “Foucault and the Subject of Power,” TS 1)

The main point made in Racevskis' commentary, according to which the subject, rather than Power, is the main focus of Foucault's research, is clarified by another of Racevskis' quotations, in which he cites Foucault, precisely defining the two definitions of "subject," one that implies subjugation, and one that implies one's identity as an individual conscious of one's own existence:

To appreciate this complexity, we need to keep in mind, he said that:

...Il y a deux sens au mot "sujet"; sujet soumis à l'autre par le contrôle et la dépendance, et sujet attaché à sa propre identité par la conscience ou la connaissance de soi. Dans les deux cas, ce mot suggère une forme de pouvoir qui subjugue et assujettit.

(Foucault, *Dits et écrits IV* 227, as cited in Racevskis, "Foucault and the Subject of Power," TS 1)

In Foucauldian power theory, the subject, while normally possessing a sense of his or her own identity with respect to society, comes to lose more and more of this sense of self, as he or she is continually compelled to demonstrate behavior that is expected of him or her by society, whose mandates exert control over the individual, turning a person who would have say over their own behavior, into someone completely conditioned by social cues and imperatives.

The fact that Foucault himself specified subjectification and subjection as the key processes at the center of his "power theory," stipulating that he did not intend "power" to be seen as the focus of this research, suggests that Foucault saw the vulnerability that results from complex relationships, often characterized by heavy imbalances, as being

critical to the condition of being human. As Racevskis makes clear, in Foucault's theoretical construct, Power itself is not a motor or agent, and Power should not be personified or be seen as representing a person or group; rather, power is produced from the contrast created by the fact that some people, as the promoters of certain regimes based on the production of certain types of knowledge, have superior positions as compared to people who are seen as being responsible for accepting these types of knowledge and the imperatives of these certain regimes. In addition, since the vulnerability experienced by people at the lower end of these systems is so important to Foucault, it supports the idea that society as a whole has a duty to defend the rights of the marginalized, and to protect these vulnerable people from exploitation and oppression, an idea which seems to correspond with Derrida's vision of a more cooperative and just society.

Racevskis uses the following quotation from Foucault to illustrate his point according to which subjects perceive certain patterns of behavior that come to be seen as obligatory for them to accept, and then internalize these "norms," behaviors which perpetuate the continuation of the system:

What Foucault sought to understand, and to analyze in this regard, was the way in which the behavior of individuals is regularized in terms of concepts that function to determine their experience. In other words, the process through which individuals gain an understanding of their experience also serves to elaborate an imperceptible system of rules and regulations that oversees and guides their behavior. While these concepts have no concrete referents—that is, they do not name any real or tangible objects—they are quite real, nevertheless, since they do have a concrete existence in the heads of individuals. They are what Foucault calls « des réalités de transaction, c'est-à-dire que c'est dans le jeu précisément et des relations de pouvoir et de ce qui, sans cesse, leur échappe, c'est de cela que naissent, en quelque sorte à l'interface des gouvernants et des gouvernés, ces figures transactionnelles et transitoires qui, pour n'avoir pas existé de tout temps,

n'en sont pas moins réelles et que l'on peut appeler, en l'occurrence, la société civile, ailleurs, la folie, etc. (« La naissance de la biopolitique » 301). »

(Racevskis, « Foucault and the Subject of Power, » TS 1)

Foucault's theory, according to which the same experiences that help to illustrate to people the expectations that society has for them, also serve to show them the penalties for transgressing these norms, can be applied to the situation of the *Beur* protagonists in several of the novels, films, and songs that I analyze in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation. For example, Georgette in Belghoul's *Georgette!*, a novel that I discuss in Chapter 2 of my dissertation, and which focuses on the academic experience of a seven-year-old Maghrebin-French girl, reveals the way in which the French school makes clear the types of behavior that are expected for girls like Georgette (for example, bringing the proper school supplies to class, writing her name in the proper fashion), and also disincentivizes unwanted behavior (such as writing her name backwards, as in Arabic, in her *carnet*, or bringing the wrong type of notebook to school). Though in this case, some of these behaviors can be represented by concrete objects (such as notebooks), while Foucault saw this type of disincentivization as sometimes being more abstract, the fact remains that the relationship between Georgette and her *maîtresse* is heavily predicated by Georgette's ability to meet the standards created by the administrators of the school, norms which young Georgette, at first bewildered because of the numerous cultural differences which she observes between her family background and the school, eventually internalizes, despite the emotional toll that it takes on her, and her parents.

In order to demonstrate the intricacies of this theory, Racevskis cites a quotation by Foucault concerning the location of the dissemination of patterns of knowledge, behaviors, and lifestyles that subjects are conditioned to accept :

A few years later, Foucault would make his thinking more precise by introducing the concept of “les foyers d’expérience” (focal centers of experience), sites constituted by an accumulation of impressions, perceptions, and reflection, which were made up of three categories that interested him in particular : « premièrement, les formes d’un savoir possible, deuxièmement, les matrices normatives de comportement pour les individus, et enfin, des modes d’existence virtuels pour des sujets possibles » (« Le gouvernement de soi et des autres » 4-5).

(Racevskis, « Foucault and the Subject of Power,» TS 1)

Fittingly, one of the categories of *les foyers d’expérience* that Foucault describes, namely, that of « ...les formes d’un savoir possible, » is that of educational institutions, corresponding to the type of institution that compels Georgette to accept the cultural norms that clash sharply with her background, although these *foyers d’expérience* also include prisons, mental hospitals, and other institutions. It thus becomes more clear why several of the *Beur* novels that involve relationships that are at least partially dysfunctional (Begag’s *Le Gone du Chaaba* and *Béni ou le paradis privé*, among other examples) are works set in academic environments.

According to Racevskis, Foucault conceived of the institutions that perpetuate these patterns of behavior for their subjects as often hiding the true aims of the norms that they generate for society, as shown by this quotation, which illustrates the true sense of the word *biopower*, as these institutions find ways to exercise control over people’s

bodies through mind control, as demonstrated by this quotation by Racevskis, found in the typescript, “Foucault and the Subject of Power”:

This manner of inverting the traditional manner of conceptualizing the relation between thought and reality constitutes the basis for Foucault’s critical strategy. As we have just seen, its first effect is to show that an interpretation of reality in the light of “universals” results mainly in the masking of the operation of discourses that function clandestinely and “behind the scenes,” as it were, in order to impose truths, to form and discipline subjects, to control bodies by fabricating identities and souls for them. Foucault theorizes this strategy in the course on the birth of biopolitics offered at the Collège de France in 1978-1979. His purpose, he explains, has been to « montrer par quelles interférences toute une série de pratiques—à partir du moment où elles sont coordonnées à un régime de vérité—par quelles interférences cette série de pratiques a pu faire que ce qui n’existe pas (la folie, la maladie, la délinquance, la sexualité etc.), devienne cependant quelque chose. »

(Racevskis, «Foucault and the Subject of Power, » TS 1)

In the quotation above, Racevskis interprets Foucault as seeing the goal of these institutions that obscure their true aims for setting standards of conduct for their subjects as being the control of people, through the creation of socially-constructed concepts that he cites at the end of the quotation, such as, « madness, sickness, delinquency, sexuality... » : « la folie, la maladie, la délinquance, la sexualité... » (« Foucault and the Subject of Power, » TS 1).

In the following quotation by Foucault, cited by Racevskis, Foucault demonstrates his attitude towards this process of the perpetuation and internalization of societal norms, which have a tendency, through the very pull of general influence, to turn people from active agents in their lives, to passive subjects, automatically and sometimes uncritically

applying society's norms to their own lives, and punishing themselves for their failure to attain these standards :

These « interferences » that are coordinated with a truth regime are evidently to be found in a dimension outside or preceding conscious thought, and find themselves established according to an order that is constituted independently of the thinking subject. It is a perspective that brings about a completely changed view of the self, as well as the practices an individual engages in and that go into the constitution of the self. The self is no longer the originator of a thought by means of which it can dominate the world, but finds itself completely immersed in a thought that precedes its self-awareness. The subject's meaning, as well as its convictions, are due to its capacity for identifying itself with the truths provided by discourses that constitute its time and its place in the world. Thought is formed according the subtle dictates of a whole *dispositif* or apparatus : “Si je dis vrai sur moi-même comme je le fais, c'est que, en partie, je me constitue comme sujet à travers un certain nombre de relations de pouvoir qui sont exercées sur moi et que j'exerce sur les autres” (Foucault, *Dits et écrits IV* 451).

(as cited by Racevskis, “Foucault and the Subject of Power,” TS 1)

Nevertheless, Foucault's idea of resistance is not completely undermined by the potential breakthrough in Derrida's thinking, which holds that that the marginalized can achieve control by identifying with, and appreciating, the vulnerabilities of the party in authority. Derrida seems to recommend a balancing act between his own hyper-ethical view of political engagement and political resistance, although this act of empowerment, through awareness of the Other, disrupts previous understandings of political perceived differences in status. Derrida's conception is expansive enough to include other visions of hierarchicalized relationships. He does not deny the vast perceived differences in status that exist, but provides a new way of considering them, suggesting an attitudinal change that does not require perpetual resistance, but allows for moments of forgiveness, which

could be considered a form of subversion. The dynamic of a role reversal described by Derrida is more virtual than real, because he was as aware as Foucault of the extreme difficulty of overturning established power structures.

Despite the virtuality of Foucault's vision of deference to the Other, even the most radical and unexpected aspects of Derrida's notion of the Other have real-world political implications. Derrida's theory is a radical approach to political engagement, and it represents a complication of the more binary concepts, making it impossible to think in black and white terms. Derrida's deconstruction of ethical concepts results in hyper-ethical versions of these concepts, full of paradox, and difficult to apply to political situations. This would include the idea of completely non-reciprocal hospitality and gift-giving. Nevertheless, the hyper-ethical sheds new light on the ethical, which includes reciprocity, enabling an improved application of the ethics to politics. The process of this thought experiment results in the highly ethical.

While I acknowledge that there is some potential for relationships between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent to involve ethical and even ethical behavior, Foucauldian power theory also allows for the emancipation of the marginalized from the tyranny of the norm, although different strategies are used in the application of these theories. In particular, given that Foucauldian power theory allows one to see the central role of subjection in hierarchialized relationships, and the way in which many *Beur* characters in the novels and films experience subjectification and subjection by the French of European descent, with some of them being able to deconstruct the discourses that tether them to behavior scripted by authorities in France, and by some of their families, it becomes clear that it is critical that the Maghrebi-French minimize their

subjectification and subjection, to the greatest degree possible. The works in which these *Beur* characters come to circumvent these processes, are the ones in which they are able to make significant improvements to their circumstances. While in Foucauldian theory, this circumvention of mandated behavior, when it is against the subjects' own interests, is not guaranteed in the course of events, his concept of *critique* encourages the individual to question these discourses, and choose the behaviors and mentalities that are best suited to his or her situation. Additionally, Agamben's suggestion that the marginalized desacralize behaviors and objects that reinforce divisions between people seems to strengthen this observation that I have made from reading, watching, and listening to *Beur* novels, films, and songs. As I analyze the works in my dissertation, I will comment on each one, revealing the degree to which circumvention of society's mandates occurs, and the reasons behind the way it happens, or does not, in each work.

The applicability of, and need for, desubjectification in some contexts of modern life is illustrated by Racevskis in the typescript, "The End of Man...". In particular, Racevskis discusses Foucault's analysis of the concept of liberalism, the practice from which the concept of a free marketplace emerged in the mid-18th century. Racevskis characterizes the free marketplace as a, "...truth that reveals itself in the form of mechanisms deemed 'natural' and that regulate automatically the functioning of the marketplace" ("The End of Man...", TS 2). According to Racevskis, Foucault recognizes the dangers intrinsic to the practice of *laissez-faire*, a concept formalized by d'Argenson in 1751, as Foucault indicates that he sees that the free market tends to limit the liberties of the public: "...un fait originaire fondamental qui était qu'on ne pouvait pas penser l'économie-politique, c'est-à-dire la liberté du marché, sans poser en même temps le

problème du droit public, à savoir la limitation de la puissance publique” (*Sécurité, territoire, population* 40, as cited in Racevskis, “The End of Man...,” TS 2).

Along with the liability occasionally leading capitalist countries to jeopardize the rights of its citizens through *laissez-faire* policies, Racevskis cites Foucault as seeing another danger: in the neo-liberal conception of capitalism, the person at complete liberty to pursue his or her interests on the market, becomes subject to the whims of the government, which compensates the individual for behaviors that the government sees as desirable: “*L’homo oeconomicus*, c’est celui qui est éminemment gouvernable...” (*Sécurité, territoire, population* 274, as cited in Racevskis, “The End of Man...” TS 4). In Racevskis’ interpretation of Foucault’s observation in *Sécurité, territoire, population*, the worth of the individual becomes closely tied to his or her potential for production:

...while in the eighteenth century, the notion was taken to represent one facet of life in society, for neo-liberals, *homo oeconomicus* incorporates the totality of human experience. Economy...covers the entirety of human activity...What we have, then, is a society of individual enterprises for whom thinking and functioning is interpreted in strictly economic terms. Thus, an individual’s place, importance, and chances for success are to be determined by his or her capital, or more specifically, his or her human capital...The supreme value in such a system is no longer the community or the commonwealth, it is individual achievement.

(Racevskis, “The End of Man...,” TS 4-5)

Racevskis cites Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval, and their work, *La Nouvelle raison du monde: Essai sur la société libérale*, as he explains the implications of Foucault’s exposition of the flaws inherent to neoliberalism, and summarizes their findings that neoliberal politics rely heavily on the construction of a certain model of human behavior:

“La politique libérale...a pour horizon et référence l’homme nouveau, défini par la recherche de son intérêt, la satisfaction de son amour-propre...”, a conception that results, in Dardot and Laval’s estimation, in the further subjectification of the individual in these societies, as they are constrained to obey models of behavior set for them by the government, which is seen as having increasingly less responsibility for resolving the large-scale crises that occur in these societies (Dardot and Laval, as cited in Racevskis, “The End of Man...,” TS 5). The crushing weight of responsibility that is imposed upon individuals in these settings makes concepts related to society, in Racevskis’ perspective, a moot point: “Obviously, such a view of the world order and of the individual’s role in society makes such notions or ideals as egalitarianism, social justice, and even democracy, irrelevant...” (“the End of Man...,” TS 5).

While Racevskis’ article, and the discussion of neoliberalism by Foucault that inspired it, involve issues more comprehensive in nature than those that I treat in my dissertation, Racevskis’ typescript, “The End of Man...” does show the high level of applicability of the concept of *subjectification* to people in modern contexts, reinforcing the idea that subjectification is much more generalized in our societies than some acknowledge it as being. The perception according to which, according to Foucault, the person living in modern, capitalist nations such as France and the United States is heavily subjectified by the governments’ expectation that he or she will satisfy their self-esteem and ambitions through involvement in the free market, thus enabling the government to subjectify him or her as he or she is expected to conform to its standards, reveals that on a basic level, the members of our society are highly vulnerable to trends the determination of which are far beyond their control. Likewise, the situation of minorities

such as the Maghrebi-French in France exemplifies the concept of subjectified people, heavily conditioned, in many cases, to accept the discursive constructs of French society, and those of their families. Subjectification is a phenomenon occurring on many levels of human experience, and Racevskis' discussion of the current urgency of the need to break the cycle of subjectification of the individual through a virtually unregulated free market, and the way in which it has led the government to tend to absolve itself of much responsibility for the resolution of generalized crises, shows the immediate relevancy of this phenomenon of subjectification, and the many ways in which discussion of it is necessary.

Moreover, the examination of desubjectification in the *Beur* artistic works that I study in this dissertation is situated within the context of engaged intellectuals calling attention to, and striving to improve, the situation of the marginalized, largely exemplified by Foucault's summaries of his response to the suffering of psychiatric patients and prisons that he visited, summarized by Racevskis in the article, "Edward Saïd and Michel Foucault: Affinities and Dissonances" (TS):

In a radio interview given in 1975, for example, Foucault recounts the suffering he experienced in a psychiatric hospital, at the insight of the inmates' suffering. It was a feeling of empathy that contrasted sharply, he thought, with the scientific detachment and seeming impassivity of the doctors (*Dits et écrits II*, 783-802). Similarly, in the prisons he visited, what struck Foucault most was the manner in which the act of confining human beings was taken as something perfectly natural, as a procedure whose legitimacy was self-evident. The naturalness of this power to subject others led him to reflect on the historical process that had yielded the necessary truths for justifying and institutionalizing procedures of confinement.

(Racevskis, "Edward Saïd and Michel Foucault" 9)

Along with his great degree of empathy for the mistreated, and insight into the systems regulating their marginalization, Foucault's dedication to being politically-engaged can be seen within his vision of the committed intellectual, whose purpose is primarily instructive and altruistic; in Racevskis' words, "...the purpose being not to tell others what to do, but to make knowledge available to them, on the basis of which they could then decide on the best course of action" ("Edward Saïd and Michel Foucault," TS 19). Racevskis also cites Saïd, who praises Foucault by saying that he sees this instructive function as paramount: [Foucault] "...wanted everyone to be aware of what disciplines, discourses, epistemes, and statements were really all about, without illusion" (Saïd, *Reflections on Exile*, as cited in Racevskis, "Edward Saïd and Michel Foucault," TS 19).

Although most of Foucault's work does not engage with post-colonial thought, which is very relevant to my study of the integration of the Maghrebi-French in France, he does refer to the use of racist justifications in some governments dealing with colonized peoples in *Il faut défendre la société*, according to Racevskis, in, the article, "Michel Foucault et l'ordre impensé" (16), as Racevskis articulates Foucault's view of the mechanism of racism: "...le racisme, qui sert 'à fonction meurtrière de l'Etat'...assure la fonction de mort dans l'économie du bio-pouvoir, selon le principe que la mort des autres, c'est le renforcement biologique de soi-même, en tant que l'on est membre d'une race ou d'une population, en tant que l'on est élément dans une pluralité unitaire et vivante" ("Michel Foucault et l'ordre de l'impensé" 16). Racevskis continues to comment on Foucault's conception on the function of racism as seen by some (although of course, Foucault does not justify it):

...le concept de racisme doit se comprendre, d'une façon très générale, en termes d'appartenance à un segment particulier de la population dont l'existence se conçoit dans une perspective biologique, génétique ou évolutionniste. Il existe, ainsi, une race de pauvres ou des défavorisés; in Peter Dickens' words, published in his 2000 work, *Social Darwinism: Linking Evolutionary Thought to Social Theory*, "We can therefore begin to envisage a biological mechanism contributing to the continued reproduction of an "unfit" underclass; generations of people being not only born into poor circumstances, but constructed for such contexts and furthermore, even passing on inherited biological misfortunes to their children.

(Dickens 109-110, as cited in Racevskis, "Michel Foucault et l'ordre de l'impensé" 16)

Certainly, Dicken's conceptualization of racism, and Foucault's enunciation of it, in its perceived aim to promote the perpetuation of the lives and well-being of people of certain ethnicities, as opposed to those of others, runs completely counter to the goals of those advancing the instatement of proper rights and the integration of the Maghrebi-French into French society. Racist mentalities and practices have the capacity not only to impede social progress, and even render it stagnate, but to dehumanize people whose humanity is as very real, precious, and vulnerable as that of the people responsible for this type of oppression.

My Justifications for My Choices of the Theories and Sources that I Will Use in this Dissertation

Now that I have declared the thesis that I will defend in my dissertation, I will justify my choice of theories and major sources that I will use. I have chosen to use Derrida's hospitality theory because of its close connection to the topic of immigration in France, demonstrated especially in *Of Hospitality* (2000), in which Derrida discusses hospitality as it applies to the Algerian-French (143). I have decided to apply Foucault's power theory and concept of resistance to the situation of the Maghrebi-French because power theory is the most famous such theory to emerge out of the late 20th-century, and can be used to describe the domination of the descendants of North African immigrants by the French of European descent. In addition, Foucault was a very influential philosopher in France; he was named a *Trésorier national*, and he is still cited frequently in various outlets of cultural expression, twenty years after he passed away, in 1984. I will study samples of *Beur* novels, films and music videos, due to their portrayal of power dynamics in France, essential gauges of the health of this rapport. Finally, I will analyze *Paris-Match* as a major representative of the French press and as a reflection of public opinion in France. This widely-distributed magazine in France, consisting largely of photographs, with shorter articles than are found in some magazines, can be said to be a barometer of attitudes towards issues concerning relationships between people of different ethnic backgrounds in France. Namely, while 35 years ago, in the 1970s, the covers of this magazine featured only faces of Caucasian people, it now shows the faces of entertainers of diverse origins, thus seemingly reflecting the evolution in society,

concerning the extent to which the visibility of people of other backgrounds is represented in the wider French social landscape. I will examine *Paris-Match* articles from the years 1990-1991, 2005, 2007, and 2010, because there were significant riots in each of these years.

My theoretical approach, putting Foucault into conversation with Derrida, is a continuation of a dialogue that took place between the two philosophers before Foucault died in 1984, over the degree to which philosophy should have practical, political applications. In *The History of Madness*, Foucault criticizes Derrida's well-known claim that, "there is nothing outside the text," found in his 1967 *Of Grammatology* (163). Foucault complained that Derrida's practice of deconstruction, the process by which the internal oppositions and contradictions of philosophy are exposed, was politically irrelevant (573). Other critics castigated deconstruction for being obscure and overly complicated. Foucault never lived to see the evolution in Derrida's thinking when he turned to the study of ethics, starting in the 1990s. Derrida's system of ethics amounts to a theory of politics as well. It seems that Derrida tried, in this later stage of writing, to prove that he could make deconstruction politically useful, such as in his application of hospitality theory to the situation of refugees, in *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (2001). Two major works, Simon Critchley's 1992 book *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, and Richard Beardsworth's *Derrida and the Political* (1996), hold that Derrida's deconstruction is a political process. More specifically, Derrida deconstructs the concepts of hospitality, gift-giving, forgiveness and friendship in his works on ethics, focusing on the implications of reciprocity. In fact, my dissertation participates in a very new and recent scholarly effort to understand and interpret Derrida's late works on ethics.

I am obviously not, however, the first to use these works, as this topic is the subject of a contemporary collections of essays, *Derrida and the Time of the Political* (2009), the first major work in English to deal comprehensively with Derrida's late thinking.

Through this synthesis of Derrida and Foucault, my research indicates that this scale of types of hospitality found in *Beur* novels, films, and music videos, and journalistic articles from *Paris-Match* seems to reveal that the affiliation between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French is a very multifaceted one, and that it is hazardous to make all-encompassing generalizations about progress in integration, or the degree to which it is happening. I therefore make no blanket statements about whether integration is happening in France, nor do I assert any evolution or historical progression concerning attitudes towards integration.

On the Choice of the Spectrum as a Metaphor by which to Discuss the Variability of Contexts of Integration in France

Up until this point in this introduction to my dissertation, I have tried to illustrate that there is a wide variation in the degrees of integration that the Maghrebi-French experience in France, from person to person, situation to situation, and artistic work to artistic work. This tremendous variety seems to indicate that a spectrum of these degrees of integration would be an appropriate metaphor by which to discuss and analyze this issue. Integration cannot be discussed in a monolithic manner, nor can it be boiled down to simplistic terms, or reduced to blanket statements.

For this reason, I have taken this idea of a spectrum of integration, and combined it with the Derridean theory of hospitality, and contrasted this theory with a dysfunctional type of hospitality, which can be likened to the distrustful and disastrous relationships characteristic of Foucauldian power theory, in order to provide a more dynamic and comprehensive picture of the nature of Maghrebi-French integration in France.

In my first chapter, I will explain my application of Derridean hospitality theory, and Foucauldian power theory, to a broad-range spectrum that I will use to represent degrees of Maghrebi-French integration in France.

For the purposes of this introduction, I will state that in Derridean hospitality, there is a good relationship between the host and the guest, who symbolize France and the North African community, respectively. When there is a positive and healthy relationship between the guest and the host, each community tries to facilitate a more beneficial integration experience for the other. This type of relationship is symbolic of a mutually-beneficial relationship between France and the Maghrebi-French, in which the Maghrebi-French are well-integrated and productive members of French society, and in which the French of European descent view them as such, and treat them with respect and in an equitable fashion.

Conversely, mutually injurious, and mistrustful rapports are symbolized, in this dissertation, by the other end of the spectrum, namely, Foucauldian power theory. Foucault perceived that the patients or inmates in a hospital or prison are powerless against the people running these institutions, and that negative interactions feed on each other, escalating conflict into a truly nightmarish situation. Likewise, in instances in which the Maghrebi-French clash with the French of European descent, for example, the

riots of 2005, in which some Maghrebi-French, as well as some Franco-French, rebelled against the police due to the accidental deaths of two youth of North African origin in an electrocution station, one offense against one community begets another. In a Foucauldian power context, the Maghrebi-French have no recourse of defense against the ultra-powerful Franco-French, and are at their mercy, although in the short term, the youth who riot in France can incur serious damage in the suburbs, and cause the French of European descent to feel intimidated.

An Application of Derrida's and Foucault's Theories to Issues of Contemporary Integration in France

Given these explanations of my most important theoretical foundations, I will apply Derrida and Foucault to my topic, due to the link between hospitality and the status of the Maghrebi-French in France. In light of Derrida's theory, the relationship between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French can be viewed as one between guest and host, and this bond implies some mutual rights and responsibilities. Derrida, in *Of Hospitality*, connects the metaphor of hospitality with the idea of immigration, discussing French-Algerian relations (145). I realize that most of the Maghrebi-French are not technically immigrants, and have French citizenship, but they are outsiders in a metaphorical sense, because they are often mistreated by the French of European descent, and have not gained full access to French society in key ways. Derrida holds that immigration, like hospitality, is an ongoing, dynamic process, which never ends, and

consists of reciprocal overtures. In the rapport between the *Beurs* and French of European descent, certain governments, like the Socialist one in the 1980s, reached out to the descendants of North African immigrants and helped them create associations. In this overture, the government hoped that the *Beurs* would benefit. There was also the period of family reunification, in which North African men were allowed to welcome their families to France. Likewise, in a highly-ethical hospitality relationship, the Maghrebi-French would also make overtures to French society, refraining from hostile behavior, and making the French of European descent more comfortable. In the typical guest-host relationship, according to Derrida, there is no extreme animosity; however, in France, relationships have deteriorated, and there is a necessity to overcome decades of alienation through reciprocal overtures. I recognize, however, that the relationship between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent is an asymmetrical one, in which the French of European descent have much greater power than the Maghrebi-French. Of course, Derrida's ideal hospitality requires a level playing field of equals, which is not the case in France. Derrida's work in *The Gift of Death* and *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* implies that the Maghrebi-French can make progress in dealing with the French of European descent, through the radical step of seeing the French of European descent as the Other, envisioning their vulnerability, an argument that both transcends Derrida's traditional vision of reciprocal relationships and undermines concepts of resistance, based on Foucault's writings.

While Derrida's theory involving reciprocal relationships fits some exchanges between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent, Foucault's theory of the panopticon can be used to describe this rapport as sometimes being a dysfunctional,

compulsory type of hospitality. Foucault's argument that oppression is preferable to surveillance may carry more weight in contexts where the stakes are lower, such as in integration. In this context, I argue that the Maghrebi-French are sometimes manipulated and controlled by the French of European descent, indicating not only pathology in the interactions between them, but also a relationship akin to an exploitative one. The notion that the Maghrebi-French are subjected (that is, brought under the control of the French of European descent) and subjectified (that is, treated as if they were objects to be acted upon, without recognition of their own intrinsic agency and perspectives, and without the respect of their right to self-determination) by the French of European descent, is an extension of Foucauldian power theory, since Foucault saw these processes as innate to relationships within hierarchalized contexts. French authorities may allow immigrants to come to France, but the environment, once they are there, can be one of domination. Of course, I note that the perceived difference in status between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent is less significant than that between prison guards and inmates in Foucault's panopticon model. I argue that the mental hospital or the prison may be conceived of as a place of involuntary hospitality, thus there is some parallel between these places and the social conditions under which the Maghrebi-French currently live in France. Foucault's theory may be more applicable when stakes are lower, and there is less of a perceived difference in status between the guests and the hosts. The Maghrebi-French in France are not as oppressed as a prisoner or a patient in a mental asylum from centuries ago, and they are protected by civil liberties and are not imprisoned, their issues consisting more often of challenges such as finding employment and social acceptance. Foucault's concept of the necessity of resistance to combat

embedded power structures corresponds to the way in which the Maghrebi-French in cultural representations challenge authorities and assert themselves, although resistance, in some situations, may not accomplish their goals.

Definition of Key Terms

Since I have stated my central arguments, and explained and justified my theoretical framework, I will now define some key terms that will be useful in the analysis of integration in France. First, I will define the term *Beur*. According to Tony McNeill, a senior lecturer at the University of Sunderland, this term came about in the 1980s, and at the time of the publication of this article, described a person born in France, or having spent most of his or her life in France, with North African parents or grandparents. The term meant “Arab” in French pig latin, or *verlan*, and was used to describe the second-or-third generation Maghrebins (McNeill). Most of the people referred to by this term were (and are) French citizens, particularly because of the law affirming the right of *jus soli*, declaring that if one is born in France, one is a French citizen, as opposed to the law of *jus sanguis*, which declares one a citizen of a country if one’s parents are from this country. In this study, I will be primarily interested in examining the situation of third-generation descendants of North African immigrants to France.

While the term *Beur* was used throughout the 1980s and 1990s, and is still used in some cases in both the Francophone and Anglophone worlds of literary and cultural

studies, in recent years, this term has come to be widely replaced in the English-speaking intellectual world by the term, “Maghrebi-French.” It is based on the French phrase, *les Français d’origine maghrébine*, according to Sylvie Durmelat and Vinay Swamay, in the work, *Screening Integration: Recasting Maghrebi Immigration in Contemporary France* (13).

In fact, the term *Beur* seems to refer mostly to this population as they existed in the 1980s and 1990s, when their identity was in heavy flux for some of them, during the French equivalent of the American Civil Rights Era. The word, *Beur*, as a term used to refer to the emergence of the population of North African origin in France, and in effect from the early 1980s, the era of *la Marche contre le racisme et l’égalité*, in 1983, has largely lost its meaning, and some of the people whom it used to designate, now resent it, largely due to the pejorative origins of its use, as the pig Latin word for “Arab.” Thus, while the word, *Beur*, is used less and less, except to designate the genre of *Beur* literature, film, and culture, the term *Maghrebi-French*, a word that takes into account the composition of the ancestral history and nationality of over five million people in France, is used more and more frequently.

Thus, in order to be sensitive to the preference of the people of North African descent in France, and to be in step with the current literature on their situation in France, I will use the word, “Maghrebi-French” to designate these people in this dissertation, except when I refer to “Beur” literature, culture and film, and the status of these people in the 1980s and 1990s, when this term was in common usage.

I must note, however, that in the introduction to *Screening Integration*, Durmelat and Swamay warn against the risk one runs when using the term, *Maghrebi-French*: it arguably evokes the conflation of two national and historical identities that are very different from one another. Additionally, Durmelat and Swamay caution that the French themselves do not use these hyphenated words for identities. Durmelat and Swamay signal the presence of another term used to refer to this population of North African descent in France: the “new French,” used by French political science researchers, Sylvain Brouard and Vincent Tiberj, in their 2005 work, *Français comme les autres? Enquête sur les citoyens d’origine maghrébine, africaine et turque (As French as Everyone Else?: A Survey of French Citizens of Maghrebin, African and Turkish Origin*, which is also the first comprehensive study of the condition of integration in France done by comparing the survey responses of these “new French” to those of French people of European descent (Durmelat and Swamay 13).

This process, that of the gradual refinement of the conception of the identity of an emerging ethnic group, is normal and typical of the evolution of the status of minorities, as identities that are perceived as unstable often evolve over time. With this evolution, come changes in the names used to refer to them.

In contrast, the terms used to refer to established majority groups do not typically change as rapidly; for example, in the United States, the term “whites” is still used to refer to Caucasians, while the term used to designate people of African descent in the United States has changed several times, most recently from the word, “black” to the more accepted term, “African-American.”

Likewise, it is necessary to explain my usage of a phrase referring to the majority of people in France, namely, “French of European descent,” instead of the terms, “Franco-French” or “Français de souche.” Specifically, in this dissertation, I will use, whenever possible, the term, “French of European descent,” since it seems to strike more a neutral and balanced tone than the other aforementioned terms do. The term, “Franco-French” is interpreted by some people as indicating that there is a strict definition of Frenchness, and that having long-standing French ancestry is the criteria that qualifies one as being French, rather than taking into account the vast number of types of identity represented by the French. Meanwhile, the term, *Français de souche*, while still used sometimes in France, is often seen as controversial, since it may carry with it the connotation of the presumption of a narrowly-defined definition of Frenchness, and can even be used as an insult in some contexts.

Thus, I will use the term, “French of European descent,” since it seems to communicate what I mean best: a citizen of France, with European ancestors, while not revealing any judgment made on who in France is truly French.

I will use this term, “French of European descent,” whenever possible, except in cases in which it is necessary to use an adjective in this sense, in which I will be obliged to use “Franco-French” as an adjective.

I acknowledge, however, that some people in France may use terms that do not correspond to Anglophone usage, such as *les gens du Maghreb* and *les Arabes*.

Next, given my definition of these essential terms, I will define the terms *integration* and *assimilation*. Based on an online newsletter from the Mackenzie Institute, a non-profit organization devoted to the study of political instability, these terms

are connotative of two indicators of immigrants' successful negotiation of their arrival in their new countries. In integration, immigrants do not lose their cultural identity, while in assimilation, they do, to some extent. In particular, I base my definition of integration on the conceptualization of it in a 2003 document from the European Commission's Communication on Immigration, Integration and Employment, described in a March 2008 report by the Sciences-Po/European Commission INTI Programme, *Measuring Integration: the French Case*. Integration is defined in this report as:

a two-way process, based on mutual rights and corresponding obligations of legally-resident third country nationals, and the host society, which provides for full participation of the immigrant. This implies, on one hand, that it is the responsibility of the host society to ensure that the formal rights of immigrants are in place in such a way that the individual has the possibility of participating in economic, social, cultural and civic life, and on the other, that immigrants respect the fundamental norms and values of the host society and participate actively in the integration process, without having to relinquish their identity.

(8)

This definition, mentioning the terms *host* and *mutual rights*, reveals the way in which hospitality theory may be helpful in speaking to integration. Meanwhile, assimilation is defined by Jean-Luc Richard, a Lecturer of Demography at l'Ecole nationale de la statistique et de l'analyse de l'information, cited in the article, "A French Point of View: Statistics, Integration and Universalism," as "the process by which...different entities become similar."

Beyond the basic definitions of these terms, which indicate the stance of the minority population to the larger culture, overall it seems that, based on sociological findings by other researchers, integration, without adjustment to cultural norms, is the

goal of many Maghrebi-French, while the French government has tended to prefer the style of assimilation. This difference significantly complicates relationships. The Maghrebi-French have demonstrated some resistance to the term *assimilation* in the past, according to Michèle Lamont, of Princeton University, cited in the article, “Working Men’s Imagined Communities: The Boundaries of Race, Immigration, and Poverty in France and the United States.” In fact, Laurence and Vaisse write, in their 2006 work, *Integrating Islam: Political and Religious Challenges in Contemporary France*, that most Maghrebi-French prefer integration (47). Integration allows the Maghrebi-French to participate in French society, without adopting French values and customs, and abandoning North African ones. It seems that the Maghrebi-French would have an easier time becoming integrated than assimilating, due to their partial connection to North African culture. Of course, the attachment of some Maghrebi-French to North African culture is conflictual, and different from that of the first generation, in that they have adopted many French practices. The Mackenzie Institute holds that the real goal for which governments should aim is not assimilation, since it can take several generations, but integration. According to this source, assimilation should only be seen as the result of a long period of integration.

In addition to there being different outlooks towards integration between the French government and many Maghrebi-French, I note that a change in discourse has signaled the government’s preference for assimilation. Sylvia Zappi writes, in the 2003 article, “French Government Revives Assimilation Policy,” that the French government aimed to assimilate immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s, then adopted a more

integrationist policy in the 1980s, but has, more recently, as of 2001, resumed advocacy for an assimilation policy (1).

With regard to these terms, I find a significant parallel to the Derrida/Foucault spectrum of hospitality. Derridean hospitality theory, which showcases opportunities to build a good relationship between guest and host, when applied to the situation of the Maghrebi-French, can reveal the potential for their incorporation into France. Foucault's theory on power, however, which insists on the way that within relationships, people are both subjectified and subjected to treatment that can be deeply oppressive, and which involves perceived differences in status and the way in which the strong often manipulate the weak for their benefit, would seem to forecast Franco-French pressure on the Maghrebi-French to assimilate into French society, which in the specific case of the Maghrebi-French, means that in this process, the French of European descent would force them to adopt French values. Assimilation of a minority population, to the extent that a government demands it, is an effort to control minorities. The difference between these two approaches will become more evident in the section on the theoretical foundations of my dissertation.

A Caveat, on the Perspective that I Bring to the Analyses of Novels, Films, and Magazine Articles, Concerning Integration in France

Before I begin my presentation of analyses of these works, I would like to address an issue that often surfaces when a person of Caucasian descent, such as me, focuses on,

as the object of his or her study, issues related to people of Africa and the African diaspora. In this case, there are sometimes suggestions that such individuals lack the proper perspective to comprehend the situation of Africans, or of minorities of African descent, now living in France, Québec, the Caribbean islands, Asia, or other areas. There is wisdom in realizing the limitations of one's own viewpoint, and one's myopia about experiences other than one's own.

Still, an encouraging example can be put on display, when examining Jewish director Matthieu Kassovitz's block-bluster, the provocative *La Haine*, from 1995. In the article, "The post-Holocaust Jew in the age of post-colonialism: *La Haine* revisited," Yosefa Loshitzky, from the University of East London, writes that even Kassovitz, the celebrated film director, has also been scrutinized for attempting to portray issues in the *banlieues*, without having North African origins:

Missing from these many insightful and important interpretations is a significant reference to the fact that the first *Beur/banlieue* film was made not by an "authentic" member of the *Beur* community, but rather by a French Jew....These [other, Maghreb film-makers] accused Kassovitz of "being an outsider and producing an inauthentic account of the *banlieue* in France" (quoted in Sharma and Sharma 2000: 114).

(Loshitzky 137)

At the same time, Loshitzky concludes, at the end of her article, that, "Kassovitz's film implicitly suggests that the moral alliance of the Jews, despite their social mobility and shifting towards the centre of French society, should be with the underprivileged ethnic minorities, with France's and Europe's new others who challenge its hegemonic symbols of traditional national identity" (146). While Kassovitz's people have becoming

more mainstreamed and have ascended in their social position, he takes the path of defending people who are new to Europe and France, who struggle to be respected and valued as equals in a heavily-stratified French society. Like Kassovitz, as a Caucasian, and with the additional difference of being a Christian woman, as opposed to a Muslim man, as many of the film's characters are, I lack the personal characteristics to say that I can closely testify to the actual experiences of real-life Maghrebi-French and other minorities.

Yet, I have been the minority at times in my life, just as Kassovitz has, and I am able to sympathize with their struggles and conflictual experiences, as Kassovitz does. I approach this dissertation with an open mind, eager to analyze and comprehend the day-to-day experiences of the Maghrebi-French in France. As an American living in France, I was the outsider in a larger culture; likewise, as a practicing Christian, in France and the United States alike, I have been and am often regarded as the stranger, or as practicing a religion that many people in our modern life have relegated to tradition and history. Thus, I feel that my evident weakness, my alternate cultural and racial background, as opposed to the characters featured in the film, *La Haine*, can turn into a strength, since I have empathy for these *Beurs*, who struggle to find a place for themselves, respect in society, appropriate employment and housing, and healthy relationships, both with the French of European descent and others, alike.

In particular, my personal experience living in France, and the observations that I made about French culture while living there, gleaned partially from the friendships that I made with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds, including the Maghrebi-French and Franco-French, have provided me with insight into intercultural relations in France,

and into the diversity in both the Francophone world and in France itself. During my first long-term study abroad experience, as a student at l'Université de la Sorbonne Paris-IV's *Cours de civilisation française*, in the fall of 2001, immediately after the terrorist attacks of September 11th in the United States, I made friends with a woman of Algerian descent living in the women's residence hall in which I lived in Paris. Through my friendship with this young woman, Linda, I was able to observe some cultural practices unique to people from North African cultures (for example, the practice of seeing time from a polychronic, and not monochronic, perspective, particularly interesting for an monochronically-raised American, living in France, already with its own polychronic tendencies), and to see the way in which she interacted with the French of European descent and other Maghrebi-French, as I attended social functions with her in Paris, and visited the *banlieue* where she was living. It was this initial experience, as I studied in Paris and met people of Maghrebi origin in France, that led to the development of my strong interest in *Beur* culture, literature, and film, and the study of the process of integration of the Maghrebi-French into French society. I was keenly drawn to this topic because it resonated with my experience while living abroad; as an American in France, I loved experiencing French culture first-hand, yet I experienced frustration at seeing my foreignness through the eyes of other people, regardless of how fluent in French or culturally-savvy I became. Aware of the frustration of being perceived as different, and experiencing some of the penalties of this disassociation, and before studying this field in depth, I knew that there were obstacles towards the integration of the Maghrebi-French, yet I wanted to explore the nature of these impediments in depth, and perhaps, one day, to contribute to the development of recommendations that can be used to improve

Maghrebi-French-Franco-French relationships. To this end, I wrote a Capstone project paper at the end of my undergraduate studies at Westminster College in Pennsylvania, on the subject of identity, immigration, and integration in France, and in which I discussed several indicators of progress in Maghrebi-French integration.

During this semester spent in Paris, my exposure to, and interest in, international issues and the practices of people of other cultures greatly expanded, as I studied French grammar and literature with students from Japan, Russia, Ukraine, Mexico, and Poland; lived in the residence hall with a French student of European descent Virginie, and had meals with French women of European descent and other women of all nationalities; discussed the advent of the use of the Euro, which occurred in France on January 1, 2002, and the international interpretation of the events of September 11, 2001, with my Franco-French host family in Nice, only three to four days after this catastrophe occurred; introduced my brother, then in high school and visiting me for a week at Christmas, to European and American friends, and the awe-inspiring monuments of Paris, as well as to colloquial French (“Vous avez l’heure?” for “What time is it?”), and attended churches, while, all in the Christian tradition in which I was raised, showed tremendous diversity, from Catholic to Anglican to Baptist to Evangelical to Pentecostal to Lutheran to “Reformed” (Presbyterian), rapidly enriching my comprehension of the diversity implicit to human experience, and enabling me to make connections between people, traditions, denominations of Christianity, historical movements, and cultural practices, at a rate that was life-changing, and tremendously instructional.

My interest in intercultural exchange continued while, two years later, from 2003-2004, as a student at l’Universite Francois-Rabelais through Bowling Green State

University, I tutored a nine-year-old girl, Mégane, whose mother is Franco-French, and whose father hails from la Réunion, often partaking of meals with this family and exchanging cultural information about France, la Réunion, and the United States. I had met another friend, from Madagascar, through the residence hall in which I lived at Deux-Lyons in Tours, near *la faculté de droit*. Additionally, I observed the way in which cultural practices and mentalities from Cameroon, Chad, Central Africa, and the Congo mixed with those of the French of European descent, while attending a Baptist church in Tours, where I was living and studying that year. A number of couples within the church were composed of Franco-French men or women, married to men or women who had come to France from Africa, making intermarriage very visible, and yet seeming to lack the controversy that it sometimes attracts in the United States.

Other people whom I met that year included couple working as missionaries in Tours, speaking fluent English, and hailing from an Asian country, the Philippines; two French couples of European descent of a certain age, with whom I worshipped at Baptist and Catholic churches, respectively, and who were keenly interested in the English language and American culture; a young Franco-French woman, Nelly, planning linguistic stays in Germany and the UK; my Italian roommates in Tours, Deborah and Martina, Erasmus students from Verona, Italy, the setting of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, and who spoke French to me, but Italian with each other; other German, British, Mexican, Norwegian, and Canadian friends and acquaintances whose experiences revealed high levels of interest in international exchange, and who were keenly interested in the discussion of issues from other cultures; and other Americans studying in France,

with whom I was able to share some of my experiences, anecdotes, and observations about life in France, and on a larger scale, Europe.

Following my return to the United States, and my enrollment in courses on the campus of Bowling Green State University for my Masters degree in French, I took a graduate course on Women in Africa, taught by Dr. Opportune Zongo, originally from Burkina Faso. This was the class that allowed me to discover *Beur* literature and culture, since along with about five West African novels written by women from Sénégal and Cameroon, we were assigned to read Soraya Nini's *Ils disent que je suis une beurette*, written in 1993. This was my first taste of *Beur* literature, although I had studied the more general topic of *Beur* integration through my Capstone project at Westminster College. Although I was captivated by West African literature and the portrait of the African woman as depicted in these novels, due to my previous study of *Beur* culture and integration, *Beur* literature soon became a strong interest of mine, and I presented a paper later that year at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, on this novel, *Ils disent que je suis une beurette*. While I did not immediately have the chance to pursue further studies of *Beur* literature as a Masters student, I had a strong interest in Francophone studies, encouraged by readings that I had done as a student in Dr. Jason Herbeck's Critical Theory class that I had taken that same semester, the fall semester of 2004, and I knew that I wanted to delve further into this field in the Ph.D. studies in French that I envisioned doing in the future.

In summary, while I recognize my limitations as a Caucasian, American woman scholar of *Beur* culture, literature, and film, I feel that my empathy for the Maghrebi-French, gleaned from the benefits and difficulties that I received and experienced while

living in France, and my observations of the position of the Maghrebi-French in French society during these two intercultural stays in Paris and Tours, in addition to my experience interacting with people from diverse areas of the Francophone world, allows me to have a culturally-sensitive, inquisitive, and compassionate perspective into this very difficult, but critical, issue of the means necessary to promote better intercultural relationships in France.

The Outline of the Chapters in this Dissertation

Now that I have introduced the general framework of my dissertation, I will describe the chapter divisions that I have established for this study. In the first chapter, I will address Derrida's theory of hospitality, and Foucault's power theory illuminated by Derrida's hospitality theory; in the second chapter, I will comment on instances of "Foucauldian," dysfunctional hospitality in these artistic works; in the third chapter, I will offer examples of the mid-point of hospitality; in the fourth chapter, I will analyze samples of Derridean hospitality in *Beur* novels and films; in the fifth and final chapter, I will provide analysis of these three types of hospitality/integration, as manifested in issues of *Paris-Match* from the periods of significant rioting in France, in 1990-91, 2005, 2007, and 2010.

Chapter 1:
Theoretical Foundations Based on the Derridean Theory of Hospitality and the
Foucauldian Theory of Power,
Revisited in Light of Derrida's Hospitality Theory

Introduction

In this chapter, I will establish the theoretical foundations of my dissertation, the crux of which will be a contrast between Derrida's theory on hospitality, described in his late works on ethics, and Foucault's power theory. I will creatively interpret Foucault's theory on power in light of Derrida's hospitality theory, then engage the work of these two theorists in a dialogue about integration in France. While Derrida's theory highlights healthy rapports between guests and hosts (the ethical) and the ability of the weak to envision the powerful as the Other in order to gain perspective and end the cycle of mutual distrust (the hyper-ethical), Foucault stresses the consequences of complex interactions between people and parties with varying degrees of power, the domination of the weak by the powerful, the reality of perceived differences in status, and the necessity of the weak to resist oppression. Derrida deconstructs the ethical to produce the hyper-ethical, which, in turn, may serve to ameliorate the application of the ethical to politics. The hyper-ethical is idealized and cannot be practiced in the real world, but speculation about its qualities can serve to ameliorate real-world conditions. The hyper-ethical concept of utter non-reciprocity is the end-result of Derrida's deconstruction of the

ethical and is the common thread of his late writings. Derrida's writings on ethics are greatly influenced by Christianity, a turn that marked a rupture with his previous writings, influenced as they were by the Talmudic tradition. Foucault's writings, on the other hand, are influenced by the philosophy on the *care of the self*, also found in Plato's writings, in addition to having a foundation in social constructivism. As opposed to Plato, who saw the human soul as a real entity, Foucault conceived of the soul as being socially-constructed. Specifically, Foucault's power theory advances the idea that the Other is socially constructed to serve the interests of Power. While both philosophers emphasize the concept of *self-care*, Foucault also makes it clear that caring about the situation of the disadvantaged of society is also essential. Derrida, meanwhile, found much of his inspiration in the work of the 20th-century phenomenologist, Emmanuel Lévinas. I will also evaluate the contributions that the 20th- and 21st-century Italian philosopher and political theorist, Giorgio Agamben, makes to the discussion on hospitality and integration, through his theory of the *state of exception*. Although I agree, for the most part, with Derrida's findings on the value of appreciating the radical Otherness of the Other and thereby overcoming hostilities between the weak and the powerful, I will avoid siding in a simplistic way with Derrida over Foucault and will remain ever alert to the valuable insights each theorist provides about the nature of relationships between the powerful and the weak.

The contrast between the conclusions of these two theorists is striking when applied to the topic of integration in France. While Foucault never treats this topic directly, extrapolating the Foucauldian theory of power in this direction produces results radically different from those produced by the application of Derridean hospitality theory

to the same topic. Edward Saïd extended the philosophy of Foucault and applied it to the study of peoples from the Arabo-Islamic world, thereby making Foucault's socially constructed idea of the Other easily applicable to the study of the Maghrebi-French in France.

In this chapter, I will summarize their theories and apply them to the topic of Maghrebi-French integration in France, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of each as a framework for discussing this dissertation's topic. In the process, I will shed new light on key aspects of Derridean and Foucauldian thought by using each theorist to critique the other.

Theoretical Foundations

In this section of this first chapter, I will clarify the main theoretical concepts that are at the foundation of each author's relevant texts, focusing on the conflict between the two conceptions of hospitality that are created through these theories, in order to create an appropriate context for discussion of the novels, films, and journalistic articles that are the focus of this dissertation. While Derrida's and Foucault's theories can be applied to many of these works, their theories do not always neatly describe them.

Summary of Derridean Hospitality Theory

First, I will summarize the main conclusions of Derrida's late works on ethics that deal with issues such as hospitality, gift-giving, and forgiveness. Derrida's *Of*

Hospitality (2000) will serve as my primary theoretical text for the discussion of the integration of the Maghrebi-French. In this work, he bases his theory on the legend of Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*. Oedipus, a pariah after having killed his father and married his mother, thereby practicing incest, cannot return to his homeland and is in exile, and finally finds a place to stay in the city of Colonus, the city that takes him in. As demonstrated by the story of Oedipus, there is always potential for the marginalization of the powerful. The gods bless the city for having been hospitable to Oedipus. Derrida writes that, just as Colonus was rewarded for its hospitality to Oedipus, in a healthy guest-host relationship, the guest and host are in a mutually beneficial rapport, spiritually and materially (21, 29). For Derrida, the idea of reciprocity, or *xenia*, found in ancient Greek culture, a "contract or collective alliance," which "reciprocally links the foreigner," is quite important (Derrida 29, 21). Derrida discusses the reciprocal overtures made by the guest and the host as he writes about "rights and duties that are the conditions of hospitality" (147). This theorist holds that when the guest-host relationship is working well, there is no separation between the two. When integration is happening, he writes, the difference between the guest and the host breaks down: they behave like each other. There is the saying "Mi casa, su casa"; according to Derrida's concept of hospitality, the host wants the guest to feel comfortable, to feel as if the house is his or her house. In this optimal relationship, the guest feels a sense of responsibility for the house, and the guest treats the host hospitably (21, 29). Derrida also states that the host in the host-guest relationship has the duty to impose laws on the guest, and that the host can become the hostage of the visitor (151, 107).

It is conceivable, of course, that Derrida's image of the immigrant and the host nation as a guest and host is too idyllic. Immigrants are not always invited to their new countries, and the way in which they are received is often less than welcoming.

Besides *Of Hospitality*, other late theoretical works focusing on ethics by Derrida enrich my presentation of hospitality theory. Gift-giving, the main topic of these works, is inseparable from hospitality. These works are Derrida's *The Gift of Death* (1995) and *Giving Time* (1991). In his two books on gift giving, Derrida relies on sociologist Marcel Mauss' principal theory from *The Gift* (1923), which holds that hospitality is a form of gift exchange (66). Mauss writes that gifts are exchanged in order to build a healthy network and solidify relationships, but that gifts have strings attached: "...by accepting it (a gift) one knows that one is committing oneself. A gift is received with a burden attached. One does more than derive benefit from a thing or a festival: one has accepted a challenge, and has been able to do so because of being certain to be able to reciprocate, to prove one is not unequal" (Mauss 41). In Mauss, the Native American cultural practice of *potlatch* entails the obligation to give something or be charitable to others. The potlatch, which was a kind of banquet, involved hospitality, and the guests were obligated to give the leader their political allegiance in exchange for the gifts received (39). Mauss holds that there are no free gifts, and that relationships are reinforced through gift-giving, when he writes, "This is because the bond established between donor and recipient is too strong for both of them...The recipient puts himself in a position of dependence vis-à-vis the donor" (59). Based on Mauss' theory, the link between gift-giving, hospitality, and the guest-host rapport is clear, but the complications associated with gift-giving can make the relationship between Power and Others very difficult, due

to the strings that are normally attached to gifts. Mauss provides a number of examples from primitive cultures, such as those of Polynesia and the American Northwest. In fact, much of the best research on gift-giving comes out of the field of anthropology. These theoretical works are applicable to the situation of the Maghrebi-French in France, since concessions to and from the French of European descent create expectations that may not be met. Mauss' theory, nevertheless, may not be completely useful in understanding the situation of the *Beurs*, since politics is not about giving, it is about taking. For this reason, Mauss is worth noting in this dissertation only as he relates to Derrida's late ethical works.

In addition to Mauss' *The Gift*, another work that supplements my understanding of the role of gift-giving in hospitality is Derrida's *The Gift of Death*. In this work, death is viewed as the most extreme kind of gift, unlike all others since it cannot be reciprocated. Although there is no non-gift gift mentioned in Derrida's other work on gifting, *Given Time*, in *The Gift of Death*, which acts as its sequel, it becomes clear that the non-reciprocal gift, the only true gift, is death alone. As he pursues his act of deconstructing, Derrida envisions a type of hospitality and gift-giving that does not include an expectation of reciprocity. For Derrida, each person's death is unique, and killing someone does not make a gift of death: "Death is very much that which nobody else can undergo or confront in my place" (42). Death is seen as a morally superior type of gift. Derrida writes Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac because he was willing to put his duty to God above normal morality (67). One could argue, however, that it is illogical to envision death as a gift, since it is only given begrudgingly and under the worst possible circumstances.

In his explanation of sacrifice as a measure of deference to the Other in *The Gift of Death*, Derrida offers the example of the Biblical story of Abraham's near-sacrifice of his son Isaac, in which God is seen as the Other, a perspective that has important implications for political dialogue. There are manifestations of both the ethical and the hyper-ethical in this story. The ethical is visible through Abraham's decision to obey God's command through his respect for the Otherness of God, and the hyper-ethical is seen through the fact that he is willing to make a sacrifice of his son, a situation that indicates a lack of reciprocity, given that Derrida views death as a gift that can never be reciprocated. Concerning the ethical, in this story, God is conceived of as the Other, a revolutionary way of thinking that positions the Most Powerful as Alterity: "The story is no doubt monstrous, outrageous, barely conceivable: a father is ready to put to death his beloved son, his irreplaceable loved one, and that because the Other, the great Other, asks him or orders him without giving the slightest explanation" (68). Envisioning God as the Other allows Abraham in this story to put himself in the place of God and act respectfully towards Him. While Derrida does not explicitly characterize God as marginalized in this story, his description of God as the Other carries that implication in part. Thus, it is sometimes beneficial to think and act as if Power were marginalized. Derrida's saying that "Tout autre est tout autre," indicates, as he explains it in this work, that "Every other (one) is God, or God is every (bit) other" (87). This quotation makes it clear that there is a strong connection between God and all human beings, and this observation calls for a more considerate treatment of other people, even including the powerful. Derrida sees the sacrifice of Isaac as an example of the *mysterium tremendum*, a phenomenon which involves a radical approach to the Other: "The sacrifice of Isaac belongs to what one

might just dare to call the common treasury, the terrifying secret of the *mysterium tremendum* that is a property of all three so-called religions of the Book, the religion of the races of Abraham. This exaggerated rigor, and the demand it entails, compel the knight of faith to say and do things that will appear (and must even be) atrocious” (65). At the hyper-ethical level, God gives Abraham’s son back to him because Abraham has renounced expectation of return for the gift he is about to make (96). This hyper-ethical level involves the abandonment of norms for relationships, and is engaged with a total giving of the self.

Foucault’s concept of perceived differences in status can also be seen in this story, as evidenced by Derrida’s statement that this sacrifice happened in the context of God’s supremacy over Abraham: “One must behave....in the name of absolute duty. And this name, ...is here none other than the name of God as wholly other...to which I am bound by an absolute, unconditional obligation, by an incomparable, nonnegotiable duty” (66).

This work, *The Gift of Death*, has far-reaching political implications. Derrida’s theory on relationships between the weak and the powerful is expounded upon in the collection of essays *Derrida and the Time of the Political*, especially the essay “European Memories: Jan Patočka and Jacques Derrida on Responsibility,” by Rodolphe Gasché. Gasché interprets Derrida as asserting that a Christian form of responsibility implies that the powerful care for the Other: “The Christian self’s responsibility rests on its relation to an other” (139). This statement, applied to conditions of integration in France, implies that the French of European descent have a duty towards the descendants of North African immigrants. This responsibility ideally supposes a special kind of relationship

that cannot be explicitly described. Gasché reads Derrida's *The Gift of Death* in the vein of the obligation of Europe to take responsibility for the heritage of its identity, which is inextricably tied to the Other, especially the non-European (135-136). Responsibility has to acknowledge abuses of the Other and compensate for them. The only way to understand the viewpoint of the Other is to acknowledge that one can never understand the Other completely, since this Other is so different, according to Derrida (87). He also recommends an even more radical approach to the Other, viewing Power as the Other (68). While Derrida's theory espouses the Christian values of tolerance and appreciation for the other, his philosophy does not explicitly advocate Christian beliefs.

The philosophy of Jan Patočka, a Czech dissident, academic philosopher, and author of the work *Heretical Essays on the Philosophy of History*, is a key influence on Derrida's thinking. This political theorist, who was heavily influenced by radical Christianity based on an insistence on the welfare of the Other, sacrificed his life for the good of his compatriots oppressed by the communist government in the late 1970s. Patočka, who was advocating democracy in his country and defending minority rights, died of a brain hemorrhage in 1977 after being tortured by police for his dissidence.

The political consequences of this work, *The Gift of Death*, must be understood within the context of the philosophy of Patočka. This twentieth-century Czech political philosopher, who had an enormous influence on Derrida, divides Europe's political heritage into two halves, the Platonic and the Christian. The Platonic political heritage, by and large, is concerned with the search for the ideal form of government and employs abstract, impersonal reasoning. At its best, the Christian political heritage is concerned with the proper treatment of the Other. Patočka complains, however, that the Christian

heritage has always been contaminated by the Platonic; he thus recommends that a new, heretical and truly Other-centric form of Christianity shape Europe's future political evolution. In other words, Patočka wants to purge European politics of its Platonic influence, a recommendation which Derrida adopts in *The Gift of Death*: “Christian politics must break more definitely and more radically with Greco-Roman Platonic politics in order to finally fulfill the *mysterium tremendum*” (28-29). In particular, this Christian type of responsibility focuses on serving the Other. The *mysterium tremendum*, as Gasché defines it, is “the unseen gaze of an absolutely self-less Goodness, who shakes the soul (the self or person) because it is unable to adequately respond to this gift of love” (141). This is a phenomenon that describes a relationship so intense and powerful that it cannot be described in words (Gasché 143). Gasché interprets Derrida’s work by connecting the idea of responsibility and the mysterious: “That which makes me responsible is something that remains impenetrable to me---in other words, secret” (142). This heretical type of Christianity espoused by Patočka holds that the responsibility of self comes from the soul’s exposure to the gaze of the Other (139).

Derrida uses Patočka’s idea of the responsibility of Power to make the paradoxes resulting from his deconstruction of gift-giving applicable to politics. In his ethical writings, Derrida deconstructs gift-giving, holding that the most extreme form of a gift is death. Derrida envisions Patočka’s concept of responsibility of Power to the Other as a gift and insists that it cannot be reciprocated. Death cannot be reciprocated, likewise, neither can political responsibility to the Other. As Patočka argued in the *Heretical Essays*, in Christianity, “The responsible life is itself presented as a gift from something which...though it has the character of the Good, has also the traits of the inaccessible

and forever superior to humans----the traits of the *mysterium* that always has the final word.” Responsibility, according to Gasché, is a gift from Power to the absolute Other as a singular, irreplaceable human being. Political power is envisioned as a force that gives to the Other through a sense of responsibility. Derrida writes in *The Gift of Death* that Patočka’s philosophy takes “into account the event of Christian mystery as an absolute singularity, a religion par excellence and an irreducible condition for a joint history on the subject, responsibility and Europe” (2).

Derrida’s turn towards ethics, particularly those related to Christian values, as demonstrated by the work *The Gift of Death*, represents a remarkable turn from his Jewish heritage, as well as from the focus of his earlier writings, based on the Talmudic tradition. According to John Caputo, the Thomas J. Watson Professor of Religion Emeritus at Syracuse University, in the work *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion*, while Derrida had Jewish origins, he considered himself an atheist. Derrida came from a Jewish family from Toledo, Spain, which settled in French Algeria. During World War II, Derrida was actually expelled from his high school due to anti-Semitic measures by the Vichy government. Despite this Jewish heritage, Caputo insists on Derrida’s atheism: “...Derrida is Jewish without being Jewish, Jewish sans Judaism, married outside Judaism, his sons uncircumcised, he an atheist” (xvii). Caputo writes that no one, not even Derrida’s mother, understood his lack of religion (xvii). Misconceptions about Derrida’s stance towards religion have been abundant, according to Caputo (xx). Namely, few people understand Derrida’s identification with Judaism, in spite of his avowed atheism, which has special meaning for Caputo (xxi). Though his atheism was well-documented, Caputo holds that it is clear that Derrida has a passion for

God, and that he had invented his own religion. The heart of Derrida's religion is "the call for justice, a democracy, a just one to come, a call for peace among the concrete religion messianisms..." (Caputo xxviii, xxviii). Derrida's religion was unique to him, even though he did not believe in the God of Judaism or Christianity, as Caputo demonstrates when he writes, "The point of view of Derrida's work as an author is religious---but without religion and without religion's God---and no understands a thing about this alliance" (xviii). Caputo writes that Derrida cherished a hope for the "wholly other," "tout autre," the impossible (xviii). According to this scholar, even the process of deconstruction is seen in the context of transcendence, and has religious aspirations:

Deconstruction works the provocation of what is to come, *à venir*, against the complacency of the present, against the pleasure the present takes in itself, in order to prevent it from closing in on itself, from collapsing into self-identity. For in deconstruction such closure would be the height of injustice, constituting the simple impossibility of the impossible, the prevention of the invention of the *tout autre*.

(Caputo xx)

Others hold that Derrida's Judaism was primarily intellectual.

In addition, the evolution in Derrida from his earlier works to his later works on ethics is all the more surprising given the fact that his former scholarly productions had been in the Talmudic tradition, according to Christopher Norris in the work *Derrida*. Norris explains in detail the difference between the Christian and Jewish theological traditions:

Christian doctrine was shaped at an early stage by its exposure to Greek philosophical influences, tending to equate the Word of God with the Logos of divine revealed purpose. In the Jewish tradition, on the contrary, there grew up a habit of treating the manifold commentaries as sacred texts in their rights, each adding to the store of received wisdom and requiring yet further attention from the scribes and exegetes.

(Norris 229)

Norris notes that Derrida's work was heavily influenced by the Talmudic tradition in several ways: "Derrida adopts various techniques for reminding the reader of his own close involvement with Rabbinical sources and traditions. These may take the form of riddling autograph signatures...of allusion to the methods of Talmudic commentary, or of other multiple insets and other such graphic devices which refuse any clear demarcation between primary and secondary texts" (229).

The ethical turn in which Derrida engaged in his later writings in the 1990s and 2000s, some argue, demonstrated that he had an interest in making an application of deconstruction to the rapport between religion and ethics. In particular, he had a keen interest in studying passages from the Bible, including the story of Abraham and Isaac, and while never mentioning the sacrifice of Jesus, the foundation of Christianity, explicitly in *The Gift of Death*, he evokes themes that are at the core of Christianity, such as responsibility for the Other.

While this question of why Derrida changed from a focus on the Talmudic tradition to Christian-inspired writings is fascinating, the scope of my dissertation will not allow for an in-depth exploration of such a topic. It is clear that Derrida implicitly

separated the Judeo-Christian heritage into two components, declaring the Christian superior. Perhaps Derrida, coming from a Jewish background, which does not emphasize proselytizing and the conversion of the non-Jewish to Judaism, found the forgiveness, tolerance, and unconditional welcome of and care of the Other, characteristic of Christianity, and especially of Catholicism, appealing. The word “Catholic” means “universal,” indicating that the Catholic Church, in particular, stresses the idea of the value and worth of each individual, regardless of his or her identity, in contrast to Judaism, which tends to be seen as a religion meant mostly for one group of people, the Jews, and which has much less of a focus on converting other people than Christianity does. Conversion from Judaism to Christianity, and even from Islam to Christianity, happens fairly often, perhaps indicating that some people feel strongly drawn to the concept of absolute love for, and care of, the other, and that of the common humanity shared by all people. Despite the fact that I do not offer solid answers to this question in this dissertation, I hope that my findings in this dissertation will provide inspiration for someone to make discoveries regarding this question.

Returning to Derrida’s *The Gift of Death*, this work can illuminate the situation of the *Beurs*, in their relationship to authority figures. Applied to this topic, a Derridean interpretation of integration in France would suggest that the Maghrebi-French could make progress towards liberation by appreciating the vulnerability of the French of European descent who oppress them, in an act of role reversal. For example, a *Beur* who is marginalized on the job market may try to see the perspective of Franco-French employers, who may feel pressure to hire applicants who fit into the company. The Maghrebi-French may fully realize that this rationale is not justified, but they may gain

some perspective by valuing the Otherness of the French of European descent employer. A hyper-ethical relationship between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent would involve the French honoring the ancestry of the Maghrebi-French and supporting them in any way possible to facilitate their integration. On the side of the community of North African descent, the Maghrebi-French would make efforts to make positive contributions to French society and would respect French traditions and laws. Of course, it may be impossible to envision the rapport between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French at the hyper-ethical level, since there is a great deal of resentment between them, but Derrida encourages us to apply lessons from the hyper-ethical to the ethical, an arrangement that is indeed possible. The Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent may never be able to give themselves totally to one another with no expectation of reciprocity, but it is reasonable to see them becoming more open to the vulnerability of the other.

The Connection Between Derridean Hospitality Theory and Emmanuel Lévinas' Other-Centered Ethical Framework

In my explanation of Derrida's writings on ethics in the *Gift of Death*, I find it essential to note that Derrida's conception of the radical appreciation of the Otherness of the Other is founded on the philosophy of Emmanuel Lévinas, a 20th-century phenomenologist who applied the idea of the Other to ethics. Derrida constructed his ideas after reflecting on Levinas' thinking. This influence is illustrated most clearly in the work *The Gift of Death*. The philosophy of Lévinas, according to Richard Cohen, the

Isaac Swift Distinguished Professor of Judaic Studies at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and the translator of several Lévinas books, as cited in the *Humanism of the Other*, is based on an ethical metaphysics, which began with Husserl's phenomenology and Heidegger's ontology in the 1930s (xxvi). Like Lévinas, whose philosophy was based on the Talmudic tradition, it is often said that Derrida's philosophy of deconstruction is based on a Talmudic interpretation. Three of Lévinas' works that are relevant to Derrida's theory are *Totalité et l'infini* (1961), *L'Humanisme de l'Autre* (1972), and *Alterité et Transcendance* (1995).

First, *Totalité et l'infini* is important for its contributions to Derrida's theory since it states Lévinas' philosophy of the approach of the self to the Other. Lévinas holds that the individual encounters elements and things which are other than the self, that the self learns to manipulate things in his environment, that the self is egocentric, and that the Other, radically different from the self, is encountered in a face-to-face relationship (12-13). Lévinas writes that the Other is seen as absolutely different from the self: "The Other remains infinitely transcendent; infinitely foreign; his face in which is his epiphany is produced and which appeals to me breaks with the world that can be common to us, whose virtualities are inscribed in our nature and developed by our existence" (194). Lévinas holds that each time one meets a person, there is a choice to either remain within oneself or speak to him, and that communication implies a relationship (14). The Other, according to Lévinas, is free to absolve himself from the relationship (16). Lévinas holds that the encounter with the Other provides one with the opportunity to become aware of the arbitrariness of one's thoughts, and to justify egocentric attitudes (15). The self faces

a duty towards the Other: "...the Other who dominates me in his transcendence is thus the stranger, the widow and the orphan, to whom I am obligated" (215).

In this work, the concepts of totality and infinity are crucial. Lévinas holds that totalizers seek power and control, and seek to join all into one, in contrast to infinitizers, who are content to preserve individual uniqueness, according to Clive Hazell in the work *Alterity: the Experience of the Other* (17). According to Hazell in *Alterity and Transcendence*, Lévinas defines totality "as a unity possessing an intrinsic reality and proceeding from exclusive principle" (xviii). There is a palpable tension between totality and the infinite in Lévinas.

While some critique totality for leaving nothing outside, Lévinas notes that social totality can be beneficial, since it permits the grouping of individuals, according to *Alterity and Transcendence* (xviii).

Lévinas, however, does not necessarily ask us to choose the infinite over totality in *Totalité et l'infini*, although the refusal of totality, and a preference for the infinite, comes in the face-to-face relation, where the uniqueness of the individual is paramount. The relation to the Other is the ultimate situation for Lévinas (xxii). This conflict between infinity and totality is crucial in Lévinas (xxii).

Meanwhile, Lévinas' work *Humanism of the Other* served as inspiration for Derrida's radical approach to the Other, due to its emphasis on the importance of the Other, rather than the self. This work appeared in the context of the events of May 1968, and the waves of structuralism and Heideggerian ontology. In fact, according to Cohen in *Humanism of the Other*, the entirety of Lévinas' philosophical thought can be viewed as a humanism of the Other (xxvi). This philosophy centers on the "superlative moral

priority of the other person” (Cohen xxvi). The self is seen as taking responsibility for the other. These moments of transcendence and responsibility are viewed as moments of “concrete ethical encounter, the face to face of the self and other” (Cohen xxvi). In this relationship, according to Lévinas, responsibility for the other becomes central: “...between the one that I am and the other for whom I answer gapes a bottomless difference, which is also the non-indifference of responsibility, significance of signification, irreducible to any system whatsoever. Non-in-difference, which is the very proximity of one’s fellow, by which is profiled a base of community between one and the other, unity of the human genre, owing to the fraternity of men” (6). Service to the Other becomes paramount, and selfhood emanates from this service, rather than from selfish gain. I will show that this focus on *care for the Other*, found in Lévinas’ approach to ethics, is more radical in its stress on the welfare of the other, than the philosophy advocated by Foucault, who, while active in the defense of several causes for the common good, such as the situation of AIDS patients and the mentally ill, feels that the *care of the self* is essential. Foucault’s philosophy was not Platonic in all aspects; while the idea of *self-care* is linked to the philosophy of Plato, Foucault, unlike Plato, sees the soul as being socially-constructed. It is true that Foucault showed, through his writings and activism for several causes, that defending the rights of the disadvantaged was key for him, yet Lévinas’ philosophy on the concept of service to the Other is based in the morally-based idea of the fundamental dignity of each human being, implying the need for justice for all:

For Lévinas, the dignity of the self arises in and as an unsurpassable moral responsibility to and for the other person. And moral responsibility for the one

who faces leads to the demand for justice for all those who do not face for all others, all humanity. They too have the right to moral relations...It is in relation to this irreducible and immediate responsibility that in the name of justice, culture, history, organized religion, state, science, and philosophy take on their ultimate senses and have their ultimate justifications.

(Cohen xxvii)

Lévinas insists on this responsibility to the Other: “The epiphany of the absolutely other is face where the Other hails me and signifies to me...by its destitution, an order. Its presence is this summons to respond. The Ego does not only become conscious of this necessity to respond as if it were a demand or a particular duty it must decide on. The Ego is through and through, in its very position, responsibility or diacony, as in chapter 53 of Isaiah” (33).

Alterity and Transcendence is a third work that is relevant to Derrida’s approach to the Other. According to Pierre Hayat, a leading Lévinas scholar, transcendence comes in the relation to the other man in Lévinas. Rather than seeing transcendence as coming from the sacred (God), Lévinas envisions transcendence as coming from the relation with the Other. This approach abandons the “magical mentality” that attributes events to unseen, mysterious powers. In true transcendence, the other is related to the self, but external to it. The face-to-face encounter is seen as an asymmetrical relation because of the separation between I and the Other (Hayat xiii). The Other is seen as a point of departure (Hayat xv).

For Lévinas, the concept of infinity is linked to God, a finding supported by Descartes. According to *Alterity and Transcendence*, the infinite is often conceived of as having religious connotations: “The infinite can designate a superlative qualitative

excellence above human measure or limits, the divinity of attributes enveloping the infinite with duration in the immortality of the gods, despite a certain finitude attested to by their multiplicity, which becomes conflicts and combats” (53-54). During the Hellenistic period, through Gnostic speculation and Christian patristics, a contact was established between Eastern spirituality and philosophy: the notion of infinity was identified with the perfection and omnipotence of the Biblical God (Lévinas 62). Descartes linked the idea of the infinite to God, according to Lévinas (63). Lévinas insists that infinity is linked to the concept of the soul: “It is the human soul (conceived, according to the biblical tradition, as being in the image of God) that, in the creature, is the first to receive the attribute of infinity” (64).

Lévinas also makes a clear distinction between totality and the infinite in *Alterity and Transcendence*. According to this work, in totality, all Other is “included in the Same,” while in the infinite, it is the “absolute thought determining itself of itself, in a State and institutions by which, efficacious, it becomes reality and through which the individual human being is free or infinite; as he will be free, in Marx, in a classless society resolving all contradictions and in which, consequently, an infinite is actualized” (56). Again, the infinite plays a major role in the face-to-face relation: “The face-to-face is a relation in which the I frees itself from being limited to itself ...from its reclusion within itself, from an existence in which the adventures are but an odyssey, i.e., a return to an island. The exodus from that limitation of the I to itself...is also worthy of the adjective infinite” (57).

Lévinas’ philosophy, as posited in these three works, is central to Derrida since Lévinas gave him the basis for the foundation for the conceptualization of the Other as

fundamentally separate and different from the self. Derrida agrees with Lévinas that the Otherness of the Other must be appreciated, and then Derrida extends the concept, applying it more fully to politics. Caputo writes that Derrida seems to pose a question to Lévinas, concerning how best to translate the ethics of the Other into a politics (283). Caputo holds that Derrida reads Lévinas' ethics as an "extended commentary on the notion of hospitality," which for Derrida has significant political implications (284).

In the work *Lévinas, L'Approche de l'autre*, Joseph Debès goes so far as to apply the concept of Lévinas' radical approach to the Other to the situation of the marginalized in France, specifically including the *Beur* community. A major theme is the division between the rich and the poor in modern society, a status quo which Lévinas attributes to a generalized lack of compassion. Debès applies Lévinas' findings about the radical otherness of the Other to the situation of the homeless in France. In particular, Debès holds that the homeless are envisioned as the Other. One is inevitably seized by the differences between oneself and the homeless in an engagement with the face of the Other. In order to remedy this dilemma, Lévinas advocates daily acts and gestures that promote engagement with the poor (Debès 70). Debès sees the epiphany of the Other as essential---in the relationship with the Other, people are in face-to-face encounters. The Other expresses his emotions through his face (Debès 71). Debès writes that Derrida holds that one's relationship with God is found in his or her relationships with Others (70). Debès thereby connects Derrida to Lévinas.

There is a link between the concept of hospitality addressed in *Of Hospitality* and Derrida's advocacy of an appreciation of the Otherness of the Other. In fact, Caputo, in the article "Adieu---sans Dieu: Derrida and Lévinas," published in the work *The Face of*

the Other and the Trace of God, writes that hospitality is essential to Derrida's philosophy because he felt that in a sense, we are all Semites, wanderers in need of hospitality (276). Wanderers are frequently found in the text of *Adieu à Emmanuel Lévinas*, the text that Derrida wrote in honor of Lévinas upon the occasion of his death in 1995. Derrida himself was very concerned with the exiled in his writings on deconstruction (Caputo 277). Hospitality is seen as the vehicle that Derrida uses to apply Lévinas' thinking to politics.

In fact, according to Caputo, it can be said that the bridge between Derrida and Lévinas is, not surprisingly, hospitality. Although, according to Caputo, Lévinas hardly ever used the term hospitality, much of Derrida's inspiration in his writings on hospitality came from Levinas' open attitude towards the Other. Caputo takes the viewpoint that deconstruction is "on the side of God who loves the stranger, sharing God's loving concern for the Other, responding to the sign that God has placed on the face of the stranger" (299). This God, according to Derrida, "commands hospitality for the Other" (299).

Caputo postulates that it may be problematic for Derrida to use the term *adieu* in his bidding goodbye to Lévinas, since Derrida was admittedly an atheist. Caputo wonders how Derrida can honestly commend Lévinas to God given his disbelief (278). In truth, Derrida's conception of God, according to Caputo, can be translated into hospitality (283). It is through this that one can justify his use of the word of *adieu* in spite of his atheism. Derrida holds that Levinas saw God as the one who loves the stranger. Caputo sees *adieu* as Derrida's prayer, and supports the idea that the philosopher has a religion without religion (279).

Derrida and Lévinas' findings have two commonalities: they do not confirm traditional religious beliefs, and they are not apolitical. Like Derrida, who did not explicitly believe in the God of Judaism or Christianity, even Lévinas did not believe in an afterlife according to Christianity (Caputo 300). Derrida, despite being comfortable in a secular academic environment, took inspiration from the Christian Bible and the Talmud. Lévinas appeared to have believed in a God that falls into the realm of the relationship of the individual to the stranger (Caputo 302). Lévinas' findings are not apolitical, given that he comments about events in Israel, France, the United States, and Algeria (Caputo 290). Derrida held that Lévinas would not support the political implications of ethics of hospitality in the situation in Israel and Palestine (Caputo 290).

The Relationship between Derridean Hospitality Theory and
Giorgio Agamben's Theory of the *State of Exception*:
Differing Concepts of the Role of Hospitality in Modern Democracies

Along with Lévinas, another noteworthy philosopher and ethicist is Giorgio Agamben, who, like Lévinas, also works on reciprocity, hospitality and ethics, with the aim of minimizing conflict in interpersonal relationships. In my analysis of the connection between the philosophy of Agamben, particularly his concept of the *state of exception*, and the theoretical construct of this dissertation, based on Derridean hospitality and Foucauldian power theories, I find it necessary to first provide a general introductory overview of Agamben's significance and contributions within the fields of philosophy and political theory.

According to Catherine Mills in the article on Agamben in the online *International Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, entitled, “Giorgio Agamben (1942-),” found on the website of the University of Tennessee at Martin, Agamben has had considerable influence on several intellectual fields in the US, UK, and other English-speaking countries. This Italian philosopher and political theorist, born in Rome in 1942, who studied Law and Philosophy, wrote a dissertation on Simone Weil’s political philosophy, has taught at the Universities of Macerata and Verona and the New School University of New York, and was the focus of significant discussion after he disallowed American immigration authorities from giving him a biopolitical tattoo after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, as he entered the United States.

With respect to his work, Mills characterizes Agamben’s work as being strongly influenced by that of Walter Benjamin, author of the work, *The Origins of German Tragic Drama* and the essay, “Critique of Violence,” in his analysis of issues related to “language and representation, history and temporality, the force of law, politics of the spectacle, and the *ethos* of humanity,” in Mills’ words. Agamben also engages with Heidegger, Hegel, Aby Warburg, Aristotle, Carl Schmitt, Hannah Arendt, Emile Benvéniste, Danté, and Kafka, and with a number of religious texts, such as the Jewish Torah and the Bible (Mills). Agamben has also written commentaries on texts in both the Jewish and Christian mystical traditions.

For purposes of providing context, I will introduce Agamben’s most important works, the five books in the *Homo Sacer* series, written from 1995 to 2008. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* was his first work in the series, and later became the title of the series as a whole, followed by *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and*

the Archive. Homo Sacer III, in 1998; *State of Exception, Homo Exception II, I*, in 2003; *Il Regno e la Gloria, Homo Sacer II, 2*, in 2007; and *Il sacramento del linguaaggio. Homo Sacer II, 3*, in 2008. The final installment in the series is 1996's *Means without End*. As explained in the Notes to Leland de la Durantaye's 2009 *Giorgio Agamben: a Critical Introduction*, the installments of this series did not appear in chronological order, and the series is best understood by reading each installment before reading the original book, *Homo Sacer* (393-394).

The primary theoretical concept crafted and developed by Agamben that bears relevance to my dissertation topic is the *state of exception*. In the article, "Democratic Hospitalities: national borders and the impossibility of the other for democracy," published in 2008, in Issue 16 of *Democracy Under Fire: the Uses and Abuses of Democracy in the Public Sphere*, Elaine Kelly, then a doctoral candidate in the Department of Critical and Cultural Studies at Macquarie University in Australia, writes that Agamben's critique of modern strategies of government is based on the concept of the *state of exception*, and that Agamben claims that sovereign power begets the state of *Homo Sacer*, or *bare life*, for its subjects (implying their complete vulnerability to the sovereign power of the government), as Agamben phrases these terms in his 1998 work, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Agamben's theory holds that the way in which these governments maintain sovereignty allows them to determine whether its subjects live or die.

The term used for Agamben's series of works, *Homo Sacer*, refers to the term in Latin, meaning, "sacred man," a term which Agamben uses to represent a life that is

completely vulnerable to the sovereign power, which has total freedom to kill it, as explained by Elena Bernardini, in a chapter of the book, *Experiences of Freedom in Postcolonial Literatures and Cultures*, edited by Annalisa Oboe and Shaul Bassi, entitled, “Everyday Border Surveillance and Trespassing: Cities in Contemporary Indian Art” (163). More specifically, Bernardini explains in this chapter that *Homo Sacer* was a term in ancient Roman law that represented a life that could be taken with impunity. Completely unprotected from violence on the part of the sovereign (in the time of the Roman Empire, the Emperor; currently, the leaders of democratic governments), the man in the position of *Homo Sacer* has no “clear judicial or political connotation,” in the words of Bernardini, and is thus “bare life,” another term used frequently by Agamben, to indicate this person’s condition of being a mere biological entity, from the perspective of the government, to which this person’s existence or death is a non-issue (Bernardini 168).

In fact, it is no coincidence that Agamben draws this term, *Homo Sacer*, from ancient Roman law; his formulation of the concept of *bare life*, so essential to his political theory involving hospitality in modern democracies, was a result of his delving into two areas that Foucault did not examine in his conception of power theory: law and theology, according to de la Durantaye. Agamben wrote in an essay entitled, “The True Politician” [“Die wahre Politiker,” in German], that, “...there are two [fields] he [Foucault] left out of account: law and theology. It seemed natural to me to direct my efforts in these directions” (de la Durantaye 209). While Agamben acknowledged that for the purposes of Foucault’s work, an examination of law and theology was not necessary, he deemed that these two fields would be advantageous to his own work. To that end, the initial volumes of the *Homo Sacer* project (*Homo Sacer* and *State of*

Exception) concentrate on law, while *Homo Sacer II, 2: Il Regnio de la Gloria*, published in 2008, involves theology (de la Durantaye 209). I will further comment on the way in which Agamben borrowed from Foucault in the section on Foucault's power theory, found further in this chapter.

In *State of Exception*, differing from Foucault, Agamben asserts that biopower is not a product of Modernity, but that biopower is an essential part of Western politics and philosophy, holding that there is a convergence between the juridico-institutional and biopolitical models of power (6, as cited by Kelly). Through its claim to the biological life of its people, these modern governments create the state of *Homo Sacer*, or "bare life," which can be terminated but not sacrificed, as Agamben wrote in 1998. In particular, this life cannot be sacrificed because it does not matter to the government in any significant way. Thus, there is more that democracy has in common with totalitarian government, which removes its subjects of normal rights, that is normally acknowledged, in Agamben's estimation. In this, democracy seems to create a situation of violent exclusion for its citizens (Agamben, *States of Exception* 28, as cited by Kelly).

In *Homo Sacer*, Agamben states that he sees the *state of exception* as characterizing the status quo in modern nation-states. He uses the metaphor of the concentration camp as the *state of exception par excellence*, and as the model for modern society:

...in our age, the state of exception comes more and more to the foreground as the fundamental political structure, and ultimately begins to become the rule.

When our age tried to grant the unlocalizable a permanent and visible localization, the result was the concentration camp... Today, it is not the city, but rather the camp that is the fundamental biopolitical paradigm of the West.

(*Homo Sacer* 34 [181], as cited by de la Durantaye 212)

Several critics found Agamben's likening of modern society to a concentration camp shocking, including Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno and Dominick La Capra (de la Durantaye 213-214).

Kelly brings to light the way in which Agamben connects the violence used by sovereign power in determining life or death for the constituents of the government, with the applications that this concept has for the potential outcomes of hospitality within democracy. Namely, Agamben claims, in this work, *Homo Sacer*, that there a commonality between democracy, which has formed biopolitical agendas (as evidenced in the biopolitical tattoo that Agamben himself refused upon entry to the United States in 2001), and totalitarian governments, a link which at first glance would seem improbable, and even counterintuitive, due to the ostensible diametric opposition between these types of government (221, as cited by Kelly). For Agamben, the American post-2001 "war on terrorism" is a prime example of the *state of exception*, as American politicians found ways to justify actions that would normally have been seen as unacceptable. Agamben sees this "war on terrorism" as having the potential to provoke global civil war (de la Durantaye 338). In these types of *states of exception*, Agamben sees the normal concept of the *force of law*, analyzed by Derrida, and referring to the consequences that the government can impose upon a citizen for a specific transgression, as virtually

disappearing, as the government in a society in the *state of exception* removes all distance between the force and the law, making them virtually indistinguishable from one another (de la Durantaye 339).

For Kelly, the critique of democracy as it is practiced in modern times that Agamben makes, has as its purpose the elimination of the excessive confidence that the West places in democracy for its ability to create an egalitarian form of government that gives priority to life and security, when combined with liberalism. While recognizing of the achievements of democracy, Agamben sees its risks, since it provides sovereign power with a less readily-perceived and more dangerous way to grasp the true “rights” of its citizens, while ostensibly protecting them in a nominal sense (*State of Exception* 9-10, as cited by Kelly). The rights that democracy supposedly guarantees, imply citizens’ subjection to the government, which has complete right to form *states of exception* for some of these citizens. Agamben feels that there is a need to make this concept of the sovereign exception more widely known as it pertains to democratic states, rather than this dangerous component being recognized only in totalitarian regimes (*States of Exception* 10, as cited by Kelly). In the quotation below, Agamben states his conception of this danger:

Modern democracy does not abolish sacred life, but rather shatters it, and disseminates it into every individual body, making it what is at stake in political conflict. And the root of modern democracy's secret biological calling lies here: he who appears as the bearer of rights and, according to a curious oxymoron, as the new, sovereign subject can only be constituted as such, through a repetition of the sovereign exception, and the isolation of corpus, bare life, in himself.

(Agamben, *States of Exception* 124, as cited by Kelly)

Agamben holds that this very vulnerability in which people under democratic rule find themselves is exemplified by the situation of the refugee, since this position shows the way in which living under democracy makes oneself totally invested in sovereign power. Namely, the refugee lacks adequate protection from the government, and loses his or her rights very easily. The refugee's human rights (in Agamben's terms, "proclamations of eternal, metajuridical values") are not guaranteed, since the rights that ultimately matter the most are those that the nation-state confers upon those living in its territory, which, in Agamben's words, "represent the originary figure of the inscription of natural life in the juridico-political order" (127, *States of Exception*, as cited by Kelly). Unlike native citizens, who are deemed to be part of the nation-state because they were born there, refugees lack a claim to the soil; lacking "the pairing between birth and nation," he or she is vulnerable to being mistreated, and is not seen as a legitimate citizen. Agamben feels that human rights policy is also prey to falling to a similar approach; in this case, the "right" to hospitality would fall entirely under the jurisdiction of the nation-state in question, and the human rights of refugees would not be guaranteed (*State of Exception* 127, as cited by Kelly).

For Agamben, according to Meyda Yeğenoğlu, in her 2012 work, *Islam, Migrancy, and Hospitality in Europe*, one can physically locate the "states of exception" in the post-industrial cities and gated communities of the United States, holding that these settings are the modern-day camps, with clearly-delineated boundaries, preventing outsiders from entering the grounds. The metaphor of the camp reveals the way in which some people in parts of Europe are denied citizenship and rights, denied full participation

in the life of these countries, but are not prevented from living on their territories (Yeğenoğlu 4). This concept of the camp is similar to that created by Etienne Balibar in the work, *We, the People of Europe: Reflections of Transnational Citizenship*, in which he describes the notion of European apartheid, the system by which some people in Europe are denied citizenship due to racism, using internal borders. Yeğenoğlu feels that Islam is often seen as an internal enemy, once seen as an external enemy (4).

Yeğenoğlu takes Agamben's concept of the *state of exception* as described by Agamben, according to whom it "embodies a kind of membership without inclusion" (24, as cited in Yeğenoğlu 58), and applies it to an analysis of the Turkish guest workers in modern-day Germany. Agamben is quoted as writing, in *Homo Sacer*, that the *state of exception* implies both membership and non-membership: in his words, "...what cannot be included in any way is included in the form of the exception" (24, as cited in Yeğenoğlu 58). For Yeğenoğlu, this "inclusive inclusion" (Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 21, as cited in Yeğenoğlu 58), in Agamben's words, indicates "a paradoxical inclusion of guest-workers" (Yeğenoğlu 58). According to Agamben, the German government regulates inclusion versus exclusion through the formation of "the sphere of its own reference in real life" (Agamben 26, *Homo Sacer*, as cited by Yeğenoğlu 58), rendering this reference regular (i.e., normalized, and accepted as such), instead of through the delivery of imperatives. In the case of Germany, Yeğenoğlu suggests that the government of this nation achieves and maintains its power by claiming a right to exclude some from full citizenship (the *state of exception*), while expressing this claim through an "inclusive exclusion." This "apparent exclusion of the exception," in Yeğenoğlu's words, signifies its incorporation into the more general legal and political structures.

This type of sovereignty, maintained by the government's claim to regulate inclusion versus exclusion, according to Agamben's conception, renders the question of who is truly inside or outside, obscure (Yeğenoğlu 59).

Yeğenoğlu responds to the question asked by Agamben regarding the conditional presence of temporary workers: "...does the conditional welcoming of workers indicate that they are left outside the sovereign law of the host society?" (58) While she acknowledges that these guest workers have been welcomed into the German territory, she admits that they have been denied full membership in the German political sphere. Yeğenoğlu inquires into the question of whether these Turkish guest workers, excluded from full citizenship, are still under the jurisdiction of sovereign and general law (57-58).

In the same work, Yeğenoğlu explains the situation described above. Namely, she notes that the laws Yeğenoğlu involving the regulation of the guest-workers in Germany all imply that these Turks are part of a short-term labor force; thus, residence permits are given only as work permits; the guest workers are expected to leave at the end of their term; overall, their very presence in Germany is to be seen as a *state of exception*. This exception also means that these workers are not guaranteed a voice in German politics (Yeğenoğlu 57-58).

While Agamben's theory is related to Derridean hospitality theory, in several ways, their theories differ greatly. Namely, Derrida's vision of hospitality seems to be more forward-looking, hopeful, and optimistic, as he states in his 2005 work, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, holding that the democracy of the future will be more adept at welcoming non-citizens and refugees (48, as cited in Kelly). Although Derrida acknowledges that there are many challenges to maintaining hospitable attitudes and

practices towards non-citizens and refugees within democratic nations, namely, the propensity for protective actions described in the paragraph below to be taken, as these nations attempt to minimize their liability in relationship to immigrants, he feels that *grosso modo*, the tendency of the democratic state is to promote and facilitate *ouverture* to people from other nations. Derrida sees the very fact that the boundaries of democracy are constantly being questioned as a remedy against a conservative tendency to maintain the status quo, and to maintain complete authority over its people (*Rogues* 87, as cited in Kelly). This “democracy to come,” according to Kelly, implies constant deferral, ambition, and eventually, the promise of a utopic state (not unlike the ideal hospitality situation described in Derrida’s *Of Hospitality*).

Nonetheless, despite his general optimism towards the future of hospitality in democracies, Derrida acknowledges the inherent conflict experienced by democracies as they consider the question of immigration:

In its constitutive autoimmunity, in its vocation for hospitality (with everything in the ipse that works over the etymology and experience of the hopes through the aporias of hospitality), democracy has always wanted by turns and at the same time two incompatible things: it has wanted, on the one hand, to welcome only men, and on the condition that they be citizens, brothers, and compeers, excluding all the others, in particular bad citizens, rogues, non citizens, and all sorts of unlike and unrecognisable others, and, on the other hand, at the same time or by turns, it has wanted to open itself up, to offer hospitality, to all those excluded. In both cases...this hospitality remains limited and conditional.

(Derrida, *Rogues* 163)

According to Kelly, while Derrida holds that democracies are often able to inoculate themselves against the perceived damages incurred by offering hospitality to non-citizens

and refugees, and holds that this ability is the reason for temporary descents into totalitarianism (i.e., when these democratic governments realize that they are suffering due to immigration, and form defenses against their exploitation, thereby mistreating some non-citizens and refugees), Agamben himself feels that there is an inherent vulnerability to being exploited by the government in democracies, in general. For Derrida, as opposed to Agamben, who perceives the threat of democracy to be more generalized in its scope, the primary challenge that democracies face is being hospitable to all, regardless of legal immigration status: "...that is what is most difficult, most inconceivable...[is] an extension of the democratic beyond nation-state sovereignty, beyond citizenship" (*Rogues* 87, as cited in Kelly).

Kelly finds a significant difference in the conclusions that can be made regarding the future nature of relationships between the nation-state and immigrants, after reading Derrida and Agamben. Derrida's vision allows for a more hopeful interpretation of this future, as he feels that hospitality will be possible because of the constantly-in-flux nature of democracy. Agamben, on the other hand, seems to feel that democracy itself is the primary obstacle to hospitality, implying that there is a need for a dramatic revolution of political structures, should hospitality be expected to function normally (Kelly). Given the way in which Agamben rejects modern democracy as we know it, and his harsh indictment of the predominant biopolitical paradigm in Western societies, it can be expected that he calls for a new type of politics.

While several critics, such as Jenny Edkins (2007) and legal scholars Stephen Humphreys (2006) and David Fraser (1999), confirm the assessment of modern

democracies as seen in Agamben's work, very few commentators on the Italian political theorist's opus are able to draw conclusions on the type of politics that should be formulated, in response to these criticisms (de la Durantaye 347). In fact, some critics characterize Agamben as having a utopian outlook, since even people gifted in legal and political theory have difficulty in prescribing a political structure with as many benefits as democracy, which would at the same time avoid some of the problems associated with totalitarianism (de la Durantaye 348).

For Agamben, the political resolution to the current dilemma will be in the "thought to come," (as opposed to Derrida's "the democracy to come"). As described in *Means without Ends*, this resolution will come in the form of "the profane life," according to which modern people begin to live lives divorced from their governments' ability to hurt them through biopolitical means: "...an absolutely profane life which has attained the perfection of its own potential and of its own communicability, and over which sovereignty and law no longer have any hold..." (*Means without Ends* 114-115, as cited in de la Durantaye 352). In other words, it is necessary to reevaluate the constellation of oppositions that currently impose structure on our society (such as citizen versus immigrant, legal versus illegal, sacred versus profane, powerful versus weak, to name a few). While Agamben realizes that these oppositions will always exist to some degree, reevaluating them is necessary, in order to liberate those under their domination from their oppressive weight, and to reduce the power of divisions resulting from them, eliminating the power of the government to inflict violence on us, its subjects, while not caring about our personal well-being (*Means without End* 358, as cited in de la Durantaye 358). Agamben, in *Profanations*, writes that the realization of such a profane life is

necessary, in order for a dire biopolitical disaster not to happen (de la Durantaye 354). This process of *profanation* consists of removing sacred associations from objects and behavior, for Agamben, thus making it available for everyone's use, especially through play (de la Durantaye 355-356).

In addition, Agamben proposes other means by which humanity can be preserved, despite the dangers of conflict and oppression stemming from differential statuses between people, such as that which exists between the sovereign power (the government) and the person with a "bare life" (*Homo sacer*, representing virtually anyone in modern society), according to Mills in her article on Agamben in the *International Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: through written testimony, which removes the possibility for subjectification and desubjectification (objectification), and allows the person who has suffered to communicate what is normally inexpressible.

Namely, Agamben, in *Remnants*, suggests that a type of ethics unrelated to law (meaning "normative discourse," in Mills' words), be formulated, which would allow people to express their testimonies about the suffering which they have experienced, particularly with respect to experiences which have put them into *states of exception*, as they were treated as if they were no more than anatomical creatures, with no value, as perceived by the government. Since dignity and respect did not exist at Auschwitz in their proper sense, and Agamben uses the concentration camp as the metaphor for life in modern democracies, Agamben looks to language, and not dignity or respect, as the marker of humanity. For Agamben, however, even when a person speaks, this person is totally subjectified and desubjectified: "...in the absolute present of the event of

discourse, subjectification and desubjectification coincide at every point and both the flesh and blood individual and the subject of enunciation are perfectly silent...” (*Remnants* 117, as cited by Mills). Because our speech makes us both subjects, acting on other people and the world, and objects, as we are acted on by other people and the natural environment, written testimony alone allows us to find our humanity, since without subjectification, it allows us to tell the untellable, as Mills states:

...he [Agamben] argues that what is at stake in testimony is bearing witness to what is unsayable, that is, bearing witness to the impossibility of speech and making it appear within speech. In this way, he suggests, the human is able to endure the inhuman. More generally then, testimony is no longer understood as a practice of speaking, but as an ethos, understood as the only proper “dwelling place” of the subject.

(Mills)

However, for Agamben, even testimony is part of a conversation between two parties, and thus is “unassumable,” meaning that the subject can never assume it as his or her own (Mills).

At face value, *Remnants* is a collection of testimonies made by survivors of Auschwitz, revealing the actual experiences of these people, instead of what was reputed to be the nature of these camps. *Grosso modo*, however, Agamben’s main concern in writing this work was the ethical issues involved in some people’s doubts over whether the Holocaust even occurred, an issue that French theorist Jean-François Lyotard and others address.

In *Remnants*, the character of the *Muselmann* represents a person in such poor physical condition that he or she is between life and death, a figure with great significance in Agamben's ethical framework. In Agamben's eyes, this person is more correctly the "the limit-figure of [or the threshold between] the human and inhuman," in Mills' words, rather than being the non-human human, as some see the people living in concentration camps. For Agamben, the *Muselmann* is exterior to the realm of human, and its corresponding moral status. The example of the *Muselmann* leads Agamben to inquire whether there is a "humanity to the human" that transcends biological function and appearance. From this question, Agamben founded his ethics, which refers not to dignity and respect, since these are the moral values of the former order: "Auschwitz marks the end and the ruin of every ethics of dignity and conformity to a norm....The *Muselmann*...is the guard on the threshold of a new ethics, an ethics of a form of life that begins where dignity ends" (*Remnants* 69, as cited in Mills). This new ethics of which he speaks refers to the ability of survivors of trauma (potentially anyone, in modern democracies) to deliver written testimony about their experiences, as opposed to spoken testimony, which would put them at once in the positions of subject and object.

Moreover, returning to the discussion of the differences between Derrida's and Agamben's theory involving hospitality, there are a number of more discrete-point differences. Overall, Derrida's philosophy is much more heavily-influenced by religious thought, both Jewish and Christian, while Agamben's philosophy derives largely from his readings of Foucault, and his studies of ancient Roman law. To this end, Agamben's system of thought carries a much more pessimistic tone than Derrida's does, just as Foucault's thought is significantly more pessimistic than Derrida's. Namely, while in

Derrida's *Gift of Death*, death is seen as a morally superior type of gift, since it cannot be reciprocated, for Agamben, when a citizen of a modern democracy dies, it means virtually nothing to the government, thus robbing total sacrifice of its normal significance. Furthermore, Derrida's ethical system involves the hyper-ethical, while Agamben, on the contrary, sees ethics as separate from guilt and responsibility in the traditional framework of morality. Indeed, Agamben aims to desacralize the sacred, again divesting the elevated of its power to set some people, objects and activities above the rest, with the goal of decreasing tension between people. Derrida's concept of *Tout Autre est Tout Autre*, stressing the sacred nature of human (and animal) life, and the connections between all beings, operates on a radically higher moral scale than Agamben's interpretation of the condition of *Homo Sacer, bare life*, which he feels has characterized the status of individuals in all Westernized societies. Derrida's moral framework puts the Other in a sacred and protected position, while Agamben claims to recognize that virtually everyone in democratic nations is vulnerable to the least whim of the government. Derrida feels that the Christian self involves responsibility to the Other, while Agamben's sovereign power refuses this responsibility. As I explained in the section on Derridean theory in this chapter, when Gasché interprets Derrida's *The Gift of Death*, he sees Europe as having the obligation to show responsibility to the non-European Other, differing widely from the status quo in modern society in Agamben's eyes, which can be characterized as a *state of exception*, in which people are not even guaranteed their human rights, let alone the rights that normally would be accorded to them in other circumstances.

In introducing Agamben in this section of my dissertation, I presented him as a philosopher engaging in work in analysis of the Talmud and other religious writers, like Lévinas, whose thought I also reference with respect to that of Derrida. Despite their shared affinity for commentary on religious texts, these two thinkers make very difficult conclusions on the topic of ethical responsibility. Namely, while Lévinas confers infinite responsibility towards the absolute Other, Agamben holds that although responsibility may be expected of people, these people are never capable of accepting it, characterizing Lévinas's focus as excessively-modeled after the legal framework of debt, culpability, and sponsorship. Rather than maintaining a guilt and responsibility-centered focus, which he envisions as a paradigm leading to "confrontation with a responsibility that is infinitely greater than any we could ever assume..." Agamben instead puts stress on the "doctrine of happy life" (*Remnants* 24, as cited in Mills). For Agamben, ethics are divorced from the concepts of guilt and responsibility: "...ethics is the sphere that recognizes neither guilt nor responsibility" (*Remnants* 24, as cited in Mills). The work from which these quotes are drawn, *Remnants*, consists largely of testimonies of survivors of the concentration camp at Auschwitz, meant to document the nature of these prisoner's lives there, and to squelch skepticism on the issue of the reality of the Holocaust, according to de la Durantaye (247-248). Lévinas puts special focus on the need to service Others, while Agamben's observations on modern democratic states reveal the selfishness of the sovereign power.

To conclude this section on the consequences of Agamben's political philosophy for my view of Derridean hospitality theory, when these two theories are studied in tandem, Agamben's theory makes one seriously question whether hospitality, in its true

sense, can occur in modern-day France, since the inherent vulnerabilities of citizens in democracies such as France are made the most visible by the challenges to the situations of non-citizens and refugees, which are very precarious due to the inherent mechanism by which democracies defend themselves through a variety of “autoimmune”-related measures (as described by Kelly), by which they also prevent the true incorporation of people from other countries as full-fledged citizens. While Foucauldian power theory is a paradigm that often corresponds to some interactions between the government and would-be or actual immigrants, Agamben’s theory seems to imply that even in cases in which hospitality would occur, the very nature of these governments, as democratic ones, means that non-citizens and refugees will always remain in a non-integrated state, that of *exception*, and in the worst cases, be treated without their human rights being protected. In the situation of the Maghrebi-French in France, although France is a democracy and not a totalitarian state, the way in which the government controls the people through biopower, and the way in which individual people do not matter much to the government, means that people who have even less connection to the government, who were not born in France, are seen as even less worthy of protection, a vision that runs strongly contrary to that described by Derrida, who feels that the progressive, liberal, and humanitarian functions of democratic nations will protect them from constructing too many barriers to immigration and integration.

The Political Implications of Derrida's Hospitality Theory

Beyond an exploration of Lévinas' and Agamben's philosophies, I note that all of Derrida's late works on ethics have important political implications, including *Given Time*, the subject of which is gift-giving. In this work, Derrida argues that a true gift is not even thought of as one by the person who gives it or by the one who receives it; thus there is no acknowledgement of debt (16). In other words, Derrida banishes the notion of reciprocity from the true gift, as idealized or impossible as this may sound. Derrida criticizes Mauss in this work for discussing reciprocated gifts. For Derrida, any such gift is not a gift at all. Mauss conceptualized time as a dimension of every gift: "The gift is not a gift, the gift only gives to the extent that it gives time. The difference between a gift and every operation of pure and simple exchange is that the gift gives time. There where there is gift, there is time...The thing must not be restituted immediately and right away" (41). Derrida, on the other hand, confirms his belief that the true gift involves no reciprocity in his discussion of Baudelaire's "Counterfeit Money" in the sequel to *Given Time, The Gift of Death*: "The moment the gift, however generous it be, is touched by the slightest hint of calculation...in short it gives counterfeit money, since it gives in exchange for payment" (113). This quotation is relevant to the rapport between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent. Any concession that is made in this relationship carries the expectation of reciprocity, potentially creating a vicious cycle of demands. Derrida's conception of non-reciprocity as a criterion for a true gift has relevance for his consideration of the hyper-ethical, which involves a lack of reciprocity.

There is also a connection between Derrida's concept of *différance* and the gift in this work. Derrida writes that in normal (ethical) situations, every gift involves the concept of *différance*, or time delay in which reciprocity is deferred: "Moved by a mysterious force, the thing itself demands gift and restitution, it requires therefore time, delay, interval of temporization, the becoming-temporization of temporalization...*Différance*, which is nothing, is in the thing itself" (40). Considering Derrida's work more globally, *différance* plays a role, in that the expectation of reciprocity points to some future time other than the present moment when hospitality is being extended or a gift is being given. Foucault's perceived differences in status, added to the expectation of reciprocity, can make this dynamic oppressive. Derrida does not totally eliminate the potential for reciprocity, yet he tries to minimize its importance. The hyper-ethical is exemplified by a total renunciation of expected reciprocity; it is a boundless form of generosity that transcends typical standards for relationships. While Derrida tries to conceive of a gift with minimal reciprocity, it would seem that it is almost impossible to have such a gift, since gifts reinforce relationships, which involve actions and reactions.

Derrida, in a deconstructive thought experiment, conceptually tries to eliminate reciprocity in hospitality and gift-giving in his writings on ethics, for the sake of political practice, which will be touched upon in my explanation of his *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (2001). In this pair of essays, Derrida, addressing the International Parliament of Writers, in 1996, provides a practical application of his practice of deconstruction, applying it to immigration and human rights, with the aim of liberating oppressed groups. The context of this address was the outcome to the *sans-papier*

incident of that year, in which the French government had to make decisions regarding hospitality to immigrants. The Parliament called for the opening of cities for refugees (4, 10). There is a strong connection between the two key concepts of cosmopolitanism, which encourages inclusion of immigrants, and forgiveness, the other topic of this pair of essays, since these two concepts dealing with human relations in modern times can each be thought of as being divided between two poles (xi). Derrida posits that there are two poles to cosmopolitanism, unconditional hospitality and the conditional right to visit, based on Kant's theory, and, likewise, two poles to forgiveness, the imperative to forgive unconditionally and to seek justice (22, 59). Absolute and unconditional forgiveness is considered to be in the realm of the hyper-ethical, while conditional hospitality and forgiveness are more in the order of the ethical.

Derrida recommends modifying the ethical in light of the hyper-ethical, specifically in terms of minimizing the role of reciprocity in favor of forgiveness. To some extent, he advocates finding the middle ground between each set of poles (22-23, 59). Derrida analyzes situations of reconciliation and amnesty, such as that in Rwanda or with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, which demand forms of forgiveness (30). In his discussion of the way in which crimes against humanity are regarded in modern times, Derrida holds that forgiveness only comes when it applies to the unforgivable: "If there is something to forgive, it would be what in religious language is called mortal sin, the worst, the unforgivable crime or harm...forgiveness must announce itself as impossibility itself" (32). There is a link between this definition of forgiveness and Derrida's concept that the true gift is unreciprocated, which he asserts in *Given Time*. Derrida tries to imagine generosity with no strings attached.

Derrida writes that there is power in forgiveness in certain, unpredictable contexts, preferring it to previous forms of resistance as theorized by Foucault. This interest in the possible practical use of forgiveness on the part of Derrida is illustrated in his application of this theory to the events that transpired in South Africa through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (43). While Foucault advocates resistance, Derrida explores a benign, more pacific approach in which the weak use their moral imaginations to appreciate the Otherness of the powerful, even as Power harms them. However, as I have noted in my discussion of the political implications of *The Gift of Death*, Derrida does not completely reject political resistance. This tendency towards religious thinking that can be found in Derrida is rare for a modern philosopher. He most definitely realizes that the world is unequal, but recommends to the disempowered to consider, on occasion, acting as if they are powerful and forgive, inspired by the Christian tradition.

The way in which Derrida envisions forgiveness can be applied to politics. The type of forgiveness that Derrida describes happens within the context of crimes against humanity on the part of toppled tyrannical regimes, rather than the situation in which the Maghrebi-French find themselves, that of the marginalized in a democratic nation. In contexts such as the end of apartheid in South Africa or the genocide in Rwanda as two settings, ordinary people saw a need to forgive the powerful for their crimes against humanity (43). Derrida's thinking agrees with that of Archbishop and Nobel Peace Prize winner Desmond Tutu in some respects. In the 1999 work *No Future Without Forgiveness*, Tutu asserts, in the context of the aftermath of apartheid in South Africa, that there is a necessity for forgiveness as a political act in some cases: "...the cycle of reprisal and counterreprisal...had to be broken and...the only way to do this was to go

beyond retributive justice to restorative justice, to move on to forgiveness, because without it there was no future” (260). It may seem that forgiveness is out of the question in situations involving apartheid, but the fact that forgiveness is an option, and a liberating one, in even the most serious circumstances, indicates that the expectation for such an imperative is not naïve, and that, arguably, more quotidian struggles such as that of the Maghrebi-French in France could be mediated by encouraging the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent to forgive each other for mutual transgressions. Tutu holds that forgiveness was effective in the transition from apartheid to democracy in South Africa, a situation involving the unforgivable: “South Africans managed an extraordinary, reasonably peaceful transition from the awfulness of repression to the relative stability of democracy” (261). Like war crimes against humanity, the mistreatment that the Maghrebi-French receive from the French of European descent involves collective responsibility.

Another of Derrida’s late works on ethics is *The Politics of Friendship*. In this work, Derrida elaborates on his theory on friendship. He states that having too many friends endangers one’s existing friendships, that good friendship comes from respecting the Other more than oneself, and that friendship can and should be based on non-reciprocity, meaning that there should be no expectation of return and a focus on the irreducible presence of the Other (62-63). Like Derrida’s other works on ethics, this conception of friendship is characterized by minimized reciprocity, true friendship happening only when there is no expectation of return. In fact, I perceive a commonality in Derrida’s late works on ethics: non-reciprocity. Derrida deconstructs ethical situations to arrive at the hyper-ethical, subsequently applying these conclusions to the ethical to

produce the highly ethical. He also holds that the declared enemy is a better friend than the friend in this work (64). Again, it may be unrealistic to expect friendship to have minimized reciprocity. This type of pure relationship would doubtlessly be contaminated by human weakness.

Summary of “Foucauldian” (Dysfunctional) Hospitality Theory

Since I have explained Derridean hospitality theory and the contributions that Mauss made through his concept of the importance of gift-giving in hospitality, I will contrast Derrida’s theory with Foucault’s, which is the other central theoretical foundation of my project. I have chosen to use Foucault’s theory on power in light of Derridean hospitality theory since Foucault’s theory, pessimistic in nature, serves as a foil to Derrida’s optimistic conceptualization of relationships between the powerful and the weak. The books by Foucault that I will examine include *Surveiller et punir (Discipline and Punish)* (1975), *La Folie et la déraison (Madness and Civilization)* (1961), *The History of Sexuality* (1976), *Power/Knowledge* (1977), and *Dits et écrits* (1988). Foucault stresses the consequences of relationships affected by perceived differences in status on the parties involved in these relationships, the subjectification occurring most noticeably to the most vulnerable, the domination of the weak by the powerful, and the necessity of the weak to resist oppression. In this section, I will analyze specific quotations and passages from Foucault’s central works in order to convey the way in which Foucault described the way in which the disadvantaged are subjectified in a variety of contexts, from the mental asylum to the prison to sexual relationships. While much of

Foucault's characterization of relationships between the weak and powerful is deeply pessimistic, there is much to be taken from this portrait. In addition, there is a redeeming quality in the creative resistance that Foucault advocates, as he encourages the weak to rally against the powerful in inventive ways that affirm the dignity of the disempowered. In this sense, my aim is in no way to villainize Foucault, but rather to reinforce the value of what he writes about the nature of unbalanced relationships between people.

Among these works, *Discipline and Punish*, which examines the effects of power in the field of punishment and incarceration, is one of the most foundational works pertaining to Foucault's power theory. Foucault, in this work, holds that authorities and governments currently have the power to do more damage through incarceration and surveillance of individuals in prisons than they formerly did by drawing and quartering those who they thought were outside societal norms. This change happened at some point in the 19th century, and drastically revolutionized punishment: "...The hold on the body did not entirely disappear in the mid-nineteenth century. Punishment had no doubt ceased to be centered on torture as a technique of pain; it assumed as its principal object loss of wealth or rights" (15). Although Foucault never explicitly asserts that it is better to be drawn and quartered than to be controlled and manipulated, he does write that there are deleterious effects to be constantly monitored, and that this type of change was enacted not necessarily for humanistic ends, but rather to assert control.

Among so many changes, I shall consider one: the disappearance of torture as a public spectacle. Today we are rather inclined to ignore it; perhaps, in its time, it gave rise to too much inflated rhetoric; perhaps it has been attributed too readily and too emphatically to a process of "humanization" thus dispensing with the need for further analysis.

(Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 7)

Foucault subtly disagrees with the idea that the replacement of physical torture by surveillance was enacted for humanistic motives. Foucault's characterization of punitive systems as tending to control and monitor their subjects to an excessive degree is very observable in modern society.

Beyond an examination of Foucault's theory found in *Discipline and Punish*, his work on the history of mental illness from the 16th to the 18th centuries, *Madness and Civilization*, is noteworthy for its portrayal of the way in which the staff members of modern-day mental hospitals collect information on the mentally ill in order to control them and the way in which mental illness is a construct. More specifically, Foucault asserts that the mental asylum constantly surveys and judges its patients. He holds that there was a significant change in the way these establishments operated at the end of the 18th century: "Until the end of the end of the 18th century, the world of madmen was peopled only by the abstract, faceless power which kept them confined; within these limits, it was empty, empty of all that was not madness itself...The space reserved for insanity would now be haunted by those who were "from the other side" and who represented both the prestige of the authority that confines and the rigor of the reason who judges" (251). In this new mode, mental patients lived in an environment of perpetual surveillance, not dissimilar to that of the prison, despite the avowed claims of rehabilitation that are the core of such institutions. Regarding the origins of the psychiatric profession, Foucault holds in *Madness and Civilization* that psychology was not initiated "as the truth of madness, but as a sign that madness as now detached from its

truth which was unreason and that it was henceforth nothing but a phenomenon adrift, insignificant upon the undefined surface of nature. An enigma without any truth except that which could reduce it" (198). In this quotation, Foucault communicates his belief that madness does not exist and that psychiatry is constructed.

In *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault insists on the surveillance and judgment that are part of the mental asylum, distrust being central in relationships between those in charge of the asylum and its patients. In this interaction, the victory of reason is assured, the only task of those in charge to perpetually monitor the patients:

The keeper intervenes, without weapon, without instruments of constraint, with observation and language only: he advances upon madness, deprived of all that could protect him or make him seem threatening, risking an immediate confrontation without recourse...Reasons' victory over unreason was once assured only by material force, and in a sort of real combat. Now the combat was always decided beforehand, unreason's defeat inscribed in advance in the concrete situation where madman and man of reason met. The absence of constraint in the nineteenth-century asylum is not reason unliberated, but madness long since mastered.

(Foucault 252)

In the same section of this work, Foucault holds that the madman also recognizes that he is judged and condemned, given that he is constantly subjected to the obviousness of his wrongdoing:

Everything was organized so that the madman would recognize himself in a world of judgment that enveloped him on all sides; he must know that he is watched, judged, and condemned; from transgression to punishment, the connection must be evident, as a guilt recognized by all...This most arithmetical obviousness of punishment, repeated as often

as necessary, the recognition of transgression by its repression---all this must end in the internalization of the juridical instance, and the birth of remorse in the inmate's mind: it is only at this point that the judges agree to stop the punishment, certain that it will continue indefinitely in the inmate's conscience...The cycle is complete twice over: the transgression is punished and its author recognizes her guilt.

(Foucault 268)

In his other works, Foucault corroborates his findings in *Madness and Civilization*. In fact, Foucault's discussion of the mental asylum as a locus of control parallels his description of the panopticon. Foucault writes, in *Discipline and Punish*, that there is a strong link between psychiatry, the legal profession and penal network (2):

...what is odd about modern criminal justice is that, although it has taken on so many extra-judicial elements, it has done so not in order to be able to define them juridically and gradually to integrate them into the actual power to punish: on the contrary, it has done so in order to make them function within the penal operation as non-judicial elements; in order to stop this operation being simply a legal punishment; in order to exculpate the judge from being purely and simply he who punishes.

(Foucault 22)

In this quotation, Foucault implies that modern justice uses the psychiatric profession to conceal the fact that it is trying to control people, under the guise of rehabilitation. As with the punitive system, the psychiatric profession indeed seems to grasp an unusual amount of control over its patients even as it claims to be treating them.

In addition, Foucault's *Power/Knowledge* (1977), particularly an interview, "Truth and Power," supports his findings in *Madness and Civilization*. He claims that in the mental asylum, "treatment" comes through the form of a type of psychological and

mental manipulation. Freedom of movement is limited, and knowledge is controlled, power being obtained through information gleaned about people. While knowledge is conceived of as a positive commodity, Foucault writes, in the same work, that it can also be problematic because of the manipulation that it enables (131). In these situations, those who have authority over others, for example, the staff in the mental hospital, often collect knowledge about the weak and disempowered, in order to control them. This radical theorist writes that psychiatry may have done more harm than good, according to an interview, “On Popular Justice: A Discussion with Maoists” (7). Current forms of punishment are manipulative, craftier and slyer. They leave the domain of perception, enter the abstract and are hidden by bureaucratic concealment.

Madness and Civilization has relevance for the plight of the Maghrebi-French in France, since, while the French do not officially collect statistics, they monitor the immigration status of North Africans in France.

Another of Foucault’s works, *The History of Sexuality* (1976), makes a contribution to the understanding of the way in which some psychiatrists use the knowledge that they have collected about their patients, in particular, knowledge about sexuality, to control them, such as through the practice of psychoanalysis. In the 19th century, the psychiatric profession found a way to persuade patients to speak through therapy to reveal personal, sexual information, which was then used against them. While in the past the Catholic Church was the institution that demanded confession of its members, this role came to be played by psychoanalysis:

The confession was, and still remains, the general standard governing the production of the true discourse on sex. It has undergone a considerable

transformation, however. For a long time, it remained firmly entrenched in the practice of penance. But with the rise of Protestantism, the Counter Reformation, eighteenth-century pedagogy, and nineteenth-century medicine, it gradually lost its ritualistic and exclusive localization; it spread; it has been employed in a whole series of relationships: children and parents, patients and psychiatrists, delinquents and experts.

(Foucault 63)

Instead of forgiveness or absolution being conferred through the Catholic Church, specifically through the practice of confessing one's sins to a priest, people in the modern era achieve this end by telling their psychoanalysts information on their sex lives. This concession to mental patients, while it makes them feel psychically relieved, according to Foucault, results in the powerful having more ability to manipulate people: "...the agency of domination does not reside in the one who speaks...but in the one who listens and says nothing; not in the one who knows and answers, but in the one who questions and is not supposed to know" (62). Again, Foucault seems to have tapped into something very relevant to modern society in his observation of the control that psychiatry extends over its patients through confession.

The model of the powerful counseling the weak may correspond to the situation of the *Beurs*, who are sometimes subject to manipulation by the French or European descent. For example, in some of the *Beur* novels I will analyze in this dissertation, specifically Soraya Nini's *Ils disent que je suis une beurette*, Franco-French school administrators advise *Beur* students about career paths they should follow, arguably to control the occupational trajectory of these students. In particular, the administrators in this novel advise Samia to aim for more practical, less intellectually-demanding

professions, and she decides on a career as an *animatrice*, although she may have been capable to hold other types of employment. The French of European descent schoolteachers tend not to have very high expectations for *Beur* youth, reserving more prestigious types of career tracks for the talented Franco-French, and reinforcing already-existing tendencies of the upper classes to reproduce themselves, limiting the full participation of the Maghrebi-French in these professions.

In *The History of Sexuality*, Volume 1, Foucault paints a picture of the intertwined nature of power and pleasure as they pertain to sexuality. In this scenario, there is great distrust between the powerful and the weak. The powerful gain a perverse sense of pleasure from controlling the weak, through many forms of monitoring:

The medical examination, the psychiatric investigation, the pedagogical report, and family controls may have the over-all and apparent objective of saying no to all wayward or unproductive sexualities, but the fact is that they function as mechanisms with a double impetus: pleasure and power. The pleasure that comes of exercising a power that questions, monitors, watches, spies, searches out, palpates, brings to light; and on the other hand, the pleasure that kindles at having to evade this power, fell from it, fool it, or travesty it. The power that lets itself be invaded by the pleasure it is pursuing; and opposite it, power asserting itself in the pleasure of showing off, scandalizing, or resisting. Capture and seduction, confrontation and mutual reinforcement: parents and children, adults and adolescents, educator and students, doctors and patients, the psychiatrist with his hysteric and his perverts, all have played this game continually since the nineteenth century. These attractions, these evasions, these circular incitements have traced around bodies and sexes, not boundaries to be crossed, but perpetual spirals of power and pleasure.

(Foucault 45)

The History of Sexuality, particularly its reliance on Platonism, forms a sharp contrast with the philosophy of Derrida, due to the difference between Foucault's idealization of the Greek city-state, which emphasizes care of the self, and Derrida's Other-centric approach to political responsibility. While Foucault does not explicitly define Platonism in the *History of Sexuality*, in the second volume, he explains the general aims of the Platonists in the third volume: "One encounters it (the *cura sui*) in the Platonists: Albinus advises that one commence the study of philosophy by reading the Alcibiades "with a view to turning and returning to oneself," and for the purpose of learning "that which one should make into the object of his care" (45). Although Foucault clearly addresses sexuality in this work, the real issue at stake is the political history of Europe, because Foucault envisions sexuality as part of a network of power. The historical shift from the small Greek city-state in the era of the 4th century B.C. to the Roman Empire is seen as a turning point in the relationship of the individual person to power. Politics became much more unstable, and there was a need to be cautious and even suspicious of the motives of others. While Derrida sees the Other in a positive light, Foucault paints the Other in very negative hues. This is Foucault's description of politics in the Roman Empire:

In reflection on political activity, during the first centuries of the Empire, this precariousness inherent in the exercise of power is associated with two other themes. First, it is perceived as being linked to the dependence that one experiences in relation to others...It is not so much the particular cycle of good and bad fortune that explains this fragility, but the fact that one is placed under what Seneca calls the *potential aliena* or the *vis potentioris*. In the complex network of power, one is never alone facing one's enemies. One is exposed on all sides to influences, fatigues, conspiracies, losses of favor. To be secure, one will have to be careful not to "give offence...It is burdensome to keep the friendship of all such persons; it is enough not to make enemies of them.

Foucault's penchant for the care of the self, in contrast to Derridean care for the other, is demonstrated by his admiration for the small Greek city-state of the fourth century B.C. for its ethical system that stressed the cultivation of the self, particularly since privileged males, who alone had access to political power and enjoyed more stable existences than their less powerful counterparts, were able to develop themselves in relative freedom. While Plato emphasizes the perfection of the self and of politics, a viewpoint shared by this privileged minority, Derrida prefers to focus on the Other, inspired by Jan Patočka's "heretical" interpretation of Christianity and of Europe's political history. Stimulated by Plato in *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault gives priority to a self-ish conception of politics, because he believes that a focus on others creates conformism and limits personal freedom, including sexual freedom. While Foucault is correct in asserting that Christianity has been used to justify control over people's sex lives, Derrida's radical idea of the coming rapport between Power and the Other will not lead to the same effect, due to its extreme stress on tolerance.

Edward Said's thoughts on the social constructedness of the Other in his landmark 1978 work *Orientalism*, inspired by Foucault, are markedly different from the concept of the radical otherness of the Other advanced by Derrida and Lévinas. Said's Foucauldian vision, which holds that Orientalism, the image of the people of the countries of the Middle East, Asia and North Africa in the eyes of the West, was a Western formulation used in order to facilitate colonialism and exploitation, can be contrasted with Derrida's outlook, which holds that the Other is a real entity and that a deference and respect

towards the Other can advance the cause of the marginalized. Foucault's writings on the way in which sexuality, criminality and mental illness are social constructs created by the powerful to manipulate people served as the foundation of Said's theory. In *Orientalism*, Said, the father of post-colonialism, explains his central argument and the way in which Foucault's theory acted as the bedrock of his own:

Taking the late eighteenth century as a very roughly defined starting point Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient...in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. I have found it useful here to employ Michel Foucault's notion of a discourse, as described by him in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and in *Discipline and Punish*, to identify Orientalism. My contention is that without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage---even produce---the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the Post-Enlightenment period....It (Orientalism) is the whole network of interest inevitably brought upon to bear on...any occasion when that peculiar entity "the Orient" is in question.

(Said 3)

Through the use of the verb "produce" at the end of the passage, Said communicates his belief that the Oriental Other is an identity that is entirely constructed by European power. Derrida's idea of radical hospitality, however, is not founded on the social constructedness of the Other, neither is Lévinas' conception of the Other constructed. This fact, in addition to the fact that Said does not mention Lévinas in *Orientalism*, leads one to believe that the political theory formulated by Derrida in his late writings on ethics does not agree with the concept of social constructedness, at least in its integral form.

Nevertheless, Derrida does not hold that Foucault and Said's socially constructed concept of the Other is entirely erroneous.

Besides the contributions that Foucault made in *The History of Sexuality*, perceived differences in status, which complicate and frustrate hospitality in France, will be the crux of my reading of Foucault in light of Derrida's hospitality theory. Foucault, in *Power/Knowledge*, a collection of interviews, defines power as, "...not an institution, a structure, or a certain force with which certain people are endowed; it is the name given to a complex strategic relation in a given society" (236), emphasis mine). Foucault writes in the same work that knowledge and power occur in a cycle: "...the exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information...the exercise of power perpetually creates new knowledge and conversely, knowledge constantly induces new effects of power" (51). The theorist asserts, in an interview, "Prison Talk," published in *Power/Knowledge*, that, although power causes repression, it is potent enough to make us blindly accept it: "What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse" (119). Perceived differences in status are essential to the work of Foucault. He conceives of power as existing in a relational manner: "Truth is a thing of this word: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power" (131). Mistrust plays a major role in relationships in Foucault. For example, he asserts in an interview, "The Eye of Power," published in *Power/Knowledge*, "In the Panopticon, each person, depending on his place, is watched by all or certain of the others. You have an apparatus of total and circulating

mistrust, because there is no absolute point. The perfected form of surveillance consists in a summation of malveillance” (158). The emphasis in this quotation from Foucault is so clearly on distrust between the powerful and the disempowered, that the contrast with Derrida is stark. Indeed, Foucault appears to be accurate as he observes the way in which power and knowledge interact to corroborate each other in modern society.

Nancy Fraser, in her article “Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Confusions,” stresses the embedded nature of power in Foucault’s theory. She writes that Foucault felt that power works at the lowest level of social groups in quotidian practices (218). Fraser also points out that Foucault saw these social practices as more critical to determining behavior than belief systems, and that even changing the state or economy would not significantly modify the modern power regime. Fraser holds that Foucault’s treatment of issues such as sexuality, psychiatry and schools can be seen as an everyday politics, and that power controls by prohibition (226-7). The Maghrebi-French deal with everyday political and social problems and therefore Foucault’s ideas are helpful.

In his discussion of the effects of power, Foucault argues that the concession from the party that enforces a certain *regime of truth*, sustained by the production of certain types of knowledge, and thus retains authority over other people in a given context, is not as advantageous as vice versa, since the process works better when the perceived difference in status is not so great. The person in the inferior situation, for example, the mental hospital, may have reason for doubting the motivation of a person making a concession. For example, the above citation from *Discipline and Punish* regarding the humanization of prisons, illustrates this concept. Namely, I reference Foucault’s

statement that this process was not as great a concession as it appeared to be, since tight control was kept over inmates, although through other means. This holds true for mental hospitals, as described in *Madness and Civilization*. Applied to Mauss' theory, there are always strings attached to a concession from the powerful to the disempowered.

With respect to the plight of the descendants of North African immigrants in France, perceived differences in status play an important role in their relation to the French of European descent. French authorities, in many ways, have license to monitor and constrain the actions of the Maghrebi-French, creating an atmosphere of distrust, as in the panopticon. For example, as illustrated in the *Beur* film *Le Gone du Chaaba*, the figure of the schoolteacher tends to instill an atmosphere of conformity to French school standards, an idea that I will develop in the chapter on mixed hospitality. Of course, the schoolteacher has a duty, to some extent, to try to produce model citizens. Nonetheless, from the viewpoint of the Maghrebi-French, this normalizing influence is not always sensitive to their backgrounds.

In the context of this power struggle, the best scenario envisioned by Foucault is resistance by the marginalized. A disenfranchised person can resist and challenge authority. In *Dits et écrits* (1988), Foucault writes that resistance is always found where there is power: "...dès lors qu'il y a un rapport de pouvoir, il y a une possibilité de résistance. Nous ne sommes jamais piégés par le pouvoir: on peut toujours en modifier l'emprise, dans des conditions déterminées et selon une stratégie précise" (267). The resistance that Foucault portrays is perpetual. Power and resistance are in a constant battle (654). Foucault discusses the relation between power and resistance in the work *The History of Sexuality*, when he writes: "Where there is power, there is resistance, and

yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (95). John Hartmann, in the published remarks from the conference presentation, “Power and Resistance in the Later Foucault,” holds that this quotation may be interpreted in the sense that Power is found along a series of points that imply opportunities for resistance.

Foucault’s vision of resistance is realistic, since he acknowledges that it often proves difficult to overcome the obstacles created by perceived differences in status among people; he writes in an excerpt of “Hommage à Jean Hyppolite,” that, “Humanity installs...its violence in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination” (85). He does, however, admit, in the *History of Sexuality*, that resistance is essential (308). Foucault recommends a creative resistance, and intends his works on knowledge and power to be, as he states in *Dits et écrits*, “a kind of toolbox others can rummage through to find a tool they can use however they wish in their area...I don’t write for an audience, I write for users, not readers” (523-4).

Despite the challenges that Foucault sees in the prospect of resistance, he envisions resistance as being potentially fruitful, and relations of power, as being instable, and often in flux. In *Dits et écrits II*, published posthumously, after his death in 1984, Foucault cites the complex interplay of factors that occur within power relations:

Si je me faisais une conception ontologique du Pouvoir, il y aurait, d’un côté, le Pouvoir avec un *P* majuscule, sorte d’instance lunaire, supraterrrestre, et puis les résistances des malheureux qui sont contraints de se plier au pouvoir. Je crois qu’une analogie de ce genre est totalement fautive; car le pouvoir naît d’une pluralité des rapports qui se greffent sur autre chose; naissent d’autre chose, et rendent possible, autre chose.

(Foucault, *Dits et écrits II*, 631)

Additionally, Foucault is quoted as saying, in *Dits et écrits IV*, that, “Ces relations du pouvoir sont donc mobiles, réversible, et instables...Cela veut dire que, dans les relations du pouvoir, il y a forcément des possibilités de résistance,...de stratégies qui renversent la situation...” (720). Far from power relations being based on a hegemonic conception of Power, real power relations consist more of the assertion of wills of a number of people with respect to each other, constantly producing more or less new relational scenarios, in Foucault’s estimation.

Thanks to this more flexible conception of power relations, as enounced by Foucault, it seems logical to conclude that there is greater chance for the reversal of power relations through the action of resisting oppression, and that resisting such oppression is far from futile. Thus, the pessimistic picture of human relations that some take from reading Foucauldian power theory is not accurate; rather, the flexibility and possibility that Foucault envisions as being inherent to the process of resistance implies that there may be significant hope for the improvement of the conditions of the disadvantaged, and for the future establishment of greater social justice. If resistance were not at all effective, imagine the delay in social progress that would still exist in many areas of society, as well as the total domination of forces that have long ago lost their legitimacy. For example, there has been great progress in the status of women in Western societies since the 19th-century.

The resistance that Foucault proposes as a strategem for the weak in their interactions with the powerful has its redeeming qualities, even in the context of a pessimistic vision of such relationships that Foucault has created. While Derrida seems to have created a highly innovative way for the weak to grasp greater control through

forgiveness, Foucault has theorized---and practiced-----creative methods of resistance to dominating power structures. There is value in the realization that the weak are not completely resigned to accepting the rulings of the powerful, and that they have some ability to defend themselves.

Indeed, for Foucault, resistance was much more than a theoretical concept----it was a personal practice of his. David M. Halperin's *Saint Foucault* (1997) praises the theorist for his advocacy of creative resistance in the realm of gay and AIDS activism. According to Halperin, Foucault "regularly engaged...in street battles with the police, fighting at sufficiently close quarters to sustain a variety of serious physical injuries----including, on at least one occasion, a broken rib" (23). Foucault called this engagement a "hyperactivism" (Halperin 23). Starting in the late 1960s, Foucault was heavily involved in political organizing, including "going to meetings, writing manifestos, handing out leaflets, and even driving three thousand kilometers from Paris to Warsaw in the fall of 1982, less than two years before his death, leading a convoy of medical supplies and smuggled printing materials that he had helped to collect for the beleaguered members of Solidarnosc" (23). Foucault also participated in an association to improve the French government. Foucault's political engagement inspired the creation of groups such as ACT UP, or the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power. His conception of homosexuality as a product of systems of power gave way to direct-action organizations such as ACT-UP, which practiced a brand of sexual identity politics that went against assimilationist and essentialist theories (Halperin 27). The AIDS crisis led many in the gay community to, "...conceptualize sexuality.....as an essentially concentrated point of traversal (point de passage) for relations of power" (Halperin 27).

In addition, Foucault was involved in activism with the GIP, le Groupe d'Information sur les Prisons. According to the article, "The Intolerable Inquiry: The Documents of the Groupe d'information sur les prisons," written by Albert Toscano, and posted on the website of the political magazine, *The Viewpoint*, dated September 25th, 2013, Foucault and the other activists involved in the GIP conducted surveys of anonymous prisoners of France, questioning them on the status of life in prisons in 1971. Cited among these concerns are the way in which solitary confinement amounts to its own form of psychological torture, the way in which dental services were difficult to come by in prisons at the time, and the way in which the living quarters were often extremely dirty. One prisoner, according to Toscano, complained that reform of the entire French justice system, and not just prisons, was necessary at the time, and that brutality among police was the norm. Toscano finds that these questionnaires filled out by prisoners are a testament to the ubiquitousness of oppression in France. Among the booklets published by the GIP, are *Intolérable 4*, by Defert and Deleuze, who comment on the number of suicides occurring in French prisons, often by immigrants; these two theorists write that suicide "...is another facet of the collective intolerance of the inmates, and a call to public opinion. Each suicide today already registers itself into forms of combat that elaborate themselves for tomorrow" (272, as cited in Toscano). While Toscano remarks that prisons today are often worse than they were when Foucault, Deleuze, Denfert, and the others in le Groupe d'information sur les prisons observed them, he feels inspired by the way in which this group conducted an independent, informal investigation into the study of prison environments: "What these booklets leave behind....remains in many ways vital: the need to fashion unauthorized inquiries into

collective movements...; to undo the divisions between workers and their others; to incite 'active intolerance.'”

The Foucauldian concept of *desubjectification*, an idea that I will develop in the following section, with relationship to the situation of the *Beurs*, and the intellectual's role in this process, that of liberating people under the weight of institutions that produce narratives leading to their own subjectification, seems to be exemplified well by the role that Foucault played in le Groupe d'information sur les prisons. Along with his colleagues, Foucault worked to reveal the nature of prisoners' lives in France, thus providing proof to the general public that the generalized belief according to which prisoners in France lived in humane and acceptable conditions, was not a sustainable one, as people were confronted with the responses to these survey questions that prisoners answered. By showing the faulty nature of this narrative, Foucault and his colleagues attempted to reduce the subjectification of French prisoners, and although their efforts did not lead to dramatic changes, I agree with Toscano when he claims that this initiative provides a template for other campaigns to use as they expose social problems, the display of which can eventually catalyze change in real and lasting ways.

This theoretical framework contributes to the analysis of relations between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French since a Foucauldian reading would endorse the creative resistance of the Maghrebi-French against domination by the French of European descent. It would also suggest that concessions from the stronger party, the French of European descent, complicate exchanges, leading the Maghrebi-French to doubt the motivation for these concessions.

A Special Form of Resistance:
The Foucauldian Concept of Desubjectification, through *Critique*

I will say that *critique* is the movement by which the subject gives himself the right to question truth on its effects of power, and question power on its discourses of truth. Well, then!: critique will be the art of voluntary insubordination, that of reflected intractability. Critique would essentially ensure the desubjugation of the subject, in the context of what we would call, in a word, the politics of truth.

(Foucault, “What is Critique?”, as cited in *The Politics of Truth* 47)

Since I have articulated the theoretical approach that I will take as I use Foucauldian power theory to illuminate the nature of *Beur*-Franco-French relationships, I find it imperative to further explore Foucault’s concept of *desubjectification*, an idea that I will apply to my presentation of the *Beur* novels, films, and songs examined in this dissertation. While Foucault thoroughly develops the concept of subjectification and subjection through his power theory, the concept of desubjectification was explored primarily in his later works on ethics, and largely in his works on subjectivity (such as in *The Care of the Self: the History of Sexuality*, Volume 3 (1985), and *The Use of Pleasure: the History of Sexuality*, Volume 3 (1985), according to the article, “Revisiting Foucault through Reading Agamben: Implications for Workplace Subjectification, Desubjectification, and the Darkside of Organizations,” written by Richard Ek, Martin Fougère, and Pers Skalen, of Lund University, Corporate Geography, and Karlstad University, of Sweden. *The Politics of Truth*, a collection of transcribed lectures and unpublished essays, itself published in 1997, after Foucault’s death in 1984, from which I

cited the excerpt above this paragraph, also addresses subjectivity and desubjectification through the formation of *critique*.

Desubjectification, according to Racevskis, is one of the tools that Foucault envisions people as taking from his “tool box” and using to improve their circumstances, the notion of “se dépendre de soi-même” (removing oneself from oneself) being key in the process of *desubjectification*. In the article, “Michel Foucault, Rameau’s Nephew, and the Question of Identity,” published in *Philosophy and Social Criticism* in the summer of 1987, Racevskis also emphasizes the centrality of Foucault’s recommendation that the disempowered strive to “se dépendre de soi-même,” that is, take themselves out of situations where their freedom of choice is compromised (“Michel Foucault, Rameau’s Nephew...” 11). In the article, “Michel Foucault et l’ordre de l’impensé,” Racevskis characterizes the act of “se dépendre de soi-même” as a way of formulating a conception of the relationship between the subject and the discourse used in the specific *regime of truth* involved in the given situation: “...cette manière de comprendre la relation entre le sujet et le *discours porteur de vérités* qui servent à constituer le sujet” (11). Namely, Racevskis quotes Foucault’s statement that the aim of his “critique of identity” (in Racevskis’ words) is to facilitate this disassociation, or to “allow one to take oneself away from oneself” (“se dépendre de soi-même”), and that the goal of his [Foucault’s] writing is to extrapolate the consequences of this disassociation, or to, “...know to what extent the exercise of thinking one’s own history can free thought from what it thinks silently, and to allow it to think otherwise” (“Michel Foucault, Rameau’s Nephew...” 133). Racevskis ascertains that Foucault sees a *critique of culture* as a way to escape one’s identity, since,

When truths cease to command a general adherence, the underlying epistemological organization of an epoch becomes vulnerable to critique: the obsolescent condition of the disintegrating “order of things” is all the more criticable when it continues to hold a partial sway over the critic. It is in this conjunction that a critique of culture becomes, at the same time, an attempt to escape identity, to get away from oneself---an injunction to “se déprendre de soi.”

(Racevskis, “Michel Foucault, Rameau’s Nephew...” 138-139)

In one of Foucault’s later works, the essay, “What is Critique?”, included in the posthumous collection, *The Politics of Truth*, published in 1997, he articulates his notion of *critique*, which he sees as having a long tradition in history, including the *critique* formed by Kant. Foucault finds commonality in various types of *critique*:

...and it seems that between the high Kantian enterprise and the little professional polemical activities that are called *critique*, it seems to me that there has been in the modern Western world (dating, more or less, empirically from the 15th to 16th centuries), a certain way of thinking, speaking, and acting, a certain relationship to what exists, to what one knows, to what one does, a relationship to society, to culture and also a relationship to other that we could call, let’s say, ‘the critical attitude.’

(Foucault, “What is Critique?”, as cited in *The Politics of Truth* 42)

Despite the general definition of *critique* that Foucault provides, he acknowledges that there has been tremendous diversity in the topics that have been subjected to critique, as these topics are “...condemned to dispersion, dependency, and pure heteromony” (“What is Critique?”, as cited in *The Politics of Truth* 42).

Besides the general nature of *critique* that Foucault has observed in various

forms (for example, in Kant's philosophy, Marxist theory, and the theology of the Reformation, all of which he references in this chapter, Foucault sees the morally-driven sources of *critique*, and the ultimate moral aim of *critique* as being central to the definition that he formulates in this chapter. Specifically, he writes that *critique* is both the art of, "...not being governed quite so much" and, "...the art of voluntary insubordination....in the context of the *politics of truth*", and insists that critique is regulated by natural law, as its justification and *raison d'être* (Foucault, "What is Critique?", as cited in *The Politics of Truth* 45, 47, and 46). These criteria that Foucault lists for the genre of *critique* seem to apply to a number of situations in which people come to defy excessive control by other people, come to fully value their integrity and dignity as human beings, and can use rationally-constructed arguments to support their claim to greater autonomy and more fair policies.

Moreover, *critique* has a virtuous aim, in its true sense:

"...critique...is...supported by some kind of more general imperative---more general than that of eradicating errors. There is something in *critique* which is akin to virtue" (Foucault, "What is Critique?", as cited in *The Politics of Truth* 42-43).

Despite the way in which it appears that Foucault's *critique of identity* seems to have implications primarily for the individual, given this new-found ability to escape one's identity to some extent (in Foucault's words, "...se rendre capable, en permanence, de se dépendre de soi-même"), this evasion involves other people in Foucault's concept, according to Racevskis ("Michel Foucault, Rameau's Nephew..." 141). Due to the involvement of others in addition to the individual, Foucault considers making other people aware of the freedom implied in critiques of culture, the intellectual's reason for

being. In Foucault's terms, this task is to instruct others on the implications of critique, or to,..."reexamine evidences and postulates, to shake up habits, ways of doing and thinking, to dissipate accepted familiarities, to examine rules and institutions...and...to take part in the formation of a political will..." (as cited in Racevskis, "Michel Foucault, Rameau's Nephew..." 142). The engaged intellectual, in Foucault's estimation, is an informed citizen, sees the constraints of citizenship, and makes these constraints implicit to citizenship, known to the general public (Racevskis, "Michel Foucault, Rameau's Nephew..." 142).

The Application of the Foucauldian Conception of Desubjectification to the *Beur* Protagonists in the Literary, Cinematographic, and Musical Corpus Analyzed in this Dissertation

In the Introduction to this dissertation, specifically, the section entitled, "My Central Arguments," I advance the idea that it is critical that the Maghrebi-French in France try to achieve some degree of desubjectification from the cultural and social norms in France (and sometimes those conveyed by their families), to the extent that it is possible, in order for them to preserve their emotional health and self-esteem, and in order for them to increase their sense of agency, encouraging them to feel that they have more choices in life, than the imperatives that they are given for their behavior. Now that I have explored the Foucauldian concept of "desubjectification," which was part of Foucault's later works, I will state my idea of the way in which this idea of desubjectification can be applied to a comprehension of the situation of the Maghrebi-French in France.

Just as Foucault calls for the intellectual to call attention to the internal inconsistencies of “regimes of truth” that incentivize certain types of behavior from the general population, thus encouraging people to feel greater freedom from following the dominant trends in society, a person of Maghrebi descent in France can “...remove himself or herself from himself or herself” by questioning and challenging mentalities that may not aim towards his or her own interest, particularly those that serve a goal of society, and that conflict with his or her own values of priorities.

This process of desubjectification is manifested in several of the works discussed in this dissertation, although admittedly, in some cases, this process according to which *Beur* protagonists escape the demands associated with their perceived identities in France is more necessary in some works than others. Namely, in Chapter 2, in which I discuss Foucauldian-like relationships in artistic works by the Maghrebi-French community, this process of desubjectification is sorely needed, since relationships with the French of European descent are often severely challenged. Indeed, as I show, some of the strategies used by the *Beur* protagonists in these works are truly ingenious, and could have been inspired by Foucault’s toolbox of strategies for resistance. Other works’ protagonists, however, such as those in Sebbar’s *La Seine était rouge*, Belghoul’s *Georgette!*, and Gilou’s *Rai* are too limited by obstacles related to historical background, age, or social environment to be able to desubjectify themselves from the dominant narratives impeding their freedom, indicating that often, the most dire situations for the Maghrebi-French in France occur in contexts in which the process of undertaking desubjectification is unfeasible.

When compared to Chapter 2, desubjectification and the strategies used to achieve it, play much greater roles in the novels and films analyzed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. Specifically, Tahar Ben Jelloun's character in *Les Raisins de la galère*, Nadia, seems on a constant search for desubjectification for her, family, and friends, from the constraints of the racially-oriented injustices of French society, and the demands of radical Islam, some of which she sees as contradictory to human rights. The protagonists of Serge Meynard's 1987 film, *L'Oeil au beurre noir*, strive for, and achieve, some desubjectification from the inherently racist housing policies in France, and from the stigma that many Franco-French women see them as carrying, due to their different racial background. Two other works that feature protagonists liberating themselves at least psychologically from the often-mutually exclusive demands of their social circles and their conservative families are Azouz Begag's *Le Gone du Chaaba* and *Béni, ou le paradis privé*. In contrast, the protagonists of Medhi Charef's 1983 *Le Thé au harem d'Archimède* and Matthieu Kassovitz's 1995 *La Haine* are largely unable to free themselves from the dominant trends demonstrated by people in the environments in which they live, although Madjid and Humbert each find some psychological desubjectification from these forces, which are so strong in these works, that there is little that the protagonists can do to combat them. The fact that there are more examples of desubjectification attempts in this chapter, than in Chapter 2, may indicate that attempted desubjectification has the possibility of significantly improving a situation, or perhaps, that the inherent situations demonstrated in the works analyzed in Chapter 2 are more grave or more constrained than those examined in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

Meanwhile, in Chapter 4, in which I discuss more Derridean relationships in *Beur* artistic works, these types of desubjectification are not as critically needed, but are nonetheless practiced when necessary, and are effective at improving conditions for the *Beur* protagonists in these works, as in Doria's Guène's *Kiffe kiffe demain* and Soraya Nini's *Ils disent que je suis une beurette*. Moreover, relationships between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent become so good in some of these novels, thanks to strong interpersonal relationships, that the issue of desubjectification is not so critical, as made visible in Kassovitz's *Café au lait* and Kechiche's *L'Esquive*, revealing that positively-constructed relationships between some Maghrebi-French and French people of European descent, and the interpersonal investment involved in them, can be strong motors of integration. The two songs analyzed in this chapter, Diam's "Ma France à moi" and Kery James' "Banlieusards," while acknowledging the difficulties of intercultural relationships in France, can largely be seen as manifestos of the desubjectification of the Maghrebi-French, showing that this call to action has been extended to the public through popular music.

While in the *Beur* novels, films, and songs that I analyze, *Beur*, North African, and Franco-French artists (authors, directors, and songwriters) express their viewpoint on the situation of the Maghrebi-French in contemporary France, often dismantling societal narratives that conflict with their interests, and in this case, it is the intellectuals who seem to be making a *critique of culture/identity*, and are thus showing the way in which some of their protagonists can achieve desubjectification, real-life Maghrebi-French can also attempt to achieve a degree of desubjectification from the dominant French culture, or from the norms demanded by their families, in some situations. Although Foucault

calls the intellectual in particular to try to show the general public the way in which societal norms can be manipulative and only in the interest of a select few, generally those at the top of social hierarchies, in another sense, if real-life Maghrebi-French can use some of the strategies used in these artistic works, desubjectification can occur on a grander scale than that that would be normally be expected as a result of the activity of intellectuals.

Although it may be more difficult to discuss Chapter 5 in terms of *Beur* desubjectification, since this chapter focuses on an analysis of the riots of 2010, 2007, 2005, and 1990-1991 in France, and thus concentrates on current events and recent French history, instead of literary, musical, and filmic works, it may be said that some of the worst situations in which the Maghrebi-French can find themselves involve excessive violence, which seems to imply a high degree of subjectification in the end for the rioters in these incidents, who often experience backlash and/or prosecution from the French authorities, in response to rioting. While rioting can be seen as a form of resistance to difficult socioeconomic conditions in the French suburbs, it seems that finding other means of demonstrating resistance and demanding change, methods which I will elaborate on in my Conclusions to this dissertation, imply lesser degrees of subjectification, allowing the Maghrebi-French to express and defend themselves, without becoming incarcerated or being the victims of the French police. In this sense, then, desubjectification can be recommended for the real-life Maghrebi-French, including those living in turbulent *banlieues*, although there must be caution taken when considering which strategy of desubjectification to use in a particular situation.

On the Degree of the Specificity of Foucault's Power Theory

While my depiction of Foucault's theory on power may seem broad to some, I find that Foucault's portrait of distrust as a major characteristic of relationships between the weak and the powerful, itself, seems to focus on big picture, broad trends. Even though he focuses on specific contexts such as sexuality, incarceration, and mental illness, most of his thinking does fit into the big picture approach. In addition, this dissertation applies Foucault's power theory in a specific way to the study of the *Beurs*, due to my findings about Saïd's application of this theory to peoples from the Arabo-Islamic world. Saïd applied Foucault's concept of social construction, as it was used to describe mental illness, sexuality, and criminality, to the Western concept of the Other.

Indeed, some of Foucault's later writings, such as those in *Power/Knowledge*, are very vague. In *Power/Knowledge*, there is not sufficient acknowledgement of the complexities of human relationships. He sees power as a monster-like entity that consumes the helpless. For example, Foucault, citing Bentham, describes the powerless situation of those in the Panopticon: "It is necessary,' he writes, 'for the inmate to be ceaselessly under the eyes of an inspector; this is to lose the power and even almost the idea of wrong-doing.' Here we are at the heart of preoccupations of the Revolution: preventing people from wrong-doing, taking away their wish to do wrong. In a word, to make people unable and unwilling" (154). In this description, the possibility of the weak to resist power structures is not emphasized.

Notwithstanding, as Racevskis states in “Foucault and the Subject of Power” (TS), Foucault himself was aware of the difficulty of defining the nature of power, as he explains in his essay, “Naissance de la biopolitique”: “...le terme même de pouvoir ne fait pas autre chose que désigner un [domaine] de relations qui sont entièrement à analyser,” thus, his goal in his study on the effects of power was to aim to make the analysis of power relationships, concrete, “...voir quel contenu concret on pouvait donner à l’analyse des relations de pouvoir” (191). In doing so, he aimed to demonstrate the way in which the combination of practice and regime of truth form knowledge-power constructs: “...montrer comment le couplage, *série de pratiques – régime de vérité* forme un *dispositif de savoir-pouvoir...*” (“Naissance de la biopolitique” 22, as cited in Racevskis, “Foucault and the Subject of Power,” TS).

According to Racevskis in “Foucault and the Subject of Power” (TS), despite the appearance of the evasiveness of discussions on power, Foucault’s analysis is relevant to the current nature of Western societies, and thus is very applicable to modern life (2). In this essay, “Naissance de la biopolitique,” and the other essays in the same series, which were originally lectures on biopolitics that he delivered at le Collège de France in 1978-1979, he deals specifically with contemporary society, and analyzes the current form of neo-liberal governmentality that is characteristic of French as well as American societies. Dardot and Laval, the authors of a recent book on these lectures, entitled, *The New Way of the World: On Neo-Liberal Societies*, hold that for Foucault, the primary challenge of neo-liberalism is that the subject must be constructed in all situations: “The main lesson of neo-liberalism: *the subject is always to be constructed*. The whole question is then how to articulate subjectivation with resistance to power. Now, precisely this issue is at

the heart of all of Foucault's thought" (318). For Dardot and Laval, what neo-liberalism accomplishes, is the construction of *homo oeconomicus*, a subject that is eminently controllable and manipulable (274, as cited in Racevskis, "Foucault and the Subject of Power" TS 2).

Foucault is more specific when he concentrates on historical descriptions, such as in the *History of Sexuality*, but his footing becomes less sure when he describes the future. The more Foucault predicts the future, the vaguer he becomes. He provides no roadmap for the future. In contrast, Derrida is very focused on the future. Despite this, the toolkit that Foucault provides to his reader is an example of the way in which Foucault has the potential for being more specific in his recommendations. His toolkit for resistance can continue to be put into practice well into the future.

Some other Extensions and Applications of Foucault's Power Theory

In consideration of "Foucauldian" hospitality theory, it is essential to acknowledge recent criticism on Foucault. In the work *Foucault Beyond Foucault: Power and its Intensifications Since 1984*, Jeffrey T. Nealon writes that Foucault, despite being dead since 1984, has continued as a "big name" linked with French theory, although, of course, there have been many social changes since his death: the end of the Cold War, the Internet, globalization, the War on Terror, the onset of the HIV/AIDS crisis, and the neoliberal revolution (1). Despite Foucault's continued preeminence in French theory, the focus of Foucault criticism has changed since the 1980s, although Nealon does not find this shift to be justified. While in the 1980s, Foucault was linked to

the idea of power, since his death most of the scholarship has focused on the “ethico-aesthetics of subjectivity” (1). Nealon argues that scholars have too easily dropped Foucault’s mid-career work on power. Although it was thought in the 1990s that the nation-state was no longer important, and that the corporation had replaced it, the return of the preeminence of the nation-state occurred after September 2001. Thus, Nealon asserts that power is indeed critical to consider (3). Instead of seeing Foucault’s works in three parts (neo-structuralist, power discourses, subjectivity), Nealon views his works in terms of a series of “intensifications” (5).

Foucault’s research has had far-reaching implications for gay and lesbian studies, according to Lisa Downing in *The Cambridge Introduction to Michel Foucault* (77). In particular, Foucault holds that gay and lesbian identities are “culturally constructed through normative discourses and power regulations regulating the ‘healthy’ and ‘normal’ expressions of sexuality” (Downing 78). Foucault was not the first to support the idea that sexuality is constructed, although his ideas in *The Will to Knowledge* were critical to the study of sexuality and gender in the late 20th century. Constructionist approaches do not trust biological explanations of gender and sex. In the *Will to Knowledge*, Foucault shows how power deployments are closely linked to the body (Downing 110). Judith Butler has appropriated Foucault’s theories on the social constructedness of gender and sexuality in the work *Gender Trouble*. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, also, has used Foucault’s focus on the relation of knowledge and power, and the idea that sexuality is seen as constructed is a secret of modernity (Downing 111). The importance of social construction in Foucault’s conception of sexuality is relevant to the way in which the Maghrebi-French and other peoples from the Arabo-Islamic world

are considered by the French of European descent, based on the findings of Saïd in *Orientalism*.

Foucault's theories also inspired queer politics, which demands that people question identities that are seen as natural by shedding light on their cultural construction and connections to power relations (78). According to Downing in *The Cambridge Introduction to Foucault*, queer studies have pushed away narrow identity categories: "One of the principal achievements of queer, of which Foucault would no doubt be proud, is its systematic rejection of limiting identity categories in favor of a problematization of the assumption that the truth lies in identity" (112). Downing also writes that queer is linked to identity politics: (queer) "has a history in identity politics, ...and it developed directly from gay and lesbian liberation discourses as a given cultural moment, as a result of a strategic public rezones to certain cultural, medical and political events" (113). In the 1980s, the media claimed that AIDS was a gay disease, and many activists protested the stereotyping of gay males. Queer came from identity politics, when there was great danger in seeing oneself as gay. Downing asserts that queer developed in response to the way in which AIDS was perceived: "Queer, then, came about in a very Foucauldian sense, as the response of the gay movement to the institutionalization of knowledge about the "gay disease," and that made its political attack at the level of discourse, responding, countering and twisting the accusatory label "queer" so that it began to mean something else" (114). Foucault's contributions to the politics used in the gay movement could serve as inspiration for the political engagement of the *Beurs*, who like members of the gay community, struggle against marginalization.

Foucault has also influenced interdisciplinary sexuality studies, in that his focus is on the discourses that describe sexual behavior. Foucault gives an alternative answer to the question of whether homosexuality is innate or acquired. Foucault refused to comment on this question, according to Downing: “Despite his (strategic) lack of interest in the question, Foucault’s work has broadly contributed to those theories that problematicize the “natural” status of sexuality and posit gender, sex and sexuality and social and historically contingent rather than as natural categories” (110).

With respect to Foucault’s reception among feminists, it has been very mixed, according to Downing. In fact, Downing writes that few feminists in these last 20 years have relied heavily on Foucault. While Kristeva and Irigaray, the two most prominent feminists, have characterized Western discourse as phallogentric, Foucault sees discourse and power as elastic. Irigaray holds that women have to create their own manners of gesturing and speaking, beyond masculine models. Meanwhile, Foucault holds that neither men nor women have absolute power over discourse. It is the Anglo-American feminists who have mostly used Foucault (Downing 104-105). Many feel that Foucault’s work is slanted in favor of masculinity, since Foucault mostly aims at masculine subjects, although he does investigate the ways in which disempowered subjects are constructed, just as feminism does (Downing 105). However, Foucauldian theory and feminist theory found a common point in its attitude towards the 1960s sexual revolution, each of them seeing that power relations regarding sexuality goes deeper than the removal of restrictions on sexual behavior, although Foucault himself saw little fruitfulness in alliances between gay men and women (Downing 105-106).

In addition, according to Downing, Foucault's easy transitions between the fields of criminality, mental health, and sexuality have inspired the Anglo-American tendency towards interdisciplinarity: "The idea that by working across disciplinary boundaries, the blind spots and limits of each system of knowledge are brought to light and their ideologies relevatised, is a profoundly Foucauldian one" (20).

Despite the breakthrough regarding the nature of the criminal justice system in *Discipline and Punish*, even this seminal work has not gone without its critics. Some critiques of Foucault's method, namely that of Peter Dew, that are discussed in the work *Cambridge Introduction to Foucault*, are centered on the way in which *Discipline* focuses on the way in which power works through those who monitor the prison, instead of on the resistance of those dominated, despite the fact that Foucault takes away power from the operation of the subject's agency (84).

Derek Hook's *Foucault, Psychology and the Analytics of Power* aims to fill a gap in scholarship on this theorist with respect to the field of psychology. Hook posits that Foucault's methods are involved with the philosophical and political concerns that Foucault had with the human sciences. Hook provides an introduction to these politico-historical and methodological concerns, and puts Foucault's writings to work to reconceptualize parts of psychological practice and knowledge (2). Hook states that Foucault's characterization of disciplinary power is a "condition of possibility for the emergence of psychological individuality" (4). Hook holds that psychology, with its therapy, case studies, and research, is itself a kind of power, as it ostensibly aims for the well-being of people, but actually controls them (viii). In this light, psychology can be compared to psychoanalysis, which is Foucault's focus in *Madness and Civilization*.

Hooks holds that there is a necessity to understand the psychological effects of power (ix).

Foucault's work has been extended to domains as diverse as labor practices and affirmative action. For example, Mark Yount does so in the essay "The Normalizing Powers of Affirmative Action," found in the work *Foucault and the Critique of Institutions* (18).

Some recent critics, according to Johanna Oksala in *How to Read Foucault*, support the idea that Foucault's political activism was not solidly grounded in theory, and produced no effective politics (9). As a counter to this, I note that Foucault was politically active and contributed to the defense of gay rights.

The Relationship between Foucauldian Power Theory and Agamben's Theory of the *State of Exception*

Although Agamben's theory on the degree to which modern governments impose and maintain control over their subjects through the use of control of their bodies differs from Foucault's characterization of this issue, Agamben borrows heavily from Foucault, as evidenced by a number of components of his theory on the *state of exception*. In fact, while I introduce Agamben in the same section in which I treat Derridean hospitality theory, Agamben's *state of exception* theory has more in common with Foucauldian power theory, than Derridean hospitality theory. Agamben himself commented on this affiliation with Foucault in 2004: "I see my work as closer to no one than to Foucault"

(“The True Politician,” as cited in de la Durantaye 209). Agamben drew on the use of Foucault’s concept of biopolitics, on Foucault’s use of paradigms, and on his concepts of archaeology and genealogy, as well as that of sovereignty (de la Durantaye 209). Agamben does modify the concept of sovereignty defined by Foucault, combining it with the theory of Carl Schmitt and his studies on sovereignty, holding that the biopolitical power that Foucault sees as defining of the modern age, as having been used throughout the history of Western civilization, and finding that the defining characteristic of the modern age is the *state of exception*, which is a more recent invention (de la Durantaye 210).

Regarding Agamben’s use of paradigms, de la Durantaye notes that some find his paradigm of modern life as the concentration camp, both shocking and foreboding, in terms of predictions of the future. Some people feel that Agamben’s metaphor, that of modern life being like a concentration camp, is disrespectful to the memory of concentration camp survivors, and thus is an excessively dramatic characterization (de la Durantaye 217), although Agamben did make efforts to document the suffering of concentration camp survivors in *Remnants*.

Applications and Limitations of these Theories in Light of Integration in France

Given these explanations of my most important theoretical foundations, I will apply Derrida and Foucault to my topic, due to the link between hospitality and the status of the Maghrebi-French. I will also consider the limitations of the application of these theories to my topic. In light of Derrida’s theory, the relationship between the French of

European descent and the Maghrebi-French can be viewed as one between guest and host, and this bond implies some mutual rights and responsibilities. Derrida, in *Of Hospitality*, connects the metaphor of hospitality with the idea of immigration, discussing French-Algerian relations (145). I realize that most of the Maghrebi-French are not technically immigrants, and have French citizenship, but they are outsiders in a metaphorical sense, because they are often mistreated by the French of European descent, and have not gained full access to French society in key ways. Derrida holds that immigration, like hospitality, is an ongoing, dynamic process, which never ends, and consists of reciprocal overtures. In the rapport between the Maghrebi-French and Franco-French, certain governments, like the Socialist one in the 1980s, reached out to the descendants of North African immigrants and helped them create associations. In this overture, the government hoped that the *Beurs* would benefit. There was also the period of family reunification, in which North African men were allowed to welcome their families to France. Likewise, in a highly ethical hospitality relationship, the Maghrebi-French would also make overtures to French society, refraining from hostile behavior and making the French of European descent more comfortable. In the typical guest-host relationship, according to Derrida, there is no extreme animosity; however, in France, relationships have deteriorated, and there is a necessity to overcome decades of alienation through reciprocal overtures. I recognize, however, that the relationship between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent is an asymmetrical one, in which the French of European descent have much greater power than the *Beurs*. Of course, Derrida's ideal hospitality requires a level playing field of equals, which is not the case in France. Derrida's work in *The Gift of Death* and *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*

implies that the Maghrebi-French can make progress in dealing with the French of European descent through the radical step of seeing the French of European descent as the Other, envisioning their vulnerability, an argument that both transcends Derrida's traditional vision of reciprocal relationships and undermines concepts of resistance based on Foucault's writings.

Despite the general applicability of Derrida's theories, due to the fact that most of Derrida's writings are founded in the Talmudic tradition, there is some difficulty in translating some of Derrida's more abstract concepts based on ethics into an examination of the material reality of the Maghrebi-French. Derrida's exhortation to forgiveness and to appreciating the Otherness of the Other may be challenging to apply to the situation of the *Beurs*, who face the realities of conflict with the French of European descent on a daily basis. It may be unrealistic to demand that the Maghrebi-French forgive the French of European descent for oppressing them, or request that the French of European descent dismiss some of the rebellious acts of the Maghrebi-French. Indeed, there is such a vicious circle between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French that there may be no room for forgiveness. Nonetheless, Derrida's call to this kind of hyper-ethical behavior can be considered in light of the potential of the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent to make concessions to each other, concessions which, while not completely corresponding to Derrida's injunction to forgive the unforgivable and appreciate the viewpoint of the Other even when it is ultimately impossible, at least matches the spirit of Derrida's late works on ethics. For example, the French of European descent can try to envision the vulnerability of the Maghrebi-French by supporting them as they look for employment and housing. Similarly, the Maghrebi-

French can make a concession to the French of European descent by refraining from extreme measures in controlling violence in the suburbs.

In addition, it is possible that the Maghrebi-French cannot be totally envisioned as the Other, since they are the neighbors and countrymen of the French of European descent. In this sense, the Maghrebi-French can be seen as the Other only in a figurative sense. While it is true that the Maghrebi-French are ubiquitous in France, with five million of them, the Maghrebi-French are the Other in the sense that they still face significant barriers to becoming integrated in France.

Specifically, some people may disagree with the concept of conceiving of the Maghrebi-French as “guests” in France, which is home to most of them, and of the French of European descent as “hosts,” since the French citizens among the Maghrebi-French are no less French than are the French of European descent.

I realize the validity of this argument, yet I feel that discussing the presence of the Maghrebi-French in France in terms of Derridean hospitality theory can be very informative, as to formulating an understanding of the relationship between an ethnic minority, and the larger culture in which these people live.

The references to the Maghrebi-French as “guests,” and to the French of European descent as “hosts,” are not meant in any way to suggest that there is a strict definition of what it means to be French. I do not intend in any way to privilege an understanding of Frenchness as being based on having European ancestry; likewise, I do not mean at all to suggest that the Maghrebi-French who are French citizens are less deserving of their citizenship than the French of European of descent; rather, the usage of these terms is meant only to promote a conceptualization of the relationship between the

Maghrebi-French and French of European descent, in terms of the process by which they interact in France, as peoples learning to negotiate encounters with other peoples who have different ancestral histories.

Although Derrida's theory involving reciprocal relationships fits some exchanges between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent, Foucault's theory on power can be employed to describe the way in which the French of European descent exert considerable power over the *Beurs*, although, as I will demonstrate, this theory does not fully describe conditions in France. France cannot be completely viewed as a model of the panopticon, in the sense that there is massive disorder, with the Maghrebi-French retaining basic liberties and feeling free to rebel against the French of European descent, yet some of the ways in which the French of European descent manipulate the Maghrebi-French make one think of the mental hospital or prison. In fact, the panopticon model is intended as a hyperbole, and is not meant to be taken literally by Foucault. Authorities may allow immigrants to come to France, and the Maghrebi-French may have considerable freedom in the suburbs, yet they face constraints on the housing and job markets. Of course, the perceived difference in status between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent is less significant than that between prison guards and inmates in Foucault's panopticon model. I argue that the mental hospital or the prison may be conceived of as a place of involuntary hospitality, thus there is some parallel between these places and some of the methods in which the French of European descent approach the *Beurs* in France. Foucault's theory may be more applicable when stakes are lower, and there is less of a perceived difference in status between the guests and the hosts. Of course, the Maghrebi-French are not as oppressed as a prisoner or a patient in a

mental asylum from centuries ago, and are not imprisoned, their issues consisting more often of challenges such as finding employment and social acceptance. Foucault's concept of the necessity of resistance to combat embedded power structures corresponds to the way in which the *Beurs* in cultural representations challenge authorities and assert themselves, although resistance in the majority of situations may not accomplish their goals. Furthermore, resistance in the case of the Maghrebi-French may not always be practically applicable, since the power structures in France are embedded into society. Despite this, the Maghrebi-French have, since the 1980s, demonstrated their ability to resist oppression in France through their work through associations, the genres of *Beur* film, literature, and music, and political engagement.

Moreover, this framework is limited in the sense that it is risky to characterize Derrida as a saint for his generous approach to the Other and Foucault as a villain for seeing the negative side of relationships between the weak and the powerful. Derrida's outlook may be overly sanguine and Foucault's approach, excessively skeptical.

Another Limitation to the Application of Derridean and "Foucauldian" Hospitality
Theories to the Situation of the Maghrebi-French in France:
An Analysis of the Representation of Incidents in France Following
Algeria's World Cup Victory Against Russia,
on Thursday, June 26th, 2014,
as Seen in French Newspapers of Various Political Persuasions

The complexity of the situation of the Maghrebi-French, with respect to their integration in France, is accentuated by the resistance of some Maghrebin-French towards

their own incorporation into French society, as evidenced by the events of late June, 2014, as some French people of Algerian descent reacted particularly strongly to Algeria's win over Russia in the World Cup Tournament, occurring on Thursday, June 26th, 2014. According to an article on [francetvinfo](#), entitled, "La qualification de l'Algérie pour les huitièmes de finale de la Coupe du monde a provoqué des scènes de liesse, mais aussi quelques dérapages," and dated June 27th, 2014, on the night beforehand, Algeria had qualified for the eighth round of the World Cup. A minority of the French people of Algerian descent living in France behaved destructively towards the people and infrastructure of France, seemingly claiming France for Algeria, even hanging Algerian flags outside of several city halls. In total, the French police interrogated seventy-four people during the time span from Thursday to Friday, June 26th to 27th, 2014, and in some areas, partiers literally filled the streets. Thirty vehicles, and numerous garbage cans, were burned.

Concerning the response of the police to such unrest in Paris and surrounding areas, the police led thirty interrogations, and had to use tear gas at some points, in order to encourage the dispersion of the crowds. In Lyon, 450 police officers were sent to subdue the violence, and the police in Lyon used tear gas on crowds after some people in these crowds threw objects at them. Conditions in Marseille were noticeably more peaceable, as they were during the 2005 riots, though 300 police officers in the area had prepared to be on duty that night ([francetvinfo](#)).

Before proceeding with an analysis of the depiction of these riots in various French newspapers, I find it imperative to state that there are often sporting events in France during and after which French people of European descent engage in rioting and

violent behaviors, which are often seen as symptoms of a strong social pathology. This type of reaction is not distinct to the Maghrebi-French, and I must stress the fact that my discussion of the way in which these riots are seen in the French press is not meant to call attention to the misbehavior of the Maghrebi-French *per se*; rather, it is intended to demonstrate the way in which the same events, with respect to Maghrebi-French integration, can provoke radically different reactions in newspapers of various political persuasions. In fact, there have been riots enacted by French people of European descent after sporting matches, that have been more violent than those enacted by Maghrebi-French soccer fans. Additionally, I would like to clarify that I am not pinpointing the reactions to these athletic events as manifestations of the ingratitude of some Algerian-French people for being assimilated into French culture.

Of course, it is also essential to take into account the fact that the context in which the Maghrebi-French riot during sporting events in France is quite different from the context in which French soccer fans of European descent demonstrate their discontent with the outcome of some games, as they seemingly liberate the destructive tendencies that they have towards athletic event outcomes that are not pleasing to them. These riots enacted by the Algerian-French, especially ones in which the French flag is defiantly and provocatively replaced by the Algerian one, symbolizing revenge against French domination, carry distinct connotations of nationalistic pride and rejection of French hegemony, as compared to ones led by French people of European descent, which seem to be primarily manifestations of a type of sports-related social disorder.

A Comparison of the Portrayals of these Riots, as Found in
Various French Newspapers, from *la Gauche à l'Extreme-Droite*,
within the Theoretical Construct of
the Spectrum of Derridean and “Foucauldian” Hospitality Theories

While in the fifth chapter of my dissertation, on the progression of urban riots in France, from 1981 to 2010, I refer to *Paris-Match* in order to gain understanding of the viewpoint of the French of European descent towards challenges to Maghrebi-French integration, I find it instructive, in this chapter, to analyze a representative sample of French newspapers of various political persuasions, in order to create a representation of the tapestry of the different types of perceptions that French journalists have towards the interpretation of the unrest among the Algerian-French population in France, generated by their feelings of triumph and victory after Algeria’s World Cup victory over Russia on Thursday, June 26th, 2014. I have found a great disparity in the way in which these newspapers address the rioting that occurred in late June, 2014, after the soccer match between Algeria and Russia. The same events are framed in vastly different ways, according to the newspaper that one consults, as I show in this section of my dissertation. By reading representations of diverse points of view in the French media, one can see the way in which newspapers on the left tend to stress the jubilatory function of the rioting in late June, 2014, while the newspapers on the right tend to find wrongdoing in almost all of the behavior of the people of immigrant origin implicated in the rioting following the June 26, 2014, soccer match. The heavily-politicized nature of the coverage of the World Cup soccer tournament, especially with respect to games involving Algeria, results in this

disparity found while examining these newspapers, an observation that I will further comment on in the final paragraphs of this section of my dissertation.

Theoretically-speaking, regardless of the fact that there were documented incidents in which the rioters caused damage in Paris and Lyon after the Algeria-Russia soccer match on Thursday, June 26th, 2014, the differences in which these events are portrayed in French newspapers of a variety of political persuasions reveals a widely-varying spectrum of attitudes towards the presence of the Algerian-French community in France, evoking the spectrum of types of hospitality outlined earlier in this chapter. Generally, liberal newspapers and magazines, such as *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *Jeune Africain*, and *La Libération*, seem to support a Derridean interpretation of the integration situation in France, while the more conservative newspapers, such as *Le Figaro* and *Minute*, align more with a Foucauldian negotiation of meaning of intercultural relations in France. The degree to which these newspapers take politicized stances towards their reporting style in the articles of these newspapers is often striking; one common technique used is to contrast commentary by an official from the opposition, with the newspaper's own commentary. The newspapers that take a more objective stance, such as *Agence-France-Presse*, lack an incriminating or conciliatory approach towards the damages incurred in the events of June 26th, 2014, instead focusing on the reporting of statistics related to these damages.

The great diversity of representations of these events makes it clear than when reading and evaluating a newspaper article, it is critical to take account of the newspaper's political leanings, if they exist. If one reads such an article without this type of assessment, one can be more easily swayed to put stock in the reporter's representation

of the material, rather than comparing the article to others on the same subject, and accounting for these differences as one forms one's own perspective.

A Newspaper Representing the Interest of the Members of the African and African
Diasporic Communities:
Jeune Africain

In the article, "Le Mondial des Fennecs et la vague de racisme anti-Algériens en France," dated July 8, 2014, from *Jeune Africain*, a weekly magazine (and e-magazine) addressing the interests and concerns of Africans and the people of the African Diaspora, Farid Alilat claims that the Front National and parties on *la droite* took advantage of the events of Thursday, June 26th, 2014, to advocate the revocation of double nationality of French people of Algerian descent, an initiative which they have long promoted: "Les débordements de certains supporters de l'équipe d'Algérie pendant le Mondial de football ont suscité de nauséabondes réactions sur le thème de la binationalité. Et pas seulement dans la bouche de Marine Le Pen." While Alilat refers to several other politicians and commentators making remarks on the link between the events of June 26th, 2014, and the supposed need to revoke the French nationality of the Algerian-French, Marine Le Pen's commentary on this issue remains critical in his consideration of the reaction of the right and extreme-right to these events. Alilat cites Le Pen's comments that promote a halt to further immigration into France, and the termination of the French nationality of the Algerian-French, blaming the Algerian-French for the dilemma of the consequences of behavior of French citizens showing greater allegiance to other countries than France: "Il

faut dire les choses: l'Algérie est le seul pays posant problème, qu'il gagne ou qu'il perde..." (Marine Le Pen, as cited in Alitat).

As if to dismiss the legitimacy of Marine Le Pen's argument that the events of June 26th, 2014, prove that the double nationality of the Algerian-French should be revoked, Alitat alleges that she has long tried to use incidents involving unrest after World Cup soccer matches as a reason to make this political change. For example, Alitat notes that, in November 2009, Marine Le Pen advanced this idea after newspapers reported Algerian soccer fans noisily celebrating Algeria's qualification for the World Cup in South Africa, arguing that some of these people's double citizenship prevented them from becoming assimilated into French society, as he writes, "Marine Le Pen avait fustigé la double nationalité, qui freine, selon elle, l'assimilation des Maghrébins d'origine, et proposé de la réserver aux ressortissants des pays de l'Union européenne." Although at the time, in 2009, the measure was considered, it was not implemented then. Alitat feels that since Algeria not only did well in the World Cup of 2014, but also has ended its season (as of June 30th, 2014, after its loss against Germany), it is likely that further such attempts to revoke double nationality will not be productive in the near future.

With respect to other French commentators and politicians cited by Alitat in this article, he refers to an article in the conservative French newspaper, *Le Figaro*, entitled, "Match de l'Algérie: Rachida Dati "ne veut pas retenir les incidents mineurs," that I also comment on in this section of my dissertation. He cites the following quotation from *Le Figaro*, as proof that the editors of this newspaper are alarmist, creating a false

controversy based on the incidents in France following the Algeria-Russia soccer game on Thursday, June 26th, 2014, a quotation that carries within it a commentary from the aforementioned article from *Le Figaro*:

À Lyon, Marseille, Paris ou Roubaix, la qualification des Fennecs pour les huitièmes de finale du Mondial donne lieu de la part de certains supporters à de fâcheux débordements. Ce qui permet à un éditorialiste du *Figaro* de sortir l'artillerie lourde et de mettre dans le même sac casseurs et paisibles citoyens: [*Le Figaro*:] "Leurs parents ayant refusé l'Algérie française, ils veulent la France algérienne. Leurs drapeaux brandis dans les rues expriment un refus du vivre-ensemble, voire une volonté de contre-colonisation.

(Alitat)

According to Alitat, the columnist from *Jeune Africain*, *Le Figaro* makes it sound as if peaceful citizens were behaving like criminals.

Additionally, Alitat illustrates that it is not only Marine Le Pen, her conservative political colleagues, and the editors of newspapers such as *Le Figaro* whose commentaries reveal a provocatively condemnatory attitude towards the Algerian-French involved in the events of June 26th, 2014, especially with respect to the issue of bi-nationalism, as he alludes to the weekly magazine, *Le Point*, which raised a particularly controversial question on its online survey webpage: "Should the French government revoke the double nationality of French people of Algerian descent?," in the following commentary:

Dans la foulée, l'hebdomadaire, *Le Point*, pose sur son site internet une question d'une rare brutalité: "Faut-il retirer aux Français d'origine algérienne leur double nationalité?" Plus de 80 % des internautes y répondent froidement: oui. Devant le flot des protestations, le sondage, jugé "lamentable et consternant" par le directeur de l'hebdomadaire, est prestement retiré. Mais il donne une idée de l'ambiance générale.

(Alitat)

Although the editor of the magazine later had the survey removed from the website for *Le Point.fr*, the results of the survey, in and of themselves, reveal that a large majority (over 80%) of Internet users filling out the survey answered this question, which could be seen as being posed in an insensitive manner, and which is certainly politically bold, to the affirmative.

Despite the fact that the results of this survey from *Le Point.fr* do not speak for the general French population, and the fact that the results represent only the opinions of a segment of the reading public of *Le Point* magazine, Alitat finds that this survey reveals at least the general cultural atmosphere of the post-June 26th, 2014 events. There must have been a sufficiently significant reaction to these events among the reading public of *Le Point*, for a majority of them to be able to confirm their opinions about the proposal to revoke the double nationality of Algerian-French people.

Emphasizing the volatile nature of relations between France and Algeria, made exponentially stronger by World Cup matches, at least as these relations are perceived by many, Alilat explores the potentially catastrophic results of a hypothetical match between Algeria and France:

Et si la France affrontait l'Algérie, son ancienne colonie, en quarts de finale du Mondial brésilien, le 4 juillet? Finalement battus, de justesse, par les Allemands, les Verts n'ont pas rencontré les Bleus de Karim Benzema - né à Lyon d'un père kabyle et d'une mère oranaise. Tant pis ou tant mieux, tant il est évident que le passé tourmenté entre les deux nations continue de conditionner leurs relations, fussent-elles footballistiques. Près de 2 millions d'Algériens vivant en France, un match entre les deux pays aurait forcément pris un caractère passionnel. Voire explosif. Sur et en dehors du terrain.

(Alitat)

For Alitat, the sheer demographics of the Algerian-French community, with two million Algerian citizens living in France, and an untold number of French citizens of Algerian descent, as well as bi-nationals, in addition to the extremely strained relationship between France and Algeria since the late 19th century, and most particularly, since the dawn of Algerian independence in 1962, means that a hypothetical confrontation between Algeria and France on the soccer field could seriously aggravate tensions, on a much grander scale than is involved during an average World Cup game.

As if to promote the idea that there is a significant French influence on the Algerian soccer team, and thus, to alleviate fears about an inimical attitude towards France on the part of the Fenecs (the Algerian soccer team), Alitat writes that a majority of the Fenecs were born in France, and that eight of them played with the French soccer team in youth sports clubs. Several of Algeria's soccer players started with les Bleus, the French soccer team. This status, representing a significant change from the nature of the team in the early 1980s, is largely due to lobbying done by FIFA (The International Federation of Soccer Association), which has allowed soccer players to change national teams, as long as they have not played in an A-class competition. Alitat seems to aim to

provide consolation to people concerned with the apparent allegiance of many Algerian-French to Algeria, as he stresses the French citizenship (if also concurrent with the Algerian citizenship) of much of Algeria's national soccer team.

Despite this change, as Alitat acknowledges, some Algerians criticize the "bi-nationals" (those born in France, and now playing for Algeria) for being overly concerned with money, speaking French instead of Arabic or Kabyle, playing soccer differently from French soccer players, and being unaware of the lyrics of the Algerian national anthem (Alitat).

Some of these criticisms (with respect to language and cultural values and attitudes) are also made of Maghrebin-French people who return to North Africa; as is illustrated in a minority of *Beur* novels, such as *Les Raisins de la galère*, by Ben Jelloun (analyzed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation), being exposed to French culture often makes a "return" (or a "return" in the generational sense) challenging, due to the sharply contrasting cultures of France and the countries of North Africa.

Moreover, the issue that Alitat raises, that of both Algeria and France seemingly rejecting bi-nationals for some of their behavior that aligns completely with neither French, nor Algerian, culture, shows the degree to which it can be very difficult to have strong connections to two countries. As challenging as it is for Maghrebi-French adolescents to please both their Franco-French teachers and classmates and their sometimes-conservative Muslim families, the Fennecs who began their lives and professional careers in soccer in France face challenges in convincing other Algerians of their identification with Algerian cultural values on all levels. Although identification with two cultures can be extremely enriching, personally and corporately, the demands to

sacrifice one's first culture (French culture for some of the Fennecs) for the second culture (Algerian culture, although this also represents their historical, familial culture) seems to be as potentially exasperating as the challenges faced by the Maghrebi-French, many of whom have to placate their families by demonstrating at least superficial allegiance to traditional values, while simultaneously trying to maintain or increase their social credit by adopting French culture values, to various degrees.

While Alitat's claim that the extreme-right and the right in France seem to be keen and ready to exploit unrest resulting from athletic contests involving Algeria for their own purposes, and his perception that some of the rhetoric used by politicians and media outlets on the right and extreme-right is unnecessarily polemical, his assertion that the social consequences of unrest following events involving the Algerian soccer team can be seen as less serious because of the composition of this team, largely consisting of people born in France, is not entirely convincing.

In particular, it may be that many of these soccer players for the Fennecs identify strongly with French culture, but given the strength of the apparent devotion of many Algerian-French for Algeria, perhaps the fact that many of these players lived in France and are bi-nationals, is not the most compelling argument that can be made in order to alleviate the seriousness of the concerns of people distressed with the loss of order in the streets of the larger cities of France, during a global soccer tournament that is designed to encourage international and intercultural fellowship and good sportsmanship.

*Une Hebdomadaire à la Gauche (A Liberal Weekly Magazine):
Le Nouvel Observateur*

Le Nouvel Observateur's depiction of the events following the Algeria-Russia soccer match on Thursday, June 26th, 2014, corresponds to this weekly magazine's tendency to confirm the positions of *la gauche*. Namely, as evidenced in the article, "Scènes de liesse après la qualification de l'Algérie: un formidable pied de nez aux réacs," published in *Le Nouvel Obs* on Friday, June 27th, 2014, political columnist Bruno Roger-Petit argues that the actions undertaken by several Algerian-French, as they reveled in Algeria's triumph against Russia, were not the actions of a minority community angry at France for the injustices involved in colonialism and post-colonialism, but rather, the celebratory gestures of a people proud of their mother country's success in soccer, representing an unprecedented victory. Roger-Petit dismisses the "classical" argument that these incidents prove that integration in France is a failed experiment, citing a number of thinkers who advanced this idea: "Finkelkraut, Zemmour, Ménard, Polony, Lévy, Mariani, [Marine] Le Pen." Roger-Petit, on the other hand, stresses the fact that at no time during these celebrations, did any Algerian-French person explicitly state that they were reveling in their triumph against France, through Algeria's victory. Although Algeria had won against Russia, some commentators feel that the Algerian-French involved in these incidents were expressing their elation at their ancestral homeland having won a significant soccer game against a major European country, as if implying that Algeria had reached the status of France and other European nations (and had surpassed it), in a symbolic sense.

Rather, in Roger-Petit's estimation, the events following the match on June 26th, 2014, were a testament to the Algerian-French community's joy over reaching the 8th rounds of the World Cup. The following excerpt from this article reveals his perception of these events:

Télé, jeudi soir, parmi le flot d'images consacrées à la fête des supporters de l'équipe d'Algérie, est apparu l'un de ces supporters, partagés entre Algérie et France.

Il était beau ce supporter, au milieu de gens heureux de toutes générations. Fou de joie, il célébrait la victoire de l'Algérie. Fou de joie, il portait le drapeau algérien sur les épaules. Fou de joie, il était affublé d'un maillot d'aujourd'hui de l'équipe de France, celui de Benzema et de Cabaye, orné d'un superbe coq gaulois. Fou de joie, il a lancé à la caméra d'Itélé une sentence qui dit tout:

"Ma mère, c'est l'Algérie, mon père, c'est la France."

Fou de joie, et sans le savoir, à lui seul, saisi par une caméra de télévision au hasard d'une liesse improvisée dans les rues de Paris, sincère et authentique, pacifique et illuminé, cet inconnu d'un soir a renvoyé par avance Rioufoul et ses camarades en nostalgie française dans les limbes de ce vieux nationalisme de colonisateur, qui ne se remet pas d'avoir perdu une guerre elle-même, sortie de la tête de ce supporter.

Peut-on tirer une leçon politique de cette affaire de football? Oui, à l'évidence. Si cette épopée algérienne en Coupe du monde et ses conséquences festives en France ont une vertu, c'est bien de montrer que le multiculturalisme est soluble dans la République.

À part les réacs, les peureux et les frileux, qui s'en plaindra?

This excerpt from Roger-Petit's article, detailing an anecdote in which he saw a supporter of both Algeria's and France's soccer teams, reveals that Roger-Petit saw these incidents as an innocent and joyful celebration of Algeria's success against Russia. When he quotes this soccer fan as saying, "Ma mère, c'est l'Algérie, mon père, c'est la France," he emphasizes his perception of these soccer fans as being proud of both Algeria and France. He seems to stigmatize Rioufoul and the other thinkers who characterize these soccer fans as being out of control in their retaliation against France and its domination of

the Algerian-French as being terribly misguided, portraying these Franco-French thinkers as still experiencing the sting of losing Algeria in 1962. Instead, Roger-Petit feels strongly that this incident is a witness to the way in which multiculturalism has its rightful place in French society, since this Algerian-French community feels free to demonstrate its joy at its success in soccer. No one can complain about these occurrences, Roger-Petit insists, apart from the conservatives (“les réacs”), the fearful (“les peureux”), and the hypersensitive (“les frileux”).

Nonetheless, despite the fact that some may find the way in which Roger-Petit comes to the defense of the Algerian-French involved in the events of June 26th, 2014, admirable, some of the defenses that Roger-Petit presents against the critics of these Algerian-French, are not without controversy. Namely, in spite of the apparently jubilant tone that the events conveyed, there was a distinctly destructive side to some of these incidents, that can easily be characterized as strongly rebellious to French society. Referring to this jubilation as a sign that multiculturalism has secured its place in French society, may be somewhat simplistic, since concurrent with the celebratory nature of the events, there was also a very tangible sense of anarchy, which seems to run against the grain of the spirit of multiculturalism.

Additionally, the story that he details, regarding the Algerian-French man carrying both the flags of Algeria and France, could be categorized as anecdotal. There were, according to reports, many more signs of unequivocal nationalism and challenge to French civilization in these incidents, than there were of signs of support for both France and Algeria.

A Left-of-Center Newspaper: Libération.fr

An article on La Libération.fr, a left-of-center French newspaper, and founded by philosopher and author, Jean-Paul Sartre, entitled, “Ces drapeaux étrangers qui affolent l’UMP,” written by Laure Equy, and dated June 30th, 2014, a mere three to four days after the incidents of June 26th and 27th, 2014, focuses on the reaction of leaders on the right towards the celebration by Algerian-French soccer fans on Thursday, June 26th, 2014, in particular, that of the Mayor of Nice, Christian Estrosi, who tried to ban the flying of foreign flags during the World Cup Tournament. Rather than focusing on portraying the events themselves in great detail, as Agency-France-Presse does, or concentrating on these incidents as symptoms of the failure of the French integration model, as Minute.fr, an article on the extreme-right, does, this article from La Libération.fr, true to its left-of-center political orientation, seems to try to convince its readers that Estrosi’s initiative to ban the flying of foreign flags during the World Cup is part of a larger scheme of the right and extreme-right to squelch manifestations of pride in people’s countries of origin, as manifested by a number of comparisons that he makes between this proposed law by Estrosi, and laws that have been proposed or passed about the flying of foreign flags, in a variety of contexts.

Namely, this article presents this mayor’s ban on foreign flags during the World Cup as being in alignment with the general tendency of the Front National, to severely limit overt expressions of nationalism based on allegiance to other countries besides France, and even to revoke the double nationality of some French citizens with strong ties to other countries, as was proposed by Marine Le Pen after the events of June 26th and

27th, 2014. Equy also paints Estrosi's initiative as corresponding to the action of some parties of the right, such as Le Droit populaire, the right-wing branch of the UMP, whose representative, Thierry Mariani, has quoted Marseille's mayor in 2010, Jean-Claude Gaudin, who proclaimed his displeasure at seeing the Algerian flag, and not the French one, flown after Algeria's World Cup win against Egypt that year (2010). Finally, other actions on the part of the right and extreme-right that Equy claims are similar to this initiative, that of banning the flying of foreign flags during the World Cup, are initiatives taken against the flying of foreign flags at town halls during marriage ceremonies, and after political contexts affirming the left (such as one the one that occurred in 2012, when François Hollande was elected President of France).

The article announces, from the beginning, that some Algerian-French soccer fans flew foreign flags in their jubilation over Algeria's victory in soccer, demonstrated by a picture featuring one Algerian man flying the Algerian flag with one foot out the window of a car. The red, green, and white colors of the flag, prominent in the picture, which was taken in Lille that Thursday night, match those of the Algerian man's T-shirt, all of which contrast sharply, and are all the more noticeable, against the backdrop of this man's black car and the beige-colored buildings, behind him.

Estrosi's decision to ban the *utilisation ostentatoire* of foreign flags in the center of Nice during the World Cup Tournament is presented as a precaution meant to minimize the chance of another June 27th, 2014, occurring in Nice, as insurrection had occurred in Paris, Lyon, Marseille, and some cities in the North after Algeria's qualification in the 8th round of the World Cup. Estrosi framed the goal of this initiative in these terms: "pour maintenir l'ordre et la tranquillité publique et éviter les

débordements, comme ceux qui ont pu se dérouler dans la nuit du 26 au 27 juin dans l'agglomération parisienne, dans la région lyonnaise, à Marseille, et dans le Nord.”

It seems that the way in which Equy puts Estrosi's ban on foreign flags being flown in the center of French cities during the 2014 World Cup into the larger contexts of the initiative of the right and extreme-right to minimize expressions of nationalism for countries outside of France, is reasonable, although it could be argued that Estrosi's actions stemmed from his concern with the violence involved with the events of June 26th, 2014. Proposals to ban the flying the foreign flags during the World Cup, a tournament which has had a recorded history of soliciting insurrection by impassioned and celebratory or angry fans, are distinct from more generalized proposals forbidding such flag-flying during marriage ceremonies and announcements of electoral results.

A Newspaper Agency at the Political Center: Agence-France-Presse

Newspapers that emphasize objective reporting, such as Agence-France-Presse, tend to depict the events of the evening of Thursday, June 26th, 2014, by using many statistics, results of police reports, and quotations made by political officials. For example, in an article from Agence-France-Presse, entitled, “Mondial-2014: nombreux incidents après la qualification de l'Algérie,” dated June 27th, 2014, and written by Philippe Huguen, the unpalatable facts, and detailed statistics about the number of people participating in “intolerable” waves of unrest and facing interrogation by the French government (74 people) are related. This article includes several quotations made by the Prime Minister, Manuel Valls, condemning these actions that “spoiled the party,” in his

viewpoint, taken by people completely unrelated to the sport of soccer, and who would come to justice. A similar comment is alluded to in this article, that of the Minister of the Interior, Bernard Cazeneuve, who had previously condemned “acts by a handful of isolated criminals taking advantage of athletic events, thereby spoiling events that should be festive” (my translation).

While the article acknowledges that celebration scenes had occurred in France after every match that Algeria had played in the World Cup, especially because of the large community of Algerian descent in France, Huguen nonetheless stresses the way in which the events of Thursday, June 26th, 2014, differed sharply from what should be expected on these occasions: celebrations and revelry, and not mayhem and destruction, as vocalized by a police officer, who is quoted as saying: "Si l'on peut comprendre la ferveur autour d'une équipe et du moment historique de la qualification de l'Algérie, les agressions envers les forces de l'ordre, sont en revanche, intolérables."

The article enumerates the grievances of the French authorities towards those involved in the riots: 30 interrogations were held in the Paris area, although most of the calamity transpired in Lyon, Grenoble, Vaulx-en-Velin, Saint-Priest, Lille, Roubaix, and Marseille. Namely, Lyon saw businesses ransacked, firefighters attacked, and cars burnt; Grenoble was the site of four policemen who were wounded and four protesters who were interrogated, including one man on a scooter who ran into a woman, gravely wounding her; in Paris, several fans of the Algerian soccer game threw items at the riot police, who in turn used tear gas against these police officers in the Place de l'Étoile.

Likewise, in Marseille, two police motorbikes were dismantled by fans of the Algerian soccer team.

The governmental representatives cited in this article seem to be well-reasoned in their remarks according to which the celebratory aspect of the events of June 26th, 2014, should be respected, but that these celebrations should have never escalated to the point where cars were burnt, tear gas was sprayed, and some people threw objects at the police. It seems fair to expect celebration, patriotism, and identification with an athletic event, particularly after a landmark victory, while restricting these revelers from destroying other people's property and engaging in violence towards police after a soccer match.

Another Agence-France-Presse article, entitled, "Des motos accidentés dans une rue de Lyon, après des incidents perpétrés par des supporters de l'Algérie, qui ont fêté la victoire de leur équipe au Mondial contre la Russie, le 26 juin 2014," written by Jean-Philippe Ksiazek, has a similar focus, detailing damage done to police motorcycles by supporters of the Algerian soccer team in Lyon, leading the police to use tear gas against them; twenty bicycles burned in the North of France, windows broken, and other indemnities. The spokesman for the Minister of the Interior, Pierre-Henry Brandet, remarked that the destructive behaviors shown by some Algerian-French represent those of a minority who used the World Cup as an opportunity to fight firefighters and the police, noting also that the celebrations occurred in a relatively peaceful and festive atmosphere.

Another source cited in this article by Agence-France-Presse remarked that only the matches involving Algeria's team involved violent reactions of this scale, seemingly

pointing to the volatile nature of Algeria's fans in France, when compared to those of other countries, ostensibly Morocco and Tunisia. Authorities were preparing to dispatch security forces before the match against Algeria in the 8th round of the final, on Monday evening, June 30th, 2014, at 10 pm, France time. The article explains that the Algerian-French community is the largest immigrant community in France, and that there are 700,000 Algerian immigrants and a million descendants of Algerian immigrants in France, not counting those of the third-generation and the *harkis*, who were born as French citizens (Ksiazek).

Although, in general, Agence-France-Presse continues to provide reasonable coverage of the events of June 26th, 2014, the source cited in the last paragraph seems to indicate that Algerian-French fans have a great degree of difficulty in controlling themselves during World Cup matches, when compared to other countries. While there may be truth to this assertion, at the same time, it must be recognized that the especially-difficult history between Algeria and France dwarfs the turbulence of Moroccan-French or Tunisian-French relations, thus one could expect that the Algerian-French may take greater joy in the accomplishments of their ancestral homeland in its interactions with other countries, such as Algeria's role in its match against Russia.

A Conservative Newspaper: *Le Figaro*

The conservative, prestigious, newspaper, and the second most- successful newspaper in France, *Le Figaro*, reveals its attitude towards the violence following the

match between Algeria and Russia by presenting its reaction to commentary made by Rachida Dati, a Deputy to the European Parliament and former Minister of Justice in France, towards these incidents. The very title of the article, “Scan Politique---La maire UMP du VII^e arrondissement de Paris préfère se féliciter “d’un moment de communion populaire,” is indicative of the editor’s attitude towards Dati’s evaluation of the events, evoking a sarcastic tone through the words, “...préfère se féliciter,” as if to imply that Dati chooses to espouse a quixotic interpretation of these incidents, refusing to recognize reality. Dati’s remarks minimize these events at all costs: “Les violences, lesquelles? Ces violences et ces faits ont été minimes. Ne soyez pas complice de choses qui sont de la nature du fait divers,” as she told a reporter at a political brunch sponsored by Sud Radio on Sunday, June 29th, 2014. Although Dati acknowledged that it is necessary to “réprimer” (repress) these incidents, she cautions others not to exaggerate their importance:

Mais n'en faisons pas un événement national, s'il vous plaît, de grâce...Nous sommes dans un moment d'unité nationale grâce à ce sport populaire, où tout le monde se réjouit des victoires des pays des uns et des autres...Ne transformons pas un moment de communion populaire. Il y a eu des incidents mineurs, mais ce n'est pas ce qu'il faut retenir.

(Dati, as cited by *Le Figaro*)

Dati’s comments seem to be founded upon the use of two *champs lexicaux*: that of mutual celebration (“un moment d’unité nationale,” ... “se réjouit,”... “un moment de communion populaire”), to stress the fact that these events should be seen within the context of the World Cup, a tournament that lends to celebration by many peoples, and that of minimalism (“n’en faisons pas,” “des incidents mineurs,” “du fait divers,”

“minimes,” and “Les violences, lesquelles”?). Dati seems to be among those who would make a generous interpretation of the behavior of those involved in the incidents of June 26th and June 27th, 2014, corresponding to the outlook of many people on the left, a philosophical bent that the conservative *Le Figaro* is likely to criticize.

Indeed, the true attitude of the newspaper seems to be clearly expressed through the quotation of comments made by the Prime Minister, Manuel Valls, who characterized what had happened on Thursday and Friday, July 26th and 27th, 2014, as «incidents insupportables», that «gâchent la fête» (intolerable incidents that ruined the celebration). Valls denounced this behavior, that of people who are completely uninvolved with the sport of soccer, and who must be called to go before justice, saying that this type of behavior cannot be allowed after soccer matches in France, as he spoke of “le comportement insupportable d'un certain nombre d'individus qui n'ont rien à voir avec le football, et qui devront, eux, aussi, être traduits devant la justice, parce l'on ne peut pas permettre cela dans notre pays à l'occasion d'un match de football».

Le Figaro's implicit confirmation of Valls' evaluation of the incidents of June 26th, 2014, stressing the violent aspect of the celebrations, striking a sharp contrast with the gracious verbal portrait of these events painted by Dati, can be understood for what they are, condemnations of violent expressions of triumph of some Algerian-French people in various cities of France. Valls' statement that these fans were completely uninvolved with soccer, seems somewhat myopic, since soccer is taken so seriously in France and in most countries in Africa and South America (and is growing in popularity in the United States). His statement that violence should not be part of celebrations of soccer victories in France seems reasonable, and more realistic than the minimization that

Dati makes of the incidents, referring to them as “mineurs” (minors). Should thirty vehicle owners in France tolerate their cars being burned, after a soccer match? Should 450 French police officers in Lyon be expected to be dispatched to control these incidents, and should some of these officers expect to have to spray tear gas on a crowd of soccer fans? Are these incidents truly minor, and relatively negligible, given the overall celebratory tone of these events? Should some lawlessness be tolerated, in the name of a moment of *communion populaire* (“common celebration”), as Dati phrased it? Is there a link between jubilation and anarchy? Does the occurrence of anarchic incidents imply some retaliatory attitude towards France?

An Extreme-Right Newspaper: *Minute*,
and Some of the Consequences of this Coverage

On the other end of the spectrum from *Le Nouvel Obs* and *Libération.fr*, is the extreme-right newspaper, *Minute*. This article, entitled, “Déchoir de la nationalité française, c’est possible!,” dated June 28th, 2014, and written by Lionel Humbert, far from minimizing the violence that occurred after the Algeria-Russia soccer match, paints an accusatory portrait of the population of immigrant descent in France, enumerating acts that can be considered as treasonous to the people of France, from the way in which some French people with allegiance to Islam participate in *jihād* in Syria, to the way in which some Algerian-French people proudly wave their flags as soon as a “Fennec” (a member of the Algerian soccer team) scores. In contrast, the article suggests that it is ironic that other French citizens are expected to tolerate seeing such signs of disrespect to France,

while at the same time never questioning the phrase, “Ils sont aussi français que vous!,” an expression which seems to be the heart of a mentality that affirms republican theory even in the face of difficult realities, which show that in some respects, the people of immigrant origin in France do not uniformly display allegiance to France, and that some of them defy calls for their own integration. For Humbert, both the French integration model, designed by liberals, and efforts at republicanism-inspired assimilation of the populations of African descent have failed, the latter affirmation noted by Marine Le Pen in 2011, as she cited the immigration of vast numbers of people with drastically different cultures than that of the majority of the French people.

Humbert’s cynicism towards the allegiance of many French people of immigrant descent is clear when he remarks,

Et si on leur donnait le choix, il est probable que beaucoup de binationaux choisiraient la nationalité qui les arrange le plus sur le plan matériel, en n’en pensant pas moins sur le plan affectif. En clair: une nationalité pour les allocations et une autre pour le ballon rond!

(Humbert)

Another comment made by Humbert reveals a similar attitude:

C’est d’ailleurs le message très évident que nous adressaient dimanche soir, à l’occasion d’une rencontre footballistique, ces « Franco-Algériens, » qui ne brandissaient pourtant, sur les Champs-Élysées ou ailleurs en France, qu’un seul drapeau, celui de leur vraie patrie: l’Algérie.

(Humbert)

Nonetheless, Humbert perceives the threat to France as surpassing that of a single post-soccer-match riot, or what he sees as a thinly-disguised hypocrisy, cloaking the strong allegiance of some French people to Algeria, citing the fact that about 1,000 young French Muslims have left on *jihad* to Syria, a figure double to that recorded in the United Kingdom, according to the publication, “Foreign fighters in Syria,” compiled by the Soufan Group, a private economic intelligence agency, in June, 2014. In response, Marine Le Pen and Florian Philippot, and also the deputy-mayor of Orange, Jacques Bompard, have tried to revoke the French nationality of these young people who have left France for Syria on *jihad* missions. However, Humbert feels that revoking double nationality at this time may be premature, since it may prove a more useful measure in the future than at the present.

As for the actual revocation of French nationality of the alleged *jihadistes*, despite the delay in the proper handling of the question, French Prime minister, Manuel Valls, elected in April of 2014, has been recorded as legitimizing this possible outcome, as he did in June of 2014: « Nous pouvons déchoir de la nationalité ceux qui s’attaquent aux intérêts fondamentaux de notre pays. Il n’y a pas de tabou.» Humbert cites Article 25 of the Civil Code, and Articles 23-7, according to which this « atteinte aux intérêts fondamentaux » (i.e., an attack to the national interests of France) could lead to one becoming disposed of one’s French nationality: « Le Français qui se comporte, en fait comme le national d’un pays étranger, peut, s’il a la nationalité de ce pays, être déclaré, par décret, après avis conforme du Conseil d’Etat, avoir perdu la qualité de Français. » For Humbert, going on *jihad* missions in Syria, without the support of France, and acting as if one is Algerian, when one has been raised as a French person, can be characterized

as acting as the “national d’un pays étranger,” thus constituting an attack to the national interests of France, and justifying the consequence of having one’s French nationality revoked.

Although I can contextualize Humbert’s skepticism to the allegiance of some Algerian-French people towards France, as evidenced by fans of Algeria’s soccer team who flew Algerian flags, post-match, and by cases of French *ihadists* leaving France for Syria, at the same time, his characterization of the fidelity of the Maghrebin-French population in France as being feigned is not based on an examination of the attitudes of all Maghrebin-French. Likewise, his advocacy for the revocation of the double nationality of the Algerian-French, a motion advanced by Marine Le Pen, based on these examples of people demonstrating allegiance to countries of the Muslim world, in favor of France, does not do justice to such people who are able to maintain proper relationships with both France and Algeria.

Humbert’s article, clearly calling for the revocation of French nationality of *ihadists* to Syria, is reinforced in its strict stance towards the population of immigrant descent in France by Marine Le Pen’s post-June 27th, 2014, call for the revocation of double nationality of the Algerian-French, as explained in an article on Agence-France-Presse, entitled, “Incidents post-match de l’Algérie: Marine Le Pen veut mettre “fin à la double nationalité,” and dated June 29th, 2014. While Agence-France-Presse presents Le Pen’s remarks much more objectively than Humbert contextualizes those of Valls, her vehement call for the revocation of double nationality can be understood by examining her remarks according to which immigration policy in France has completely failed, since many bi-nationals have completely refused to become assimilated into French society. In

Le Pen's eyes, since some of the bi-national citizens have chosen Algeria above France, as demonstrated by facts such as that according to which 800,000 Algerian-French are registered to vote in Algeria, the government must summarily revoke their French nationality:

Il faut choisir, on est algérien ou français, marocain ou français, mais on ne peut pas être les deux... Il faut que l'Etat retrouve son autorité... Il n'y a pas un pays au monde qui accepterait de subir ce que nous subissons sur notre territoire... Il faut supprimer l'acquisition de la nationalité automatique au motif qu'on naît sur le territoire.

(Marine Le Pen, as cited by Agence-France-Presse)

It may be said that one of the consequences of the expressions of certain extreme-right politicians and commentators, is that about a week after the Algeria-Russia soccer match on Thursday, June 26th, 2014, and directly before the match between Algeria and Germany, one fan of the French soccer team, les Bleus, in Bourges, burned an Algerian flag, while a crowd looked on, singing "La Marseillaise," as an amateur cameraperson videotaped the incident. This incident, which led to an investigation for inciting racial hatred, is detailed in the article on *L'Express.fr*, originally from Reuters, entitled, "Drapeau algérien brûlé par un supporter français: enquête pour provocation à la haine raciale," written by Jean-Paul Pélissier, and dated July 2, 2014. Several governmental officials condemned this action, including the prefect of the Cher, Marie-Christine Dokhélar; the deputy of the Cher, Yann Galut; and the mayor of Bourges, Pascal Blanc, from the UDI.

It seems clear that this article from Reuters, found on *L'Express.fr*, a left-of-center magazine, similar to the United States' *Time*, claims a causal link between the comments of Marine Le Pen, as she called for the revocation of double nationality, and the initiative of Christian Estrosi, in Nice, to ban the flying of foreign flags during the World Cup, post-June 27th, 2014, when one is referred to the following quotation from this article:

La présidente du FN a instrumentalisé ces incidents en annonçant qu'il fallait "maintenant mettre fin à la double nationalité" et "arrêter l'immigration", tandis que le maire UMP de Nice Christian Estrosi prenait un arrêté contre les drapeaux étrangers jusqu'à la fin du Mondial. L'Algérie a finalement été éliminée lors de son match avec l'Allemagne, et pourtant, l'extrême droite aurait pu rêver d'un match en quarts de finale avec la France.

(Pélissier)

While *L'Express.fr*, as a magazine, does not claim any uniform political leaning, the attitude of the author towards Marine Le Pen's and Estrosi's commentaries and actions is evident, given clauses and sentences such as, "La présidente du FN a instrumentalisé ces incidents...." and, "L'Algérie a finalement été éliminée lors de son match avec l'Allemagne, et pourtant, l'extrême-droite aurait pu rêver d'un match en quarts de finale avec la France," as it seems to the article's author, Pélissier, that Marine Le Pen, of the Front National, and by extension, Estrosi, of the UMP, saw good opportunities in the riots following the Algeria-Russia soccer match, to further their agendas of revoking the double nationality of the Algerian-French, and of limiting the manifestation of patriotism with respect to other nations besides France. Pélissier's last remark, as he claims that even as the far-right watched Algeria lose against Germany, some of its representatives

may have been daydreaming of a match between Algeria and France, which may have given them even more ammunition with which to exploit the political opportunity offered in a close competition between France and Algeria, which may have provoked significant rioting on the part of the Algerian-French, even if Algeria had won the soccer match.

An Analysis of the Post-World Cup Game Incidents
of June 26th and 27th, 2014,
within the Context of Maghrebi-French Integration in France

As one considers these incidents, the issue of their role within the debate over the status of Maghrebi-French integration comes into question. Namely, from one perspective, it seems counterintuitive to realize that the same behavior used by some Maghrebin-French during periods of rioting in the suburbs (burning cars and garbage cans, and throwing objects at police officers) has been used during a period of celebration, after a groundbreaking World Cup win by Algeria. Why does this exhilaration, this time of reveling in the glory of Algeria's athletic accomplishment, so easily turn into a fierce and competitive manifestation of nationalism, as if the Algerian-French, some of whom have no formal tie to Algeria, engage in these destructive incidents as if they were on an Algerian conquest for France, reversing colonial history, and escaping their status as post-colonial subjects, while at the same time robbing the French of European descent of their role as the former colonial power and current dominant presence in France? Are these Algerian-French capable of separating their allegiance to Algeria from their French citizenship, and more abstractly, from the

absolute imperative to prove national superiority through soccer games? To what degree do they pledge allegiance to France, if they demonstrate their love for Algeria during a soccer game? Does the soccer game serve as a pretext for them to reveal their true feelings towards France and Algeria? Is it possible to watch games of the World Cup more objectively? Could they find more constructive methods of celebrating Algeria's World Cup victory? Do athletic events have to be so closely associated with memories of colonial-era domination and post-colonial era hegemony? Do the people who engage in such behavior realize that they would be prohibited from it in Algeria?

While I sympathize with the position of the Maghrebin-French, in that it must be difficult to be the minority within a nation dominated by a people with a historically- and contemporarily-dominant role over them, it seems that the degree to which these Algerian-French are reacting towards Algeria's victory in soccer reveals that there is strong resistance towards integration on their part. Their reaction represents more than that of a people towards the success of their native culture; truly, it seems to be a rejection of their subordinate role in relation to France, and their fervent desire to make this rejection visible to the French of European descent. These manifestations of rebellion make it clear that the situation is far more complex than one featuring a victimized and marginalized people; rather, these Algerian-French reveal strongly rebellious attitudes towards Franco-French hegemony, as well as deeply rooted antagonism, based on over a century of their domination by the French of European descent.

Given such clear indications of this resistance towards integration with French society, it must be asked, is integration a goal worth striving for, when some Maghrebin-

French refuse the concept? What if the Derridean reciprocal gestures that the French government has extended towards the minorities of France, are being rebuffed? These conciliatory gestures, such as making accommodations for Muslims during Ramadan in France, serving *hallal* meat in schools and prisons, and the Presidential greeting to Muslims on Eïd and Ramadan, once extended to Christians on Christmas and Easter, seem, in this case, to meet with hostility, and apparent attacks on Western civilization. Is there a more modest goal that could be aimed for: finding a way to affirm North African culture, and Islam, within France, while minimizing conflict between the Maghrebin-French and Franco-French? If a Derridean hospitality scenario is not likely, would it at least be possible to avoid a scenario from Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (which seemed to be the paradigm for the events occurring among the Algerian-French population, as of late June, 2014)?

On the part of the French of European descent, perhaps the same question could be asked: Do the French of European descent uniformly present a pro-integration stance? Namely, as Reuters and *L'Express.fr* point out, in the article that I cited, some people on the far-right seem to use incidents such as the post-soccer match riots in late June, 2014, as reasons to decry the failures of integration and assimilation, and to advance their political agendas. Marine Le Pen seems quick to dismiss the possibility of the eventual success of assimilation, instead calling for the drastic measure of the revocation of double nationality for the Algerian-French, which would affect the lives of thousands, if not millions, of people. Estrosi fights to ban the flying of foreign flags during the World Cup, but the flying of these foreign flags is in itself not so shocking, as they are also flown at town hall marriage ceremonies and celebrations after political contests that result

in victory for the left. As Pélissier implies, it seems too convenient sometimes, the way in which these athletic events, which are in themselves meant to promote international fellowship, can become themselves the “political footballs (or soccer balls)” of politicians and commentators who are very aware of the import of their comments on many French people, to whom soccer and politics are important staples of life. To what degree do French authorities have control over such situations of unrest, when they are sometimes afraid of disorder reaching uncontrollable heights in the suburbs? This fear was made visible in 2005, when many French media sources were reluctant to describe the nature of the reality of the unrest occurring in the suburbs, during the riots in the fall of that year, due to fears of exaggerating the response of the public, and of encouraging further violence, as it was found that announcing the statistics on the number of cars burned per night, per suburb, only encouraged more car burnings, as if those involved were competing against one another.

On a more general level, the degree to which the French national sport, *le foot*, easily stokes ancient political, national and cultural rivalries (such as that between Algeria and France, bringing up memories of the period of the French colonial empire, the Algerian War between 1954 and 1962, decolonization, and the Algerian Civil War in the 1990s), and simultaneously, becomes an excuse for some people to promote their political agendas, proves that soccer, and the World Cup in particular, are much more than a national pastime or an important yearly event; indeed, soccer carries with it the weight of hundreds, if not thousands, of years of intercultural and international relations, making nearly every match one to watch closely, for both its political and cultural ramifications.

With respect to the spectrum of hospitality as a metaphor for contexts of integration in France, Algeria's victory over Russia on Thursday, June 26th, 2014, may have symbolized, in one sense, a Derridean moment for some Algerian-French, as Algeria succeeded in making it to the eighth rounds of the World Cup for the first time, playing against many more prominent nations, including its former colonial power, France. It must have given many Algerian-French, and Algerians, a positive feeling, to realize that their national soccer team was not only on par with that of a major European country, but that its performance surpassed that of the other team in the game that evening. At the same time, the nature of the destructive events following this soccer game is certainly supportive of a Foucauldian type of hospitality being in effect at the time. As I noted in Chapter 3, the chapter on "mixed" hospitality, one event can have different interpretations, based on who is evaluating the situation, thus making complexity a key characteristic of the current intercultural atmosphere in France.

A Comparison of Derrida's Hospitality Theory and Foucauldian Power Theory, as Applied to Integration in France

These theories, while each making unique contributions to discussion on integration in France, are vastly different. In this section, I will compare and contrast these theories, using each to critique each other. I will also comment on differences between these two theories and Agamben's theory on the *state of exception*. These theories differ in that Derrida's is much more optimistic, prone to insist on the ability to transcend perceived differences in status, and characterized by a more accepting attitude towards concession-making. Furthermore, Derrida's theory is based on a conception of

an authentic Other and the ethical and highly ethical, as opposed to Foucault's focus on the realistic. Derrida's conception of relationships is partial to a trusting approach to the Other, in opposition to Foucault's distrust, is founded in the elimination of reciprocity in relationships, and is centered on a quasi-religious approach to the Other. Derrida's theory, in contrast to that of Foucault, involves both the Platonic and Christian traditions, instead of primarily the Platonic, and recognizes limits to the extent to which the parties which perpetuate certain discourses based on certain types of knowledge can demand specific behavior from those who are under their watch.

First, Derrida's work is certainly more optimistic than so-called "Foucauldian" hospitality theory. Derridean theory allows for the potential for true integration in France. Derrida's work stresses what could be, and Foucauldian theory, what is. It is not that I overemphasize the positive aspects of Derridean hospitality theory, in comparison to those of Foucauldian power theory. Foucauldian theory is merely more realistic and cognizant of the dangers belying conditions for integration in France. Indeed, in some ways Derrida may be overly optimistic, stressing the degree to which peaceful relationships can result from appreciating the Otherness of the Other, when sometimes this type of behavior is too idealistic. Despite this, Foucauldian theory on power may be too strongly negative to apply to some aspects of integration in France. As I note elsewhere, France cannot be envisioned as a total panopticon. Agamben can be seen as a philosopher with an even more pessimistic perspective towards relationships between the powerful and weak than Foucault, as Agamben sees the existence of *states of exception*, instead of the use of biopower, as the defining characteristic of the modern age, and views the potentiality of integration occurring in France as being much less likely than

Derrida, since the very nature of democracy, in Agamben's eyes, prevents this eventuality, while Derrida feels that democracy tends to promote positive attitudes towards immigration and integration.

Derridean and "Foucauldian" hospitality theories also differ in that they have different conceptions of power dynamics. Foucault is more cautious about them, seeing the enormous challenge represented by trying to overcome unhealthy patterns established by those who oppress others, while Derrida holds that they can more readily be transcended in a radical appreciation of the Otherness of the Other. The forgiveness that can be seen in Derrida is certainly a form of subversion, for he advocates sidestepping traditional approaches to Power. Meanwhile, Agamben's vision of power dynamics is the least favorable, as he feels that the modern-day democratic government has complete reign over its citizens, to harm them or kill them, and that the only way to limit this tendency is by desacralizing actions and objects that stress perceived differences in status between the powerful (i.e., the government) and the weak (i.e., its citizens), and by encouraging the disadvantaged to express the traumatism that they have suffered by recording their testimonies in a written fashion.

In addition, the two theorists also have radically different approaches to concession-making. While in Derrida a concession is a reciprocal overture, in which the guest and the host reach out to each other, resolving differences and building stronger relationships, in Foucault, a concession can cause major difficulties, making for confusing relationships. Foucault states, for example, that a concession from the powerful to the weak can lead the weaker party to doubt the reason for the concession. As can be expected, Agamben's theory does not allow for the existence of concession-

making between the empowered and disadvantaged, since the perceived differences in status are too deeply-entrenched for this type of conciliatory gesture, which would ostensibly encourage even greater hegemony claimed by the sovereign power.

Derrida's theory is also more based on a belief in the authentic existence of the Other, while Foucault's thinking is based on social constructivism, extended to the assertion by Edward Saïid that the Other is a conception created by the West to describe the East. For Derrida, the Other is a real entity, capable of being valued and appreciated, rather than mistrusted as in Foucault's theory. While Lévinas' philosophy suggests that interpersonal relationships imply an ethical responsibility on the part of each person to the Other, to Agamben, this type of responsibility cannot be assumed, and moreover, his ethical framework has happiness as its end goal, instead of the fulfillment of traditional moral standards, based on law.

Furthermore, Derrida's theory is also based on not only the ethical, but the hyper-ethical, in contrast to Foucault's theory, who sees the more realistic aspects of human relationships, particularly suspicion of the motives of other people. In this sense, these value systems can be contrasted, Derrida calling for an approach to the Other that transcends typical standards for relationships. Agamben, on the other hand, seems to operate on the other end of the spectrum from Derrida, instead stressing the way in which even the basic human rights of citizens in modern-day democracies are easily violated.

Foucault's theory is also based on the premise that Others constantly watch and monitor the individual, while Derrida seems to operate more on trust and a positive attitude towards the other. While Derrida does not specifically cite trust as a component of a highly ethical relationship, his insistence on Power's responsibility to the Other

implies that the Other has a right to trust Power to serve its best interests. Agamben's philosophy is more similar to that of Foucault in this respect, since he advocates the convulsion of typical relationships between the empowered and disadvantaged; rather than encouraging the weak to trust the powerful, he promotes the desacralization of behaviors and objects considered sacrosanct, and the minimalization of perceived differences in status, which he feels put the weak in great jeopardy.

In addition, Derrida seems to wish to eliminate reciprocity in his ethical writings, while Foucault realizes the intrinsic nature of relationships, in which there is a reaction to every action. Foucault's call for the weak to resist the powerful happens in the context of action and reaction, while Derrida aims for a more radically different relationship where appreciation for the Other is a non-reciprocated gift.

In addition, Foucault's theory is based on a non-religious conception of human relationships, in which the self is very important, as well as the welfare of Other people, while Derrida tends to insist on the welfare of the Other at all costs. Interestingly, it seems that due to the appreciation that Foucault has for the care for the self, he sees caring for Other people as paramount. It seems that the appreciation that Foucault has for the value of human life, intrinsic to the concept of *care of the self*, finds its natural extension in his encouragement for people to care for others. Derrida's thinking even borders on the religious, particularly on a Christian conception of the Other. Derrida does not directly espouse Christian beliefs, but he does advocate the values of tolerance and non-judgmentalism that are components of Christianity. This fact does not mean that he is intolerant to other religions, including Islam, since *care for the other* is also a value of the general Abrahamic tradition. As Caputo writes, Derrida's frequent references to

Patočka in the *Gift of Death* have less to do with Christian dogma than “the genealogy of European responsibility....Patočka is not trying to sell us on the Christian doctrines of the Incarnation, Original Sin, and the atonement, on any particular interests of Christian faith. His interests lie not in the event of Christian revelation but rather in a philosophical structure or possibility that underlies the event” 194). More extreme than Foucault’s power theory, Agamben’s philosophy not only prescribes non-religious means to protect the position of the weak; instead of promoting the assumption of responsibility, based on moral principles, Agamben prioritizes happiness, not ethical purity or integrity, and feels that one cannot accept responsibility for the Other, since this task is overwhelming in its implications. It can thus be said that Foucault’s philosophy has a greater stress on *care for the Other*, than does Agamben’s philosophy.

In addition, the two theorists have different conceptions of the degree to which there should be mystery in relationships between the weak and the powerful. While Foucault is concerned about the powerful obtaining information from the weak, and recommends that the weak resist the powerful, in part through withholding information, Derrida is more radical than Foucault, advocating the notion of ineffability, since the relationship between the powerful and the weak can become a powerfully constructive one based on the enigmatic. This type of behavior advocated by Derrida is not the same thing as withholding information out of distrust or fear. For example, Derrida’s notion of the *mysterium tremendum* conveys the indescribable way in which the Other can be approached.

While Foucault, in his espousal of the philosophy of the *care of the self*, as described in *The History of Sexuality*, praises parts of the Platonic tradition, Derrida

recommends more of a blend of the Platonic and Christian approaches to political responsibility, unlike Patočka, who advocates the Christian model alone. Gasché summarizes this aspect of the Derrida's philosophy: "Against Patočka's attempt to free Christianity from its Platonic foundation and to conceive of a Europe emancipated from both Athens and Rome, Derrida stresses the need to remain faithful to both aspects of European memory" (151). There are elements of Foucault in Derrida, and Derrida does not completely reject Foucault's or any other notion of political resistance, mostly because of the unpredictability of how his own new vision of politics will operate in practice.

Derrida is also more revolutionary in his understanding of power structures. Foucault's conceptualization of Power imagines static relationships, in which resistance happens within the terms set by Power. Derrida writes that certain forms of resistance, including Judith Butler's theory of performativity, or the idea that gender is a construct that is performed, with the recommendation that people violate gender norms, fit too neatly within the context of established power structures. In particular, he makes this argument in the article "Performative Powerlessness---a Response to Simon Critchley":

I believe that a politics, as well as an ethics or law, which regulates itself solely on performative power----the performative is a power----is not only a power, but also a legitimizing and legitimized power. And so, in a certain way, theories of the performative are always at the service of powers of legitimization, of legitimized or legitimizing powers. And consequently, in my view, the ethical must be exposed to a place where constative language as well as performative language is in the service of another language.

(Derrida 467)

In this quotation, Derrida indicates that when one protests a norm, such as gender norms, one is accepting the broad framework set by Power acknowledging the importance of that which is protested. Derrida, in his own philosophy, suggests that one can political resistance by imagining a different set of circumstances. He conceives of another kind of relationship between Power and the Other. Derrida's notion of Power is actually more fluid, mainly because of the role reversal concept, although he does not believe that power structures can be easily overturned. For Derrida, there is a huge amount of unpredictability in what could result from the modification of political ethics through reflection on the hyper-ethical, therefore resistance is a valid option in the meantime. While Derrida knows that this change in perspective can result in changes, he does not predict what changes this evolution in attitude would produce. Interestingly, Agamben's approach to defending the rights of modern-day citizens in democracies is revolutionary, as is that of Derrida, but in a different sense; Agamben feels that since the modern-day government has complete reign to physically harm and kill its citizens, and rob them of their human rights in cases in which it sees fit, and since those considered exterior to these nations are guaranteed even less, it is necessary to use non-traditional means in order to obtain protection from these outcomes, such as the deconstruction of oppositions that maintain perceived differences in status, and the provision of written testimony concerning traumatic experiences, removing the possibility for those testifying to become subjectified or desubjectified.

Other key differences between Derrida's and Foucault's visions of exchanges between the weak and the powerful include a contrast in their view of the responsibility of Power. In particular, Foucault holds that Power is not limited in its ability to enact its

plans. Rather, in Foucault's writing, the only limits on Power are those created by the resistance of the weak, marginalized and disempowered. In comparison, Derrida's and Patočka's ideas about the responsibility of Power toward the Other place significant limits on Power and on its ability to commit abuses. For example, the power of the Other is limited in *The Gift of Death* because of Power's obligation to appreciate the Otherness of the marginalized, as Derrida writes: "...it is declared that every other one, each of the others, is God inasmuch as he or she is, like God, wholly other" (87). Meanwhile, Agamben envisions the empowered as having unrestricted control over the weak, which is completely immune to traditional forms of resistance to this power.

Conclusions to Chapter One:

In this chapter, I have provided a foundation for my analysis of *Beur* novels, films and music videos and the magazine *Paris-Match* from the perspective of Derridean hospitality theory and "Foucauldian" theory on power. These theories, applied to conditions for integration in France, are radically different, yet each makes a unique contribution to my comprehension of this topic. In fact, it is only by using Derrida and Foucault in tandem with each other that the full picture of relationships between the *Beurs* and the French of European descent can be fully envisioned. This chapter will serve as the basis for a discussion of Derridean, mixed, and "Foucauldian" hospitality in key artistic works from the *Beur* community and journalistic articles in *Paris-Match*. In

these chapters, I will explore the nuances and complexities of these works as illustrated by these two theories.

Chapter 2:
“Foucauldian” Hospitality in *Beur* Novels, Films and Music Videos

Introduction

Having established my theoretical foundations, based on Derrida’s hospitality theory and Foucault’s power theory, I will now devote three chapters to applying these theories to certain *Beur* fictional works. I will start by examining representations of contexts of integration that reveal Foucauldian patterns. The first category of works that I will examine falls on an extreme end of the continuum, opposite the Derridean end, and is characterized by major pathology in interactions between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French. Foucault’s theory of the panopticon may elucidate the real nature of these poor relationships between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French, indicating a dysfunctional type of hospitality where there is a lack of reciprocal overtures, and where the host has a tendency to dominate and manipulate the host. I will also evaluate examples of so-called “Foucauldian” hospitality, as found in these literary, musical, and cinematic texts, in light of Agamben’s theory on the *state of exception*, which I introduce for the purposes of this dissertation in Chapter 1, for the way in which Agamben’s theory can shed light on conceptions of the vulnerability of the Maghrebi-French, with respect to French society. According to the Foucauldian model, distrust is a key component of relationships between the powerful and the weak. Since

the host has a tendency to manipulate the guest, there may be no reason for the guest to trust the host. A reading based on Foucault's thesis, according to which modern modes of punishment allow us to avoid the most severe physical pain, but are actually more manipulative than previous ones, may result in the conclusion that it is preferable for the Maghrebi-French to resist integration, thereby escaping control and psychological abuse by the French of European descent, at all costs. According to this argument, the descendants of North African immigrants would be better served by maintaining their own communities and practices, than by trying to adopt French mores and by complying with majority standards.

An analysis of this type, made according to Foucault's power theory, would also propose that perceived differences in status are critical in situations of hospitality, and that, just as the inmates of the mental asylum are the "guests" of the hospital staff, in a forced type of hospitality, there is a tremendous perceived difference in status between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French, thereby making it almost impossible to have a healthy relationship. For example, the guest in the mental hospital is extremely disempowered. The perceived difference in status could not be greater between the two. Likewise, the Maghrebi-French may have no chance at having an egalitarian affiliation with the French of European descent.

Even when there are situations in which the powerful party extends grace or favor to the weaker party, these gestures, akin to steps taken towards the humanization of the mental asylum or hospital, as reciprocal overtures from Derrida, or as a gift according to Mauss' theory, can result in unintended consequences. The mental patient or prisoner

may wonder why there has been a concession. Similarly, the Maghrebi-French may ask themselves to what end the French government makes reciprocal overtures towards them.

Moreover, the way in which relationships affected by disparities in levels of authority, clout, or possessions result in subjection and subjectification, particularly to the people at the lower end of these hierarchical structures, as conceived by Foucault, is largely illustrated by the relationships depicted in the *Beur* novels and films that I will analyze in this chapter. Foucauldian power theory can be used to clarify interactions between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent; namely, the power possessed by French authorities and those in charge of key institutions in France is not an agent in itself; rather, it is a product of the strategies used by the people who create *regimes of truth* within France, that are sustained by particular types of knowledge. The Maghrebi-French find themselves in the position of experiencing the effects of the power and control seized and maintained over them by the French of European descent; meanwhile, just as Foucault defined the subject as also possessing his or her own identity, through his or her own conscience or knowledge of self, the *Beur*, in a normal context, is also an individual with consciousness of his being. Just as the subject in Foucault's power theory is conditioned to respond in certain ways that reinforce the goals of the authorities, often without full knowledge of the true nature of the social mechanisms behind these imperatives for their behavior, and in this process, often loses his or her ability to initiate independent thought and action, some of the *Beur* characters in these fictional works become subjectified by the standards of behavior that are expected for them with respect to the French of European descent. They realize which behaviors are incentivized and disincentivized by the French of European descent, although at least

initially, they may be unaware of the discourses that create such imperatives for their behavior. In some of the works, characters come to see their subjectification as being implicit in the way in which they are treated by the French of European descent, and eventually break away from these models, creating new paradigms of thought and action for themselves, disallowing French authorities to perpetuate these modes for them.

In this chapter, I will demonstrate the way in which this subjectification is key to understanding the Foucauldian interactions between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent depicted in these novels and films. Namely, I will describe the degree to which the protagonists in these novels, films, and songs manage to desubjectify themselves, removing the power that French authorities have over them, and curbing the influence of the social norms that these authorities perpetuate, thus reclaiming their status as subjects in the sense of the word that connotes agency, action, and choice.

Globally, within this chapter on dysfunctional relationships between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French, the protagonists struggle to define their own sphere of action from the behavioral mandates that they receive from their Franco-French schoolteachers, peers, and neighbors. Although in all cases, the degree to which they can achieve desubjectification is limited, the works in which *Beur* and *Beurette* protagonists seem to achieve or at least indicate the most progress in this regard are Kessas' *Beur's Story* and Zebda's song, "Le Bruit et l'odeur." While Malika and Farida in Kessas's novel are older than Georgette in Belghoul's work, their vulnerability comes largely from the fact that they are females in a patriarchal culture, that of the Muslim, North African families from which they come, yet Malika herself uses her powers of observation and insight to insist on the need to make her own path in France, instead of following the

dictates of French society, or those of her family. Zebda, in their 1995 song, “Le Bruit et l’odeur,” calls attention to the xenophobic attitudes of many Franco-French, and especially those of the French President from 1995 to 2007, Jacques Chirac, and protest the way in which North African immigrants in France were exploited for the purposes of construction, industry, and warmaking in the years during which the French economy was based on industry, while they and their descendants are now often treated as second-class citizens, imploring the French of European descent to respect and recognize the contributions of the current Maghrebi-French, and those of their ancestors.

On the other hand, the works in which the primary injustice alluded to occurred in the past, such as Sebbar’s *La Seine était rouge*, see the least amount of room for the characters to act in their own interest, and against the injustice committed against them; the resistance enacted by current French citizens of North African descent, in this case, is mostly of a symbolic nature. In addition, the work that features a seven-year-old *Beurette* protagonist, Belghoul’s *Georgette!*, depicts a character in an especially vulnerable situation, with limited ability to defend herself against the tyranny of the norm, although *Beur’s Story*’s Malika, a *Beur* teenager, does achieve greater desubjectification than Georgette does, in Belghoul’s work. For Georgette, especially, her extreme youth as a seven-year-old prevents her from freeing herself from the psychic weight of the pressure exerted by her Franco-French school teacher. The *Beurette* novel, nonetheless, seems to be a subgenre in which there is limited room for protagonists to act in their own favor, due to the way that both being female and Maghrebi-French are disincentivized in many contexts in French society. Another work in which there is limited agency for *Beur* protagonists is Gilou’s film, *Rai*, but for different reasons than in *La Seine était rouge* or

the two aforementioned *Beurette* novels. Namely, in *Rai*, the conditions in the suburb in which the protagonists live are so explosive, and the undercurrents of insurrection so strong, that individual characters have little chance of circumventing their circumstances, as evidenced by the situation of Djamel and Sahlia.

Lastly, another main tenet of a Foucauldian interpretation of these novels would support the idea of creative resistance on the part of these *Beur* characters, in order for them to escape domination. Although the power structures in France, as elsewhere, are strongly embedded into society, the application of Foucault's power theory may suggest that it is better for the Maghrebi-French to resist oppression, even if it is ultimately ineffective, if only to allow these minorities to express themselves, and to preserve their dignity.

In this chapter, Islam plays an essential role, since it is sometimes the most significant factor that causes barriers between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French. Islam can be viewed as a marker of the ways in which many Maghrebi-French differ culturally from the French of European descent, as manifested by many examples in these novels.

On the Application of Agambien Theory to the Works Analyzed in this Chapter

Although I will primarily evaluate the examples discussed in this chapter in the light of "Foucauldian" hospitality theory, I will also examine the situations discussed in these novels, films, and songs with consideration of Agamben's political theory of the

state of exception. As I stated in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, Agamben's theory, while utilizing some of the elements in Foucauldian power theory, takes the conclusions of both Derrida and Foucault further than either theorist did, nearly dismissing the possibility of hospitality occurring normally within a modern democracy, disagreeing with Derrida, and finding that biopolitical power has been used throughout the history of Western civilization, unlike Foucault, who sees this power as a characteristic of the Modern Age. Agamben's conclusion that in the modern democracy, people have almost no protection from physical harm as incurred against them by the government, and are thus *bare life*, and that the modern democracy is analogous to a concentration camp, since there are clear demarcations between people with higher and lower types of status, implies a radical type of vulnerability for virtually everyone, although not the type of vulnerability valued in Derridean hospitality theory; rather, according to Agamben, this vulnerability must be guarded against through the techniques of *play* (*desacralizing* behaviors and actions, that allow people to deconstruct perceived differences in status), and of *testimony*, which allows people to reveal their experiences, without being exposed to subjectification and objectification. In Agamben's theory, non-citizens and refugees are especially vulnerable to losing their rights, as they lack the protection of being born in the land, which normally guarantees these rights to everyone else. In his eyes, even humanitarian rights can be discounted in these situations, and the suburb would seem to be the modern-day concentration camp in Agamben's theory, since it is as if there are clear lines drawn between those outside and inside the boundaries of the French suburbs.

However, one could argue that the Maghrebi-French in France are not, unlike the Turkish guest workers in Germany, in a *state of exception*, in a legal sense, at least as it

pertains to the concept of citizenship. While it is true that the Turkish guest workers in Germany whom Agamben discusses in *Homo Sacer* are in a *state of exception*, since they are not allowed to participate in the politics of the nation, and they are expected to leave once their work permits expire, the Maghrebi-French are in a different situation. When they are citizens in France, they are allowed to vote, implying full legal membership in French society. They are not guest workers, although many of their parents, grandparents or even great-grandparents were, thus they are not expected to leave, as the Turkish guest workers in Germany are normally asked to do.

Thus, while we cannot extend Agamben's description of the guest workers in Turkey to the situation of most of the Maghrebi-French, his theory may apply to their position in France in two ways. Since the first manner can be generalized to anyone, I will focus on the evaluation of examples in novels and films analyzed in this chapter, in light of the second manner which I discuss below, the way in which being perceived as being a foreigner in France can greatly increase these people's vulnerability, even when they are citizens of France, leading to an especially precarious and vexing situation for them.

First, in a general sense: in some ways, modern-day citizens of democracies, such as France, the United States, and Germany, may have great vulnerability with respect to their governments, since, according to Agamben, these democracies create an appearance of guaranteeing their citizens' rights, but in actuality, these rights can be taken away at any time, and these citizens, subjected to physical harm, or even death, at the hands of the government. Of course, there are many checks against this threat of absolute power that Agamben sees as being the status quo, but in a real sense, the government has great

license to punish its citizens as it sees fit, particularly in situations that are unusual, or of an emergency nature. Agamben sees the physical torture that occurred at the US-run Guantanamo Bay after September 11th, 2001, as falling into this category; likewise, he seems to consider the biopolitical tattooing that he was asked to participate in after 9/11, to demonstrate the fact that the citizens are completely vulnerable to the whims of the government in situations in which its officials see it as being necessary.

Second, although most of the Maghrebi-French have the advantage of having French nationality, and thus cannot be said to lack the advantage of being born in France, and being able to count it as their home for life, unlike the Turkish guest workers in Germany, the way in which they are perceived lends to their increased vulnerability to being harmed and receiving negative reputations, as compared to most Franco-French people, based on Agambien theory. In particular, while French police officers running security checks in the suburbs of France may know that many of the people whom they ask for their identity papers are actually French citizens, these people's appearances, identifying them as potentially of African or Middle Eastern descent, imply that these people are especially vulnerable to being seen as foreigners, and potentially, as injurious to French society. When the politicians on the extreme-right, such as Marine Le Pen, insist on the revocation of the double nationality of the Algerian-French, due to events in which some people rioted after a soccer game between Algeria and Russia (such as occurred on June 26th and 27th, 2014, in several French cities), it seems clear that these people are perceived as foreigners, even when they are French citizens, and may demonstrate allegiance to France in many other ways.

The Rationale for the Choice of Works Selected for Analysis in this Chapter

A number of compelling artistic works in various genres support this Foucauldian reading of hospitality, with respect to the integration of the Maghrebi-French in France. I will provide a rationale for each such work that I will analyze in this chapter of my dissertation. Excellent examples include Leïla Sebbar's 2003 *La Seine était rouge*; Ferrudja Kessas' 1990 work, *Beur's Story*; Farida Belghoul's 1986 novel, *Georgette!*; Thomas Gilou's 1995 film, *Rai*; and Zebda's 1995 music video for "Le Bruit et l'odeur."

I have chosen Sebbar's novel, analyzed for its demonstration of the reaction of the second and/or third generations to the large-scale violence that the French police displayed towards Algerians who were disobeying a wartime curfew in Paris, in October 1961, towards the end of the Algerian War; Kessas' work, selected since it portrays the difficulties that some Maghrebi-French females (once known as *Beurettes*) experience in France, including social isolation, tight control by their parents and physical abuse from their older brothers; Belghoul's novel since it demonstrates the problems that some *Beur* schoolchildren, in this case, a seven-year-old girl, Georgette, encounter in their dealings with Franco-French teachers and their often-strict, Muslim parents; *Rai*, which I have chosen for its demonstration of the propensity of the French suburbs to periodically erupt in racial tension and rioting, the most dramatic symptoms of the challenges that Franco-French---Maghrebi-French relationships face; and Zebda's music video, chosen because

it showcases the ways in which this musical group perceives the unjust attitude with which the French of European descent regard minorities in France.

The Analysis of a Select Group of *Beur* Novels and Films that are Illustrative of So-Called “Foucauldian” Hospitality, as a Model for Contexts of Maghrebi-French Integration

La Seine était rouge (Leïla Sebbar, 2003)

First, an extreme case of so-called “Foucauldian” hospitality, shorthand, in this chapter, for very conflictual relationships between North Africans and their descendants, on one hand, and the French police, representative of French society, is found in Leïla Sebbar’s *La Seine était rouge*, which recounts the events of the tragedy that occurred on October 17, 1961, in Paris, when, during a curfew established by the French police to control the goings and comings of Algerians in Paris, near the end of the Algerian War, the French police assassinated several Algerians, and dumped their bodies in the Seine. In this work, a number of characters who witnessed or experienced the events of October 17, 1961, in Paris, testify about this tragedy. While this work consists mostly of a reflection on the past, since most of the action is told in the past tense, referring to the tragic events of October, 1961, this novel portrays a very real struggle that many members of the immigrant community experience in France: their relationship with the history of colonization, the Algerian War, and the subsequent decolonization of the Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia).

The author of *La Seine était rouge*, Leïla Sebbar, uses her unique position as the daughter of a French mother and an Arab father, both teachers in Algeria, and as an

immigrant to France at 19 years old, after living in Algeria until that point, to address the concept of exile in her novels, according to Martine Fernandes' book review of Michel Laronde's work, *Leïla Sebbar*, part of a collection entitled, "Autour des écrivains maghrébins" (402). Rather than consider herself a *Beur*, Maghrébine, or *pied-noir* writer, she calls herself *une croisée*, a term that carries connotations of intermixed cultures, representing her life story, as the progeny of French and Algerian parents, on one hand, and also as a citizen of Algeria who made a new life in France. In the "old country," she also had French heritage, and in the "new country," she is a newcomer from Algeria. These origins make her an excellent commentator on the concept of exile (Fernandes 402).

While the history of decolonization was a long-neglected subject within French studies, it has become a field of inquiry and research in its own right, within recent years. According to Alec G. Hargreaves, cited in the article, "Resistance at the Margins: Writers of Maghrebi Immigrant Origin in France," included in the work, *Post-Colonial Cultures in France*, edited by Hargreaves and Mark McKinney, the events of October 17, 1961, serve as a common focal point for the study of this period of the final years before Algerian independence, declared in 1962, a study which was, until recently, censored by the French government (233). During this time, as Hargreaves writes, tensions in Paris were high, due to the conflict occurring in Algeria: "Nationalist forces fighting in Algeria drew strong support from migrants in France, who by the same token were regarded with deep distrust by French officials and the public at large" (232). This tension was exacerbated by the fact that French diplomats and army officers were struggling to maintain Algeria as a part of France; even Jean-Marie Le Pen, the founding father of the

nationalist party, Le Front National, was part of this contingent, reluctant to grant freedom to Algeria (Hargreaves 233). Hargreaves views texts such as *La Seine était rouge* and other similar works, focused on this time period, as a means of “resistance to the discourses of (neo)-colonialism,” (233), just as the documentary that Louis, in the novel, *La Seine était rouge*, makes is a cultural and filmic document of resistance towards the oppression and violence that his people suffered on the tragic night in 1961. There have even been two other works, in addition to *La Seine était rouge*, treating the events of October 17, 1961: *Meurtres pour mémoire*, by Didier Daeninckx, and *Le Sourire de Brahim*, by Nacer Kettane, according to Mireille Rosello, as cited in her work, *France and the Maghreb: Performative Encounters* (200).

The so-called “Foucauldian” nature of the “hospitality” manifested in this novel between the French of European descent and the North Africans and their descendants who compose the novel’s cast of characters, is confirmed by several observations. Namely, Louis, Omer, and Amel experience, as modern-day descendants of Algerian immigrants to France, and as the descendants of survivors of the events of October 17th, 1961, a situation pitting their families as the historical victims of a brutal massacre of Algerians by the French police, near the end of the Algerian War. In this sense, the power struggle that these modern-day protagonists find themselves in this novel could be described as Foucauldian, since these characters face deeply-entrenched racist attitudes and denial of the events that transpired in 1961. As in a context of Foucauldian power relations, the dominant group (in this case, the French of European descent) perpetuated a certain discourse, both at the time of the curfew for Algerians in October, 1961 (a discourse according to which the Parisian chief of police, Papon, was at complete liberty

to control the comings and goings of the Algerian-French in Paris, as if retaining power of the liberty of these citizens was essential to, and less important than, Papon's control of Paris). The discourse perpetuated after the events of October 17th, 1961, held that it was best not to inquire into, and discuss, the events of this night. Just as the Algerian-French challenged the dominant discourse during the time of the curfew, Louis, Omer, and Amel come to deconstruct this other dominant discourse, as they freely talk about these events, interview people involved in them, and take pictures and recordings of places associated with these events, as designated by signs around Paris.

Likewise, the resistance that these three characters stage against ignorance of these events, and a real and generalized tendency to dismiss the gravity of the events of October 17th, 1961, the day when *la Seine* went red, is in alignment with one of the tenets of Foucauldian power theory, according to which it is better for the disenfranchised to resist oppression.

Among the strategies of resistance used by these characters, first of all, is the nature of the initiative of Louis, the main character, to record a documentary about the events of 1961. Louis, a young filmmaker, Amel, a French-born, female teenager, both of Algerian descent, and Omer, an Algerian journalist who escaped his home country, have been raised in the shadow of the Algerian War. While Amel, of Algerian descent, has never heard anyone explain to her the nature of the massacre that occurred on October 17, 1961 (Sebbar 15), her friend Louis decides, against his own father's initiative, to record a film consisting of people's testimonies about the tragic night: "Justement je veux le faire [to make a film on this topic], je le ferai parce que c'est pas mon histoire" (Sebbar 26). Louis feels the need to explore the history of this fateful

incident because it is uncharted territory for him and his friends, and because he wants to expose the magnitude of this tragedy to other people in his generation. In fact, it seems that Amel's female relatives actively try to hide the reality of these events from her, since, when they discuss this historical period, they always do so in Arabic, to Amel's vexation; even when she asks for clarification in French, they refuse her, claiming that having this knowledge will cause her distress, due to her youth (Sebbar 15). Here, the fact that Amel does not know Arabic is used against her, to preclude her from being able to participate in her own cultural and familial history. Other dolorous souvenirs of this traumatic period in French history include the plaques that Louis and his friends constantly see all around Paris, testifying to the massacre (Sebbar 26, 29, 101).

While Louis realizes that he cannot change the events that transpired to his people, the Algerian community in Paris, in 1961, his feelings of needing to rectify the situation, and to promote a better future for his family and friends, compels him to make a video documenting the testimonies of people who experienced the terrible events, such as Amel's mother, the Algerian saved from drowning in the Seine River, and the French of European descent student who saved an Algerian man's life. Sebbar gives us the chance to see the various perspectives of people who experienced the events of 1961, and in doing this, helps us to know these characters' motivations for supporting the campaign to expose the reality of the events of 1961, and on a larger scale, the nature and extent of the discrimination against and the manipulation of the North African community in France. The Maghrebi-French in this novel deal with complicated issues relating to the past, and demonstrate effort to prevent the shameful treatment that many Algerians experienced on this day, from recurring.

The situation that the characters in this novel encounter in their examination of the past, and in their realization of the difficult and sensitive nature of issues relating to the process of decolonization and the issues of national and cultural identities, leads them to become fully engaged in a symbolic resistance of the events of the past, quite different from an active resistance, which involves action in the present, in order to improve the future. As I stated in my introduction to this chapter, Foucault recommends resistance as means by which weaker parties can express themselves and preserve their dignity. Louis' initiative to create this documentary film is part of a symbolic resistance; he is disseminating these testimonies, coming from a generation of Algerians, to current and future generations, as if to insist on saying, this massacre happened, and there must be no repetition of such events.

Another aspect of the resistance that these characters participate in against the historical factors that caused the massacre of Algerians in 1961, is its tendency to seek resolution by avoiding France, and instead, to focus on Africa. In particular, Amel's decision to leave France for Egypt, followed by that of Louis and Omer (Sebbar 123), suggestive of a return to Africa and the sources of African culture, rather than dealing with painful historical and current realities in France, is evocative of this external type of resistance. This desire to return to Egypt represents the agreement of the characters that the problems of France come from sources much deeper than the events of 1961, and go back to French imperialism. Additionally, Amel's choice to seek answers in a trip to Egypt represents her will to escape the very real existence of racism and violence in France. Once Amel is in Egypt, Louis follows her, on a quest to make a film, starring her, and Omer does as well, to write a play for Amel, about an incident in which an

Algerian girl finds her twin brothers buried, after being executed by the French army, during the Algerian War (Sebbar 125). Why do the characters choose to go to Egypt, and not Algeria? It is possible that a trip to Algeria would be too painful for the characters, given the extremely sensitive nature of French-Algerian relationships, and the fact that a trip to Egypt, itself also once part of the French empire, under Napoleon, is an emotionally safer alternative than one to Algeria. Perhaps Egypt, the crossroads of civilization, is, for Amel, representative of an intersection between France and Algeria. One also notes that Amel's friends, Louis and Omer, continue on their quest to create cultural artifacts, such as films and plays, relating to the history of the Algerian War and decolonization, only this time in Africa, demonstrating the close affiliation between the events of 1961 in Paris, and the colonial history that was their impetus.

While Louis, making the documentary featuring the witnesses to the events of 1961, is able to record for posterity the magnitude of the bloodshed that occurred on this night, in the end, this acknowledgement, and even the dissemination of its reality, still does nothing, in the immediate sense, to protect North Africans and their descendants, and other minorities, from subsequent brutal oppression and human rights violations.

Likewise, the type of external resistance that Amel chooses, in traveling to Egypt, is limited in its effectiveness in the quest of these young people to spread awareness of their people's mistreatment by the French of European descent, since grave problems remain in France, unchanged by a temporary displacement. Amel is ostensibly able to escape the emotional pain caused by examining this historical era, as she travels to Egypt, but upon her return, any relief that she experienced is likely to subside, as she confronts her identity as a Frenchwoman of Algerian origin.

Still, just as Foucault holds that resistance is better than passive acceptance of the status quo, so, in this work, Louis' decision to deal with the painful realities of colonial-era oppression, and its aftermath, serves to unburden his conscience, in some part, from the guilt resulting from the silence that French society casts upon this topic, long unaddressed and unresolved, and also, in the long term, may serve to provide him with motivation to protect himself and his people from being exploited, oppressed and repressed. Another obstacle to the effectiveness of this symbolic resistance is the fact that many French people, even currently, are reluctant to discuss the events of 1961, as if to whitewash history and hide blame. Even if it is now impossible to assign guilt to those involved in the massacre of North Africans in Paris, given the significant amount of time that has lapsed since then, the fact that many of the French police involved in the brutalities have likely passed away, and the generalized chaos that was doubtlessly occurring at the scene, it is crucial to recognize the historical nature of these events: they occurred, are historically well-documented, and resulted in many unnecessary deaths, the result of a desperate Parisian government that was keen to control the Algerian population during a time when France was vulnerable to rebellion from North Africans, due to French resistance against their loss of control of Algeria, once considered an integral extension of French territory.

Foucault's philosophy, holding that there is resistance wherever there is power, can be demonstrated by examining these two forces in this novel. The power that the French police exerted over the North Africans finds its counterpart, and opposite force, in Louis' symbolic resistance to the violence avenged against North Africans in 1961. The wrongs committed by Papon's police force are etched in history, and negative attitudes

towards the Maghrebi-French are persistent in French culture. Unlike the physical brutality of the French police's power over Algerians on that tragic night, Louis' resistance is non-violent, and its intent, unlike that of the French police in their drive to control, repress, and terrify, is to promote understanding, and thus encourage emotional healing among the North Africans who experienced this violence, and the emotional agony that they and their loved ones suffered.

As stated in my first chapter, Foucault advocates a creative sort of resistance, based on the toolbox that he recommends as an essential resource for the disempowered. This type of creative resistance is primarily exemplified in this novel by Louis' creative resistance in his choice to videotape various plaques and memorials of the atrocities committed against Algerians in 1961, and to record several testimonies of these incidents, made by his people.

However, it is not necessary to look to Foucault alone when trying to contextualize the return of the protagonists to Egypt. In particular, the protagonists' trip to Egypt could be understood within the framework of a return to the homeland, an idea often evoked in Ethiopianism, and in Zionism, within the context of the African diaspora. According to *The Oxford Encyclopedia of African Thought*, Volume 2, by F. Abiola Irele and Biodun Jeyifo, Ethiopianism, an Afro-Atlantic tradition, consisting of literary and religious components, was developed first by South Africans in the late 1880s, and spread to British Central Africa, and eventually, the United States, by the 1890s, where it took the form of the creation of "Africanized" churches. The common link in Ethiopianism in these various regions was a stress on the continuity of African churches from the times of the Bible, based on the use of the country name, "Ethiopia," in the

Bible (Irele and Jeyifo 230). African civilization prior to the arrival of the Europeans was seen as advanced, and a return to the homeland symbolized the restoration of dignity and freedom, for many people in the African diaspora (Irele and Jeyifo 353, 355). The term, *Zionism*, within the context of the African diaspora, can be said to stress a return to Ethiopia as the African equivalent of a New Jerusalem (Irele and Jeyifo 147).

Additionally, the protagonists' return to Egypt may evoke the concept of a return to a different type of knowledge, more in line with the heritage of these protagonists, especially since Egypt is the source of many aspects of civilization, such as mathematics, architecture, and political systems. Rather than let the French of European descent define them, by creating a type of knowledge on their own identity, Louis, Omer, and Amel seem to be returning to a different means of producing knowledge, that of identification with their ancestral continent, Africa. In this case, the perspective of other thinkers besides Foucault, particularly, Saïd, who portrayed the way in which many Western thinkers create a socially-constructed image of the Other, including the African, is helpful.

The Limits of History, and the Limits of Efforts towards Desubjectification in *La Seine était rouge*

Concerning the degree to which the protagonists in this novel are able to desubjectify themselves, rejecting the control and domination of the French of European descent, it seems that the term “symbolic resistance” reveals much about their degree of

agency. Since this primary injustice depicted by the work occurred in Paris of 1961, there is limited action that Louis, Omar, and Amel can take; their role seems to be basically instructive, as if to educate second-and third-generation Algerian-French about the atrocities that took place against their grandparents and parents. The desubjectification that they aim for is only partially within their grasp. A critical condition for the occurrence of desubjectification is thus the ability to make appropriate changes in the present that address the injustices that happened in the past, which Louis, Omar, and Amal have only in a limited sense.

Connections Between *La Seine était Rouge* and Agamben's Theory on the State of Exception and Bare Life

With respect to the application of Agamben's theory on the *state of exception* and *Homo Sacer (bare life)* to this work, in *La Seine était rouge*, by Sebbar, the way in which the characters of Algerian descent in this novel experience mistreatment due to their perceived difference from other French people, does not weigh heavily as much on the narration of the text, but rather on the interpretation of the actual traumatic events of October 17th, 1961. Although this work is set in the contemporary era, the events which the work explores in detail, through the provision of testimonies given by a number of people who witnessed or experienced the assassination of many Algerians in Paris on the aforementioned date, it is the description of this time period that seems most closely related to the unfavorable situation in which minorities in France are mistreated, due to their perceived race and origins, regardless of whether they are French citizens. In this

time, in 1961, when these assassinations occurred, the Algerians involved were technically citizens of France, since Algeria was considered to be part of France.

In any case, Paris in 1961 was its own type of *state of exception* for Algerians, since the French authorities had imposed a curfew for Algerians in Paris, as they were concerned about potential protests against French military action in Algeria, near the end of the Algerian War, which had begun in 1954, and would end in 1962. The Algerians in Paris, while allowed to be on French territory, were treated differently, and unpreferentially, by the French police, and when they protested the curfew, many of them were shot and thrown in the Seine River. Their general inclusion in France, but exclusion on many levels, fits Agamben's description of a *state of exception*.

This outcome, as many Algerian people were shot and killed, would likely give Agamben even more reason to argue that people in a modern democracy have no protection from physical punishment and potential assassination by the government, and thus are nothing more than *Homo Sacer (bare life)* to this government, particularly when they are perceived as being foreign to the nation in question, thus divesting them of even their human rights, which would be, in most cases, undeniable.

Another connection between this work and Agamben is that the protagonists in this novel, particularly the filmmaker, Louis, use *testimony* to allow people whom they interview about the events of October 17th, 1961, to express themselves about the suffering that they experienced and observed at this time. Likewise, Agamben himself recommends written *testimony* as a means by which people can express their experiences of trauma, and thus preserve their humanity. While in the video that Louis makes, these testimonies are made in a spoken, recorded format, on video, the concept of using

testimony as a means to encourage people to testify to their trauma is affirmative of Agambien theory.

Additionally, Sebbar herself uses the strategy of assembling testimonies (though in this book, they are assumed to be fictional, although ostensibly representative of the experiences of survivors of this traumatic event), in order to allow these characters to tell the reader about these events in their own words. If Sebbar had obtained these testimonies through interviews with real people, and assembled them in her book, she would have followed Agamben's recommendation of soliciting written testimony, which he himself did in *Remnants of Auschwitz*.

Beur's Story (Ferrudja Kessas, 1990)

The *Beurette* (female *Beur*) novel that reveals the many facets of the difficult lives of these teenagers, *par excellence*, is Ferrudja Kessas' 1990 work, *Beur's Story*. In this work, *Beurette* teenagers struggle to meet the demands of their conservative Muslim families and French society, thereby finding themselves in an exceedingly unfortunate position in French society. These teenagers have difficulty becoming integrated into modern, secular, westernized French society, due to their conservative, controlling families, a mismatch resulting in very strained relationships, similar to those in a Foucauldian power model. It is not merely French society that these teenagers face; they are also confronted with the demands imposed upon them by their often fundamentalist, Muslim families. This work, *Beur's Story*, focuses on the

experiences of two female *Beur* teenagers, namely, Malika, who is raised by parents espousing traditional North African and Muslim values, but who comes to see the value of education in escaping what she perceives as an oppressive environment, and Farida, her friend who faces an arranged marriage, social isolation, and psychological problems related to unrequited love, and who succumbs, in the end, to the weight of these emotional burdens, culminating in her suicide. The work, as a whole, raises critical questions on the nature of what should be expected from, and offered to, these young women of North African descent, given that they are coming of age in a country radically different from the one in which their mothers and grandmothers were raised, and whose values and norms their fathers and brothers, guardians of the old country's patriarchal system, try to impose upon them.

In the analysis of this novel, some key questions will surface, and beg for resolution, which may never come. Namely: Should *Beurettes* be allowed to obtain higher education, as opposed to being obliged to face marriages arranged for them by their well-meaning, but perhaps overbearing, families? Is it healthy to expect *Beurettes* to follow the norms of Algerian society, while in France, which has a radically different culture? Is it fair to expose *Beurettes* to the more liberal values of the French of European descent, and still ask them to follow Muslim and North African social codes and norms? What are the costs of forced social isolation and being kept from attending school? How is an educated *Beurette* perceived? Should *Beur* boys be forced to participate in arranged marriages? How does one reconcile traditional and modern, French and Algerian, values and customs? Is it possible? Should the teenager have more personal freedom, or behave as if the family is still in North Africa, with the families of

the entire community watching to ensure that the family honor is not violated? To what degree is there room for a more expansive conception of gender roles, than that prescribed by Islam?

In the article, "The Algerian novel in the nineties," Farida Abu-Haidar summarizes this work, Kessas' *Beur Story*: Malika, the central character, is a serious teenager, intent on obtaining an education, while her friend, Farida, is more inclined to want to have a full social life as her Franco-French friends do. Malika refuses the alternative of running away, since she feels close to her mother and brothers, and wants to be able to go to university after high school, given her high grades. She wants her family to respect her as a person, and to be able to decide herself about issues in her life (Abu-Haidar 392). Regardless of their different personalities and goals, their parents constrain both of their social development; "[they] make their daughters prisoners from birth, weaving a tightly-knit web around their bodies and souls, stifling their ambitions and desires, without stopping to think for one moment how much damage they are causing them" (Kessas 222). While Malika accepts her parents' plans for her, specifically the vision that they have of her in an arranged marriage, although she hopes to attend university, Farida succumbs to depression while facing the prospects of an arranged marriage and watching Malika's brother, the object of her affections, Abdel, date a French woman (Abu-Haidar 392). This depression results in Farida's suicide, causing her friend, Malika, who cares deeply about her, to feel profound sorrow, and leading readers to want to pinpoint which factors caused the remarkably different outcomes experienced by these young women.

The setting of the novel, in the *cité* of the French city called Le Havre, carries significance with respect to its main themes, according to Susan Ireland. This housing development, where Farida and Malika live, is the site of large-scale socio-economic marginalization, and is home to people in the lowest social stratum of society, as Ireland writes in the article, “Writing at the Crossroads: Cultural Conflict in the Work of *Beur* Women Writers,” published in the journal, *The French Review* (1024). Even the nickname for their neighborhood, “Le Marais noir” (“the Black Swamp”), evokes the nature of this potentially violent, unfortunate area, as Ireland suggests: ‘The terms ‘marais’ and ‘noir’ suggest dangerous, unstable ground that threatens to swallow up those who venture into it...’ (1024).

First, among the factors that render Malika’s life in France unbearable, creating a sensation of displacement that is evocative of the “Foucauldian” hospitality context in which many *Beurettes* are raised in France, are the many examples of the excessively rigid respect for patriarchal practices, traditions, and attitudes practiced by Malika’s family, as evidenced by the behavior of her father, mother, and brothers. For example, the word of Malika’s older brothers is seen as equally valid and authoritative as that of her father, their patriarch. This tendency, of male family members’ having the prerogative to control their sisters, is demonstrated several times in this novel, for example, in the description of the authority of her older brother Mohamed’s power in the household, a tendency common to many families of North African origin, which privilege masculinity and age: “Toute sa famille dépendait...de son jugement. Ce qui expliquait en partie son autorité” (Kessas 37). Mohamed is so untouchable, that he even slaps their other brother, Slimane (Kessas 36). In another *Beur* novel, Soraya Nini’s *Ils disent que je*

suis une Beurette, which I will analyze in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, Samia's older brother is also violent towards his siblings, including his sisters, and is seen as responsible, along with their father, for monitoring his sisters' social lives and the family's honor, especially since Muslim women in such conservative families are expected to remain virgins until marriage, and, above all else, to avoid romantic relationships with non-Muslims. When Malika comes home past curfew, her brother, Mohamed, as well as her mother, hits her, even after she tries to defend herself (Kessas 53). Domestic violence is seen as the appropriate sanction for violation of family norms, established by the patriarchy, and enforced by Malika's mother and brothers, also ascribing to these norms, or at least consenting to them. Although her father's personality is more generous than that of his wife, Malika's mother, his father approaches the topic of family honor with severity, due to its great importance among the Muslim communities in France (Kessas 43). Additionally, the girls are not authorized to receive their own mail, as a measure to control, protect, and isolate them from potentially-harmful outside influences (Kessas 20).

The traditional bent of Malika's family, which she finds oppressive, is also evident in the pressure that her mother puts on her to do housework and care for her younger siblings, and in her mother's resentment towards Malika's studiousness, which represents, for her mother, a dangerous distraction from the true duties of a woman, which are domestic and conjugal (Kessas 23, 37). The girls of her family are expected to fulfill household duties, such as cooking, cleaning, and child care. Malika's mother hits her for breaking a casserole dish, illustrating another aspect of this conservatism, corporal punishment, a practice common in many fundamentalist circles. The following paragraph

explains the mentality of Malika's mother in regards to her daughter's fulfillment of her household chores: "Sa mère ne se mettait pas facilement en colère, elle était comme la plupart de ses mères algériennes, bonne et généreuse dans le fond, mais ne tolérait aucune bavure de la part de ses filles. Une fille qui brûle le repas familial brûlera le repas de son mari" (Kessas 22). In reaction to her mother's affirmation of women's obligatory submission to their husbands, Malika curses these future husbands who expect domestic servitude: "Maudits, soient les époux" (Kessas 22). Despite her resistance, Malika is expected to make *galettes* (cakes) for her brother, Mohamed (Kessas 90). Malika's mother wants her daughters to occupy themselves with housework, and to avoid the distractions associated with French culture (Kessas 63). Already, at only ten years old, when her younger siblings were born, Malika was expected to care for them. Malika's mother insists that when she was Malika's age, she cared for her siblings (Kessas 65). The importance of tradition seems to mandate that these customs, practiced by one generation, will be duplicated by subsequent ones, almost regardless of differences in the environments of modern North African women, as compared to those of their ancestors. In addition, the stronghold that patriarchy exercises over the girls in these North African families is exemplified by the general expectation for them to get married, although Farida is an exception, since her father is educated, and she has the chance to attend university (Kessas 14). The more general rule is exemplified by Malika's mother's attitude towards this issue: "Mme Azouik portait une haine invétérée aux études de ses filles. Sans l'intervention de ses deux fils aînés, elle ne leur aurait jamais permis de les poursuivre. Elle avait la profonde conviction que leur place se trouvait à la maison, et non à l'école, car elles s'échappaient à la surveillance, et

Dieu seul savait ce qu'elles y faisaient" (Kessas 23). Malika's mother cannot read or write, and she both justifies and explains her illiteracy by saying, "Une femme, c'est comme une chienne!" (Kessas 23). In this quotation, she dismisses the ability of women to learn, take education seriously, and hold stable employment. Malika's mother's lack of employment is explained by her affirmation of the traditional attitude taken by Algerian families towards their daughters' potential careers: "Elle ne pouvait pas travailler, d'après sa mère, une Algérienne, qui vivait sous le toit de ses parents, ne pouvait et ne devait travailler à l'extérieur" (Kessas 27). Malika's brother, Slimane, even goes so far as to shred her homework, resulting in her receiving a zero as a grade, a prime example of his wish to discredit her ability to learn (Kessas 94). Slimane has internalized the values that he perceives around him, and ruins her homework because it is representative of the possibility of her climbing through the French education system, freeing herself from North African values and traditions, and avoiding the tight grasp of patriarchy and the expectation that she will marry, have children, and depend on a man. Even the *Beur* male teenagers are obligated to marry, as Malika's uncle tells her brother Mohamed: "N'OUBLIE pas, que tu es le fils de dignes musulmans et en tant que tel, tu dois te comporter en digne Musulman, qui respecte Dieu, et à travers Dieu Tout-puissant, ses parents bien-aimés!" (Kessas 189) For Malika, Mohamed's refusal to stand up to his uncle and resist arranged marriage means that there will be an even greater obstacle for her and her female family members: "Elle maudissait la faiblesse de Mohamed, qui renforçait encore plus les siennes. Si les mecs se laissent faire," pensa-t-elle, "comment nous en sortir nous, pauvres filles, comment oser lever le ton si l'aîné de la famille se

laisse mettre la corde au cou, sans rien dire?” (Kessas 191) Malika’s resentment towards her uncle, for trying to force Mohamed into an arranged marriage, may be valid, but even if she voiced her opinion, it would probably be silenced. Even more significant for Malika, is Madame Azouik’s declaration that she and her sister, Farida, will be expected to get married after their brother, Mohamed, gets married. When Malika comments that Mohamed should be able to choose whether he marries, and whom, since they are in France, not Algeria, their mother objects (Kessas 85). Again, Malika’s mother seems to be enforcing these norms long practiced in Algeria, but largely foreign to French culture, putting her children in a bind, since they are exposed to more liberal and secular values and practices in school, which modify their views of these issues.

Exemplifying the ideal of the arranged marriage, itself the paragon custom of the patriarchal system, which is very problematic for Beurettes such as Malika and Farida, is a candidate for such a union, Madame Simine’s daughter, Djamila, friends of Malika’s mother. In Beur culture, an extension of North African culture, a traditional marriage is based on a proposal from a young man, through the intermediary of a woman’s family. In the case of Djamila, Madame Simine’s daughter, she is considering marriage to a serious young man, the son of the Bentina family from Paris, a rich and prosperous family, and a man who is credited with abstaining from alcohol and having a respectable job at Renault. While Djamila is only 17 years old, and is very academically-gifted, her pretendant is 34 years old (Kessas 72), and she is expected to marry this much older, more experienced, near-stranger, and to abandon her studies and future employment possibilities. In this equation, the honor, reputation and values of the family, and

moreover, of the larger Algerian-French patriarchal culture, are prioritized, rather than the feelings and goals of Djamila, who may have otherwise wanted to pursue further education or career goals that would be precluded by this traditionally-framed marriage. Madame Azouik feels jealous of Djamila's beauty, and annoyed by the fact that she has the opportunity to marry this older, established, and honorable man, when her own daughters only want to study (Kessas 72). Her daughter's academic ambitions are, for Madame Azouik, not seen as they are in many Franco-French families, as positive means by which to ascend in society, but are rather obstacles, preventing them from focusing on the more necessary aspects of life: marrying well, raising a family, and taking care of a home, goals that do not always match those that are valorized by the larger French society. On the subject of family honor, a key value in the patriarchal system, which is emotionally and relationally suffocating to Malika, Farida, and some other Beurettes in this novel, it is made clear in this novel that there is a definite distinction between the behavior expected of Franco-French women and that expected of Maghrebi-French women, a perceived difference in status, critical to Foucauldian power theory, which aggravates the already-difficult situation in which Beurettes are raised: "Ce qui était bon pour les autres filles ne l'était pas pour leurs soeurs [the Beurettes, the sisters of the males in the family], et chacun veillait jalousement à ce qu'elles [the Beurettes] soient respectées, car d'elles dépendait la réputation de sa famille" (Kessas 57). Another quotation that encapsulates the stress that these families put on family honor and their daughters' purity is the following: "...toutes les familles arabes, mais surtout kabyles, étaient des familles rivales qui n'hésitaient pas à utiliser leurs griffes et leurs dents pour s'approprier la couverture de l'honneur au risque de se sacrifier, eux et leurs enfants"

(Kessas 97). In this quotation, the narrator stresses the fact that many Muslim parents will even resort to physical violence (“utiliser leurs griffes et leurs dents”), in order to preserve the family reputation, as perceived by other Muslim families. Ireland writes that this issue of family honor is an implicit pact between fathers and daughters, which symbolizes the family reputation and the ability of young women to make choices that will either honor or tarnish it:

The generational conflict is particularly strong between fathers and daughters. The fathers represent patriarchal Islamic traditions and use their authority to ensure that family honor---i.e., their father’s daughter---remains intact. As Ben Jelloun remarks [in *Hospitalité française*], “On ne supporte pas que leur vie échappe à la volonté du père.”

(Ben Jelloun 106, as cited by Ireland 1029)

Ireland remarks that Malika and Farida are punished by their father for disobedience, severely penalized by many Muslim families, according to the principles of the Koran: “In this sense, they indeed live in “The House of Obedience,” as Juliette Mince calls it, in which the father rules supreme, his authority sanctioned by the Coran” (1029). The link between the father’s absolute rule, and the Koran, governing Muslim life and thought, adds even more reinforcement to the strength of the patriarch’s decrees: they are sanctioned by the Holy Book of their religion, and any digression from his judgment is punished severely, either by physical violence, or community-wide shame and possible banishment (as in the case of three Algerian girls featured in Leïla Sebbar’s 2003 work, *La Seine était rouge*; these teenagers are sent to live with an Algerian uncle, in order to

preserve them from being influenced by the surrounding, more liberated French and European cultures). Ireland comments that the brothers in these *Beur* novels are extensions of the father's authority:

As guardians of family honor, the brothers are expected to watch over their sisters and enforce the regime of the father. Consequently, Malika's brother treats her as his servant, tears up homework, and hits her when he disapproves of her behavior. Although one of her brothers [namely, Abdel] has some sympathy for his sisters, the others show no sign of deviating from "la route tracée par les pères" (Kessas 42).

In one instance, Malika evokes a "mur invisible" (invisible wall) between her brothers and sisters (Kessas 222): from her viewpoint, the females are completely isolated and oppressed, while the brothers have total autonomy (Ireland 1029). Ireland comments that this gender differential is clear-cut, making the *Beurettes* feel jealous of their more socially-liberated Franco-French counterparts, feel compelled to acquire the values and norms of their parents, and feel entrapped in a system over which they have no control. As Malika observes, the parents feel that they cannot exert the same kind of control over their sons, "alors ils se rabattent sur les filles, qu'ils capturent dès la naissance, tissant savamment un filet autour de leurs corps et âmes, insufflant leur propre volonté, leurs propres désirs" (Kessas 222). The women perceive this attempt to impose a traditional Islamic mold on them as a form of imprisonment, and they envy the "profane" lifestyle of their French peers. Prisoners of their families within their homes, the daughters meet at school and dream of "LE DROIT D'ETRE LIBRE" (as cited by Ireland 1029).

This quotation from Kessas, evoking the idea of these teenagers' parents "...purposefully weaving a net around their bodies and souls, breathing in their own will

and desires into their daughters,” thereby promoting the internalization of familial and cultural norms within their daughters, instead of encouraging their individuality, leads one to think of a quotation by Foucault found in *Discipline and Punish*:

But let there be no misunderstanding: it is not that a real man, the object of knowledge, philosophical reflection or technological intervention, has been substituted for the soul, the illusion of theologians. The man described for us, whom we are invited to free, is already in himself the effect of a subjection more profound than himself. A 'soul' inhabits him and brings him to existence, which is itself a factor in the mastery that power exercises over the body. The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body.”

(Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 30)

Namely, Foucault conceived of people exercising control over other people’s bodies, thus producing the perception of the existence of the soul, the socially-conditioned result of this type of control, as Foucault sees it, and the sign of the internalization of the authority exerted by other people over the body in which it is seen as inhabiting. Contrary to theologians, and to Plato, who see the soul as being a real entity, Foucault believes that the idea of the soul is a ruse contrived to convince people of the legitimacy for the autosubjection under which many people bring themselves, as they internalize the norms of the greater society, all the while being the subjects of bodily control by those reigning over them. In this conception, rather than the body being home to the soul, the soul is ostensibly created by the way in which the body is mastered by outside influences. In this process, the subjugated person becomes an instrument of the very norms which are sometimes contrary to his or her best interest.

Speaking of the power of norms to subjugate individuals, a relatively recent book on Foucauldian power theory, written by Stéphane Le Grand, and entitled, *Les Normes Chez Foucault*, uses as its founding premise Foucault's observation that the behavior of modern people is no longer guided by what is right, but by what is considered "normal." Le Grand builds on the current knowledge on the nature of social norms by deconstructing their origins, finding that they are more indeterminate than they seem, and thus are not the hard and fast rules that some people conceive of them as being. The process of normation consists of absorbing norms, and the coercive imposition of ways of behavior, according to Le Grand.

Stemming from the deeply-entrenched, patriarchal system governing these *Beurettes'* families, is the control that the *Beurettes'* brothers carry over them; namely, they are the sole guardians of the *Beurettes'* social lives. The need, on the part of the father and brothers of the family, to protect the females' honor presents a serious constraint to Malika's and Farida's social lives, another element contributing to the Foucauldian nature of interactions in this chapter. While the French of European descent girls are allowed to date French men and to socialize outside of the home at all hours, these *Beurettes* do not live under the same rules, since they are mandatorily virgins, and must be seen as such before they are married. Girls must be respected, and no appearance of impropriety can be tolerated, since the reputation of the Azouik family depends on the way in which these girls are seen in the *Beur* community. For example, Malika, in Kessas' work, has to obtain permission from her older brother, Mohamed, before making complete innocuous errands, such as going to the library (Kessas 39). Actually, even the library is not seen as innocuous, in the eyes of Malika's mother, since

she fears the consequences of her daughter reading books, and sees the library itself as a “lieu de perdition” (place in which people can get lost, here, in a moral sense) (Kessas 39). A library is a place where one can access knowledge, which could potentially liberate oneself from social, moral, and religious expectations. Malika’s mother fears that her daughters may break free from the family’s values, and become liberated and modern, having affairs with French men, refusing to help around the house, dressing as Franco-French women do, potentially provocatively, obtaining education and finding jobs, and refusing to follow male authority. Paradoxically, despite her mother’s dislike of education, reading is what helps Malika survive her adolescence: “C’était grâce à eux...que Malika était sortie de l’adolescence presque indemne. Adolescence difficile dans laquelle elle débattait encore” (Kessas 40). Despite its numerous transformative and instructive capacities, on the topic of the potential pitfalls of reading literature, Malika criticizes her sister, Fatima, for reading romance novels, which must be seen as the epitome of what to avoid in traditional North African culture: stories of romantic love, as opposed to unions based on parental approval, the practice of pre-marital sex, and the exaltation of feelings and emotions above morals, religion, social expectations, and tradition (Kessas 87). In this respect, Malika almost seems to mimic some of the sentiment that Gustave Flaubert conveys in his *chef-d’oeuvre*, *Madame Bovary*, as this work intends to reveal the dangers of the excessive idealization of romance, and to expose the damage that this idealization can cause when it clashes with reality and the weight of social constraints.

In this extremely socially-constraining environment, based on the patriarchal system that evolved in North Africa, and in which these *Beurettes* live, it is not just the

library that is seen as a place of forbidden fruit; for Malika, Farida, and their mothers and sisters, even going on small trips, such as going to the grocery store, is seen as risky. On the occasions when Malika buys dinner items for her mother, Malika's little brothers serve as her chaperones as she visits the grocery store (Kessas 48). The neighborhood is, after all, known for its robberies, and for police violence (Kessas 49). On one hand, it is admirable that the family takes precautions to protect the safety of their daughters; on the other hand, the presence of these constant safeguards must be ultimately very limiting to these teenagers' sense of freedom of choice, and to the development of their self-concept, so important in one's path to becoming an adult.

A critical aspect of this gender-polarized system, is the stark difference between the lifestyles of the sisters of the family, who are oppressed and controlled, while their brothers live totally independent lives: "Alors qu'elles étaient enfermées et soumises, leurs frères jouissaient d'une totale indépendance" (Kessas 56). However, while these brothers are so free even as to be able to have relationships with Franco-French women, a freedom representative of secular, modern French culture, these boys generally refuse to continue their studies to higher education, and even neglect their schooling. For the boys, as opposed to the girls, who generally take education seriously, "Le collège était pour s'amuser, montrer force et bêtise. Ils s'y retrouvaient en groupe le plus souvent dans les classes spécialisées, où chacun d'eux s'ingéniait à être plus nul que son voisin" (Kessas 56). The narrator notices that despite their negative attitude towards their studies, male *Beurs* are shocked to be later unemployed (Kessas 56). Unlike the boys, Malika sees education as a way of escaping poverty: "Elle savait que ses études étaient son seul et unique moyen de voir un jour se profiler des horizons nouveaux" (Kessas 200).

Another illustration of the extreme conservatism of many *Beur* families, symbolic of the patriarchy that renders life in France very difficult for female teenagers, is seen in this novel when Malika sees her brother, Abdel, with a blonde girl, Alice, an example of a couple who transgress expected conceptions of romantic relationships (Kessas 103). Malika notes that these kinds of relationships are not spoken of in the family. In some families, it is almost taboo to speak of romantic relationships, and in some very religious families, and in immigrant ones such as that of Malika, no one discusses these interracial, inter-religious relationships. Muslims are expected to marry other Muslims, although France itself is becoming more diverse, progressive, and open to intermixing. Although Malika knows that the relationship between Abdel and Alice is taboo, she feels that seeing her brother break this barrier is an achievement and is indicative of progress, since Abdel is having a relationship with someone outside of the expected social circle of their family, and Algerian heritage: “Enfin, quelqu’un qui n’emportait pas les chemins battus et la route tracée par les pères. Bien sûr, c’était un garçon, mais c’était déjà un bon point. Ce simple événement éclaira d’un feu serein son après-midi” (Kessas 42). The social exclusion of *Beurettes*, on the part of the French of European descent, is another illustration of the pathological relationship between those of North African descent and the French of European descent, as demonstrated in this novel. For example, Farida is often excluded from the social lives of her classmates: “Farida venait d’apprendre, par hasard, que les filles de sa classe préparaient une boum pour le week-end suivant” (Kessas 11). While the party is so inclusive that even boys are invited, Malika and Farida are excluded from the guest list. Gender lines are transgressed, and yet some of the French of European descent girls in her class cannot be bothered to invite their peers

from other cultural backgrounds. Malika and Farida immediately perceive their rejection: “Tu vois, toute notre vie, on sera réjeté, c’est à désespérer!” (Kessas 11) The girls notice that, paradoxically, their Franco-French classmates are disgusted by the racism of some white Americans towards African-Americans (Kessas 12). One questions why these same classmates fall into racist habits with their *Beurette* classmates, yet are so lucid about similar attitudes in the United States.

On a cultural level, Malika’s and Farida’s sense of alienation in France is reinforced by their perceived psychological separation from various aspects of French culture. For example, while Farida has been to a bar, and looks forward to greater access to French culture upon turning 18, Malika does not trust bars, drugs, alcohol or smoking, due, no doubt, to years of hearing her parents’ instructions on avoiding environments that encourage these behaviors: “S’il existait un endroit où Malika ne songeait jamais à entrer, c’était bien dans les cafés et les bars. Elle s’en méfiait comme de la peste...Ce n’était qu’un endroit où les types ne pensent qu’à draguer, plein de fumée et d’idées pas claires, d’alcool à go-go et de sous-entendus malhonnêtes” (Kessas 76-7).

Another manifestation of the displacement that the *Beurettes* in this novel experience, is the tragedy that occurs to Farida. Malika notices that her friend has stopped attending school, and worries about her, especially since she has to prepare for *le bac* soon (Kessas 97). She later hears news that Farida has decided to stay home and help her family, but upon visiting her house, Farida tells her that she has stopped attending school because she is tired of being marginalized, and that she is depressed because she is in love with Abdel, Malika’s brother, who is dating a Franco-French woman (Kessas 114). Another factor contributing to Farida’s isolation is the fact that she dreads the

arranged marriage that her parents have made for her, with an Algerian cousin (Kessas 210). In the end, Farida commits suicide due to her isolation and the mistreatment that she receives from her parents, as exemplified by her admission that her father beats her with a belt, even though the official word at school is that she is in Algeria with her father. Malika tells her brother, Yemin, when he suggests that Farida killed herself because she was raped: “Tu sais, Yemin, y’a des milliers de raisons pourqu’une fille veuille se suicider. Pas seulement parce qu’elle a été déchirée dans sa chair, sans votre permission; mais aussi parce qu’elle est déchirée dans sa tête!” (Kessas 214). Ireland interprets this quotation as meaning that Farida was not raped, and did not lose her virginity, as some suspect, but rather, that her mind became too conflicted between Algerian standards relating to the maintenance of virginity, and French social standards, encouraging liberal values (1028).

Unfortunately for Farida, her friends and family, the psychological and emotional toll of these conflicts of social isolation, disappointed love, a predicted, unwanted, arranged marriage, and confusion over her identity as a North African woman living in France, spell her turn to suicide; however, expressions of issues related to identity, such as found in this text, written by Kessas, can encourage *Beur* women and *Beurettes* to deal with these issues in a healthier way, according to Alec Hargreaves, cited in the article, “Writing at the Crossroads: Cultural Conflict in the Work of *Beur* Women Writers,” by Ireland:

By recovering their voices and writing from their position of the Other, *Beur* women hope to re-place themselves in the popular imagination and to eliminate the need for an imaginary island halfway between France and Algeria. The problem facing them is whether they can straddle their two worlds and find a

place in society or whether they will remain torn between the two in a state of permanent conflict. The challenge for them thus remains how to rewrite the nature of the hyphen in the “France-Algérie” pair in order to make it a sign of hybridity, rather than mutual exclusion.

(Ireland 1032)

While Malika sees hope for her future through education (Ireland 1032), it is tragic that her best friend, classmate and compatriot, Farida, finds herself in the situation of having to commit suicide, due to her isolation and the forced marriage that she faces. Although Malika’s mother expects her to follow a traditional path of raising children and caring for a family, Malika hopes to break free of this trajectory, by applying for college, in the hopes that her parents will pay for her education (Kessas 209). The difference in the outcomes of each young woman shows the importance of offering alternatives to them, to provide them with hope and the means to improve their situations. While Malika apparently has the fortitude to entertain the possibility of marrying someone whom her parents choose, for Farida, the prospect is unbearable, added to the weight of her crushed romantic feelings for Abdel, and the unlikelihood of her attending college.

In light of the tragic outcome that Farida faces, as opposed to the more hopeful one that Malika looks forward to in this novel, I feel that it is critical to be sensitive towards these young women, and weigh the benefits of requiring them to follow socially-mandated paths, against the costs that these paths may have towards their self-esteem or their well-being. I will reflect more on this issue in my analysis of Farida Belghoul’s *Georgette*.

Another dividing line between *Beurettes* and *Beurs* in these novels, which renders the lives of *Beurettes* even more difficult and strenuous, corresponding to “Foucauldian” hospitality within France, is the degree to which they are expected to be

able to speak. There is one instance in which the reader learns that Malika was told to never talk back to a man (Kessas 79), confirming the notion that rigid respect for the authority of male figures within these North African cultures is paramount. Ireland writes that the *Beurettes* are the victims of “double subjection,” first as minorities in French society, and then as women in a patriarchal culture: “Double subjection means double silencing, and *Beur* women repeatedly emphasize the need to find a voice----“une voix et une voie...” (138). This “voie” [in this sense, “outlet”] for female writers, such as Kessas and Belghoul, is found through writing, in which they can express their “voix” [voice], thus avoiding the trap of double subjection. Additionally, in *Beur’s Story*, the compulsory silence which Malika faces in her family’s home is manifested in the mandate that she is given, to complete household activities silently, without protesting or complaining, as she explains to her sister, Fatima: “Veux-tu me dire qui fait attention à nous, qui nous regarde? Pour nos parents, il faut bosser et se taire, pour nos frères servir et disparaître...” (Kessas 202). This quotation seems to emphasize the way in which Malika feels voiceless and invisible, with respect to her family. She indicates elsewhere that she feels excluded from her Franco-French peers, so this invisibility, voicelessness, and subsequent powerlessness are seemingly pervasive. Likewise, at school, as Ireland notes, the invisible barrier between them and Franco-French culture tells them that there are clear boundaries separating them from their ability to project themselves and that of their Caucasian classmates, and even from people in helping positions, such as the school nurse, to do so (Ireland 1030). Without the added disadvantage, culturally speaking, of being a female in a male-dominated culture, it is already difficult for immigrants to be respected for their opinions in their conversations with the French of European descent,

according to Ireland, who cites Ben Jelloun in *Hospitalité française*, as he writes, “La majorité des Français ne manifestent pas un empressement à écouter ce que l’immigré peut lui dire” (Ben Jelloun 86, as cited in Ireland 1031). Ireland points out that Farida’s suicide, a protest against her own powerlessness, occurs in an aptly-named place, called “Criauville,” which alludes to Farida’s tears as she experiences the emotional suffering that leads to her suicide (Kessas 215). The novels themselves can be seen as a form of resistance, and they reflect the desire of *Beur* women to break the silence and refuse the image imposed on them from the outside, by both their North African parents and French cultural stereotypes, as Ireland writes (1031).

The pathological environment in which Malika is raised, also colors her perception of social trends involving the attitude of the larger Franco-French community towards people of non-European descent. The many indications of strict Islamic fundamentalism, and its effects on Malika’s family, are noted at many points in the novel, but the comments of Malika and Farida, two *Beurettes* and the main characters in the novel, reveal a preference for more modern approaches than those prescribed by their family and conservative Algerian social circles. This excessive conservatism results in a clash between the expectations of these *Beurs*, and the modern, secular, feminist, and liberal *moeurs* of the French of European descent, a disparity that contributes to an environment of inhospitality. The fact that many Franco-French people consider women to be equal to men is ground-breaking, in the eyes of many *Beurettes*. For example, when Malika’s classmate, a male Caucasian middle-schooler, walks directly next to her at school, she can hardly believe this transgression of norms, which have been established and reinforced by her family’s patriarch (Kessas 79). Malika remarks on this dichotomy

between the behavior of the French of European descent teenagers, as opposed to that of many *Beur* teens: “D’ailleurs, l’attitude des garçons du lycée était totalement différente de celles de ses frères et de ses cousins, qu’elle jugeait rétrogrades et tyranniques” (Kessas 80).

While Malika certainly admires French culture for its practice of gender equality, and its greater openness, she realizes, based on the values of her Algerian heritage, and probably on her observations of French society, that there are risks inherent in too great a degree of interaction with youth of the opposite gender. Specifically, she respects the fact that Jean Garçon, a Franco-French classmate, treats her as an equal. She is pleased that he seems to consider her as an equal, as men and women do in 20th-century, Western civilization, rather than the Middle Ages (Kessas 80). It is worth noting that this comparison between these vastly-different behavioral systems is evocative of the fact that Islam was in its formative stage in the Middle Ages; some mentalities of this period still have manifestations in Muslims cultures. Despite the fact that this greater gender equality and mutual respect is refreshing to Malika, compared with the archaic social system which she experiences in her own family, she knows the dangers associated with becoming friends with male students, a reality that is strong in her mind: “...la méfiance...lui avait appris à ne pas se lier d’amitié avec un garçon, car le jeu pourrait se révéler dangereux pour tous deux. Cette amitié risquerait fort de dépasser le stade de l’école, et d’empiéter sur ces fameuses obligations familiales” (Kessas 80). Here, Malika seems to have internalized her family’s views, and has become her own chaperone, refusing to become too close to male friends, in order to avoid accusations of impropriety, which could endanger her family’s reputation, and possibly, her own safety,

if any of her male family remembers reacted to her hypothetical transgressions with violence.

Beyond these challenges that many families of North African origin face, contributing to the “Foucauldian” context of hospitality in which Malika and other Beurettes live, Malika’s family also faces poverty, due especially to the circumstances caused by her father’s disability, a situation that mirrors the one depicted in Medhi Charef’s *Le Thé au harem d’Archimède*, in which Madjid’s father becomes disabled after falling from the roof. As in Charef, the financial situation of Malika’s family, in Kessas, is depicted as very dire due to the father’s disability. Malika’s family depends on a disability pension:

Elle savait alors que son père, si le Mektoub (le destin) l’avait voulu, aurait pu être autre chose qu’un invalide. Il ne travaillait plus depuis douze ans déjà, à cause d’une chute qu’il avait faite d’un échafaudage, alors qu’il peignait un immeuble, une de ces magnifiques habitations réservées aux rupins. Depuis, la famille vivait d’une pension ridicule, heureusement augmentée par le salaire du fils aîné.

(Kessas 46)

There is thus a tendency to depict these North African patriarchs as weak and dependent, and to portray these immigrant families as financially struggling. This combination of financial weakness and disability, visible in the fathers in Charef’s and Kessas’s works, contrasts sharply with the tendency of these North African fathers to staunchly protect their families’ honors at all costs, as manifested in their close surveillance of their daughters, as in Soraya Nini’s *Ils disent que je suis une Beurette*. However, Malika’s

father, in Kessas, differs from the image of many North African fathers in these novels, who are characterized, in general, as domineering and hostile, in that he has a character that can be described as “extrêmement généreux” (43). Still, even with this kinder father, he is serious about protecting the family’s honor: “Il portait le même amour à ses fils et à ses filles, ce qui n’empêchait pas son jugement d’être sévère, et ses coups, brûlants, lorsqu’on touchait à son honneur” (Kessas 43).

As in *Le Thé au harem d’Archi Ahmed*, a factor aggravating the “Foucauldian” environment in which these *Beurs* are raised, is unemployment, a serious problem for the young men, including Malika’s brother, Abdel: “Très jeune, comme la plupart de ses copains, il avait été frappé de plein fouet par le chômage qu’il n’avait pas cherché: il s’était dirigé vers le dessin industriel, mais cette branche s’était révélée sans débouche, partout où il se rendait, on lui réclamait sa nationalité française” (Kessas 57). The lack of gainful employment that Abdel faces in this novel, as he attends nightclubs (Kessas 57) and that other characters, such as Pat and Madjid in *Le Thé au harem d’Archimède*, and various characters in *Rai*, suffer from, often leads them to amplify the magnitude of their social lives, as a seeming way to avoid these harsh realities, and to occupy themselves through other outlets.

Another aspect of family life that is symptomatic of the use of maladaptive integration strategies, reinforcing a negative experience for *Beurs* in Kessas’ novel, is the stipulation on the part of Malika’s father, that only Kabyle be spoken in his presence (44). Following this requirement must be difficult for his family, since his children presumably spend most of their time with their Franco-French classmates at and outside of school, speaking French. For the father, insisting on Kabyle is perhaps a way of

maintaining their cultural and linguistic heritage, or of encouraging the children to preserve the conservative values associated with their Kabyle heritage and Islam. In fact, Monsieur Anouik is portrayed as being passionate about Algeria (Kessas 46). Nonetheless, retaining the Kabyle language at home could potentially be a handicap to the parents' integration; the children will most likely become fluent in French at school, but how will Mr and Mme Anouik learn to speak it fluently, if they are at the family house most of the time, and speak and hear only Kabyle?

Coping Strategies, Resistance and Desubjectification in *Beur's Story*

While there is not much material in this work that could be characterized as belonging to the Derridean category of integration, still, some elements that can be found in this novel seem to be coping strategies, or, alternatively, methods of resistance, and in some cases, means of achieving some degree of desubjectification from both the narratives sustained by French society, and those perpetuated by the *Beurette* protagonists' strict families. For example, *Beurs* and *Beurettes* in these novels resist the uncomfortable position in which they find themselves and manage to desubjectify themselves to some extent, at least psychologically, by transgressing gender boundaries encoded in the conservative social *moeurs* of their families, as Malika's brother, Abdel does, and as Malika does, in her friendship with Jean-Garçon; by joining in solidarity, as Malika, Farida, and Madame Azouik do with their peers, against the backdrop of a culture that has a tendency to "doubly subject" them, in Ireland's words, [or,

alternatively, to “double Other” them], due to their ethnicity and gender, making them minorities in two senses; and by choosing non-traditional paths for Muslim women of their generation, such as attending college, as Malika is determined to do. The variety of challenges that Malika, Farida, and their contemporaries face, lead them to formulate creative methods of resistance to the difficult situations in which they find themselves, within the context of French society. While some characters in this novel practice the creative resistance and methods of desubjectification that Foucault advocates, Farida’s circumstances overcome her at the end of the novel, because of the unbearable circumstances in which she finds herself, an event that makes it impossible not to acknowledge the dire straits in which some *Beurettes* (and *Beurs*) found, and find, themselves.

First, among the instances in which some *Beur* and *Beurette* characters reach some degree of desubjectification in this novel, Abdel’s decision to leave his family and pursue his life with the French of European descent Alice, rather than become involved in a forced or arranged marriage, demonstrates the more modern values that he espouses, transgressing his family’s expectations for him as a young Muslim man, and allowing him to create a life more in tune with his values and interests, instead of those of his family: “Il est temps de faire ma vie. Ou tu préfères que j’attende que Yamin se marie avec une fille d’Algérie! Je ne suis pas Mohamed, moi!” (Kessas 41) In this quotation, he refuses the traditionally-proposed, arranged marriage, and also declares that he wants a normal, modern life, including a relationship with someone outside of his community and tradition. However, Abdel’s departure from the family begets his family significant strife, as Madame Azouik, his mother, cries for his departure, knowing that her friends

will mock her, since their sons are established with families, and she feels responsible for his departure and abandonment of family traditions (Kessas 135). Again, the reader sees the crushing importance of family honor in these family systems, even when concerning a male child; Abdel is seen as transgressing a crucial boundary, that of marrying someone outside of his religion and social group.

Besides Abdel's decision to pursue a romantic relationship with a young Franco-French woman, Malika also experiences some desubjectification from the strict constraints of her family environment and family's values, by walking besides her French classmate, Jean-Garçon, to school, behavior that runs counter to her parents' expectation for stricter separation between people of different genders, outside the family. While Malika appreciates her friendship with Jean-Garçon, she is cautious about becoming too entrenched in this relationship, since she fears that her family's honor may eventually come into question, if they spend too much time together. Thus, although this experience of being friends with a young man in her high school has opened her mind to her ability to befriend males, the moral and social framework outlined by her family's religion and values constrains her from full involvement with Jean-Garçon.

Another strategy towards desubjectification, on the part of some *Beurettes* and adult Maghrebi-French women, including Malika and Farida, and Malika's mother, with the other women in her community, is the solidarity in which they engage:

Ensemble, elles parlaient le même langage; elles oubliaient la maison, leur pauvreté, les menaces, et les portes .qui se renfermaient lourdement derrière elles. Elle laissaient tomber leur masque de petites lycéenes modèles presque françaises, et rénouaient avec leur origine. Ensemble, elles aimaient parler d'elles, de leurs espoirs, de leurs désespoirs, de leurs études, aussi, qui leur trouvaient la porte

vers un avenir différent, moins désespéré que celui de leurs mères...Ensemble, elles se racontaient leurs amours platoniques pour des individus qui ignoraient jusqu'à leur existence. Ensemble, c'était le droit de se croire émancipée: "LE DROIT D'ETRE LIBRE".

(Kessas 33)

Although these *Beurettes* live under oppressive social and familial structures, when they talk to each other, they can find a platform from which to voice their concerns and discuss their hopes. They can break the mold they try to live in, of being perfect high school girls, and be themselves, articulating their hopes of succeeding in French society, with the right opportunities in education and employment. They can also share their stories of their unrequited love for high school boys, and pretend that they are living freely, although they know that they are living under strict social, religious and familial confines. This solidarity even seems to be mandated by the French social structure: at school, *Beurettes* are, "jugées, classées, elles n'avaient d'autres solutions que de se retirer en groupe" (Kessas 100). In addition, while school is socially strenuous, it does provide a place where *Beurettes* can escape the "prison" of school, according to Ireland: "Whereas Malika describes life at home as "cloîtrée," (Kessas 202)...school represents a form of escape where "...elles oublièrent la maison, leur pauvreté, les menaces, et les portes, qui se renfermaient si lourdement derrière elles..." (Kessas 32, as cited in Ireland 1028). The model of school as a prison is part of Foucauldian theory, and will be revisited in Chapter's 3 discussion of *Le Gone du Chaaba* and *Béni, ou le paradis privé*, both by Azouz Begag.

Like the *Beurettes* in the novel, Malika's mother, Madame Azouik, and her friend, Madame Simine, her friend from the same village in Kabylie, Algeria, also

share their frustrations and hopes with each other, in solidarity. They discuss the problems that they have with their husbands, particularly, Monsieur Azouik's infidelity towards his wife. Another topic of discussion is Madame Simine's daughter Djamila's upcoming arranged marriage to a family friend in Algeria (Kessas 69-70).

Another strategy that Malika uses to avoid the pain of her situation as a *Beur* teenager, is to live vicariously through her Franco-French, male classmates, in particular, her friend, Jean-Garçon:

Alors, elle revit le visage du garçon du lycée...[Jean-Garçon, previously referenced in the discussion of *Beur's Story*]. Elle lui en voulait d'être français, d'appartenir à cette autre caste, où l'on tolérait tout, elle lui en voulait d'être un garçon, mais surtout, elle lui voulait de l'ignorer quand ils se croisaient et se quittaient, à l'aube d'un couloir.

(Kessas 64)

More specifically, Malika resents the fact that Jean-Garçon does not have to cook, care for children, or do other housework, as she does, and as her mother demands (Kessas 81). This form of resistance is not very effective in the long run, but it allows Malika to temporarily evade the burdens of her existence, at least on a mental level, and envision a life that less oppressive. This type of vicarious living is complicated by the fact that she resents it when Jean-Garçon ignores her, as is mentioned in the last sentence of this excerpt, indicating that she is most likely fascinated by this young man. Thus, for Malika, this male classmate is also the

source of her envy, fascination, and resentment, creating a complex snowstorm of emotions that reveals some of the problems inherent to many male-female relationships, including ones in which racial difference is not a factor, as is the case between Malika and Jean-Garçon.

Also among the methods of resistance and coping strategies that are illustrated in this novel, in the midst of this patriarchal, and often abusive, family structure, Malika's brother, Abdel, takes a stand against Mohamed, representing a stance that proscribes Mohamed from continuing to hit his sisters, a form of resistance against domestic violence and other behaviors associated with strictly-defined gender roles and the absolute rule of patriarchy. Abdel, the polar opposite of Mohamed in his approach to his female relatives, is seen as liberal and modern, and he is willing to take his sisters to the movies and to the beach, two excursions that Mohamed would never sanction (Kessas 55). Abdel is representative of a more progressive type of Muslim man, vastly different from the type exemplified by Mohamed, violent, brutal, and oppressive towards his sisters (Kessas 102) (and possibly towards his mother).

As demonstrated by these examples, some desubjectification occurs within the novel, with Malika, especially, making an active choice to attend university, instead of marrying someone of her parents' choice, yet, overall, Malika and Farida's vulnerable position as female teenagers in male-dominated families, with strict scripts for the behavior of their children, spells severe constraints to the degree to which they are able to escape the process of subjectification that occurs from the dual forces of the social norms of French society, and the mandates created by their familial traditions. Farida, especially, is able to withstand this subjectification for only so long. The young women's

maturity, when compared with Belghoul's *Georgette*, lends Farida time, in withstanding these pressures, and it provides Malika with an alternative life strategy that allows her to preserve her dignity and create a hopeful scenario for her future. When compared with Nini's character, Samia, from *Ils disent que je suis une beurette*, however, this desubjectification that Malika envisions is basically theoretical, while Nini's work, analyzed in my chapter on Derridean hospitality, illustrates Samia's departure from the family home as a very real illustration of the possibility of self-extraction from constraining circumstances. A decade and a half later, in 2004, Guène's character, Doria, in *Kiffe kiffe demain*, will achieve even greater desubjectification, deconstructing the paradigm according to which she had to have a father, in order to be socially acceptable. It is possible that the later *Beur* novels and films feature more characters with the ability to desubjectify themselves, potentially indicating relatively recent changes in society that allow for greater senses of agency for the real-life Maghrebi-French.

Connections Between Kessas' *Beur's Story* and Agamben's Theory on the State of Exception and Bare Life

Although *Beur's Story* treats the position of two *Beurettes* within French society, as opposed to their relationship to the French government (the sovereign power, as in Agamben), Agamben's theory is still applicable to the situation in which Malika and Farida find themselves in Kessas' novel. In one sense, Malika and

Farida are in their own type of *state of exception* within French society; especially vulnerable because they are female, and come from families where patriarchy is the norm, they may exist as citizens of France, students, and the classmates of the French of European descent, but they are treated as if they are *à part*, due to the allegiance that they believe that they owe to their conservative, Muslim families. Just as Agamben saw the non-citizen or the refugee as being treated as if he or she is in a *state of exception*, included as a resident of the new nation's territory, but not given the right to be part of the nation's polity, so are these *Beurettes* nominally part of French society, but not considered as such because of the way in which the expectations of their families prevent them from meeting their peers' cultural norms, and also because of the inherent racism in some of their peers' outlooks towards people of their background.

In the same way in which the modern citizens in a democracy are considered *bare life* by their governments, the *Beurettes* in this novel are like *bare life* in the eyes of the French of European descent. Although in most cases, the French of European descent do not physically harm or kill them, as the sovereign power is free to do within Agamben's theory, Malika and Farida have no protection from being the victims of discrimination and negative judgment, due to the differences between their families' cultural values, and those of the French of European descent.

Additionally, females within the *Beur* culture in this novel can be seen as *bare life* in their eyes of their families. Just as the sovereign power sees refugees and non-citizens as even less-deserving of protection than regular citizens, so do most of the older members of Malika's and Farida's families view them as less-deserving of respect than

their brothers. The clearest demonstration of this difference, proving that these *Beurettes* are virtually without defense against their fathers and older brothers, is found when encountering textual examples in which these *Beurettes* are physically disciplined or punished for non-adherence to familial norms, intended or non-intended, such as in the instance when Malika is hit by her older brother, Mohamed, when she returns home late, past curfew time, and when her mother hits her for breaking a casserole dish.

While the physical punishment used against *Beurettes* in this novel does not extend to their killing, in one sense, the fact that Farida kills herself at the end of the novel, to escape the prospects of social isolation, an arranged marriage, and unrequited love for Malika's brother, shows that even when there is not direct murder of people in this state of exception, the tremendous amount of pain engendered by intolerable conditions can lead to such emotional distress that some people take their own lives. Although this is a type of reflexive violence, the state of exception in which Farida finds herself, only partially integrated into French society, and unable to escape the constraints imposed upon her by her family, is unbearable for her.

Le Marais noir, the quartier of Le Havre in which these teenage girls, and many other socioeconomically-disadvantaged people, live, would likely be considered by Agamben as a physical site of the *state of exception*. In Chapter 1, I note that Agamben saw the modern-day outskirts of cities as places of this *state of exception*, harboring people who are neither totally included in society, neither denied the right to live on the territory of the nation in question.

I find another application of Agamben's theory of the *state of exception* to this novel: Malika's use of *desacralization* or *play*. Namely, at the end of the novel, Malika

applies to study at the local university, even though her parents want her to become engaged to someone of their own choosing. It seems that Malika, by insisting on making her own choice, is practicing an Agambien strategy of *desacralization* or *play*: specifically, she refuses to meet an expectation placed on her, that of marrying someone of her family's choosing, thus avoiding the penalties associated with the *state of exception*, and deconstructing expectations that had been set for her, just as Agamben recommends to people in a *state of exception* to take steps to dismantle perceived differences in status between people, by removing the sacred associations related to objects and behavior. While Malika is able to work towards the creation of conditions allowing her to live more authentically and free from the weight of perceived differences in status related to her family's expectations, for Farida, the way in which the constraints are imposed upon her life, leave her incapable of circumventing them.

Georgette! (Farida Belghoul, 1987)

So-called "Foucauldian" hospitality also encapsulates the ambiance of the work *Georgette!*, by Farida Belghoul. As in many other *Beur* novels, a student of immigrant origin finds herself caught between the expectations of her parents and her school. On a grander scale, the frustration that Maghrebi-French students and their parents experience, while trying to succeed academically and socially through the French elementary, middle, high school, or university, are representative of serious gaps in integration between the

Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent. The school is an example of an institution where manifestations of mismatches between North African and French values create almost cruelly exclusionary and painful situations for children of immigrants, and lead to frustration and indignation for the parents involved. In chapter 2 of the work, *Voices from the Community in France*, entitled “Autobiography and Fiction,” Hargreaves remarks that the novel *Georgette* is divided between two lieux communs that are frequently used in *Beur* novels: the home and the school, also featured in Charef’s *Le Thé au harem d’Archii Ahmed* (50).

Nonetheless, this novel is differentiated from other *Beur* novels involving issues of ambiguous cultural identity within academic environments, since the heroine is significantly younger than the protagonists in the other novels. In fact, unlike most characters in such literary situations, the protagonist in Belghoul’s novel is actually a seven-year-old Algerian-French girl, with very strict, Muslim parents, and a demanding, strict Franco-French teacher (*la maîtresse*). The crux of the novel involves cultural and social norms that are seen as *la monnaie courante* in the French school system, but of which *Georgette* and her parents are largely unaware, at least at the beginning of the novel. The resulting frustration and lack of comprehension on the part of *Georgette*’s father and the girl herself correspond to the classically-unhealthy relationship characterizing “Foucauldian” hospitality. This unawareness of cultural codes, unexpected by French teachers, parents, administrators, and students, leads to her further marginalization, and prevents her from achieving academic or social integration. It is a lesson learned soon in life that ignorance, even if genuine and leaving one technically blameless, can still lead to disaster. We all wish that there were ways to prevent these

misunderstandings from occurring, but they do occur, often because one or both parties refuses to communicate with the other, even going so far as to terminate communication when one of their boundaries has been crossed. This unfortunate tendency in human nature further complicates the rapport between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French, as manifested in this novel. On a lighter note, another unique aspect of this work is Belghoul's use of literary devices, lending to the evocation of fantasy in the novel, perhaps alleviating its intrinsic seriousness, and matching the innocence and maturity level of seven-year-old Georgette.

From the very beginning of the novel, it is clear that Georgette has a difficult relationship with her schooling, representative of an institution that is a primary vehicle of attempts to integrate minorities, and to normalize their upbringing, attitudes, and knowledge. First of all, she expresses the dread that she feels upon attending class, to her friend Mireille, who is actually suspected to be an imaginary friend (Belghoul 11). While this attitude is not totally inconsistent with what could be expected of a seven-year-old, conversely, many children of this age relish the thought of attending school, where they can make friends, learn about the world, and be in a different environment from that of their parents' or guardians' homes. In retrospect, the reader may suspect that Georgette's dislike of school may be a result of her bewilderment over the difference between the behavior that her parents expect of her, and the behavior that is expected at school.

In addition, another crucial component of this elementary schooler's negative academic experience, representative of an environment akin to "Foucauldian" hospitality, is her unhealthy relationship with her teacher, as evidenced by several incidents.

Namely, the teacher remarks that Georgette walks like an Arab (Belghoul 12), calling attention, in a very conspicuous and embarrassing way, to the cultural difference that Georgette represents for her classmates, as compared to the “normalcy” of most of her classmates’ backgrounds. Nowadays, it is likely that these comments would not be tolerated, being categorized as racist. In addition, Georgette is often cast as her teacher’s problem student. For instance, *la maîtresse* becomes angry at her and writes Georgette’s name in the *livre de correspondance*, which is a book used to note the daily behavior of students and inform their parents of these problems, aiming to have them resolved, thanks to the accountability that many parents expect from their children. At one point in the novel, her father signs her carnet even when she receives a low grade; thankfully, there are no serious ramifications for her underachievement: “Personne n’y pense (au carnet), parce que toute la famille est heureuse de voir mon père vivant” (Belghoul 35). In other environments, such as that of a Franco-French home, where the father’s very survival is not as much at stake, as it is Georgette’s family, most parents would probably be concerned by the low grade, and encourage their son or daughter to study more and apply himself or herself, given the extreme importance of academic achievement in France, where many parents dream of their children attending *les grandes écoles*, and where extracurricular activities, employment, and social lives take the backseat to academics, in students’ priorities. This incident turns out well for Georgette, who avoids being punished by her parents, or held to strict academic demands by them, although at the same time, it is her loss that her parents express no concern over her difficulties at school, since in general, parents can provide a great deal of support to their academically-struggling children. Elsewhere, Georgette calls her teacher a “rusée,” a term indicating

that she feels very little trust towards her teacher (Belghoul 51). A lack of trust, characteristic of the relationships between the inmates and the guards in Foucault's panopticon/prison model, means, for Georgette, that she may not invest herself sufficiently in trying to obtain knowledge, and to acquire norms and values that are instilled through the French school system, knowledge and values that could prove very useful in promoting aspects of her integration into French society, and open new doors to her, personally and academically.

Furthermore, another aspect of pathological, Foucauldian relationships between school authorities and Georgette's family is manifested by the difficulty that Georgette's father experiences, in his efforts to cooperate with Georgette's teacher's recommendations for her, which are frustrated by his lack of understanding of norms standard to French society and the academic environment there. For example, at one point, Georgette's teacher becomes upset to read her notebook written backwards, as in Arabic (Belghoul 29). She clearly expects Georgette's parents to know that homework should be written in the Latin alphabet, used as the standard in France, and she feels exasperated by this (apparent) ignorance of cultural norms. In the work, *France and the Maghreb: Performative Encounters*, Mireille Rosello writes, in chapter 3, entitled, "Linguistic Encounters: Maghrebi 'Langualization' in Francophone Fiction," that there are sometimes instances in which there is a role reversal (also part of Derridean hospitality theory, but in Derridean theory, only in a positive sense), from the Beur student as the linguistically-incompetent one, to the French of European descent teacher being seen as such:

Most immigrants' children discover, when they go to school, that their developing bilingualism is negated, interpreted as ignorance. In Georgette!, Farida's Belghoul's heroine brings to school a notebook on which her father has written a letter in Arabic on what he considers to be the first page. But that sign remains invisible to the teacher, for whom that page is the last one, and who is incapable of imagining the existence of a different type of alphabet (186)...Linguistic incompetence is now on the side of the educated Francophone speaker. The passage is interesting from a point of view of literary history, because it reverses a topos that saturates Beur literature, whether or not it is treated in a comic or tragic mode...Rare are the texts, though, that reverse such a situation and force European readers to appreciate the relativity and fragility of their privilege.

(Rosello 96)

In this situation, with the cultivated, experienced, Franco-French schoolteacher being confronted with an alphabet and mode of writing that confound her, the role reversal leads to feelings of alienation, characteristic of "Foucauldian" hospitality, unlike the results of a Derridean hospitality role reversal, in which the weaker party learns to see the vulnerability of the powerful one, and in which the powerful party makes concessions towards the weaker party, for the mutual good of each party. This passage also calls attention to ethnocentric conceptions characteristic to the French education school system, and the unique instances where these seemingly-unquestioned values, are at last challenged. While *la maîtresse*, in this passage, is clearly the more educated one, representing French society and the authority of the centralized educational system, seeking to unify French children in their values and knowledge, this situation takes her out of her comfort zone, momentarily putting her in the position of the inferior party, and perhaps calling her to have greater empathy for Georgette and other students with immigrant parents, in her classroom.

Similarly, Georgette's father buys her school supplies, but is frustrated to find that he has bought his daughter pens from the wrong company (Belghoul 17). Clearly, the system is stacked against Georgette's father, who most likely attended school in Algeria, and although the French language is common to both countries, these cultural norms, and her father's misconception of them, create tremendous conflicts for Georgette, her family, and her teacher. It is sometimes not enough to be able to speak the language in a country that is foreign to you; rather, it is essential that one also observes, acquires, and practices the corresponding cultural norms, to the extent that it is possible, in order to facilitate better interactions with people in the host culture.

This work also carries the trappings of a Foucauldian, panopticon-like context, since those in charge of education are viewed on a parallel level to those in other authority positions. For example, Georgette's father remarks that he is dominated at work by Italians who can write; likewise, Georgette is dominated by her teacher, who teaches her to write (Belghoul 33). Georgette's own father criticizes the rebellious attitude towards authority that he perceives in Georgette, and in himself: "C'est une famille de dingues qu'on est. Le père étrangle le chef et la fille crève l'oeil de la maitresse" (Belghoul 35). Both Georgette and her father, literally or figuratively, attack their superiors, as if to reclaim power from them, they who have power through their accomplishments in education and employment. Subsequently, Georgette's father tells her that she is not allowed to disobey her teacher (Belghoul 29). In this injunction to his daughter, he is establishing a very solid line of acknowledged authority and structure, which Georgette dares not cross, due to the authority that he has over her. Also, her father

indicates that he is sending her to school in order to become intelligent (Belghoul 133).

This very supposition raises a few questions:

1. Does he realize that French truancy laws are truly obligating Georgette to attend school, and not her father's volition that she do so?
2. Does he accept the idea that she will become intelligent only by attending French schools? Does she not already possess intelligence?

This second question, evocative of the question over whether nature or nurture predominates in children's development, makes one think of the philosophy of the 17th-century, Englishman, John Locke, who conceives of the child as being a *tabula rasa*, or a blank slate, waiting to be instructed, molded, and trained, as opposed to the 18th-century, French philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's point of view, according to which children are doted with innate abilities and gifts, which should be encouraged and cultivated through what he termed *natural education*, in which children are led to explore and develop their inclinations, according to the article, "Locke and Rousseau: Early Childhood Education," by Jamie Gianoutsos, published in the journal, *The Pulse* (2, 10). Georgette's father also threatens her with predictions of his disapproval if she faces expulsion from school (Belghoul 17). This threat seems to impose even greater punishment on Georgette, who seems incapable of finding a supportive environment at her parents' home; instead, the school and the home seem to be institutions of punishment, rather than as positive and encouraging places where she is loved and valued. Another instance in which the teacher/employer are likened to one another, is found when Georgette thinks to herself about the enormous power of her teacher in

relation to her father, and not just herself: “Elle [The teacher] est si forte qu’elle est capable, en même temps qu’ici, de commander mon père à son travail” (Belghoul 54). In this quotation, Georgette seems to liken the teacher to the employer, seeing both roles as having authority over her father, who has tremendous power over her, thus strengthening the ultimate power that education is seen to have in this novel.

In an extended sense, the firm grip that education has on the lives of Beurettes like Georgette is a reflection on the strength of the legacy of colonization over French history. Georgette, even as a seven-year-old, already seems to resent French colonization, although she was born long after its initial practice: “Je suis bien contente que la colonisation, c’est fini, j’en avais marre” (Belghoul 99). Such a comment may seem absurd and precocious for a seven-year-old to utter, since it is clear that her brief life did not coincide with the period of the French colonization of Algeria. Reinforcing her realization of the heavy emotional weight of being the child of immigrants to France, from a nation that was exploited by France, she even likens herself to Native Americans, also victims of colonization, like North Africans, her own people: “Je suis maigre comme un peau-roue” (Belghoul 102). The heavy weight and legacy of colonization have made her realize that she and her people have lost significant parts of their histories and cultures, due to the French colonization of the Maghreb. Ostensibly, Georgette realizes that this history of victimization has contributed to their subjugated role in the French school and workplace. Although North Africans and their children have the chance to attend school and have jobs, they cannot escape the heavy weight of cultural oppression. If Africans and people living in the Caribbean also resent colonization being brought to them, Georgette may also realize that colonization is also a heavy force on her own

people, resulting in difficult cultural spaces in which to act, and erasing important parts of their own culture, tethering them to participation in a system which is unlikely to reward them until they can play the parts of people whom they simply are not. Unlike Africans and the Afro-Caribbean peoples living in formerly-colonized areas, Georgette herself has never been a colonial subject; nonetheless, she seems to be a post-colonial subject, since she is viewed by many French people as a resident of France whose rightful place is in Algeria, though she herself is a French citizen, and since these Franco-French observers may continue to view her as an individual who must be controlled by the adoption of norms appropriate to the post-colonial era. Elsewhere, she calls herself “une sauvage” (Belghoul 116); clearly, she seems to feel ostracized from the core of French society, and appears to be cultivating a rebellious component in her character that allows herself to act outside of French norms. Indeed, her own father addresses the issue of the abuse of power under the colonial regime in French Algeria, at the end of the novel, making it clear that he is aware of the strained relationship that France and Algeria have had since the era of decolonization, and even during the colonial period (Belghoul 159).

Just as there are parallels between *Beur* and African-American literatures, as I alluded to in my introduction to this dissertation, so there is a connection between *Georgette!* and the American novel by Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*, according to Hargreaves. In the latter novel, the African-American narrator-protagonist constantly faces manipulation by powerful Caucasians when he speaks, and he doubts that the speech that he makes at a political rally, is his own creation, as Hargreaves writes in *Voices from the North African Immigrant Community in France* (16). Hargreaves remarks that these two novels are unified in their portrait of the power of socio-cultural

factors over individuals, regardless of their strength of will: “Both works present a bleak picture of the relationship between an individual consciousness and the socio-cultural forces surrounding it. At the end of *Invisible Man*, the narrator-protagonist suggests that at root, his findings hold good not simply for most people: their consciousness is, to a very large extent, a plaything of forces beyond their control” (Hargreaves 116). One notes the vast difference between the seven-year-old, Algerian-French, female protagonist of *Georgette!*, and the middle-aged, African-American, male narrator of *Invisible Man*, and yet both of them are heavily conditioned by their culture.

Beyond the academic milieu, predictably, there is also a great deal of dysfunctionality in the relationship between Georgette and her father. The other examples detailing his behavior indicate that his outlooks on relationships are patriarchal, hierarchical, and conservative; thus the reader is not surprised to find that he expects total respect and compliance from Georgette, as evidenced by this quotation: “C’est pire que tout de manquer de respect à son père” (Belghoul 47). As a way to enforce his demands, he threatens her with violence, predictable, unfortunately, for a parent with such authoritarian attitudes, and from a culture which has a tendency to use battery as a method to provoke compliance from women and female children, especially.

However, the ultimate dysfunctionality in the novel, evocative of a context of integration which is, sadly, more like that of Foucault’s panopticon, than Derrida’s idyllic guest-host relationship, is found in the accidental death of Georgette, an innocent and unassuming young girl, at the end of the novel. She takes a ride from her teacher, and a car hits her as she crosses the street to go home:

Je grille un feu et je traverse. Le bonheur est dans...La roue de la voiture est sur mon ventre. J'ai déchiré mes vêtements. Je suis toute nue comme une saleté. Je saigne sur la rue. J'ai joué ma chance: manqué de pot. J'étouffe au fond d'un encier.

(Belghoul 161-162)

This tragic ending puts into question the very value of this struggle over cultural integration; if this young girl has spent presumably two of her seven years struggling over pens, grades, and notebooks, only to die before being able to experience a normal life, what good has this struggle done for her, her family, or her teacher? Of course, it is understood that such premature, tragic endings can happen to anyone, regardless of the trials that he or she undergoes while alive; yet, it is truly regrettable that Georgette meets her end after a period of academic and emotional stress, parental conflicts, humiliation from her teachers, and social alienation from her home environment. In life, she encounters tremendous emotional pain; as she dies, she bleeds to death, is suffocated, and is crushed by the wheel of a car, this small, vulnerable, innocent little girl, the victim of the weight of civilization, symbolized by the car that crushes her in death, and by the post-colonial structure, that oppresses her in life. Alec Hargreaves, in the article, “*Beur* Fiction: Voices from the Immigrant Community,” seems to reinforce the acknowledgement that education carries painful consequences for Georgette. He claims that as Georgette learns to read, she finds herself farther and farther away from her Algerian roots: “... the seemingly insoluble contradictions experienced by the seven-year-old heroine, as she attempts to learn to write at school, vividly capture the sense of alienation and loss, *vis-à-vis* her family roots, engendered by the acquisition of literacy” (Hargreaves 665).

On a more general level, if severe emotional pain can be spared to the vulnerable members of our population, such as children, the elderly, the infirm, the penniless, or animals, at the expense of the enforcement of arbitrary rules and norms, signifying the “tyranny of the norm,” to coin a recently-minted phrase, I feel that these individuals should be able to escape the worst of this suffering, and that the “tyranny of the norm” should be less of a forceful factor compelling all people to conform, regardless of individual differences or weaknesses. This is not to say that integration, and the academic, social, and professional success that are sometimes its byproducts, are not worthwhile goals for the descendants of North Africans; merely, I hold that their well-being must be taken into account as the system tries to integrate them into French society.

Desubjectification in *Georgette!*:
The Challenge of Finding Psychological Relief When One is
a Minority, a Female, and a Child, Amounting to “Triple Subjectification,” Using the
Expression Created by Susan Ireland (“Double Subjectification”)

The phrase, “double subjectification,” which Ireland uses to discuss Malika and Farida in *Beur’s Story*, the novel that I just explored in the previous section of this dissertation, can be modified in the case of the discussion of *Georgette!*, to, “triple subjectification,” specifically because of Georgette’s triple minority status as a Maghrebin-French, female, child. Already, to be a *Beur*, means to be subjectified to the norms of French society and to the expectations of his or her family, but Georgette’s situation is complicated by both her gender and her extreme youth. As is indicated in much of the critical and theoretical literature surrounding literature with *Beurette*

protagonists (which I deem, “*Beurette* literature”), and expressed explicitly by Ireland in the term that she coined, “double subjectification,” being a female *Beur* is all the more difficult, due largely to the way in which *Beurettes* live much more socially-constrained lives than *Beurs* (that is, the male Maghrebi-French) are portrayed to have in such novels and films.

Additionally, the vast majority of *Beur* novels and films focus on older protagonists, those at least in their teenage years, and these *Beurs* and *Beurettes* generally have the more developed cognitive and emotional faculties characteristic of more mature people, who are able to have deeper reflections on the mechanisms of society, and their place within this society, providing them with the means to escape their own subjectification, in some circumstances. Georgette, on the other hand, is under the constraints of being a seven-year-old in both a French school, known for its authoritarian approach to educating and socializing children, and in a patriarchal, Muslim, family, which has tendencies to expect girls to walk a very thin line, with regards to their behavior and obedience towards elders. Childhood in itself, in many cultures, implies a certain level of subjectification that can be impossible to overcome. In this era, it seems that some adults of a certain age are astonished to learn that even some young adults lack the judgment or maturity that people of this age were expected to have at this time, yet it is possible that perhaps, some of these adults have lost familiarity with the difficult process by which young adults develop these skills and qualities, so heavily conditioned into some young adults’ mentalities, is the subjectification that they have come to expect as a result of being someone’s child.

Moreover, *Georgette!* appeared in 1986, meaning that it is likely that the context in which such a story could have taken place (minus the fantastic elements, which align it no more, but no less, with any other historical period) was the early or mid-1980s, the period in which the *Beur* movement was just developing, compounding the relative alienation that a character such as Georgette probably would have experienced in France.

Given the formidable amount of obstacles that Georgette faces (the control and sanction of her parents, teachers, and other elders; sexism and the consequences that it carries for girls in France in general, and for girls growing up as Muslims in this country; and the mistreatment and skewed attitudes that she sometimes encounters from people due to her being a *Beur*), and her very young age, it is not surprising that she is not able to invent the strategies of resistance and desubjectification that many of her older *Beur* and *Beurette* fellow protagonists are, in the other novels and films in the corpus.

Despite this general lack of invention of such creative strategies, in one instance in this novel, Georgette does indicate a means of achieving some psychological relief from her feelings of being simultaneously compelled to accept norms not her own, and feeling unable to make the changes that would secure a better life for her, due to her “triple subjectification.” Namely, the quotation that I cite in the section above, as Georgette remarks, “Je suis bien contente que la colonisation, c’est fini, j’en avais marre” (Belghoul 99), and her self-description as “...maigre comme un peau-rouge...” (Belghoul 102), and “...une sauvage...” (Belghoul 116) demonstrate that she acknowledges the role of French colonization in the creation of the precarious situation in which her family lives in France, perceived as outsiders no matter which steps they take towards striving towards integration, and that she identifies herself with Native Americans, who were also

the victims of colonization, although, admittedly, the French and British colonists (and those of other ethnicities, in the United States) took different steps towards colonizing North Africa and the United States, the French exploiting the land of North Africa and trying to promote the adoption of French culture to the colonized, and the colonists of the American colonies, sometimes inflicting warfare on Native Americans, and stealing their land. As I noted above, Georgette's identification with Native Americans shows that she realizes that certain historical realities shaped the condition of the *Beurs*' lives in France, and that the vulnerability that she experiences comes from other sources than her or her family's character, values, or practices.

In this sense, Georgette does achieve some degree of desubjectification from the heavy psychological burdens that she carries as a person triply marginalized in France. While this desubjectification is very limited, in that it does not mitigate her actual circumstances, it does seem to remove some of the sting from the pain that she experiences, given her family's difficult position in France. The enunciation of her celebration of the end of colonization (“Je suis bien contente que la colonisation, c’est fini, j’en avais marre...”) reveals that she sees this process as having limited consequences that can not make her situation any worse than it is already, a type of realization that can be useful for reducing psychological stress and inner conflict. Additionally, conceiving of herself as a “...une sauvage...,” as one who can act outside social norms, can be said to allow her to see herself as different from the average female, Franco-French elementary schooler, but of value in her own right. Overall, it is not likely that these thought processes, of seeing herself as victimized by history, and with unique and valuable traits, significantly improves her self-esteem and outlook on life, yet such

observations seem to have lessened the emotional burden that she had probably accumulated since she first experienced the challenges of being a female, *Beurette*, child in a France challenged by issues related to intercultural relations. In this sense, Foucault's call to "...se dependre de soi-même..." ("remove oneself from oneself"), escaping the constraints of one's identity, and engaging in critique of culturally-conditioned mentalities, has not only great value for the intellectual, as he or she draws attention to areas of critical concern in society, but also, humanitarian value, as desubjectification can allow people in situations of severe marginalization to find emotional relief from the knowledge of the way in which others see and treat them, a process that can carry even more value when it alleviates the suffering of children.

Connections Between Belghoul's *Georgette!* and Agamben's Theory on the State of Exception and Bare Life

Similarly, an Agambien reading of *Georgette!* does not yield commentary on the rapport between the *Beurs* and the French government, but rather, on the position of the *Beurs* within French society, in this case, the school. In particular, the painfully-exclusionary situation in which the seven-year-old, female, Algerian-French protagonist of the novel, Georgette, finds herself is a type of *state of exception*, created by the discord between the values of the French education system, and those of her strict, conservative, Algerian-French parents. While Georgette is allowed to, and legally expected to, attend French schools, she is excluded from being considered as any of her Franco-French

classmates, due to the incongruity between her father's knowledge of the academic system, and the actual values and norms of this system. Additionally, her extreme youth may jeopardize her condition even further, leaving her in a position of being *bare life*, metaphorically-speaking, perennially caught between two mutually-exclusive cultural traditions, which, although both claiming to have her best interests at heart, create an extremely difficult situation for her. As evidenced by several examples which I discussed above, Georgette is the object of misunderstanding and frustration from her Franco-French teacher, and of her father's pressure for her to succeed academically.

Regarding the strategies that the novelist seems to recommend as a buffer to the *state of exception* in which people in similar situations find themselves, Georgette does practice, in one sense, the Agambien strategy of *play*, or *desacralization*. By likening herself to a Native American, in the sense that both Native Americans and North Africans were placed in problematic situations because of the conquests of Western Europeans, Georgette seems to be experimenting with the definition of a colonized (or post-colonized) subject. It is interesting to note that Georgette herself, even at seven years old, realizes that French colonization is (at least partially) to blame for the awkward situation in which she and her family finds themselves. Despite the fact that ultimately, Georgette is not able to escape this *state of exception*, and dies prematurely at the end of the novel as a result of a car accident, it is encouraging that she understands the nature of her situation, at least to some extent, even at such a very young age.

With respect to Georgette's death, I remark that in both Kessas' *Beur Story*, and in this work by Belghoul, a female protagonist dies prematurely. While in Kessas, Farida commits suicide due to severe emotional pain related to the *state of exception* in which

she finds herself, Georgette, until her death, is able to withstand the discomfort. In a physical sense, however, pedestrians can be considered to be a type of *bare life*, with no or very little protection against vehicles, including ones driven by people watching a little girl cross the street. Although this comparison has relationship to Agamben's theory only in an abstract sense, one starts to notice the multitude of ways in which perceived differences in status (such as that between motorist and pedestrian) can create situations of complete vulnerability for the person in the weaker position.

Rai (Thomas Gilou, 1995)

Rai, a 1995 dramatic comedy, albeit with some very violent scenes and subject matter, directed by Thomas Gilou, illustrates "Foucauldian" hospitality, like Kassovitz's *La Haine*, through its portrait of the doomed French suburbs, as well as the mechanism that causes the recurring racial riots that France has experienced since 1980. While some see this film as an incitation to racial violence, I view it more as a cry for help on the part of the *Beurs*, dramatized into filmic mode by Gilou, representing the voices of the youth of the suburbs, who find themselves in relatively hopeless situations, unable to find jobs, housing, or social affirmation and belonging in French culture, and some of whom turn to violence and retaliation against its institutions, in an effort to distinguish themselves from this seemingly-rejecting majority, the French of European descent, and in frustration that would better be expressed by using appropriate channels of communication and self-assertion. The cry-for-help term, in fact, could also be used to describe the genre of *La Haine*, as well. However, Carrie Tarr asserts, in the article, "Ethnicity and identity in the

cinéma de banlieue, » published in the work, *French Cinema in the 1990s: Continuity and Difference*, that unlike *La Haine*, *Rai* does not specify on the situation of the *Beurs*, although this film by Gilou does make generalizations about the French suburbs (177).

First, the depravity and hopelessness characteristic of the atmosphere of many French suburbs, confirming the existence of “Foucauldian” relationships between the French of European descent and the minority populations, is made evident in this film, which is set in the angst- and violence-filled suburb in northern Paris, Garges-les-Gonesses, particularly in the Muette neighborhood, the site of many HLMs, low-income housing buildings that are virtually indistinguishable from one another, isolated in neighborhoods with few amenities, and breeding grounds for endemic drug use, sporadic violence, and chronic unemployment. The youth in this neighborhood, as portrayed in the film, including Mezz, Aziz, Poisson, Nordine, and others, are mired into drug and crime-filled existences, with little hope of securing employment. There is little chance for establishing a hopeful future, since all of them seem resigned to lives of selling and doing drugs, engaging in petty crimes, and feeling disappointment after disappointment, as they are rejected from numerous job opportunities. This despairing culture of the suburbs has been codified into three alternative languages: slang (*l’argot*), pig Latin (*le verlan*), and rap. The characters in this film, perhaps because they are so pessimistic about finding social respectability through employment, invest themselves in their social lives, partying in *discothèques* (as Abdel does in *Beur’s Story*), speeding in cars, listening to rock and rap, engaging in gun shoot-outs, doing drugs, seeing movies, insulting each other, swimming, and playing cards.

Compared to the others, two characters who form a romantic couple, and are at least informally engaged to be married, for a period, Djamel and Sahlia, see the ray of light pointing the way out of the suburbs, and they attain some distance from this way of life. Djamel (the elder of two brothers born of an Algerian woman, and the brother of a drug addict (Nordine)), manages to evade this hostile and dire environment, becoming able to sustain himself by working at a community pool. His girlfriend, Sahlia, also of North African origin, also aims to break ties with her oppressive North African family and their associated traditions, and to live more freely, as the integrated Franco-French people do, free of the weight of her culture's traditions. Since all of the other characters seem to follow similar paths in life, which generally lead them to poverty and social isolation, Tarr writes in the article, « Ethnicity and identity in the *cinéma de banlieue*, » that it seems that Gilou portrays most *Beurs* as more or less monolithic in their behavior. The exceptions that Djamel and Sahlia represent, according to Tarr in the same article, in combination with the end-results of their ambitions, leads one to think that the only valid alternatives are to emulate them in their exit strategies, and follow Djamel as he descends into violence, or Sahlia, as she leaves *la banlieue* (Tarr 177).

Despite the fact that Djamel does succeed for some time in maintaining his self-sufficiency, and although Sahlia has a relationship with Djamel that resembles that of a Franco-French couple, rather than having to adhere to standards of her traditional family, eventually, their plans to sustain their relationship and maintain independence from their repressive families are trumped by reality. Djamel's brother, Nordine, becomes the target for police violence after he pulls a gun on them, and his resulting death instigates a mass riot in their suburb. Although Djamel intends, for most of the duration of the film, to

steer clear of the violence that his peers participate in, he finds himself drawn to it, and engages in the riot that occurs in response to the police brutality against Nordine.

Similarly, the relationship between Sahlia and Djamel is terminated when Djamel discovers that she has been unfaithful. While her family expects that they will marry and remain united for life, an indiscretion, perhaps encouraged by the rather open liberal values of French culture pertaining to relationships between men and women, results in a rupture of this relationship, which Djamel and Sahlia had anticipated would give them social stability and standing, and prove to their families that they had escaped the cycle of poverty, dependence on social welfare, and ephemeral relationships, seemingly ubiquitous in the suburbs.

The ultimate proof of “Foucauldian” hospitality in this film, however, is seen when Nordine’s death, after a confrontation with the police, leads to both his mother’s deep sorrow and the riots that engulf their neighborhood. This Algerian-French mother engages in a period of traditional mourning according to Muslim tradition, and the viewer witnesses a scene of frenetic crying and lamenting, and the efforts of her female relatives to comfort her, after Nordine’s death. She cries bitter tears over him in this scene, speaking in Arabic to her family members. The fact that she uses Arabic, in addition to the traditional Algerian garb that she wears, indicates that she has not become integrated into French culture, and that she holds onto the past, the Algerian way of life, just as Malika does in Charef’s *Le Thé au harem d’Archi Ahmed*. The helplessness of her tears and wailing are perhaps the most stinging and poignant reminder of the real cost of the violence in the suburbs; more than a temporary loss of social cohesion or peace and order, the most exacting loss involved in these riots is the loss of the young people who

participate in them: young lives truncated over incidents that would not have happened, had there been adequate means of social insertion and opportunities to seek employment, and a more accepting attitude on the part of the French of European descent towards their compatriots of North African and West African origin (as well as other ethnicities), as well as a more enlightened and reformed approach on the part of the French police towards the youth living in these areas.

The pathological level of conflictual relationships characteristic to this film is also apparent in the scenes portraying the riots in this suburb after Nordine's death. Just as in the film *La Haine*, and as in the events in the 2005 riots beginning in Paris, the death of one youth of immigrant origin sparks a rash of violence, in which youth pour oil on cars, set them on fire, loot stores, and vandalize property. As I note in my commentary on *La Haine*, the youth seem to band together once one of their own has been victimized. Their frustration, anger, and helplessness seem to coagulate into a concentrated force against French authority and institutions, and what seems like a purposefully-antagonistic criminal operation consists more of a cry for help from people who never asked to be born into the desperate way of life of the suburbs, or to be born in France at all, living half-way between North African and French ways of life. Still, Tarr, in the article, "Ethnicity and identity in the *cinéma de banlieue*, » suggests that Nordine has brought on his own death by taunting the policewoman, thus the violence in this film is seen as more gratuitous than in *La Haine* (176). It seems, according to Tarr in the same article, that the characters in *Rai* blame their maladaptative behavior on their families' outdated approaches to marriage and family honor (176). If some *Beurs* do blame their desperate situation in France on the patriarchal values that their families espouse and try to transmit

to them, this charge should be balanced by acknowledging that these youth do have some sphere of action in which to act, independent of the customs and mores that their parents recommend, although they may have to be exposed to new experiences or people in order to encourage them to develop these new, adaptive skills.

Djamel, Sahlia, and Desubjectification in *Rai*:
their Efforts to Differentiate themselves from the Culture of *la Banlieue*

After noting, above, that Djamel and Sahlia are the only two characters who seem to try to defy the norms of the culture of *la banlieue* in this film, *Rai*, it seems logical to discuss desubjectification in terms of the efforts of these two young adults to set new patterns for their lives, ones that do not correspond to those followed by their friends in the suburb in which they live, la Muette neighborhood of Garges-les-Gonesses, and ones in which they feel free to choose their own cultural practices, and not feel tied to North African ones, as their families expect them to be. Although Djamel and Sahlia's attempts to achieve some degree of social stability and security by being known as a couple engaged to be married, Djamel's effort to financially support himself while working at the community pool, instead of becoming involved in drug-dealing and doing, as his brother Nordine tends to do, and Sahlia's wish to follow other models than those set by her traditional-minded family, do not last the duration of the film, it is nonetheless encouraging that they choose positive templates for themselves, that of trying to construct an enduring relationship, and that of supporting themselves financially, as adults. In this

case, Djamel and Sahlia are protagonists in more than one sense, since they also seem to be the main characters with positive behaviors and attitudes in this film, as they seem to reject commonly-accepted narratives observed in *la culture de la banlieue*, "...removing themselves from themselves..." as they create new narratives that seem more appropriate for them, giving them the ability to be less constrained by other people's priorities. The familial and relational events that occur to them (in Djamel's tendency to become involved in the rioting following Nordine's death, and in Sahlia's romantic betrayal of Djamel, leading to their rupture) are in keeping with tendencies occurring to youth in their situation, which, although unfortunate, show the degree of difficulty that they face in trying to build lives for themselves as a couple. In this sense, while the desubjectification that they achieve is temporary and incomplete, the viewer of this film is given these two examples of characters with constructive behaviors and goals, valuable personalities in a film characterized largely by chaos and tragedy. It may be a *cause célèbre* to trumpet the achievements of a *Beurgeoisie*, in the words of Bernard (1999) in his work, *La Crème des Beurs*, or those of the *élite noire* described by Vincent and Imbert in the article from *Le Monde Magazine* that I cited in the Literature Review section of the Introduction to this dissertation, "Ils sont la minorité agissante," but I feel called to valorize the struggles of those in difficult positions, without the benefit of social connections, luminous talents, or other advantages, who set positive goals for themselves, often in the absence of other people striving towards such objectives. As de Beauvoir entitled of her books, *L'Amérique de jour en jour*, I envision "La France de jour en jour" of *les banlieues* to be such a place, where some people, against all odds, pursue positive

goals, and whose vision and striving are no less valuable because of the struggles that they face, even when these struggles involve tremendous setbacks.

Connections Between Gilou's *Rai* and Agamben's Theory on the State of Exception and Bare Life

In the case of *Rai*, unlike those of *Beur's Story* and *Georgette!*, Agambien theory can be taken more literally, with the French authorities and police officers in the film being representative of the sovereign power, with the complete freedom to harm or kill its subjects. The seemingly-doomed French suburb of la Muette can be envisioned as a *state of exception*, home to people with little means of achieving social respectability and insertion through traditional means such as the establishment of careers and stable families, thus they turn to such unhealthy behaviors as becoming involved in drugs, petty crime, and violence. They are expected, by French society as a whole, to be productive and integrated (implying at least a state of partial inclusion), yet the conditions which they face leave them unable to achieve these conditions (implying their exclusion).

In particular, Djamel and Sahlia's difficulties in maintaining their relationship, and Djamel's diversion from attention paid to his job at a community pool to involvement in the rioting after his brother Nordine's death, are symbolic of the challenges that the *Beur* community in la Muette faces.

A physical manifestation of the *Beurs'* position as *bare life* with respect to the French police is found when Nordine is shot by a police officer after he points a gun

towards him. While Nordine's action may solicit similar responses from police officers in many settings, this incident demonstrates the degree to which the *Beurs* are completely vulnerable to the decisions of French police officers, when they see such punishment as appropriate.

“Le Bruit et l’odeur” (Zebda, 1995)

The song, “Le Bruit et l’odeur,” one of Zebda’s songs from 1995, showcases these artists’ perception of the xenophobia characteristic of many Franco-French attitudes towards North Africans and their descendants in France, and the thought process that many of these Franco-French use as they aim to justify their reactions to the increasing numbers of immigrants and their descendants, who are said to take advantage of the social welfare system, as many Franco-French are said to support them and the rest of the country through their work. Zebda insists on the pathology of the degree of integration between the *Beurs* and the French of European descent, demonstrated, particularly, by the plethora of insults and condescending statements that are made about the minority population. Namely, Zebda reacts to this element of Franco-French behavior by mocking Chirac’s comments from a 1995 address, which are insulting, since they stress “the noise and the smell” as two aggravating factors in the annoyance of a Frenchman towards immigrants. This song, based on a line in President Chirac’s 1991 address concerning Franco-French---*Beur* relations, lends a mocking tone to the expression of these viewpoints, and indicates that these artists feel that the French of European descent

continually raise the bar for the full acceptance of the *Beurs* into French society. It is as if these artists are satirizing the French of European descent perception, as voiced by France's leader at the time, that the relative poverty of the North African population, resulting in their perceived dependence on the rest of France's citizens to survive financially, in combination with the societal problems that they cause, namely, "le bruit" (the noise) and "l'odeur" (the smell), render it completely acceptable that the French worker becomes "fou" (crazy, with the connotation of possible anger), completely separate from possible accusations that this type of argument is racist. In fact, the song seems to stress the very racist nature of Chirac's speech, robbing the former French President of the validity of his statement, according to which resenting dependent people, who smell and make noise, and are perceived to be of minority origin, is not racist.

While the content and significance of the song lyrics are more important than the analysis of the music video that accompanies the song, for the purposes of this dissertation, it is noteworthy that certain aspects of the music video, particularly, its presentation of the members of Zebda, and the cinematography that is employed in the video, contribute to the cautionary and alarming effects of this song. Just as the lyrics of the song convey an urgency that the songwriter uses to call attention to the near-emergency-level conditions in the French suburbs, as well as the gravity of the extent of racism and violence in France, so does the hard-hitting, fast-paced, and tense ambiance created by the music video, seem to intend to lead viewers to pay close attention to the content of their message.

In this video, the members of Zebda, wearing white Adidas soccer jerseys and black glasses, boldly and almost audaciously sing the lyrics, as a group, and dance

frenetically to the song. The color of their outfits matches the white cinematographic background of the video.

Concerning the cinematography of the music video, there are certain recurring images that seem to reveal the potentially-mortal effect of chronic racism and the periodic eruption of violence in the French *banlieues*: namely, red splotches of paint, images of people with wounds in the areas of their heads, a man in a military mask, and guns that are pointed in various directions, as if to indicate a state of war, extended in all directions. The ubiquitousness of these types of representations of violence in this video seems to reveal that the tensions between the French government and its minorities, much more pervasive than the irritation that the French of European descent worker featured in the song feels towards the “noise and the smell” of the *Beur* community, can only be ignored at France’s peril, just as Kassovitz’s 1995 film, *La Haine*, seems to suggest through the character of Hubert Koundé, as he remarks:

C’est l’histoire d’un homme qui tombe d’un immeuble de cinquante étages. Le mec, au fur et à mesure de sa chute se répète sans cesse pour se rassurer: jusqu’ici tout va bien, jusqu’ici tout va bien, jusqu’ici tout va bien. Mais l’important c’est pas la chute, c’est l’atterrissage.

This quotation from *La Haine* conveys the idea that one can tell oneself for only so long, that everything is going well, before one realizes the gravity of one’s situation. The time during which one is “falling” (*la chute*), is insignificant, in the end, compared to the impact of the subsequent devastation that one experiences as one makes contact with the ground (*l’atterrissage*). Correspondingly, the French of European descent can try to deny

the extent of the increasingly hostile conditions within the suburbs, between French authorities and minorities, but the end result of these volatile circumstances will eventually manifest themselves (and they have repeatedly done so, as in the riots of 1980-1981, 1990, 2005, 2007, and 2010, as I will demonstrate in chapter 5 of my dissertation, in which I will examine these episodes, as illustrated in the magazine, *Paris-Match*).

In the remainder of my treatment of this song, “Le Bruit et l’odeur,” I will focus on the analysis of the song lyrics, discussing one or two stanzas at a time:

Si j’suis tombé par terre
 C’est pas la faute à Voltaire
 Le nez dans le ruisseau
 Y avait pas Dolto
 Si y’a pas plus d’anges
 Dans le ciel et sur la terre
 Pourquoi faut-il qu’on crève dans le ghetto?”

In this stanza, the songwriter refers to some long-standing intellectual traditions in France that he questions, as an origin of immigrant descent, and as a contemporary of an age in which the belief in God has been largely replaced by indifference, moral relativism, and even atheism. Namely, he insists that Voltaire is not responsible for his [the songwriter’s] existence, in the first two lines: “Si j’suis tombé par terre/C’est pas la faute à Voltaire.” He seems to be referring here to the fact that the French intellectual and philosophical tradition cannot answer for all of the realities of contemporary French society; thus, resolutions for dilemmas related to immigration cannot be resolved through French philosophy and intellectualism, leaving room for searching for solutions along

more practical lines. This line, “C’est pas la faute à Voltaire,” is a recasting of lyrics from a song found in Victor Hugo’s 1862 novel, *Les Misérables*, in which the young boy, Gavroche Thénardier, sings, before his death, at the hands of French authorities, during the June Rebellion, or the Paris Uprising of 1832 (*l’Insurrection républicaine à Paris en juin 1832*): “Joie est mon caractère/C’est la faute à Voltaire/Misère est mon trousseau/C’est la faute à Rousseau.” These lines are seen as a parody of the conservative train of thought in effect at the time, seemingly attributing the socio-economic oppression of the lower classes during the period after the French Revolution to *les Lumières*, whose philosophies catalyzed the onset of *la Grande Révolution*, in 1789. In the case of the song by Zebda, the recasting seems to indicate that the protagonist in the song refuses to attribute his existence, and conditions in France, to France’s key intellectuals and philosophers. In the last two lines of the stanza, he sings, “Si y’a pas plus d’anges/Dans le ciel et sur la terre/Pourquoi faut-il qu’on crève dans le ghetto?” In these lines, he seems to indicate that if people have refused to believe in God and in religion, why it is necessary for them to suffer in the French suburbs? When there was a generalized belief in God, people justified suffering by saying that eventually, they would go to Heaven, and be rewarded. These lines seem to ask, Absent the hope of attaining eternal life, what good is suffering?

Plutôt que d’être issu d’un peuple qui a trop souffert
 J’aime mieux élaborer une thèse
 Qui est de pas laisser à ces messieurs
 Qui légifèrent [legislate] le soin de me balancer
 Des ancêtres”

In this stanza, the songwriter rejects his people’s long history of suffering as a rejected and excluded minority, and he claims that he prefers to refuse to let the dominant culture pass laws that lead him to neglect his tradition and his ancestors’ stories. The songwriter is effectively reclaiming his own power, denying the dominant culture the power to subjugate him and treat him as a victim. Rather, he aims to be empowered, and to contribute to his community’s efforts to view their traditions in a proper light, that is not obscured by French prejudices.

On		a		beau		être		né
Rive		gauche		de		la		Garonne
Converser		avec		l’accent		des		cigales
Ils	sont	pas	des	kilos	dans	la	cité	gasconne
A	faire	qu’elle		ne	soit	pas	qu’une	escale
On		peut		mourir		au		front
Et		faire		toutes		les		guerres
Et	beau		défendre	un		si	joli	drapeau
Il		en		faut		toujours		plus
Pourtant		y	a	un		hommage	à	faire
A ceux tombés à Montécassino								

In the two stanzas above, the songwriter suggests that, no matter what the *Beurs* do to become better-integrated, whether it is being born on the right side of the Garonne River (“On a beau être né/ Rive gauche de la Garonne/Converser avec l’accent des cigales”), or dying on the front in the World Wars (“On peut mourir au front/Et faire toutes les guerres/Et beau défendre un si joli drapeau”), the French never truly accept them (“Il en faut toujours plus”). The French of European descent, in the songwriter’s eyes, seem to have increasingly higher standards of how they will judge the

Beurs' candidacy for integration into their society. It would seem that being born in France, or fighting in French wars, would unanimously qualify them for inclusion, but ultimately, it never comes to pass, since North Africans and their descendants are considered permanent outsiders. In the last line of the stanza, he admits that, regardless of the French of European descent disregard for the contributions of North Africans to their society, it is worthwhile to pay homage to his people who died in the most brutal battle of World War II, Montecassino. The history of North Africans participating in World War II is illustrated by the film by Rachid Bouchareb, *Les Indigènes (Days of Glory)*, starring Jamel Debbouze, which I will discuss in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

Le bruit et l'odeur
 Le bruit et l'odeur
 Le bruit du marteau-piqueur {x4} [jackhammer]"

These three lines recall the quotation by Chirac in his 1991 address, where “le bruit et l'odeur” refer to the noise and the smell that emanate from North Africans and their descendants, as Chirac, and some other Franco-French people, see it, symbolizing their negative attitudes towards them as nuisances, who not only pollute the atmosphere, but who also draw on social benefits without contributing meaningfully to society. It is possible that the line, “The noise of the jackhammer,” refers to the industrial contributions that North Africans provided to France, in the time after World War II. While now, the French of European descent resent the noise caused by the *Beurs* living in

their cities, in the post-World War II era, their North African parents and grandparents were respected and valued for their contributions to the French economy.

La peur est assassine
 Alors c'est vrai, je pénalise
 Ceux qui flinguent les mêmes [gun down children]
 Qu'ont pas la pelouse [lawn] en bas
 Je suis un rêveur
 Et pourtant ami j'analyse
 Je suis un érudit et je vous dis:
 Je suis serbo-croate et musulman
 Voilà le hic [problem]
 Un prêtre polonais républicain
 Et laïque
 Et si certains regrettent
 De pas être noir de peau
 Je n'ai qu'une réponse les gars
 Vous avez du pot ("You're lucky")

"L'égalité mes frères
 N'existe que dans les rêves
 Mais je n'abdique (give up) pas pour autant
 Si la peur est un bras qui nous soulève (an arm that lifts us up)
 Elle nous décime
 J'en ai peur pour la nuit des temps

In these stanzas, the songwriter communicates his cynicism in the practical existence and maintenance of social and racial equality, which only exist in dreams, as he sees it ("L'égalité, mes frères/N'existe que dans les rêves"). Still, he will not surrender easily to the gross social inequalities in France ("Mais je n'abdique pas pour autant"); although fear helps us to survive ("Si la peur est un bras qui nous soulève"), it can also be destructive ("Elle nous décime"). This last line both acknowledges the difficulties inherent to being a minority in France, but also his refusal to surrender to them.

Elle				aime				Noah
Mais	faut	qu'y	gagne	les	tournois	[the	championships]	
Elle	aime	Boli	mais	a	jamais	rien	aboli	{x2}

This stanza seems to refer to a woman's preference for a certain tennis player over another: "Elle aime Noah/Mais faut qu'y gagne les tournoi." These lines seem to suggest that while this woman prefers the French-Cameroonian tennis star, Yannick Noah, it is necessary for her to support a player who will win titles. This line indicates, perhaps, that while some Franco-French people will superficially advocate for equality, they put national prestige, as evidenced by success at soccer tournaments, over more noble concerns. Also, this stanza reveals that this woman supports the French-Ivory Coast soccer player, Basile Boli, but that she has never abolished anything ("Elle aime Boli mais a jamais rien aboli"). Again, this line indicates some limited level of approval of racial equality in theory; this woman, it seems, is glad that the French soccer team is more diverse than it was in the past, but at the same time, the end of the last line may reveal that she has never made any meaningful contributions to initiatives related to racial parity.

Le		bruit		et		l'odeur
Le		bruit		et		l'odeur
Le	bruit		du	marteau-piqueur		{x4}"
"Qui	a		construit	cette		route?
Qui	a		bâti	cette		ville?

Et qui l'habite pas?
 A ceux qui se plaignent du bruit
 A ceux qui condamnent l'odeur
 Je me présente

In the second stanza above, the songwriter seems to hint that while many minorities constructed French buildings and roads, they and their descendants are not usually the ones who live in them. Thus, while these people were appreciated for their contributions to labor, there is a very sharp line separating them from full access and equal rights in French culture and society. The songwriter paints a picture of a society that hinges on silent, but omnipresent double standards, according to which minorities in France can be expected to pay all the social costs that many Franco-French will not (for example, participation in jobs involving manual labor), yet cannot attain the status that most French of European descent enjoy, in principle. In addition, the songwriter claims to accept blame from those who complain about the noise and the smell (“A ceux qui se plaignent du bruit/A ceux qui condamnent l’odeur/Je me présente”). While Chirac’s comments were ostensibly intended to insult the minority population, and to justify a certain extent of xenophobia on the part of the French of European descent, Zebda’s songwriter mocks this perception, as if to say, what can this criticism do to the minority population?

Je m'appelle Larbi, Mamadou Juan et faites place
 Guido, Henri, Chino Ali je ne suis pas de glace
 Une voix m'a dit "Marathon" cherche la lumière
 Du gouffre j'ai puisé un combat "la bonne affaire

In this stanza, he cites the names of immigrants from several places, such as Muslim countries (Mamadou), Spain (Juan), Italy (Guido) and Henri (France), representing the diversity of immigrants to France. In the second and third lines, he suggests the internal struggle that he is undergoing (“Une voix m’a dit “Marathon” cherche la lumière/Du gouffre j’ai pris un combat “la bonne affaire”). The lexical, oppositional pair “lumière” et gouffre” is revelatory of the inner conflict that seems to be experienced, as he is called to negotiate his identity in a multicultural and ever-changing France.

J’en ai bavé [I suffered from it], de la peur que j’ai lu dans les yeux
 De ceux qui ont trois fois rien et qui le croisaient précieux
 Quand j’ai compris la loi, j’ai compris ma défaite
 Intégrez-vous, disait-elle, c’était chose faite

In this stanza, the songwriter alludes to the feeling of bewildered admiration that he feels when he encounters the abjectly poor, people who, despite their material suffering, can still appreciate what they do have. This line seems to indicate that many people in the *Beur* community suffer terrible poverty, but that they do their best to survive these unfortunate conditions, demonstrating a resiliency and a grace that humble the songwriter. Indeed, although the experience of poverty is tragic, some of the testimonies of the poor reveal immense strength and resolve. This line is reminiscent of the Gospel story in which Jesus tells a parable about a woman who has almost nothing, but who gives all, and has given much, more than the rich person, who gives as he or she

sees fit (Luke 21:1-4). While poverty is a condition that most people want to avoid, the beautiful character that some poor people develop, and their appreciation for what they have, is admirable. Also, the songwriter claims, in the last two lines of the stanza, that he felt defeated, upon learning that French authorities expected him to integrate into French society. Although, as the song indicates, the “elle” [it] in the last line claims that integration has been completed, it appears that he does not agree with this affirmation. This stanza reveals the way in which some people in France are very disadvantaged, and yet are not despondent, and also the way in which some have declared integration to be a mission accomplished, while it is far from being over, indicating a false portrait suggesting an overly optimistic picture of social integration in France, and even hypocrisy on the part of those who suggest this idea.

Le		bruit		et		l'odeur
Le		bruit		et		l'odeur
Le	bruit		du	marteau-piqueur		{x4”
“Le	bruit	du	marteau-piqueur	dans	tes	oreilles
Tu	finis	ta	vie,	elles	bourdonnent	les
						abeilles. {x2}

In this couplet, the “sound of the jackhammer rings in one’s ears, “and as one dies, “one hears the bees buzz.” These lines suggest that the engagement of the first generation in the industries in France after World War II, permanently marked the lives of these people, due to the strenuous work with which they were occupied, and perhaps, that these sounds associated with their hard labor echoes in the ears of the younger generations. They remember their legacy and contributions, through participation in the

war and the industries, and the younger generation can only feel shame for the way in which their ancestors strove to earn money for their families, only to leave their descendants to live in a racist and unjust society, through no fault of their own.

Le bruit et l'odeur
 Le bruit et l'odeur
 Le bruit du marteau-piqueur {x4}

Jacques Chirac:

Comment voulez-vous que le travailleur français qui travaille avec sa femme et qui ensemble gagnent environ 15 000 FF, et qui voit sur le palier à côté de son HLM entassée, une famille avec un père de famille, trois ou quatre épouses, et une vingtaine de gosses, et qui gagne 50 000FF de prestation sociale, sans naturellement travailler.
 Si vous ajoutez à cela le bruit et l'odeur, eh bien le travailleur français sur le palier, il devient fou. Et ce n'est pas être raciste que de dire cela.

Nous n'avons plus les moyens d'honorer le regroupement familial, et il faut enfin ouvrir le débat qui s'impose dans notre pays, qui est un vrai débat moral pour savoir si il est naturel que les étrangers puissent bénéficier au même titre que les Français d'une solidarité nationale à laquelle ils ne participent pas, puisqu'ils ne payent pas d'impôts.

Le bruit et l'odeur et l'odeur
 Le bruit et l'odeur

In the last stanza of the song, which are taken from President Chirac's discourse, it seems that Chirac is calling into question the morality of a system that lets immigrants and their descendants draw on social benefits without working and paying taxes. He seems to be setting limits on the rights of immigrants to have family allocations, health insurance, and social welfare benefits, which sustain them and their families, and provide

them with basic food and clothing, arguing from a position that accords benefits to each person only as he or she can earn them. One can imagine the degree of abject poverty, and the ensuing social alienation and chaos that would occur, if social benefits were withdrawn from those who are not able to find employment in an ailing economy, and one that has been suffering for many years.

Although Chirac seems to base his arguments in this address on a moral principle, that of just treatment of those who contribute to society, on a moral level, despite the generalized apathy to religion and even the atheism many French people espouse, is apathy to caring for people who lack for material sustenance, acceptable, in a country that is not only the former daughter of the Catholic Church, but that is also based on a multi-century history of sophisticated intellectual, religious, and political traditions, a society that claims as its principle values, liberty, equality, and fraternity? How is anyone free or brotherly if the poor of society suffer so greatly, without proper amenities? How does anyone repeat this saying in a society that ignores the need of the least powerful to have their basic needs provided? Lastly, to what extent could the French claim that their society is better-designed than that of the United States, which, admittedly, features an excessive dependence on capitalist values, profits, and materialism, if France itself refuses to care for those who cannot provide for themselves?

While it is clear that this song by Zebda, like others of their recordings, seems to represent a harsh confrontation with issues relevant to their perception of French racism, this apparently contestatory nature of their work and political engagement are not necessarily extensions of their composition as a minority group in French culture, according to Barbara Lebrun in the article, “Le bruit et l’odeur...du succès? Contestation

et contradictions dans le rock métis de Zebda.” In fact, Lebrun holds that the goals of the group have some elements of *petit-bourgeois* life in them, thus their subversive nature actually reveals an element of their social ascension, putting the *Beurs* closer to the dominant leftist intellectual crowd (1).

In the song, “Le Bruit et l’odeur,” Zebda takes the comments of Chirac, made in a 1995 address, which are very negative in their portrait of the *Beurs*, and uses them to make a statement about French racism. In one sense, this marginality is negative, from the perception of the viewpoint of the French of European descent, but it also can be positive in that Zebda has reappropriated the comments of Chirac to defend themselves against French racism. Therefore, marginality can be seen as a positive contribution to Beur culture. The subversive nature of the reappropriation of this marginality is confirmed by Danielle Marx-Scouras’ statement in her work, *La France de Zebda*: “Jacques Chirac étant Président de la République au moment de la parution de l’album *Le bruit et l’odeur*, la chanson ne pouvait éviter l’effet du choc. De nombreuses stations de radio vont même censurer le fameux sample” (113). The fact that numerous radio stations refused to play this song when it came out, indicates that many French people chose to adopt an attitude of feigned deafness towards making an acknowledgement of Zebda’s rebellion against Chirac’s racist characterization of the *Beur* community, and on a grander scale, towards an assignment of blame towards French society as a whole, in its treatment of minorities.

“Changing the Subject” or “Changing the Tune”?:
Desubjectification in Zebda’s “Le Bruit et l’odeur”

The lyrics of Zebda’s “Le Bruit et l’odeur” dislodge the voice of the segment of the French of European descent population that casts the North African community and their descendants in France in negative terms, seemingly turning this hegemonous Franco-French narrative on its head, allowing the Maghrebi-French to defend themselves against the racist comments of President Jacques Chirac, made in 1991. In this sense, Zebda’s lyrics can be seen as “changing the subject,” not in the sense of addressing another topic in a conversation, but in the sense of permitting the Maghrebi-French to desubjectify themselves with respect to the French of European descent, or as “changing the tune,” in that Chirac’s comments become an inspiring and catchy defense of the position of people of North African descent in France. As I showed in the previous section, Zebda demonstrates their refusal to accept dominant narratives according to which the community of North African descent in France’s subjugation within Franco-French society can be justified by traditions in French thinking (“S’il y a pas plus d’anges/Dans le ciel et sur la terre/ Pourquoi faut-il qu’on crève dans le ghetto?”); and the mentality holding that the contributions of the original North African community in France were minimal (“Qui a construit cette route?/Qui a bâti cette ville?/Et qui l’habite pas?”). As if replacing these claims, Zebda insists that striking disparities between the socio-economic conditions in which people live have been shown to be more closely related to their situation, than to any natural and innate differences between people, and are thus not justified in any absolute sense, and calls attention to the need for French

society to recognize the critical contributions of North Africans to French infrastructure and military history. Additionally, the following lines allow Zebda's lyricists to indicate their refusal of the French of European descent legislators and other authorities to create portrayals of the ancestors of the current Maghrebi-French, allowing the Maghrebi-French to take pride in these contributions:

Plutôt que d'être issu d'un peuple qui a trop souffert
J'aime mieux élaborer une thèse
Qui est de pas laisser à ces messieurs
Qui légifèrent [legislate], le soin de me balancer
Des ancêtres.

In summary, Zebda's "Le Bruit et l'odeur" is a prime example of a musical piece that calls for the desubjectification of the Maghrebi-French. While it is phrased mostly in reaction to negative characterizations made by the French of European descent, it nevertheless holds much in common with two veritable manifestoes of Maghrebi-French desubjectification, namely, Diam's "Ma France a moi" and Kery James' "Banlieusards," two songs that are couched in language with much more positive connotations than this song by Zebda is framed in, perhaps reflecting the evolution of music of this genre, in that it seems that the later contributions by Diam's and James are more strongly optimistic as to the eventual degree of progress for the Maghrebi-French community, envisioned by these artists.

Connections Between Zebda's "Le Bruit et l'Odeur" and
Agamben's Theory on the *State of Exception* and *Bare Life*

While Zebda's song, "Le Bruit et l'odeur," seems to be a condemnation of Chirac's remarks made in 1995, which justify the annoyance of some Franco-French people towards the "noise and the smell" created by their neighbors of minority descent, there is another important aspect to the song; the lyrics indicate the frustration of its lyricists with the *state of exception* in which many Maghrebi-French people live. For Zebda's lyricists, French society imposes a double standard on the Maghrebi-French: more is expected of them than people of other origins in France (fighting in wars that do not involve their ancestral homelands, and working in fields that many French people would refuse to work in), yet they never receive even equitable treatment, let alone what is really due to them. More specifically, two segments of the song reveal this sentiment: the section in which the Maghrebi-French are described as doing all that the French of European descent expect of them, including fighting in World War II, and yet never being fully included in French society, in the same way in which Caucasians are included, and the segment in which it is indicated that the Maghrebi-French have historically engaged in labor that many French people would never accept, and yet are never treated with the dignity and respect that they deserve.

Another Agambien aspect of the song is the very fact that Zebda reappropriates the comments of Chirac about "the noise and the smell" of the residents of some communities with large numbers of minorities, into an expression of the group's perception of the injustice intrinsic to French society. In particular, the integration of

Chirac's remarks into this song, and the clever way in which Zebda's lyricists turn his observations into a commentary on the way in which some Franco-French misunderstand the members of the Maghrebi-French community, seems to be similar to the corrective method that Agamben recommends for people living in a *state of exception*, namely, *play* or *desacralization*. Using Chirac's comments in their song was certainly a daring move, as it could be expected that people would find their reappropriation to be controversial. Zebda *desacralizes* Chirac's remarks by revealing them as racist and misguided, although Chirac insists that the annoyance of some Franco-French people with the Maghrebi-French community does not imply a racist attitude on their part. By deconstructing Chirac's comments, and contextualizing them within a description of the myopia of some Franco-French, in a philosophical sense, Zebda is able to remove the stinging power from Chirac's remarks, thus *desacralizing* them, reducing the perceived difference in status between the Maghrebi-French and the French government and society, and therefore lessening the subjectification of the Maghrebi-French community at the hands of the French of European descent, at least temporarily, and symbolically.

Conclusions to Chapter 2

In this chapter, I have presented and analyzed several diverse cultural and literary texts, ranging from traditional *Beur* novels, to a film in the genre of *le cinéma de la banlieue*, to a hit song by a famous French rock band, all of which reveal manifestations

of problematic contexts of *Beur* integration, akin to the model of power and manipulation that was theorized by Foucault. Through the genres of *Beur* literature, cinema, and music, these and other artists have used their artistic voices to express their viewpoints and perceptions on the very real racial, social, and cultural tensions in France, which often create inhospitable living and working conditions for the *Beur* community in France.

However, even in the most “Foucauldian” contexts in which integration could occur, there are some harbingers of potential relational healing, and signs that one day, perhaps the *Beurs* will achieve more secure status in France, and maintain their civil rights, refusing to let the painful past draw an indefinite line of oppression, violence and control, into the future.

As I state in the introduction to Chapter 2, and demonstrate in my analyses of the *Beur* artistic works analyzed in this chapter, only some of the *Beur* protagonists in these novels, films, and songs are able to desubjectify themselves from the need to meet the standards of French society. In some cases, the subjectification that the community of North African descent in France has experienced over the decades since the period after World War II, is so entrenched, that the only relief achievable by these characters is psychological in nature. Namely, in *La Seine était rouge*, the memorials and the testimonies to the carnage of October 17, 1961, in Paris, serve to help Louis, Omar, and Amel in this novel to process the pain that their parents’ and grandparents’ generations experienced at this time, but the damage has been incurred to a large degree in the past, limiting their attempts to extract some of the pain out of experience of their families. Additionally, in *Georgette!* by Belghoul, the “triple subjectification” of seven-year-old

Beurette, Georgette, given her age, ethnicity in France, and gender, proves too great an obstacle for young Georgette to counter, preventing her from “removing herself from herself” in any other way than psychological, as she frames her own oppression in terms of the history of French colonialism, allowing herself to recognize that factors outside of her control are strongly determinative of her and her family’s situation. Limited, and temporary, desubjectification is seen in *Rai*, as Djamel and Sahlia achieve their objectives of supporting themselves financially and being a committed couple in a culture of the *banlieue* in which many of their peers survive by selling drugs, and in which many young adults engage in ephemeral relationships, although relational and familial challenges eventually rob Djamel and Sahlia of the realization of their goals.

However, some desubjectification does occur for the *Beur* protagonists in Kessas’ *Beur’s Story* and Zebda’s song, “Le Bruit et l’odeur.” For example, despite the struggles that Malika and Farida experience in *Beur’s Story*, Kessas shows the reader that *Beurettes* have the capacity to improve their circumstances, at least in a limited sense, as demonstrated by Malika, who pursues higher education, instead of following the path that her family had set for her. Also, the solidarity that Malika and Farida show to one another seems to be a tool that Kessas suggests can be used to alleviate the seriousness of their personal and social difficulties related to their only-partial integration into their community and school. Malika and her brother, Abdel, are also to temporarily escape the constraints associated with their identities as *Beurs* and *Beurettes* by having friendships or romantic relationships with French people of the opposite gender, thereby transgressing the expectations of their family.

Additionally, in Zebda's rather pessimistic song, "Le Bruit et l'odeur," there are signs that the protagonist is reaching for opportunities to set his own terms within French society, to reaffirm his cultural heritage as the son or grandson of immigrants, rather than hiding these realities and behaving complacently towards the French of European descent, and to refuse to accept cultural typecasting or excessive stigmatization, even from the French President at the time, Jacques Chirac.

Thus, it seems that in the artistic works that demonstrate the most challenging relationships between the *Beurs* and the French of European descent, limited desubjectification is possible for the *Beurs*, although in some cases, this desubjectification is only psychological in nature. Nonetheless, these strategies used by these protagonists, as they remove the strength of some cultural mentalities and the ability for them to hurt them, may be more critical than we know, thus, these coping strategies (a phrase used in psychology and counseling) should be validated and encouraged, in order to promote the protection of their self-esteem and the maintenance of their sense of agency.

While Foucauldian power theory, the central theoretical construct used in this chapter, is vital in its capacity to help one to conceptualize the position of the disadvantaged with respect to those in places of power, Agamben's theory adds a new dimension to an understanding of these types of relationships: a way to theorize about the absolute vulnerability of people in a *state of exception*, and the way in which they can seek to mitigate their vulnerability with respect to the sovereign power (or in the case of several of these artistic works, French society), through *desacralization (play)*, or the provision of *testimony*. An examination of these works in the light of Agamben's theory

shows the seriousness of the degree to which the *Beurs* are vulnerable to exclusion by French society, and to subjugation by some of their families. These *states of exclusion* are the most severe, it seems, for the *Beurettes* in these novels, such as Georgette in Belghoul's work, and Farida in Kessas' novel, although the *banlieue* can also be envisioned as a larger-scale site of a *state of exception*, as seen in *Rai*.

Nonetheless, examples in which these characters, or the artists who created these works, engage in *desacralizing play*, minimizing inequalities by removing the power from enunciations of Franco-French hegemony, or in the provision of *testimony*, can be found in each of these works, revealing that these strategies may bear universal value in helping the subjectified escape their domination, despite the fact that Agamben is sometimes characterized as radical or utopian, in the degree to which he portrays democracies as being inhospitable to hospitality.

On that note, I will suggest that we continue our study by examining several examples of *Beur* literary, cinematographic, and musical cultural texts that are more demonstrative of contexts that allow for some degree of integration to occur, even while it is clear that these works' protagonists will face real challenges as they negotiate their places in French society.

Chapter 3:
Mixed Hospitality in *Beur* Novels, Films and Music Videos

Introduction

My third chapter will focus on the analysis of instances of hospitality that fit neither the sanguine description of healthy, mutually-beneficial relationships described by Derrida, nor the pathological type that Foucault evokes as a model for situations characterized by oppression and manipulation. A Derridean analysis of these works would suggest that the negative experiences that the *Beurs* have in these novels are only a part of the process of becoming integrated, with some efforts towards this goal failing, but ultimately culminating in a better position for minorities in France; meanwhile, a Foucauldian appraisal would lead one to believe that signs of integration in these works are not authentic, the French of European descent tolerating the *Beurs* only to manipulate them.

Within this chapter, unlike in the previous and subsequent chapters, when I focus on the application of one theorist over the other, I will use Derrida and Foucault together, dialectically, to analyze a select number of novels and films that fall at the mid-point of hospitality, when used as a model for understanding *Beur* integration in France.

The Foucauldian aspect of interactions between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French involves relations of power, which make it difficult for the

French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French to cohabitate, especially in the academic setting, the focus of several of the works in this chapter, despite the fact that some of the *Beurs* in these novels achieve some success through their education. I envision the school in these *Beur* novels as a sort of a panopticon. The *Beurs* in these novels are constantly monitored by their schoolteachers, who survey their behavior, seeking to assure themselves that it conforms to the standards that are valorized in French society. Many of these teachers are unsympathetic to them, as are some of their peers who are also of immigrant origin, many of whom resent their fellow *Beur* students for their success in school. Given that, as Foucault writes, power is conveyed through the transmission of knowledge, I argue that the school setting in these *Beur* novels and films is a suitable environment in which to examine the rapport between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French at the mid-point of hospitality, especially since French pedagogy is well-known for its authoritarian approach. The schoolmasters in these *Beur* novels have significant power over their *Beur* students. Likewise, the more socially-accepted Franco-French students exert an uncomfortable amount of power over the *Beurs* in this setting, compromising and undermining their real and perceived integration. Presumably, many *Beurs* resent behaviors or attitudes that are characterized by condescension and judgmentalism, just as most people do. Of course, the *Beurs* in these novels are not in as difficult a situation as the inmates of a hospital or mental asylum, Foucault's two models for the panopticon, are, since the school administrators' power over the *Beurs* is limited; outside of the school environment, the *Beur* students may be able to behave freely, unrestrained by the values and norms that are presented as standard by their teachers. Foucault's theory on the connection between knowledge and

power is applicable to many settings besides educational ones, as Foucault writes in *Power/Knowledge*.

Of course, I realize that the *formes de disposition* to which Foucault refers in his power theory include more than educational institutions; there are also prisons and medical institutions among these organizations. The essential criteria for being a *forme de disposition* is not being academic in nature, but rather, being an institution in which certain discourses are granted authority. The following quotation from *Discipline and Punish* shows the multitude of occupational roles that can be seen to be arbiters of normality:

The judges of normality are present everywhere. We are in the society of the teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the educator-judge, the social worker-judge; it is on them that the universal reign of the normative is based; and each individual, wherever he may find himself, subjects to it his body, his gestures, his behavior, his aptitudes, his achievements.

(Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 304)

The common link between these institutions, from a Foucauldian perspective, is the way in which all of them evaluate people's behavior according to a spectrum of the *abnormal* and *normal*, attributing value judgments to each type of behavior. Another key attribute of these institutions, in Foucault's estimation, is the way in which they exercise power over individuals, punishing and limiting misbehavior, and providing supervision, thereby creating the soul, through the control of people's bodies, as he writes, also in *Discipline and Punish*:

This is the historical reality of the soul, which, unlike the soul represented by Christian theology, is not born in sin and subject to punishment, but is born rather out of methods of punishment, supervision, and constraint.

(Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 29)

In Foucault's power theory, the soul is created through the process of normalization, exerted on people, whether they are patients in a mental health unit, prisoners, or high school students, populations whose situations we know well. Indeed, this type of covertly coercive, psychological power can be said to be found in relationships of all types between human beings.

In this sense, French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's work, discussed in his 1979 *La Distinction*, is useful, with respect to the concept that he made well-known, that of *la violence symbolique* (*symbolic violence*). This concept must be understood within the greater context of Bourdieu's overarching focus, that of the definition of *good taste* by those with greater educational and cultural investment, as opposed to by those with less of this type of background. By affirming this definition of *good taste*, and asserting this distinction to those with less cultural and educational experience, the upper class in each society, seems to engage in *symbolic violence*, violence that draws clear lines between those who meet certain material or intellectual criteria, and those who do not.

In terms of the conception of the French school, or the mental hospital or prison, this idea of *symbolic violence* can be useful for understanding the way in which those who perpetuate certain discourses based on certain types of knowledge in situations of so-called "Foucauldian" hospitality can be seen, especially in some situations, as engaging in a type of *symbolic violence*, however non-violent, that makes it clear to

people who are subjugated within these institutions that certain behavior is expected of them, and that certain people are in power. This is not to suggest, of course, that educational, psychiatric, and corrective professionals are intentionally or personally engaging in *symbolic violence*; the very function of certain institutions, as opposed to that of individuals in general, can be said to enforce the reproduction of certain behavior based on the threat of *symbolic violence*.

Desubjectification occurs among the *Beur* protagonists in these works to different degrees, and in different ways, although, globally, there seems to be higher degrees of desubjectification in the works of Chapter 3, than there were in Chapter 2, on “Foucauldian” hospitality as exemplified in *Beur* artistic works. Namely, there are many attempts at this process in *Les Raisins de la galère*, *L’Oeil au beurre noir*, and *Le Gone du Chaaba and Béni our le paradis privé*, while there are very limited degrees of attempted desubjectification in *Le Thé au harem d’Archimède* and *La Haine*. The fact that there are more examples of desubjectification attempts in this chapter, than in Chapter 2, may indicate that attempted desubjectification has the possibility of significantly improving a situation.

Although, in general, there are more examples of efforts at desubjectification than there were in Chapter 2, it seems that many of these attempts aim primarily at psychological relief, and do not seem to have a high probability of achieving actual results. Nonetheless, I demonstrated, in my analysis of Begag’s two works, that even achieving psychological relief can make a difficult situation that causes cognitive and emotional dissonance, much more bearable, thus I valorize and even applaud these examples of attempted desubjectification in these *Beur* artistic works.

Despite the fact that several excerpts in these novels, particularly those occurring in academic contexts, can be described in terms of “Foucauldian” hospitality, a Derridean reading, based on the *Gift of Death*, would highlight the instances in which the *Beur* students identify with the Otherness of their white counterparts, and even with their schoolteachers, who are in some cases viewed as their adversaries. Such redemptive acts allow them to participate in role reversals. This interpretation would also insist on the way in which some *Beurs* succeed in transcending racial stereotypes, and are able to forge places for themselves in France through education.

Rationale for the Choice of Works that are Discussed in this Chapter

Six key works display the mixed approach to hospitality, when conceived of as a model for *Beur* integration, that I have just described in the introduction to this third chapter of this dissertation: Moroccan-Frenchman’s Tahar Ben Jelloun’s 1996 novel, *Les Raisins de la galère*; Medhi Charef’s landmark novel from 1983, *Le Thé au Harem d’Archi Ahmed*; Jewish Frenchman, Mathieu Kassovitz’s 1995 *film de banlieue*, *La Haine*; the French of European descent Serge Meynard’s 1987 film, *L’Oeil au beur(re) noir*; and Algerian-French author, Azouz Begag’s 1986 *Le Gone du Chaaba* and his 1989 *Béni ou le paradis privé*. The two *Beur* novels that have been the most commercially-successful, namely, *Le Thé au harem d’Archi Ahmed*, and *Le Gone du Chaaba*, likely due to the reputable publishing houses that sponsored them, according to Richard Derderian

in the work, *North Africans in Contemporary France: Becoming Visible*, will be analyzed in this chapter. In addition, *La Haine* will also be examined, as the most profitable and impactful of the *films de banlieue*.

At this time, I will justify each work that I have chosen to analyze in this chapter on mixed hospitality, as a model for some contexts of *Beur* integration. Three of the works that I will address, feature portions of the novels that take place in the school environment. Specifically, I have chosen *Le Gone du Chaaba* for its revelation of the paradoxical situation in which some gifted *Beur* students find themselves, as they are admired by their teachers, but are scolded by their peers for their conformity to French standards; *Béni, ou le paradis privé*, for the way in which it shows young Algerian-French teenager Ben Abdallah's fascination with French culture, and his insecurity, caused by the French of European descent perception that he is not a real Frenchman, despite his being born in France; and Medhi Charef's 1983 *Le Thé au Harem d'Archy Ahmed*, the first *Beur* novel, for its complex portrayal of the socio-economic challenges that both *Beurs* and French youth of European descent, namely, youth named Madjid and Pat, face, mitigated by the very close friendship that they share, regardless of their racial and cultural differences.

Beyond these three works, all of which are set predominately or partially in academic environments, this chapter will also include discussion of three other works that are suggestive of situations of mixed hospitality, as a paradigm for the portraits of integration that they convey. Namely, I will address the following three works: Ben Jelloun's *Les Raisins de la galère*, for the way in which it draws attention to the struggle that an Algerian-French family encounters as they lose their house due to a decisively

racially-motivated decision made by their mayor, alleviated by the strength that the protagonist draws from her attempts to defend her family and people, on a personal and political level, evoking the concept of Derridean hospitality; Kassovitz's *La Haine*, for the way in which the inflammatory image that it creates of the French suburbs, suggestive of a model of hospitality similar to the dynamic seen in Foucauldian power theory, is tempered by the strong alliance between the *Beur*, the black, and the white trio, symbolizing some degree of racial solidarity, found in the relative tinderbox of racial strife that is France; Meynard's film, *L'Oeil au beur(re) noir*, for the way in which it depicts the struggle of many minorities in extreme situations, such as the inability of some *Beurs* and people of West African descent to secure housing due to their ethnicity, as well as the strong bonds that it portrays between some Franco-French people and the descendants of North and West Africans, namely, between Denis, Rachid, and their Franco-French mutual friend and romantic interest, Virginie Raymonde.

The Analysis of Works of *Beur* Literature and Cinema that Illustrate "Mixed" Hospitality

Les Raisins de la galère by Ben Jelloun

Strong pathology, evocative of "Foucauldian" hospitality, alleviated by the development of Derridean hospitality, is evident in the efforts of Nadia, the protagonist in Ben Jelloun's work, *Les Raisins de la galère*, to defend her family from losing their house to a racially-fueled initiative on the part of the city mayor, and to achieve success as a political candidate. In this novel, it is not the threat of rioting and gun violence, as it

is in *La Haine* and *Raiï*, but the racism intrinsic to French society that represents an obstacle to Nadia's familial integrity and career fulfillment. Nadia's Algerian-French family is expelled from their home in the centre-ville of Resteville, part of Ile-de-France, in the Paris region, and is relegated to substandard housing in an inferior HLM, after Resteville's mayor decides to build a *Maison de culture*, or a center for cultural events, in its place. Nadia's grandfather, Mohamed, a Kabyle (Algerian) worker who emigrated to France to work in the factories after World War II, had been a farmer and shepherd in agrarian, rural, French Algeria. Of course, the painful legacy of the Algerian War, which has created long-lasting tension between the French, on one hand, and Algerians and Algerian immigrants to France, on the other, also affects Nadia's familial situation. Despite the fact that "Foucauldian" hospitality dominates in the decision of the mayor to evict the family and force them to live elsewhere, there is some transformation on the part of the character of Nadia from Foucauldian resistance to Derridean hope for the future, especially as she envisions that one day, someone of foreign background in France will be able to succeed in political contest, and defend the rights of the North African community in France.

First, the Foucauldian aspect of the context of integration in which Nadia's family finds themselves, based on the control that the French of European descent government and society possess over the North African community, and the manipulation that they use to maintain this grasp, is first revealed when Nadia discovers that the mayor decides to demolish her family's house, due to his racism against Algerians, an epiphany for her, which shows her that housing for minorities is threatened by the pre-conceived notions that the French of European descent have about them: "Il y avait là quelqu'un qui ne

supportait pas l'idée d'une famille d'Algériens puisse s'installer en centre-ville; à ses yeux, un immigré devait habiter la zone, au mieux une cité de transit ou un logement social" (Ben Jelloun 17). Foucault's perceived differences in status are at work in this novel, as the mayor, who represents the consolidation of power in his neighborhood, exercises his authority arbitrarily against Nadia and her family. I use the word "arbitrarily" carefully, since his decision to ask their family to move is most likely purposeful, given Nadia and her father's perceptions that he has targeted them because of their Algerian origins, although the decision to ask them to move, in particular, in order to facilitate the construction of a house of culture, is based largely on his whims, although he uses the concept of public domain to justify this decision.

To compound matters, reinforcing the Foucauldian nature of conditions relevant to *Beur* integration in this novel, even Nadia's efforts to speak to the mayor simply result in further manipulation, central to Foucault's theory, as the mayor proposes that they relocate into a large apartment in an HLM, where it is more acceptable for minorities to live, instead of their home, a decision which reflects compulsory hospitality for this family: « On vous l'achète au prix de marché, puis on vous propose un grand appartement dans une superbe HLM » (Ben Jelloun 19). Nadia takes pain to disguise herself as a high school employee, Marie-Ange Fontaine, in order to secure a meeting with the mayor (Ben Jelloun 19). On the exterior, it may seem that the mayor is doing what is in her family's best interest, but in reality, the proposal that he makes to Nadia and her family is only in alignment with the government's policy on housing for immigrants; they feel that it is acceptable for North Africans to live in certain parts of the neighborhood, but certainly not in the *centre-ville*, where the family's house is currently

located. Unlike the healthy guest-host relationship in Derridean theory, in which the guest and the host try to make gestures that are truly in each other's best interest, what seems to be a "reciprocal gesture," namely, the mayor's offer to move them into an apartment, is not truly one; rather, it is only another example of manipulation, sugarcoated to be a socially-acceptable way of legitimizing his grasp of power, and to disguise the mayor's inherent racism towards Algerians. The mayor's claim, in response to Nadia's appeal to his decision to demolish her family's home, that it is necessary to do so in order to build a *Maison de culture* in the public interest (*l'intérêt général*), further demonstrates that perceived differences in status are significant in this exchange (Ben Jelloun 19). The perceived general interest of the residents of the neighborhood, to the degree that having a *Maison de culture* there is necessary for them, takes precedence over Nadia's family's right and need to preserve their home, regardless of the fact that this decision is somewhat arbitrary.

Despite the basic fruitlessness of Nadia's initiative in speaking to the mayor, it is evident that Nadia, in angrily bringing her concerns to the mayor, is acting in resistance to the control of the French of European descent, as a Foucauldian reading would recommend. While, ultimately, the mayor's power is too great, especially as he defends his choice in the name of the general interest of the city, Nadia makes her resentment of the choice known, thus defending her interests, those of her family, and on a larger scale, those of her fellow North Africans.

Even Nadia's history teacher, an employee of the State (the National Ministry of Education), categorizes the government's seizure of the family home as being a politically and racially-motivated gesture: "Un maire communiste veut raser la maison

d'une famille algérienne" (Ben Jelloun 20). Nadia's subsequent observation alludes to the possible motivations of this mayor: "Pour moi, l'affaire était politique et teintée de racisme. Le Parti communiste français entendait démontrer qu'il était lui aussi capable d'en faire voir aux immigrés" (Ben Jelloun 21). More explicitly, Nadia surmises that the communist party intends to show their constituents that it, like other parties, can take action against immigrants, in this case, to defend the downtown area's integrity as a place for respectable French people of European descent. Clearly, some of Paris' political leaders are out to cast immigrants in a negative light, as evidenced by a subsequent revelation, implicating some Moroccans in drug use: "Quelques mois après notre histoire, le maire de Montigny-les-Cormeilles accusa une famille marocaine de se livrer au trafic de drogue" (Ben Jelloun 21). As a result of the seizure of the family home, Nadia's father feels defeated: "Vis-à-vis des Français, il était tout aussi mitigé: l'épreuve de force avec la mairie communiste l'avait dégouté, démoralisé" (Ben Jelloun 33).

Within Nadia's family, some relationships also evoke the idea of "Foucauldian" hospitality. Namely, before her marriage, Nadia's sister wanted to be a mechanic, but she becomes enmeshed in an unhealthy marriage with a controlling, patriarchal, husband of Arab descent. This marriage prevents her sister from finishing her studies, an obstacle which even her father resents (Ben Jelloun 7). In this work, Nadia describes her sister's husband, who behaves in a self-serving and demanding manner towards his wife: « Le mari de ma sœur est très comme on les aime chez les Arabes. Sûr de lui, content de lui, il aime se faire servir. Sa femme est aussi sa bonne» (Ben Jelloun 7). Nadia rejects the concept of her sister's domination by a man, characteristic of the patriarchal system linked to Islam. In this novel, as in others, North African women and their descendants

are depicted as subjugated by the weight of mentalities related to Islamic fundamentalism. Many French people of European descent, like Nadia in this novel, fear this tendency; this is one of the primary arguments that some French people use in defending France from the spread of Islam, by means of religious proselytism. The modern Franco-French person, in general, espouses pro-woman and pro-feminist values, and some people in France fear that Islam may result in great oppression for many women who fall under its control. One hot-button issue, the question of whether women should be allowed to wear the veil in public places, is complicated by the mentality in traditional French culture, according to which women are greatly valued and respected, a philosophy that extends in time back to the Middle Ages, when women were courted and revered. Thus, the French are reluctant to allow oppressive practices to be used in their country, even under the auspices of the most quickly-growing religion in France (Islam, and no longer Christianity).

Another manifestation of hospitality affected by Foucauldian power dynamics at work in this novel, especially in relation to the status of North African women in French society, involves Nadia's rejection of the treatment that three Algerian girls of her acquaintance receive from their fundamentalist uncle in Africa (Ben Jelloun 77). The three girls, Yamina, Kbirra, and Rosa, who are forced to leave France for Algeria, by their protective father, write to Nadia, telling her that they are indeed not on vacation *au bled* (in their native village in Algeria, Ben Jelloun 77), but are actually being retained in a room by their uncle, Mohamed, where they are forced to learn the Koran, and banned from involvement in a long list of banal activities, which would be considered normal in mainstream French society (Ben Jelloun 78). Although some characters in the novel

argue that the girls' father is trying to protect them from the temptations of French society, which is far more permissive towards relationships between men and women, it is clear that these teenagers resent being isolated and being lectured in the tenets of a strictly-interpreted strain of Islam, even as their brothers and their friends are allowed to remain in France. The tragedy of this episode is not only that these girls are removed from their friends and education in France, but also that one of them, Kbir, commits suicide, due to her depression (Ben Jelloun 83). The effects of Islamic fundamentalism are seen to be one of the aspects of Foucauldian-like contexts of integration in France, as seen in this novel. While the Muslim patriarch in Ben Jelloun's novel claims to be trying to safeguard their daughters' honor by taking them to Algeria, or as in Nini's and Kessas' novels, when fathers and brothers enforce harsh curfews or monitor their daughters' social lives on a minute level, in terms of French values, their actions seem sexist and unfair, since their brothers are allowed to have mostly free social lives, and also because French values permit much greater social and sexual latitude. The North African women in these novels face not only these harmful fundamentalist attitudes and practice, but also the judgmental attitudes of many Franco-French, who, as in several novels, sometimes mock them for their more conservative practices and attitudes, when the youth of North African descent often have little control over the parameters set for them.

Aligning with the categorization of this novel in the "mixed-hospitality" chapter, while most of the work reflects a type of integration that is both challenged and challenging, Nadia undergoes a significant transformation from anger towards the French of European descent towards a more hopeful attitude, signifying a transition to a more Derridean approach to the future. In particular, at the beginning of the work, she

inwardly expresses anger towards the mayor for making her family move: “Aujourd’hui, j’ai subi une grande défaite. Mais ils ne m’auront pas. Je ne serai jamais la petite *Beur* qui passe à la télé pour dire combien elle est assimilée, intégrée, rangée. Non. J’ai la rage! Trop d’injustice. Je ne serai jamais galérienne” (Ben Jelloun 22). In this quotation, Nadia expresses her frustration and anger towards the French, who have uprooted her family, and who see Algerians as second-class citizens. In this work, minorities are vulnerable to the whims of the French of European descent government, some of whose representatives aim to limit the *Beurs*’ rights to urban space.

Nadia’s anger is reinforced by her father’s reaction to the forced eviction of their family, as he remarks on the racist motivations behind it: “Bourru [the mayor] s’est permis de démolir notre maison parce que, pour lui, nous ne sommes que des Algériens. Jamais il n’aurait osé faire ça à des immigrés portugais ou espagnols” (Ben Jelloun 35). The perception that Nadia’s father has, that their eviction is racially-fueled, since their family is Algerian-French, instead of being from a Western European background, seems to add to his indignation. It is not merely an injustice, and a violation of civil rights, but is also racially-based, and thus an act of discrimination. In Nadia and her father’s angry attitudes towards the French of European descent, there is also the bitter taste of post-colonial betrayal and disappointment. Nadia’s father explains the *Beurs*’ problematic situation in France to her, by pointing to the fact that the French of European descent, during the colonial period, demanded submission from the immigrant population, yet once these North Africans made their permanent homes in France, at the time of family reunification in 1974, many French people of European descent came to resent the Maghrebin immigration to and settlement in France: “La France s’est arrangée pour

aggraver nos défauts, elle nous a voulu soumis, resignés. Après la guerre d'Algérie, elle ne nous a pas vraiment admis. Tous nos malheurs sont venus de là" (Ben Jelloun 63). He senses that, although the French of European descent let North Africans settle in France after World War II, they resented the immigrant community, made them the *bouc-émissoires* of their troubled economy, and punished them into submission, by demanding their conformity to French norms and standards.

In regards to this issue of Maghrebin immigration to France, Nadia likes to insist on the fact that she, herself the descendant of Kabyles, and the *Beurs* in general, for the most part, are not immigrants. Accordingly, she rejects the term, *deuxième génération*, since she and many of her contemporaries were born in France: "On oublie que nous ne sommes pas du tout les immigrés; nous n'avons pas fait le voyage, nous n'avons pas traversé la Grande Bleue, nous sommes nés ici, en terre française...dans les banlieues arabes" (Ben Jelloun 76). Another excerpt from this novel that testifies to Nadia's perception that she and her family, and others of Maghrebin heritage in France, are unwanted and resented, is the following:

Peut-être que nous sommes le sel maudit de la terre, la mauvaise graine que pousse toute seule là où elle tombe, peut-être qu'on nous a fait venir ici pour casser, tordre et mordre le fer, perturber les fêtes de familles, crier aux heures où les gens dorment, semer le désordre, le doute et l'ortie?

(Ben Jelloun 17)

In this quotation, Nadia seems to perceive the French train of thought, according to which North Africans are the "cursed salt of the earth," and that they are in France for the sole purpose of disturbing parties, waking people up, and causing havoc. The feeling of being

the black sheep, or the sore thumb, of the French social stratosphere, has to be difficult and demeaning for the Maghrebi-French, as they presumably dislike lacking definitive, significant, and positively-perceived roles within French society.

However, Nadia's anger towards her marginalized position in France leads her to other places besides vindictiveness; as I stated above, her transition from a vantage point akin to the disadvantaged in a context of so-called "Foucauldian" hospitality, to a more positive attitude towards herself and the future, also motivates her to protect her family and strive to secure a place for herself in society. She describes herself in terms of bravery and resistance: as she sees it, she is part of "cette nouvelle race de Françaises pas très blanches de peau, mais avec une farouche envie de vaincre dans leurs yeux brillants, leurs poings serées" (Ben Jelloun 61). In this vein, she is motivated to attend school for sociology and urban studies, and to obtain her driver's license (Ben Jelloun 62). Her father encourages her to take advantage of life's opportunities: "T'es pas dans la galère. Profites-en! Des raisins il y en a. Tu as mérité de les cueillir" (Ben Jelloun 68). This line is the inspiration for the title of the work, *Les Raisins de la galère*, which is modeled after the title of John Steinbeck's 20th-century American classic, *The Grapes of Wrath* (translated in French as, *Les Raisins de la colère*), and perhaps after Lorraine Hansberry's 1959 work, *A Raisin in the Sun*, treating the lives of African-Americans. While, apparently, in Steinbeck's book, anger plays a role in the lives of his characters, in this work by Ben Jelloun, Nadia is encouraged to draw happiness (*des raisins*, as in the quotation above, by her father) out of a difficult situation (*la galère*, referring to a situation that is similar to jail, as is being victimized by a racist France), which she does. On a symbolic level, Nadia makes a special brand of lemonade, by taking advantages of

new opportunities for herself, her family, and her people, although the situation in which she finds herself is akin to receiving another type of fruit, instead: “lemons” in life, frustrating, often ridiculous circumstances that no one wants to experience.

Speaking of the term *la galère*, it is a term that is not only used in this work by Ben Jelloun; rather, it is, according to Derderian, who wrote the book that includes this excerpt in 2004, eight years after the publication of *Les Raisins de la galère* (published in 1996):

...the new term used to designate the sickness that afflicts youths in the *banlieues*. *La galère* is a highly volatile sense of detachment and frustration among suburban youths produced by an environment that excludes, alienates and stigmatizes. *La galère* is always at risk of degenerating into *la rage*, a destructive form of explosive anger associated with the urban riots that have periodically erupted across France’s suburban landscape since the early 1980s. Powerfully conveyed in films such as *La Haine* (1996) the banlieues are cast as ethnically-saturated films seething with a rage that threatens to spill over into the urban center. In a long tradition of French borrowing from American territorialized images of otherness, beginning with James Fenimore Cooper’s “savages” in the early nineteenth century, the new term used to stigmatize the suburbs is *ghetto*. Refuted in countless studies, *ghetto* has nevertheless become common currency over the past two decades.

(Derderian 148)

In addition, Nadia’s anger, and ensuing refusal to be dominated by the French of European descent, lead her to run for political office, representative of a step towards a more egalitarian role in France, corresponding to “Derridean” hospitality: “Moi, Nadia, née en France, devenue française, avec encore de la terre algérienne collée à la plante des pieds...la rebelle qui refuse d’être réduite à la condition de Beur, je me présente aux législatives, et pourquoi pas demain aux européennes?” (Ben Jelloun 90). She sees

running for European Parliament as a possibility to have revenge on her detractors, in the event she is not elected in the European elections: “Après tout, l’élection d’une Beur à Strasbourg ferait une belle revanche, si je venais à échouer aux législatives” (Ben Jelloun 98). Despite her struggles, Ben Jelloun portrays Nadia as a member of a rising *Beur* minority (Ben Jelloun 61). This characterization seems to refer to the ascending *Beurgeoisie* minority, who transcend stereotypes about their ethnicity, but are able to make significant contributions to society. This *Beurgeoisie* minority, proving that some *Beurs* can attain great success in France, is the subject of Philippe Bernard’s *La Crème des Beurs* (2001).

Also, another indicator of a change from a “Foucauldian” to a “Derridean” attitude towards integration within Nadia is found at the end of the novel. Despite the fact that she loses in her contest for political office, Nadia expresses her hope that one day, a *Beurette* will succeed in her place: “Au soir du scrutin, je respire : je ne serai pas députée !...Ce sera pour une prochaine fois, peut-être pour une autre que moi» (Ben Jelloun 131). In the article, “Writing from the *Beurs*,” Hélène Jaccomard comments on the reasons that contribute to Nadia’s loss in the elections:

However, due to all the other parties’ dirty tricks, Nadia does not get elected. The novel is very much an indictment of the present paralysis of the French political system, where every party from left to right appears corrupt. Nadia realizes that even if she wins no elections, her participation in political life could change French society by making her visible in a positive way. She would counteract the media crime, the tolerance threshold...She could also be an instrument of change within Arab culture.

Ultimately, Nadia surrenders her excessive resentment towards the French of European descent, in the expectation that one day the *Beurs* will become more accepted in the mainstream. The very fact that she has the confidence to run for office means that she has some faith in the fairness of political contest. In this sense, Nadia's develops as a character, evolving from a place of seeing her situation with a Foucauldian outlook, to viewing it from a Derridean, optimistic stance.

An extension of a less Foucauldian, and more Derridean, approach to Nadia's perception of her own future is seen in her decision to leave her father and explore the world at the end of the novel. He implores her: "Quitte ce pays-ci, voyage, va à la découverte du monde" (Ben Jelloun 135). Nadia does not have many reasons to remain in Resteville at the end of the novel, as Jacomard's comment illustrates:

Yet at the end of the *Les Raisins de la galère*, both her private and public lives lie in tatters with nobody to love, her father dead, her mother uncomprehending, no job prospect, and no illusions of the political scene. After the pitfalls of apathy, delinquency, suicide, drugs, and unemployment thoroughly illustrated in all preceding *Beur* novels, this recent book suggests that not even political action is the answer in their quest.

Earlier in the novel, Nadia's father makes it clear to her that if she remains in France, she will never be seen as a real citizen of her own country: "Tu es Kabyle, on te prendra pour une Arabe, alors même que tu es citoyenne de France. Tu ne seras jamais française" (Ben Jelloun 35). For these reasons, Nadia's father's advice to her is well-supported by his experience. As he saw it, perhaps, one day, Nadia will find attain greater respect and

opportunity in another country, whose people will not stigmatize her as an Arab, despite her identity as a Kabyle, and as an immigrant, rather than as a fully-accepted and participating citizen. In addition, one of the comments by Nadia herself is indicative of a basic rejection of her life in the suburbs, as she calls Resteville, “le Val de Nulle Part”: “C’est même pas la France, c’est le Val de Nulle Part” (120). This nickname reminds me of references in the films, *La Haine* and *Raï*, to the suburbs as a no-man’s-land, a reference also found in the title of the *Beur* novel, *Zeida de nulle part* [*Zeida from nowhere*].

Desubjectification in Ben Jelloun’s *Les Raisins de la galère*

While I use the general term *resistance*, in the Foucauldian sense, to describe the actions of Nadia of trying to negotiate with the mayor of Resteville, Bourru, as he makes plans to oblige her family to sell the family house to the city government her house for the purposes of building a *Maison de culture* on the property, and of running for the legislative elections and planning to run for the European elections, the processes that Nadia undergoes, those of questioning the discourse according to which it was in the best interest of her family to sell this house to the government, and of seeing herself as a viable candidate for political office, regardless of the way in which some people perceive her due to her ethnicity and the stigma that some of them put onto Algerians living in the center of town, as her family does. The dominant narrative that Bourru tries to assert is that the government does as it pleases, and that even when the actions of this government are suspect, it is not the place of people like Nadia to question these actions. She must

also perceive a dominant narrative concerning the question of who can run for political office in France. Those in charge in this novel probably assume that most Maghrebi-French know that it is the French of European descent who make the crucial decisions in Resteville, even ones that affect Algerian families so greatly, such as the decision to sell Nadia's family's house.

Additionally, aside from political desubjectification, Nadia reaches a point where she can protect herself psychologically from the potential subjectification that she could have experienced if she had been involved in a marriage with a traditional-minded man such as the one married to her sister, who expects her sister to wait on him hand and foot (Ben Jelloun 7). Nadia recognizes the internal flaw in this narrative perpetuated by the traditional-minded members of the Algerian-French community in France, and is able to draw a firm line between this type of behavior, and the behavior that she will accept.

Nadia appears to be a character who, although heavily subjectified by the discourses of the French government, seems to have great maturity and inner strength, seeing clearly the challenges before her, and seeing the possibility of becoming politically engaged as a means to ensure more equal participation in governmental decisions for the Maghrebi-French in the future. Her father's honest presentation of his perception of Bourru's behavior, as he diagnoses the reason for the dispossession of their house as being Bourru's racism towards Algerians, and his encouragement to her to expand her horizons, further strengthens Nadia's resolve. She also makes plans to study sociology and urban studies, two disciplines that may foreseeably help her to address urban problems such as the one faced by her family in the future through the creation of better policy, and she aims to get her driver's license, since she knows that it will help her

to become more independent. Nadia is one of the more mature, resilient characters whom I examine in this dissertation, and along with Nini in *Ils disent que je suis une beurette*, the strongest *Beurette* character that I study. There seems to be tremendous difference between the characterization of Nadia in this work, and the portrayal of Malika and Farida in Kessas's *Beur's Story*, which I discuss in Chapter 2, and which is set in the early 1990s, with more limited options for *Beurettes* to seize their senses of agency.

Le Thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed by Medhi Charef (1983)

Additionally, Medhi Charef's landmark 1983 work, *Le Thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed*, which was one of the first *Beur* novels, is a good example of a novel that demonstrates mixed hospitality. Foucauldian-like hospitality, as a model for attempts at integration, is demonstrated by the novel's depiction of the widespread employment that the Beurs face, like their Franco-French peers, as well as the delinquency, including pick pocketing and doing drugs, to which these youngsters often resort, absent a sufficient number of viable employment opportunities. These forms of delinquency are seen by many as a response to their perceived alienation from society, since they often feel that circumstances are stacked against them. To some extent, the social and occupational challenges encountered by the *Beurs* touch the French of European descent as well, as demonstrated by the fact that the *Beur* protagonist, Madjid and the French of European descent student, Pat, both face trouble at school. Beyond these obstacles, the

Foucauldian environment of hospitality in this novel is reinforced by the constant clashes that occur between some of the North African community's religious practices and values, and the norms of the larger French society, which affirm the prevalence of the secular republic. In this section, I will explore some of the obstacles that the *Beurs* in this novel experience, referring back to Foucauldian power theory. As explained in my first chapter, Foucault focuses on perceived differences in status that complicate and frustrate relationships, with the strong dominating and manipulating the weak, and the necessity of the weak to resist power structures. There are frequent references in this novel to the manipulation that the *Beurs* encounter from the French of European descent.

Still, paradoxically, the multitude of the obstacles that the *Beur* youth share with their French peers helps these characters foster strong bonds between them, creating a form of interpersonal Derridean hospitality in France, for other people to observe, who may have much more difficult relationships with people from other cultures.

First, I will examine the support that I can find in this novel for the existence of Derridean-like gestures of hospitality as a metaphor for the degree of the integration of the *Beurs*. As Carrie Tarr remarks in the article, "Questions of Identity in Beur Cinema: From *Tea in the Harem* to *Cheb*," from the journal, *Screen*, *Le Thé au Harem d'Archimède* provides French viewers with a new example of a work that, unlike many representations of interracial relationships at the time, does not wage its stakes on the fulcrum of racial issues; instead, in this work, interracial solidarity between Pat and Madjid suggests to "French audiences, a non-threatening and non-accusatory representation of ethnic difference" (341). She also suggests that *Le Thé au Harem d'Archi Ahmed* and Rachid Bouchareb's film from 1985, *Baton Rouge*, convey a more

positive outlook towards relationships between the French of European descent and *Beurs*, as was seen in the early 1980s, that many other films do (Kechiche 3410).

On the subject of the *rapprochement* that Charef makes in this work between the immigrant community and lower-class French youth of European descent, he remarks: “Je voulais tout simplement montrer que dans une famille française et une famille immigrée, on vit toujours la même chose,” as cited in Hargreaves’ *Voices from the North African Community* (135). Another one of Charef’s goals in writing *Le Thé* is to illustrate to the more affluent Franco-French, that the concerns of the *Beur* community are very real, and as valid as theirs: “On n’est pas des bêtes, nous aussi on cherche quelque chose, on veut vivre” (Hargreaves 134). This goal seems similar to the one that is the apparent purpose of the film, *L’Oeil au beur(re) noir*, by Meynard, which portrays the severe challenges that two men of North and West African descent encounter in finding an apartment in Paris in the mid-1980s, due to the intrinsic racism of French society at the time, as described later in this chapter. The way in which Charef seems to avoid discussing obstacles that were unique to the *Beurs* in this novel, and instead focuses on ones shared by the *Beurs* and the French of European descent youth from poorer backgrounds, is alluded to in this passage written by Tarr, who sees the early 1980s as a period in which films portrayed a more positive integration climate (58):

Socioeconomic conditions are presented as the principal stumbling block to integration, and cultural differences are marginalized or erased. The films refuse “miserabilism,” and minimize or omit references to racism and the legacy of the Algerian war. Even the representatives of oppressive state institutions are shown as relatively benevolent.

(Tarr, “Questions of Identity” 58)

Beyond the depiction of problems shared by the *Beurs* and some disadvantaged Franco-French youth, as a sign that racial strife in France is a not serious concern in this novel, one scene reveals the existence of the potential for understanding and dialogue between the French of European descent and the *Beurs*. This scene, which is encouraging for the prospect of the development of healthier relationships in this novel, is the cancan scene, in which Madjid, Malika, and her husband watch a TV show featuring *les Folies-Bergères* dance the can-can, on New Year's Eve. There are indications that the French and North African cultures are coming to be seen as parallel to each other, when Madjid recalls the marriage dances that his mother led at weddings in Algeria, as he watches this TV show, depicting French women dancing a very French dance:

Il attend minuit, l'heure où sont programmées les filles des *Folies-Bergères*. A moitié nues, elles danseront le French cancan comme à chaque jour de l'An, puis nous souhaiteront la bonne année....Madjid s'en souvient. Il était même, il se rappelle sa mère mènant la danse dans les mariages de famille en Algérie.

(Charef 157)

The fact that Madjid recalls his childhood experiences, in particular, seeing his mother lead traditional dances in Algeria, as he watches the French can-can being performed on TV, indicates that there is some degree of cultural mixing in his environment. The past in their home country, where the wedding dances were not only accepted, but expected, is suddenly brought to mind as he watches the performance of a characteristically-French dance, the can-can. Although Madjid lacks the ability to truly appreciate his mother's cultural practices for what they are, preferring to see them as

merely the vestiges of a past best forgotten in favor of a life in France, this passage indicates that he does seem some continuity between the Old World (which, for him, unlike Pat, is not Europe, but Africa), and the New World (not America, as it is for me, the author of this dissertation, but France), perhaps indicating less of a rejection of Malika's traditional Algerian values than he realizes.

While for Madjid, watching this dance brings him to see his mother's culture in a new light, for Malika, it brings back positive memories of a time when she was young, beautiful, and in her element, a young Algerian woman in Algeria, instead of in her current situation, a middle-aged, Algerian woman, transplanted in a country with remarkably different cultural values than those of her home country: "Elle était belle, Malika, grande, élancée, elle n'avait à l'époque qu'un enfant, elle était bien jeune" (Charef 157). The phrase, « ...elle n'avait à l'époque qu'un enfant » seems to reveal that she prefers this time in which she only had one child, and was not burdened by the care and upbringing of her other children, and by the onerous responsibilities of marriage and motherhood. For her, the can-can is symbolic of her youth and of a relative golden age.

On the other hand, there are numerous examples that indicate a more "Foucauldian" environment in this novel. Like many *Beurs* in France, Madjid finds himself in a very awkward position, between the culture of his origins and the French society in which she lives: "...ni arabe ni français depuis longtemps...Il est fils d'immigrés, paumé entre deux cultures, deux histoires, deux langues, deux couleurs de peau, ni blanc ni noir, à s'inventer ses propres racines, ses attaches, se les fabriquer..." (Charef 17). While prisoners or patients in a mental hospital or prison, also in a disadvantaged position, have a more definite concept of their place since they are being

cared for by their supposed superiors, the discomfort that Madjid and other *Beurs* experience in France carries even more painful implications, because their role is often much less-clearly defined. In fact, this lack of a clear-cut identity is a such a common theme in many Beur novels, that many of these works are considered *romans d'apprentissage*, in which *Beur* youth negotiate their belonging to North African and French cultures, often forging a sort of hybrid, *Beur* identity that accepts and rejects elements of each cultural tradition, according to the possible advantages that these characters can glean from them. This type of cultural fusion is evoked by the last part of the sentence in the excerpt cited above: “à s’inventer ses propres racines, ses attaches, se les fabriquer...” (17).

On the subject of identity crises, some of the most painful, excruciating experiences that humans experience are ones which involve confusion over vaguely-defined roles. If people know what to expect from other people and from society, while at the same time having some degree of autonomy, they are less likely to become stymied in these difficult *entre-les-deux*, in which they feel constantly tugged and towed between two influences that are, in some ways, mutually exclusive, and yet both very demanding. The ability to create one’s own perceived identity is reminiscent of Sartre’s concept of living an authentic life of good faith, as he describes in his existentialist treatises. This ability that humans have, to make their own decisions, to reject the labels and directives that others assign to them, and to refuse to play strict roles that are assigned arbitrarily to people in society as a whole, implies both a great freedom and responsibility. Thus, in the aspects of life in which the Maghrebi-French have more sphere of action, they realize that, beyond the constraints that prevent them from absolute freedom, they do have some

control over their lives, and yet they also have a great duty to act responsibly, ethically, and authentically, refusing to live according to others' expectations, or to follow codes that they deem inappropriate for them. This means that the Maghrebi-French have to be intentional and cautious about the models that they follow and create for themselves. Having the mere capacity to reject burdensome or inappropriate expectations from the dominant French or the minority North African cultures may give them a feeling of self-satisfaction, but the onus is still on them to take action to make the choices that are right for them.

Another facet of Madjid's experiences that are described in this novel, which contributes to his feeling of dislocation and disenfranchisement in France, involves the glaring issue of the way in which practices related to Islam and North African cultures are perceived in France. In particular, many of the French of European descent in this work are reluctant to accept the religiously-based practices of Madjid's mother, Algerian-born Malika.

First, among the cultural practices that are not well-received by the French, is the very thorny and controversial issue of *la portée de la voile* (the wearing of the veil) in France. This issue has proved to be a sore spot in relationships between the French of European descent and Muslims for the past couple of decades, and in 2012, the wearing of *la voile intégrale*, or *le burqua*, covering the face, as well, was outlawed in public places. Many French people of European descent conceive of *la voile* as a symbol of fundamentalist Islam, carrying connotations of proselytism and extremism. The French Republic is based on the concept of *la laïcité*, thus, the goal of banning or limiting the wearing of the veil in public places, such as the office or school, has been established, in

order to eliminate the possibility of any State religion becoming dominant, and in this case, especially to prevent any infringement of a person's rights to have complete religious and personal liberty.

Many French people also associate *la voile* as being a symbol of a misogynist and patriarchal culture which insists that women shroud their faces in order to discourage attention from men, while at the same time preventing women's physical identity and uniqueness from being revealed, as well as stifling these women's liberty, creativity and freedom of expression. French sensitivities, cultivated by feminist thought, can easily be offended when women are seen wearing these signs of religious oppression, as many people perceive it. Complications arise when one is dealing with women who truly want to wear the veil, in order to protect themselves from impurity, to express their ties to their ancestral cultures, or to communicate their allegiance to their faith. Is someone wearing the veil, French first, and so bound to reject symbols of inequality, or is she Muslim, enabling her to wear it, provided that she does not proselytize?

It is this context, although presumably in the time period of the early 1980s, instead of the 2010s, that Malika, mother to the main character of Algerian origin, Madjid, represents a challenge to French values and perceptions of normalcy. Namely, the sight of Malika wearing the veil causes great controversy among her Franco-French neighbors, as described in the scene detailing Malika's arrival in France. This sight provokes the curiosity and bewilderment of these French people of European descent:

Malika avait gardé son voile, perdue entre deux civilisations. Elle fut la curiosité des banlieusards qui allaient pointer au bureau. Elle n'avait jamais quitté son village de l'Est algérien et d'un seul coup, la voilà d'un seul coup de l'autre côté de la Méditerranée. Tout est grand et démesuré. « Le progrès, » qu'elle se dit

sous son voile...C'est son costume de première, et elle découvre qu'ici les femmes n'en portent pas. Dur pour elle !

(Charef 116)

In this excerpt from the novel, the veil that adorns Malika's head is viewed by her neighbors as a vestige of a foreign, unwelcome, and inferior cultural mindset. The inhabitants of the suburb, and the people in the offices in the area, demonstrate their curiosity towards Malika because of this cultural practice, which seems out of place, in their eyes. The shock that Malika registers upon learning that in "grand, démesuré" (gigantic, immeasurable France), the veil is not accepted, is amplified due to the fact that she has spent all of her past before arriving in France, in a small village in eastern Algeria, where, presumably, the wearing of the veil was never challenged; in fact, it was most likely mandated by culture, religion, and common decency. The last sentence of this excerpt, in which Malika comments sarcastically on the supposed "progress" that France is or was lauded for in North Africa, leads her to great disappointment, as she views what she perceives as a cultural regression. She evidently has not realized, or wholly internalized, the fact that cultural practices vary widely across cultures, due to her limited life experiences. Our cultures condition us to accept or reject certain practices or mentalities, and once this conditioning has been established, often due to consistent reinforcement for desirable behavior, and punishment for non-compliance, the person who has adopted this mentality may experience significant cognitive dissonance in learning that these practices are not universally accepted, and even that they are absolutely forbidden in some areas, potentially resulting in mental trauma. This is "culture shock" in its truest form, created by a clash of two opposing mindsets.

In this same section of the novel, the reader learns of Malika's discovery that the French rejection of the wearing of the veil in their society, becomes a way for the dominant French culture to limit transgression of this expectation to a bare minimum. Malika becomes reluctant to go out because the French of European descent do not wear the veil, and she cannot envision herself without wearing the veil: "Elle n'ose pas encore sortir, parce qu'ici les femmes n'ont pas la voile et elle ne se voit pas dans la rue sans haïk. Elle n'ose pas encore" (Charef 115-116). For Malika, if going outside means removing her veil, which she presumably considers in opposition to her sense of self and religious and cultural identity, she will not go outside and be perceived as any of the French or foreign women, for whom wearing a veil is a vestige of a foreign past that carries connotations of oppression of and prejudice against women. Regardless of these views of many Westerners, removing her veil, for Malika, is akin to having part of her heart removed: the veil has become an integral component of her life, despite the fact that many French people expect her to forgo wearing it, and to conform to the standards of a country, culture, and religious past that is not her own. In general, the French cultural standard of *la laïcité* leads them to reject ostentatious manifestations of religious adherence, especially when this religion is Islam. Some have even noted that the French have a propensity to reject manifestations of Islam more frequently than those of Christianity, and it has been said that there is a certain ambivalence in the French approach to religion: their laws establish a secular state, and yet, the severity with which some of these laws proscribe expressions of Muslim faith seem to point to a special prejudice against Islam, perhaps revelatory of a tendency to shield adherents of Christianity, Judaism, and some other religions from the brunt of complete suppression.

In addition to the issue of the veil, Malika's integration into French society is handicapped by her limited fluency in French, and by her adhesion to using Arabic. For example, according to Alec G. Hargreaves, in the article, "*Beur Fiction: Voices from the Immigrant Community in France*," Malika's authority in her relationship with her son Madjid is jeopardized when she fails to use proper French, and even falls into using Arabic, in a scene in which Malika is trying to convince Madjid to stop listening to his Sex Pistols album (representative of his interest in American culture), which he is listening to at full blast in order to camouflage the sound of her voice, and look for his father. Malika physically approaches him, shakes him, and yells at him in French, threatening to send him do his military service in Algeria, where he will be forced to acknowledge his heritage and learn his language (Charef 16-17). In this scene, Madjid is undermining his mother's authority over him, and using her bad French and her use of Arabic as excuses to avoid following her commands. Hargreaves comments on this scene in the work, *Voices from the North African Community in France*, insisting on the way in which Malika's handicapped French puts her at a real disadvantage in her relationship with her son:

Early in *Le Thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed*, Charef presents a blazing row between the young protagonist, Madjid and his mother Malika. Madjid is refusing to follow his mother's orders, which she yells at him in her broken French: "Elle parle un mauvais français avec un drôle d'accent et les gestes napolitains en plus," the narrator tells us [Charef 16] and Madjid takes advantage of this to pretend he cannot understand her. When she lapses into Arabic---which Madjid cannot understand---her defeat is complete.

(Hargreaves 664)

With respect to the importance of fluency in French as a criterion of and tool for integration, Hargreaves holds that while education and reading have permitted many *Beurs* to achieve access to French society and culture, the advantage that *Beurs* have over their parents and grandparents can cause great humiliation for people from these older generations:

That education has enabled immigrant youths to articulate a much more critical view of French society than was feasible for most of their parents. It has also had sometimes humiliating consequences for first-generation migrants in their dealings with their children. Illiterate Muslim parents have often been dependent on the assistance of their sons and daughters, when confronted with written documents. This is a striking reversal of the traditional relationship between young and old, particularly in Muslim societies.

(Hargreaves 664)

Although the dysfunctionality of this mother-son relationship, and the impasse that is created when Malika starts to speak French, seem dire, Charef himself states that, like many of the situations depicted in this novel, the real-life scene that inspired this excerpt from the novel and its corresponding scene in the film adaptation, was much worse: “Madjid, c’est moi [...] Quand il dit à sa mère qui lui parle en arabe: “Je ne comprends *pas* ce que tu dis”, j’ai failli mettre *plus* [instead of *pas*, indicating that Madjid/Charef had forgotten Arabic]. Mais ça aurait été trop dur,” as cited in Hargreaves’ *Voices from the North African Community* (85). As Hargreaves interprets this comment, Charef seems to indicate that the character representing him, Madjid in this novel, has forgotten Arabic, instead of never having learned it, symbolizing a more or less willful rejection of his heritage, his ancestral past, and his mother’s authority over

him (85). Hargreaves holds that while for Malika's generation, a feeling of belonging to North Africa was common, the younger generation does not feel the same way, as Algeria is seen as a distant ancestral past, unlike France, where they have been raised, and which is their home (53). According to Hargreaves, Charef's wish to put the impact of such a scene in more subtle terms is in line with Charef's general anticipation of the reactions of the French of European descent to this nascent genre, a tendency that Hargreaves sees elsewhere among these works (86).

However, although the scene that I just commented on puts Madjid in the superior position with respect to his mother, based on his rejection of the language of the old country, linguistic ability proves to be a barrier to integration for even Madjid himself, according to Hargreaves in the same article:

 Madjid, for example, is a victim of his divided cultural heritage and disadvantaged social status. Unlike his creator Charef [the author of the work, Medhi Charef], he fails to make the grade at school....Madjid consistently comes out at the bottom. He soon finds himself evicted from school altogether, and drifts into the familiar syndrome of unemployment and petty crime, which eventually leads to his being arrested in possession of a stolen car.

(Hargreaves 664)

Madjid's bicultural life trajectory works as a disadvantage to his academic success, which results in his expulsion from school, leaving him without recourse on the job market, and his eventual resort to delinquency. His friend, Pat, also harbors anti-school attitudes; for him, the best hour of the day is lunch and canteen, and he cannot read (100). In fact, Pat

is expelled from school, as well (Charef 57), again confirming the commonalities that these two youth of different backgrounds experience.

While Madjid's mother is the symbol of traditional values, and Madjid recognizes his mother's participation in Algerian culture as important to her, he rejects this identity for himself, since he finds his position in France to be very uncomfortable. *Beur* teenagers and children often find themselves in a dilemma between their imposing, traditional parents and the French society that expects them to be like the average Franco-French teenager. These teenagers are often seen as culturally divergent when they are unable to behave as any other French adolescent, dating and leading "normal" social lives during high school, wearing fashionable clothing, and engaging in other behaviors typical of the French of European descent, and likewise, they often rebel under the strain of their family's expectations to expect arranged marriages, to obey strict rules determining their social lives and dress (for girls), and to maintain their observance of Islam. A work that portrays this *entre-les-deux* in which many *Beur* teens find themselves, in more detail than the work by Charef, is Soraya Nini's *Ils disent que je suis une beurette*, which I will discuss in Chapter 4.

The reader finds more evidence of a Foucauldian-like environment in the experiences of this North African family in France, as he or she is informed of Madjid's alienated feelings from his father upon the arrival of Madjid and his mother in France: "Madjid ne le reconnaît pas, il était trop jeune quand son père avait émigré" (in France) (Charef 116). This lack of familiarity with his own father indicates a wide gap between the time when his father left Algeria for France, and the present, indicated in the passage. There is a wide temporal, spatial and cultural gap between the Algeria that Madjid knew

with his father, and the France in which they are living now. The distance that Madjid puts between Algeria and France corresponds to the mentality behind his rejection of his mother's use of Arabic and allegiance to Islam, exemplified throughout the novel.

Yet another factor that creates unfortunate circumstances for Madjid and his family in this novel is widespread unemployment. Namely, Madjid's father is unemployed after falling from a roof: "Madjid reste une année dans la section, juste après l'accident de son père, quand il comprit que celui-ci avait paumé dans sa chute toutes ses facultés, et ne possédait plus aucune autorité... Cette même neige qui a fait chuter son père du toit qu'il couvrait » (Charef 21). Madjid is unemployed, as well, although for different reasons, in particular, his lack of work experience, and his potential employers' perception that he does not need a job as badly as workers with mouths to feed, as shown by this description of one employer's reaction towards Madjid's job application: "Ils ne trouvent rien pour lui. 'Vous sortez à peine du collège, sans expérience, c'est vraiment dur de vous trouver quelque chose. Et puis il y a priorité aux ouvriers qui ont des enfants à nourrir, un loyer à payer...'" (Charef 21). The difficulty that the Maghrebi-French experience in finding a job in France is doubtlessly an indication of so-called "Foucauldian" hospitality for the Maghrebi-French since their joblessness results in more than their financial need; it is also suggestive of their lack of a niche in society. While it is understandable that Madjid's father cannot find employment after his accident, due to his physical constraints, the fact that Madjid, a young man, cannot find a job after multiple attempts, reveals that there is a drastic mismatch between the need for work among teenagers in France and their perceived skills and preparation for these positions. For Madjid, his expulsion from school may have further branded him as being unfit to be

hired. Indeed, unemployment is significantly higher among *Beur* youth, as compared with the general population.

Another litmus test correlated to the inhospitable environment in which the *Beur* youth exist is delinquency, a trait that unites the *Beur*, Madjid, and Pat, the French teenager of European descent. The latter indicator of problematic relationships between the descendants of North African immigrants in France, lack of employment, in turn promotes delinquency, since a lack of money, food or other goods, has a tendency to turn the unemployed to crime. For example, due to their unemployment, Pat and Madjid resort to pick-pocketing as a way to support themselves: “Quand on est chomeur et pas aidé, on ne regarde pas aux moyens de se payer un sandwich et un paquet de cigarettes. Vivre au jour le jour et se taper le coquillard de ce que pourra être demain! Tels les animaux” (Charef 104). The desperate unemployment rate for *Beur* youth has created a situation in which the only the way for Pat and Madjid to survive, or at least as they see it, is crime. This engagement in petty crime on the part of these characters could be seen as a form of resistance, as they are subverting traditional social structures and laws. Ultimately, though, this form of resistance is not self-sustaining, corresponding to Foucault’s conclusion that resistance does not actually transform embedded power structures.

The quotation that I cited in the paragraph above is also significant, since it reveals the attitude of many people who are disadvantaged: the poor will sometimes make significant sacrifices to afford what they need, even when, as the quotation indicates, these purchases involve what are considered normally to be non-essentials, such as cigarettes (or in any other cases, alcohol, drugs or gambling opportunities).

Another element of the mentality of the lower classes that is demonstrated in this quotation is that they often live from day to day; the narrator characterizes Madjid and Pat's life by using the phrase, "au jour le jour" (Charef 104). As with many disadvantaged people, they strive to meet their daily needs on the day itself, with scant planning or preparation. As in many other cultures, such as the United States, many people in the middle- and upper- classes are not cognizant of this type of mentality. Some people in these higher classes do not understand why many disadvantaged people live in socially-unacceptable ways, and cannot raise themselves out of the proverbial gutter. Some individuals with greater resources often expect the poor to be self-sufficient and independent, criticizing the government for giving them social benefits, and blaming them for their own suffering, regardless of the fact that many people in more fortunate socio-economic circumstances have or had significantly more education and opportunity to achieve self-sufficiency than those in the lower class do. It has been concluded that if one is born into poverty, as Pat and Madjid presumably were, one's origins in the lower class can be predictive of one's later status, and prevent one from achieving any mobility in society, and from adopting middle classes values.

Among other challenges that reveal a Foucauldian type of hospitality for Madjid's family, emblematic of very conflictual relationships between the *Beurs* and those of European descent in France in this era, securing adequate housing is also a dilemma in this work by Charef. According to a passage chronicling the arrival of Madjid's family in France from Algeria, the depravity of the housing that they were offered in France was traumatic for them. The family lived in dire straits when Madjid was a boy:

A l'époque, Madjid et ses parents habitaient le bidonville de Nanterre, rue de la Folie, le plus cruel des bidonvilles de toute la banlieue parisienne... Quand il avait fait venir sa femme et son gosse d'Algérie, le père de Madjid ne leur avait pas dit dans ses lettres qu'ils logeraient dans ces baraques enfumées et froides.

(Charef 115)

In this quotation, the reader becomes cognizant of the despair that Malika experiences over the difference between her homes in Algeria and France. Many Maghrebi-French live in substandard housing, including HLMs, constructed in the after-war period, and that carry a stigma in the eyes of the French of European descent. In this passage, it is suggested that Malika has neither flooring nor walls in her room to clean, and that she has to use the broom to clean the dirt floor. The low quality of the HLMs in which many descendants of North African immigrants in France live, indeed, has become well-known; for example, in contemporary France, CVs from job applicants hailing from zip codes known for substandard housing are often ignored. The discrimination that the Maghrebi-French face due to their disadvantages in housing is very real, and can be seen as a literal demonstration of the lack of acceptance that they encounter in France, as revealed in the film, *L'Oeil au beur(re) noir*, by Serge Meynard. Just as they are symbolically-barred from full participation in French society, they are also sometimes literally locked out of apartments and houses where they could potentially live. The issue of substandard housing, and its consequences for those who live in these areas, is also addressed in Begag's *Le Gone du Chaaba*, discussed later in this chapter.

Beyond the struggles that Madjid's family undergoes, on a more generalized level, the characterization of person-to-person relationships between the French of

European descent and Algerians in this novel also raises eyebrows. For examples, there are several examples that illustrate the racial tension intrinsic to France: “Une Française, une Algérienne se disputent. Des disputes de ce genre, il y en avait journallement dans ce grand ensemble. C’est la règle dans tous. On n’y faisait même plus attention” (156).

The most striking quality that this passage reveals about the way in which the French of European descent and Algerians interact in this work seems to be the banality of verbal conflict between Algerian immigrants and the French of European descent. In most areas, a significant quarrel between neighbors is taken seriously and remedied, if possible, by other neighbors or by authorities. Yet in this work, the strife between the Algerian population and their French neighbors has become so generalized, that it has virtually no significance. Nevertheless, the fact that this contention has almost become a non-issue, since it is observed so frequently, also raises the question of the extent to which these problematic relationships can deteriorate, and what this constant conflict means for the position of people of North African origin in France, at least concerning their status in France in the mid-1980s, when this work was written.

If North Africans and their descendants are or were often resented, and encounter obstructionist behavior from the French of European descent, the participation of people of North African origin in arguments with the French of European descent may be seen as an example of Foucauldian resistance, although it is likely that the former may never succeed in fully asserting themselves towards the latter. The fact that many Franco-French are so severely disposed against the *Beurs*’ continued residence in France, as portrayed in this novel, means that the immigrant population’s continued efforts to defend itself may be, at least temporarily, a frustrating effort.

These disputes are also referenced in Yamina Benguigui's 2003 film, *Inch'Allah Dimanche*, in which an elderly French couple, the Donzes, become angry when the children of an Algerian woman, Zouina, throw a ball into their garden. These Franco-French people are depicted as hostile, competitive and unfriendly towards people of North African origin, revealing a serious pathology in their approach to intercultural relationships. What kind of welcome were the French of European descent extending to the families participating in *le regroupement familial* in the mid-1970s, as Zouina, her children, and her mother-in-law are in this film? What kind of thanks did the men of North African origin called to work in the industries in the post-war period receive from the French of European descent? These examples call into serious question those contexts of integration that resemble Derridean hospitality, which I will analyze in the final chapter of this dissertation.

The passage from Charef's novel, describing contentious scenes between women of French (European) and Algerian descent, cited earlier, and the mistrustful relationship between Zouina and the Donzes in *Inch'Allah Dimanche*, serve as a foil to the strong alliance between the *Beur*, Majdid, and the French of European descent teenager, Pat, in this novel. That which is precisely so rare about the rapport between Pat and Madjid is that, on the whole, they are generally cooperative and supportive of each other, in a novel characterized by many examples of Foucauldian hospitality, ostensibly indicating that even in hostile, tense, racial, social, and cultural environments, individuals of differing backgrounds can form an alliance that helps each one to survive difficulties. The very fact, too, that the French of European descent teenager, Pat, like Madjid, also faces financial, occupational and social obstacles, reveals that the divide between the haves,

have some, and have is not as definitive or consequential as is expected, at least among youth.

Along with the novel, *Le Thé au Harem d'Archi Ahmed*, Charef also made a film of this novel, which became the first full-length feature film by a director of North African descent. According to Tarr in the article, "Maghrebi-French (*Beur*) Filmmaking in Context," "The growth of the *beur* movement, including the March for Equality in 1983, paved the way for two *beur* filmmakers to embark on full-length feature films...[including] Charef's adaptation of his first novel, *Tea in the Harem*..." (Tarr 33). Charef won the Jean Vigo prize for Best First Film. This film adaptation was noteworthy not only for its portrayal of the *Beurs*, but also for its focus on the *Beurs*, differing from previous films on minorities in France, which were generally consisting of documentaries and shorts (Tarr 32).

Concerning the reception of the film, it was mixed. While the actual film is fairly pessimistic about integration, many became hopeful that the existence itself of the genre of *Beur* cinema would be a sign of improving degrees of *Beur* integration. Like the novel, this film focuses on what is common between *Beur* and Franco-French youth, and is set in the *banlieue* (Tarr, "Maghrebi-French (*Beur*) Filmmaking in Context" 32). In "Race Matters and Matters of Race," an article by Dina Sherzer, she states that Charef's film shows relationships between *Beurs* and the French as being positive, as Pat and Madjid dance together in nightclubs and romance women, without discussing their differences in race (242). However, Sherzer points out that while Pat steals, Madjid is the one who is accused for the crime, in alignment with the stereotype that *Beurs* are delinquents (Sherzer 243). Indeed, many people criticized the film, *Le Thé au harem*

d'Archi Ahmed, for portraying the *Beur* protagonist as a stereotypical delinquent and bum, according to the article, "The "Rachid System" in Serge Meynard's *L'Oeil au beur(re) noir*," by Mireille Rosello, as published in the work *Cinema, Colonialism and Postcolonialism: Perspectives from the French and Francophone World*, edited by Dina Sherzer (156). This stereotype will be turned on its head in the film *L'Oeil au beur noir*, which I will discuss later in this chapter.

Alternative Forms of Desubjectification in Charef's
Le Thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed

While this work seems to fit in well with the other works analyzed in this third chapter, the types of desubjectification seen in Charef's *Le Thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed* do not come in the traditional forms in which they are seen in the other works discussed in this chapter. Additionally, there seems to be fewer instances of *Beur* desubjectification in this novel. While the greatest resource that Madjid and Pat seem to have in this work is each other, in that they find camaraderie and support in each other, and find themselves in the same situation, that of being academically- and financially-challenged high school students, and while having a close friend of another ethnicity doubtlessly has beneficial effects in that they probably have a more comprehensive, humane view of people of the other ethnicity, decreasing the chance for resentment of people of the other ethnicity to develop, Madjid seems to rely less on individualized strategies of desubjectification than *Beur* protagonists do in other novels. As I state in my Conclusions, forming friendships with people of other ethnicities can be one of the best ways to dispel racial strife and

suspicion of people of other backgrounds, although Pat and Madjid's relationship in itself does not qualify as a means or strategy of desubjectification for Madjid, in itself.

Nonetheless, there are two key excerpts in the novel, discussed in the previous section, that reflect the desubjectification that Madjid and Malika achieve, at least temporarily. Namely, Malika seems to temporarily evade the cultural isolation that she experiences, as an Algerian woman living in France, as she watches the *can-can* on New Year's Eve with her family, bringing her back to the era in which she was a young, beautiful, woman, dancing traditional Algerian dances. Through this identification with French *can-can* dancers, depicted on French television and acceptable within French culture, she momentarily escapes the constraints and *la nostalgie du pays* that she feels as a Algerian woman living in France, finding a part of her culture, at least psychologically, by watching French TV, and finding joy and a feeling of being at home from this experience. While this instance of Malika achieving some desubjectification is not found in the typical form in which many of the other instances of desubjectification are found in my analyses of *Beur* artistic works, Malika does seem to "remove herself from herself" from the cultural isolation and sense of displacement and dislocation from her home country, extended family, values and cultural practices that she experiences while living in France. Finding relief from the sense of cultural isolation that she experiences may seem minor in the short run, but given the fact that many people living abroad experience this type of alienation, this achievement is valuable, and symbolic of the inner resources and imagination with which Malika is gifted.

In addition, it seems that the instance in which Madjid temporarily avoids conversation with his mother, who is attempting to speak French that Madjid finds to be

subpar, could qualify as an instance of desubjectification for Madjid. In this passage, while Malika yells at him in broken French and Arabic, her native tongue, imploring him to lower the volume of his stereo music and to look for his father, Madjid deliberately pretends not to hear her pleas, ostensibly using the excuse that he cannot understand Malika's French, and he can understand even less of her Arabic: "Elle parle un mauvais français avec un drôle d'accent et les gestes napolitains, en plus" (Charef 16). Although, of course, Malika intends her son no harm as she asks him to play his music at a more suitable level for the household and to look for his father, it seems evident that Madjid feels subjectified, on some level, by his mother's pleas, and especially by the fact that she is trying to communicate to him in her subpar French, and even in Arabic, which, as Madjid conveys, is completely incomprehensible to him. Charef's comment that I cited in the previous section, according to which, "...Madjid, c'est moi [...]. Quand il dit à sa mère, qui lui parle en arabe: "Je ne comprends *pas* ce que tu dis", j'ai failli mettre *plus*" [instead of *pas*], indicating that Madjid/Charef had forgotten Arabic], quoted by Hargreaves in *Voices from the African Community* (85), reveals, as I stated above, that Charef intends Madjid, his autobiographical self in the novel, to be understood as never having learned Arabic, and thus being far from understanding it, or identifying much with his parents' homeland. Madjid's decision to continue playing his "Sex Pistols" record on his stereo shows that he identifies closely with American culture, which has affected French culture, and that the broken French his mother speaks, does not speak to him, let alone the Arabic that punctuates her French. In this sense, although the way in which Madjid tunes out his mother who is trying to communicate with him, using her linguistic deficiencies as an excuse, is not a kind gesture, I acknowledge that Madjid does possess

strategies that allow him to escape some of the complications associated with his identity as a *Beur* teenager, expected by his parents to perpetuate and practice the traditions and mentalities of Algeria, but identifying more closely with those of his Franco-French friend, Pat, and the lifestyle that they lead as they engage in delinquency in order to support themselves, given the lack of available jobs, and the fact that Madjid is expelled from school.

Although the dysfunctionality of this mother-son relationship, and the impasse that is created when Malika starts to speak French, seem dire, Charef himself states that, like many of the situations depicted in this novel, the real-life scene that inspired this excerpt from the novel and its corresponding scene in the film adaptation, was much worse: “Madjid, c’est moi [...] Quand il dit à sa mère qui lui parle en arabe: “Je ne comprends *pas* ce que tu dis”, j’ai failli mettre *plus* [instead of *pas*, indicating that Madjid/Charef had forgotten Arabic]. Mais ça aurait été trop dur,” as cited in Hargreaves’ *Voices from the North African Community* (85). As Hargreaves interprets this comment, Charef seems to indicate that the character representing him, Madjid in this novel, has forgotten Arabic, instead of never having learned it, symbolizing a more or less willful rejection of his heritage, his ancestral past, and his mother’s authority over him (85). Hargreaves holds that while for Malika’s generation, a feeling of belonging to North Africa was common, the younger generation [the Maghrebi-French who were teenagers and young adults in the 1980s] did not feel the same way, as Algeria was seen as a distant ancestral past, unlike France, where they were raised, and which is their home (53). According to Hargreaves, Charef’s wish to put the impact of such a scene in more subtle terms is in line with Charef’s general anticipation of the reactions of the French of

European descent to this nascent genre, a tendency that Hargreaves sees elsewhere among these works (86). Apparently, Charef portrayed this scene in a more attenuated way that it had occurred in real-life, between him and his mother, because he wanted his book to be palatable to the French of European descent as well as to the *Beur* youth in situations such as that of Madjid.

La Haine (Matthieu Kassovitz, 1995)

Among *banlieue* films, of which it was the first, *La Haine* is doubtlessly the most critically-successful and culturally-impactful film, due largely to its almost documentary-like depiction of the crisis in the French suburbs, or *banlieues*, a characterization that results, in combination with the admirable display of racial solidarity evidenced in the *Beur-black-blanc* trio of Saïd, Hubert, and Vinz, in this ground-breaking film's categorization in this third chapter of my dissertation, illustrating contexts of a "Foucauldian" model of hospitality/integration. This 1995 film led to the creation of the term, *le cinéma de banlieue*, as a new genre, as Tarr explains in the article, "Maghrebi-French (Beur) Filmmaking in Context" (32). Kassovitz's portrayal of *la banlieue* captures the almost war-like interactions that occur between the French of European descent, on one hand, and some minorities of West African, North African, and Jewish backgrounds, a tension that is lessened by the presence of a strong friendship between these three youth. The *Beur-black-blanc* trio, consisting of the militant, vengeance-seeking Jewish man, Vinz, the peace-seeking, more tolerant Hubert, and Saïd, of North African descent, represents the three ethnicities that are most targeted in France, and that

can even be said to be occasional *bouc-émissaires* of the French of European descent. Indeed, the perception that these three youth are seen as victims of the failures of French society, is echoed by Carrie Tarr, who holds that the viewer sees the *Beur-black-blanc* trio in *La Haine* as not accountable for their drug use and delinquency, since they have few other options, given their social marginalization, and the threat of excessive violence that they live under from the police (175). The film focuses on the two extremities of approaches to the resolution of grievances, represented by Vinz, who seeks revenge, and by Hubert, who advocates peace-seeking and the extension of forgiveness, with respect to an incident of police brutality against a minority, a man of North African origin, Abdel, who, at the beginning of the film, is struggling for his life in a hospital. This disparity between Vinz's and Hubert's attitudes can also be said to be representative of a context of "mixed hospitality." Hubert's outlook is connotative of a Derridean approach to conflict resolution, while Vinz's anger and will to settle scores through violence, captures the essence of the most strife-filled Foucauldian context of "hospitality" (which resembles more of an *inhospitality*). On a grander scale, the film demonstrates the extent of the seriousness of the violence in the *banlieues*, between the police who seek to maintain order and to repress not only insurrections, but any behavior that is out of bounds, and a diverse minority population that tends to band together when there has been a transgression on the part of the police against one of their own.

In the work, *La Haine*, Ginette Vincendeau synthesizes the film with the following remarks:

La Haine follows a day in the life of a group of three ethnically diverse young men --- a *Beur*, Saïd, the Jewish Vinz and Hubert, who is black---from a deprived

suburban *cit *. The film starts the morning after riots provoked by the police, accidentally wounding a young *Beur*, Abdel. It then charts the bored, aimless life of the three protagonists ---- who are neither at school nor at work ---- in a series of more or less violent encounters, in particular with the police, first in the *banlieue*, then in Paris, ending in a decisive episode of shocking violence...

(Vincendeau 40)

Paradoxically, though this film was made in the 1990s, it is still relevant to the current racial and cultural atmosphere of the French projects. Just as the film, following the pattern that has been established since the early 1980s, when racial relations became even more tense, following the oil crisis in the mid-1970s and the concurrent immigration of North African families to France, reuniting these mothers, children, and in-laws with the original male, North African immigrants, these riots typically occur after a member of the *Beur* or West African community is attacked by the French police. Looting, throwing Molzoltov cocktails at cars, and engaging in other forms of vandalism are common outlets that the youth resort to, in their rebellion against the police. Lacking a proper way to voice their concerns to French authorities, many of them use strategies that are part of *la monnaie courante* in their own cultures, violence and intimidation. It is likely that they feel defenseless against the racism and perceived persecution from the police, and they react in disorderly and hostile ways. In the last and fifth chapter of this dissertation, I will explore the riots that occurred in the French suburbs in 1990-1991, 2005, 2007, and 2010, which resemble the riots portrayed in *La Haine*, as depicted in the French magazine, *Paris-Match*.

While this film is, overall, an excellent illustration of the catastrophe waiting to happen in the French suburbs, a catastrophe that has happened again and again, as in the riots of 1980-1981, 1991, 2005, 2007, and 2010, at the same time, the other *côté de la médaille* of this film, so to speak, reveals the potential for the existence of more Derridean-like relationships, and the power that lies in solidarity, even among people who are very different from one another and among people who are even sometimes considered natural enemies. For example, in French society, Muslims, often included in the North African and West African communities, often express resentment towards French Jews, due to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians in the Middle East, and also because of the privileged position that some Jews play in the French economy and media. Accordingly, one could expect the possibility of the existence of tension between Vinz and Saïd or Hubert. However, largely due to the numerous commonalities and the similar upbringing that the three share, as well as their common role as minorities in France, this *Beur-black-blanc* trio, consisting of Saïd, Hubert, and Vinz, respectively, are able to offer each other protection and support that serve as antidotes to the underlying tension that is caused by the perception of their racial difference, and the way in which they are perceived in French society. Their friendship protects each one from harm that can occur from this potentially explosive group affiliation, at least for some time. It is remarkable, on one level, that the French Jew, Vinz, is so upset by the police brutality against the youth of North African descent, Abdel, that he feels strongly motivated to defend his honor, although the strategies that he adopts are inappropriate and violent; likewise, it is also noteworthy to see that his two best friends are of North and West African origin. As with many other groups, when one person in the tribe or

group is taken down or injured, the others want to avenge his or her death, as if it had happened to someone in their own families. This level of social cohesion among minorities in France, or perhaps, more generally, among the youth in the suburbs, is certainly a factor that compels these riots to occur again and again. Indeed, it is one sign that, perhaps, race itself is less of a divisive a factor in this film between these characters, symbolized by the volition of Vinz, a Caucasian Jew, to avenge the death of a youth of North African origin. Perhaps, on some level, there is greater social cohesion, more generally speaking, among the youth of immigrant origin as a whole, than among the members of certain racial groups. If social cohesion transcends race, and extends to people in similar situations, namely, youth in racially-charged suburbs, perhaps there is some chance that race itself is becoming less polemical of a factor. In the article, “French Cinema and Post-Colonial Minorities,” published in the work, *Post-Colonial Cultures in France*, Tarr observes that the issue of social difference is more impactful in this movie, than the issue of ethnic difference (78). While to some degree, the trio of Vinz, the French Jew, Hubert, the young man of West African origin, and Saïd, of North African origin, represents racial solidarity, as Kassovitz also uses the members of his multi-ethnic love triangle in another of his works, *Café au Lait (Métisse)*, the power of this symbol of multi-racial cooperation and friendship is put into question by the larger statement that the film makes on the extremely strong tensions surrounding issues related to race in French society.

In fact, racial solidarity, and its protective, beneficial consequences, seem to be secondary themes in this film, compared to the “Foucauldian” type of hospitality as a model for integration that permeates many of the interactions between the French of

European descent and racial minorities in France, as well as much of the philosophy and many of the actions of these minorities towards the French of European descent. This tension affects not only the young man of North African descent, Saïd, who would be expected to have a strong reaction against the police seriously injuring Abdel, the North African youth, but also Vinz, a French Jew, and Hubert, of West African descent, as well as some white characters in this film. The comments that open and close the film, as if they were cynical, philosophical bookends, “Up until this point, everything is going well. It’s not the fall the counts, it’s the way you land,” seem to convey the message that Kassovitz aims to send to his viewing audience, namely, that one can deny the fact that there is a tremendous propensity towards violent social and cultural implosion in the French suburbs for a certain time, during which there is a sort of gridlock, but that eventually, this powder keg of racial tension will become a political landmine, and a relational tinderbox.

From the incipit of the film, the atmosphere of violence, distrust, and hatred, all elements of a Foucauldian power model, is palpable. Namely, Kassovitz opens the film by showing scenes of teens dancing, turning into scenes in which cars are burning and the police are running away. The song accompanying these initial hostile encounters includes the line, “burning and looting tonight.” There is, evidently, a music that corresponds with this racially-charged, volatile atmosphere, in which violent explosions could occur at any time. The viewer soon learns that there has been a riot (*une émeute*), in which 33 people are arrested, and that represents the reaction of the youth towards police brutality against a young man of immigrant origin, Abdel Ichacha, who is being hospitalized, and is in critical condition. A school and gym are burned during the riots,

representing the destruction of educational and social institutions. We see the first instance of times of the day flashing across the screen, as if to document each event. Indeed, the action of this film occurs in one day. Throughout the film, there are mentions of the fact that the gun involved in the police brutality against Abdel Ichacha is missing. This is literally a “smoking gun,” representative of potential violence that could occur at any time, now that the gun is among the general population. The fact that this gun has gone missing is such significant news, may be revealing of the relative availability of guns in France in the mid-1990s, which, as of 2014, are reputed to be more difficult to come by than they are in the US. From the very beginning of this film, thus, the atmosphere of these projects is depicted as violent, volatile, and fatal for an unfortunate few. At other points in the film, a man of West African origin shoots bullets into a nightclub from the outside of the building, once denied entry to it, and Vinz, Hubert, and Saïd are, at another point, physically tortured by thugs. Elsewhere in the film, Vinz, Hubert, and Saïd are forced to leave an art gallery where Saïd appears to be courting a woman. As in the many other cases in which the three are expelled from clubs and other venues, the immigrants themselves are blamed for their lack of social integration; a man at the gallery attributes the negative interaction between the woman and her friend, on one hand, and Saïd and his friends, on the other, to “the malaise of the ghetto.” In other words, according to his mentality, it is never the fault of the French of European descent, or of its institutions, but always the inability, or lack of volition, of the immigrant population to become integrated and to accept French social norms.

In addition, despite the degree of racial solidarity between the three protagonists that we noted at the beginning of the discussion of this film, racial conflict is visible even

in the friendships between the three main characters, Vinz, the bellicose, break-dancing, French Jew, Hubert, the philosophical, more peace-inclined boxer of West African descent, and Saïd, of North African descent. While the three ostensibly are close companions, there are issues of discord between even them. Namely, Vinz vows that if their friend Abdel Ichacha, currently hospitalized after being wounded by the police, dies, he will avenge this unjust death by killing a police officer: he refuses to “turn the other cheek.” This phrase has its source in Christianity, as it was the phrase that Jesus used to encourage his disciples to forgive their enemies and be peaceful towards all. Vinz implies subsequently that those who turn the other cheek are ultimately exploited or abused. At one point, upon seeing a haunting picture of a news update featuring Abdel, he says to himself, “We’ll get even.” Hubert, meanwhile, tries to dissuade him from retaliating, insisting that no good will come from it, and makes it clear that he will not help him in any vengeful action: “Hate breeds hate.” At another point in the film, Vinz remarks to his friends as they ride the train that he would have killed a man who had been aggressive towards them yesterday, a comment clearly putting him in opposition with Hubert’s much more pacific approach.

There is also a great deal of friction in the relationships between the principal three characters and the French of European descent who surround them, another strong indicator of a type of integration resembling that of the Foucauldian power model than Derrida’s idealized guest-host relationship. In the work, *Violence in Europe*, Sophie Body-Gendrot, in the article “From Old Threats to Enigmatic Enemies: The Evolution of European Policies from Low-Intensity Violence to Homegrown Terrorism,” asserts that there is a conflict of urban space between the French and minorities: “In a mimetic

posture, the youths also perceive of the police as a rival gang trying to control the public spaces which they have somewhat appropriated and privatized for lack of alternatives” (124). This conflict is portrayed in this film.

Numerous examples of this hostility between the minority youth and the French police can be analyzed. For example, soon after the point in the film marked as 12:43, in terms of the span of the day in which the action occurs, the trio demonstrates their hostility towards and mistrust of the French press when a car of reporters approaches them, asking them about their reactions to the recent riots. One of the characters implies that the reporters are treating them as if they were zoo animals; Vinz insists that they are “pas [not] Thoiry” [an in-car zoo]. The three of them throw stones at the car and tell the reporters to stop taping them. One of them calls the female reporter “a bimbo” (a comment further cementing the viewer’s perception of these characters’ misogyny). Evidently, they mistrust the French press since they likely see it as prone to portray only the point of view of the French authorities and the French of European descent, whom they are seen as protecting, and also because the press portrays minorities in the projects as thoughtless, senseless “animals,” whom they are observing as if they were not actual people. If these minorities cannot even trust the French press to be objective in their accounts of the riots, and respectful of their place in France, how can they trust the French of European descent, on any level, to be sympathetic to their interests? I approach this subject in more detail in my fifth chapter, on the portrayal of the riots of 1980-1981, 1990, 2005, 2007, and 2010, as characterized by the magazine, *Paris-Match*. On another level, the fact that Vinz conceives of the reporters seeing them as animals in the zoo, indicates that they feel trapped, and on display, in the French suburbs. Indeed, a

sense of living in the *nul part* (no man's land) seems to permeate these characters' sense of self. At one point, while eating dinner with his family, Vinz himself comments that he wants to leave the projects: "J'en ai marre de la cité." This sense of hopelessness and despair is no doubt another factor that contributes to the "Foucauldian" hospitality of the French suburbs, and that itself further ignites the angst behind the rioting. If these youth witness injustice against, and slaughter of, their own in the French suburbs, and they themselves have resigned themselves to not being able to leave, their reaction, absent of the option for flight, is fight, and this fight, since it is against a force larger than one French person, often consists of a decision to resist representatives of the status quo and the preservation of order in France, namely, the police, as well as to deface the property of the French, their cars, which become the target of Molotov cocktails and torching.

Another scenario in which these minorities engage in hostile encounters with the French of European descent, also symbolic of destructive relationships, recalling so-called "Foucauldian" hospitality, takes place in the hospital where Abdel Ichacha, the youth injured by the police, is a patient. Vinz, Hubert, and Saïd visit the hospital, hoping to see their friend: "C'est notre ami." However, the hospital authorities circumvent this visit, saying that Abdel is in a coma. The lack of respect that these three youth have towards authorities (the hospital staff), or conversely, their strong desire to show solidarity to their peer, Abdel, is shown by their reaction to the authorities' denial to admit them to see their injured friend. Saïd tells the hospital employees that they will not leave without seeing Abdel first, and Vinz dares to shoot the employee who denies them access to the hospital room. Eventually, a fight ensues, and Saïd is arrested and taken to the police station, where Hubert and Vinz visit him. Thankfully, an Algerian man bails

Saïd out of jail. Even in this instance, though, Vinz's malevolent attitude towards authorities manifests itself, as he berates the friendly Hubert for extending a handshake to a policeman: "You don't shake a pig's hand." The fact that Vinz resorts to using this very insulting language, comparing police officers to pigs, is evocative of similar language that former French President Nicolas Sarkozy used at the beginning of his Presidency, in discussing the habitants of the *banlieues*: *la racaille* (scum). If we can generalize the sentiment behind the first comment to actual minorities in France, it is revealing of the escalation of animosity between these parties, and of the poisoned state of this relationship. As Gustave Le Bon theorized in his 1895 work, *La Psychologie des foules*, seeing opposing parties in very negative, black and white terms, simplified by images (in this case, such as "scum" and "pig") assists these groups in concentrating and justifying their hatred for the other party, and also in conceiving the other group as monolithic, and purely adversarial. Far from using scatological humor and vocabulary in an attempt to stress the frivolity of life, as Rabelais does in his works, *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*, this type of language makes little attempt to conceal a high level of resentment.

In addition, the last few scenes of the movie are representative of the critical problem in the French suburbs, and also of the climax of the film, both linked to a pathological relational context between the French of European descent and minorities in the suburbs. In this final segment, the three main characters see the news of Abdel's death flash upon the TV, followed by an update on the war in Bosnia, which transpired in the mid-1990s. Vinz immediately steps away from the scene, and Hubert and Saïd, who realize that he has a gun, follow him. They see him shoot a policeman, who subsequently

falls through a glass window, as if to shatter Vinz's relative innocence, and the degree of protection that he can maintain from his friends and French society. His friends leave him, only to see him pull a gun on a skinhead, who seeks to avenge one of Vinz's previous actions. While Vinz has the chance to kill this man, he chooses not to do so. In the next scene, Hubert takes leave of Vinz and Saïd, and Vinz gives his gun to Hubert, since they all ostensibly believe that Vinz is out of danger. This action, of Vinz surrendering his gun to Hubert, seems gratuitous and meaningless upon a first viewing of the film, but it has great significance, as will be seen immediately, since Vinz is now unarmed, and a likely target since he has both killed a policeman and threatened the life of the aforementioned skinhead. Hubert sees a group of men approach Saïd and Vinz, and he immediately turns to help his friends, but the situation is beyond salvage. The skinhead whom Vinz targeted earlier turns the gun on him, and Vinz is suddenly dead. Subsequently, Hubert and the skinhead are seen with guns pointing at each other, and the bookend reminder, "Until here, all is going well...." appears on the screen, as if to remind us of the irony and falseness of this aphorism. Everything is not going well, and in fact, the tensions existing all along in the French suburbs have resulted in another murder, based on vendettas, anger, and racial divisions. In the final scene, a gun is pointing towards Saïd, as if to indicate that he may be the next victim of gun violence. Violence has come full circle; Vinz, who was quick to want to avenge the murder of Abdel by the police, has himself become the victim of murder. In the long run, Hubert was both prescient and insightful, realizing that if Vinz took justice into his own hands by turning on the police, he would be placed in a dangerous situation. Although there may have been no direct link between Vinz shooting the policeman, and the skinhead

attacking and eventually killing Vinz, “violence begets violence,” in the long run, as Hubert has wisely advised him, throughout the film.

The significance of this scenario, in which the violent become the victims of violence, is not only indicative of the theme of ever-spiraling and ever-continuing violence in the French suburbs, but also of the grave problem in situations involving contexts similar to so-called “Foucauldian” hospitality. As we found in the chapter on the theoretical foundations involving Derrida and Foucault, any action taken by one party against the other can result in an ensuing cascade of harm towards each other, and in certain cases, even a seemingly benevolent or morally-neutral action can be questioned or drastically misinterpreted by the inferior party. Hubert’s remark, “Hate breeds hate,” speaks to the heart of this issue. At some point, there must be a termination to the self-perpetuating cycle of anger, hostility, and resentment, and some accord of forgiveness or at least an agreement equivalent to a truce, neutralizing these feelings between two parties; otherwise, as in *La Haine*, the continual aggravation of relationships will leave each party in catastrophe, and may even signify a situation in France from which its people will not be able to recover. This is the reason for which efforts must be made, similar to reciprocal overtures in Derridean theory, to overcome this history of violence and retaliation, followed again by violence.

Furthermore, even in the familial situation of the immigrant of West African origin, Hubert, the dysfunctional nature of integration in France is made evident. Namely, Hubert’s brother is in jail, and needs money to buy a math textbook to earn his diploma while in jail, but his mother has no money for the book; this relative poverty in which his family lives is a commentary on their relatively low socio-economic level,

found in many immigrant communities. Also, in the scene on the metro, in which a woman whose family is incarcerated, pleads for money, Hubert responds by saying that he also has family in jail, and exhorts her to find a job, as everyone else does. The kind of callousness and indifference that Hubert demonstrates towards this woman on the metro is illustrative of the depth of suffering that many of these disadvantaged people experience; they may become hardened to other people's struggles, and unable to extend empathy to others. It is possible that a reduction in the ability to extend empathy towards others contributes to the propensity of youth in the French suburbs to become violent, although Hubert himself takes a more pacific approach towards relationships with French authorities.

Other problematic elements of the depiction of interracial relationships in the French suburb include components of the culture of *la banlieue*, namely, drug use, heavy identification with American cultural codes that encapsulate violent and misogynistic attitudes (break dancing, R & B, rap including lines such as "F. la police," pop cultural references such as ones to Robert de Niro in "Taxi Driver" and "The Godfather"), racially-charged and racist comments (including "chink," and "nigga"), threats ("I'll waste you for free"), and politically charged references (" F. Le Pen"). As I mentioned earlier in this subsection on *La Haine*, the culture of the suburbs is accompanied by a music of the suburbs. For example, the saying heard frequently, "Nique [Expletive] la police," is evocative of the name of the rap group, NTM (*Nique ta Mère*). Indeed, many of the insults in this film involve comments that the characters make towards and about each other's mothers, confirming the existence of a strong misogyny and a taste for violence in *banlieue* culture. In general, this aggressive, misogynistic language is that of

the powerless; these minorities use this language in an attempt to reclaim some power from the oppressors, whom they perceive to be the French police and the other representatives of society. They feel so completely powerless and desperate, and so disenfranchised, that they resort to these misdirected expressions of hostility. Another example of this desperate sort of anger is visible when one of the characters breaks something in the museum scene, during the encounter with the woman whom Saïd is trying to court, as they are told to leave the museum. Furthermore, the instance in which Saïd alters the sign, “Le monde est à vous” sign to “Le monde est à nous,” indicates his wish to reclaim his sphere of power as his own, no longer permitting authorities or the French of European descent to define their role or identity. This action is reminiscent of a Sartrean, existentialist philosophy. On the whole, however, since these minorities feel completely powerless, they feel that any expression of anger is ultimately justified, so low is their self-perception in relationship with the power that French society holds over them. In addition, it is arguable that their attraction to American culture, for example, the film *The Godfather* and the musical genre of rap, which is sometimes associated with violent attitudes, promotes their propensity towards violence, which is glorified in many manifestations of American culture.

Desubjectification in Kassovitz’s *La Haine*

Like Charef’s *Le Thé au Harem d’Archi Ahmed*, this film, *La Haine*, does not feature many examples of *Beur* desubjectification; likewise, this film has in common with Charef’s work, the primary strength that carries the protagonists, the *Beur-black-*

blanc trio of Saïd, Hubert and Vinz, through most of the film, and which lessens any tensions that would make friendship with each other difficult: close personal bonds, defying the expectation that people in such a racially-contentious atmosphere would associate only with those of their own ethnicity, although admittedly, this work is set in the early to mid-1990s, somewhat later than the ostensible timeframe in which Charef's work is set, the mid-1980s. Nonetheless, there are some instances in which these characters express diverted thought from the dominant trend that they would be expected to support: namely, Hubert indicates his support of non-violent means to improve racial relations, instead of espousing the volatile, angry approach of Vinz, equivalent, for Hubert, to a means of possible desubjectification, since, as I show in my last chapter, involvement in physical retaliation against the French of European descent tends to further subjectify minorities defending their rights, instead of liberating them; the three characters refuse to be seen by the female journalist coming to their area to report on the riots following the shooting of Abdel Ichaca, claiming that their area is "pas Thoiry" ("not [a French zoo]"), thus insisting on the need for respect, and defending themselves from being seen as a zoo exhibit by an uninvolved outsider; and the instance in which Saïd changes a sign reading, "Le monde est à vous" to "Le monde est à nous," seemingly claiming his and his friends' ability to effect change on French society. Although Hubert's pacifist attitude is not a specific instance of desubjectification, it may promote his own and possibly others' desubjectification, particularly since he is able to successfully advocate non-violence to Vinz and Saïd until the end of the film, when Vinz shoots someone, only to be shot next. The other examples, those of the defensive attitude of the trio towards the reporter visiting *la banlieue* for a news assignment, and the change in the

sign from “Le monde est à vous” to “Le monde est à nous,” may seem minor in scope, but they reveal that Vinz, Hubert and Saïd do have other strategies of at least psychologically salvaging themselves from the expectations that French society has for them by other means than violence, potentially protecting them from further desubjectification.

L’Oeil au beur(re) noir (Serge Meynard, 1987)

Another film in the genre of *Beur* cinema, *L’Oeil au beur(re) noir*, directed by Serge Meynard (1987), is also exemplary of a mix of healthy and pathological relationships between the French of European descent and minorities of African origin in France, consisting of a combination of contexts of integration that mirror both Derridean and so-called “Foucauldian” hospitality models. This film, featuring Smaïn, a *Beur* comedian, and a French-Caribbean actor, Pascal Legitimus, both of whom had already had long-established careers in *Beur* cinema before the filming of *L’Oeil au beur(re) noir*, throughout the 1980s, centers on the struggles that minorities in France undergo as they seek proper housing, as Carrie Tarr writes in the article, “Maghrebi-French (*Beur*) Filmmaking in France” (37). On the Foucauldian side, is the film’s characterization of the grave inequalities on the housing market for minorities in Paris, while the achievements that Denis and Rachid make in infiltrating Franco-French culture, particularly through their friendship/romantic relationships with the French woman of European descent, Virginie Raymonde (Julie Jézéquel), and the access to more numerous opportunities in the housing market that they reach through their acquaintance with her,

are representative of strides towards a Derridean hospitality context of integration. In particular, in order to compensate for the disadvantage that their ethnicities bring to them, a man of West African origin, Denis, and his friend of North African origin, Rachid, who are looking for an apartment to rent together, use their friendships with two Franco-French "punks" (*loubards*, and thieves) to make themselves look better by comparison, and thus more deserving of access to housing and relationships with Franco-French women.

Rosello, in the article, "'The Rachid System' in Serge Meynard's *L'Oeil au beur(re) noir*," deems this film as one that aims to re-appropriate cultural stereotypes, and that depends heavily on the use of repetition, while seeming to evade solid representations of *Beur* or "noir" (West African-French) identity (151). The "repetition" to which Rosello refers, is the portrayal of the repetition of two stereotypes that the French of European descent have towards minorities, namely, their resistance to renting towards them, and the blame that they assign to these people of North and West African descent for *l'insécurité* (the danger and turbulence characteristic of some French neighborhoods, and a term often used by the far right) in French cities (157). She suggests that the film is a criticism on the "syntax of stereotyping"; namely, the way in which the French society regards these minorities, and the way it represents this regard, through metaphor, rhetoric, and image (Rosello 157).

The film's title, *L'Oeil au beur(re) noir*, in connection with the word that both identifies its genre and its subject matter, *Beur*, solidifies the perception that this film focuses on the risk that minorities in France run, as relative outsiders in French culture. Many of the characters develop black eyes (*des yeux au beur(re) noir*), namely, the punks

who are used in Rachid's and Denis' schemes, to attract women or to deflect negative attention from themselves to actual delinquents, as seen in the eyes of the French of European descent. The title is also a play on the word, "beur": in the film, while the punks generally take the black eyes, the minorities in the film constantly experience symbolic wounds to their pride, and are excluded from being treated as full citizens in France, because of characteristics that they cannot change. On one level, these collective and accumulated figurative wounds, registering on an emotional level, are perhaps more damaging than the black eyes that the punks in this film sustain, since mental pain can take more of a toll on the spirit, than a punch can to one's face. Additionally, while viewers are not informed of these minorities' nationalities (whether they are French citizens or not), the question almost becomes a moot point, because they clearly had no control over being born as the children of immigrants from Africa to France. If they live in France, and have lived nowhere else, it should be assumed that it is their home, and that the guarantee of *liberté, égalité, et fraternité*, on which the Fifth Republic is based, should provide them with protection from the incessant dangers that they encounter to their civil rights, especially in having equal access to applying for housing in Paris, on a level that transcends the ability to pay rent, which varies tremendously, according to economic status. Rosello suggests another reading of the phrase, *l'oeil au beur(re) noir*: the *Beur* community is linked closely to the population of African descent in France, including *les Beurs et les noirs*; thus, their positions in France cannot be isolated from each other, as minorities who are deeply stigmatized and marginalized, despite their differing cultural backgrounds (151).

While the film involves a very serious subject matter, the tone of the film is comical, even sometimes farcical, as if to detract from the acknowledgement of the magnitude of the barrier that the almost-systemic racism in France creates for people of African origin. Rosello attributes the levity intrinsic to this film to the fact that it is not a commentary on the supremacy of *Beur* culture (151).

There are some signs that point towards a limited degree of integration for the minorities in this film, indicative of a model of integration along the lines of Derridean hospitality, namely, the way in which Denis and Rachid, of West and North African origin, become friends, in addition to the romantic partners of, an attractive, brunette, upper-class, professional young woman, and a public relations specialist, named Virginie Raymonde, who ultimately opens doors to them, namely, by exposing them to opportunities in housing, which are normally closed to them, due to generalized discrimination against minorities seeking housing in Paris.

First, Denis and Rachid manage to attain the goal of becoming close to Virginie, although they reach this end by dishonest means. In particular, Denis and Rachid ask their two "punk" friends to harass her, so that they will have a chance to save her from trouble. Their scheme is a success, as Virginie soon becomes close friends with Denis and Rachid, after witnessing them participate in the role of "good men" and defenders of women. Their success in persuading Virginie of their goodness is solidified by her apparent perception that these two men of immigrant origin are the ones saving her, as opposed to the punks, who are Caucasian, but who are assaulting her. Denis and Rachid use the factor of race, which is usually held against them, in a positive way, tricking this woman into believing that they are of better character than the French of European

descent punks, through this disingenuous situation. It is presumed that Denis and Rachid have difficulty meeting Franco-French women, probably because these females perceive of them as less desirable partners, due to their ethnicities, and also because of widespread stereotypes associated with minority populations in France. The fact that these two young men have to resort to using two Franco-French men to pose as assailants and delinquents, in order to cement their good reputation and to gain ground with young women, such as Virginie, and with housing authorities, indicates that as far back as the mid-to-late 1980s in France, race was a significant dividing line between people to whom resources were plentiful, and people who were cut off from necessities as simple as being able to rent an apartment.

In addition, these young men reach another milestone in their quest for integration into French culture, when, through their acquaintance with Virginie, they are more able to view and apply for housing in Paris that would normally be unavailable to them, due to pervasive racism on the housing market. Namely, Virginie, who perceives these young men as having good character and her best interests in mind, after witnessing them save her from the punks at the beginning of the film, brings them to visit her parents' apartment property in Paris, a far cry from the standard that they usually encounter among apartments that are within the price range of most minorities. Knowing that Denis, who has been evicted from his art studio/apartment, and subsequently moves in with Rachid's North African parents, while wishing to gain greater autonomy from them and access to adult life, and that Rachid lives with his family, Virginie, who comes from an affluent background, proposes that Rachid and Denis visit her parents' property, to see an apartment that they are trying to rent to someone. In this sense, their original goal, to

promote the development of a *liaison* with Virginie, leads them to have greater access to this portion of French society, from which they are normally restricted. The aphorism, “It isn’t what you know, it’s who you know,” may hold more water than one realizes, since an acquaintance with someone in the proper social or professional context can indeed open doors that remain closed, if one limits oneself to a specific circle of people. It is likely that Rachid and Denis realize that they will never be able to escape living with their families, under close supervision from their parents, even as adults, in the expectation that all of their actions must preserve family honor, and respect Muslim and North African traditions, if they rely on help only from their parents and their other friends of African origin, in their search for housing.

In this sense, while Rachid and Denis do not secure an apartment, they find access to housing, and hospitality, in a literal and physical sense, through their friendships with Virginie, who seems to represent the younger Franco-French population, ostensibly more accepting of people of various races and backgrounds, and on a larger scale, symbolic of possible advancements that may be made towards a more welcoming, functional relationship between the French of European descent and the *Beurs*. The intransigently racist attitudes of some characters, on the other hand, such as Virginie's mother, reveal their very deep legacy of discriminatory attitudes towards some minorities in France.

On the other side, among indices of a context of integration that is akin to a so-called “Foucauldian” hospitality for the Maghrebi-French in French society, is the palpable and real tension that the viewer senses, while watching the interactions between Virginie’s parents and her friends, Rachid and Denis. While Virginie’s parents make the pretense of being polite and hospitable to Rachid and Denis, they convey a thinly-veiled

disdain to their daughter's friends, who express their admiration for the family's home. In particular, Madame Simone Raymonde, Virginie's mother, makes several transparently racist and xenophobic comments to Rachid and Denis upon meeting them, and subtly discourages them from renting the apartment. She highlights the high cost of the rent, as if to insist that the property is too expensive for them to pay ("900 balles" (900 francs) per month). In all likelihood, a Franco-French person in the position of considering becoming this couple's tenant would take offense at this comment, implying some level of condescension towards him or her. By making this remark, Madame Raymonde insinuates that Rachid's and Denis' ethnicity translates in their challenged ability to pay rent, particularly for an apartment of such caliber. Madame Raymonde also insists that Rachid and Denis obtain permission and a guarantee of funding from their parents. This request, while technically a hurdle that most potential tenants under a certain age must clear, is clearly an attempt to erect a barrier to Denis and Rachid's occupation of the family's property. While her father tries to minimize the chance that these young men will rent their apartment, by insisting that the apartment has already been taken, Virginie corrects his statement, in an effort to encourage her father to give her friends an opportunity to live there. Evidently, her parents will not only insult her friends, but also lie to them, in order to avoid a landlord-tenant relationship that is not desirable to them, merely because of these young men's ethnicities, and all of the stereotypes that accompany them.

In regards to the dysfunctional relationship that mirrors the power struggle at the heart of "Foucauldian" hospitality, I remark that the very evident socio-economic disparities between these two men of African origin, on the one hand, and Virginie's

wealthy parents, on the other, is not unlike many relationships that feature significant cultural difference as a fulcrum point. Rachid and Denis, even if they do not admire the Raymondes' personalities, and even if they resent the way in which the Raymondes treat them, are propelled to maintain good relationships with this family, and are drawn to admiration and perhaps to the will to emulate them, as affluency tends to encourage many people's admiration and respect. This perceived superiority that the Raymondes seem to relish in, and that Rachid and Denis may even accept as given, provides the Raymondes, in their minds, with no-holds-barred permission to treat them in whatever way that they see fit. Even if dismissing them as applicants to rent the apartment is a violation of law and is unethical, they do not seem to be affected by this realization. Additionally, it does not seem that there is a great likelihood that the authorities will find out and realize that this discrimination is so blatant and shamelessly undisguised. Do Rachid and Denis realize that technically, they could report such treatment? Are they so intimidated by upper-class structures that they resolve to oppose this tendency by themselves, and suffer the risk of perpetual exclusion?

In the end, Virginie's parents offer the apartment to two of her Franco-French colleagues, whom they seem to favor, thereby confirming the idea that in a society and era marked by difference as a litmus test, potentially revealing of one's place in society, and tending to justify and validate those at the top, the dominant trend of establishing strict hierarchies of access to resources is still very strong. While they make the pretense of being kind to Rachid's family, in the end, their racism and attitude towards people of African descent, along with their cultural prejudices towards other Franco-French people, leads them to retain their allegiance to the dominant ethnic group.

The stark contrast between the lifestyles and behavior of Virginie's Franco-French, property-owning family, and those of Rachid's conservative, traditional, Muslim family, is also another manifestation of the unsuccessful, or at least incomplete, integration of minorities in France. Namely, while Rachid's father works as a sanitation worker in Paris, emblematic of the tendency of immigrants to belong to the working-class, Virginie's father and mother live in an elaborately-furnished, splendidly-decorated, house, which impresses Denis and Rachid, and even have the resources available to own rental property. Denis and Rachid struggle just to secure a place to sleep and live, while Virginie's family indulges in excess, serving pork dinners and wine at dinner (the consumption of which, interestingly, are forbidden to practicing Muslims, but which Denis and Rachid can consume, because of their non-practicing status as Muslims). There seems to be an enormous chasm between the opulent lifestyle of the Raymonde family, on one hand, and the working-class, disadvantaged *modus operandi* of Rachid's kin.

These major cultural and socio-economic differences between Rachid's family, of North African origin, and Virginie's Franco-French family, are clearly manifested in the dinner scene, held outside. As I have learned, differences between people, ethnicities, and nationalities, in themselves, are not always a recipe for disaster; rather, enormous conflict tends to occur when there is limited communication about these differences, and also when each party knows relatively little about the other person or group's background.

Rachid's family is invited to Virginie's family because of their friendship, and because of the potential landlord-tenant that may develop between Rachid and Virginie's

parents. While the goal is, ostensibly, to promote good relationships between their families, the superior attitude demonstrated by Virginie's mother indicates that this rapport is certainly strained. The tension is palpable, even if the families are making the pretense of being civil.

There are many fault lines that are potential causes of tension between these families: their different religions, social classes, and upbringings, and also their approach to money and raising children. For example, Simone comments, facetiously, but with perhaps some intent to offend, that Denis' face is "darker than black." The comment draws no immediate attention at the table, but Simone's husband later scolds her for this remark. Also, when one dinner attendant breaks a crystal glass, Simone becomes very upset; likewise, she seems irked when Rachid's father slaps his little son as punishment. In addition, Rachid's father pours tea from very high, and in an awkward fashion, to the annoyance of Simone. It must be vexing for the Raymonde family to see their customs transgressed, and their property jeopardized, but likewise, it must prove disconcerting for Rachid's family, who are clearly not familiar with the social conventions governing such family get-togethers in French culture, and who continue to adhere to long-established codes that are unique to their own, North African culture.

Also symptomatic of roadblocks to *Beur* integration, is the complicated and strained friendship, that was once solidarity, between Rachid and Denis. They curry favor with Virginie, but are impaired at maintaining their own friendship with each other, because of their shared feelings for Virginie. Although a related incident jeopardizes their friendship, the last scene of the film reveals that the three remain close friends, and that Rachid and Denis live with Virginie, although, to both of their vexation, Virginie has

a Franco-French boyfriend, as well. It seems that each man resolves that Virginie will never see either of them exclusively, and that the most that they can ask from her, is to enjoy her company, with no expectation of a monogamous relationship.

Discrimination towards minorities, also a component of So-called “Foucauldian” hospitality in this film, is manifested several other times in this film, upon visits that Rachid and Denis make to various apartments in Paris. At one point in the film, a landowner insults Rachid and Denis for their cultural attributes, and shows them an apartment in very poor condition, complete with a Chinese-style toilet (essentially, a hole in the ground), which is associated with very low-quality hotels and restaurants. The two young men are so insulted by the real estate guide’s treatment and verbal abuse towards them, that they lock the real estate guide in the bathroom, realizing that this apartment, and their treatment by the guide, are sub-standard, and to be avoided. In this instance, they do not take the high road, refusing to tolerate insults. Of course, locking someone in the bathroom is not appropriate, but at some point, they have learned to have some self-respect and to mount a defense against blatant, racially-charged slurs.

“Foucauldian” hospitality, as it relates to integration in France, is also manifested in the problematic relationship that Rachid has with his father. In his quest to obtain a signature and a guarantee of permission that he will be able to pay rent for the apartment that Virginie’s parents own, from his father, Rachid encounters resistance, since his father does not want him to leave the family home. He cites a number of pitfalls that Rachid may fall into, representing a diversion from Muslim faith and tradition, which his father fears, wishing to protect the family honor and also to reinforce the transmission of Islam and its values and customs. It is understandable that his father expresses his

concerns on this issue, but his father also seems to impede the progress that his adult son wants to make, even if he is 25 years old. In this aspect, the family honor and tradition take precedence over Rachid's own choices and values, thus rendering their rapport akin to a "Foucauldian" type of relationship. Figuratively, it is as if Rachid's father is the jail-keeper or the official at the mental health hospital, preventing Rachid, the patient, from securing his civil liberties and from preserving his self-respect.

However, despite the generally pessimistic portrait of integration as seen in this film, at its conclusion, Meynard seems to alter the normal course of the plot, suggesting that racism, instead of difference, is the real offense. At the end of the film, the viewer watches a man of African descent deny an apartment to two Franco-French men, justifying his decision by claiming that these French men of European descent are "racist." Just as, in my analysis of the work *Georgette!*, I found a role reversal in the case of the teacher being bewildered at reading Georgette's notebook written in Arabic, instead of the Roman alphabet, here, there is a role reversal between the landlord, normally Caucasian, and now of African descent, and the potential tenants, usually of African descent, and now Caucasians. While the role reversal is intended in Derrida's hospitality theory to be a positive phenomenon, in both *Georgette* and *L'Oeil au beur(re) noir*, these role reversals involve parties turning the tables on each other in negative ways, although, perhaps, positive outcomes can come from these situations; perhaps the schoolteacher in *Georgette* will eventually learn greater humility and sensitivity towards her students of other origins, after seeing homework done in Arabic, and it is possible that the French of European descent potential tenants in this scene, near the end of *L'Oeil au beur(re) noir*, will eventually acquire the knowledge that they cannot, on a legal,

moral, or socially responsible basis, discriminate against people on the basis of their skin color or origins, for anything, including housing, which should be equally available to people of all ethnicities.

Desubjectification in *L'Oeil au beurre noir*

Desubjectification plays more of a role in this film, *L'Oeil au beurre noir*, than it does in either *Le Thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed* or *La Haine*. While the film acknowledges the tremendous challenges that Rachid and Denis carry as the descendants of North and West Africans in France, many of the plot mechanisms of the film consist of devices that Rachid and Denis use in order to gain or maintain social credit with Franco-French people, in order to find housing and create relationships with Franco-French women. For example, Denis' and Rachid's use of the system according to which they ask punks to harass attractive women, then apparently coming to their rescue and saving them from these punks, allows them to use the factor of their race in order to make themselves look better to these women; similarly, their maintenance of their relationship with Virginie Raymonde, the daughter of apartment owners and from a very respectable Parisian family, and their tolerance of rude behavior from Virginie's parents, reveals that they know very well which behaviors are effective at making themselves look approachable and trustworthy in the eyes of Virginie and her parents.

Meanwhile, the instance in which Denis and Rachid lock the real estate agent who insults them and shows them a substandard apartment with a Chinese-style toilet, reveals

that Denis and Raymond have reached a threshold of tolerance, past which they will stand no more rude behavior from this person.

Additionally, a third scene which demonstrates the desubjectification of minorities in France with respect to housing there is found at the end of the film, when a man of African origin denies two possible Franco-French tenants an apartment rental, since they are said to be “racist.” This instance, which, as I noted in the previous section of this dissertation, exemplifies the concept of *role reversal*, but in the Foucauldian, not Derridean sense, and qualifies as an example of desubjectification for the people in the ethnic group usually discriminated against in France, normally, those of West and North African descent. While Rachid and Denis do not themselves have the opportunity to deny two Franco-French people an apartment, as they themselves are denied apartments by Virginie’s parents and countless other landlords, the viewer of this film has this chance to envision an event that illustrates the reverse process of subjectification of the *Beurs*: the desubjectification of people of their ethnic group, which, if not conveying a favorable portrait of some Franco-French people, provides encouragement that racism, not ethnic difference, will one day be the liability that will be consistently penalized in French society.

Le Gone du Chaaba (Azouz Begag, 1986)

Among the *Beur* novels displaying mixed hospitality with respect to *Beur* integration, Azouz Begag’s 1986 novel, *Le Gone du Chaaba*, carries special weight because of its semi-autobiographical nature. Begag, born in Lyon, France, of Algerian

parents, has been a researcher at the CNRS and is the author of thirty works, including *Béni, ou le paradis privé*, which I will discuss later in this chapter, and *Ahmed de Bourgogne*. In this work, Begag tells his story through the words of Azouz, a youngster of Algerian origin growing up in the Chaaba (a low-income neighborhood in Lyon) with his family. In the novel, Azouz's family moves to le Chaaba in August, 1966 (Begag 142). Thus, this novel is set in a period roughly twenty years after North Africans began to come to France to replenish French industries after World War II, in the late 1940s, and before and perhaps during the period of large-scale settlement of North African women and children in France, following their fathers and husbands who were already there, in the mid-1970s. This novel depicts academics as the means by which Azouz tries to become better-integrated into French society, a potential that evokes the concept of Derridean hospitality. By the same token, his academic ambition makes him a target for the criticism of several of his friends of North African origin, and for negative comments from some of his Franco-French teachers and classmates, who see him as a transplanted Algerian, instead of as a Frenchman, a disparity that is anchored in challenges to integration, as in so-called "Foucauldian" hospitality.

The dynamic between forces that inspire and impede *Beur* integration in this novel seems to raise the question of how far it is permissible for a person of North African origin to ascend in French society, without being considered a traitor to his or her roots. The notion of *la Beurgeoisie*, or the class of artists and politicians of North African descent who rise to the top of French society, despite expectations that many people have for them, comes to mind when reflecting on this issue. This class, *la Beurgeoisie*, is often said to be symbolic of the very real potential of people of North

African descent to ascend in French society, yet at the same time, some people claim that it is overly optimistic to generalize this potential to the overall minority population, since many of the members of *la Beurgoisie* have unusual gifts or advantageous backgrounds, permitting them to attain high positions and to make notable contributions to French society. Begag himself, the author of this novel, can be considered to be such a luminary in the *Beur* community.

First, I will examine this work in the light of Derrida's hospitality theory, first considering Begag's treatment of Azouz's relationship with *le pied-noir* schoolteacher, Monsieur Loubon, who forms a bond with Azouz based on their similar backgrounds, since they both have ties to Algeria (Begag 182). Azouz's parents are from Algeria, while Monsieur Loubon is a Frenchman who has lived in Algeria. Monsieur Loubon tells Azouz that their common link to the home country will strengthen their bond: "Eh bien, vous voyez, moi, je suis français et je suis né en Algérie, et vous, vous êtes né à Lyon, mais vous êtes algérien" (Begag 182). In this instance, there is a Derridean act of empowerment on the part of Azouz, in which he is able to develop a keen awareness of the Otherness of a Caucasian authority figure, putting him on a more level playing field with this teacher, and perhaps erasing some of the animosity that he has towards other Franco-French teachers. Once he sees Monsieur Loubon as human and humane, it is possible that he will come to see the other teachers as less threatening. Hargreaves, in the work, *Voices from the North African Community in France*, states that Begag removed accounts of Azouz's relationships with other teachers in le Lycée Saint-Exupéry in Lyon, from the definitive version of the novel, since he wanted to enable the reader to focus on

this very healthy student-teacher relationship, in considering the evolution of Azouz's integration into French society (78).

In addition, the high grades that Azouz receives at school can be seen as signs of strides towards his integration, evoking the concept of Derridean hospitality. At several points in the novel, Azouz receives the highest grades in his class (Begag 194), eliciting his father's pride in his success (Begag 197). The fact that Azouz's achievements make his father proud is noteworthy, since his father most likely feels that his son is honoring his family's reputation, as a family of immigrants from North Africa, who began their lives in France with humble origins, but who are now represented by a successful and intelligent son. This positive parental attitude towards academic success can be contrasted with that of Malika's mother in Kessas' *Beur's Story*. Malika's mother prefers that her daughters concentrate on domestic tasks, seeing school as a source of diversion and corruption. Although Kessas' novel does not describe in detail her attitude towards her son's academics, it is suggested in *Beur's Story* that Malika's brothers are not academically motivated.

Second, I will explain my view of the way in which Foucault's power theory can illuminate the interpretation of *Le Gone du Chaaba*. I will first analyze the role of the schoolteacher, as seen under the optic of Foucauldian theory. My re-interpretation of Foucauldian theory, in light of Derrida, may reveal that Azouz in this novel is praised by his teachers only because they are trying to mold him into the model French republican citizen, rather than encourage his individuality or permit him to have his own personality. The schoolteacher figure sometimes invades the privacy of the *Beurs* and makes them conform to an excessive degree, as in the panopticon, as demonstrated in the novel by

Belghoul, *Georgette!*, analyzed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. For example, in *Le Gone du Chaaba*, there is a conflict between an Algerian-French student, Mouassoui, and *le maître* (the schoolteacher), over cleanliness standards, as differing cultural practices come into sharp contrast (Begag 89). In addition, the schoolteacher's psychological manipulation, characteristic of the dominant party in a Foucauldian power model, is exemplified when Azouz accepts his schoolmaster's statement that he and his classmates are the descendants of the Gaulois, an assertion that could clearly raise eyebrows, when applied to the *Beurs*: "Nous sommes tous descendants de Vercingétorix!" (Begag 56). These kinds of statements are absurd, revealing that such schoolteachers are fixated on following standard procedures and policy, set by the Ministry of National Education, and that they are insensitive to the *Beurs'* ancestry.

Next, I will analyze Begag's relationships with other students, as seen through the lens of Foucauldian power theory. While Azouz does very well at school, his classmates of North African descent become angry towards him because they do not do as well as he does, while some of the French of European descent dislike him because he becomes close to their Caucasian teacher, *le pied-noir*, Monsieur Loubon: "A l'école Léo Lagrange, les Arabes de la classe me traitaient de faux frère, parce que je n'étais pas dernier avec eux. Et ici, les Français ne vont pas tarder à jaser sur mon compte, parce que Loubon et moi, nous avons l'Algérie en commun" (Begag 190). Azouz finds himself in a serious dilemma, as his ambitious attitude towards school clashes with the allegiance that the North African community in Lyon expects from him, as Hargreaves notes in *Voices from the North African Community* (51). Hargreaves sees success as being represented by two indices: "the mastery of the French language and...conformity with

the moral precepts transmitted by the teacher” (51), two sets of skills which are doubtlessly stigmatized by some of his Algerian-French friends as tantamount to fraternizing with the enemy, or at the very least, as contributing to their own marginalization and manipulation by the French of European descent. As a consequence of this conflict, Azouz becomes the victim of several cruel comments by Algerians. Moussaoui, an Algerian-French student, gives Azouz an ultimatum about belonging to the *Beurs* or to the French of European descent: “Ben, je ne veux pas me battre avec toi...parce que t’es un Algérien. Mais faut savoir si t’es avec eux ou avec nous!” (Begag 84) This ultimatum seems to be an extreme example of peer pressure to conform to the norms of the home country, even as all around him, other influences tell Azouz to follow French standards in order to succeed.

Beyond the issue of his fellow Algerians’ conception of him as a good student in a sub-culture that does not necessarily valorize academic success or compliance to majority standards, on another level, the stigma that Azouz faces is even greater than it would have been for some other *Beurs* in France, given the fact that he lives in a neighborhood known for low-income housing, le Chaaba in Lyon, which is famous for its *bidonvilles*. Many people assume that since Azouz is from this area, he cannot succeed in school or French society, as others do, a presupposition that Azouz opposes and wishes to eradicate: “Je n’aime pas être avec les pauvres, les faibles de la classe. Je veux être dans les premières places du classement, comme les Français...Je veux prouver que je suis capable d’être comme eux. Mieux qu’eux. Même si j’habite au Chaaba” (Begag 54). Azouz is ashamed of where he lives in the Chaaba; he finds it embarrassing that his friends know that he lives in *les bidonvilles* there, which are perceived as the place where

the poor live. He compares his family's housing with his Franco-French friend Alain's house, as large as the entire neighborhood of le Chaaba:

Je sais que j'habite dans une bidonville de barques en planches et en toiles ondulées, et que ce sont les pauvres qui vivent de cette manière. Je suis allé plusieurs fois chez Alain, dont les parents habitent au milieu de l'avenue Monin, dans une maison. J'ai compris que c'était beaucoup plus beau que les huttes. Et l'espace! Sa maison à lui, elle est aussi grande que notre Chaaba tout entier....Moi, j'ai honte de lui dire où j'habite. C'est pour ça que Alain n'est jamais venu au Chaaba.

Because he seeks to be successful in life and has aspirations outside of le Chaaba, Azouz does not align himself with his friends of a similar background, and is ashamed to let his Franco- French classmates know that he lives in the Chaaba. The marginalization that Azouz experiences, as a resident of a poor neighborhood, is hurtful to his self-esteem, although he seems to forge an identity for himself that is unique to him, by taking pride in his successes at school, thus overcoming the major liabilities of his familial situation.

With regards to the concept of hospitality, central to this dissertation, this passage seems to demonstrate that just as interracial and intercultural differences can frustrate existing hospitality situations, negative sentiments related to these disparities can also prevent actual hospitality, in the physical sense, from occurring. Azouz is too ashamed to invite his friend to his house, because this friend, Alain, comes from a significantly higher socioeconomic level than Azouz's family does. Azouz fears putting himself in a position of inferiority in the eyes of Alain. Even though Alain is a friend, Azouz fears jeopardizing this relationship, as giving Alain the knowledge that he is from le Chaaba may elicit negative responses and damage to their relationship. Thus, the frictions

inherent to cultural and racial differences, even between friends, can prevent contexts of hospitality from occurring, potentially stalling the development of relationships that could result in more understanding between people. If a reciprocal gesture is never made, how can it facilitate better relationships?

Azouz's relationships with his Franco-French peers are also challenged by these students' perceptions of his ethnicity, as an Arab in France. At one point, Azouz tells a Jewish student that he is Jewish too, although he is an Arab:

Si j'avais avoué que j'étais Arabe, tout le monde m'aurait mis en quarantaine, à part Babar, bien sûr. Et puis les Taboul racontent aussi que, dans le desert...un million d'Israéliens ont mis en déroute plusieurs millions d'Arabes, et je me sens humilié à l'intérieur. Alors il valait mieux que je sois juif.

(Begag 164)

While being Jewish in France also can be difficult, perhaps Azouz feels inclined to claim this identity because his appearance could help him pass as a Jew, instead of an Arab. He feels not only ashamed of his academic talent and ambition, but also of his ethnicity, a double condition of liability that doubtlessly causes him internal strife, confusion, and issues with his self-esteem. At another point in the novel, Azouz denies recognizing his own mother, dressed in full Algerian garb, when she comes to take him home from school. In the work, *Voices from the North African Community*, Hargreaves remarks, concerning this incident, that, "As a consequence, she and Azouz both suffer profound feelings of shame and humiliation" (52). Hargreaves holds that it is almost impossible

for these *Beur* protagonists to avoid conflicts, owing to their very real difference from the French of European descent (52).

In addition, Azouz's relationships with his family are also severely challenged by the unique dynamics of the cultural conditions in which he lives in France. Namely, his father's traditional Muslim values come into frequent conflict with the secular practices that fascinate Azouz. For example, Hargreaves pinpoints a scene in the novel in which Azouz's father, Bouzid, demonstrates his shock towards and rejection of Western values, as he watches a couple kiss on television: "According to Islamic teachings, such acts ought not to be seen in public. He therefore rips the plug of the television set out of its socket, fusing all the lights in the apartment and at the same time setting back his reconciliation with the family through this fresh display of ill-temper" (52).

Yet another excerpt from the novel which reveals the severity of the degree of the conflict in which *Beur* youth who want to become integrated, such as Azouz, can suddenly find themselves in relationship with their families, is found in the description of Azouz's accidental reporting of his own uncle's illegal slaughter of sheep in his apartment. During a police-raid on the *bidonville*, the police ask Azouz to lead them to an unlicensed *halla abattoir* in the *bidonville*, which is, unbeknownst to Azouz, run by his uncle. Since he realizes that slaughtering sheep is illegal in France without a license, he reports the site of the *abattoir* to the police, for the purposes of supporting law and order (Begag 122-163). In this case, his good citizenship results in his uncle being fined, and in the loss of goodwill from his family, as Hargreaves remarks in *Voices from the North African Community in France* (52). Torn between two masters, allegiance to his

family and membership within French society, it seems that he can never protect himself from indemnity, let alone appease or please either side.

Desubjectification in Begag's *Le Gone du Chaaba*

In this work by Begag, it seems that young Azouz, the literary counterpart of sociologist and author, Azouz Begag, seeks desubjectification from the stigma linked to several parts of his identity, namely, his status as a French person of Algerian descent, and speaking fluent French, who is widely seen as an outsider; his position in school as a top student, widely envied by other students of his ethnic group; and his background, as a resident of le Chaaba, a low-income area where many people of Algerian descent live, and that is known to other students at school, some of whom live in fancier neighborhoods. It seems that he wants protection from various parts of his personality, often mutually exclusive, that subject him to criticism, rejection, or isolation from his peers, his family, and his teachers, among others. While his parents and teachers may value his academic success, some of peers do not, since they are jealous of it. Some of his fellow Algerian peers may take pride in living in le Chaaba, where Azouz lives, but he would prefer that his more socio-economically favored classmates remain unaware of his family's home address. Similarly, some of his fellow Algerian-French peers may take pride in their common Algerian descent, but for Azouz, some Franco-French people's knowledge of his background as an Algerian-French person leads them to think of him as an Algerian, and not a French person. Thus, for Azouz, finding relief from the conflicts

that he falls into due to his involvement in both French academics and his Algerian-French family and community, presents constant pitfalls for him, as pleasing some people can displease other people, at the same time, and vice versa.

Since he seems to be torn between these aspects of his identity at several points, perhaps the mitigating factors that allow him to maintain a manageable psychological threshold of stress come from his satisfaction at achieving high grades at school, though this success irks his classmates, and from his beneficial friendship with Monsieur Loubon, with whom Azouz identifies, as an Algerian-French person, Monsieur Loubon being a *pied-noir*.

It thus seems that, in situations where desubjectification is very difficult to achieve due to mutually exclusive demands on an individual, the best strategy to take is to focus on the effects of positive people or forces in the person's life; it is possible that this value added to his or her life will reduce the tension provoked by the conflict between these demands.

Béni, ou le paradis privé: roman (Azouz Begag, 1989)

Begag's *Béni, ou le paradis privé*, also exemplifies the mixed hospitality that I am describing in this chapter. In this novel, Begag tells the story of a young Frenchman of Algerian origin, Béni, who lives with his family in low-income housing developments. The novel depicts Béni's family as traditional, including an authoritative older brother, and a conservative mother and father, very attached to their Algerian heritage. Unlike his brothers, and like the protagonist, Azouz, in *Le Gone du Chaaba*, Béni succeeds in his

classes in high school, and is the first in his family to graduate from high school (Begag 35). He is challenged romantically, however, as he is in love with a blond girl of African and English descent, France, and is frustrated by the fruitlessness of his unrequited love for her (Begag 43). Complicating these matters, is the fact that his parents would never approve of a romantic relationship between Béni and France, due to the custom in most North African families, of Muslim young people marrying other Muslims (Begag 44).

A noteworthy characteristic of this novel, which Hargreaves refers to in the work, *Voices from the North African Community in France*, is that it mentions Islam more than in passing, differing from most *Beur* novels. In particular, both the incipit and the conclusion of the novel allude to this religion; the beginning of the novel focuses on Béni's frustration with his exclusion from the celebration of Christmas, representative of his feeling, confirmed at several junctures in the novel, that his parents' religion is an impediment to full participation in French society (Hargreaves 79). Hargreaves attributes the relative silence of *Beur* authors on this topic, to the way in which they see Islam: in general, as a vestige of their ancestral past, from which they would like to be freed, although they lack the skills to achieve this liberty (80).

There are several aspects of this novel that illustrate contexts of *Beur* integration that are reflective of Derridean hospitality theory. First, the title of the novel clearly is a play on the word *bénir* (to bless), a word similar to the protagonist's first name, Béni, indicating Derridean hospitality. The word *bénir* carries religious connotations in France, and also has the air of being a positive word, in the sense that the words "blessed" (*Béni*) and "happy" (*heureux*) are very close in approximate meaning. In reality, Béni's name is a nickname that he uses, to hide his true name, based on his North African heritage, Ben

Abdallah: “parce que là, on voit pas que je suis arabe. Pas comme Ben Abdallah, que je suis obligé de porter comme *un djelleba* toute la journée en classe” (Begag 40). Béni remarks that he decided to change his name because his schoolteachers could not pronounce his given name, Ben Abdallah: “J’ai commencé à vouloir changer de prénom à cause de l’école. Les profs n’arrivaient jamais à prononcer correctement le mien.....” (Begag 40).

In addition, Béni’s first name is also significant due to its connections to his scholastic achievements, as the first person in his family to receive a diploma:

Ben Abdallah, donc Béni: “Béni, c’est moi, “mon fils” dans la langue du Prophète, Béni dans celle du Christ, anagramme de bien dans celle du petit Robert. J’avais tout pour réussir, tout pour plaire. Béni en 4 lettres, comme BEPC, le Brevet d’Enseignement du Premier Cycle que j’ai passé l’année dernière en CES des Capucines.....Premier diplôme de taille dans la famille. Abboué en a fait 17 photocopies pour en envoyer en Algérie et pour en garder chez nous.

(Ben Jelloun 35)

In this quotation, Béni expresses the joy that he finds in the links between his name and both Islam and Christianity (“la langue du Prophet...celle [the language] du Christ”), and between his name and his numerous achievements in school, which, as he notes, have been communicated to their family in Algeria, no doubt seen as impressive achievements and proof of his success and integration into French society. Notably, unlike some other Algerian-French families, as in Kessas’ *Beur’s Story*, Béni’s family supports his efforts to become educated: “Il [his father] doit penser à nous, c’est sûr. Il doit se donner du courage en nous imaginant sur les bancs de l’école, apprenant tout par coeur, pour devenir des gens importants: et moi, je n’ai pas le courage d’aller en maths, ce matin”

(Begag 120). In this quotation, Béni expresses his gratitude for being able to obtain an education, and his guilt over his occasional lack of appreciation for these opportunities.

Moreover, the Derridean hospitality at work in this novel is also manifested by Béni's fascination with French culture. Although he is of Algerian descent, he sees himself abandoning his traditional culture for French culture when he is older (Ben Jelloun 43). There are even a couple of instances where his opinions suggest a rejection of certain Algerian customs, such as arranged marriages with Algerian cousins: "J'en ai eu marre de ces discussions des pauvres, des projets de retour au bled, du camion berliet, des sous, du mariage avec une Arabe blanche ou noire..." (Begag 110). This line of thought mirrors the mentality demonstrated by Malika in *Beur's Story*, discussed in Chapter 2, as she expresses her preference for continuing her education, to following her parents' plans for her, of marrying someone of their choice. Despite the fact that Béni feels shame that he has sentiments that indicate a preference for French culture, this aspect of his personality reveals the tensions that many *Beurs* feel in France, as they strive to secure their identity between two cultures, North African and French (Begag 43). With respect to his relationships, in addition to his affection for the French of European descent girl, France, he also has a close Franco-French friend, Nick, with whom he spends time in his housing development (Begag 70). Béni's destiny as an aficionado of French culture seems to be reinforced by the final scene of the novel, featuring an image of him and his beloved, France, flying towards the stars (Begag 173). This ending seems to suggest that Béni will reach his ultimate happiness by identifying with the French culture that he enjoys, with the girl whom he loves, even if they face obstacles because of their different religious and social backgrounds.

Hargreaves establishes a connection between Béni's ardent love for France, and his keen interest in French culture, despite his cynicism about French society's attitude towards his people, as he states in the article, "Resistance at the Margins: Writers of Maghrebi immigrant origin in France," published in the work, *Post-Colonial Cultures in France*: "The desire to make France his girlfriend is emblematic of a wider desire on Béni's part to achieve personal success within mainstream French society....[However], Béni knows full well that France has a history of colonial oppression and remains deeply impregnated by racist attitudes which threaten to block his personal advancement" (Hargreaves 232). Hargreaves acknowledges that even as Béni strives to conceal the aspects of his identity that may be offensive to the French people, the perception that the French of European descent have towards him is forcibly affected by the traits that are characteristic of people of his background (232).

One incident that illustrates a movement towards Derridean hospitality, in terms of *Beur* integration in France, is found in Béni's response to his father's forbidding him to celebrate Christmas, a Christian holiday, as a Muslim: "J'allais dire chez moi qu'on pouvait très bien profiter de la fête des Chrétiens, même quand on est des Arabes" (Ben Jelloun 19). Béni and his family are first exposed to a Christmas tree when his father's bosses organize a Christmas party for his employees. Béni seems to enjoy this event, which brings him into contact with French culture, and where he and siblings also receive toys as presents: "Nous nous sentions vraiment proches des Français" (Begag 8). In the previous quotation, from page 19 of the text, he seems to be almost defiant, in asserting that he has the power to choose which holidays he will celebrate. He seems to feel that he can pick and choose which aspects of French culture he will adopt, and which he will

reject. For him, celebrating Christmas by erecting a tree seems the festive action to take, and his fascination with French culture plays some role in this justification, no doubt. This instance, in which Béni asserts his right to combine the celebrations of two cultures, that of his family, the “guest,” and that of France, “the host,” implies some proof that cultural intermixing between the French of European descent and North Africans and their descendants is increasing, at least as exemplified in *Beur* literature. Another example of this cultural syncretism occurs in the work, *Le Thé au Harem d'Archi Ahmed*, by Charef, in which the *Beur*, Madjid, finds a parallel between his mother's traditional Algerian wedding dances and the French can-can (159-60). The longer that these cultures are in contact with each other, the richer the results of these cultural combinations will be.

As for the analysis of so-called “Foucauldian” hospitality theory in effect in this novel, an issue that contributes to the Foucauldian atmosphere in the work, *Béni ou le paradis privé*, by Begag, is the conflict that Béni experiences between being faithful to his Muslim faith and being open-minded towards French cultural practices, particularly ones that involve Christian traditions. While the issue over buying the Christmas tree, described in the previous paragraph, reveals Béni's emerging interest in French culture, by the same token, it demonstrates the tension between him and his father with respect to religion. For example, Béni feels tempted to buy a Christmas tree, but cannot do so, because of his strict Muslim family; his father forbids him from celebrating Christmas, and above all, from converting to Catholicism (Ben Jelloun 7, 22). Béni notes his father's justification for not allowing Béni to buy the tree: “Après quoi, il m'a dit, comme tout le monde, que cette fête n'était pas pour les Arabes” (Ben Jelloun 20). Béni tries to

convince his father, dismissing his likely suspicion that he wants the tree for religious reasons, related to an interest in Christianity: “On est pas obligé de mettre une crèche avec un petit Jésus dedans, bon Dieu!” (Ben Jelloun 22) In his injunction to his son on the subject of their religion, he remarks, “Tant que je serai là, je jure sur Allah que jamais nous ne deviendrons catholiques!” (Ben Jelloun 22) One can sense the intransigence of his father’s judgment on this topic, and given the typically strong and firm demeanor of North African patriarchs, as seen in the other *Beur* novels, one can imagine that Béni feels very strongly convinced to follow his father’s injunction to celebrate only Muslim holidays, and not Christian ones.

Just as Béni’s family finds his interest in Christian traditions problematic, his father, Abboué, feels threatened by Béni’s love for his classmate, France. Again, as with the controversy over Béni’s wish to buy a Christmas tree, an issue that evokes Derridean hospitality, the conflict over Béni’s relationship with France can also be perceived as evidence for Foucauldian-like contexts of integration, a phenomenon that I will touch upon in the conclusion to this chapter. In particular, when Béni’s brother, Nordine refuses to engage in an arranged marriage with an Algerian woman, Abboué reacts to his son’s resistance to follow *la voie des pères*, and his son’s tendency to be interested in intermixing:

C’est à ce moment qu’Abboué s’est laissé aller.

-Quoi? Quoi? C’est des Françaises que vous voulez, bandes de chiens! Vous voulez salir notre nom, notre race! Vous voulez faire des enfants que vous appellerez Jacques...Allez, allez, épouser des Françaises: quand vous pleurerez parce qu’elles vous auront traité de ‘bicou’, vous reviendrez chez votre vieux [their father] qui comprend rien. Débout sur ses deux jambes d’Algérien, de Musulman de paysan sétifien, de maçon archarné et fatigué, il a insulté pendant

encore longtemps toute sa vie, sa famille, et la France. J'en avais marre. J'ai pris le Coran de ma chaîne entre mes doigts et je l'ai posé sur la table.

(Begag 78)

Hargreaves finds parallels between the contestation that Béni's father demonstrates in this novel, and the reaction that Georgette's father in Belghoul experiences, in reaction to his daughter's use of a French proper name, symbolizing a wild divergence away from traditions to which they were accustomed in North Africa, alluded to, in Hargreaves' viewpoint, by the second paragraph of the passage. Correspondingly, Hargreaves sees Béni's gesture of removing the Koran-shaped necklace from his neck, as another rejection of the weight of his family's cultural traditions, which infringe of his liberty (78).

This novel, as several others, reveals another element that renders life in France problematic for many *Beurs*: the fact that physical abuse is a serious problem in many families of North African descent, and the fact that many of the *Beurs'* temptations to participate in French culture and social life are the justifications that are used for some of the domestic violence in these families. In this work, for example, Béni's father, Abboué, exacts punishment upon Béni when he requests a Christmas tree, despite his mother's pleading that he stop the abuse, and the support that he receives from his other brother, Nordine (Begag 23-4). Due to the seriousness of abuse that he receives from his father, Béni resolves to never mention the topic of the Christmas tree to his family: "Je me suis juré de ne plus jamais reparler de sapin de Noël à la maison" (Begag 24). His reaction is consistent with that of many abuse victims, who become paralyzed with fear when

violating the boundaries of the behavior that has been declared expected for them by their abusers. It seems logical that some form of outreach could be made to protect people who are at risk for physical abuse in some of these conservative, traditional families in France.

“Foucauldian,” dysfunctional hospitality is also in effect, in a literal sense, when Béni, at the end of the novel, is ultimately denied access to a private club, le Paradis privé, the importance of which is stressed in the title. In a Foucauldian interpretation of hospitality, Béni is rejected from mainstream French culture and identity, represented by the club, because he does not have a membership card (Begag 165). This scene, along with references to critical comments from teachers to Béni regarding his ability to master French, given that he is of Algerian origin, reinforces the fact that perceived differences in status between the French of European descent and the descendants of immigrants in France significantly frustrate intercultural exchanges, making for examples of dysfunctional hospitality. As Foucault argues, a concession from the more powerful party to the less, such as the invitation to the club extended by the French girl, France, and her friends to Béni, creates many potential problems. The person in the inferior situation, for example, Béni, may have reason for doubting the motivation of a person making a concession. His denial to the club illustrates the fact that the invitation to the nightclub, symbolizing social life in French society, could not be supported by realities in France, as discrimination against the *Beurs* is still common.

The racism that Béni observes in some Franco-French people is also an element of dysfunctional hospitality in this novel. For example, Béni hears a conversation between two strangers, that seems to be very critical of and hostile towards foreigners

and their residence in France: “Si c’était moi que je dirigeais ce putain de pays, je les renverrai tous dans leur pays, les Gitans, à coups de botte dans le cul!...”...“C’est sûr, dit un autre. Tu les accueilles, tu leur donnes du boulot, ils violent tes femmes: France pays d’accueil! Voilà le résultat!” (Begag 125) In this quotation, there is a suggestion that all foreigners be repatriated to their former countries, due to their perceived tendency to take advantage of French women, after being granted citizenship and employment. This type of argument is at the heart of the xenophobia that characterizes many arguments of the French of European descent against welcoming foreigners into France, and that drives much of the motivation of the far-right party currently led by Marine LePen, le Front National.

Béni’s perception that many French people of European descent display condescending attitudes towards Arabs is reinforced in the scene involving the newscast on the subject of Muslims and the Middle East: “Quand le présentateur parlait des Arabes, du pétrole, de l’Islam, de l’Algérie, il nous disait à tous de nous taire...Les Français ne disaient que des mensonges sur nous.” The silence that the newscaster seems to demand of minorities in France seems reminiscent of the silence that Malika in *Beur’s Story*, by Kessas, discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, claims that her family demands of her and her sister as they do their household chores, and of the silence that is the result of invisible cultural barriers between the French of European descent and the descendants of North Africans, often resulting in the *Beurs’* sensation that they are invisible, voiceless, and powerless in relationship to French culture as a whole, and even within their own families and social circles.

In addition, Béni encounters negative, condescending attitudes from some Franco-French teachers, who maintain that they cannot understand how Béni understands French. Namely, the teacher asks Béni: “De quelle origine vous êtes?” “Humaine,” il répond, “algérien” (Begag 38). The teacher responds in a supercilious manner, as if to compliment him for speaking a foreign language, when French is actually his first language, since he is born in France: “Pour un étranger, vous maîtrisez plutôt bien le français” (Begag 38). One teacher remarked to him, “Si c’est pas un comble que le seul étranger de toute la classe soit le seul à pouvoir se vanter de connaître notre langue!” (Begag 42) At another point, Béni explains that his fluent French skills come from the fact that he was born there: “M’sieur, faut dire quand même que je suis pas totalement étranger, puisque je suis né à Lyon, comme tout le monde, je fais remarquer....Autrement dit, je suis né à Lyon, aussi puis-je demander à être considéré comme un Lyonnais” (Begag 42). He intends to disarm them from any excessive curiosity about his nationality, and to make a bridge between him and people of other ethnicities, rather than making his status as a descendant of North Africans the focal point of the discussion, and thus of the relationship. This sentiment echoes the complaint that several *Beur* characters make when hearing such comments, including Samia in *Ils disent que je suis une beurette*, discussed in Chapter 4; and Nadia, in *Les Raisins de la galère*, analyzed in Chapter 2. They understandably grow tired of hearing insinuations that they speak French well, despite their immigrant origins; they feel that people should not be surprised at their fluent French, since they are as French in nationality as the French of European descent.

Desubjectification in Begag's *Béni, ou le paradis privé*

Begag's *Béni ou le paradis privé* reveals the use of some techniques towards achieving psychological desubjectification on the part of Béni: his mental and emotional attachment to his Franco-French classmate, France, which is seen as being improper for the Muslim son of his traditional-minded parents, and may be challenged as being unacceptable in the eyes of some Franco-French and Maghrebi-French; his insistence towards his teacher that he is a French citizen, despite his Algerian origins (echoing *Le Gone du Chaaba's* Azouz); and his interest in French culture and holidays of France, which puts him at odds with his father, who forbids him from celebrating Christmas.

It is striking that in both of Begag's works, *Le Gone du Chaaba* and *Béni ou le paradis privé*, the male protagonist is pictured as having to defend the status of his citizenship in France, so convinced are some Franco-French people that having an Algerian name and Algerian parents make one Algerian, even when one is born in France. The complaints registered by Azouz and Béni echo the actual complaints of many Maghrebi-French living in France today. The fluency of his French, which should help to convince these people of the veridity and validity of his French citizenship, in fact makes them only more skeptical of it.

While, ultimately, Béni will not likely be able to date the French of European descent girl, France, and he may continue to be perceived as Algerian even with his fluent French and French citizenship card, the ways in which he allows himself to have contact with his classmate, France, and with French culture seems to reduce the stress that accumulates due to these sensitive issues occurring in his life.

Just as in Begag's *Le Gone du Chaaba*, despite the ongoing nature of some phenomena, linking us to factors beyond our control, and to realities that we do not create, some relief can be found by seeking more contact with positive experiences and people in our lives, which, while not necessarily getting us closer to our goals (in Béni's case, dating France, being seen as French, and participating in French culture, because of the social and familial constraints surrounding him), the process of desubjectification can help us to feel closer to these objectives that we have designed for ourselves, reducing feelings of cognitive dissonance and the feeling that we will never have what we want, even if that is the reality.

Conclusion to Chapter 3

In this chapter, I have presented and analyzed examples of mixed hospitality, as they pertain to integration, in six *Beur* cultural texts, including films and novels, namely Ben Jelloun's *Les Raisins de la galère*, Charef's novel, *Le Thé au Harem d'Archy Ahmed*, Kassovitz's *La Haine*, Meynard's *L'Oeil au beur(re) noir*, and Begag's *Le Gone du Chaaba*, and *Béni, ou le paradis privé*.

The analysis of works in this chapter on mixed hospitality, in particular, seems to call attention to the fact that there is a tremendous amount of nuance, complexity and ambiguity to account for in the process of dissecting these works for the purposes of commenting on the type of hospitality/integration that they reveal. Sometimes, one issue or incident can reveal both "Foucauldian" and "Derridean" aspects of

hospitality/integration, requiring one to examine the way in which intercultural relationships affect the experience of North Africans and their descendants, in multiple facets. For example, in my analysis of *Béni, ou le paradis privé*, Béni's inclinations towards buying a Christmas tree and becoming romantically involved with a girl of English and African descent reveal tendencies towards both Derridean and so-called "Foucauldian" hospitality models.

One conclusion that can be drawn from the complexity of analyzing these cultural and literary works that fall at the midpoint of the spectrum of hospitality/integration, which I established in Chapter 1, on my theoretical foundations, is that before one interacts with, or makes a decision that will affect, minorities, whether they are the Maghrebi-French in France, or Hispanics, African Americans, or Native Americans in the United States, is the multiplicity of the way in which these decisions can affect these people, who are especially vulnerable in our societies. This is the reason for which I ask several times, within this chapter and the previous, for people to demonstrate compassion to minorities, and to show sensitivity and deference when dealing with them.

If they were actual people, instead of literary characters, within this chapter alone, the following incidents or interactions may have affected the following people in these ways, as they do in the cultural texts in which they are featured:

1. Nadia's family, from *Les Raisins de la galère*, may lose their house due to a decision by the town mayor, based on his will to prevent Algerians from living in the center of town;
2. Madjid, in *Le Thé au Harem d'Archi Ahmed*, may face chronic employment, and turn to delinquency, due to the fact that he was expelled from school, partially for

factors related to his lack of acquisition of cultural norms expected in French society;

3. Vinz, in *La Haine*, may die after being shot by a skinhead in the Paris suburbs, due largely to the extremely violent subculture that exists there;
4. Rachid and Denis in *L'Oeil au beur(re) noir* may be denied access to apartment after apartment in Paris, based solely on their ethnicities as people of North and West African origins;
5. Azouz, in *Le Gone du Chaaba*, may have to battle stigma based on the connection between the area where he lives and the negative connotations associated with such areas, due to racial stereotyping;
6. Béni, in *Béni, ou le paradis privé*, may have to face physical abuse from his father and brothers for innocuous behavior, because of the way in which this type of violent behavior, generally proscribed by French society at large, is tolerated in many Muslim families.

In these cases, when they are not literary or cinematographic characters, but actual people, we see the effects of these longstanding issues and conflicts on French society. Viewing these characters as symbols of real people may help us to have empathy and respect for them, instead of seeing them as caricatures. This increased empathy and respect may help us, thus, to treat minorities better, and to have more consideration for people who are not native to our language and culture.

This type of sensitivity will also be important as we examine the works in the fourth chapter of this dissertation, addressing examples of contexts of integration that are evocative of Derridean hospitality theory.

Finally, there are a greater number of examples of attempts at desubjectification among the *Beur* protagonists in these works analyzed in this chapter than are found in Chapter 2, revealing a greater sense of agency among these characters than was seen in the works of Chapter 2, which consisted of some historical works in which tremendous damage had already been incurred, robbing the characters of ability to act (*La Seine était rouge*), or in which the characters were too young (*Georgette!*), or too encapsulated by the cultural of a certain area (as in *Rai*) to act on their own behalf to improve their situation in France. It will be instructive to determine whether an examination of Chapter 4, on “Derridean-like” relationships as seen in the *Beur* artistic corpus, will reveal depictions of characters with even stronger senses of agency than have been observed in Chapter 3, as demonstrated in Ben Jelloun’s *Les Raisins de la galère*, Meynard’s *L’Oeil au beurre noir*, and Begag’s *Le Gone du Chaaba* and *Béni ou le paradis privé*, each featuring characters perceiving themselves to have senses of agency, and the drive to effect change in France, whether on their lives alone, or on the lives of the *Beurs* as a population.

Chapter 4:

Derridean Hospitality in *Beur* Novels, Films and Music Videos

Introduction

In this chapter, I argue that Derridean hospitality is exemplified by a number of artistic works from the *Beur* community. As I have explained, Derrida posits that in a good guest-host relationship, the guest and the host make sacrifices for each other's good, and act with the best interest of the other party in mind. Within the context of the cohabitation of the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French within France, this type of rapport would involve reciprocal overtures, made by each side, as each shows consideration towards the other. Thus, in this chapter, I will examine a group of *Beur* novels and films and songs by and about the Maghrebi-French, all of which feature relationships between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French that are at least somewhat mutually beneficial, and some of which feature ethical and even ethical behavior, often contrasting sharply with the behavior that we examined among the characters discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation. Notwithstanding, the characters in these more favorable situations still face a wide variety of challenges, revealing that even in the best scenarios of integration, complicating factors often remain.

Beyond the standard healthy relationship, which operates on the basis of reciprocity, as theorized by Derrida in *Of Hospitality*, there is a tendency in these novels and films for the Maghrebi-French to rise above the ethical and towards the highly ethical, regarding the Otherness of the French of European descent with no expectation of reciprocity, corresponding to an act of empowerment according to Derrida's theory in *The Gift of Death*. While rare, I have identified instances of such hyper-ethical behavior within the 2006 film *Indigènes*, directed by Rachid Bouchareb, in which the North African soldier, Yassir, prays for a deceased German soldier, and refuses to steal from a Catholic Church in France; *Café au lait/Métisse*, directed by Mathieu Kassovitz, from 1993, in which Jamal and Félix learn to renounce their natural animosities towards each other, ignited by romantic rivalry, for the sake of their beloved, and each other; and Faïza Guène's 2003 novel, *Kiffe kiffe demain*, in which Doria envisions a non-violent transformation of French society, eliminating the propensity to retaliate against the dominant culture, and respecting and valuing all people.

Likewise, the French of European descent have the capability to empathize with the sufferings of the Maghrebi-French, and to make efforts to promote better living conditions for them. This type of hyper-ethical behavior is found in the concessions that the Jewish Frenchman, Félix, makes to his rival of West African descent, Jamel, in the film, *Café au lait/Métisse*.

Concerning the degree of desubjectification that is achieved by the protagonists in these novels, films, and songs, when it is necessary, desubjectification is very useful to these characters, especially in works such as Guène's *Kiffe kiffe demain* and Nini's *Ils disent que je suis une beurette*, two *Beurette* novels, published 11 years apart. As

compared with Chapter 2's works, the works analyzed in this chapter seem to reveal the practice of diverse types of desubjectification, whereas in Chapter 2, several of the protagonists of these works are prevented by factors such as age, milieu, or the past, to achieve significant degrees of desubjectification. An examination of *Kiffe kiffe* and *Ils disent que*, in tandem, reveals that Doria, the main character in *Kiffe kiffe demain*, uses desubjectification more liberally than does Samia in *Ils disent que*, although the accomplishments made by the fictional Samia are quite remarkable, given that the novel is set in 1993, while Guène's novel is set in 2004. I am cognizant of the fact that, of course, the trends shown in these novels are not direct reflections on the realities of either 1993 or 2004, yet I find encouragement in the fact that Guène, authoring *Kiffe kiffe* in 2004, sees more possibilities for the integration and negotiation of intercultural realities for Doria in this later period, than had been envisioned by Nini and other authors of *Beurette* novels for their protagonists, a decade earlier.

Meanwhile, two of the works analyzed in this chapter do not illustrate desubjectification used by minorities so much as they are manifestos of this tendency. Namely, Diam's "Ma France à moi" and James' "Banlieuesards" are declarations of their call to their people to create a new type of France in which they are less subjectified by the French of European descent, although James' song seems to be more peaceful in its presentation, and thus in keeping with the recommendation that above all, minorities in France use peaceful methods of improving their own situation, in order not to aggravate their own situation with respect to the French of European descent, and in order to maintain their moral integrity, avoiding violence, which is what they want to avoid

experiencing themselves from the French of European descent, in the forms of injustice, oppression, discrimination, xenophobia, and overt and covert racism.

Another work, *Indigènes*, is a testament to the effect of the exposure of social problems in its ability to effect real change and help minorities to become less subjectified in respect to the regimes that govern them. The way in which this film drew attention to the need for the French government to pay the North African soldiers the money that they had earned while serving in the Free French Forces army in World War II, is proof of the ability of intellectuals and artists to effect change through art, which has functions beyond aesthetic or recreational.

While these three works, “Ma France à moi,” “Banlieusards,” and *Indigènes*, seem to have the closest relevancy to contemporary France, it is in Chapter 5 that I will discuss representations of the riots of 1990-1991, 2005, 2007, and 2010, found in the French magazine, *Paris-Match*. In this sense, Chapter 4 offers us some works that direct that evoke current socio-economic conditions and historical realities relevant to the topic of *Beur* integration, while Chapter 5 will allow us to delve into examples of realia written in these time periods, reflecting the events of these periods of rioting, as well as the attitudes of the French of European descent, and some minorities, towards them.

A fourth category of these works can be made, namely, the works in which desubjectification in the Foucauldian sense is not strictly necessary, given the way in which interpersonal relationships and the investment that people of various racial backgrounds have in them, can prevent tension from accumulating between people, tension that would normally spell the need for the use of means of desubjectification. Such works in which racial tension is at a minimum, in general, between the main

characters, are Kechiche's *L'Esquive* and Kassovitz's *Café au lait/Métisse*. While other issues create tension between Krime, Lydia and their friends in *L'Esquive*, namely, peer pressure, romantic interest, and reputation, racial difference in itself does not cause the bulk of conflict in this film, although it does make the issue of whether Krime and Lydia will date, problematic. In *Café au lait/Métisse*, despite the romantic competition that exists between Félix and Jamel over Lola, each man is able to prioritize his love for this young woman over his jealousy, countering the tendency for the combination of romantic and ethnic rivalries to spoil their relationship with each other, and thus with Lola.

In summary, it is encouraging to see two examples of works in this chapter that do not rely on Foucauldian desubjectification as a means for the featured characters to liberate themselves from dominant narratives, namely *Café au lait/Métisse* and *L'Esquive*, although, in general, even in works in which the balance tends to favor good relationships between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French, desubjectification proves a useful tool, as in *Kiffe kiffe demain* and *Ils disent que*. It is also a positive sign that two artists in 2008, Diam's and Kerry James, each felt confident enough to release songs invoking fellow minorities in France to create a new type of France, based on equality, tolerance, and openness to diversity, making veritable manifestoes of Maghrebi-French desubjectification.

Rationalization for the Choice of Works that I Have Selected to Analyze in this Chapter:

I will now justify my choice of the works that I have selected in this chapter, before exemplifying my treatment of these novels, music videos and films through the

lens of Derridean hospitality theory. I will examine Mathieu Kassovitz's 1993 *Café au lait/Métisse*, the film *L'Esquive* (Abdelattif Kechiche, 2003), the film *Indigènes* (Rachid Bouchareb, 2006), the novel *Kiffe kiffe demain* by Faïza Guène (2004), Soraya Nini's 1993 novel, *Ils disent que je suis une beurette*, Diam's music video "Ma France à moi" (2006), and Kery James' music video "Banlieusards" (2008).

I have chosen Kassovitz's film, *Café au Lait (Métisse)* because it showcases cooperation between a Caribbean woman, Lola, and her Jewish and North African lovers; *L'Esquive* because it shows that there is intermixing and a racially-diverse environment in France, with Franco-French high schooler Lydia speaking and acting as all of her *Beur* friends do; Bouchareb's 2006 *Indigènes* because it seems to bring attention to the important contributions that North African soldiers made in World War II, and thus reinforces the concept that there is a place for the community of North African origin in France, according to Bouchareb and actor Jamel Debbouze, cited by Alec Hargreaves, in the article, "*Indigènes: a Sign of the Times*" (211); *Kiffe kiffe demain* (2003), because of its portrayal of professional success as a path to liberation for Maghrebi-French women, as well as its optimistic overtones with respect to the future of the main character, Doria, at the end of the novel; Nini's 1993 *Ils disent que je suis une beurette*, since it demonstrates the way in which *Beurettes* can make a place for themselves in French society through education and employment, which can enable them to be more independent from their families; Diam's 2006 music video, "Ma France à moi," since it calls for a more diverse, tolerant France; and James' 2008 music video, "Banlieusardes," since it features portraits of successful children of immigrants, including CEOs and

athletes, in France, and communicates the message that immigrants in France are not condemned to failure.

Analyses of *Beur* Novels and Films that Evoke Derridean Hospitality, as a Model for Contexts of Integration in France

Café au lait/Métisse (Mathieu Kassovitz, 1993)

While I classified Kassovitz's 1995 blockbuster, *La Haine*, in Chapter 3, under the category of novels and films that exemplify mixed hospitality, his lesser-known work, *Café au Lait/Métisse*, from 1993, is clearly more Derridean in its approach to depicting integration in France. These works, *La Haine* and *Café au Lait*, form two-thirds of Kassovitz's *fracture sociale* trilogy, films that address hot-button topics in contemporary France, including racism, insecurity, violence, exclusion, ethnicity and delinquency, all occurring in the French suburbs, according to Will Higbee in the article, "The Return of the political, or designer visions of exclusion? The case for Mathieu Kassovitz's *fracture sociale* trilogy" (123). The trilogy also includes the film, *Assassin*, from 1997. Higbee places Kassovitz in a long line of other French directors who have also served as social commentators, including Charef, Renoir, Carné, Varda, Boisset, Guédiguian, and Tavernier, although Kassovitz's works tend to focus more on the plight of ordinary people, rather than on the high-profile figures that were depicted in French films of the 1970s (133).

In the article, “L’Origine dévoilée du discours sur la violence et sur les relations inter-ethniques dans le cinéma de Kassovitz,” Johann Sadock comments on the perspective that Kassovitz bring to this trilogy, as a Jewish Frenchman:

Dans le débat critique public sur *La Haine*, par une sorte de mimétisme politiquement correct, on a négligé de souligner l’influence de l’origine ethnique de Kassovitz sur un cinéma qui prend pour personnages principaux des Arabes, des Juifs et des Noirs en France...Il me semble que cette origine ne peut qu’influencer ses films en amont, sur le plan de la création, mais aussi en aval, sur le plan de la réception. Kassovitz peut difficilement oublier son origine parce qu’il peut difficilement oublier qu’on ne manquera pas de lui rappeler son origine. Il sait notamment qu’on lui reprochera assez de n’avoir pas “grandi” en banlieue, pour ne pas prendre en prise le risque d’être pris en flagrant délit de dérapage ethnique.

(Sadock 64)

Despite the handicap that Kassovitz is perceived as having, since he is not of North or West African origin, and is naturally inclined to prioritize the perspective of the Jews in France, at the same time, Sadock questions who, if anyone, is qualified to discuss interethnic issues in France. Even most sociologists, Sadock insists, have not had the personal experience needed to make completely accurate and comprehensive accounts of racial and cultural issues in France. Sadock feels that it is valid to examine representations of these issues as presented by people of various ethnicities, as opposed to studying only those of the population in question, given that the liabilities of these viewpoints are properly taken into account (65).

Sadock’s assertion, giving credence to commentators of various ethnic backgrounds, can have also pertinence to my work in this dissertation. As I state in my

introduction, as a Caucasian, American woman, I have not been in the place of the Maghrebi-French in France, yet my perspective still has merit, since I am a minority in other respects, and my experiences of feeling marginalized by the dominant group allow me to have perspective on the trials that the Maghrebi-French face. Just as Sadock holds that the liabilities of Kassovitz's position as a Jewish, Franco-French commentator on subjects related to ethnicity must be accounted for, so must the liabilities that are intrinsic to my position as a Caucasian, American woman.

In *Café au lait*, Lola (Julie Mauduech), Jamel (Hubert Koundé, the same actor who plays Hubert in *La Haine*), and Félix (Mathieu Kassovitz, also the film's director), all of different racial backgrounds, decide to live together and prepare for the birth of Lola's baby, who belongs to Félix. Lola is of Martinican descent, and has light brown skin, Jamel's father is a diplomat in France, of West African origin, and Félix seems to represent both the stances of Kassovitz and *La Haine*'s Vinz, the Jewish Frenchman (Kassovitz plays the role of Félix, as well as that of the skinhead who shoots Vinz at the end of *La Haine*). These friends, and romantic partners, Lola, Jamel and Félix, constitute a love triangle in the measure that there is ample tension between them, regarding the nature of each man's relationship with Lola. Higbee states that Lola seems to want to retain her relationships with both Félix and Jamel, out of fear of losing both of them (125). Near the beginning of the film, Lola tells the men that she loves both of them. These three characters do not represent a *Beur-blanc-black* trio, as there is in *La Haine*, since there is no *Beur* in this group of three, although they do compose a "Jewish-Muslim-Christian" trio. While the film depicts several acrimonious scenes between Jamel and Félix, the fact that Lola's two suitors resolve to overcome problems of

romantic jealousy and cooperate for the well-being of Lola and her baby with Félix, and that of each other, indicates that there is some potential for limited racial harmony in France, affirming the potential for Derridean contexts of integration to occur on a more regular basis in France. Not only does racial difference create conflict between them, but the existence of strongly-shared romantic feelings between Jamel and Lola, and between Félix and Lola, as well as the competition that results from their rivalry for her affections, severely complicates relationships between them, as they try to share a small space, namely, Jamel's apartment, funded by his father, a diplomat. At some point, it becomes difficult to answer questions such as, "What differentiates love from friendship? Can one love more than one person, in a romantic sense, at the same time? What is the extent to which one can express one's romantic jealousy and feelings of betrayal? Is it possible to be friends with a romantic rival? If romantic relationships are not practiced exclusively, are they still romantic?" While Kassovitz's 1995 *La Haine* is filmed in black and white, calling attention to the gravity of the violence in the suburbs, *Café au lait/Métisse* is filmed in vibrant colors, symbolizing racial diversity and a more optimistic approach to questions of integration.

In my interpretation of this film, *Café au lait/Métisse*, and my treatment of it as a film demonstrating a Derridean-like mode of integration in France, with the gradual development of generally healthy and beneficial exchanges characterizing the rapports between Jamel, Lola, and Félix, in particular, I feel that it is important to briefly state the nature of the challenges that are intrinsic to the interracial relationships in this film. While some American critics, notably, those cited on the cover of the VHS version of the film, hail *Café au lait/Métisse* as "charming" (Ronald Ehmke, *The Buffalo News*), "a free-

spirited romantic fantasy,” “warmly comic and hard to resist” (Janet Maslin, the *New York Times*), “mischievous, multi-cultural, marvelous!” (David Sterrit, *The Christian Science Monitor*), and “funny, sweet and moving!” (Mike Cucciopoli, WABC Radio), the magnitude of the achievement that is made by a woman of Antillean descent, a Jewish man, and a man of West African descent, all of whom live in the same household, situated in a France that is easily rocked by problems related to racial difference, can only be understood by taking into account the problematic behind this relationship, and the racial and cultural tensions that underlie this problematic.

It is noteworthy, and important to acknowledge, that while interracial relationships are a frequent theme in the French cinema of the late 1980s and the early 1990s, some of these films portray them as unfeasible, while in the others, these relationships seem somewhat unbelievable, according to Dina Sherzer, in the article, “Race Matters and Matters of Race: Interracial Relationships in Colonial and Postcolonial Films” (243). Indeed, in another article, “Comedy and Interracial Relationships: Romuald et Juliette (Serreau, 1987) and *Métisse* (Kassovitz, 1993),” published in the work, *French Cinema in the 1990s: Continuity and Difference*, Sherzer remarks that among these films, only *Métisse* and Serreau’s *Romuald et Juliette* focus on the nature of the interracial relationships in their films, provide optimistic endings with “utopian solutions,” and use comedy, which lends itself well to approaching topics such as race and gender (150) [given, of course, that these subjects are approached with sensitivity]. Higbee states that Kassovitz makes *Café au lait/Métisse* a comedy on purpose, rather than making it a film in the genre of social realism, which is the genre of the film that African-American director, Spike Lee made, in his 1986 *She’s Gotta Have It*

(125). In fact, as she explains in “Race Matters and Matters of Race,” Sherzer sees the plot of *Café au lait/Métisse* as artificial, a “post-colonial fairy tale,” as she holds the others involving similar themes to be, made in the late 1980s and early 1990s. However, Sherzer finds it telling that these directors addressed these subjects in her films, meaning that they acknowledged that the phenomenon of interpersonal relationships between people of various races needed to be considered at that time, since dialogue about diversity was becoming an increasingly salient conversation piece in France (244-245). Sadock refers to the *naïveté* that many critics perceive in this film’s representation of this complicated familial situation, which would normally be expected to be dysfunctional:

La vraie question au début des années 90, comme aujourd’hui, n’est pas de savoir si ces trois peuvent dépasser leurs préjugés diverses, ou ceux de leurs proches, pour former une bande ou un ménage à trois, mais bien de savoir comment Noirs, Juifs et Arabes peuvent vivre entre eux et avec les Franco-français...

(Sadock 64)

In fact, *Métisse* shares several elements that are common to works about the changing concept of the family in Western civilization, namely, Lee’s *She’s Gotta Have It*, Woody Allen’s films, and Coline Serreau’s *Pourquoi pas*, from 1977, about the cohabitation of a woman with two lovers, although Kassovitz’s work addresses issues of ethnicity, rather than the sexual freedom of the 1970s, the topic of this latter work by Serreau (Sherzer 244).

From the very beginning of the film, there is strong tension between Félix and Jamel over Lola’s newly-announced pregnancy, particularly because she has been having

simultaneous romantic relationships with Jamel and Félix, until then unbeknownst by both of them, yet her baby has been proven by a genetic test to be that of Félix, leading to Jamel's resentment. In fact, it appears that Félix and Jamel do not know each other until they both take the elevator to Lola's apartment, on the day when Lola announces her pending pregnancy. Imagine the shock, anger and distress that one would encounter, upon discovering that one's lover had another, secret lover (and in the case of Jamel, that his girlfriend was pregnant by another man)!

Concerning the reaction that Jamel has to this news, as soon as Lola announces it, he becomes visibly upset, swears, and starts to fight with Félix. Koundé's character in this film, Jamel in *Café au lait/Métisse*, is much more bellicose than his character in *La Haine*, the peacefully-inclined Hubert, is portrayed, although *La Haine* is a much more violent film than *Café au lait*. In both films, Koundé plays a character interested in boxing, a sport which evokes notions of violence, yet only in *La Haine*, does he come from an economically- disadvantaged family, who cannot afford a textbook for the younger brother of the family. On the other hand, in *Café au lait*, Jamel's father is a diplomat with means, and Jamel himself is a law student, although he later leaves law school, to devote himself to Lola. Jamel feels confused by the affair that Lola has simultaneously been having with Félix, and demands answers from her, with respect to the status of their relationship. Jamel sees the African roots that he and Lola share as a strong commonality between them, and eventually, he moves in with her, although she is pregnant with Félix's child, a decision that would cause cognitive dissonance in some people, but that is apparently justifiable in Jamel's eyes, likely because he is so enamored of and devoted to Lola.

In addition, Lola's pregnancy causes great distress to Félix. For example, to his dismay, he discovers that all of his friends know about it, and that they know that there is another man involved, during a party that he attends. Again, in a scene taking place in the courtyard, his schoolmates mock him, implying that his girlfriend, and the mother of his future child, is being unfaithful to him. Félix has been thrust rapidly into the role of father-to-be, although he has not even introduced Lola to his Jewish family, ostensibly because Lola is not Jewish, but Christian. He clearly feels that the reaction that his family members may have to his relationship with a non-Jewish woman, and the possibility of him fathering her child, will be negative, although he would like his grandmother to meet Lola. Also, Félix is faced with the knowledge that Lola's baby is Jamel's child, a fear that surfaces in the final scene, once the baby is born, as Félix somewhat nervously asks the nurse what color the baby appears to be (a comment that I will analyze later in this subsection).

Since I have just explained the predicament of each character in pertinence to Lola's announcement that she is expecting, I will examine a concept that Sherzer discusses, the way in which Félix and Jamel's life situations seem to be reversed, when comparing them to the normal situations of a Jewish Frenchman and a man of West African descent, living in France. I see this inversion as further proof that this film is optimistic in its approach to integration. Namely, Sherzer notes that there is a "role reversal" (a term that is key in Derridean hospitality theory), between Jamel, the man of West African origin, who in this film, comes from a privileged background, studies law, speaks perfect French, has a diplomat father, and dresses stylishly, and Félix, the Jewish Frenchman, who here, is portrayed as a pizzeria employee who loves to listen to rap

music, speaks verlan, and is from the working class. Sherzer feels that that this role reversal is purposeful on Kassovitz's part, since many outsiders would expect that the Jewish young man would be the affluent, privileged character, living in one of the pricier neighborhoods in Paris, and that the West African-French man would be from a working-class background, living in the *cité* (155). Another element of the film that confirms this role-reversal motif is Jamel's decision to work at a fast-food restaurant, ostensibly to prove to Lola that he is not above seeking employment in working-class positions, and that his background as a diplomat's son has not unnaturally inflated his self-concept. He seems to want to portray himself on more of an even plane with his rival, the pizza boy, Félix. The fact that Kassovitz uses the technique of reversing the roles of these two protagonists, in order to show people that, as of the 1990s, there were more and more examples of atypical characters, indicates that he saw integration as being at a relatively advanced stage in France (although, of course, he recognizes, and even accentuates, the strong tensions between Jamel and Félix, which only dissipate near the end of the film).

In fact, Higbee holds that this film offers many instances in which these categories related to race and ethnicity, which are often taken for granted, have to be expanded, refined, and tested:

Métisse ...warns us about buying into the careless homogenizing of essentialized post-colonial and racial identities....[The film] therefore acknowledges that cultural identity and social status are determined by a complex network of positioning, of which ethnicity or 'race' and class are but two components (gender, sexuality, and age are doubtless, the others).

(Higbee 125-126)

An example of these stereotype-breaking incidents in the film is mentioned by Higbee, who comments on the way in which Jamel tries to use his ancestry as a descendant of African slaves, like Lola, to his advantage in convincing her to date him, and not Félix, although Lola quickly sees through this ploy, as she replies: “Your grandparents were diplomats” [unlike, presumably, her ancestors, who were most likely slaves of the French colonists in Martinique]. Additionally, Saddock claims that Kassovitz gives these characters masculine traits that are not expected of people of their ethnicities, as if refusing to claim a determinism to their behavior: Félix, played by Kassovitz, is the first Jew, and the first white man, of French cinema to listen to hip-hop and rap, followed by Vinz in 1995’s *La Haine*. In fact, Saddock holds that Kassovitz characterizes the portrait of the Jew in his films as belonging neither to categories corresponding to those of the Caucasian, or the North or West African (71).

The degree of tension between Félix and Jamel is exemplified in the scene transpiring at the French fast food restaurant, called “Freetime” (presumably representing the French fast food chain, QuickHamburger). The scene starts normally, with Félix ordering fish and fries from Jamel, but the interaction between them soon deteriorates. This time, since Félix has been estranged from Lola, while Jamel is living with her, Félix verbally and physically assaults Jamel, as Jamel runs the register, as a cashier, claiming that Jamel has unfair advantage with Lola, as an ambassador’s son, and that Lola has no basis for choosing Jamel over him.

Amongst these conflictual scenes between Jamel and Félix, is the scene in which the two men are approached by thugs, who pose as the police, pulling them over, and demanding their papers, and in which the two men themselves insult the thugs, and each

other. Jamel calls Félix a racist, and refers to Félix's "synagogue," and Jamel is himself called anti-Semitic. Jamel makes a comment that indicates his opposition to the then-leader of le Front National, Jean-Marie LePen. They both receive jail time for creating disorder in the streets, although they have been provoked by thugs. This is a recurring scene in this film; it also appears in *La Haine*, in which Vinz, Hubert and Saïd, the masculine and non-romantic, although mutually-beneficial, trio is incarcerated for their escapades in Paris. Kassovitz seems to be indicating to the viewers that this type of multi-racial trio is tested by real tensions, although the predominant tone of *Café au lait* is positive and harmonious.

Another scene that demonstrates the strife between the two men over Lola is the scene in which Félix sees Lola with Jamel at the end of her high school day. Jamel instructs Félix to leave Lola alone, since she is with him. At this stage, there is only bitter strife and competition between the two men, and they are far from being at the stage at which they can act fraternally towards each other, for the sake of Lola. It is interesting to note that while Lola is still a high school student, Jamel is a law student at the university, and Félix works for his family's pizza business, a situation that implies differences not only in class, but presumably age and social experience, since Lola is probably younger than both men, and yet seems to have the upper hand in her relationships with them.

Ironically, the scene that is most evocative of "Foucauldian" hospitality, in this strongly Derridean film, is the scene that initiates the development of Derridean-like contexts of integration, namely, the scene in which Lola returns to France from Martinique. Although they have both had problems with her (in particular, Lola and

Jamel have quarreled, and separated temporarily, and Félix and Lola have been estranged from each other), both men come to the airport to welcome Lola to Paris, extending bouquets of flowers to her, as a gallant and romantic gesture. Disappointingly, Lola walks past both Jamel and Félix, as if not to notice them, although she does briefly smile at them. Her disdain, ironically, leads Félix and Jamel to form a bond of friendship, rather than one of enmity. The smile that she shows them is an indication that she recognizes them, but the distance that she takes from them, and the coolness that she displays, reveal that she sees herself as independent from both of these men. As Jamel drives the two of them back to Paris from Charles-de-Gaulle Airport, north of Paris, after Lola ignored them, the two men commiserate over their mutual bitterness and disappointment. Since they both recognize that Lola does not need them, at least for now, they nostalgically discuss their experiences of their initial acquaintance with her. Both men met Lola at a math party; while Jamel purports to have fallen for her immediately, and to slept with her in the same week, Félix boasts that he had sexual relations with Lola on the same night that he met her there. While Félix and Jamel feel rejected and dejected now, they enjoy reveling in their glory days, the time periods when they were first (albeit simultaneously) dating Lola, as if she were a conquest. The discovery that Lola has been traveling on vacation with both of them, at approximately the same time, must be agonizing to both of them, but this pain is attenuated by the fact that their misery is shared.

Indeed, the phrase, "Misery loves company," best summarizes this scene from the film, since their shared lovesickness helps to solidify a bond between them. In this scene, neither man is the winner; each of them experiences heartache over the way in which

Lola has ignored him, even after they had driven to the airport at Charles-de-Gaulle, to the north of Paris, prepared to welcome her with flowers. Since no one is winning, it seems here that Fate is responsible for both of their misery, and that there is no one to blame. From this situation, I would postulate that it is easier to believe that the universe is not against oneself when no one around you is attaining what one wants, is doing better, or is at all succeeding; it is easier to put so-called “failure” into perspective, by attributing it to fate, when one is not confronted with another person’s success. Perhaps, that is part of the problem with envy; when someone else gains what we want, we come eventually to personify our own lack, by substituting the other person for that which we do not have, and for the pain that we experience over our deprivation of what we covet. If we can learn, as Félix and Jamel seem to recognize in the scene in which they return from the Charles-de-Gaulle Airport to Paris, not to personify our envy, perhaps we can be more satisfied with what we do have, and cease to constantly compare ourselves with other people.

While this film portrays difficulties between Félix and Jamel due to their racial differences and mutual attraction to Lola, these struggles result in a positive outcome for all, as the characters learn to cooperate with each other, for the sake of Lola and the new baby. Derridean hospitality is first demonstrated in the film by the assistance that the two men provide to Lola, and eventually, by the cohabitation of the three protagonists. Early in her pregnancy, Lola implores the two men for their practical help, particularly with shopping and cleaning; as a single woman, she does not foresee herself being able to care for herself, without their help, which they promise to deliver. In this family, Félix does the cooking, while Jamel scours the neighborhood for strawberries, which she craves

during her pregnancy, although in this scene, the two men squabble over their rights and responsibilities towards Lola: Jamel abdicates his responsibility to Lola (*pas ma femme*), and Félix claims his role as the child's father: (*pas ton père* [enfant].) These two young men awkwardly deal with their new roles as quasi-husbands and fathers (one biological, and the other, figurative), although not in the traditional sense.

In time, Lola asks Félix to live with her and Jamel, claiming that she does not want to be alone. The situation of the three characters living together is a case of physical hospitality between people of various races, and a mutual reciprocal overture, based on Derrida's theory. Perhaps Kassovitz is suggesting that racial problems such as those depicted in his other well-known film, *La Haine*, can be tempered in the situation of a love triangle, where the best interest of the mother is at stake (although this supposition is contrary to most accounts of the consequences of love triangles, real and fictional). A Derridean interpretation, based on *The Gift of Death*, in which the theorist posits God as the Other, insisting that power may be achieved by the weak through absolute appreciation for the otherness of Power, would insist on the understanding that Jamel, of West African origin, must have for Félix, from a Jewish background, as he faces the uncomfortable position of being father to a child whose mother is simultaneously involved with another man, enabling Jamel to act on a more equal, respectful, and sensitive footing, by living with Félix and Lola. These attempts at collaboration include the negotiation of cooking and household duties. Their cohabitation is facilitated by their agreement to follow certain community standards, as listed in a set of rules, "les Dix Commandements" ("The Ten Commandments"), created and enforced by Jamel, who is perhaps making a reciprocal gesture towards both Félix

and Lola, who are from Jewish and Christian backgrounds, respectively, since the Ten Commandments are from the Biblical books of Exodus and Deuteronomy, which are also found in the Jewish Holy Book, the Torah. In addition, contrary to the behavior of most romantic rivals, when Félix finds Jamel and Lola together in bed, he lies beside them, instead of becoming angry at seeing them together.

Another portion of the movie, depicting the dinner at Félix's Jewish grandparents, to which Lola and Jamel are invited, reveals Derridean tendencies. Namely, Félix's grandmother innocently asks Lola whether she is Jewish; when Lola responds negatively, his grandmother remarks that she must be a "black Jew," as in, a Jewish person from Ethiopia, in Africa. The grandmother's perception that it is almost imperative that Lola be seen as a Jew, even resorting to seeing her as the descendant of Jewish minorities living in eastern Africa, alludes to an element of the film that reveals the tensions between the Jewish and Afro-Caribbean communities in France (as well as those between the Jewish and North, Sub-Saharan, and West African populations living in France, most of whom are Muslim or Christian). Lola eventually replies that she is of Christian heritage, but Félix's grandmother remarks, "Dommage." Although Félix's grandmother has issues with Lola's alternative religion (indeed, within Félix's family circle, Lola is considered the minority), she compliments her many times on her pleasing appearance, insisting that she and Félix will make beautiful babies. Perhaps, Félix's traditionally-minded grandmother values the virtues of allegiance to the Jewish faith, and of beauty, as the principle factors that make a young woman a good candidate as her grandson's wife; fortunately for Lola, while she has not passed the litmus test of being Jewish, in this elderly woman's eyes, she more than fulfills her standards for beauty, although in an

exotic fashion. Higbee holds that the fact that this Jewish working-class family lives in *la cité* in Saint-Denis, is proof that not only disenfranchised immigrants live there, although Félix's brother, Max, is a drug dealer. Still, the dangerous aspect of life in the *banlieue* is underlined by the incident that occurs during Jamal's visit, in which Félix jumps onto the hood of Jamal's car and pretends to warn all criminals against attacking the vehicle, after Jamal expresses concern that his car may be stolen in Félix's working-class neighborhood. This incident, in Higbee's perception, permits Kassovitz to contrast the social milieux of the two men, as he "draw[s] attention to this perception of the *banlieue* as a site of rampant criminality, whilst at the same time highlighting the class difference between Jamal and Félix" (126).

Nonetheless, the scene that most effectively demonstrates harmonious relationships between Félix and Jamal, who are naturally at odds with each other, because of their racial differences and rivalry for Lola's love, is the hospital scene, in which Lola's baby with Félix, "Clothaire," is born, culminating in a scene in which Lola holds hands with Félix and Jamal, representing a nascent family, as well as interpersonal and interracial cooperation. While *La Haine* ends with three deaths (those of the policeman whom Vinz shoots, Vinz himself, and Abdel Ichacha, a victim of police brutality, whose assault provokes the cycle of violence that occurs throughout the film), *Café au Lait* ends with a literal birth, that of Lola's baby, Clothaire, as well as a symbolic birth, that of the potential for a real, cooperative household/domestic triumvirate between Lola, Félix and Jamal, overcoming hostility related to the conflict between Arabs and Jews, on one hand, and between these two men as romantic rivals.

Corresponding to the theme of the prevalence of Derridean relationships in this film, Jamel drives Lola to the hospital when she is about to give birth, substituting for Félix, who is at a bar at the time. Jamel's gesture towards Félix could also be seen as a role reversal, as he fills the role of being a provider and helpmate to the mother of Félix's child (although Jamel is also her lover). Despite the fact that Félix is late to the hospital, having received Jamel's phone call saying that Lola is in labor, while at a bar, and having rode his bicycle to the hospital, he joins Lola and Jamel in welcoming the new baby boy. The way in which Félix responds to Jamel's beeper as he sits at the bar, when called to the hospital to see his new-born son, is also the result of a beneficial gesture on the part of Jamel towards Félix, namely, Jamel's initiative to supply the small family with beepers ("Walkie Talkies") in order to facilitate communication between them. Clearly, Jamel wants Félix to be present at the hospital, both as Lola's biological son and "co-husband/father" to Lola and Clothaire, and as part of the small family of which he is part.

With respect to the assurance of a future of minimal conflict within this new family, in alignment with "Derridean" hospitality, the allegiance to Christianity, or at least to the culture thereof, that Lola seems to affirm in her choice for the newborn baby's name is a prime example. As the newborn, Clothaire, cries, Lola chooses a name for him that is distinctly her own choice, rejecting both Félix's proposition of "David," and that of Jamel, "Mohammed," as if to say that she will not be bound to the religious tradition of either man who is in her life. Sadock comments on this moment in the film, suggesting that, while each man in Lola's life tries to make it seem as if making reciprocal gestures towards her, in downplaying the subculture that he insists on

maintaining within the household, their suggestions for the baby's name reveal that they do have agendas:

D'où leur choc à l'annonce par Lola de son choix, un prénom à haute resonance passéiste et chrétienne: Clothaire. Ironiquement, ce combat s'effectue alors que chacun des personnages semble en apparence avoir pris ses distances avec ses préjugés de son groupe d'origine, de sa famille ou de son milieu social, en entrant dans une relation de couple qu'on doit bien qualifier de "mixte" et en décidant--- non sans mal pour Félix---d'assumer sa paternité virtuelle catholique. Mais dans *Métisse*, Lola est à la fois proche et lointaine de chacun de ses amants. Lola incarne en fait bien pour le Noir et le Juif que sont Jamel et Félix, la version ethnique ou culturelle plus digeste d'une France majoritairement chrétienne. Demain, aujourd'hui, nous dit Kassovitz, ce Clothaire-là – qui que soit son père et quelle que soit la couleur de sa peau – doit "faire France."

(Sadock 64)

According to Sadock's interpretation of this quotation, Lola chooses a name that, rather than accommodating minority religions, confirms the dominant religion and culture in France, Christianity and Judeo-Christian civilization. Even though the baby is white, since he belongs to Félix, his race is not as salient a feature, as is the fact that he represents the future of France, whose dominant religion, traditionally and in our time, at least nominally, though not in practice, is Christianity. Elsewhere in the film, Lola has expressed her negative attitude towards Jamel's intransigent Islam and patriarchal attitudes, and she has also communicated her allegiance to Christianity, during the dinner scene in which Félix's grandmother asks expectantly whether she is Jewish, to her disappointment.

A couple of comments in these last couple of scenes of the film also reinforce the idea that the relationship between the three protagonists is complicated by multi-faceted

and innovative approaches towards family and dating relationships, and towards the representation of race. First, as the nurse at the hospital ushers Félix in to Lola's room, she asks him why there are two fathers in this situation. This comment is clearly made as a joke, but if taken seriously, it challenges the idea of the traditional family as the only acceptable unit that can raise a baby. Was France of the mid-1990s ready to accept differently-configured arrangements of families, such as a single woman with two boyfriends? One recalls some American television shows of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, featuring non-standard family representations, such as the show, the 1970's *Three's Company*, about three friends, including one man and two women, who live together; *My Two Dads*, about a teenage girl being raised by two men; *Murphy Brown*, in which a single working mother becomes pregnant, to the ire of then-American Vice President, Dan Quayle; and *Step-by-Step*, an updated version of the 1960s *Brady Bunch*, about a mixed family, resulting from the marriage of two previously-married and divorced parents. Higbee alludes to two French movies in this genre, *Les Trois Frères/The Three Brothers* (Bourdon and Campan, 1996), and *Les Deux papas et la maman/Two Dads and One Mum* (Smain and Longval, 1996) (125). Although the nurse in this scene makes a very subtle, and perceivably- inoffensive comment to Félix, her remark does indicate the fact that she has noticed a practice out of the normal for her, and probably, for most of French society. Of course, it is likely that French society will see more and more non-traditional families, as cohabitation rates rise, marriage rates decrease, and marriages between gays and lesbians increase in number. On the subject of the latter case, the show, *Will and Grace*, featuring a close friendship between a heterosexual woman and a gay man, has been very successful in the United States. I will again explore this topic,

that of non-traditional families, during my examination of *Kiffe kiffe demain*, by Faïza Guène, later in this chapter.

Another comment, seemingly off-the-cuff, but perhaps more telling than viewers may initially find it to be, is also part of the running conversation between the nurse and Félix, as he rushes to Lola's hospital room, after she has given birth. When Félix asks the nurse, "What color is the baby?", she replies teasingly, "Pink with green stars." Just as the nurse is surprised to see two men present at Lola's bedside, it seems that she is also perplexed by the fact that Félix has inquired into the baby's race, as if it is a typical question that a new father would ask (as with the question, "Boy or girl?"). The nurse's attitude, presumably representative of that of Franco-French society, towards expectations for the discussion of racial issues, seems to reveal that she presumes that race is not an issue to wonder about before a baby is born, as if to say that all of the cases that she has seen do not involve this question as a central issue. Again, the dynamics of this multi-racial, non-traditional family challenge the expectations of society, due to the status quo, which despite all of the changes to French society since the mid-20th century, has been confirmed by time and practice.

Kassovitz's perception that France has made significant progress in integrating their minority populations is also made apparent by the fact that Félix rejects an opportunity to engage in a sexual relationship with a Franco-French woman at the bar that he is visiting, at the time of receiving Jamel's phone call instructing him to come to the hospital for Lola's delivery, mirroring Jamel's decision to leave the blonde French woman of European descent, Julie, whom he sees earlier in the film, for Lola. Their rejections of these Franco-French women, and clear preferences for Lola, seem to

indicate that each man realizes that they are emotionally devoted to Lola, implying that there is a strong romantic connection between her and each man, which prevails over their desires to have relationships with other women. Unfortunately for Julie, Jamel's Franco-French girlfriend, she feels hurt by Jamel's preference for Lola, and implies that she realizes that Jamel prefers Lola, partly because of their shared ethnic roots. It is perhaps telling that both Jamel and Félix deny themselves the chance to romance Franco-French women, who are traditionally seen as the emblems of beauty, sophistication, and femininity in France, rather than Lola, a woman of Afro-Caribbean heritage, possibly representing a changing stance on interracial romantic relationships, which have become more numerous over the years. Indeed, critiques of this film, upon its initial appearance in France, included favorable comments about the beauty of the actress portraying Lola in their reviews.

The last scene of the film, as in *La Haine*, hearkens back to the first scene, both of which feature a picture of Earth, as seen from outer space, followed by a voice-over discussing the difficulties of integration: "a melting pot of integration would be a disaster... There is no space for black and white... The political discussion on assimilation is not possible." The words, *le respect pour l'ordre*, can be heard in the background, referring to the way in which the French government tries to control minorities in the suburbs, and to the potential dangers of attempts at integration. The irony of this ending is that Kassovitz has just illustrated that racial strife can be overcome and exchanged for racial solidarity, in his portrait of the interracial, non-traditional trio of Lola, Félix and Jamel. In *La Haine*, as well, the bookends of the film indicate irony and inherent contradiction. The incipit scene of *La Haine* begins with a scene insisting that, "All that

matters is how you land,” while the final scene echoes this saying, just after Kassovitz has proved that, indeed, the descent also matters; in other words, the French of European descent in this film could have tried to prevent the presumably inevitable descent into violence, racial discord, and hatred in the suburbs, by addressing racial tensions previously, in healthy, constructive ways.

Examining the film apart from its sequential order, on a more global scale, there are examples of multiculturalism in France throughout the film, leading to its classification as a work showing the fruit of integration, an observation made by Sherzer, in the article, “Comedy and Interracial Relationships.” Some examples of this presence in the film are the following: Félix’s Yiddish-speaking grandparents; Lola’s French-Creole speaking grandmother; Jamel’s professor with a Central African accent; Félix’s Jewish family, which owns a pizzeria, a dish based in Italian culture; and some of the songs on the film’s soundtrack, recorded by Assassin and Zap Mama, two music groups with diverse origins (154).

Although it seems that Lola has been well-served in the film, since she has preserved the company of both men, and gives birth to a baby, which she has earlier stated to be her goal, Higbee perceives that Lola’s sense of agency and independence have been curbed by her dependency on Félix and Jamel, and by her preoccupation with the predicament in which she has put them, while at the beginning of the film, she seems more autonomous (126).

From my perspective, however, although she has certain moments at which she seems to prefer solitude (as in the scene at the airport, when she seems almost to ignore her boyfriends), and at which she rejects her lovers’ domination over her (as when she

tells Jamel not to be so controlling), for the majority of the film, she does seem to depend heavily on them, although, of course, one could argue that she tries to preserve the relationships because she is pregnant, and needs both of their practical, material, and emotional support.

This debate makes one think of the functions of romantic relationships: Lola must have been initially drawn to these men, Félix and Jamal, for sentimental and physical reasons, but the romantic feelings that drive dating and marital relationships also serve another purpose, from an evolutionary perspective, namely, to secure means of physical protection and emotional support for women as they are pregnant, and raise their young. From a modern, feminist perspective, perhaps Higbee is right to suggest that Lola has abdicated some of her independence by dating Félix and Jamal, but it is possible that without maintaining these relationships, and absent from her family, she would lack proper support as a pregnant woman and as a mother. Her grandmother lives in Paris, but it seems that the rest of her family is in Martinique.

On a larger scale, with respect to feminism and many men and women's innate needs for relationships, Lola's dilemma, which in turn creates problematic scenarios for Jamel and Félix, is related to the complex interplay of factors attached to the modern status of men and women in society, and to the perceptions and realities of relationships between them. Lola is simultaneously attracted to Jamel and Félix, seems to need their physical presence and protection, and often their emotional support and their love, but at other times wants to assert a fierce independence from relying on these relationships, as when she passes by Jamel and Félix at the airport, and as when she instructs Jamel to refrain from domineering her, even pointing to his Muslim upbringing as being

responsible for his “macho” attitude. Many modern women, like Lola, seem to be torn between their instinctual needs for relationships, their needs for material and emotional support, and their desires to maintain their self-respect, sense of independence, freedom of conscience, and autonomy with respect to their career, education, and personal choices. This complexity can be daunting to the men in their lives, as it is apparently to Jamel and Félix, as expectations for gender and sexuality are constantly questioned, challenged, redefined and negotiated. Jamel and Félix must decide whether they will tolerate dating and living with a woman who is in another relationship, simultaneously, and must decide to what extent they will maintain their pursuit of her, especially when her actions suggest that at times, she wants independence and solitude, at all costs.

Interpersonal Investment as a Factor Reducing the Perceived Need for Desubjectification,
as Seen in *Café au lait/Métisse*

In the measure that relationships between Lola, Jamel and Félix in this film are tempered by the love of each man for Lola, and their ensuing deference to the other man in the situation for her sake, there is arguably less of a need for these men to achieve desubjectification from the complex factors involved in their competition for her affection, and in their displays meant to convince Lola that each one of them is the better partner, complicated by the way in which they perceive their racial differences. In this sense, the relationships in this work are the least dependent on the need for desubjectification, among the works in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, on contexts of integration that involve Derridean-like interactions between people. The propensity for each man to demonstrate sincere and almost unconditional love for Lola, thus mitigating

the tension that they feel towards one another, shows that, at least in fictional works, this type of deference in the name of love, more in the Derridean train of thought than the Foucauldian, can make the process of desubjectification less necessary, although desubjectification proves extremely useful in a wide variety of circumstances, as evidenced by my discussions of other works examined in this dissertation. Although there may be instances in this film in which Jamel, of African descent, could have called attention to the faults inherent to the mentality giving Félix more cultural and social clout as a Franco-Frenchman, there is one instance in which Félix suggests that Lola prefers Jamel because she is of Afro-Caribbean descent, thus sharing heritage from Africa with Jamel, and there are times when both men criticize Lola herself for dating both of them simultaneously, the strength of each man's love for her leads them to defer to each other, and to accept her dating both of them, minimizing the need for this deconstruction of dominant narratives, at least with respect to their relationships with Lola.

L'Esquive (Games of Love and Chance, or The Dodge, Abdelattif Kechiche, 2003)

My application of hospitality theory to *banlieue* cinema, related to *Beur* cinema, is exemplified by my treatment of Abdellatif Kechiche's *L'Esquive (The Dodge, or Games of Love and Chance, 2003)*, which is loosely inspired by Marivaux's play, *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard*, focusing on a budding relationship between a *Beur* teenager, Krimo, and the French of European descent Lydia, as they rehearse the leading roles in Marivaux's play, which itself treats class tensions in 18th-century France.

In order to gauge the vision that Kechiche creates in this film, of a suburb with increased potentialities for integration, as compared to those depicted in most *Beur* and *banlieue* films, one must understand Kechiche's mission in making this film. Kechiche, according to the article, "L'Esquive: le saviez-vous?," posted on the website, *AlloCine.fr*, designed this film to be different from most other *Beur* and *banlieue* films, which, as he views it, are plagued by provocative portraits of serious social issues (arranged marriages, rioting, and discrimination), as he indicates in this quotation: "On a fait une telle stigmatisation des quartiers populaires de banlieue, qu'il est devenu quasiment révolutionnaire d'y situer une action quelconque, sans qu'il y ait de tournantes, de drogues, de filles voilées ou de mariages forcés. Moi, j'avais envie de parler d'amour et de théâtre, pour changer" (1). Confirming the authenticity of the nature of this portrait, Kechiche has chosen to employ non-professional teenage actors in the film, according to Dana Strand, in the article, "Etre et parler: being and speaking in Abdellatif Kechiche's *L'Esquive* (2004) and Laurent Cantent's *Entre les murs* (2008)."

In this sense, *L'Esquive* seems to be a purposeful foil to the play that Kechiche uses as his *mis-en-abyme*, Marivaux's play, *Le Jeu d'Amour et du hasard*. As Krimo and Lydia's French literature professor explains to them, this play centers on the consequences of material inequalities in 18th-century France. In Marivaux's play, all people are viewed as prisoners to their social condition; in the play, the rich fall in love with the rich, and the poor, with the poor, regardless of how much they try to camouflage their origins from other people. Their teacher explains that people recognize each other in the person with whom they are in love; we fall in love with other people's inner selves, and this recognition that provokes our romantic feelings is conditioned by our original

milieux. In this respect, Marivaux's play operates on the same concept expressed in the Québécois singer's Céline Dion's song, "On ne change pas," in which she suggests that no matter how much she tries to hide her origins as a girl who grew up in rural, Catholic, traditional Québec, her traits and behavior eventually reveal these origins. Compared with Marivaux's play, Kechiche's film seems to be a treatise on the way in which love is not always and completely conditioned by our social circumstances. While Krimo and Lydia ostensibly come from similar socioeconomic backgrounds, Krimo recognizes himself in this young woman, a Caucasian girl with presumably Franco-French parents, and representative of the dominant culture, as opposed to the position of Krimo, who may feel like an outsider in French society in several ways, because his father is on trial, and because his family is of Algerian descent. Perhaps Kechiche is indicating in this film that while one's circumstances were once a good predictor of one's romantic propensities and potential couplings, today, these circumstances are much less predictive of them, and new and fascinating connections can form between very different people, enriching human experience.

However, Strand suggests an opposing viewpoint, holding that, because of Krimo's inability to remain in the play, he has failed to make a successful crossover to join her social milieu, ostensibly on a higher plane than that of Krimo, in Strand's perception:

Krimo...would have difficult succeeding [in attaining equal social and academic success as the French or European descent students]. This is because, as a second-generation North African with an absent father in prison, a clearly overworked mother, and little in the way of educational encouragement at home, he is so locked into this stereotypical, marginalized position that he does not have access to the cultural capital needed to make the grade. His culturally- and

economically-impooverished upbringing cuts him off from the knowledge and experience to ensure their advancement.

(Strand 263)

At this junction, it seems necessary to qualify my position on the degree to which Lydia is integrated into the circle of her *Beur* peers, given the acknowledgement that must be made, of the clear social factors that make Krime and Lydia a controversial potential pair, within this circle. From these observations, I conclude that while integration in this high school social circle is such that the *Beurettes* accept her as a *copine* (a friend), there remains a certain level of skepticism surrounding the development of dating relationships between Maghrebi-French and Franco-French teenagers, even ones who are in the same larger social circle, and approximate socioeconomic grouping. On the level of friendship with *Beurettes* and girls of West African descent, Lydia is very well-integrated, and has the likability and ability to observe and reflect the social behaviors that surround her, including the use of socially-appropriate language. Despite this fact, it is clear that Krime's friends are hesitant to see their friend fall in love with Lydia. Her friends suspect that she is provoking his romantic frustration, and thus resent her, and Lydia is hesitant to enter into a relationship with Krime. His friends approach the possibility of them dating with many attitudes that can only be characterized as misogynist, indicating that they may be suspicious of the integrity of Franco-French girls, and the effect that they can have on young men. Additionally, although one cannot ascertain exactly Lydia's feelings towards Krime, it seems that she is reluctant to start dating him, partially because she fears being the target

of retaliation from his ex-girlfriend, Magalie. There is a certain fear that Lydia experiences, as she may be wary of becoming involved in the already-established relationships of her Maghrebi-French peers. There are, of course, many factors influencing the initiation of romantic relationships, but it seems that the racial and cultural differences separating Krime from Lydia do contribute to the stalling of this potential relationship, revealing that there are still obstacles to complete integration.

Despite this complexity, there are numerous signs of increased *Beur* integration in this film: the way in which the French of European descent, beautiful, blonde teenager, Lydia (Sara Forestier) is part of a group of friends, both male and female, of *Beur* and West African descent; the way in which Lydia's speech mirrors that of her friends of immigrant origin; the way in which the Maghrebin-French Krime, a male teenager, falls in love and pursues Lydia, despite their different cultural and religious backgrounds; Krime's growing interest in literature and drama, stemming from his interest in Lydia; the nature and the consequences of the car scene, the climax of the film; and the last scene of the film, in which it is indicated that Krime and Lydia are in some sort of relationship, whether friendly or romantic. During this analysis, I will discuss complicating factors, such as the opposition that Krime and Lydia encounter as they consider entering a relationship, as well as enriching factors, such as the parallel between the way in which the variable of social class affects the development of romantic relationships in both Marivaux's play, and in *L'Esquive*, which draws its inspiration from *Le Jeu d'Amour et du Hasard*.

Indeed, the first indicator of a certain level of social and cultural integration for the is the way in which Lydia is part and parcel of a large group of Maghrebi-French

teenagers, all of them friends (although there are a few very unfriendly, even inimical scenes in this movie, pitting Krimo's friend, Fathi, against Lydia's friend, Frida, as Fathi intimidates Frida into telling Lydia to stop confusing Krimo on a romantic level, featuring images of Fathi choking and hitting Frida). In some *Beur* and *banlieue* films, there is a clear-cut distinction between the *Beur* and Franco-French social groups, for example, in *Beur's Story* by Kessas, in which Malika and Farida, the novel's heroines, feel almost a physical barrier isolating them from belonging to the French of European descent group. In most other *Beur* works, there is some intermixing, such as in Charef's *Le Thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed*, Begag's *Béni, ou le paradis privé*, Meynard's *L'Oeil au beurre noir*, Ben Jelloun's *Les Raisins de la galère*, and Nini's *Ils disent que je suis une beurette*, but certainly not at the level that is present in *L'Esquive*. In this film, it seems that Lydia has no Franco-French friends. Outside of school, she spends her time with Frida and Nanou, both presumably of North African origin. She develops a friendship with romantic potential, with Krimo. In some scenes, Lydia sits directly next to her *Beurette* friends, and she appears to be one of them, as if their racial difference makes no significant difference. This portrayal echoes Charef's message in *Le Thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed*, focusing on a friendship between a *Beur* teenager, Madjid, and his Franco-French partner in delinquency, Pat, which posits that racial differences are not the crucial factor separating French youth into two distinct groups; rather, this differentiating factor is socio-economic difference. Youth seem to become segregated into two general groups; the socioeconomically-disadvantaged minority populations and Franco-French youth often form close friendships, as in Kechiche and Charef; the other group, it seems, consists of youth from more favorable socio-economic backgrounds. This is why Pat and

Madjid, in Charef, suffer similar problems at school, are both unemployed, and engage in pick-pocketing. Charef, in *Le Thé*, minimizes the discussion of problems unique to the North African community; likewise, given Kechiche's comment, cited above, it seems that he, as well, aims to portray a French *banlieue* through the depiction of a story that could occur in any social context: one of unrequited love, and the challenges that it creates for both the lover and the beloved. Perhaps, the fact that Lydia in *L'Esquive* is so well-integrated in *banlieue* culture, as compared to her counterparts in other *Beur* novels and *Beur* and *banlieue* films, is due to the fact that this work by Kechiche is much more recent (appearing in 2003), compared to most of the other works that I mention above.

Another symptom of Derridean integration in this film is the way in which Lydia uses language that is very similar to that of her *Beur* friends, a language that contrasts sharply with not only the French of the classroom, but also with the 18th-century French language used as the teenagers recite Marivaux's play, *Le Jeu d'Amour ou du hasard*. Namely, she not only uses *l'argot* and *le verlan* (pig Latin), but she also uses Arabic (for example, *Inch'Allah*, "God willing," *sur le Coran*, "on the Koran"). Strand also finds some English and Wolof in the teenagers' vocabulary usage. The fact that Lydia has acquired these words used by Muslim teenagers in France, indicates that she has become fairly well-integrated into *banlieue* culture. Strand writes that this new, hybrid French is securing some sort of integrated identity for the *Beurs* in France:

...sociolinguistics are coming to acknowledge the functional role it ["this distinctive language"] plays in lending the legitimacy all but denied by the ethnic cleansing of uncompromising universalism to a increasingly multicultural environment. According to linguist Meridith Doran, the alternative French spoken by a population that is both physically- and socially- excluded from the dominant society allows for an expression of an alternative identity...Doran

concludes that the youth language...[allows] youths...to define themselves in their own terms, along a more *métisse* and hybrid identity continuum, that rejects the fixed categories of “French” vs. “immigrant” that continue to dominate in mainstream journalistic and political discourse.

(Doran 2007: 498, as cited in Strand 263)

A common phrase in the film is, *Tu le kiffes?* (“Do you like him?”), which several of Lydia’s friends ask her, concerning her pending decision over whether or not to date Krimo, who has proposed a romantic relationship. Other words that are used by Lydia as well as her *Beur* friends include *meuf* (pig Latin for “woman”) and *mec* (“guy”). Underlining these youngsters’ ability to be versatile, a quality much needed to integrate into French society, Magnan also comments on their ability to “code-switch” and use standard French in the classroom, immediately before and after using the language of their sub-culture, composed of *le verlan*, *l’argot*, Arabic, English, and Wolof, in their social circles, confirming again the inextricable links between registers of language and the social contexts in which their use is appropriate (264).

The concept that integration is present in this French *banlieue*, as depicted in *L’Esquive*, is also reinforced by the fact that Krimo falls in love with Lydia, despite their presumed cultural and religious differences. Intermarriage is a strong indicator of integration, and the potential couple of Krimo and Lydia, which never comes to full fruition before the film’s end, still indicates that taboos regarding interracial relationships have disintegrated sufficiently to the point that a relationship between a North African male and a Franco-French female is not out of the question. While Krimo dates the Maghrebi-French Magalie before developing an interest in Lydia, who has been his

friend all of his life, and while his belonging to an Algerian-French family is very evident, he falls under the charm of the imaginative, dramatic, and lively Lydia, who also introduces him to the world of acting, which is far from his strong suit. Krime asks Rachid, who initially plays Harlequin, the lead male character in the play, to let him have his role, in order to work with Lydia. As Krime spends more time with her, his feelings for her become very strong, and he kisses her as they rehearse lines alone together in the outside arena, one day after school. This act of hospitality, however selfishly-motivated, also corresponds to the overarching theme of the film, which is the idea that close relationships can and do form between Franco-French and *Beur* teenagers, and that there is little difference between the behavior and language of these two groups. Krime asks Lydia whether she will date him, but her answer never comes during the duration of the film, although the film concludes with a very tense car scene, in which Lydia discusses her reaction to Krime's proposal, as well as the final scene, in which Lydia comes to see Krime at the housing project, B-7, where he lives.

Despite the fact that Krime pursues a relationship with Lydia, and Lydia entertains having one with him, indicating at least some level of mild interest in him, I would be amiss to say that their potential romantic relationship is without its critics and even its opponents. There are several problems provoked by Krime's interest in this Franco-French girl: his ex-girlfriend, Magalie, wants to date Krime again, and jealously tries to intimidate Lydia into staying away from him; Fathi, Krime's friend, becomes concerned that Krime is becoming confused over Lydia's behavior; his involvement with Lydia is taking him away from his friends, as Fathi perceives it; and Lydia herself feels intense pressure from her entire social circle, as she deliberates over whether or not she

will date Krimo. I feel that at some level, some of these problems involve the characters' differences in culture, customs and values, and their need to protect their own from harm, emanating from the person of the opposite gender from their friend. For instance, it is clear that Fathi prefers Magalie as a girlfriend for Krimo, instead of the new potential girlfriend, Lydia, and while he cites a number of good characteristics that he sees in Magalie, it is likely that he also supports her because Krimo and Magalie share a common cultural heritage, as opposed to Lydia, whom Fathi criticizes for demanding time to consider Krimo's proposal, as if to suggest that she is asking too much from him. Tension is palpable, as well, among Krimo's friends, who are unhappy with the way in which Lydia has seemed to change their friend Krimo, who is now interested in drama and literature, and wears bright costumes, which they consider to be effeminate behavior and interests, not fitting for a *Beur* male teenager. This form of influence may even seem to be a form of corruption, in Fathi's eyes. The same factor is likely at work in Fathi's jealousy over the negligence that Krimo seems to be displaying towards his closest friends. Additionally, there seems to be an element of animosity among Krimo's friends regarding the delay that Lydia displays in responding to his proposal. She is called derogatory names several times (for instance, *pute*), although it is evident that the film shows none of her behavior to be disreputable. Krimo's allies accuse her of playing with his emotions, and therefore, of torturing him. Magalie's resentment of Lydia also seems to carry the air of racial jealousy, as well, as she communicates her dismay that Krimo, who has always been disinterested in reading, is suddenly a theatre aficionado, indicating an increased interest in formal, literary, French culture.

Additionally, this film displays a tendency towards Derridean hospitality as a model for Maghrebi-French integration, in its use of the invitation as a reciprocal overture used in the building of the relationship between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French. In each work, *L'Esquive*, and *Le Jeu d'Amour et du hasard*, the play enacted by Lydia, Krimo, and Frida in the film, there is a test of feelings; in Kechiche's film, Krimo's friends force Lydia and Krimo into discussing their true feelings for each other in a stolen car, while in Marivaux's play, Sylvia's and Dorante's servants help the pair to determine whether there is true love in their relationship, by switching places with Sylvia and Dorante.

Hospitality features prominently in both works, since in Marivaux's play, Sylvia invites her betrothed, Dorante, to her house, to spend time with her family, and in Kechiche's film, the car scene functions as one of mandatory hospitality, the marginalized youth being forced to use a stolen car as an interior space, in which Lydia and Krimo can discuss their personal feelings, for a lack of an available home. The invitation that Fathi extends to Lydia, rather forcefully, to reveal her feelings to Krimo is designed to promote reconciliation between the two characters, who have been at an impasse because of the awkward position in which Lydia finds herself, of having to decide whether or not to date Krimo. Fathi is so forceful, in fact, that he physically removes Lydia's friends, Nanou and Frida, from the car, wanting Lydia and Krimo to discuss matters between them, without interference from her friends.

Ultimately, they never reach a place of understanding, since the only dialogue between Krimo and Lydia, while they are in the car, consists of Lydia expressing her anger towards Krimo and their friends, for forcing her into a difficult emotional and

social situation. She indicates that she requires more time to consider her decision. Their discussion is abruptly interrupted by the arrival of the police, who frisk the teenagers, and demand to see the proof of registration for the car, when there is none, since it is stolen. The police are equally as brutal, in general, towards Lydia, the sole Franco-French teenager, as they are to the *Beur* teenagers, demonstrating another example of an equalized playing field among these minorities and the economically-disadvantaged Franco-French, although of course, experiencing police brutality is far from an advantageous opportunity. The ingenuity that Fathi seems to have at the start of this film sequence, has resulted in their apprehension by the law, since the car is a stolen one, and they are caught loitering inside of it. Fathi's attempt fails on both accounts, since Lydia never announces the results of her deliberation to Krime, and since Fathi's social experiment leads him and his friends to be treated as criminals. It remains to be answered why Fathi chooses to use the stolen car as the site of discussion, rather than his own car, but perhaps holding the conference in his own car would have been perceived as taking advantage of "home territory."

Although the ending is enigmatic, Lydia pursues Krime at the end of the film, indicating the potential start of a romantic relationship, or at least the continuation of a friendly one. There is a sequence of shots depicting Lydia, wearing her denim jean jacket, walking on the premises of Krime's housing project, B-7, presumably looking for him, and picturing Krime in his room, looking outside his window, as if waiting for Lydia. Does the fact that Krime is seen in his room, instead of preparing to greet Lydia outside, mean that he is avoiding Lydia, corresponding to the film's title, *l'esquive* (the dodge)? Has Krime become disinterested in her, just as she tried to seem disinterested in

him? Alternatively, does Lydia's presence at his housing project reveal that they are in a romantic relationship, or in a friendship with romantic potential? As in many French and Francophone films, the ending leaves many questions unanswered. Another of Kechiche's films, namely, *Le Graine et le mulet*, ends with an abrupt death of one of its characters, as if to suspend the resolution of the story indefinitely. In the case of *L'Esquive*, Kechiche seems to leave the ending of the film to his viewers' imagination, who are free to imagine Krimo and Lydia together, or as casual friends, or in an unequally-balanced, somewhat unhealthy relationship. All three possibilities are possible, given the film's ending, which is ambiguous, which can also be said about the nature of negotiating relationships within a culturally and socially-complicated academic atmosphere.

On the Presence of Significant Conflict, without Desubjectification, in
L'Esquive (Games of Love and Chance)

Similarly, as in *Café au lait/Métisse*, investment in interpersonal relationships, and in this case, and the tendency of people of various cultural backgrounds to adopt similar language and behavior seems to reduce the need for desubjectification in *L'Esquive (Games of Love and Chance)*. In particular, this film does not champion the position of *Beur* teenagers in relationship to Franco-French ones, other than in the sense that Krimo vies for the affections of Lydia, thereby downplaying the motif according to which *Beur* protagonists need to find ways to remove the power of narratives asserting

the hegemony of Caucasians. In this case, there is much greater equality among *Beur* and Franco-French teenagers, while the issue of romantic relationships between them seems to be new frontier, as it becomes difficult for Lydia to navigate this question, with consideration of her feelings for Krimo, but also of the way in which such a relationship will be perceived in their social circle, as Lydia would be dating a young man who had previously dated another Maghrebi-French teenager, whom most of his friends seem to still support as the rightful girlfriend for Krimo.

In fact, it seems that an appropriate question to be answered is, in this situation, is Lydia in fact the one who is subjectified by the enormous pressure that she faces from the teenagers of Maghrebi and West African origin, as they resent her for perceived teasing of Krimo, and suspiciously consider her as a potential love interest for him, when she has not, to the viewer's knowledge, directly expressed her interest in him? Of course, there is the consideration that Krimo himself may feel subjectified by having to meet the standards of this Franco-French teenager with a flair for drama, traditionally seen as linked to standard European culture, yet in another sense, he is the one pursuing her, and not vice versa, thus creating the appearance of potentially causing her to be subjectified by his wish for a relationship with her, and his proposal made to her over a dating relationship involves considerations that surpass the issue of his mastery of acting or French theater, but more personalized, individualized issues that are involved when any two people consider dating each other, which are often totally removed from the concepts of personal interests or cultural acumen.

In either case, desubjectification does not seem to be a tool used often in this film, despite the fact that the film is rife with conflicts between people. By and large, the

teenagers in this social circle seem to be fairly accepting of each other as friends, whether Franco-French, or of West African or Maghrebi origin, although the issues of dating relationships create serious “drama” (pun intended?), but this phenomenon is actually common even in situations that do not involve racial difference. This type of situation, in which one person develops feelings for another, leading to situations in which the other person is shocked, caught completely unaware, and incapable of reciprocation of these feelings, happens with some regularity, even among people with similar socio-economic backgrounds, social reputations, and academic histories. In this sense, perhaps the issue in this film is not so much the question of whether Lydia perceives Krimo “good enough” to date (and that criteria alone is very subjective, and can depend largely on the people involved, regardless of other issues), as it is the question of Lydia’s level of comfort in being perceived as the “new girlfriend” of Krimo, with some of Krimo’s friends resenting her, and the age-old problem of unreciprocated love, which can happen to anyone, putting us in situations of emotional torture on the part of the person who loves the other, and in quagmires of guilt, defensiveness, and rationalizations, on the part of the person who likes, but does not love, the other.

Indigènes (Rachid Bouchareb, 2006)

Unlike most of the other works of literature and cinema discussed in this dissertation, Rachid Bouchareb’s 2006 film, *Indigènes*, starring Jamel Debbouze, also appearing in Jean-Pierre Jeunet’s *Le Fabuleux Destin d’Amélie Poulain* in 2001, is a reflection on a time anterior even to the arrival of the first significant wave of North

African guest workers in France, starting in the late 1940s. In this sense, its focus on historical realities makes it similar to Sebbar's *La Seine était rouge*, analyzed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. This film, which was nominated for an Oscar for the Best Foreign Language Film, and whose cast won the Best Actor prize at the Cannes Film Festival in 2006, is a commentary on the difficulties experienced by the North African members of the Free French Forces, during World War II. These soldiers fought alongside Franco-French soldiers, making equal sacrifices in terms of their lives, their time, and their allegiance, but they were often treated in despicable ways, by French society as a whole, the *French of European descent*, and *les pieds-noirs* in their own regiment. Despite the fractured relationships between these North African men, who were the grandfathers and perhaps the great-grandfathers of the current Maghrebi-French, and the French of European descent in this film, the enormous sacrifice that these soldiers made towards the liberation of France from the German Occupation that was in effect between 1940 and 1944, and the legacy created by their participation in the military, strengthens the body of evidence that points towards the place that the Maghrebi-French occupy within French society, affirming a Derridean vision of hospitality, based on respectful and cooperative interactions between the guest and the host.

On a historical basis, the facts behind the negative portrait of the way in which the North African soldiers were treated by the French during the war, are well-confirmed, according to Sylvie Thénault, in the article, "*Indigènes: un film contre l'oubli.*" She explains that Belakacem Recham details these examples of discrimination in the work, *Les Musulmans algériens dans l'armée française, de 1919 à 1945*, written in 1996. Also historically-documented are the ways in which some of the North African troops were

virtually sacrificed to the enemy by French commanders, at the battle at Montecassino, Italy, which was the turning point for the Free French Forces, where they were able to repel the Germans for the first time since the Occupation had started in 1940, and the way in which the war efforts of the North African soldiers were instrumental in freeing eastern France from German control (Thénault 205).

While the link between the participation of these Africans in the French Free Forces in World War II, and France's complex relationship with Algeria during the colonial and post-colonial eras, may not seem direct or obvious, in fact, one of the Algerian soldiers in the French Free Forces, Ahmed Ben Bella, was instrumental in Algeria's quest for independence from France, as Ali Jaafar notes, in the article, "Unknown Soldiers." Ben Bella not only helped to found the Front de Libération Nationale (the FLN), but was also the first President of Algeria after independence, in 1962. Jaafar writes that Bouchareb, the film's director, sees the character of Abdelkader, who survives the war and later visits his men's graves at the end of the film, to be representative of the historical figure, Ahmed Ben Bella, and is interested in making a sequel that showcases the continuation of Ben Bella's political life in Algeria, after World War II (Jaafar 2). Jafaar writes that in the post-war period in the then-French colonies of the Maghreb, there were periods of optimism, during which the war veterans' accomplishments were lauded, followed by a peak in fundamentalism, and finally, the development of conflict, as occurred in the 1990s, during the Algerian Civil War (3). Another Francophone author's works address this turbulent period in Algerian history: those of Assia Djebar, including *L'Amour, la fantasia* and *Zhourika*.

This film's contribution to the reinforcement of the creation of a place for the Maghrebi-French within French society, affirmative of Derridean hospitality for minority populations there, is buttressed by the way in which the film encouraged the French government to restore the ability of former soldiers in World War II, of North African origin, to receive the pensions that were due to them, before a 1959 law was passed, just at the verge of the independence of several French colonies, that froze these pensions. This law of "crystallization" changed the pensions that soldiers from the North African colonies were going to receive, into "indemnités viagères," according to Charles Onana, in the article, "La France et ses libérateurs africains," written for an 2003 exposition in Berlin, "Le Tiers-Monde et la Seconde guerre mondiale" (6). Onana holds that for every 100 Euros that a Franco-French veteran received, as of 2003, their North African counterparts received only between 2.50 Euros and 4 Euros, except those who kept their French nationality. In 1989, the United Nations deemed these former servicemen victims of discrimination by the French of European descent, but even this recognition did not result in the French of European descent taking action to remedy this grave injustice. Subsequently, France received a complaint from a Senegalese serviceman, Amadou Diop, who had never received his pension, in 2000 (Onana 6).

While the rectification of this grave inequality came piecemeal, and slowly, it has been resolved, thanks to this remarkable film, *Indigènes*. As the subtitles at the end of the film convey, in 2002, there was a law signed that aimed to increase the pensions that former World War II soldiers from the former North African colonies received, and yet, this rectification did not provide equal sums of money to these former soldiers, when compared with the amount that their Franco-French counterparts received. According to

Ali Jafaar in the article, “Unknown Soldiers,” “*Days of Glory [Indigènes]* has been a sensation since its release in France, with admissions of some 3 million, and even persuaded President Jacques Chirac to increase the pensions of “indigenous” veterans to the level of their French counterparts” (2). Finally, in 2006, after the film *Indigènes* appeared in theatres, President Chirac felt convicted to de-crystallize the pensions of former servicemen who had fought in wars in Indochina and North Africa between 1940 and 1945, and he did so, terminating this almost-fifty-year-long-period of mistreatment of some of France’s former soldiers. Correspondingly, the decision of Chirac’s government to unfreeze these North Africans’ pensions can be seen as a reciprocal gesture on the part of the government, towards these former colonial subjects, who risked their lives to save France, thus placing this film in the category of works demonstrating Derridean hospitality.

In this sense, in that the film made known a change that needed to be made in order to correct an injustice and legitimize the contributions of these North African soldiers in a critical period in history, *Indigènes* is an example of *un film engagé*, along with Kassovitz’s *La Haine*. Undoubtedly, the granting of the pensions that rightfully belonged to these soldiers is proof that their service has been finally recognized by the French government, and that by extension, their descendants, the Maghrebi-French, are an integral part of French society. If they are French citizens, as most of the Maghrebi-French are, and if their grandfathers or great-grandfathers served the French and helped to liberate France, then surely the modern Franco-French society should be able to see the Maghrebi-French as being inextricably linked from the very history, cultural legacy, and democratic tradition of France.

Indeed, Rachid Bouchareb, the descendant of several Algerians who had fought in World War I for France, and for France in Indochina, aimed, in this film, to “reclaim the story of his forefathers’ contribution to World War II,” according to Jafaar, who quotes Bouchareb’s comment on the genesis of the concept for this film:

I knew some of my ancestors had died in the battlefields of World War I and my uncle fought in Indochina, but when I researched the subject, I discovered it wasn’t only a few, but that most of the French Free Army was made up from the colonies---from Algeria, Morocco, Senegal, Tunisia, Mali, Madagascar, and Indochina. It was even called “the army of Africa.” I realized then that this was an important subject for cinema.

(Bouchareb, as cited in Jafar 2)

Bouchareb seems to have been motivated not only by his desire to acknowledge his family history, but also to recount this story that is so relevant to the history of North Africans and the Maghrebi-French in France, as well.

Although there are several other films depicting World War II, namely, Spielberg’s *Saving Private Ryan*, or *Il faut sauver le soldat Ryan*, about the D-Day invasions in Normandy, and Clint Eastwood’s *Flags of our Fathers*, set in Iwo Jima, both during World War II, according to Jafaar, *Indigènes* is unique, since it focuses on the experiences of the regiments of the Free French Forces that included soldiers from the French colonial empires, during the battles that they fought in Italy and France (1).

Besides having a place among World War II films, *Indigènes* must be understood within the context of other films concerning French colonial history. Namely, Michael Haneke’s *Hidden (Caché)*, and Alain Tasma’s *Nuit nature* address the massacre of Algerians in Paris, on October 17, 1961, also the subject of Leïla Sebbar’s *La Seine était*

rouge, analyzed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. Other films about the legacy of the Algerian War are *Mon colonel* and *I Saw Ben Barka Get Killed*. *The Battle of Algiers*, about the Algerian quest for independence from France, from 1966, and directed by Gillo Pontecorvo, was released in 2004 (Jaafar 2). As I mention in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, the increasing number of films on colonial and post-colonial history is a result of the way in which the government, for decades, discouraged the discussion of the Algerian War ; in 1999, the French government changed the term that they used for the conflict, from “the events” (*les événements*) to its proper term, *la guerre d’Algérie* (the Algerian War), and apologized for its brutalities towards, and oppression of, the Algerian people.

While there are numerous examples of the way in which the relationship between the North African soldiers in the Free French Forces, and their Franco-French fellow soldiers and French society at large, was of a Foucauldian nature, a multitude of arguments can be advanced to support the idea that this film, *Indigènes*, reinforces the concept that there is a place for the Maghrebi-French in contemporary French society, thanks to the honorable legacy that these North African soldiers, from the same generation as the Maghrebin settlers of France in the late 1940s, left to France and their descendants. This concept is advanced by Bouchareb and Debbouze, as cited by Hargreaves, in the article, “*Indigènes*: a Sign of the Times” (211). While some North Africans came to France during and after World War I, since many of them participated in *la Grande guerre* on the side of France, the generation that emigrated to France as soldiers in World War II were the contemporaries of the first significant wave of guest workers to France, in the years following World War II.

Beyond the issue of historical legacy, the film has great historical relevancy to the present, as noted by Thénault: “le message... vise tous les Français appelés à les accepter dans la communauté nationale. Comme toujours, lorsqu’il sert de support à un message politique, le passé parle en réalité du présent. Les discriminations d’hier parlent de celles d’aujourd’hui” (207). In this vein, the struggles that are portrayed among soldiers in this film are analogous to the ones that modern-day Maghrebi-French experience in the French suburbs.

The aspects of this film that I will analyze in my discussion, and that suggest the need to recognize the legacy of the North Africans in the Free French Forces as a reason to consider the Maghrebi-French as full members of French society, are: the unique nature of this regiment of the Free French Forces, featured in the film; the contributions that this regiment makes to the war effort against Germany; the examples of temporarily, although truncated, healthy relationships between North Africans and the French of European descent in this film; and the homage that the surviving member of the regiment, Abdelkaber, pays to his comrades in a cemetery in les Vosges, decades after the war.

The very nature of this regiment, as one composed of both Africans and French soldiers, reinforces the Derridean aspect of his film, as one that shows an attempt at partial integration within the French military. In this respect, the diversity of the regiment can be viewed as a factor rendering it a microcosm of the atmosphere of integration that will be later be extended to general French society, once these soldiers’ contemporaries, and other men, come to France in the late 1940s and 1950s (and afterwards).

One can say that it is admirable that France included these African men in their forces, but when one considers that the French government actively recruited them throughout *le Maghreb*, claiming that France desperately needed them in order to free France from the stronghold that the Germans had during the Occupation, and that the war-time benefits that the government accords to them in the film are so reduced, as compared to those given to the French of European descent, the transparency of the French authorities, as well as their integrity and sense of justice, come into question.

The four men who are the main characters in the movie, Saïd, Abdelkebbar, Messaoud, and Yassir are part of these forces, composed of Franco-French and African troops, who are sent to fight in Italy and les Vosges and Alsace-Lorraine in France, in order to repel Hitler's forces, and thus help to liberate France, most of which had been seized by Germany in 1940. Jafaar explains the group's composition: led by the schooled Abdelkader, who becomes their corporal, and is later the only soldier among them to survive World War II, the regiment includes the marksman, Messaoud; the Moroccan Berber, Yassir, a mercenary, seeking funds to arrange a marriage for his younger brother, Larbi, also in the regiment; and Saïd, a shy man from a small village in Algeria (2).

Saïd is depicted in the incipit of the film, bidding *adieu* to his mother, who begs him to stay in Algeria, lest he come to the fate of her grandfather, who apparently perished in the First World War, fighting for France. While Saïd is properly warned of the prospect of meeting a similar end, he wants to escape the poverty of life in Algeria, and it is likely that, for many of those in his situation, life in France seems exotic and promising, full of new opportunities to visit a country with a rich culture.

Some examples of the injustices that these men encounter within the French military, beyond the ones that are mentioned in the rest of the analysis of this work, include slights as small as a rule prohibiting North Africans from being served tomatoes in the canteen line (eventually eliminated once these men show their opposition towards it, in a very dramatic confrontation with French military officers), while based in Italy; to the facts that the North African soldiers are rarely promoted or granted time to see their loved ones, an imbalance that *le pied-noir*, Sergeant Martinez laments to his superiors; and the lack of educational services that are available to troops within their regiment, an inconsistency with the stipulations of official policy, as one North African soldier discovers. Representative of many of the North Africans' soldiers' perceptions that the French are happy to use them in battle, but do not take care to assure that they are treated equitably, Abdelkader remarks to one of his superiors, "German bullets don't pick and choose." As Jafaar comments, highlighting the atrocious degree of injustice that these soldiers encounter: "The French flag is raised on the hilltop by the bloodied hands of black and brown Africans – yet these same men are denied the right to eat the tomatoes served to the white soldiers...Preserving democracy and practicing it, it seems, are two separate things..." (3). In other words, France demands the ultimate sacrifice from these soldiers, i.e., their lives, but refuses to feed them tomatoes, which are plentiful in Italy, where they are currently stationed at the time of this incident. Thénault also remarks that the foreign soldiers seem to be the first to be nonchalantly used as *la chair à canon*, that is, manipulated somewhat carelessly during battle, as compared to the way in which the French of European descent are treated (205).

This phrase, carrying the connotations of the inhumane type of mistreatment that the least-protected soldiers often receive during wartime, is also used in a 2002 French song based on the events of September 11, 2001 and the war of Afghanistan, Axelle Red's and Renaud's "Manhattan Kaboul," which comments on the common destiny that an American man and an Afghan woman experience, because of terrorism against the United States on September 11, and terrorism against Afghans, which is characterized as occurring on a regular basis in Afghanistan: death, due to the violence that occurs between people of different civilizations and religions, allowing these two individuals to be used as *la chair à canon*. This term is certainly evocative of a Foucauldian type of power model, with respect to relationships between the French of European descent and these North African soldiers.

Also, the members of the Free French Forces of North African descent carve a place for their descendants, the current Maghrebi-French, in French society, thanks to the contributions that they make within their regiment, supporting an atmosphere of Derridean hospitality as a context of integration in France. The real-life counterparts of these characters, leaving the Maghreb for France, starting in 1943, were responding to the call of General de Gaulle, imploring members of France's colonial empire to join his Free French Forces, headquartered in London, forming la Comité Française de la Libération Nationale, based in Algiers. About 233, 000 North African men supported the French and the Allies, freeing France from the German Occupation, which had been in effect since 1940 (Jafaar 1).

In the first battle, in Montessino, Italy, critical because it was the first one that the Free French had won since the capitulation of France to Germany in 1940, and the

subsequent installment of the collaborationist government at Vichy, Saïd, in particular, makes a notable contribution to the war effort, by throwing a grenade across the mountaintop, in order to protect his friends from German fire, thereby killing the German troops who are about to attack them. This battle, which is high in casualties, is characterized as a success by the French captain, although Saïd, in particular, is concerned with the number of casualties, inquiring into their number. The captain's relative indifference towards the number of people lost in the battle, demonstrates that his priorities are the overall success of the war effort, and the goal of freeing France from Germany, as opposed to documenting the number of people who are savagely killed in these scenes, in which the debris from bombs and grenades constantly fall on the soldiers' heads, smoke fills the air, and searing explosions punctuate the extremely tense and fearful atmosphere.

In addition, Abdelkebbbar makes a significant contribution to the war effort, as he leads his men at the final confrontation with the Germans in the village in les Vosges, before it is announced that the war is over. In these prolonged battle scenes, in which the Germans and the French forces incessantly spy on each other, and fire rapid gun shots at each other, only Abdelkebbbar survives. Despite the fact that all of his men have succumbed to enemy fire, he has managed to represent his regiment in this macabre battle. It is ironic that French journalists take pictures of several French soldiers, along with some villagers, in the last segment of the film, totally neglecting to ask Abdelkebbbar to join them in the photo. Indeed, at one point, he walks by the crowd as they pose for a picture, making his omission in the photo ironic. In the "official" version of history, it will be as if the North African soldiers were never part of this defense of les Vosges from

the Germans, although Abdelkebbar knows differently. This Franco-French version of textbook history is also reflected in Begag's work, discussed in chapter 3, *Le Gone du Chaaba*, in which the Algerian-French high school student, Azouz, refers to lessons in which he learns that all French people are descendants of the Gaulois. These normative statements, and extreme overgeneralizations, rob minority populations of receiving sensitive and respectful treatment, forcing history into a box that conforms to the general need to compartmentalize the inconvenient and painful facts of history.

This soldier who survives the war, Abdelkaber, the well-educated, but second-class, Algerian corporel of his regiment, stands as a foil to the privileged sergeant and *pied-noir*, Martinez, according to Thénault:

Le sergent *pied-noir* [Martinez], par ailleurs, s'il est présenté comme privilégié par rapport aux *indigènes*, s'il préfère un soldat de deuxième classe [in the corporel, Abdelkebar], soumis à un caporal capable de lui répondre [as a Franco-French corporel would be able to do], souffre aussi du mépris des métropolitains et de l'impossibilité matérielle de prendre des permissions, puisqu'il vit hors du métropole.

(Thénault 2)

In this quotation, Thénault refers to a sort of role reversal, although in a Foucauldian sense, between Martinez, the sergeant, and Abdelkader, the educated corporel. Due to the superior position that *pieds-noirs* occupy in Algeria at the time, Martinez has been able to ascend to the position of sergeant; meanwhile, Abdelkader plays a second-class corporel, because of his race, although he is very knowledgeable and intelligent. This type of role reversal is not the kind advocated in Derridean hospitality; rather, it is more akin to a Foucauldian role reversal, an inversion in roles that contributes to tension and

hostility between two parties who are on an uneven footing, as Georgette and *la maîtresse* are, in Belghoul's *Georgette!*, analyzed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. By having Abdelkebar act as corporal, Martinez is able to take advantage of Abdelkebar's limited ability to oppose him, since he is a second-class soldier; thus Martinez is in the position of the stronger, manipulative party, with respect to his relationship with Abdelkebar.

This film, *Indigènes*, also lends itself to Derridean hospitality as a context for integration in France, through instances of some of the first examples of healthy relationships between North Africans and the French of European descent, precursors of the relationships that I analyze in this chapter, which generally occur in contemporary France, between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent. Namely, there are positive relationships, or ones that at least are temporarily positive, in the collaboration between the Moroccan soldier, Saïd (Jamel Debbouze), and Martinez (Mathieu Simonet); *le pied-noir* sergeant of his regiment; between the Moroccan soldier, Messaoud (Roschdy Zem); his Franco-French lover, Irène (Aurélié Eltvedt), whom he meets in Marseille, where the troops are temporarily stationed; between Saïd and a milkmaid in a devastated village in les Vosges in France, near the end of the film; and between Yassir, the mercenary, and Messaoud, on one hand, and the larger Franco-French and European cultures, on the other, to whom they extend their goodwill through significant wartime gestures.

The first personal relationship that can be classified as Derridean is the relationship between Saïd and Martinez, which survives for some time, as long as Martinez's true identity is kept a secret, but their alliance eventually becomes corrupted,

once Saïd discovers that Martinez, a *pied-noir*, actually has a Maghrebin mother. Saïd and Martinez strike up a friendly rapport throughout the first part of the film, and eventually, Martinez promotes him to be a private, to serve as his personal assistant. It seems that this friendship is solid, transcending both lines of ethnicity, and lines of power, resembling a Derridean relationship in the true sense of the term, as the party in power, Martinez, extends a beneficial gesture to Saïd, who learns to conceive of Martinez as a person, and not just as a *pied-noir*. In this period, it seems that the two can have a rapport as good as that of another pair in a similar dynamic: the Algerian-French student, Azouz, and the teacher, Monsieur Loubon, *le pied-noir*, both characters in Begag's *Le Gone du Chaaba*, who form a positive student-teacher relationship, based on their common knowledge of Algerian culture, and on their interest in academics.

This good rapport endures until a serious incident occurs, in a scene which pits Saïd and Martinez in a face-to-face conversation that becomes a physical and verbal confrontation. Saïd happens to see a picture of a Maghrebin woman and a child, faded, tucked inside Martinez's outdoor clothing. Just as the two are cementing their friendship, by saying that they like each other, Saïd happens to mention the fact that they share common North African ancestry. Martinez immediately perceives that Saïd has seen the photo, and that he knows of Martinez's origins as an Arab. In response, Martinez physically assaults Saïd and advises him not to tell anyone else of his discovery. Thénault comments that there are strong forces at work in this interaction, related to the situation of each party within the larger picture of colonial relations between Algeria and France, regulated by real and psychological domination: "Leurs relations sont révélatrices d'un rapport colonial qui laissait toute sa place, d'un part, à un attachement personnel,

teinté de paternalisme et d'alienation, entre des *pieds-noirs* et des Algériens...” Unlike Azouz and Monsieur Loubon in Begag, who benefit from their shared connection to Algeria, for Martinez and Saïd, this link to Algeria leads them to a distinctly dangerous crossroads, in which the difference in their ranks and social classes renders their relationship toxic.

Their relationship is also tested when Saïd experiences peer pressure because of the role that he serves with respect to Martinez. Messaoud calls Saïd a woman's name because he is serving Martinez, as if he is in a subjugated role, and Saïd becomes so angry, that he nearly kills him at knife-point. Again, although it is possible for the soldiers to have positive interactions with some Franco-French (although, technically, Martinez is part Arab), the power structures that exist lead Saïd's peers to question his fidelity to their regiment, a theme also present in Begag's *Le Gone du Chaaba*, as Azouz's classmates doubt his allegiance to them as a friend, since he is so dedicated to succeeding academically. Any disruption to power structures, and the status quo, that involves interactions between people of different races or social levels can provoke disorder and dissension.

Additionally, another relationship that is itself positive and healthy, but that is marred by the Foucauldian-like integration context in France, is that between Messaoud and the French of European descent woman whom he meets in Marseille, Irène, while the troops are stationed there, between battles. These two people, coming from different countries and religious and cultural backgrounds, experience an instant attraction to each other, which leads them to sleep together on the same night as they meet. It is clear that there is a strong connection between them, because Messaoud incessantly mentions her in

his conversations with his fellow soldiers, shows them pictures of her, and writes letters to her, to which he never receives any response. Likewise, the viewer discovers, near the end of the film, that Irène has been responding to Messaoud's letters, and that she even asks government officials to tell her about his whereabouts, but that the government has been reading, censoring, and keeping the letters that they try to send each other, due to Messaoud's status as a North African. As with many other issues in the film, the French government uses these men in their military, lets them die for France, and exploits them, but they are not guaranteed the same protections that the French of European descent receive when they are soldiers. Imagine waiting for mail that never comes, day-after-day, when in fact, the other person is replying, especially when one is in love with the person to whom one is writing, all the while hearing and seeing Franco-French soldiers receive mail from their loved ones. Irène never learns of Messaoud's fate in the war, although she suspects that he has died, and Messaoud dies without hearing word from this woman, whom he loves more than anyone else he has ever loved. Again, in a natural environment, these relationships may have had the potential to flourish, but the heavy weight of institutionalized racism within the French government prematurely terminates this love affair.

Likewise, a potential rapport between a Moroccan soldier, Saïd, and a Franco-French woman, a milkmaid in a village in les Vosges, is truncated, in this case, by her fear of becoming involved with a man of another race and country of origin. She may also be concerned because Saïd is a soldier in this film, and can be easily called away to other areas of France (or even Europe or Africa). When Saïd and the other soldiers in his regiment are in a small village in les Vosges, near the German border, before the end of

the War in 1945, Saïd encounters this milkmaid, who asks him to help her obtain milk for her children. The scene in which Saïd and this blue-eyed, dark blond-haired milkmaid milk a cow together is evocative of sexual and romantic tension, as the camera zooms in on the way in which their hands meet, as they milk the cow. Technically, the milkmaid is teaching Saïd to milk cows, presumably because cows do not exist in North Africa, but the real physical contact in which they engage carries connotations of voluntary and gratuitous interaction. At the end of their encounter, as the milkmaid leaves to return to her house and her children, Saïd tries to sneak a kiss from her, which she refuses, by avoiding his mouth. It is clear that she feels attracted to him, and under other circumstances, that she may have pursued an affair with him, but she is most likely hesitant to accept his affections, given the gap in their social, cultural, and religious backgrounds, and the geographic realities that complicate the logistics of relationships. As in the relationship between Martinez and Saïd, and the one between Messaoud and Irène, this rapport between the milkmaid and Saïd may have blossomed into a fruitful romantic relationship, or at least a friendship, if they had been given more time, and had not felt apprehensive of the consequences of society's treatment of their involvement.

Other Derridean-like gestures on the part of these North African soldiers, towards Europeans and Christians, support my argument that this film is predominately a comment on the potential of integration in France. Namely, Jafaar isolates two incidents in the film that reveal these minority soldiers meeting the French of European descent half-way, and even going beyond the expected, in order to value the Otherness of the other: namely, the way in which Messaoud prays for the soul of a German soldier after he finds his dead body, along with pictures of his family, hidden inside his wallet; and the

way in which even the mercenary, Yassir, instructs his brother, Labi, who later dies, to Yassir's great sorrow, not to take money from the collection box in the Catholic Church that they enter. Yassir also comments to his brother, upon seeing a picture of Jesus on the cross in this church, "Their God suffered so much" (Jafaar 2). This great magnanimity of spirit, and ability to empathize with people in the dominant culture, on the part of Yassir, is representative of a hyper-ethical gesture of hospitality. This ability to look beyond race and tradition is all the more valuable, given that, as Yassir recalls to Labi, their village in Algeria had been pacified, in village-wide initiatives in which people were killed in masses, in order to prevent future rebellions against the French colonial authorities (Jafaar 2). Yassir and Messaoud, collectively, are able to rise above the enormous emotional pain of losing family to violence on the part of the French of European descent, above the natural tendency to see the German soldier as non-human, because an enemy, and above the common inclination to dissociate the picture of Jesus, representative of the deity of the French people, from religious and sacred meaning. It may seem paradoxical that the mercenary sees the sacred so keenly in other people and other religions, but perhaps, in some ways, the suffering that he has felt, in his poverty and the bereavement that he experienced after losing his family, has increased his sense of humanity, and given him a generous and tolerant spirit, where some may have grown bitter and hateful. Yassir's enormous capacity for profound love and suffering is again exemplified in the scene in which he mourns his newly-deceased younger brother, Labi, who dies during combat. On a similar note, on the subject of the ability to look past religious difference as a barrier against understanding between people, Jafaar calls attention to the fact that the word in Arabic, "Allah," is translated as "God" in this film,

instead of remaining, “Allah,” as it is in many others, reducing the potential tendency of viewers to see this name for God as connotative of only the God that Muslims worship (2).

The final sequence of the film, in which an elderly Abdelkader, the only North African soldier from the regiment in question who survives the war, is suggestive of the honor that he seems to give his comrades, thus paying homage to them. Jafaar finds similarities between this scene and the final one in *Saving Private Ryan: Indigènes*'s conclusion finds an elderly Abdelkader visiting the cemetery in which his fallen comrades lie, in much the same way as Spielberg shows his aging Ryan paying homage to the Allies who participated at D-Day, on the beaches of Normandy (2). Thénault evokes the tragedy of the way in which the North African soldiers are all located in graves here, while many of their Franco-French comrades lived their lives to old age (or are even still alive), many of them raising families in Alsace, where this last battle occurs: “A la fin du film, le réalisateur choisit de présenter un homme isolé [Abdelkebar], symbolisant l’oubli dans lequel ces soldats sont tombés, même si nombre d’entre eux, restés en Alsace, y ont fondé une famille” (206). Paradoxically, the North African soldiers seem to have sacrificed more, that is, the vast majority of their lives, to the cause of France, while many Franco-French soldiers survived the war, and were able to live normal lives. Again, the radical injustice of the realities caused by the combination of the violence of war, the gratuitous injustice of society’s attitudes towards race, and the cruelty of death, truncating lives, comes into full view.

On a contemporary level, such scenes evoke the tragedy of lives likewise cut short during the riots that have occurred in France since 1980; these lives belong

predominately to minorities, still the victims of a society that does not treat them equally in many ways, and that retains ancient forms of racism in their attitudes towards people from other types of backgrounds.

“Justice comes late, and sometimes temporarily”:
Desubjectification in Bouchareb’s *Indigènes*

Desubjectification figures heavily into this film, on both macro- and micro-levels. Globally, the very effect of this film was to “desubjectify” surviving North African veterans of World War II, who were only paid their rightful wartime pensions starting in 2006, after the film’s release. In this way, despite the heavy subjectification that these soldiers experienced during the war, as they were treated unjustly by many of their Franco-French military superiors, and were not properly compensated by the government for their support of France in World War II, the film’s portrayal of their subjectification has led them to be less subjectified in the present, as the surviving veterans were awarded their just due for their military engagement in the early to mid-1940s. Unlike in *La Seine était rouge*, in the case of these North African World War II veterans, there was substantial correction that could be made to their treatment, and it was not “too late” for this type of adjustment to be made to the survivors, although, of course, tremendous damage had been done in the way in which they were mistreated during and after the war, and were not paid their full pensions from 1945 to 2006.

Other examples of desubjectification exist in this novel, such as when the Moroccan soldier, Messaoud, has a relationship with the French of European descent woman, Irène, defying expectations for such relationships at the time, although the

government eventually finds a way to penalize and disrupt this relationship, when they stop sending Messaoud's letters to Irène, and when it seems that Saïd can have a more egalitarian relationship with the *pied-noir* sergeant, Martinez, which is terminated when Martinez becomes aware of Saïd's knowledge that he is of Algerian descent, ostensibly putting them on a more equal footing, which, although accepted in practice by Martinez, is actually offensive to him, given that he wants to maintain some professional distance from, and self-perceived superiority, to Saïd.

Thus, although this film brought desubjectification to surviving North African veterans of World War II through the eventual reward of their wartime pensions, by and large, the desubjectification that the characters portraying these real-life veterans experience in this film is limited and made ephemeral by the way in which those in the dominant culture see it as incumbent upon themselves to communicate the realities of hierarchialized relationships to characters such as Messaoud and Saïd. Justice came late in real life, in the form of wartime pensions, and it comes only temporarily, to the characters representing the North African veterans serving France in World War II.

Kiffe kiffe demain (Faïza Guène, 2003)

Another work that is best described as a *Beurette* novel, like Kessas' *Beur's Story*, Faïza Guène's *Kiffe kiffe demain*, published in 2003, can be, unlike Kessas' novel, categorized as a work more in line with a context of integration akin to Derridean hospitality theory, due to the marked change that the heroine, 15-year-old Doria, undergoes during the course of the novel. In this work, characterized as a "d'abord une

voix, celle d'un enfant des quartiers," Doria moves from a place of relative despair and hopelessness, pertaining to her circumstances as a teenage girl, growing up in *la banlieue* of Paris, an emotional state symbolized by the phrase that she uses in the incipit of the novel, *Kif kif?*, Arabic for "Who cares?", to a more optimistic, expectant tone that she displays at the novel's conclusion: *Kiffe kiffe demain*, meaning, "I like tomorrow," clearly implying a favorable disposition towards the prospect of the future. In the article, "La Banlieue parisienne, du dehors au dedans: Annie Ernaux et Faïza Guène," Anouik Alquier describes the Arabic origin of the phrase, *Kiffe kiffe*:

L'expression *kif kif* daterait de 1867, et aurait été empruntée à l'Arabe maghrébin et ramenée en France par les soldats des armées d'Afrique du Nord; c'est un dédoublement du mot arabe, qui signifie *comme* ou *pareil*... et signifie, à présent, *aimer*. Le texte renvoie, donc, à son propre espace et la langue de devenir, le gage de l'identité ou, tout au moins, de l'appartenance, c'est-à-dire une façon de créer une certaine unité, face au rejet et à la peur de la France dominante.

(Alquier 456)

In this sense, the gradual evolution of Doria, in this *roman apprentissage*, in the way in which she perceives reality, mirrors the maturation that Nadia displays in Ben Jelloun's *Les Raisins de la galère*, and that Samia shows in her attitude towards the importance of education, in Nini's work, *Ils disent que je suis une beurette*. It is perhaps telling that these works about *Beurettes* (and Kabyle-French teenagers, as in *Les Raisins de la galère*'s Nadia) move from these places of despondency and resignation, to places where they realize that they possess agency, and the means with which to improve their lives. Perhaps this distinctive characteristic, more marked in the *Beurette* novels than it is in the ones involving male protagonists, is due to the additional weight that the *Beurettes*

carry as females in French society. Although women have attained rights, job opportunities, and independence that many of their mothers and grandmothers now envy, both in France and the United States, the fact remains that there are strong tendencies in even the most-developed Western societies to expect more passive, attenuated behavior from women and girls. Meanwhile, Azouz, an academically-oriented youngster in *Le Gone du Chaaba*, by Begag, seems to lack this diffidence that his female counterparts, Samia, Doria, and Nadia, exude near the beginning of these novels. It is likely that the insight characteristic of the depth of the semi-autobiographical novels, Begag's *Le Gone du Chaaba*, Nini's *Ils disent que*, and Guène's *Kiffe kiffe demain* stem from the very fact that these authors wrote from their own experiences as *Beur* youth.

Interestingly, Faïza Guène wrote this book, a semi-autobiographical account of two academic years in the lives of a *Beurette*, and her first novel, at only 19 years old. Previous to its publication, her only artistic contribution was a film that she had made, consisting only of words. Certainly, Guène's youthful age at the time that she wrote and published *Kiffe kiffe demain* enabled her to have special insight into the psychology of teenage *Beurettes*. Indeed, when the novel was published in 2004, it became a work said to be representative of the concerns of a new generation of *Beurettes*, especially since it is representative of the France of the pre-riots period (before 2005). The other *Beurette* novels that I discuss in this dissertation were written during the 1990s: Nini's work was published in 1993; Kessas' novel, in 1990; and Ben Jelloun's, in 1996.

Like Doria in her novel, *Kiffe kiffe demain*, Guène, born in 1985, in Bobigny, has parents from Algeria; her father emigrated to France in 1952, at age 21, after being recruited by the French in Algeria to join the French labor force in the post-World War II

period. Guène's mother only arrived in France in the early 1980s, to join her father, according to a book review of Guène's 2008 work, *Les Gens du Balto*, entitled "High riser," written by Angélique Christalis (2). Guène bases her description of the projects in Livry-Gargan, found in the novel, on her experiences growing up in the estate of Courtilières, in the 93, in Seine-Saint-Denis, the site of the first riots in 2005. Even Courtilières, where Guène was raised, is by far not the worst of the estates in France; unlike many others, it has public transport, although it is infamous for the discrimination endemic to the area (Chrisafis 1).

In order to gauge the evolution that Doria displays, from a Foucauldian attitude towards her situation in life, towards a more Derridean one, allowing for the possibility that she will be able to become a respected, productive, and integrated member of society, it is essential to understand the nature of her discontent. Doria's life philosophy is best encapsulated by referring to the Arabic term, *le mektoub*, *le destin*: "Ça veut dire que quoi que tu fasses, tu te feras toujours couiller." This saying is a definite indicator that Doria perceives a futility in life; no matter how much she tries to secure a happy and productive life, senseless and painful events occur, and she finds herself mired in a place that she had tried to avoid. Thus, Doria focuses on the future, enjoying each happy moment as much as she can, since she feels that she cannot count on the future.

The circumstances of Doria's life may explain, at least in some part, her resorting to a philosophy based on the concept of *le mektoub*. Concerning her familial situation, Doria lives alone with her mother, who arrived in the projects of Livry-Gargan in February, 1984 (considerably later than some other North African wives and mothers, who entered France in the mid-1970s, during the period of *le regroupement familial*)

(Guène 21). Dora's father left her mother for a younger woman in Morocco, because she was not able to provide him with a son. Thus, Doria lives with the knowledge that her father rejected her and her mother, largely because she is not a boy. The importance of having male sons, characteristic to both Arab and Chinese cultures, results in the abandonment of Doria and her mother, and Doria's perception that she is unwanted, reinforced by the French perception that single-child families in North African circles are rare (Guène 18), and by her mother's belief that her husband's departure was ordained by destiny (Guène 20).

On a socio-economic level, Doria and her mother face live in a precarious position, on several levels. Her mother has a very poorly-remunerated position as a cleaning woman in a motel, in the suburb of Bagnolet (Guène 14). They presumably live on little means, as a result. Doria also faces academic challenges: "Le problème, c'est qu'en cours, je suis nulle" (Guène 24). Although she resents school, she eventually prepares for the CAP, the professional vocations test that Samia also takes in Nini's *Ils disent que je suis une beurette*. She passes the exam, which prepares her to be a hairdresser (Guène 177).

With respect to Doria's relationship with her mother, she faces pressure from her to follow the traditions of Islam, particularly to eat according to Muslim standards, namely, to follow the stipulations of Ramadan, which precludes Muslims from eating during certain hours of the day, during its observance (Guène 14). Following these stipulations must be difficult for Doria, since she has to attend school with Franco-French students, who may not understand the practice of Ramadan.

Doria also encounters xenophobic and exclusionary attitudes from many Franco-French people. For example, some Franco-French call her mother a stereotypically Arab name, never bothering to learn her real name (Yasmina, and not Fatma, her real name, Guène 14). In addition, Doria experiences aggravation from her interactions with the social assistants at the mayor's office, since they themselves wear the façade of being perfectly put together, while they express condescending attitudes towards her (Guène 18).

Despite the challenging conditions in which Doria and her mother live, and the overwhelmingly negative tone that Doria strikes as a narrator in this novel for most of the work's duration, near the end of the novel, her life starts to gradually improve. Notable ameliorations in her life, symbolic of her coming closer to a point of integration and full participation within French society, likened to a Derridean model of integration, include the development of her interest in politics; the greater opportunities that she starts to notice for people living in France, as compared to those in North Africa; her realization that she and her mother will fare well without their husband and father with them in France; and some signs that French society pays homage to the sufferings experienced by immigrants to France from *le Maghreb*. All of these epiphanies that she experiences lead her to modify the expression that she uses at the start of the novel, *Kif kif demain*, to *Kiffe kiffe demain*: ““Maintenant, *kif-kif demain*, je l'écrirais différemment. Ça serait *kiffe kiffe demain*, du verbe *kiffer*...Ils ont peut-être raison, les gens qui disent tout le temps que la roue tourne.” This French idiom, *La roue tourne tout le temps*, suggests the ephemeral nature of life, and the fact that good times often follow difficult ones, evoking expressions of this sentiment in English, namely, the Beatles' song, based on a verse

from the Book of Proverbs in the Bible, “To everything (turn, turn), there is a season (turn, turn)...” The improvements that she notices in her life situation are accompanied by a positive development in her sentimental life, as well.

First, Doria comes from a place of relative resignation with the injustices inherent to relationships between the North African community and the French of European descent, to a place where she considers political involvement, in order to rectify them: “Moi, je mènerai la révolte de la cité du Paradis...Mais ce sera pas une révolte violente comme dans le film *La Haine*, ou ça se finit pas hyper-bien. Ce sera une révolte intelligente, sans aucun violence, où on se soulèvera pour être reconnus, tous” (Guène 192). This wish to be engaged in French politics, in the best interest of the *Beur* community, is reminiscent of a similar decision on the part of Nadia in *Les Raisins de la galère*, by Ben Jelloun (a Moroccan-French author whose work, *L’Enfant du sable*, Doria actually reads in this novel, Guène 19). Another example of intertextuality is found in the fact that the housing projects of both Doria, in Paris, and of Samia, in Toulon, in *Ils disent que je suis une beurette*, by Nini, are called “le Paradis.” This name was most likely given to these housing blocks in order to encourage a positive perception among its residents, but the cruel realities of the failure of integration in France make this name ironic. There is further intertextuality in the comment above from Doria, who aims to differentiate her own rebellion from subjugation in French society, from that enacted in Kassovitz’s 1995 work, *La Haine*, discussed in my third chapter, by using non-violent, intelligent means, affirming the worth and dignity of each person (Guène 192). The pacifism in Doria’s approach makes one think of Kassovitz’s other work, his 1993 *Café au Lait/Métisse*, in which an interracial trio, consisting of two romantic pairs, manages to

overcome their jealousy and maintain their relationship, and also of Haitian rapper, Kery James' 2008 song, "Banlieusards," analyzed later in this chapter, in which he recommends understanding and learning as means by which those dominated by the racism inherent to French society can rise above these obstacles and make meaningful contributions to French society, already demonstrated by the accomplishments of *la Bourgeoisie*. Doria rejects the riots and incidental violence depicted in the films, *La Haine*, analyzed in Chapter 3, and *Rai*, a film directed by Thomas Gilou, appearing in 1995, discussed in Chapter 2 of my dissertation. Just as her mother is pleased to see the mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoë, make initiatives to honor those Algerians who suffered police violence in Paris on October 17, 1961, Doria herself decides to exclude violence as a means to achieve the ends she envisions, those of ensuring greater equality, respect and opportunity for the Maghrebi-French and other minorities in France. As difficult as it is, as Doria has realized, it is essential not only to reject the violence committed against oneself and one's people, as contrary to human rights and the ethical treatment of others, but also to proscribe retaliation towards the people or groups who have been responsible for this damage. This is the challenge intrinsic to a hyper-ethical relationship that goes beyond the reciprocity in a healthy, but standard guest-host relationship: it takes more grace to refuse to return hurt for hurt, and to rise above the expected ethical standards of reciprocity. The vision that Doria has of integration in the French suburbs consists, rather, of a hyper-ethical outlook, that transcends reciprocity, and is on a higher plane, of doing the utmost good to all people, a principle that she affirms in the phrase that she uses at the end of the quotation cited above: "où on se soulèvera pour être reconnus, tous" (Guène 192). She thus rejects the natural human tendency to return *coup* for *coup*;

people seem hard-wired to return mistreatment for mistreatment, but she sees an alternative path to this reflex in human nature.

Beyond these improvements, Doria is also more cognizant of the greater freedoms that she and her mother enjoy in France, compared to those that are allowed to them in Algeria (which were not numerous), revealing that she is sensing greater participation in French culture, than previously. For example, Doria realizes that people in France, unlike many people in Algeria, have the right to decide whom they will marry: “La chance de notre génération, c’est qu’on peut choisir qui on va aimer tout sa vie” (Guène 42). Correspondingly, people in France also have the right to obtain divorces, which are much more difficult to obtain in Algeria (Guène 42). Also, Doria works as a baby-sitter for Lila, Hamoudi’s love interest, a position that suggests her increased involvement in Franco-French society, although her mother is not happy with this arrangement (Guène 60-62). Doria realizes that *les moeurs* in France are evolving, permitting Hamoudi and Leïla to get married, although some people disapprove of their union, since Leïla is divorced from a French man of European descent: “...beaucoup de gens voient ce mariage d’un mauvais oeil, parce que Leïla est divorcée, et qu’elle a déjà eu un enfant avec un French of European descent. Mais les futurs mariés, eux, ils s’en foutent. Donc, c’est un détail” (Guène 189). As for Doria’s future, she no longer feels compelled to have children, as a citizen of France, although it would probably have been expected of her, along with an arranged marriage, if she and her family had not joined their father in France in 1984, or if she and her mother had followed him back to Algeria: “Moi, plus tard, je ne sais pas si je voudrai avoir des enfants” (Guène 48). Doria does not favor the idea of giving birth (Guène 48). It must be refreshing, and liberating, to know that she is

not forced to marry and have children, as a French citizen. Conceivably, being in a non-traditional family has opened Doria's eyes, and those of her mother, helping them to realize that other types of families besides traditional ones are also valid, a sign that the norms of French culture are becoming increasingly accepted among the North African community in France, symbolizing progress in integration.

Third, Doria's evolution as a character indicates that she is feeling more integrated in France due to the fact that she realizes that belonging to a non-traditional family is satisfactory, indicating that she has realized that the norms and standards that are prioritized in Algerian culture, are not the ones that render her respectable and socially -acceptable in France. From feeling as if she is a relative orphan in France, to feeling as if she and her mother will be able to survive without their husband and father, Doria comes to the conclusion that she and mother constitute an integral family unit: "C'est pas grave, non plus, si j'ai plus mon père, parce qu'il y a plein de gens qu'ont plus de père. Et puis j'ai une mère..." (Guène 192). She realizes that her mother has made progress in her degree of satisfaction in life since the start of the novel, and that she has qualities that will help her to survive: "...elle est libre, lettrée, et elle a même pas eu besoin de thérapie pour s'en sortir" (Guène 192). This issue, of the gradual acceptance of other configurations of families than the standard one, is also touched upon in Kassovitz's 1995 film, *Café au lait/Métisse*. Although belonging to, and accepting, one's status in a non-traditional family is not itself a sign that one is integrated, it is a positive sign that Doria and her mother, as well as Lola, Félix, and Jamel in *Café au lait/Métisse*, are able to put aside the rigid standards of some of their native cultures (Algerian, notably, in the case of Doria), and accept other types of values, as in the French approach

to family, which allows for other types of families, from single-parent, as in the case of Doria, to families led by two fathers and a mother, as in *Café au lait/Métisse*.

Another development in this novel, which counters Doria and her mother's initial perception that racism and insensitivity to the position of minorities are traits of all Franco-French people, is her mother's discovery that the mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoë, puts a plaque of commemoration at the point at St.-Michel at which several Algerians were killed on the night of October 17, 1961, during the police attack on them at the time of a curfew on Algerians, at the end of the Algerian War, also the focus point of Sebbar's *La Seine était rouge*, which I discuss in Chapter 2 of this dissertation:

Elle [Doria's mother] kiffe Bertrand Delanoë, depuis qu'elle l'a vu à la télé, poser la plaque de commémoration à Saint-Michel. C'était en souvenir des Algériens balancés dans la Seine, pendant la manifestation du 17 octobre 1961...Maman a trouvé Bertrand très bien de faire ça pour la mémoire du peuple algérien, très digne, très classe.

(Guène 168)

This quotation seems to imply that Doria's mother is surprised that a French politician would honor the heritage of the Maghrebi-French in this fashion, presumably because, as I indicated in Chapter 2, during my discussion of Sebbar's novel, *La Seine était rouge*, the brutalities encountered by the Algerians and Algerian-French during *la guerre d'Algérie*, between 1954 and 1962, were a taboo subject in France, until about 1999, when the French government at last recognized the conflict with Algeria as a proper war. Additionally, it is likely that Doria's mother resents many French politicians, possibly because they make some decisions that negatively impact the Maghrebi-French

population; for example, perhaps she has witnessed events such as the confiscation of an Algerian-French family's home, such as occurs in Ben Jelloun's work, *Les Raisins de la galère*, which I analyze in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

On the level of Doria's sentimental life, improvements also occur; while not correlating directly to her increased degree of integration in France, the greater satisfaction that she experiences, with respect to her personal relationships, seems to accompany her realization that there is a place for her in France. Namely, her frustration with the non-development of her relationship with her romantic interest, Hamoudi, eventually dissipates, leading her to become interested in her tutor, Nabil, who demonstrates an interest in her at the start of the novel. When *Nabil le nul* (as she refers to him) kisses her initially, during their tutoring session, Doria is annoyed, since it is a surprise, and unwelcome. While Hamoudi spends time with Doria, he falls in love with and marries another young woman, Leïla, to Doria's crushing disappointment. Near the end of the novel, after Nabil visits her when he fails his *bac*, and apologizes for rudely kissing her earlier in the novel (Guène 183-184), Doria realizes that she has affection for Nabil, as he kisses her while they watch TV together (Guène 184-5). She admires Nabil's ability to recite Rimbaud's poetry, just as Hamoudi does. She comes to see that she and Hamoudi can no longer be as close as they once were to each other. This resignation of a frustrating love interest, and replacement of it with a healthier, more likely match, is typical of a healthy person's emotional development, as she seeks to protect her own emotional health and to seek fulfillment in a relationship that is viable. Even the change that she makes in her favorite mantra, from *kif kif demain* to *kiffe kiffe demain*, comes partially as a result from her resignation of her love for Hamoudi, who

remarks to Doria on page 191: “Ça commence....c’est fini, c’est plus *kif kif demain*, comme tu me disais tout le temps?” [She replies:] “C’est ce que je disais tout le temps quand j’allais pas bien et que maman et moi, on se retrouvait toutes seules: *kif kif demain*” (Guène 192). Perhaps, her ability to heal from the pain that she experiences over Hamoudi’s loss of interest in her, and her knowledge of his pending marriage, has been so significant that it sparks a change in her choice of life mantra, to *kiffe kiffe demain* (“I like tomorrow”).

The Critical Role of Desubjectification in Guène’s *Kiffe kiffe demain*

Among the works discussed in Chapter 4 up to this point, desubjectification seems to play the most significant part in this novel, especially since the very title of the book plays on a change in the *Beurette* protagonist, Doria’s, emotional development, as she moves from saying, “Kif kif demain” (“Who cares about tomorrow?”) to “Kiffe kiffe demain” (“I like tomorrow”), and as she realizes that many aspects of her difficult situation as the daughter of a single, Algerian-French mother, and as a young Maghrebi-French woman living in France, have positive components, enabling her to fashion a new conception of herself and her situation. From her realization that her engagement in politics can be productive, to her observations of the greater degree of freedom available in France, as opposed to that found in Algeria, to the channeling of her anger at her own marginalization into the conception of a non-violent resistance for the good of all,

countering the tactics demonstrated in *La Haine* (and in *Rai*, for that matter), to her acceptance of the possibility for her to be raised by her mother alone, and to have a child-free life, marrying the person of her choice, to her realization that she has feelings for Nabil, who is interested in her, as opposed to Hamoudi, who shows interest in and later marries Leïla, Doria manages to remove the strength from the cultural imperatives that have been communicated to her, telling her that she should be raised by a father and mother, that the non-creation of a relationship with her first significant love interest, Hamoudi, spells her perpetual romantic inertia, and that anger is the only way to process her dissatisfaction with her own situation. The dismantling of these traditional ways of thinking leads her to be a healthier person, as she finds ways for these narratives to lose power over her, enabling her to defend herself from their painful implications, and gain respect for herself and hope for her and her mother's life in France.

Finally, it is encouraging that the title of a relatively recent (2004) *Beurette* novel, which promotes the use of these types of strategies of desubjectification in the interest of the emotional health of this *Beurette*, Doria, is a reference to an optimistic attitude towards, if not integration, at least towards the creation of good lives for the Maghrebi-French, and that it was written by a young Maghrebi-French woman, Faïza Guène, only 19 years old at the time...If integration remains a distant goal on some levels, the improvement of Maghrebi-French lives seems a more attainable, and perhaps an even more important, goal.

Ils disent que je suis une beurette (Soraya Nini, 1993)

In *le roman d'apprentissage, Ils disent que je suis une beurette*, published in 1993, Soraya Nini tells the semi-autobiographical story of a young Frenchwoman, Samia Nalib, born in an Algerian family, and living in an HLM in Toulon. This novel demonstrates very clearly the conflict that many *Beurettes* seem to feel, as they negotiate their identities between the cultures of French society and their families of North African descent, and touches upon many of the issues in Kessas' work, *Beur's Story*, which I analyze in chapter 2 of this dissertation, although Nini's work offers a more positive portrait of the capability of *Beurettes* to achieve independence from the oppression that they experience, in the middle ground between French and North African cultures. Just as Malika's parents do in *Beur's Story*, Samia's parents impose very strict demands on their children, reflecting their Muslim beliefs. Crucial in this work is Samia's challenge to simultaneously fulfill the demands of French society and those of her family, and in the meantime, to define and establish her identity between these two powerful, but often opposed, influences.

The novel is loosely based on the life of Soraya Nini, the author, who was a teenager in Toulon, during the 1970s, and recounts the principal events of Samia's teenage years, between 12 and 18 years old, emblematic of the experiences of many young French people of North African descent during the 1990s, according to the article, « Philippe Faucon adapte *Ils disent que je suis une beurette*, » posted on the website,

Synopsis CinéTélé. The time span depicted in the novel is considerably longer than those covered in most *Beur* novels.

While Nini had intended to entitle her novel, *Entre deux, ou les enfants du paradis*, a title that would have suggested the conflict in which the Maghrebi-French find themselves, as well as the ironic commentary on the idea of France as « paradis, » the name of the housing project where Samia is raised, the publishers of the Parisian publishing house, Fixot, changed the title to its current name, putting a picture of Nini herself on the cover, as if to give the book more personal appeal, and interest readers in this work by a nascent *Beur* literary star, according to Derderian (61).

Ils disent que je suis une beurette represents Nini's vision of the means by which the youth of immigrant origin can free themselves from social constraints, as well as those of their families. During this journey, Samia meets many difficulties, but finds that her attempts to define her identity apart from these demanding influences can be successful, but only when she understands the complexity of the systems regulating these influences. Her struggle to defend herself against these forces represents her quest to find her own identity, the quest that many young people of North African descent take, as they try to become integrated into French society, but on their own terms. While Samia remains part of French society, she finds this society problematic, and aims to affirm her identity in ways that alleviate, or eliminate, the burdens of its expectations.

The priorities that Samia places on education, and on the right of each person to take paths that are appropriate for him or her, leads me to conclude that Nini sees education as a fundamental instrument of progress in French society, and that she affirms a Sartrean philosophy according to which each person has the right to define his or her

« essence, » and resist the expectations that society has for him or her, if he or she deems them as inappropriate.

While the overall tone of this novel is optimistic, since it ends with the valorization of the power of education and employment opportunities as means to escape difficult circumstances that *Beurettes* experience in France, Samia's familial situation is characterized by challenging realities. The environment in which Samia is raised is similar to that of Malika in *Beur's Story*. Indeed, *Beur's Story* was published in 1990, while Nini's work appeared in 1993. Geography does not seem to have too great of an effect on this factor of home environment, since Nini's novel is set in the banlieue of Toulon, while Kessas' work takes place in the suburbs of Paris. In *Ils disent que je suis une beurette*, Samia, her four sisters and three brothers live with their Algerian-French parents in le Paradis, an HLM in Toulon (Nini 9). As in Kessas' work, Samia and her siblings live under the close supervision of their strict, Muslim parents, who delegate their responsibility to monitor their daughters to their brothers, Yacine («le KGB»), Foued, and Malik, who themselves leave liberated social lives, but who insist that their sisters do not go out alone or spend time with young men (Nini 176). In addition, Samia's parents force their children to follow the teachings of Islam (Nini 123).

However, unlike the protagonists in Kessas, Malika and Farida, Samia in Nini's work manages to negotiate her way to obtaining a useful education and employment, and to having a social life, despite the strict constraints that she lives under in her parents' home. These accomplishments point to the way in which Nini presumably sees some degree of integration as much more attainable than Kessas, or the authors' work cited in chapter 2 of this dissertation, leading one to think that her assessment of the capability for

integration to occur in France places her work on the Derridean end of the hospitality/integration spectrum.

First, the Derridean portrait of integration, at least as it pertains to Samia's life, is depicted through her ability to secure employment, after realizing that obtaining an education that is appropriate for her will open doors to becoming more independent from her Algerian-French family.

Despite this epiphany, Samia's attitudes towards work and school have not always been positive. At the beginning of the novel, Samia seems to disdain school, and resents the efforts of French high school teachers to insist that she study and adopt French customs and attitudes. She sleeps during her middle school classes, which she finds boring (Nini 20). She skips her classes in *le lycée d'enseignement professionnel*, ou le « LEP, » which will enable her to be either a saleswoman, a florist, a secretary, or a government employee (Nini 56-57), namely, her math, accounting and law classes (Nini 85). Her negative attitude towards school may be fuelled by the treatment that she receives from some of her middle and high school teachers, as is the case in several other works, such as Belghoul's *Georgette!*, Begag's *Le Gone du Chaaba*, and Begag's *Béni, ou le paradis privé*. For example, the principal of her school once tells her that she will not be able to pass the make-up exam (*l'examen de rattrapage*) in order to enter into *le sixième* (the equivalent of sixth grade) : « Mais ma pauvre petite, c'est trop tard pour toi. Tu ne peux meme pas le passer, cet examen, tu n'y arriveras pas! » (Nini 22). In addition, just as some of the teachers in Begag's two works point out his protagonists' Algerian origins in front of the class, Samia's teacher commands her to speak about Algeria in class, in order to reinforce the class's perception of Samia as Algerian (Nini

25). Other comments that Samia makes are revelatory of her skeptical attitude towards the value of academics : « Moi, je n'ai rien à dire à l'école, je m'ennuie...J'arrive pas à écouter pendant longtemps... » (Nini 21-22); «Trois ans enfermée pour devenir vendeuse ! » (Nini 92). Samia's study habits, and the comments that she hears from her teachers, are indicative of a Foucauldian relationship between her and scholarly institutions, as is found between Georgette and the schoolteacher in Belghoul's work, discussed in Chapter 2.

Later in the novel, in alignment with a change in attitude towards a greater sense of participation in French society, Samia realizes that academic accomplishment will be necessary if she wants to be seen as an autonomous person, who can support herself independently of her family (Nini 118). Although her family could probably support her longer, if she stays with them, they will exact the demands of their North African culture on her, possibly even asking that she be involved in an arranged marriage. Dependence is not without its costs, often to one's lifestyle or integrity. Once she realizes that she will never be able to leave the housing projects of le Paradis, where her family lives, and where opportunity is limited, without earning a degree that has a direct link to an occupation, she chooses to pursue her studies seriously: « J'ai compris aussi que le lycée est ma seule porte de sortie et liberté. Depuis que j'ai pigé ça, mes notes s'améliorent. Je suis presque devenue 'une enfant sage' qui a de bonnes notes dans toutes les matières » (Nini 118). Additionally, her school day permits her to have an escape from the stresses of her home life : « ...je suis surprise d'avoir envie que l'école reprenne...Je ne peux plus supporter l'ambiance de la maison » (Nini 114). From this point on, she starts to take a

vivid interest in her classes in French and business, which she previously avoided (Nini 151, 85).

Another turning point that eventually leads to the development of a reformed attitude towards education, which in turn propels her to become better integrated into French society, is the failure that she experiences on her first CAP exam (Nini 169-171). Because she realizes that success on the CAP exam, or *le Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle*, which Doria also takes in *Kiffe kiffe demain*, is vital to her future, if she wants to have a career in the practical professions, she feels depressed when she receives news that she has failed it (Nini 163-4).

Ultimately, Samia's freedom from the constraints of her family, representative of a Derridean march towards her integration into the French work world, is secured at two points : first, when she makes the decision to take classes in leading cultural activities at the cultural center, and to do a week-long internship in this domain, and when she has the chance to work at a camp as an activity leader. Thanks to these classes that she takes, she manages to leave the family home for extended time periods, although her mother would rather that she stay at home and do housework (Nini 200-205). This attitude, seemingly retrograde in the eyes of some Franco-French people, echoes the mentality of Malika's mother in Kessas' work, *Beur's Story*, who views her daughters' affinity for school as an unnecessary, and possibly corrupting, distraction from the main duties of a North African woman: to care for children and for the home.

Samia's ability to work at the summer camp enables her to leave her parents' home for an entire summer, liberating her from the oppressive demands of her traditionally-minded parents and brothers. Despite her mother's opposition to Samia's

departure from the family home, Samia relishes in her new independence, as she bids her mother goodbye for the summer: « Salut, maman ! » (Nini 258). According to Sally Sieloff Magnan, in the article, « Young *Beur* Heroes : Helping Students Understand Tensions of Multicultural France, » Samia's casual departure leaves the reader wondering whether she will return home in the fall, or whether her separation from her family will be definitive (923-924). In alignment with a Derridean model of hospitality/integration, Samia finds this opportunity to carve her niche in French society, away from her parents' domination, by realizing, taking into account, and acting upon her discovery that only education and employment are the tools that will enable her to support herself, and thus decide on the way of life that she sees as best. Her ability to understand society's mechanisms leads her to this realization, and her ultimate personal emancipation. The stress that French society places on education is firmly resisted by Samia at the start of the novel, but her keen intelligence permits her to adapt her behavior to French society, thus becoming better integrated with French norms, and evading *l'entre-les-deux* of life at home with her family. If she stays at home, no matter how educated she becomes, the tyranny of her family's demands will always eclipse her own judgments, values, and goals.

Paradoxically, although the consequence of Samia's evolution in her attitude towards school is that she achieves her economic and social independence from her familial milieu, the method by which she arrives at this place is Foucauldian : she sees the mechanism of society, and the way in which French society manipulates people by requiring them to meet numerous demands, and uses it against French society, by

manipulating the system herself, and succeeding academically, in order to improve her life.

Magnan asserts that departure is a central theme in this work. She characterizes the importance of Samia's decision to leave her family's home, apparently a definitive one, since her father has threatened that if she leaves now, she can never return, as inextricably linked to her rejection of the uncomfortable fit that she has with her family's way of life, and the vision that her parents have of her. Magnan also cites Michel Laronde, author of *Autour du roman beur* (1993), one of the initial critical works on *Beur* literature, and Alec G. Hargreaves, one of the top experts on this genre, who hold that departure is part of the completion of the migratory experience, initiated by the *Beurs'* grandparents and parents upon their arrival in France. Laronde views the departure of the *Beurs* as being always in the direction of the host country, as cited in Magnan. Laronde also theorized that *le mythe de retour* is impossible, since one can neither return to what one knows (the cultures of the Maghreb, pre-emigration), nor modify what has changed, in modern French society (Magnan 924). Indeed, Magnan notes that Samia does move from a place of having absolute respect for her parents, to preferring the academic environment to their traditional family setting: « Compared with home, the classroom, a metonymy for France, is where Samia grows more and more comfortable» (923). Magnan cites several examples of other types of departure in Nini's novel, such as: Samia's parents' trips to Algeria, and back to France; the visits that the family receives from relatives in Algeria; and the refuge from intercultural struggle that Samia's siblings take, in sports and music (921).

In addition, Samia's integration into French society, symbolic of Nini's Derridean vision of integration, is affirmed by her success at leading a social life, despite the heavily-protective behavior of her family towards her and her sisters. As with Samia's realization that she can manipulate the school system by succeeding in her classes and becoming an adult in the eyes of her family through employment, Samia's manipulation of the rules that her family sets for her is also of a Foucauldian nature. Normally, the strong party uses the weak towards their ends, but in this work, Samia uses her parents' rules for her social life against them, by cleverly working outside of their boundaries, while at the same time generally preserving their trust; thus, she is an example of a person in a position of weakness who manipulates the power structure of the dominant party, in this case, her family, symbolic of patriarchal North African culture, thereby enacting a type of role reversal, although not in the Derridean sense of the term. Just as in Kessas, the young men in Nini's work have almost *carte blanche* to behave as they choose, and always seem to avoid punishment, while the young women live under strict expectations that they will not leave the house without their brothers' accompaniment, or lead normal social lives.

Despite this grave inequality for male and female adolescents, Samia manages to have a social life closer to that of her brothers by modifying her parents' rules to the realities of French culture. She succeeds frequently, for example, when she uses school hours as an opportunity to visit her female friends, with whom she engages in normal teenagers' activities, such as listening to music and dancing (Nini 141). She also secures social opportunities, against the admonishment of her parents, by « trafiquant » her time,

in order to have more free time, and to prevent her brother, Yacine, or « le KGB, » from monitoring her (Nini 105).

On the topic of differing social lives between girls and boys, Samia also shows her opposition to the weighted scale that leaves boys almost blameless, and girls oppressed, controlled, and judged, and even physically beaten for small infractions, when she complains to her parents about her brother Foeud's apparent impunity, even after stealing alcohol from a store with his friends : «... je trouve.....Injuste que nous, les filles, on nous interdise de sortir, que l'on se prenne des coups pour rien alors qu'on autorise tout aux garçons » (176). This comment reveals that she clearly comprehends the social mechanism that puts girls and boys on such different footing in the eyes of their North African parents. The *coups pour rien* that the *Beurettes* in this novel receive for behaviors that are well within normal social limits definitely evoke a Foucauldian power environment, as does the astounding injustice that permits their brothers to remain unpunished for even egregious behavior. On the occasions in which her parents do catch her bending their rules, she remarks : «Je suis quoi, moi ? Un extra-terrestre qui n'a pas le droit de vivre comme les autres ! J'en ai marre...» (241) Her comprehension of the social mechanism regulating expectations for Muslim girls' and boy's social lives helps her to benefit from it, but in the end, the standards that her parents lay down for her reign supreme in their household. Samia's alienation from her own existence mirrors that of Malika and Farida in *Beur's Story*, since they feel compelled by their parents to live lives similar to those of their mothers and grandmothers, who were born and raised in France, despite their residence in France, a modern society and part of the Western world,

with radically different approaches to the status of women and to the role of religion in society.

The realizations that Samia has, that she can achieve greater independence from her family, and have a more normal social life, is related to her increasing mental and emotional emancipation from Islam. Magnan underlines the importance of Samia's discovery that the primary barrier that women face in achieving social liberation, is the constraints imposed upon them by Islam :

Enriched by books about oppressed peoples, especially women as depicted by George Sand and Simone de Beauvoir, she decides that it is religion that restrains woman : «Il paraît que c'est la religion qui veut ça, et que chez vous, la femme n'a pas le droit de faire telle ou telle chose, en bref, de vivre normalement!»

(Nini 135, as cited in Magnan 922)

Samia feels increasingly stifled and depressed by this constrictive atmosphere, in which her sister is reprimanded and beaten for dating a French man : «Moi, j'étouffe dans cette ambiance, je ne la supporte plus» (Nini 79).

Again, in the latter paragraph, the reader observes yet another example of a female character who experiences domestic violence from her family members, who are generally of North African origins, and Muslim, as in Kessas' *Beur's Story*, Ben Jelloun's *Les Raisins de la galère*, Kechiche's *L'Esquive*, and Benguigui's *Inch'Allah Dimanche*. Béni, the male protagonist in Begag's *Béni, ou le paradis privé*, is also a victim of physical retaliation by his own father. Due to the frequency of these cases of physical abuse in these novels, I insist on the need for further examination of the phenomenon of domestic violence as it occurs in North African families in France. It would seem that

the larger French culture would actively intervene to curb these violent incidents, but it is possible that there is, as of yet, not enough awareness regarding the issue, although the film coming out in France in October 2014, *Papa was not a rolling stone*, directed by Sylvie Oyalon, does raise the issue of domestic violence within Maghrebi-French families, although in this case, the perpetrator is Marc Lavoine's character, the step-father of young Stéphanie, who is, presumably, Franco-French, and not Maghrebi-French.

Desubjectification in Nini's *Ils disent que je suis une beurette* :
« Salut, maman ! »

Foucault's concept of desubjectification is central, although not in an explicit sense, in Nini's *Ils disent que je suis une beurette*, in which Samia finds ways to escape the constraints linked to her identity as a young woman in her Algerian-French family, and as a Maghrebi-French teenager, interacting with her Franco-French teachers and classmates of various ethnic backgrounds. As I noted in the previous section, Samia manages to identify and protect her identity when she understands the complexity of the mechanisms governing the familial, cultural, and institutional practices and mentalities concerning her interactions with other people.

The most important, and well-known, example of desubjectification occurs in this novel when Samia leaves her family's home to work at a camp for a summer as an *animatrice* (activity leader), a departure that is the culmination of her realization that education and employment will be key for her as she tries to become an independent

adult, and the implementation of the work that she has undertaken in order to make this goal a reality.

Although she is perhaps less liberated and culturally-savvy than Doria in Guène's *Kiffe kiffe demain*, her accomplishments, however fictional, are significant, since this novel is set in the France of the early 1990s, compared to *Kiffe kiffe demain*'s setting, in 2004. Additionally, Samia is certainly more inhibited in her ability to behave as freely as Doria does, since she is constantly monitored by her older brothers at home and outside of the house, in contrast to Doria, who is an only child. While Doria is pictured as having a relatively normal social life for a teenage girl in France, similar to that the girls in Kechiche's *L'Esquive* seem to have, both of these works, *Kiffe kiffe demain* and *L'Esquive*, are set in the early to mid-2000's (2004 and 2003, respectively), making them more recent representations of relationships between *Beur* and Franco-French teenagers, than is envisioned in *Ils disent que*. Certainly, Nini's Samia achieves more of a social life than does Kessas' Malika and Farida in *Beur's Story*, Samia using her creativity and perception of the rules of home and school to see her friends during the school day, outside of school.

Samia's distancing herself from the constraints that she feels that Islam imposes upon her, for example, the possibility of having to marry someone of her parents' choice, an eventuality that positions her to secure her financial independence from her family, to an even greater degree, is also exemplary of her achievements in seeking and attaining desubjectification from the norms sustained by the three « regimes of truth » affecting her life: her traditional Algerian family, the school environment, and the social scene for teenagers in her area.

Thus, despite the way in which some of her accomplishments seem anachronistic to people reading this novel in 2014, since it was published in 1993, Samia was an early forerunner of her future fellow *Beurette* protagonists, such as Doria in *Kiffe kiffe demain* and the *Beurettes* featured in *L'Esquive*. Nini's contribution to this subgenre of *Beurette* literature is thereby essential to its evolution.

“Ma France à moi” (Diam's, 2008)

Diam's, a female rapper and hip-hop artist of French and Cyprian descent, originally known as Mélanie Georgiades, as well as a relatively newly-converted Muslim (2009), is seen as a spokesperson for the interests of marginalized minority populations in France, searching to solidify their identities in a country which has not fully accepted the scope of its cultural and racial diversity, through both her musical production and her political advocacy. In her work, she expresses her thoughts on the realities of contemporary French society. This singer, born of a mother from France and a father from the island of Chypre, and having grown up in the Parisian banlieue of Orsay, since the age of four, is well-known for the rap that she creates in the Parisian *banlieues*, according to the article, “Biography: Diam's” on the website *RFI Musique*. According to Patrick Williams, in the article, “Rencontre-Diam's and Faïza Guène nous parlent à coeur ouvert,” published in the magazine, *Elle*, «Diam's, 26 ans, rappeuse française-chypriote...a étonné tous les sceptiques en vendant 370 000 exemplaires de son dernier album, *Dans ma bulle*, devenant, au passage, une icône générationnelle » (131). In 2004,

Diam's won la Victoire de la Musique award, for "the Best Rap/Hip Hop Album of the Year," and in 2006, her album, *Dans ma bulle*, appeared (RFI Musique).

In this chapter, I will analyze Diam's song from 2008, "Ma France à moi," as a cultural text that expresses her vision of a non-racist, progressive France, affirming the categorization of this song as one that encourages a Derridean outlook towards *Beur* integration. On the topic of her motivations for recording this song, Diam's remarks, as cited in Arnaud Vaubicourt's work, *Diam's: de A à Z*:

Il y a plein d'images de la France que je n'ai jamais vues, parce que je vis dans un monde parallèle. Il y a ma France qu'on n'arrête pas de critiquer et une France qui ne connaît pas du tout les jeunes....Sur les cinq millions de personnes qui ont voté FN, je n'en connais pas une! Mais je les croise, forcément...Je voulais valoriser ma France à moi.

(Vaubicourt 65-66)

In this quotation, Diam's seems to imply that she has grown up in isolation from *la France profonde*, known for its xenophobia, and that her goal in this song is to emphasize the virtues of the more tolerant subculture that she knows, having grown up in the suburbs of Orsay, despite the fact that this subculture is frequently attacked by those who do not understand it. Through the positive evaluation that she gives the subculture in which she has been raised, she is able to recommend that France, particularly the segment described as *la France profonde*, becomes more honest about its nature as a diverse nation.

The format, presentation, and cinematography of the video for "Ma France à moi," while creating a conflictual ambiance, contributes, in its manner, to Diam's

message that there are two distinct Frances, and that her France will eventually predominate over the racist, reactionary, and xenophobic France. In this video, a Franco-French man, of a certain age, encounters numerous situations in which he meets minorities who are listening to and/or playing samples of rap, which is seen as a subversive genre, representing the genre of choice of some minorities. Each time that he encounters people listening to rap, he tries to silence this music, even going so far as to try to physically destroy headphones and a TV set which are broadcasting this music. Despite his multiple attempts, he cannot squelch this music, symbolic of the message that Diam's is trying to convey in her video and song: France has changed, becoming more diverse on many levels, and it is impossible for the French of European descent to eliminate the presence of minority subcultures in France. Diam's, in her lyrics, rejects *la France profonde* that this man represents; she presents her ideas with a fierce independence, strongly and vehemently, as if to defend her people from some *French of European descent* who resent the presence of her people in France. The video consists mostly of violent behavior on the part of the French of European descent man, while Diam's is seen as protesting these attitudes, advocating for a more egalitarian France, one more accepting of diversity. Diam's seems to reinforce her conviction that music, rap in general, and hers, in particular, has a special role to play in bolstering the tolerance of the French of European descent towards diversity, by portraying music as an expression of her people, which will play regardless of the xenophobia of people such as this Franco-French man.

The first sequence of the video begins with the words flashing across the screen in white letters, on a black background, "MA FRANCE À MOI." The time-tested color

combination of black and white, also employed in Kassovitz's film, *La Haine*, and James' song, "Banlieusards," is used, leading one to acknowledge the fact that this video will most likely involve difficult and controversial issues relating to ethnicity and race. The viewer then sees a view of the projects of a French city, featuring gray HLMs, under a gloomy sky. The video evokes the depression and hopelessness that many minorities sense during their time in *les banlieues*. A black alarm clock is shown, with red letters, as if to indicate that it is the morning. The main character in the video, an almost-bald, middle-aged white man, with a serious facial expression, wakes up, and looks out over his apartment balcony, where he has an overview of the HLMs in the neighborhood. He dons a black coat (corresponding with the black and white color motif), leaves his apartment complex in his car, and begins to follow a boy of African descent, as he walks through the neighborhood. Apparently annoyed by the music that the boy is listening to on his headphones, the man rips them off of the boy's head, and stomps on them on the ground, as the boy of African descent watches him. The headphones, symbolizing the subculture of the minority population in France, have been crushed, as if to symbolize the domination that the French of European descent man seizes, as he seeks to eliminate the presence of this alternate culture, symbolizing subversion of French norms, and values that he perceives as different, and thus not deserving of a place in French society. Having destroyed this boy's headphones and thus the conspicuousness of an alternate subculture in this scene, the man walks away.

If he is trying to avoid minorities in the neighborhood, however, he finds that he cannot do so: he soon encounters a trio of *Beurettes*, who recite part of Diam's rap song to him, about the discrimination that occurs on the job market in France. It is as if these

three *Beurette* teenagers are lecturing him about the racism inherent to French culture. He rapidly leaves the scene, as if wanting, again, to avoid having to acknowledge the presence of the Other in France, an Other who challenges the status quo to which he has become accustomed.

The next scene occurs in a taxi, in which the driver begins the ride by softly playing part of Diam's song, until the French of European descent man asks the taxi driver, of African origin, to stop playing the radio. Instead, the driver intensifies the volume, leading the French of European descent man to literally scream, "Stop!", imploring the driver to silence the music that represents, for him, the minority subculture, valorizing rap music, and seeming to demand equality and respect, which he does not want to accord to them. As in the other sequences, the French of European descent man leaves the taxi, finding that he cannot squelch the music, and that he must face the existence of a diverse France.

Subsequently, the most hostile, intense sequence in the video plays, in which the French of European descent man finds himself in an electronics store, facing several television sets, all of which are broadcasting Diam's face, as she sings "Ma France à moi," in a very militant and passionate voice. He tries, to no avail, to silence several televisions, but because Diam's face is on several TV sets, he cannot do so. He screams, tries to cover his ears with his hands, and even vandalizes a television set, throwing it on the ground, as if to take control of the situation, eliminating the grave annoyance that he feels at having to listen Diam's sing this song, in a confrontational manner, as if to tell him, "You cannot avoid the fact that France has changed, that the realities of social and cultural relationships in France have evolved, and that you are powerless to return to the

days in which the French of European descent were not only the dominant ethnic group, but also the unchallenged group.” Near the end of the sequence, Diam’s face on the TVs changes into images of several men and women, of both Caucasian and African descent, before returning to that of Diam’s. After the man is seen putting his head down, as if to admit defeat, and to lament the change that he can neither control nor stop, the scene fades to black and white, the color motif associated with hot-button issues related to ethnicity.

On a larger scale, the association that Diam’s makes, between rap music and the representation of ethnic diversity in France, is parallel to the metaphor that Zebda uses for the representation of difference in one of their 1995 songs, “Le Bruit et l’odeur,” discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, under works that emulate “Foucauldian” contexts of hospitality. While in Diam’s video, the middle-aged, Franco-French man actively tries to silence French rap, Zebda’s song is seen as a response to a speech in which then-French President, Jacques Chirac openly sympathized with Franco-French workers who felt aggravated by minorities who made *le bruit* and who emanated *l’odeur*, implying that their annoyance was normal and understandable, and not racist, since the French of European descent had reason to resent the presence of these minorities, who seemed to absorb all of the government’s money, due to the social benefits that they received, and to contribute nothing to the neighborhood, but noise pollution and unpleasant smells.

I have included the lyrics to this song, “Ma France à moi,” in the Appendices to this dissertation.

In the lyrics of “Ma France à moi,” Diam’s advocates for her France, which is not racist, and which will triumph over traditional France, ultimately leading to a higher quality of life for minorities. She makes a contrast between “her” France [*ma France*] and traditional France, or *la France profonde*. According to the song, in *la France profonde*, people lack integrity, lie to the youth, refuse to promote industrious employees [presumably, especially the Maghrebi-French]; vote extreme [likely, for le Front National]; support the former French President from 2007-2012, Nicolas Sarkozy, who was elected on a platform of enforcing respect for order among minorities; eat American food; patronize American chains and artists, such as KFC, 50 Cent, MacDo and Foot Locker [suggesting their complicity with the effects of globalization, and with the reduced linguistic and cultural integrity of the French market]; resent rap music, seen by many Franco-French as a subversive genre; model behavior that is acceptable in Texas [reminiscent, perhaps of the George W. Bush era, from 2000-2008?], belong to *cette France hypocrite*; have inappropriate nostalgia for the time period in which *Les Choristes* was set, the late 1940s; let the poor starve and die, celebrate the season of the Beaujolais wine in November [emblematic of traditional French culture], and “pue le racisme mais....fait semblant d’être ouvert” [feign tolerance towards all, while being openly racist].

Diam’s France, “ma France,” on the other hand, demonstrates a facility towards accepting diverse traditions and practices, symbolizing a movement towards a more progressive approach to integration. Diam’s France is against rules and administrations, since even having *le Brevet d’études professionnelle*, a vocational professions diploma, is not sufficient for them to become managers and bosses, due to discrimination on the job

market; listens to hip-hop music; believes in the importance of family; uses new technology, including text messages and the Internet (“SMS, MSN”); is an *arc-en-ciel*, (representing its respect for diversity); feels the need to play sports and to dance; refuses to submit to the values of *la France profonde*; and will triumph over old France (Diam’s, “Ma France profonde”).

With respect to her political advocacy, which is inextricably linked to her musical production, Diam’s also encourages the development of attitudes that are conciliatory towards integration. She encourages an engaged audience, exhorting her listeners to vote in the elections against Le Front National’s Le Pen, according to the article, “Rappers mobilize as Le Pen vote surges,” posted on *the Observer* website. Since at least 2007, Diam’s has been politically engaged in the struggle against racism and fascism in France; namely, she joined the movement against LePen before the 2007 elections. In addition, the work of Diam’s, in addition to that of other rappers, has facilitated the efforts of anti-racist groups to prevent the extreme right from making as significant gains as they did in the 2002 elections, in which Le Pen managed to make it to the second rounds of the election, as expressed by French rap music commentator, Olivier Cochin, who remarks, in the article, « French presidential election: Weird rumblings on the right »):

[T]he rappers' efforts to get young people in France's deprived *banlieues* [suburbs] to register to vote have paid off. In Seine-Saint-Denis, the [region near Paris that] suffered most in the riots of 18 months ago, a rise of 9 percent, double the national average, has been logged....Deprived areas with big immigrant populations in the south...have also registered big increases...No one thinks that they are going to change the world....It is a more a bid to avoid the nightmare scenario [of a Le Pen presidential victory] than to realize a dream.

(SFGate.com)

In terms of Diam's specific political preferences, she indicates, as cited in an article in *the Observer*, entitled, "Rappers mobilize as LePen vote surges," that, while she is not calling on people to vote for any candidate in particular, she is prepared to ask the public to vote against extreme candidates, such as Sarkozy and Le Pen:

I read all the manifestoes, but I'm not going to make an explicit choice because I don't want to influence people...to incite people to vote is to discover the country...[However], if Sarko or Le Pen are elected, I'm getting ready for it to kick off.

Through her music and advocacy, two aspects of her political engagement, Diam's demonstrates, along with other musical artists, that France has changed, in its demographics and in the cultural realities that characterize French society. It is certain that Diam's musical production and political advocacy will continue to be powerful forces in France, and that Diam's unique role as a female rapper will open doors to other women in France.

Manifesto of Maghrebi-French Desubjectification, #1:
Diam's "Ma France à moi"

Along with James' "Banlieusards," this song by Diam's from 2008, "Ma France à moi," can be said to be a manifesto of Maghrebi-French desubjectification, since the

entire song, and the intended effect of the song, is equivalent to Diam's declaration of the desubjectification of her people from the dominant narrative of *la France profonde* and the superiority that it often assumes over the Maghrebi-French. By creating the concept of Diam's France, she seems to be reappropriating possession of the cultural space that she and her people inhabit, refusing to let the people of *la France profonde* to assume control over it, and promoting the values of tolerance and open-mindedness, instead of xenophobia and intolerance of difference.

It is noteworthy, in this video, that Diam's seems to gain control over her emotional and cultural sphere by refusing to be silenced by the French of European descent man featured in this video, who continually seeks to silence her rapping and the music that accompanies it, and to muffle the song that plays on radios and TVs throughout the course of the video. Ireland's characterization of Maghrebi-French women being "doubly subjectified," in her discussion of Kessas' *Beur's Story*, seems to be *à propos* in discussing the effort that Diam's presents, as she asserts her "double desubjectification," in that she will be silenced neither as a woman, neither as a minority in France (Diam's is technically not Maghrebi-French, but she is Cyprian-French). In this sense, the images that Diam's uses in this video seem to resolve, in some sense, the theoretical conception that Ireland presents in her characterizing some people in the dominant culture as silencing minorities, and silencing women, a tendency that is seen as this video as impossible.

While throughout this dissertation, I advocate the use of peaceful means in the process of creating better conditions for the Maghrebi-French, the video and song that Diam's has created does seem to convey intense anger towards the contingency of the

French of European descent who seek to further marginalize the Maghrebi-French and other minorities. In this sense, Diam's song is not an ideal expression of a declaration of desubjectification, since the angry expressions featured in this video do evoke vengeance, and since it is conceivable that some people watching this video may be provoked by Diam's presentation, conveying very volatile emotions. In this sense, the *Beurette* protagonist Doria's construction of a peaceful means to assert *Beur* identity and autonomy in France is likely a better expression of this type.

“Banlieusards” (Kery James, 2008)

Despite the fact that it drew tremendous controversy in 2008, when it was first played on French radio, Kery James' “Banlieusards” can be said to affirm a Derridean vision of integration in France. In this segment of my fourth dissertation chapter, after explaining the initial controversy that the song stirred among politicians at *les Jeux de la Francophonie* in Nice, in 2010, I will analyze the significance of this song, as well as the nature of its reception. This song is a powerful call to action from James to the *Beur* and black communities in France, as he asks them to actively, constructively improve their status in French society, and to refuse to surrender to predictions of their failure, by using peaceful, emancipatory means that the French of European descent do not expect them to employ.

When it appeared in 2008, the song was deemed scandalous by the deputies of the UMP in the Alpes-Maritime, according to Jason Moreau, in the article, “‘Banlieusards,’

de Kery James, crée la polemique: une recupération politique pitoyable.” On the other hand, Moreau holds that this song, later seen as the hymn of the *banlieues*, and chosen to play at *les Jeux de la Francophonie* by le Parti socialiste, where James performed it at the opening ceremonies, sends a constructive message to youth of minority descent. At the time, in 2010, there were significant points of contention between le Parti socialiste and the UMP, specifically over issues such as violent incidents in Marseille, penal reform over *la loi Taubira*, and the consideration of whether to use military force to intervene in Syria. At *les Jeux de la Francophonie*, taking place in Nice, in 2010, youth from various parts of la Francophonie gathered to participate in athletic competitions and cultural activities. In response to the song being performed, the mayor Nice, Christian Estrosi, and the President of the General Council of the Alpes-Maritimes, deemed the song as “scandaleuse et inappropriée, incitant à la revolution des banlieues.” During James’ performance, many people whistled, as if to approve of the song, and then-First Secretary of the Socialist Party, and then-President of the General Council of Cortèze, François Hollande [and the elected President of France, in 2012], and the current minister of *la Francophonie*, Yamina Benguigui, were seen in the spiral staircase. It must have appeared to the public that both Hollande, a prominent political figure, and Benguigui, an important voice on issues related to *la Francophonie*, sanctioned this song, since they appeared on stage with James (Moreau).

While some perceived the song as linked to a call to hatred and to disorder, Moreau characterizes the song as inspiring and positive. On the contrary, Moreau holds that rather than having motives of a destructive or insurrectional nature, the song expresses the high value that it places on the social, economic, and cultural ascension of

the Maghrebi-French and blacks in French society by peaceful means, a vision that affirms a Derridean-like approach to the presence of the descendants of West and North Africans in France. Moreau interprets this song as being revolutionary, but only through the means of the elimination of financial insecurity and danger; rather than a revolution like *la Grande Révolution* of 1789, or the riots of 2010, 2007, 2005, 1990, or 1980-1981, in the French suburbs, this social change is “intellectual and social.” Moreau posits that although many people in France have long suspected that James views people in the French suburbs as being victims of French society, this song seems to be a rebuttal to this criticism, as he calls for a strong and active approach on the part of the Maghrebi-French and French people of West African descent, to facilitate their own integration.

Moreau suggests that the reason for which James’ song was perceived negatively by some politicians in 2008, in particular, as a violently-phrased, militant call to physical insurrection in the French suburbs, when he sang it at *les Jeux de la Francophonie* in Nice, was due to some politicians’ tendency to prioritize their grasp on the French electorate, over the value of Kery’s message in this song, which implores minorities to stay strong in their struggle towards achieving better conditions for themselves, and to make positive contributions to France:

On peut donc se demander comment une démarche aussi audacieuse et encourageante, de la part d’un artiste qui revendique ne "plus croire en l’illicéité", peut être pointée du doigt de la part de certains élus issus de la même région que les Bouches-du-Rhône où 15 personnes ont déjà été abattues depuis le début de l’année. Mais malheureusement, il semblerait que le clivage droite-gauche pour la main-mise sur le pouvoir soit plus important que le fait d’encourager et de coopérer avec des artistes influents. Et ce, même s’ils envoient un message d’espoir fort à la jeunesse, ce qui est non plus un devoir, mais une nécessité.

A l'heure où le chômage augmente en même temps que le pouvoir d'achat baisse, Kery James appelle donc une nouvelle fois tous les jeunes banlieusards à se prendre en main. Il se justifie par la dernière ligne du morceau à l'ombre du show-business : "car l'égalité des chances n'est qu'un projet".

A bon entendeur...

(Moreau)

At this juncture, I will examine the general format of the video for James' song, "Banlieusards," in order to analyze the way in which it reveals his progressive, outlook on the potential for the Maghrebi-French and French of West African descent in France, supportive of a Derridean interpretation of racial and cultural relations in France. In this song, James is pictured wearing a black jacket and a white T-shirt, reading, "On n'est pas voué à l'échec," one of the lines from the song, and a potential mantra for the cause of minorities in France. A spotlight periodically shines on him, as he is surrounded by shadow. Already, in the cinematography of the video, the viewer perceives the attention that is placed on racial difference, in the contrast between James' black jacket and white shirt covered by letters in black. The use of black and white backgrounds and color themes is a method also used in Kassovitz's *La Haine*, as well as Diam's "Ma France à moi," and while it may seem mundane, this format is a striking way to draw viewers' attention to the fact that racial issues cannot be ignored, and that they have profound effects on culture and society. The light that shines on James from time to time seems to be evocative, however, of an optimistic outlook towards the elevation of the Maghrebi-French and French people of West African descent from places of anonymity, disempowerment, and oppression to places of recognition, agency and freedom.

Later in the video, a number of Maghrebi-French and French people of West African descent, as well as people originating from the French Caribbean, appear in the video, usually surrounded by picture frames, and designated by their names and titles, in labels below the bottoms of the picture frames. This positive evaluation of the capability of the Maghrebi-French and French people of West African descent to find their niches in French society, based on the number of accomplished minorities that the video showcases, is affirmative of Derridean hospitality theory, as a model for healthy relationships between the powerful and those who are traditionally subjugated. These artists, politicians, businessmen, and athletes, all of whom grew up in endangered areas, appear on the screen, including the author Faïza Guène, who wrote *Kiffe kiffe demain*, cited in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, the businessman, Mohamed Dia, and the soccer player, Lilian Thuram. They can be said to be representative of *la Bourgeoisie*, the successful upper class of people from the North African community (and by extension, from the West African and Antillean communities) in France. As I mentioned earlier in this dissertation, Philippe Bernard, in the late 1990s, wrote a work about *la Bourgeoisie*, suggesting that integration in France is not a goal so far removed from reality, since all of these people who came from the impoverished, dangerous and potentially volatile areas in the French suburbs managed to achieve high positions in France, and to make significant and positive contributions to society. The number of people who have attained celebrity and honor in France, and who have origins in the colonies of Africa and the Caribbean, is very elevated, and while it is encouraging to see that these Maghrebi-French and French people of West African and Antillean descent have changed French society for the better in so many ways, there is the perennial argument against using the

concept of *la Beurgeoisie* as a carrot stick to encourage other minorities to reach their full potentials, particularly since many of these people are not graced with the same gifts, familial connections, or living and working environments which the members of *la Beurgeoisie* enjoy. Thus, the presence of all of these accomplished people among the communities of *Beur* and West African origins is not necessarily a strong recommendation for the role of Derridean hospitality as a paradigm for integration in France; nonetheless, it suggests that there is potentiality for growing numbers of Maghrebi-French people to find more fulfilling places for them in French life.

Also suggestive of a positive guest-host relationship in France, near the end of the video, there is a shot of an entire group of successful Maghrebi-French and French people of West African and Antillean descent, along with some Franco-French people, who are pictured as singing James' song, symbolizing their solidarity with the message of the song, that minorities in France should not surrender to dire predictions about social fracture in France, and that they should strive to be represented, and to represent themselves, by using their talents in positive ways.

An analysis of the lyrics of this song is also essential for comprehending the message that James expresses, regarding his Derridean conception of integration. The phrase that James raps repeatedly is, "On n'est pas condamné à l'échec, voilà l'chant des combatants." This line encapsulates the basic philosophy of James, who sees success as a goal that is very achievable for the Maghrebi-French and French people of Antillean descent in France, and who underlines room for these minorities to negotiate more egalitarian relationships with *les Français de souche*. In lines 8 and 9 of the second stanza, James reinforces this line with a call to arms to his fellow minorities: "Avant de

crier “c’est pas la peine! Quoi qu’il adienne, le système nous freine!” A toi de voir! T’es un lâche ou un soldat?” James is clearly advocating the other *banlieusards* to discontinue their passivism and resignation towards their situation, and to actively combat racism, discrimination, and stereotyping.

The lyrics of the song can be found in the Appendices to this dissertation.

In this rap song, the means that James suggests as ways to resist the status quo and to improve the condition of the residents of the *banlieues*, all of which confirm the tendency in this song towards Derridean hospitality theory as a model for positive contexts of integration, include, as enumerated in the last stanza, “Apprendre, comprendre, entreprendre...S’élèver, progresser, lutter...Même si on a mal.” These verbs suggest a reasonable, intellectual (“Apprendre, comprendre”), active (“lutter”), strong, innovative, and progressive (“s’élèver, progresser”) approach for “les banlieusards” to take, towards making France a better place for them and for their descendants to live. The phrase, “Même si on a mal,” indicates that James encourages his fellow residents of the *banlieue* to take this type of approach, even if there are certain social or cultural costs to it, instead of accepting the idea that conditions will never improve. Indeed, the active approach that James valorizes in the song makes one think of Foucauldian resistance to oppressive power structures; while Foucault recognizes the difficulty that the disenfranchised have when challenging those who perpetuate majority discourses, he places value on the psychological effects that it provides to them. In this case, it appears that the members of this successful group of ethnic minorities who have refused to accept the status quo, as it pertains to racial relations in France, have actually

made strides and changes to French society, proving that resistance can eventually be effective.

A clear theme in this song is the need for minorities to have ambition, a quality that can lead to better relationships with their Franco-French fellow citizens. In particular, in the fourth stanza, James invokes his people to build their lives and French society, instead of destroying samples of French culture, such as cars in the suburbs, an approach that is akin to Voltaire's suggestion that he makes in *Candide*, to, "cultivate our garden," rather than resigning ourselves to the inevitable injustices and cruelties that are found in this life:

On est condamné à réussir/
A franchir les barrières, construire des carrières/
Regarde c'q'ont accompli nos parents/
C'qu'ils ont subi pour qu'on accède à l'éducation/
Où serait-on sans leurs sacrifices?
Bien sûr que le travail a du mérite/
Ô, combien j'admire nos pères/
Manutentionnaires mais fiers/
Si on gâche tout, où est le respect?
Si on échoue, où est le progrès?
Chaque fils d'immigré est en mission/
Chaque fils de pauvre doit avoir de l'ambition/
Tu ne peux pas laisser, s'évaporer tes rêves en fumée/....
Rien n'arrête pas un banlieusard qui se bat/
On est jeunes, forts, et nos soeurs sont belles/
Immense est le talent qu'elles portent en elles!...
Et si tu pleures, pleure des larmes de détermination...

(James)

Ironically, the place that James carves in French society for the *Beur* and black communities, harmonious with a Derridean paradigm of integration, allows room for the potential for the French of European descent to be surprised and confused by seemingly

atypical behavior by the French, as expressed in the first stanza of the song: “j’ai écrit l’hymne des battants/C’ qui n’ont pas toujours ce qu’on attend d’eux/Qui n’disent pas toujours c’que l’on veut entendre d’eux.” James seems to take pride in the fact that the means that he advocates for achieving better socio-economic conditions for his people in France do not involve “l’insécurité/Des terroristes potentiels, des assistés...mais j’ai d’autres projets, qu’ils retiennent ça.” Other words, phrases, and terms that he associates with the way in which minorities are perceived in France, and that are representative of life in many French suburbs, include *l’échec scolaire*, *l’exclusion*, *donc la colère*, *La violence et les civières*, *la prison et le cimetière*, *les discriminés*, *souvent incriminés*, *Les innocents*, *qu’ils traitent comme de vrais criminels*, [and] *l’image des prédateurs*, *coupables et exclus de l’emploi*. He seems to mock the French of European descent assumption that car-burning and rioting are legitimate in the eyes of most minorities: “J’veux pas brûler des voitures, je veux en construire, puis en vendre.” These terms (including *le racisme*, *l’exclusion*, and *l’échec scolaire*), which appear throughout the *Beur* novels and films that I examine in this dissertation, seem to be directly opposed to the thoughtful, intellectual, proactive, and constructive approaches that James calls his peers to espouse. Interestingly, the delight that James seems to take in choosing alternative routes to further integration in France can be linked to a Foucauldian power model, in which one party sometimes manipulates the other. Just as Samia in Nini’s work uses Foucauldian means to further her participation in French society, James seems to advocate making the system work for himself and other minorities, by carefully considering the means that will best help them reach their goals.

Next, the fact that Kery is advocating a Derridean-like relationship between France and the *Beur* and black communities, symbolized by the dream of a “une France unifiée,” is referenced in the stanza on “la 2^{ème} France.” This reference seems to recall the idea of *ma France* in Diam’s song, also from 2008, “Ma France à moi.” These rappers conceive of two separate Frances, first, the country that accepts the marginalization, exploitation, and sometimes-unwarranted criminalization of many members of certain ethnicities, and that at the same time lives in denial of the need for racial reconciliation; and the second France, which has been the victim of decades of discrimination and racial and religious stigmas, and that has managed to make remarkable contributions to French society. In the first stanza, James demands, “Pourquoi nous dans les ghettos, eux à l’ENA/Nous derrière les barreaux, eux au Sénat?” This line seems to reveal that James has noticed that there are very clear socioeconomic markers that separate those who are raised in the *banlieue*, from those hailing from more affluent, Franco-French families. One could argue that James seems to wish to end this clear-cut separation, in which many minorities in France find themselves living in the ghetto, and serving alcoholic drinks at bars, while a select few of the French of European descent attend *les grandes écoles* [such as l’ENA, l’Ecole nationale d’administration], and earn positions in the Senate. While James recognizes the gravity of this disparity, he exhorts *la deuxième France*, composed of people who have suffered decades of marginalization, to come to life, in proactive and assertive ways: “Il est temps que la 2^{ème} France s’éveille.”

In addition, the following excerpt from the song lyrics reveals that the job market in France functions according to actual, functional racial divides, a complex reality that

connotes both Foucauldian power theory, symbolized by tremendous gaps in opportunity, and Derridean hospitality theory, represented by James' persistence in obtaining his goals, in spite of the general tendency in France towards injustice, figurative inhospitality, and discrimination towards some people who are not Franco-French:

J'suis pas un mendiant/ j'suis venu prendre ce qu'ils m'ont promis hier
Même s'il me faut 2 fois plus de courage, 2 fois plus de rage
Car y'a 2 fois plus d'obstacles et 2 fois moins d'avantage
Et alors?! Ma victoire aura 2 fois plus de goût
Avant d'pouvoir la savourer, j'prendrai 2 fois plus de coups
Les pièges sont nombreux, il faut qu'j'sois 2 fois plus attentive
2 fois plus qualifié et 2 fois plus motivé.

As James perceives it, the French job market is characterized by very deeply-engraved racial divisions, which exclude minorities from having equal chances for jobs, as compared to their Franco-French classmates and colleagues. Despite the extent of these tremendous inequalities, and the resulting gaps in achievement, James insists that he will maintain his perseverance in finding employment, and that the victory that he will feel upon finding it will be worth the bitter and exhausting struggle.

Another noteworthy aspect of this song, a strong call towards improved relationships between minorities in France and French society, is the frequency of the use of words that are found in *le champ lexical* of militancy, which is a word that characterizes the tone of the song, and that paradoxically, could connote a Foucauldian tone, in a song that is generally Derridean. Indeed, it is possible that some of the people who were initially alarmed by this song, seeing it as a sign that France could explode, if

provoked, due to phrases such as, “la vie est un combat,” “Je suis pas un victime, mais un soldat,” “j’ai résisté,” “Entreprends, et bats-toi!”, “Si j’rugis comme un lion,” and “Car ceci n’est pas une plainte, c’est une révolution!” It is true that the means that Kery suggests that the immigrant communities take are peaceful, democratic, and intellectual, but the *champ lexical* that he uses does connote a sense of urgency, *jusqu’au-bout-isme*, defiance, and militancy, as if this struggle for social insertion in France is a fight for survival. The tone that he takes is similar to that of Diam’s, in the song analyzed in this chapter, “Ma France à moi.” While James condemns violence as a means by which minorities should reach their goals, Diam’s seems to proscribe the violence that the French of European descent man in her video uses as he tries to avoid the sound of rap music, while not commenting on whether minorities should resort to similar means to defend their place in France.

Manifesto of Maghrebi-French Desubjectification, #2:
James’ “Banlieusards”

As I stated in the previous section, “Banlieusards” can be seen as a manifesto of Maghrebi-French desubjectification, accompanied by Diam’s “Ma France à moi.” Indeed, the lyricists of each song conceive of a new type of France, in which the Maghrebi-French and French people of West African and Antillean descent are less subjectified by the French of European descent majority. In James’ song, this new country is referred to as “la 2^{ème} France,” and “la France unifiée,” while in Diam’s words, it is, “ma France à moi,” although the precise phrasing of these terms suggests that

James' song calls for a France in which there is truly more equality and tolerance, while Diam's song seems to evoke the creation of separate Frances, one France, *la France profonde*, the other, "her France, although she does suggest that in time, her France will conquer over *la France profonde*. Even more than Diam's song, James' hit seems to have a more concentrated focus on the future, as he implores other minorities in France, both Maghrebi-French and West African-French, to take active parts in the creation of a positive future for themselves, using creative, peaceful means to achieve this type of life.

Indeed, it is possible that some of what James envisioned in 2008 is coming to pass on some level, as evidenced by the presence of the *élite noire* discussed in Vincent's article, "Ils sont la minorité agissante," from May, 2014, six years after the release of James' song, which includes images of several luminaries of the *Beur* and black communities in France, some of whom likely are listed in the "Who's Who" list of these groups, *The Gotha Noir*, described in Vincent's and Imbert's article. Nonetheless, the same criticism that was made of *la Beurgoisie*, a term made popular in 1999 by Bernard in his book, *La Crème des Beurs*, can also be made of this *élite noire*, a concept evoked, although not in the same words, in James' video: it is possible for a contingency of people of minority descent in France to rise to positions of high levels of power, but the reality remains that the vast number of ethnic minorities in France will never reach these levels. Perhaps it can be said that if some are rising to such levels, the future may bring a global improvement in the majority of these people's professional attainments and position in society, although even this desirable improvement in the occupational situation of minorities will not mean in itself that France is becoming more tolerant and open to diversity.

As a final commentary on the song, “Banlieusards,” as a statement on the need for *Beurs* and blacks to construct a future for themselves independent of the expectations of French society for them, I commend the way in which “Banlieusards” recommends a peaceful approach to forming this type of future. This seems to be a strength of this song, as compared to Diam’s “Ma France,” although I recognize that some people did not initially conceive of James’ song as advocating pacifist means when it appeared in 2008. Perhaps, the appearance of a militant call to action, when associated with the idea of *les banlieues*, in which rioting occurs periodically, was conflated with the idea of using violent means to create “la 2^{ème} France,” envisioned by the lyricist of “Banlieusards.” In this sense, perhaps even this song, largely about the eradication of prejudice, was “pre-judged” by listeners in 2008, only to be shown to have peaceful aims in later analyses.

Conclusions to Chapter 4

In this chapter, I have examined and analyzed numerous examples of *Beur* novels, and *Beur* and *banlieue* films, all illustrating positive contexts of *Beur* integration, corresponding to situations akin to that of a healthy guest-host relationship, in Derridean hospitality theory. I have also identified several examples of behaviors or attitudes that reveal hyper-ethical treatment towards other people, indicating that there is tremendous potential for the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French to learn to cooperate, support, forgive, and have empathy for each other.

Notwithstanding, even within these more favorable situations, there is potential for the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent to display animosity, resentment, aggression, and disrespect to each other. Paradoxically, sometimes the Maghrebi-French use Foucauldian-like, manipulative means in order to facilitate their integration, as Samia does in Nini's *Ils disent que je suis une beurette*, as she profits from the mechanisms of society in order to escape her disadvantaged position. In some other circumstances, when it appears that the French of European descent are encouraging minorities to become integrated in their culture, they are doing it for selfish or disingenuous reasons, as in *Indigènes*, directed by Bouchareb, which portrays the French encouraging North African men to fight for France, but refusing to accord them the equal treatment and respect that they deserve.

Desubjectification plays a part, to various degrees, in these artistic works, from works heavily featuring it, such as *Ils disent que* and *Kiffe kiffe*, while in others, it is not seen as key, as in *Café au lait* and *L'Esquive*, which rely more on interpersonal investment to promote social cohesion among people of various racial backgrounds, and to mitigate conflict that would otherwise be reduced by desubjectification. *Indigènes* is the only work that brought direct results for the desubjectification of people of North African descent, as the North African surviving veterans of World War II were eventually rewarded with the pensions that they had been due for decades, thanks to this film from 2006. Meanwhile, desubjectification is more theoretical, but strongly called for, in Diam's and James' musical hits from 2008. This diversity, even among the works analyzed in Chapter 4, reveals that there is a tremendous range of attitudes towards, and degrees of, integration depicted in works that favor a positive description of intercultural

relations in France, and that integration is more complex and situationally-dependent than I realized at the start of this research.

Armed with a knowledge of the way in which *Beur* and *banlieue* films represent a spectrum of manners of seeing integration in France, from Foucauldian-like circumstances, in which interactions between the French of European descent and the Maghrebin-French are conflictual, to the ones that are analyzed in this chapter, indicating great potential for healthy exchanges to occur between the metaphorical guests and hosts in France, I will now continue to chapter 5, in which I will examine this array of cases of varying degrees of integration, as seen in articles from the French magazine, *Paris-Match*, focusing specifically on issues of the magazine that treat the riots of 1980-1981, 1990, 2005, 2007, and 2010.

Additionally, my observations of Derridean-like contexts of integration that I have gleaned from analyzing these novels, films and songs in this chapter will serve as inspiration for my conclusions to my dissertation, in which I will suggest several factors that contribute to the facilitation of integration in France

Chapter 5:
The Predominance of Images of Dysfunctional Hospitality in *Paris-Match*'s Coverage of
the French Riots of 1990-1991, 2005, 2007, and 2010

Introduction

While an analysis of three types of hospitality (Derridean, mixed, and “Foucauldian”), as manifested in *Beur* novels, films and videos, is useful for discovering the general nature of the ways in which the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent interact, given the fact that art and life mutually affect each other, it is also crucial to have an understanding of representations of the struggle involving *Beur* integration in the French press, especially since access to reality is mediated in France, as elsewhere. To this end, in this chapter, Chapter 5 of my dissertation, I will examine selected articles from the popular French magazine, *Paris-Match*, for the way in which attitudes towards the integration of the Maghrebi-French are depicted, with special attention to the portrayal of the riots of 1990-1991, 2005, 2007, and 2010, all of which occurred in the suburbs of various French cities, primarily those of Paris and Lyon. In the same way in which artistic works tend to represent the viewpoint of the *Beurs*, since they are generally written by *Beurs*, or occasionally by North Africans, *Paris-Match* tends to symbolize the standpoint of the French of European descent, since it is a well-established weekly magazine (*hebdomadaire*), covering a variety of topics in European

culture, including the lives of celebrities and the effects of current events on everyday life for the French people. Some of the rhetoric used to discuss the suburban riots in France is very nationalistic, and seems to be in line with a socially-constructed conception of the Other, as framed by Edward Saïd, in *Orientalism*, referred to in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. Admittedly, as I affirm in the Introduction to this dissertation, there has been tremendous progress in the degree to which *Paris-Match* represents people of diverse origins on its covers since the 1970s, yet a certain tendency to take the stance of the French of European descent remains, with respect to the way that the riots in the suburbs of France are covered in this magazine. This type of rhetoric seems to further subjectify the Maghrebi-French in the eyes of many French people of European descent. The sensationalist tactics that *Paris-Match* often uses, in their coverage of the suburban riots, have a tendency to produce a certain type of “knowledge” about the Maghrebi-French, a “knowledge” intended to put, and keep, them in their place, with respect to the French government, authorities, and larger French society.

This idea, that of the often-covert function of discourses involving the presence of ethnic minorities in France, is evoked by a comment by Foucault in *Dits et écrits III*, as he writes, “The violence of the State is enveloped in a false calm” (139). Furthermore, he remarks, in *Dits et écrits II*, that, “What is most dangerous about violence is its rationality,” (803), seemingly referring to the way in which there is great risk in attributing a certain logic to violent behavior, since, by doing so, one legitimizes this violence.

Beur literature allows for several types of interpretation of the integration scene in France, “Foucauldian,” dysfunctional hospitality predominates in the issues of *Paris-*

Match that I will examine in this chapter, concerning the riots of 1990-1991, 2005, 2007, and 2010. This tendency, to portray the inherent volatility in the French suburbs, and more particularly, the use of the eye-catching, almost polemical presentation used in the articles on the French riots in these issues, indicates that this magazine is prone to featuring sensationalistic (or, according to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, “arousing a strong and usually superficial interest or emotional reaction”) representations of the *banlieues* “burning,” with little sympathy given to the Maghrebi-French, and the perspective of the French of European descent being privileged, often symbolized by authoritative government officials who are pictured in poses indicative of attempts to restore order. There are a few optimistic articles in the 1990-1991 issues, yet a negative representation of the youth of minority descent prevails across issues of *Paris-Match* over time, from 1990-1991 to 2010, especially because a magazine such as *Paris-Match* is more conducive to portraying social pathologies, given that exaggeration sells magazines. The approach that the magazine takes in the later years, 2007 and 2010, seems to align with the perspective of the French of European descent even more than is seen in the coverage of the 1990-1991 and 2005 riots, since there was more of a perception that the minority youth were becoming hardened and reckless criminals by this time, post-2005. Some of the content in these articles shows the ability of the reporters of *Paris-Match* to identify with the challenges facing the Maghrebi-French, but overall, the riots are seen as a curiosity; it is as if the reporters of this magazine are aghast at the way in which conditions in these areas have deteriorated to the point that firearms were used by some minority youth in 2007’s riots in the Parisian suburb of Villiers-le-Bel, and did not grasp

the extent to which many of the youth in these suburbs face desperately difficult situations.

Moreover, the portrait of the conditions in the French suburbs where these riots occurred in 1990-1991, 2005, 2007, and 2010, indicates that the reporters who wrote these articles felt that the relationships between the French of European descent police officers and the minority youth were becoming increasingly acrimonious, symbolized by more serious incidents, involving armed weapons in 2007 and 2010, and spreading to cities in the provinces (besides Lyon, where urban rioting by French minorities had first occurred, in les Minguettes, in 1981), and no longer primarily taking place in Paris. Additionally, from the time of the first riots covered by *Paris-Match*, in 1990-1991, to more recent ones, such as those of 2010, in Villeneuve, a Grenoblois suburb, it seems that the press was developing greater consciousness about the seriousness of urban unrest by minorities than there had originally been at the onset of *Paris-Match*'s coverage of these incidents. 2005 trumped 1990 because 2005's riots spread to several French cities, instead of being confined to Parisian suburbs; 2007 trumped 2005 in the degree of its intensity, and the way in which armed weapons were first widely used in urban rioting; finally, 2010's Villeneuve riots gave way to the realization by French authorities that a government-orchestrated, multi-city effort was needed in order to brainstorm about, and implement, strategies that would alleviate the likelihood of these riots to occur. They also brought to light the role that complicating factors, such as drug-dealing and the armed weapons trade, can play in situations in which urban unrest is at stake, and the way in which a provincial city like Grenoble can be home to serious periods of rioting, and not only major cities like Paris, and the provincial, but second-largest city, of Lyon.

While the novels and films that I analyze in Chapters 2 through 4 of this dissertation are representations in the traditional sense of the word, these articles in *Paris-Match* are also representations, through which one can detect the perspective of many Franco-French towards their relationships with people of North African descent.

Now that I have explained my basic preliminary findings from my study of *Paris-Match*, I feel that it is essential to state my perception that an examination of this medium, the French press, is essential to an understanding of this magazine's portrayal of the interactions between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent. It is essential to know the spin that is made, and the reality that is constructed, concerning the French press' representation of the riots of 1990-1991, 2005, 2007, and 2010. In this chapter, I will use *Paris-Match* as a central source in my study of media representations of, and reactions to, these riots, since this tabloid has a high degree of influence on public opinion in France. I will examine all of *Paris-Match*'s articles concerning the riots of the periods of 1990-1991, 2005, 2007, and 2010. I have chosen to examine articles from these time periods because there were significant episodes of unrest among minority populations in France during these years.

While the nature of this chapter, as an discussion of *Paris-Match* articles surrounding minority riots in France, does not lend itself to an examination of strategies of desubjectification, as do Chapters 2, 3, and 4, of this dissertation, given that they focus on novels, songs, and films, and thus feature analyses of interpersonal relationships between the *Beurs* and the French of European descent, I feel that a general commentary on the desubjectification of the Maghrebi-French with respect to the occurrence of these riots in France is in order.

Specifically, a comparison of the consequences of these instances of rioting in the French suburbs, enacted by some people of Maghrebi origin in France, with the results of *La Marche pour l'égalité et contre le racisme (la Marche des Beurs)* in 1983, as manifested in the 2013 Belgian-French film, *La Marche (Les Marchers)*, reveals that desubjectification (referred to as *desubjugation*, by Foucault) comes in less risky and sometimes-more-effective ways when it is done peacefully, as was the case with *la Marche des Beurs* in 1983. Again and again, from 1981 to 2010, in cases in which the Maghrebi-French have used violence to express themselves and demand better conditions for themselves in France, their subjectification increases, as the French police and authorities often invoke repressive measures against the Maghrebi-French community, resulting in the incarceration or even the physical injury of some of these people. Demanding change in violent and drastic ways often has the unfortunate consequence of becoming more subjectified by the dominant culture, since it is the French government that has police forces, tear gas, and jails with which to control and punish law violators.

Contrastingly, in *la Marche des Beurs* in 1983, the initiators of this movement refused to use violence as a means of self-expression or claiming of their rights, instead demonstrating that solidarity with other people of immigrant origin and negotiations with the French President at the time, François Mitterrand, were safer and more effective ways of effecting change, as Mitterrand approved the granting of a ten-year resident and working permit for some people of North African origin, and made other legislative changes in their favor.

In this sense, I strongly recommend that as the current generation of Maghrebi-French (possibly led by the *élite noire*, evoked by Vincent and Imbert in *Le Monde*

Magazine's 2014 article, "Ils sont la minorité agissante") look to improve their lot in France, that they take peaceful and carefully-considered measures to achieve this goal. Although some noteworthy improvements resulted from some of the tension that followed some of the riots discussed in this chapter, it seems less risky and more beneficial to pursue means such as those that I discuss in the Conclusions to this dissertation.

While it is difficult to gauge whether the ultimate lack of continuous progress in promoting Maghrebi-French integration that resulted from *la Marche des Beurs* in 1983 is itself at least partially responsible for the epidemic of rioting in the suburbs in 1990 and 1991, 2005, 2007, and 2010, it is certain that the period after this march was a prime opportunity for key steps to be taken to ensure that progress be initiated in this regard.

A Comparison of the Riots of 1990-1991, 2005, 2007, and 2010

A General Commentary on the Contemporary Urban Riots in France, and on the *Banlieues* (Suburbs) in which they Occur

Before initiating a discussion of the French riots of 1990-1991, 2005, 2007, and 2010, it is important to recognize the delicate nature of the dynamic governing the French suburbs. While there is a great contrast between the tumultuous atmosphere in the suburbs during periods of rioting, and the status quo maintained during the majority of the time, there is a latent volatility intrinsic to the social, economic, cultural, and racial

environment of *les banlieues* that has the potential to ignite into chaos, especially after instances of police brutality towards *Beur* and West African youth.

As of 2011, riots had occurred every weekend in the *quartiers sensibles* since 2005, culminating in about 40, 000 car burnings annually, according to Roxane Silberman, in the chapter entitled, “The Employment of Second-Generations in France: the Republican Model and the November 2005 Riots,” featured in the work, *The Next Generation: Immigrant Youth in a Comparative Perspective*, edited by Richard Alba and Mary C. Waters. Besides the periods of unrest in 1981, 1990-1991, and 2005, there were also periods of unrest in 2007, in Villiers-le-Bel; Saint-Didier, in October 2007; and Saint-Etienne, near Grenoble, in July 2009 (Silberman 283). Additionally, riots occurred in Villeneuve, a suburb of Grenoble, in 2010, and in Trappes, a Parisian suburb, in July of 2013.

In her 2011 article, Silberman makes an interesting contribution to the scholarship on this issue, by stating that it is no longer exclusively in the suburbs that there is violence, but also in the inner cities, as some young people of minority descent also engage in vandalism at soccer matches and political demonstrations. Additionally, Silberman claims that few took notice of the fact that some schools, even kindergarten classes, were attacked during the riots, leading one to think that some of the 2005 rioters were taking revenge against the school environment, after the fact, for excluding them socially and educationally (283).

While it is important not to exaggerate the extent of the disorder resulting from the tension in the suburbs, as some sources in the conservative American press, such as FOX News, did in 2005, during the first and only period of generalized minority riots in

France, the *banlieues* have acquired an unfavorable reputation in France. According to the article, “*La Haine: Framing the ‘Urban Outcasts,’*” by Amy Siciliano, the *banlieues* have a negative reputation in the eyes of many French: “The Parisian *banlieues*, long absent from the dominant French imaginary, have materialized as spatialized, racialized markers of political-economic crisis, social fragmentation, crime and violence” (1). In this quotation, Siciliano stresses the way in which the *banlieues*, once carrying little significance in the French intellectual landscape, have come to be seen as hotbeds of strife and inequality. The derogatory characterization of the suburbs in France is perhaps made worse by the fact that very few French people who do not live in the suburbs, are familiar with them: “In few of the world’s great cities is this contrast between urb and suburb so dramatic as in Paris; as soon as one crosses the *périphérique*, the outer belt that is the real boundary of the city, one abruptly leaves the elegant row houses of the capital to enter a world of architectural disarray” (Siciliano 214). The lack of familiarity with the *banlieues* of many Franco-French people ostensibly reinforces the perpetuation of damaging and hyperbolic stereotypes, which do nothing to combat the struggles of the people who live in these areas.

In fact, as Siciliano notes, the *banlieues* had a long history of stigmatization in France, even before they were home to minorities of African descent, beginning in the late 1940s: previously, the *banlieue* had been conceived of as the area for the poor since the 19th century, when many French streets were expanded during Hausmannization, and the poor population, who once lived in the inner city, was dispersed and was sent to live in the urban periphery, according to Sako Masterd, Wim Ostendorf, and Matthjis Breebart, in the work, *Multi-Ethnic Metropolis: Patterns and Policies* (146, 215). The

status of the *banlieue* as home to the impoverished was confirmed again after World War II, when the economic boom in Paris resulted in a housing shortage, forcing many poor people to leave the capital for the suburbs (Siciliano 215).

While a historically-enduring issue, the phenomenon of the relative ignorance of the general French population with respect to the realities of the French suburbs is still a relevant issue, as exemplified by the need that the inhabitants of Villeneuve, the Grenoble suburb that was torn apart by rioting in the summer of 2010, felt in 2011, as some of them created a television series, “VILL9,” according to the article on LeMonde.fr, “VILL9”: une série télé au coeur de la télé,” dated November 11, 2011, and written by Benoît Pavan, correspondent in Grenoble pour *Le Monde* (1). The city administration of Grenoble proposed the idea, in the fall of 2010, in collaboration with FranceTélévisions, in order to create solidarity between the 13,000 people living in Villeneuve, ostensibly preventing another riot from occurring. For many of the inhabitants, including Sofia, cited in Pavan’s article on LeMonde.fr, another goal of theirs is being met by the diffusion of this television show: “changer l’image du quartier.” In other words, according to Pavan, this show is filmed in order to reveal a counter-image of the depiction made in “trash” documentaries on the ghettos, by using the format of a police novel (*roman polar*), set in the context of film (*le septième art*), two genres that are very well-respected in France. The director of the show, Guillaume Ballandras, claims that the inhabitants participating in the show reveal, through their lives alone, that the *banlieues* are much more than what is represented in traditional media forms, that the people who live there are diverse, and that their lives are similar to those of many other French people, including the French of European descent (Pavan 3).

Given that the *banlieue* had long been inhabited by the poorer classes, it is not surprising that the housing that the government chose to construct for the North African population coming to France after World War II was situated in *les banlieues*. According to Musterd, Ostendorf, and Breebaart, the *bidonvilles* of the 1950s, the original housing units for the Maghrebins in France, were substandard and among the worst slum housing in all of northern Europe (146). During les Trentes Glorieuses, *les bidonvilles* were taken down and replaced by modern homes, called *les grands ensembles*, according to Ross and Merlin, cited in Siciliano (215). The *grands ensembles* were built in the 1950s, and were meant to be accommodations for the poorer people of society, but they soon became the sites of unemployment, rioting, and tension, based on ethnic lines (Musterd, Ostendorf, and Breebaart 146). Michael Moran, in the 2012 work, *The Republic and the Riots*, remarks that the way in which many of the suburbs are not served by adequate transportation is due to the way in which the French government looked to the outskirts of cities, themselves poorly served by transport, to build these housing units, since there was a shortage of housing at the time of the immigration of many of the original Maghrebin guest workers, in the late 1940s and 1950s (121). The *grands ensembles* became ubiquitous; at one point, before the 1970s, one in six people in the Paris region lived in one, according to Kristin Ross in her 1996 work, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture*, as cited in Siciliano (215). With the rise of unemployment in the late 1970s, many of the neighborhoods in which some public housing were found experienced the serious ramifications of de-industrialization, according to Sophie Body-Gendrot, as cited in Siciliano (215). These areas, according to Moran, became areas of economic stagnation, high unemployment among youth, and

shoddy investment (123-4). Planners, from the 1960s onward, aimed to make conservation areas, or *secteurs sauvegarde*, in order to stop the departure of low-income artisans and groups from the suburbs, and their subsequent replacement by the richer people, but gentrification, or *embourgeoisement*, occurred, nonetheless. Carpenter et al. (1994), as cited in Musterd, Ostendorf, and Breebaart, write that Paris, in the 1990s, had been experiencing gentrification for more than thirty years, since the 1960s. The most problematic area of the suburbs is their inner circles, containing *les grands ensembles* (Musterd, Ostendorf, and Breebaart 147).

While the issue of the recurrent riots is multi-faceted, and extremely sensitive, the greatest risk that these episodes present, besides the insecurity intrinsic to these periods of violence, according to Moran, is the danger that they bring to French republicanism, a model that aims to turn a blind eye to ethnic and religious differences, in order to secure national unity, by laying claim to a uniform French identity (64).

An analysis of the evolution of the contemporary urban riots in France would be amiss without an acknowledgement of the comparison that is often made between these periods of unrest and the French Revolution, a parallel that has been observed by several commentators. The nature of this conflict, a virtual civil war, also can be compared to the labor strikes in France at the end of the 19th century, as seen in the novel by Emile Zola, *Germinal*, as peasants working impossibly low-paid jobs in atrocious conditions battled owners of mines and the authorities in an effort to secure better labor conditions for future generations, if not for themselves and their families.

While in both cases, that of the contemporary French *banlieues*, and that of socially and economically-stratified pre-revolutionary and 19th-century France,

underclasses oppose(d) authority figures and heavily-embedded social structures, the *Beur* and West African minorities are less numerous than the population represented by the lower classes of the late 18th and 19th centuries. Additionally, the misery which these minorities experience seems to be essentially limited to the areas of the *banlieues*, as opposed to the generalized, widespread poverty and hunger that peasants and *les bourgeois* were suffering from at the time of the reign of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette. Thirdly, the modern-day lower classes in France have the option of applying for social benefits in order to provide for their material needs, as opposed to the peasants and the working class of the late 18th and 19th centuries, some of whom were left penniless, oppressed by the crushing weight of hierarchical class structures, and without resort, due to the unbridled effects of the pre-Revolutionary French monarchy, and of the almost shameless capitalism and exploitation that occurred during the Industrial Revolution.

At the same time, just as a certain sequence of events led to the storming of la Bastille, clinching the start of the French Revolution, periods of unrest in the French *banlieues* are initiated after incidents of brutality towards minority youth, in some cases, although in the case of the riots of 2010, the youth who was targeted, and killed by police violence, was actually a criminal, unlike some of the others, who were innocent from wrongdoing at the time that they were targeted.

The Nature of, and the Factors Leading to, the French Riots of 1990-1991

The Nature of the Riots of 1990-1991: “The Riots Decade,” in the Words of Fabien Jobard

Although the first noteworthy period of riots among by the minority population in France occurred in 1981, in the suburbs of Lyon (les Minguettes), I will start my discussion by addressing the unrest of 1990-1991, since *Paris-Match*, the primary source studied in this chapter, did not address the riots of 1981, although I speculate later in this chapter on the reasons for the magazine’s silence on these events.

In the work, *Rioting in the UK and France*, Fabien Jobard writes a chapter entitled, “An overview of French riots, 1981-2004,” in which he deems the 1990s, the “riots decade.” Indeed, his assessment is reasonable, as the riots that occurred in 1990, in the suburb of Mas-du- Taureau, a *banlieue* of Lyon, led to several years of turbulence in this area. During this original episode of insurrection in Mas-du-Taureau, youth and policemen fought for three nights, and the youth set cars on fire and looted stores. Despite the fact that this area was one targeted for improvement during the time of *la politique de la ville*, this riot occurred here nonetheless, showing that many of the policies that had been undertaken during Mitterrand’s first mandate, in the 1980s, did not produce long-standing results (Jobard 29).

In fact, the original riot in Mas-du-Tareau in 1990 created momentum sufficient to incite about 10-15 smaller incidents per year, from 1991-1995, and a number of incidents from 1997 to 2007, culminating in Villiers-le-Bel, in 2007. From the time of

Mas-du-Tareau in 1990, *la crise des banlieues* and *la violence urbaine* were common terms, referring to these times of tumult in *les banlieues* (Jobard 29).

Jobard divides this “riot decade,” in his words, into two distinct periods: 1992-1996, known for the predominance of confrontations between the police or civil servants and the youth; and 1997 to 2004, when there was a much higher occurrence of fights between youth and gangs in the suburbs, than there had been in the first period (Jobard 29-30). Hughes Lagrange, according to Jobard, sees this aggravation of incidents in *les banlieues* as the result of declining living and working conditions, making the altercations between people in the neighborhood more radical, and leading to an elevated number of violent and sexual crimes (Jobard 30).

Despite the high level of disorder in the 1990s, the areas that were affected during this decade were generally untouched during the riots of 2005; however, Jobard, writing his work in 2009, holds that the level of turbulence in these areas regressed to the level present in the 1990s, in the post-2005 period (30).

The Factors Leading to the French Riots of 1990-1991

According to Jobard, the events of the early 1980s, specifically, the riots of 1981, can be said to be partially responsible for the environment that sparked the “riots decade” of the 1990s. 1981 brought the “Minguettes Hot Summer,” (*l’été chaud*), a series of periods of turbulence in the Minguettes housing estates, in the *banlieue* of Vénissieux, to the east of Lyon. Instead of the simple practice of torching cars with Molotov cocktails as the primary activity enacted during the riots, these “rodeo riots” consisted of incidents

in which youth stole high-octane cars in the *centre-ville* of Lyon, drove them to the Minguettes *cités*, and then raced them, only then torching the cars that they had raced. The daredevil aspect of the rodeo riots, Jobard suggests, made it clear that nihilism and vandalism had become components of expected behavior in the suburbs. In total, 250 cars were burned during this *été chaud*, or “hot summer,” echoing patterns that were visible in 1990s England (Jobard 216). Nonetheless, as I will show in this chapter, the level of intensity of the urban riots was greatly augmented from the time of the 1981 “rodeo riots” in *les Minguettes*, making this period of insurrection seem relatively tame, compared with the events that transpired in 2007’s Villiers-le-Bel, and 2010’s Villeneuve.

The way in which the *Beurs* responded to these 1981 riots in Lyon, namely, the initiation of *la Marche des Beurs*, in 1983, and the outcome of this movement, an effective failure, paved the way for the disastrous decade of the 1990s, the “riots decade,” according to Jobard. In fact, Jobard, in his assessment of the riots of 1981, cites a convicting 2005 quotation by Garbaye, who writes, “The failure of the *Beur* movement alone is responsible for the lingering crisis of confidence among second-generation Maghrebis in French institutions, and to a large extent, for 20 years of political exclusion” (216). Jobard refers to Garbaye’s work, summarizing Garbaye’s 2005 assessment of *la Marche des Beurs*:

...these movements experienced blatant failure, due to the political inexperience of the young *banlieue* leaders, who found themselves detached from older and more experienced first-generation movements, and marginalized by the hegemonic Parti

Socialiste, whose short-sighted tactics stymied the development of an institutionalized immigrant élite on the left of French politics.

(Garbaye, as cited in Jobard 29)

In the eyes of Garbaye, the lack of fulfillment of the goals of *la Marche des Beurs* in the 1980s set the stage for a very intense riot to occur in the Lyon suburb of Mas-du-Taureau, in 1990, leading to a decade of turbulence, throughout the 1990s, although the riots of 1981 had been much smaller in size than those of the 1990s (Jobard 27, 29).

The Nature of, and the Factors Leading to, the French Riots of 2005:
The First Contemporary Episode of Widespread, Simultaneous Riots in Many Suburbs of
France

The Nature of the Riots of 2005

With respect to the situation of the Maghrebi-French within French society and politics, the event that has proved most noteworthy in the past ten years has been the riots of 2005. In the study of contemporary French culture, the riots of 2005 stand out both for their magnitude and their significance with respect to the state of relations between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent. This period in November 2005, symbolizing the first and only period of generalized, contemporary urban rioting, saw two weeks of car burnings and other violent incidents all over France, after the accidental electrocution of two minorities in the Parisian suburb of Clichy-sous-bois. Although the effects of the riots were certainly deleterious to France, the outcry that these immigrants

expressed through their rioting found its source in very real and strong responses to the way in which French society seemed to regard them in 2005.

A specific incident, in tandem with a host of social, economic and political factors, proved to be sufficient cause for these riots to occur in October and November, 2005, although one could argue that the conditions creating such conflict for the *Beur* community had been developing for over 50 years, since the first Maghrebi-French guest workers settled in France, in the late 1940s. According to Christian Joppke, in the article, “Successes and Failures in Muslim Integration,” one chapter in the work, *Bringing Outsiders In: Transatlantic Perspectives on Immigrant Political Incorporation*, “The tragic electrocution, after a police chase at night, of two teenagers of North African origin in late October 2005, triggered the worst social turmoil that France had seen since the student unrest of 1968, with over 9,000 torched vehicles and 3,000 people arrested, in nearly three weeks of continuous rioting” (126). Additionally, 300 buildings were firebombed, according to the article, “France prepares new anti-riot law,” from the BBC website, from November 30, 2010 (1). A state of emergency was declared, and the three-week period of rioting proved to be the most tumultuous period of rioting in modern French history, according to Angélique Chrisafis, in the article, “Seven years after the riots, the suburbs of Paris still simmer with resentment,” dated November 3, 2012 (2).

According to the article, “Civil Unrest in the French Suburbs, November 2005,” posted on the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) website, and written by Peter Sahlins, SRRC Director of Academic Programs, two French youths of Tunisian and Malian origin, and one Turkish youth, were electrocuted as they ran from the police in Clichy-sous-bois, a suburb of Paris, on October 27, 2005. Christafis explains that these

three male youth of immigrant descent were returning from a soccer game to their homes at the time of the incident, in order to eat a meal during the Muslim holiday of Ramadan, when a police van intercepted them, ostensibly in order to run an identity check on them, leading the boys to run. The boys hid from the policemen, in an electricity substation, where two of them were killed by tens of thousands of volts (3). David Waddington, Mike King, and Fabien Jobard, in the article entitled, "Introduction and overview: the British and French riots," published in the work, *Rioting in the UK and France: a comparative analysis*, imply that these youth ran from the police because they feared that they would be asked to show their identity papers to them. The third teenager, of Turkish youth, survived the electrocution, although experiencing severe burns (Waddington, King, and Jobard 4).

The teenagers' peers, in Clichy-sous-bois, according to Waddington, King, and Jodard, almost immediately mobilized themselves in destructive behavior within two hours of the electrocution of the three youth involved in the initial incident. 23 vehicles were torched on that night alone, October 27, 2005, and the next two nights brought similar levels of vandalism (Waddington, King, and Jobard 4).

Another incendiary incident, however, followed the initial event, truly precipitating the inflammation that spread like a virus into French cities elsewhere. On October 30th and 31st, 2005, only three to four days after the initial event, police officers fired a tear gas grenade into a mosque, during their pursuit of some local youth, asphyxiating many people in the mosque. To make matters worse, Sarkozy refused to accept any blame on the part of the police. The rioting soon spread into the 93rd department of Seine-Saint-Denis, another *zone urbaine sensible* (Waddington, King and

Jobard 4). As soon as November 7, the riots had spread to 280 cities all over France, and soon, the French Prime Minister declared a state of emergency. The rioting slowly disintegrated, until November 17, when it was deemed to have stopped (Waddington, King and Jobard 5).

Didier Lapeyronnie, in the article, “Primitive Rebellion in the French Banlieues: on the Fall 2005 Riots,” insists that if the French police had not reacted so strongly to the beginning of the 2005 riots, in Clichy-sous-bois, the unrest probably would have resolved itself, without touching other French cities, as it did in actuality:

But the repressive moral action, and especially the setting off of a tear gas canister outside the Bilal Mosque in Clichy-sous-bois, on Sunday, October 30, combined with the declaration of the Minister of the Interior [Sarkozy], who had denounced the “scrum” and “hooligans” a few days earlier, provided the fuel necessary for the violence to spread...The spread of rioting even leads to a certain pride.

(Lapeyronnie 35)

More than revenge, Lapeyronnie depicts the motivation for the diffusion of rioting as aligning with the expression of the Maghrebi-French of their need to be respected, and treated with dignity, more of a moral protest than the manifestation of retaliation (36). Lapeyronnie also views these rioters as depending extensively on French institutions, which typically fail them (41).

Despite the fact that under other circumstances, the unrest may have eventually exhausted itself, as Lapeyronnie claims, instead, it spread like wildfire, as rioting occurred in 274 towns across France for three weeks. Many police and firefighters suffered injuries---there was even a fatality, someone who was struck by a young person.

The diffusion of the rioting was due to a phenomenon that had been seen on a much more minor scale in previous episodes. Whereas previously, rioting spread throughout several suburbs of a city, in the case of 2005, the insurrection spread from city to city to city in France, driven by a collective sort of empathy for the victims in Clichy-sous-bois, according to Michael Moran, in the 2012 work, *The Republic and the Riots*: “For those living in similar suburban communities, while these deaths lacked a personal link, the tragedy constituted yet another example of the discrimination and humiliation that are primary factors in the social equation of these areas” (9-10). Indeed, before the riots of 2005, Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy had established a zero-tolerance policy regarding urban violence, according to Sahlins.

In the article, “Primitive Rebellion in the French *Banlieues*: on the Fall 2005 Riots,” Lapeyronnie writes that the defining characteristic of this period of riots was the way in which they did not remain confined to *la banlieue* of Clichy-sous-bois, and instead, were propagated all over France [with the exception of Marseille, a fact that I will address later in this chapter]. Indeed, some areas that were normally very safe erupted into dangerous zones during these two weeks (Lapeyronnie 25).

Contrary to many commentators, who depict minority rioting in France as behavior akin to guerrilla warfare, Lapeyronnie sees rioting as an extension of political action, although he acknowledges that this rioting does not occur within the normal context of political engagement. In fact, he does not see rioting as synonymous with the term “urban violence,” since the goal of this type of rioting that minorities in France engage in is not violence itself, but rather, collective action (Lapeyronnie 25). Instead, Lapeyronnie views rioting as a means of expression used by people who do not have

access to the normal channels of communication with government officials. He sees these individuals as “primitive rebels” (26). He characterizes their rioting as “a protest or reaction against an institutional effort to repress or control behaviors that the informal social controls of society cannot handle” (Lapeyronnie 28). He finds that the youth often resent the police’s perceived sense of impunity, guaranteeing them that they will not be accused of mistreatment towards minorities (Lapeyronnie 30).

Concerning the atmosphere in the suburbs, one woman who was staying in Clichy-sous-bois at the time of the riots remarked that the scenario there resembled Algeria during the decade-long civil war in the 1990s, with sirens sounding and flames flashing, according to BBC journalist, Joseph Winter, in the article, “Clichy’s “les misérables,”” dated November 4, 2005, who comments on this unfortunate comparison: “This may be an exaggeration, but it is a comparison which would still shock many French people who have never seen the near-third world deprivation in their midst” (2). This remark hearkens to an observation made by Siciliano, whom I cited earlier in this chapter: many Franco-French people have never witnessed the dire conditions in the French suburbs (214). It also recalls another phrase long-quoted in post-colonial studies (which are sometimes referred to, as of 2014, as “anti-colonial studies”): “L’Algérie est la France,” a phrase that characterizes France’s most embattled former colony as an extension of French territory and mentality.

While the riots ostensibly had their source in real socio-economic dilemmas, many Franco-French people perceived the rebellion of the minority youth against French norms, intrinsic to the riots, as excessive and uncalled for, almost as if there was a parallel country in the suburbs, with its own rules. Some of the violence, indeed, seemed

almost mindless, as if it had no basis in political dissension. For example, thousands of cars were torched in the French suburbs during this time, and the opposition that the Maghrebi-French expressed towards some repressive policies of the government, and their image in the eyes of the French of European descent, was evident in this physical manifestation of rebellion. The somewhat playful aspect of the behavior of the youth during the 1981 riots in les Minguettes, who first raced the cars that they later burned, seems to have been lost by 2005, as these youth went straight to setting cars, as well as essential buildings in the community, on fire. Although there is significant talk of police brutality in the suburbs, during this period of rioting, in October and November 2005, the French police were actually restrained in their interaction with the rioters, and have a policy of never firing into the crowd. On the other hand, police in other comparably-industrialized and racially-diverse countries, namely, the United States and Italy, have a tendency to shoot into crowds of rioters.

An Analysis of the Factors that Contributed to the Riots of 2005

In France, many associated the 2005 riots with practices as diverse as polygamy, Muslim separatism, and illegal immigration, according to Sahlins. However, in this article, “Civil Unrest in the French Suburbs, November 2005,” Sahlins expresses a very different view, quoted below, an outlook which I will explore in the segment to follow, on the causes of the riots of 2005:

In fact, while most of the rioters were second-generation immigrant youths, the underlying issues were far more complex, involving social and economic exclusion, racial discrimination, and most importantly, the capacity of the French Republic to respond to these challenges while maintaining its distinctive model of, and formal commitment to, the social integration of individuals, no matter what their color or creed.

(Sahlins)

In this segment of Chapter 5 of my dissertation, I will investigate the sources of this violence and examine several explanations that have been made with respect to this phenomenon, namely, the hypotheses that Islamic fundamentalism led to these riots (Caldwell), that social exclusion is to blame (Kaya), that unemployment provoked the insurrection (Joppke), and that a lack of proper urban planning sparked the events of 2005 (Césari). In my analysis, I reject the explanation that Islamic fundamentalism caused these riots, and hold that this insurrection had its source in the discontent of the Maghrebi-French with their marginalized position in French society, in combination with their frustration with high unemployment and inadequate and outdated housing. Other contributing factors that some of my sources claim led to these riots, and which seem feasible, were the relative weakness of the Chirac administration; the provocative, insensitive approach that Sarkozy implemented toward minority youth, inducing their anger; the general use of rioting as a means by which the French express discontent with their government; the territorial and delinquent behaviors demonstrated by some minority youth, and the way in which some youth in various neighborhoods like to compete with youth from other areas during periods of rioting.

First, I will examine the arguments advanced by those who feel that the driving force behind the unrest recurring in the suburbs is some minorities' needs to advocate for their Muslim faith, to proselytize, and to manifest their opposition to a generally non-Muslim, secular France, whose practices often clash with those prescribed by Islam. One conservative American journalist in particular, Christopher Caldwell, for example, discusses the consequences of immigration and Islam in France in the 2009 work, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam and the West*. Caldwell portrays immigration and Islam as viable threats to France. In his view, France has been far too generous to immigrants, and has permitted Islam to become the fastest-growing religion in France (174). Caldwell even speculates that France may eventually become part of the Arab world (175). For Caldwell, France and Islam are not equal partners; Islam has started to dominate France (15). According to Caldwell, Europeans are hesitant to defend European values because these mores are constantly being questioned and challenged by Europeans themselves (82). For example, the practice of Christianity is waning in Europe (Caldwell 174). How, then, are Europeans supposed to defend themselves against Islam, when they are largely jaded by the traditional faith of historical Europe? For Caldwell, Islam is a force that encompasses all aspects of a person's life (158), so it is like a *hyperpuissance* in comparison with any vestiges of traditional, European Catholic values. He calls particular attention to the riots of 2005 in France, which were the worst in decades, as a sign of the seriousness of the problems in France (138). In Caldwell's perspective, we have reason to fear Islam and immigration in France since they are changing the face of Europe.

Proponents of Caldwell's view often refer to contemporary events that seem to illustrate the thesis that Muslim mentalities will eventually prevail in France, such as reports of violence towards the French of European descent, perpetrated by minorities, and other reports citing instances in which the Maghrebin-French population has demanded its rights in a variety of contexts, such as ER rooms, where some Muslim women request treatment from female doctors, out of respect for their faith, and in French schools, in which some Maghrebin-French parents sometimes ask for *hallal* meat to be served to their children at lunchtime. Indeed, as of March, 2014, a prison in Grenoble began to serve *hallal* meat to its inmates, according to the article, "French prison ordered to serve *hallal* meals," by Sam Ball, posted on France24.com, on November 28, 2013 (1). Some people question why Muslims are receiving these benefits, while Jews and Christians are not being similarly accommodated.

Supporters of the proposal according to which the riots of 2005 occurred largely due to the effects of the mentalities of Muslim extremism also sometimes point to the apparent fear that French authorities seem to demonstrate towards the inhabitants of the suburbs. In particular, during his Presidency, from 2007-2012, Sarkozy was viewed as being too lenient with regards to crime and immigration, despite the image that he attempted to convey at the beginning of his Presidential term. Some of the sentences that perpetrators of crimes in the French suburbs received during his term were relatively light, ostensibly because the French authorities who pronounced them feared sentencing too severely, and risking additional rioting.

Another talking point that commentators such as Caldwell sometimes use is the assertion that many French youth are attracted towards Islam. Namely, Jocélyne Césari,

in the article, “Ethnicity, Islam and les *banlieues*: Confusing the Issues,” stresses the magnetism that some French youth have towards Islam: “The growing sense of alienation among young people can facilitate an attraction toward such a religious interpretation, one compatible with the feelings of discrimination and rejection. Sometimes, as is the case in many cities throughout Europe, the proper response of young men to real or perceived ghettoization is to form associations based on an Islamic ethnic identity” (7).

However, some, like Joppke, feel that the problem is not so much the consequences of the radicalization of Islam, as it is the lack of integration of Muslim ethnics and immigration: “Perhaps the most important lesson to draw from the riots is that the successful accommodation of Islam is not a recipe for the successful integration of Muslim immigration and ethnics” (126). Joppke feels that the riots happened outside of the context of organized Islam (127). He feels that France has made much progress in the accommodation of Islam, but has not resolved the problem of the socioeconomic marginalization of immigrants (Joppke 128).

I also note other opposing opinions to that of Caldwell, for example, reports from the police that suggest that Islam did not play a significant role in the riots of 2005. Although Islam may play some role in the identity of some Maghrebi-French, it cannot be held responsible for causing these riots. In particular, Laurence and Vaisse hold that these youth usually have no political or religious agenda, and only want a decent job, with a future. Unlike some, who see these youth as taking orders from Islamic organizations, Laurence and Vaisse feel differently, claiming that these youth are not following anyone’s instructions. In fact, Laurence and Vaisse cite illuminating findings from a 2005 report: many French Muslims actually feel integrated in France, even more

than people in other religious groups do, and they had very little involvement in the riots. Additionally, both radical Muslim organizations (the Tabligh, which proselytizes on an international level, and more moderate ones, such as the union of French Islamic Organizations (UOIF)), have made a statement, a *fatwa*, characterizing the riots as un-Islamic, thus it is likely that radical Muslims have little effect, if any, on the people participating in the riots, according to Laurence and Vaisse (5).

Additionally, Silberman finds that Islam is not the main factor that leads to the stigmatization of minorities in France; rather, this factor is the question of origins, whether one is a descendant of those colonized in the formerly French colonies, especially those that existed in Africa and the Caribbean (313). She suspects that there are differences in the way in which people from certain former colonial powers are perceived in France; for example, the Algerian-French face significant obstacles, as opposed to people with origins in other former French colonies (Silberman 314).

Others, like Ayhan Kaya in “The *Beur* uprising,” confirm the idea that the primary cause of the recurrent riots is the exclusion of the youth in the *banlieues*: “During the riots of France in November 2005, much was made of the increasing religious radicalism of the Muslim youth. But it is not so much cultural difference and Islamism that is taking young Muslims to the street...as a mass reaction to two centuries of colonialism and racism, compounded by recent poverty and exclusion...” (1). Kaya blames the lack of political power available to immigrants for these riots, despite the fact that Sarkozy tends to blame structural problems for the periods of insurrection. Kaya cites the “clash of civilizations” thesis by Huntington (1992), and blames this phenomenon for the problem of integration of Islamic traditions in Western societies (1).

Kaya raises an interesting point, in her assessment that the political power that is accessible to minorities in France is far from sufficient. Perhaps there is ground to be gained through the exploration of encouraging greater participation for *Beur* and West African youth in the French suburbs. If the youth are able to express themselves through proper channels, and address some of their concerns, perhaps there will be less friction between these young people and authorities on a regular basis. Even for youth who cannot formally vote in elections, perhaps they can participate in dialogues with French authorities, and make suggestions that would be key to improving the troubled environment in the *banlieues*, due to the first-hand experiences that the Maghrebi-French and West African youth have in these areas.

As for the idea that the riots of 2005 were religiously-motivated in nature, Kaya feels, instead, that the Maghrebi-French only turn to religion because it is their refuge during times of poverty and insecurity. Furthermore, Kaya dismisses the stereotype according to which Muslims are extremists, claiming that most of them actually have a secular world view.

Likewise, Césari contrasts the American perception that the French riots of 2005 were provoked by religious tension with her perception of the issue: “Indeed, neither Islam, nor religious concerns, were motivating factors in the riots.” Césari grants that the French have feared Islamic fundamentalism ever since the December 1995 bombings in the Paris Métro at St. Michel; the French suspicion of Islamic terrorism was only aggravated after September 11th, 2001. Despite this fear, Césari reassures her readers that most of the youth in *les banlieues* do not follow the teachings of conservative Islamic groups, even if these groups try to claim their allegiance.

With respect to social exclusion, which Kaya discusses in the *Eurozine* article, the *Beurs* feel that they are caught between two cultures. They are not African, since they have grown up in France, and sometimes have French nationality. In general, Africa is not welcoming towards them upon their return there; these youth speak French, and have adopted most aspects of French culture, rendering them noticeably similar in behavior and mentalities to many other Europeans. Neither are they French in the sense of being Franco-Français, as they are discriminated against on the job market and the housing market, for example, because of their foreign-sounding names and darker skin. The *Beurs*, by and large, have the same goals as the French of European descent do: obtaining a decent job and a decent place to live, and finding social acceptance. Discrimination on the housing market is common, as depicted in the film, *L'Oeil au Beurre noir*, directed by Serge Meynard, and in the novel, *Les Raisins de la galère*, by Ben Jelloun (both works that are discussed in Chapter 3). For Joppke, the riots of 2005 can be attributed to ethnic segregation (126). This factor appears to be a significant contributing reason for the riots, since the *Beurs* have long expressed their frustration at not belonging totally to French society, despite the fact that many of them are French citizens.

Alternatively, other commentators prefer to blame problems such as unemployment for the riots of 2005. Jamila Ysati, in the work, *Beur black enterprise*, in particular, explains that the *Beurs* have considerable difficulty finding employment because of discrimination on the job market. Ysati writes that *Beurs* from certain areas of the city, especially, face challenges: “91 pourcent des Français jugent difficile l'accès à l'emploi pour les personnes habitantes les quartiers sensibles” (3). There is even discrimination in favor of Franco-French applicants who have similar grades to those of

their *Beur* counterparts (Ysati 26). Many job applications and phone inquiries that reveal foreign-sounding accents and names are not acknowledged, pursued, or returned. Affirmation action is not a viable option for French job-seekers, since the French valorize the republican model, under which all people are equal under the law, and no ethnicity is favored (Ysati 4). The French do not want to address these problems, as Ysati makes clear: “Comment lutter contre un problème, si les Français ne veulent pas voir le problème en face? Ils évitent ce problème, donc impossible à résister, en général” (Ysati 42). Some would say that the riots of 2005 transpired largely due to the dire job prospects of many *Beurs*. Joppke explains that the socio-economic context in which these riots took place explains, in large part, the nature of this unrest; among the youth of France, unemployment is 23 percent, and the riots hit the “sensitive urban zones,” with many immigrants, where unemployment is 40 percent, according to the *Economist* of 2005 (125). Still, although it can be said that unemployment was certainly a contributing factor to the distress of the *Beurs*, *le chômage* has been a problem in France for decades, so it seems that this explanation cannot be said to be the only one for the riots.

On the topic of youth unemployment in the French suburbs, the work, *The Next Generation: Immigrant Youth in a Comparative Perspective*, edited by Richard Alba and Mary C. Waters, features an entire chapter on the topic, entitled, “The Employment of Second Generations in France: the Republican Model and the November 2005 Riots,” written by Roxane Silberman, focusing on the precarity that youth of immigrant descent in France face with respect to obtaining secure and sufficient employment. In her study, she empirically traces the job-market entry of several classes of French youth of minority

descent, all of whom had stopped their high school studies prematurely. The goal of her study, in her words, is to determine whether:

...the ethnic unrest is a passing crisis or a chronic phenomenon that invalidates the Republican model, and may be the source of durable ethnic frontiers in French society. One has to ask: since the unrest points to segmented processes of social integration consistent with downward assimilation for some minorities, to what extent does the US concept of “segmented assimilation” apply to France (Portes 1995; Portes and Zhou 1993)?

(Silberman 284)

Overall, Silberman finds a “downward assimilation process for a part of the second generations,” as she sees strong barriers to the occupational integration of many second-generation groups (284). As is typical with countries practicing segmented-assimilation, Silberman sees France as facing downward assimilation for quite some time. Silberman, in her study, found that three second-generation groups, the “Maghrebins, sub-Saharan Africans, and Southeast Asians,” in her terms [although the French citizens among these groups are technically not Maghrebin, sub-Saharan African, or Southeast Asian, in the strict sense of the term], all faced significant obstacles on the job market, “ethnic penalties,” in her words, for which the improvement in the job market that had transpired before the 2005 riots failed to compensate (312). Silberman sees under-education, limited language proficiency, and obstacles due to issues with work permits as “ethnic penalties,” preventing the full integration of immigrant youth into the work world. Silberman forecasted that many youth of immigrant origin would continue to be marginalized on the job market, well into the future (295).

Despite Silberman's conclusions about challenges to access to employment for the "second generations" in France, her research finds that the "second generations" [of recent immigrants to France] are usually more educated than the first generations. Silberman defines the "second generation" as being those people who are the children of recent immigrants to France, from former French colonies. She sees some upward mobility between the first and second generations; nearly 80 percent of the first generation were in the manual trades, against less than 65 percent of the second generation (Silberman 298). However, Silberman holds that the second generation faces a greater ethnic penalty than the current first generation, in obtaining salaried jobs. Maghrebins face the greatest ethnic penalties, compared with the Southeast Asians and Sub-Saharanans (Silberman 302).

Among Maghrebins, as Silberman shows, more mothers than fathers lack education, while one-third of Maghrebin fathers are not educated. 40 percent of Maghrebin males report job discrimination, with 30 percent of Maghrebin females doing so, citing their last names and skin colors as reasons for this treatment (Silberman 309).

Additionally, her study revealed that many Maghrebins and sub-Saharan-French fear housing discrimination, related to occupational discrimination, which is reinforced by the stigma resulting from their residence in certain neighborhoods. Silberman finds that many people who are victims of housing discrimination are over-represented in some schools, thus exacerbating the "spatial segregation" to which people from the neighborhoods are subject, as demonstrated in Begag's *Le Gone du Chaaba*, analyzed in Chapter 3. The attempt, made since the 1980s, to give extra funding to disadvantaged

school districts, in the *zones d'éducation prioritaire* (ZEP), has not been effective (Silberman 309).

Still others blame France's riots on a lack of proper urban planning. According to Césari, the socioeconomic condition in the suburbs itself is inciting riots, such as those of 2005:

Since the 1981 “rodeo riots” in the Lyon suburb les Minguettes, social and economic conditions in the suburbs have only deteriorated, despite the often-generous funding of urban development projects. It is not sufficient, however, to attribute these outbreaks of violence solely to factors of social and economic marginality. This marginality is exacerbated by a general context of urban degradation: a degradation, furthermore, which affects a very specific sector of the population. That is, the crisis of the *banlieue* primarily concerns the first and second-generation immigrants from the former colonies of the Maghreb.

(Césari 1)

Césari notes that urban planning has been insufficient in France and thus has contributed to the problems of marginalization in the *banlieues*:

The problems entailed by marginalization are exacerbated by the particularities of urban planning in France. The term “relegation” is often used to refer to the physical distance of housing projects from cities proper. But physical distance is not the only aspect of relegation. The lack of shops, cultural spaces, cafés, etc., means that the HLMs are places devoid of what constitutes communal city life. The HLMs are dormitory towns.

(Césari 3)

Despite this, while the riots were almost certainly exacerbated by poor urban planning and ensuing anxiety and isolation in the *banlieues*, these conditions have been present in

France for decades, so it is likely that a more complex constellation of shortcomings in France's socio-economic structures allowed these riots to occur.

In addition to these factors, John Simpson, from BBC News, hypothesizes that the riots of 2005 occurred partially due to the vulnerability of Chirac's administration at the time, in the article, "Violence exposes France's weaknesses," published on November 7th, 2005. Simpson holds that if the government had been stronger in the fall of 2005, the crisis would have been averted:

If President Jacques Chirac, and the *centre-right* government which supports him, had been in full control of France's political life, it is hard to think these long days and nights of continuous rioting would have taken place. The feelings of resentment and simmering anger in the suburbs would have been just as strong, but the crowds would mostly have held back.

Simpson acknowledges that even during periods of calm in the suburbs, about 20 to 30 vehicles are torched per night, but he perceives that Chirac, in the fall of 2005, seemed to be bereft of practical solutions for the problems in the suburbs, and also to be leading a country in economic decline (1). Indeed, Xavier Raufer, a prominent French criminologist, remarked, "We live in a political system designed and created in the 1950s, and that system is dying. What is really frightening is that the people who run our country have no idea that the new measures they are proposing are miserable, absolutely hollow. If I were a young person living in a suburb, I would laugh," as cited in a *New York Times* article, "Chirac, Lover of Spotlight, Avoids Glare of France's Fires," from November 10th, 2005 (2). Many of the proposals designed to create jobs and educational opportunities for the youth, and safety in the *banlieues*, have not been successful

(“Chirac, Lover of Spotlight...” 2). After the period of the riots in 2005, Chirac was often eclipsed by the actions of Prime Minister, Dominique Villepin. Despite the fact that Chirac spoke on French television, resolving to bring back order and express confidence in republicanism, he was often accused of playing a minimalist role in the response to the riots. The newspaper, *Libération*, left-leaning, claimed that the arson attacks “prove[d] that Chirac’s reign has been a tragic farce” (“Chirac, Lover of Spotlight...” 3). Even the riot police were incapable of restoring order, and were only able to inflict further violence, provoking the crowds to be violent in turn (Simpson 2).

The weakness of the Chirac administration had been reinforced by the way in which President Chirac’s center-right-party had not been able to convince the public to accept a Constitution for Europe, and also by the way in which France did not manage to achieve the right to host the 2012 Olympics, which it lost to London (“Chirac, Lover of Spotlight...” 2).

While the relative vulnerability of Chirac’s administration may have allowed the riots to happen, others, such as Moran, cite the approach, and indeed, provocation, that the French government often takes and enacts towards the minorities in the suburbs, as manifested by various facets of Sarkozy’s law-and- order policy, which puts all humanitarian concerns behind the appearance of meaning business. Indeed, only two days before the incident that incited the riots, Sarkozy, as Minister of the Interior at the time, commented that he would use a high-power hose to remove *la racaille* (scum) from the suburbs. Several commentators remarked, during the period of the riots, that this comment clinched the start of the violence. Indeed, while Sarkozy may have intended to scare the youth and prevent them from misbehavior, the comment only served to anger

them, creating a tense and volatile atmosphere. The serious incident that happened two days later, when the three teenagers were electrocuted in Clichy-sous-bois, seemed to have been the watershed incident that opened the floodgates of the minorities' feelings of anger, anxiety, and disempowerment, culminating in the physical manifestations of violence and disorder that composed the riots. Additionally, Dominic Thomas, in the article, "Immigration and National Identity," published in the work, *Black France/France Noire: the History and Politics of Blackness*, edited by Tricia Danielle Keaton, T. Deanan Sharpley-Whiting, and Tyler Stovall, cites statistics published by Gérard Noiriel, an immigration expert in France, who claims that there was an "increase in arrest quotas" during the period before the riots of 2005, meaning that officials had been actively encouraged to prove, through the number of arrests undertaken, that the government was taking a hard line on crime. Likewise, Thomas refers to another statistic, a statement by Brice Hortfeux, according to which, "The number of people deported from France increased from just over 10,000 in 2002, to 24,000 by the end of 2006" (113).

Sarkozy's security-based interpretation of the causes of the riots, which stands in direct opposition to Moran's negotiation of meaning of the events, as discussed in the article, "Opposing Exclusion: the Political Significance of the Riots in French Suburbs (2005-2007)," published in August 2011, seems to echo the approach that Sarkozy had chosen to take before the riots. Moran holds that the authority that Sarkozy held as the Minister of the Interior in 2005 lent his post-riots comments a special weight, as he characterized the rioters as mere anarchic, violent, aimless delinquents, expressing hatred for the French Republic: "La première cause du desespoirs dans les quartiers, c'est le

trafic de drogue, la loi des bandes, la dictature de la peur et la démission de la République,” as Sarkozy remarked in an interview with *Le Monde*, on November 22, 2005. Several less powerful politicians also advanced the same argument, seemingly justifying the need for repressive police action against rioters (Moran 301).

Previous to Sarkozy’s unfortunate comments, other French administrations had taken tough stances towards the *banlieues*, creating antagonism between the police and minority youth. For example, Laurence and Vaisse suggest that 2002, 1999, or 1996 could not have brought similar riots to France, as those that occurred in 2005, because of the way in which the distrust produced between authorities and youth between 1996 and 2005 was accumulating. Laurence and Vaisse cite policies such as those enacted under the Prime Minister, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, under Chirac, who in 2002 introduced conservative policies in *les banlieues*, and who reduced funding for social programs, enabling Sarkozy, then-Minister of the Interior, to discontinue neighborhood policing in the suburbs, which had formerly served to regulate conditions during times of peace, and to proactively ensure that there was no threat to public safety. Additionally, Raffarin had reduced funding for social workers and community associations, despite recommendations from several sociologists, who had advised the government that they were needed, in order to provide support for teenagers, and to encourage community cohesiveness (Laurence and Vaisse 4).

Simpson also attributes the larger tradition of riots in France to the cleansing power that violence, insurrection, and even rejection of policy are seen as having in France: “When government becomes incapable of change, the crowds in the streets have to do the changing for themselves” (Simpson 3). This larger tradition lies within the

Revolutionary history, leading to the French acceptance of *les grèves* as appropriate means by which to protest injustice and exploitation.

The tendency that Simpson pinpoints, the way in which there is a movement in the people when the government proves itself too rigid to make room for the needs of the marginalized, illustrates a more general concept: when rules, traditions, and policies are too rigidly kept in place, creating discomfort on some level for some of the population, eventually there will be a collective movement, rejecting this institutionalized rigidity.

Another element that Moran cites, in *The Republic and the Riots*, as a factor contributing to the tendency in the *banlieues* towards violence, is the fact that many of the young men involved in the riots are raised in a culture that encourages delinquency, crime, a masculine exterior, and territoriality, all ways of guaranteeing that they will receive respect from their peers (35).

During the riots themselves, some people advanced the idea that the continuation of the riots was due partly to the competition among young people in various suburbs: “The view that the allegedly “contagious” dispersal of the riots was due to the “copycat” effect of television coverage also gained widespread political currency” (Waddington, op. cit., as cited in Waddington, King and Jobard 6). Subsequently, after the 2005 riots, media coverage citing the number of cars burned per night in the French suburbs was discontinued, in order to discourage competition between youth of various *banlieues*, and thus, record-high quotas of vehicles torched per night.

The Nature of, and the Factors Leading to, the Riots of 2007, in Villiers-le-Bel, near Paris

The Nature of the Riots of 2007

The riots of 2007, which took momentum from those of 2005, occurred after two teenagers in Villiers-le-Bel, a Parisian suburb, died while riding a motorcycle that collided with a police car. In his article, “Opposing Exclusion,” Moran characterizes Villiers-le-Bel as a typically jeopardized suburb, with 56% of the population living in *les Zones urbaines sensibles*; 30 percent of youth living in unemployment; and one third of the population, under 20 years of age (303). Moran holds that the results of the 2005 riots fuelled the riots in 2007, particularly since the riots of the two time periods occurred within similar contexts, after almost identical incidents: “The enormous and social context of the 2005 riots constituted an important moment in the collective imagination of the *quartiers sensibles*. In terms of context, the memory of 2005 and the deaths of the two young residents of Clichy-sous-bois were still fresh in the minds of the youth of Villiers-le-Bel...” (298).

The 2007 riots, while confined essentially to the suburb of Villiers-le-Bel, were nonetheless more intense than those of 2005, and also marked the first instance in which rioters used weapons against police, wounding roughly 80 police officers. According to Moran, in the article, “Opposing Exclusion,” during the 2007 riots, in Villiers-le-Bel, 82 police officers were hurt, and a public library, burned (298).

In Chapters 4 and 5 of his work, *The Republic and the Riots*, Moran analyzes the causes for the relative calm in Villiers-le-Bel in the fall of October and November, 2005,

as opposed to the tumultuous conditions existing in this suburb in November 2007, even when social conditions were otherwise equal, when comparing Villiers-le-Bel with the original source of the 2005 riots, Clichy-sous-bois. Moran holds that Villiers-le-Bel was relatively calm in 2005, thanks to the precedent established by responsible social workers and *les grands frères*, former delinquents in their 20s and 30s, who seemed to provide a calming influence before and after the 2005 riots. Additionally, even the drug dealers seemed to help prevent rioting in 2005, fearing that any huge turbulence would jeopardize the underground economy (of drug dealing and arms deals) (Moran 202).

The 2007 rioters in Villiers-le-Bel occurred in response to the police prosecution of a local celebrity, Mara Kanta, a soccer player in the Villiers-le-Bel suburb, who was held in prison for 29 months, 11 of them in solitary confinement, facing accusations of killing police officers, despite the fact that he was later found innocent. Eventually, his appeal was successful, although some policeman proposed to give him cash rewards, in return for witness statements. Kanta remarks that the justice system, as of 2012, was still largely predicated on the issue of race, and was still characterized by aggressive police checks, performed as if they were inconsequential: “There is a pseudo-politeness to them which is like putting a tiny bit of sticking plaster over a big open scar” (as cited in Chrisafis 4).

The strong connection between the riots of 2005 and 2007 is confirmed by the quotations of two minority youth, whose remarks, made to Moran in the fieldwork that he performed in Villiers-le-Bel, are found below. Moran perceives that the violence in France in 2005 reverberated in the 2007 riots. In both incidents, the issue of police brutality was at stake, since during the Villiers-le-Bel incident, the deceased youths’

supporters accused the police of being responsible for their deaths, just as those of the three youth of Malian and Turkish origins had held the police responsible for these three young men's electrocution in 2005's Clichy-sous-bois (Moran 257). The comments of two of the youth whom Moran interviewed are found below:

On a pensé en 2005 au moment des événements de 2007. Ce qui s'est passé ici, c'était la même chose à Clichy en 2005, tu vois? Deux jeunes qui sont morts à cause de la police...Ils changent pas, la police, ils font ce qu'ils veulent. C'est pour ça qu'ils se sont fait tirer par-dessus, tu vois, ils ont un sentiment de toute puissance. Ils font ce qu'ils veulent.

(Nassim, 20 years old]

On s'est dit ça recommence encore, "...deux jeunes à Clichy, deux jeunes à Villiers-le-Bel..."... "...la police là-bas, la police ici..."...de ce côté-là, on à pense en 2005.

[Wilfred, 22 years old]

(Moran 257-8)

In alignment with this theory, that the 2005 riots provided the proper context for the intense and almost unrestrained, although brief and spatially confined, riots of 2007, to occur, Moran refers to Paul Connerton's observation that, "...our experience of the present very largely depends upon our knowledge of the past. We experience our present world in the context which is causally connected with the past events and objects" (299). In more simple terms, William Faulkner's quotation can be alluded to: "The past is not dead...The past is not even past." Moran holds that just as the deaths of the two Maghrebi-French youths provoked an intense frustration among the youth in Clichy-sous-

bois in 2005, the deaths of Larami and Moushin on the motorcycle that collided with a police car in 2007, in Villiers-le-Bel, resulted in deep anger, buttressed by the already-existing furor over the events of 2005. In both cases, the youth blamed the police for the violence, while the police denied any wrongdoing (Moran 299).

Moran writes that although the violence in Villiers-le-Bel in 2007 was protopolitical, a form of political expression made through physical violence, he finds, through his fieldwork in this suburb, that nonetheless, "...violence was not random, but directed at specific institutions, and seen as a way of making themselves heard by the politicians who claim to represent them" (299). The youth targeted the *commissariat* (police headquarters), for example (Moran 299).

Additionally, Moran documents, in his research, the paradox according to which many French youth vote, but realize that voting will bring no effective results, thus leading a minority of them to their decision to act through violence:

Violence thus becomes a form of speech which is more effective than words in the case of the *banlieues*, where conventional forms of political action have lost legitimacy, due to their perceived inability to effect positive change...More than this, the violence acts as a vehicle through which the anger of the *banlieues* can be heard in the public and political spheres.

(Moran 308)

The Factors Leading to the Riots of 2007

In *The Republic and the Riots*, Moran pinpoints the reasons for the 2007 riots in Villiers-le-Bel, based on fieldwork, and also studies the rapport between the developments in the suburbs and republicanism. The main question posed by this book is whether the riots of 2005-2007 were more of a cry for help by minorities, complaining about the rejection that they were experiencing in French society, than an active and vehemently angry, anarchic defiance of French institutions. Moran dismisses Sarkozy's claim that the rioters composed a *voyoucratie*, claiming that most of the rioters in 2007 had no police record before the riots, and that those protesting police brutality included people of all walks of life. Nonetheless, Moran admits that some of the rioters were well-educated, and that the inclusion of people with diplomas among the rioters can be explained by the fact that some of the professions for which these people had trained, have very few job openings, leaving them vulnerable to unemployment. He also addresses the discrepancy between the magnitude of violence in Villiers-le-Bel in 2007, as opposed to that found in Clichy-sous-bois, in 2005. Although the zero-tolerance approach that Sarkozy, as Minister of the Interior, instituted after the riots of 2005 brought a decrease in crime, relationships between the police and the community worsened. Up until 2005, according to Moran, the suburbs were generally peaceful, thanks to the unifying and pacifying efforts of community organizations, which were subsequently largely defunded by the time of Sarkozy's Presidency, in 2007 (297).

In the article, "Opposing Exclusion," Moran answers the question posed by his book, asserting that the riots of 2005 and 2007 were a "plea for access to French society

on the part of those involved” (297). This article, like his work, *The Republic and the Riots*, focuses on the empirical fieldwork that Moran conducted in Villiers-le-Bel, home to riots in 2007. It is the first qualitative study of the riots of 2007, the first to claim a strong link between the violent episodes of 2005 and 2007, and the first commentary on the riots of this period based on empirical evidence, referring to interviews of 40 youth, aged between 18 and 27, and a number of police officers, social workers, and government officials (Moran 297).

The article is founded on Moran’s reference to the concept advanced by Lapeyronnie, cited earlier in this chapter, during the segment discussing the riots of 2005, who portrays the rioters as proto-political contestants of oppression, fighting to assure their visibility on the French political scene. Although this manifestation did not occur through proper channels, it can be seen as a primitive type of protopolitical act, according to Moran (297).

Like the riots of 2005, as Moran claims, the riots of 2007 were also seen by many as a delinquent action against the French Republic. Another one of Sarkozy’s comments systematically dismisses the claim that social problems and the marginalization of minorities were to blame for the riots, in favor of the argument that they were the work of delinquents: “...ce qui se passe à Villiers-le-Bel n’a rien à voir avec une crise sociale, ça a tout à voir avec la démocratie...Je réfute toute forme d’angélisme qui vise à trouver, en chaque delinquant, une victime de la société, en chaque émeute un problème social” (Moran 301). In this comment, Sarkozy seems to dismiss the need to consider the tremendous suffering of the *Beur* and West African populations in France, even overlooking the possibility that there are some grave social issues in France that need

remedy. Blaming these periods of unrest on issues related to pure delinquency seems irresponsible, at best, and disingenuous and callous, at worst.

In fact, even one of the minorities occupying a government position, then-State Secretary for *la politique de la ville*, namely, Fadela Amara, also towed the line in terms of this interpretation, arguably betraying her own people, during an interview with *Le Parisien*, another tabloid, on November 29, 2007:

Ce qui s'est passé, ce n'est pas une crise sociale. On est dans la violence urbaine, anarchique, portée par une minorité qui jette l'oppobre sur la majorité. Cette minorité, ce petit noyau dur, utilise le moindre prétexte pour casser, brûler, tout péter dans le quartier.

(Amara, as cited in Moran 301)

Moran interprets Amara's quotation as a claim that the immigrant population used the opportune time to respond to police brutality, immediately following an incident in which two youth were harmed during an encounter with the police, to engage in destructive behavior (302). Nonetheless, one must acknowledge that the death of two youths while riding a motorcycle during what should have been a civil identity check is hardly banal; indeed, if French society comes to the point of seeing some people's lives as relatively meaningless, and not representative of the loss of some of its citizens, regardless of their origins or social status, one must question for what values their fellow citizens will insist upon.

The Nature of, and the Factors Leading to, the 2010 Riots in Villeneuve, Grenoble, on
July 17-18, 2010

The Nature of the Riots in Villeneuve, Grenoble, in 2010

Although Villeneuve, a suburb of Grenoble, was conceived of in the 1960s and 1970s as the ideal neighborhood, the emblem of architectural innovation and social utopia, in July of 2010, it became the site of a violent rash of car burnings and confrontations between the police and young people, according to an article, “A Grenoble: “Police et pompiers n’ont pas voulu s’avancer,” on the *Rue 89/Nouvel Obs* website, by François Krug (1). The level of conflict seen in Villeneuve was unprecedented, exceeding even that seen in 2007’s Villiers-le-Bel, with about 82 police officers being shot during the conflict, revealing that the days of the “rodeo riots,” in which youth raced cars, in 1981, behavior more akin to delinquency, had been replaced by behavior resembling criminality, fueled by an underground drug and arms deal market, an element that had not played such a significant role in urban riots up until this point. Rather than merely throwing Molotov cocktails at the police, some of the youth in Villeneuve, as I will show later, threw projectiles such as baseball and rocks at police officers, and shot directly at some of them.

These conditions are a far cry, of course, from the ideal suburb that la Villeneuve had been intended to be. According to Pierre-Alexandre Bouclay, in his article, “Grenoble: la Villeneuve, de l’utopie à l’horreur,” published on the website for *Les Valeurs actuelles*, on November 19, 2012, French urbanists had conceived of building a model housing project, *une cité modèle*, at the beginning of the 1970s, shortly after the

student unrest of 1968. Villeneuve was thus constructed, in the form of a large number of apartment buildings of 4 to 17 stories, built around gigantic green spaces. The apartments in the building are large, and there are common rooms in these apartments, in order to facilitate socialization, as well outdoor skating rinks, markets, a gym, a theatre, and even an artificial lake, designed for bathing. There is also a health center, and some experimental schools. Unlike many French suburbs, with respect to the inner city, Villeneuve offers easy access to Grenoble, thanks to the tram, and in 1975, there was a shopping center built there. According to Jérôme Safar, the first deputy to the Grenoble mayor, in charge of security and *la Politique de la ville* in this city, social mixing has always been an important goal in la Villeneuve, as many of its residents are people from leftist professions, including teachers, students, socialist Catholics, educated workers, social workers, and some Italian immigrants and Chilean political refugees (Bouclay 2). In the 1980s, however, the first Maghrebin and African waves of immigration arrived, and later, people from Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Kosovars, and some Roms, moved to la Villeneuve. As Safar indicates, Grenoble has a reputation for welcoming foreigners: “Grenoble a une grande tradition d’accueil” (Bouclay 2).

However, the social mixity encouraged by authorities in Villeneuve led to some complications. During this period, the mixed population living in la Villeneuve often felt homesick, and few mastered French, thus many were poor, a reality that the mayor from 1983 to 1995, Alain Carignon, who created the *revenue sociale grenobloise*, the precursor of the RMI, to remedy. Despite this, because of the increased cultural mixity in Villeneuve, many of the revolutionaries of 1968 left Villeneuve, selling their apartments. Their resentment of the immigrant populations who had moved there is evident in a

quotation from one ecologist who had lived there: “Ils [his friends] n’en pouvaient plus de se faire agresser, de vivre dans les ordures et le vacarme des deux-roues” (as cited in Bouclay 2). This remark reminds one of the comments made by then-President Chirac in 1995, about “le bruit et l’odeur,” made in reference to the way in which he perceived some Franco-French considered the presence of the Maghrebi-French in their neighborhoods, and satirized in Zebda’s hit song, “Le Bruit et l’odeur,” analyzed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

It was in the 1990s, however, that Villeneuve truly descended into criminality. As one police commander who had grown up there, Mohamed Douhane, explained, several *Beurs* brought weapons to the area, which they had received due to the opening of the barriers between the Schengen states, and the conflicts in the Balkans, and these *Beurs* became more aggressive in protecting their drug deals and ensuring their immunity from those who would challenge them. As a result, Douhane says, Grenoble became a center of the cocaine-dealing industry. One BAC (*brigade anti-criminalité*) police officer claims that many of the delinquents hide within the housing projects, which have many hiding places, difficult for people in police cars to access. In fact, the riots of 2010 were initiated after a police chase of Karim Boudouda, 27 years old, who was trying to hide from a police shooting in the maze-like configurations of the projects of la Villeneuve (Bouclay 3).

On Thursday, July 18, 2010, this armed robber (*braqueur*) from the Harlequin area of la Villeneuve, known as Karim Boudouda, shot at a BAC (*brigade anti-criminalité*) police car, around 10:30 pm, according to an article on *Le Parisien*, “Nuit d’émeutes à Grenoble,” dated July 18, 2010. The police, who were not wounded, shot

this young *braqueur* in return. Boudouda is said to have found refuge in this neighborhood after he had looted a casino in Isère, Uriage-les-Bains, but the police shot at him, and he died (“Nuit d’émeutes à Grenoble” 1).

Although the police claims that they had the right to use force against this person who was shooting at them, the next night brought rapid retaliation from 30 to 50 of his peers, who lit cars on fire and ignited a store in Villeneuve. The police also claim to have been hit by bullets, as well (Krug 2). Additionally, some threw rocks and baseballs at the police. Some rioters even used actual firearms against police officers, the police station was the target of Molotov cocktails, and the social communal action center was looted, according to the article, “Nuit d’émeutes à Grenoble” (1). Sixty cars were burned, some windows, broken, and some businesses, vandalized, according to the article, “Un an apres les émeutes, la Villeneuve à Grenoble reste sous tension,” on the website, LeMonde.fr, dated July 15, 2011 (1). That Saturday, July 21, 2010, also the day that the issue of the 2010 *Paris-Match* that I will analyze appeared on French newsstands, Brice Hortefeux, le Minister of the Interior in 2010, came to Grenoble, and assured the people that he would restore order there (Krug 2). Hortefeux also said that he would send police reinforcements to Grenoble on Saturday, July 18, 2010 (Krug 3). Hortfeux is said to have stated, “J’ai demandé au préfet de mettre en oeuvre tous les moyens pour que le quartier soit sécurisé...Les voyous et les délinquents n’ont pas d’avenir, car la puissance publique finit toujours par l’emporter...Lors de ces violences, il y a eu intention de tuer des polices. Ce n’est pas acceptable” (Krug 1).

As one witness claims, the riots began with a group of only a dozen youth burning cars, leading to the arrival of the CRS and the firefighters, who set off tear gas

grenades. This witness would not agree with the characterization of the youth behavior as “la guerrilla urbaine,” since there was no intended strategy implemented (Krug 1). Another witness explains that the forces of order were hesitant to advance into the heart of the city, since real bullets had flown earlier in the evening, and since the parking lots were on fire (Krug 2). Another witness terms it a “règlement de comptes avec la police,” namely, retaliation for the debt created by the death of the *braqueur*, Karim Boudouda, on Thursday, July 18, 2010, instead of a riot as is commonly known in France.

Indeed, it seems likely that certain temporary forces were at work in 2010’s Villeneuve. Unlike the *quartiers sensibles*, Villeneuve boasts many advantages unknown to many of these areas: “bons aménagements, courts de tennis, terrains de pétanques et de football piscine, services publics (banque, poste, centres sociaux, etc), tram vers le centre-ville au bout du quartier. Et malgré tout, une certain mixité sociale, et pas de tensions entre communautés” (Krug 2). André Béranger, a member of the association, Les habitants du 30/40, in the Arlequin area of la Villeneuve, claims that la Villeneuve, unlike many other areas, has “la police de proximité,” who monitor the area occasionally, according to the article, “Emeutes à Grenoble: les riverains divisés sur l’intervention policière,” posted on the *Observers/France24* website (1). In this article, “Emeutes à Grenoble,” the residents of Villeneuve asked authorities to address the deeper causes of such an outbreak of violence. Additionally, there is much community spirit in the area, as shown by the number of parties, carnivals, and meetings, all in good humor, as well as the associations that exist there (“Emeutes à Grenoble” 1). At the same time, most of the other periods of rioting also followed instances of police brutality towards a young

person of immigrant descent, thus Villeneuve is not as distinct from the other areas affected by unrest, as the witness cited in Krug's article may claim.

Béranger remarks that the problematic nature of la Villeneuve had been made visible as recently as March 10th, 2010, when an Algerian-French man had been stopped and was detained in the police center, later to be sent to Algeria, according to the article, "Emeutes à Grenoble" (1).

By Sunday, July 22th, 2010, according to the article, "Nouveaux tirs à balles réelles contre la police à Grenoble," published on the website, *LeFigaro.fr*, the rioting had calmed down, despite a couple of shots that were made towards a police car. The forces that Hortefeux had ordered, 300 men, had put the unrest to rest. At this time, on Sunday, July 22th, three young people were about to face sentencing for looting a store in the nighttime of Friday and Saturday, during which sixty cars were burnt, and several stores as well. Four men were about to be judged for shooting at police officers, and were considered for attempted homicide ("Nouveaux tirs..." 1).

By Monday, July 22, the victims' peers had called for peace for the day of Boudouda's funeral procession, held at the beginning of the week. The deceased *braqueur*, Boudouda, received support from his peers in the *banlieues*, and his mother had also called for a call to peace, although she also promised that she would seek justice against her son's aggressors ("Nouveaux tirs" 1).

Yves Bordenave, in the article, "Un an après les émeutes, la Villeneuve à Grenoble reste sous tension," posted on *LeMonde.fr* website, dated July 15, 2011, asserts that Monsif Ghabbour, one of the friends of Boudouda who had been an accomplice in

the attack on the casino in 2010, was still in provisional detention, at the time of the July 15th, 2011, article (1).

Subsequent to the 2010 riots in Villeneuve, Sarkozy, as President of France, gave the famous “discours de Grenoble”: according to the article published on *Les Valeurs actuelles* website, “Grenoble: la Villeneuve, de l’utopie à l’horreur,” published on November 19, 2012, and written by Bouclay, “Sarkozy y faisait un lien entre l’insecurité et l’immigration, et dénonçait la culture de l’excuse favorisant les zones de non-droit [the so-called “lawless zones”]” (2). According to the article on La Gazette.fr, “Deux ans après les émeutes, Grenoble à nouveau dans la tourmente,” dated October 2, 2012, in this address, Sarkozy claimed to wage war against delinquents, drug dealers, and “voyous,” and threatened to take French nationality away from people of foreign backgrounds, who had attempted to kill police officers. Sarkozy also sent police supports to Grenoble, and a Unité mixité d’intervention rapide (Umir) force was created, to address the unrest (“Deux ans après...” 1).

Following the riots, the police department announced that it would place video surveillance cameras, 60 of them, on the land; in addition, authorities would combat the underground drug and arms deals. Then-Secretary of *la Politique de la ville*, Amara, planned to come to Grenoble; in addition, the president of the National Association of Mayors of France, Michel Destot, was planning to discuss urban security at the next conference of cities, planned for September 22, 2010, at the Hôtel de Ville, à Paris (“Après les émeutes, la vie reprend à la Villeneuve” 2).

One year after the riots, in 2011, Bordenave wrote that Villeneuve was still considered, in 2011, one of the most difficult *banlieues* in Grenoble, to the point that

insecurity was the top concern of the Grenoblois, ahead of unemployment. According to Bordenave, entire families lived on the drug trade, and 40 percent of those 25 above were unemployed in Grenoble, with 70 percent unemployed in Arlequin and other *quartiers sensibles* (Bordenave 1-2). About half of the youth in Villeneuve are unemployed, according to Briant, as cited in the article, “Emeutes à Grenoble” (1).

Subsequent to the riots in la Villeneuve in 2010, this suburb also saw a serious incident of violence towards minorities, in September of 2012, according to Bouclay. On September 28, 2012, two youth, Kevin and Sofiane, were assassinated by people armed with knives, baseball bats, and clubs (Bouclay 1). The article, “Deux ans après les émeutes...,” specifies that these two young people, Kevin, a student, and Sofiane, a teacher, both aged 21 years, were lynched on Friday, September 28, 2012, in a park in Villeneuve, by a group of young people with clubs and knives (1). In this article “Deux ans après les émeutes,” Daniel Chomette, the departmental secretary of the union, Unité SGP Police, claimed, in 2012, that while there had been progress in Villeneuve since 2010, there had been no way to reduce the drug dealing or arms exchanges, both underground businesses (1). Bouclay takes the fact that this violence happened in the suburb of la Villeneuve in the fall of 2012 as a sign that *la Politique de la ville* that had been implemented there after the 2010 riots had been ineffective in preventing discord between the police forces and the immigrant youth (1).

Additionally, on October 6th, 2010, there was an incident in which several youth shot police cars while crossing the Arlequin neighborhood, drawing the attention of police officers, the Samu [emergency services], and firefighters. Three youth were wounded. After the incident, the young shooters said that they had wanted to “have fun”

(Bouclay 3). The casual, and, indeed, careless, approach of these young people towards violence towards police officers is stunning, and implies that the attitude of some of these youth seems to have progressed in the degree of its defiance of consequences and of the value of human life. While in 1981, the youth raced and torched cars both to amuse themselves and to manifest their anger towards French authorities and society, by 2010, their behavior had fallen so low that they shot directly at police cars, “for fun.”

Moreover, Bouclay characterizes the atmosphere in Villeneuve as intimidating, with many delinquents, usually of immigrant descent, threatening to purge Caucasians from these areas, even people who only want to take pictures and ask questions. In fact, in this area, a white person who is not known there should have a guardian who is well-known, explained one of Bouclay’s contacts in Villeneuve (1). This aspect of the *banlieues* is depicted in Kassovitz’s 1995 film, *La Haine*, in which the blanc-black-*Beur* trio of Vinz, Hubert, and Saïd respond in a hostile fashion to the reporter who comes to their suburb of Paris to interview them about the calamity that had occurred there after a Maghrebi-French young man, Abdel, had died, as a result of police brutality. The characters tell the reporter that their area was not a zoo, thus indicating that they perceive the reporter as being out of place, a white woman with no substantial connection to the suburb.

As some of Bouclay’s other contacts explain, it is difficult for young people of minority youth in Villeneuve to become integrated, when many of their parents have attitudes that run counter to French values. For example, some of the youth’s parents throw garbage cans and empty bottles from their windows, and the waste management personnel must pick them up in order to “préserver l’harmonie sociale,” according to one

of Bouclay's contacts (3). The French of European descent response to this behavior, picking up the garbage cans and empty bottles that the Maghrebi-French throw from their windows, seems to correspond with other responses that Caldwell and other conservative commentators have observed, as French authorities sometimes go out of their way to make accommodations for the *Beur* community, in order to avoid conflict, as is seen in the accommodations made in French prisons to serve *hallal* meat, and in the relatively light sentences handed down to *Beur* offenders during Sarkozy's mandate. However, the action of serving *hallal* meat seems to be more defensible, and even imperative, in the name of being respectful of the religious diversity of France, than the other accommodations made.

In the article, "Grenoble: Certains jeunes de la Villeneuve n'ont plus peur de rien," published by Benoît Bevan, on October 6, 2012, on the website LePoint.fr, an employee of the police forces, in the anti-criminality brigade of Grenoble, explains that the youth in Villeneuve were, in 2012, largely lacking a reference point for the behavior that was expected for them from French institutions, thus their behavior seemed largely fearless. The degree of delinquency characterizing the behavior of many of the youth seemed to have surpassed that of the last 10 years. Many of them had failed out of school, and were squatting in abandoned buildings, engaging in theft, and doing drugs. There was great competition for some youth to rise to the top of the gangs to which they belonged. They saw their parents working long hours for very little pay, thus, it seemed more reasonable to them to make money by crime. Many of their parents seem uninvolved in their children's education. The justice system did not punish delinquents in effective ways, and many of the youth, when questioned, refused to admit wrongdoing.

In 2012, the level of criminality in Grenoble was approaching the level of Paris and Marseille, which is astounding to Bavan, because of the relative size of the city. Many youth became involved in crime at 14 or 15 years old (Bavan 1-2).

In October, 2012, as a response to the continually-occurring riots in Villeneuve in 2012, then-Minister of the Interior, Manuel Valls, and present Prime Minister under President Hollande, elected in April of 2014, announced that he would create a *Zone en sécurité prioritaire* in Villeneuve (1).

Additionally, the article “Deux ans après les émeutes” ends by stating that Villeneuve was going to receive a massive amount to renovate the city, 75 million Euros, to be used to destroy some of the apartment buildings, in order to create more connections between Villeneuve and the park, one on hand, and Grenoble, on the other (2).

An article on France 3-Alpes, entitled, “A Grenoble, le projet de rénovation de la Villeneuve a des “pour” et des “contre,” dated December 18, 2012, reveals that the renovation project enacted in Villeneuve in October of 2012 aimed to attract the middle class to the neighborhood, although some of its residents were strongly opposed to this initiative of gentrification. Some goals of the project were to rehabilitate the neighborhood’s image, and to make it more open and accessible, while retaining the utopic image of the 1960s, according to the deputy to the mayor of Grenoble, Jérôme Safar (“A Grenoble...” 1). This project focused on the west part of Villeneuve, called “l’Arlequin,” the site of the 2010 riots. In this neighborhood, there are still large parks that cannot be accessed by cars, and warm apartments, in duplex or triplex forms, with overlooks on nature, as there were in the days of the utopian golden age of the 1960s and

1970s (“A Grenoble...” 2). Construction plans included the creation of new apartment halls, the creation of elevators, and the renovation of several buildings on reduced energy. At the time of the publication of this article, they had planned to create athletic buildings. Other goals were to make more local jobs, and to open businesses and cultural centers. There is also a tram in the area, and they planned on making an entrance to the neighborhood on the tram track (3).

The Factors Leading to the 2010 Riots in Grenoble

Besides the incident involving Boudouda, the armed robber of the casino who was shot down by police, in 2010, the vice president of the association CIIP in Villeneuve, Jo Briant, who has lived there for 20 years, remarked, in the article, “Emeutes à Grenoble,” that these riots were also caused by the latent tension in the French suburb. While Villeneuve was constructed as an ideal suburb of Grenoble, in the 1960s, at three kilometers from the city of Grenoble, as of 2010, there were increasing numbers of low-income residents in Villeneuve, because the rent had increased in the center of Grenoble. In this article, Briant explains that many of the intellectual middle-class were irritated by the daily delinquance in Villeneuve, generally attributed to some Maghrebi-French, thus tensions in this suburb became even thicker (“Emeutes à Grenoble” 1).

Another factor leading to the riots of 2010 is, without question, the relationships that had soured between the police forces and the minorities in Villeneuve. In the article, “Après les émeutes, la vie reprend à la Villeneuve,” published on the website, LePoint.fr,

one resident of Villeneuve, Salim, remarks that many of the young people resent the police, and feel that it is them that provoke the incidents that lead to trouble: "...les jeunes, ici, ils en veulent à la police," seemingly counteracting the popular conception that it is minority youth who are the instigators of discord. A contributing factor to the deteriorated relationships between the police and the youth in Villeneuve was, as I noted earlier, the reduction of the forces of *la police de proximité* under Sarkozy.

According to the article by Bouclay, one of the journalist's contacts, Jean-Placide Tsoungui, a friend of the former minister, Kofi Yamgnane, and the founder of SOS-Racisme in Grenoble, blames the former mayor, Michel Destot, for the failure of the policy of integration, which most likely provoked the collapse of Franco-French---*Beur* relationships in 2010 in Villeneuve: "Voilà plus de quinze ans qu'il est au pouvoir, et pour quel résultat? Toujours plus de violence, de chômage, de précarité, de desespoir, de recul de la démocratie" (3). Tsoungui claims that Destot was not able to integrate the minorities of immigrant origin into the socio-professional context of the area, thus leading to social distress. As of 2012, about 40 percent of the population of 12, 000 people in Villeneuve was unemployed, leaving many youth to make money by pickpocketing and outright theft (Bouclay 3).

In addition, drug trafficking is at the origin of some of the most severe acts of violence in Villeneuve, according to one of the witnesses, Barjy, interviewed by Krug (1). It seems that the drug trade can poison relationships between people when interactions do not go smoothly, thus leading to situations involving violence in the suburbs, especially when these deals involve large sums of money and drugs on which some people are dependent.

The Framework for the Application of “Foucauldian” and “Derridean” Hospitality
Theories to Articles from *Paris-Match*

In this segment of the fifth chapter of my dissertation, I will use Foucault and Derrida together in a dialectical fashion, evaluating the degree to which integration is portrayed in a positive light in these articles from *Paris-Match*. Laronde’s application of the model of the panopticon to the *banlieue* is useful here, as the Maghrebi-French are said to be controlled and manipulated by the police. A Foucauldian interpretation of this type of environment may hold that it is preferable for the Maghrebi-French to experience physical punishment than to experience the level of monitoring that they experience in the suburbs. Mistrust is certainly an element of the *banlieues*, as it is of the panopticon, as relationships between the police and the Maghrebi-French are fraught with suspicion. Foucault’s concept of perceived differences in status, when applied to the rapport between the descendants of North African immigrants and the French of European descent, create great difficulties, since the Maghrebi-French are in a weak position. Resistance on the part of the descendants of North African immigrants is manifested through riots against the French police. Nonetheless, just as Foucault recognized the difficulties in achieving measurable results through resistance, the rioting of the Maghrebi-French sometimes does not lead to better conditions for them, even though they have an opportunity to express themselves and assert their rights in France. A Foucauldian approach may call for more creative manners of resistance than rioting.

Meanwhile, a Derridean reading would insist both on the potential for the ethical and the highly ethical in the rapport between the descendants of North Africans and the police. This interpretation would suggest that there are more signs of integration in France than the sensationalistic articles in *Paris-Match* would admit, and would point to the progress indicated in the two most optimistic articles, where there is some evidence that there have been reciprocal overtures between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French. It would also valorize the way in which some of the initiatives that have been put into place to keep the suburbs peaceful, such as maintaining peace-time police officers (*la police de proximité*) in these areas, and providing a variety of resources and amenities for the people in these communities, in order to decrease feelings of isolation, have had some success, proving that the alleviation of the dilemma of unrest in the suburbs is not a futile project. This appraisal of these articles from *Paris-Match*, reflecting Derridean hospitality, based on Derrida's theoretical work, *The Gift of Death*, may also suggest that the Maghrebi-French can achieve liberation from the cycle of violence by trying to see the powerful Franco-French as the Other, although this is a practical challenge. Derrida posits, in *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, that there is power in forgiveness, as opposed to the limitations that are involved in resistance (59). Resistance on the part of the Maghrebi-French is manifested by the recurrent riots in which some of them engage in France. Meanwhile, Derrida's definition of forgiveness is that of the unforgivable, on a significantly higher moral plane than any form of retaliation, self-assertion, or protest, all of which may fall under the broad category of resistant responses. The atrocities that the Maghrebi-French have experienced often fall into this category, of the unforgivable, and one does not expect that they will forgive this

mistreatment, yet there may be some advantage to them doing so. Perhaps if there was more mutual forgiveness, coming from the French of European descent towards the Maghrebi-French, as well as vice versa, the healthy relationship that Derrida foresees would come to fruition to some extent, since there would less likelihood that every wrong would be avenged; ideally, grievances would be addressed by discussion and negotiation. Nonetheless, a Derridean reading, founded on *The Gift of Death*, would not totally reject resistance, thus this interpretation may not entirely exclude rioting as legitimate.

If *Paris-Match* were to be informed by hospitality theory, it would acknowledge nuances of reciprocity. A newspaper must be fair and balanced; all sides should be given a chance to be represented. There should be an intellectual give-and-take; the reader must be willing to reciprocate, to listen to other points of view. In a healthy guest-host relationship, there are reciprocal overtures that indicate a sharing of power, unlike what is seen with the more biased representations of the riots of 2005 that can be found in the French press.

Justification for the Choice of Articles from *Paris-Match* that I Analyze in this
Chapter

Given my justification for using *Paris-Match* as a major source in my dissertation, I will substantiate my choice of two articles from issues of *Paris-Match* from the 1990s, that can be described in terms of Derridean hospitality. These articles are indicative of a tendency in the early 1990s towards excessive confidence concerning

prospects for integration, largely lacking in the more recent period of 2005, 2007, and 2010.

It seems, from the vantage point of as far back as 1990-1991, that the French of European descent have made progress since the 1980s in their ability to depict racially-charged issues in *Paris-Match*. The absence of coverage of the “rodeo riots” in les Minguettes in *l’été chaud* (“the hot summer”) of 1981 may indicate that the topic of racial tension in France was taboo at the time, the writers in *Paris-Match* of 1981 preferring to focus their attention on the life of newly-crowned Princess Diana, the visits of the Pope to France, and the personal relationships of celebrities. If the subject of racial tension was not technically taboo, perhaps there was no precedent for *Paris-Match* to cover racially-charged riots, since it is a celebrity tabloid, and even the current events that it now covers, as of 2014, seem to focus on the celebrities involved in them, such as the current Pope Francis. The riots of 1981 were one of the first major episodes of violence between the *Beurs* and the French of European descent, after socio-economic conditions in France took a turn for the worse in the mid-1970s, thus it seems that *Paris-Match* would have covered them. In my discussion of the two articles from 1991, indicating a Derridean outlook towards integration, I will analyze an article from the June 20, 1991 issue, entitled, “Place du pas, ou le carrefour de 49 nationalités,” chosen for its representation of the diversity found in the *banlieues* (no page numbers or authors given), and the very hopeful June 26, 1991 interview with sociologist Christian Jelen, “*Beurs et Beurettes: Ils feront d’excellents Français!*” [the latter phrase, also a book title], for its revealing depiction of Jelen’s findings that integration was on its way in France (3-6, 79, no author given).

Besides Derridean hospitality in *Paris-Match*, I also find several examples of articles in this magazine that are more related to contexts of “Foucauldian” hospitality (alternatively, seen as a type of “inhospitality”). I will provide a rationale for my choice of each. Namely, several articles from the period of the riots in 1990 and 1991 demonstrate tension between the descendants of North African immigrants and the French of European descent. In particular, I will analyze “La *banlieue*: à feu et à sang,” from October 18, 1990 and an article by Christophe Buchard and Jacques-Marie Bourget, selected for its sensationalist portrait of the riots of Vaulx-en-Velin (54-59); the article “L’Avertissement de Rocard,” by Michel Gonod, featured in the October 25, 1990 issue, and chosen for its representation of the realist viewpoint of the French government, especially that of Prime Minister Michel Rocard, towards the riots (84-5, 110); and the June 6, 1991, article, “Le Match de la semaine: Mantes: Mortelle garde à vue”, an article by Valérie Massoneau [later, Valérie Trierweiler, the one-time mistress of President Hollande, until February, 2014], and Antoine de Sercey, and selected for its representation of the alarmed reaction of the general public to the riots of Mantes-in-Jolie in 1991 (89). From the June 20, 1991, edition of *Paris-Match*, there is also an article entitled “Les Marginaux des *banlieues* ont inventé un jeu tragique: on vole une voiture, on pille, on joue les “Mad Max” et on la brûle,” an article picked for its portraits of riots of June 8 and 9 in Mantes-Jolie and the destruction in their wake (no authors or page numbers given).

Beyond “Foucauldian” hospitality in articles from the early 1990s, I will also justify my choice of this type of articles from the period of the 2005 riots. I will analyze the alarming article in the November 10th issue of *Paris-Match*, “Banlieues: Etat

d'urgence," by Caroline Mangez, an article used for its depiction of the danger in which France found itself in the 2005 riots (42-51); the November 17th, 2005 issue, with its article, "La République prend en marche le train des *banlieues*," an article by Laurence Masurel, selected for its description of the realist reaction of former President Chirac to the riots (46-51); the November 10th, 2005, interview with sociologist and novelist Azouz Begag, on his views towards the crisis of the *banlieues*, for his critical analysis of the causes of the riots of 2005 (103); and the eye-opening January 12th, 2006, article, "Retour à Clichy-sous-bois," by Romain Clergeat, chosen for its portrayal, complete with photo spreads of garbage-strewn fields, of the negative consequences of these events (60-65).

Subsequently, I will explain my justification for analyzing the sole article in *Paris-Match* that addresses the riots in Villiers-le-Bel, a suburb of Paris, from November 25th-27th, 2007, entitled, "Banlieues: le spectre d'un nouvel embrasement" (p. 40-45). I have decided to address this article from *Paris-Match* since the riots in Villiers-le-Bel, in 2007, play a significant role in the history of urban riots in France. More specifically, the widespread chaos that engulfed the suburbs of many French cities in 2005, and its consequences, fed into the full force driving the more intense, but spatially and temporally-confined, riots in Villiers-le-Bel, which lasted two to three days, compared to 2005's riots, which occurred over the course of two weeks, but which were dispersed over several suburbs in several French cities. Additionally, this article, the only one in *Paris-Match* to discuss the riots of 2007, is significant since the riots of 2007 saw the first use of armed weapons in police officer-youth confrontations, a trend that was also in effect in the riots in Villeneuve, Grenoble, in 2010.

Lastly, I will justify my discussion of the *Paris-Match* article covering the riots of July 17th-18th, 2010, in Villeneuve, a suburb of Grenoble. This article is entitled, “L’Actualité: Etat d’alerte à Grenoble: On n’avait jamais vu ça. Des centaines de police, des tirs à balles réelles, un quartier à feu et à sang,” dated July 29th, 2010. I chose to analyze this article because it is the only article in *Paris-Match* before, during, or after these riots of mid-July in Villeneuve to address these periods of unrest in this neighborhood, which were notorious for reaching new heights of conflict between minority youth and the police in France; namely, the use of armed weapons, and the complications that the drug and armed weapons trade added to the already-tense environment in Villeneuve, led authorities in Grenoble to call for a national evaluation of the problems endemic to the suburbs. This article is also noteworthy because it marks a turning point in the history of the riots, at which a city of the French provinces, Grenoble, that does not match the size of the cities which usually see great unrest, Paris and Lyon, was home to riots of great magnitude, indicating that the province is not immune from urban incidents the size of the events that usually occur in Parisian suburbs, a fact that this article stresses heavily.

While there have been riots since those of 2010, including some in late July, 2013, in the Parisian suburb of Trappes, the magazine does not address the 2013 riots, since there was no coverage of this period of unrest in *Paris-Match*, in either July or August of 2013. Although the reasons for this lack of discussion of these riots is not known, it may be that at some point, the French press came to see these recurring riots as almost part of the cultural and social landscape, thus not as deserving of coverage as other current events at the time that they occurred.

The Analysis of Articles from *Paris-Match*: “Foucauldian” and “Derridean”
Hospitalities, with “Foucauldian” Hospitality Dominating

The Analysis of Articles Supporting a “Foucauldian” Framework of Hospitality

“Foucauldian” Representations of the Riots from 1990-1991

First, I will analyze “Foucauldian” representations of the riots of 1990 and 1991, as can be found in the tabloid *Paris-Match* from this era. The October 18th, 1990, *Paris-Match* features an article entitled “La banlieue: à feu et à sang,” describing the riots of 1990 in Vaulx-en-Velin, a suburb of Lyon. The caption stresses the fact that the problem of integration is reaching new heights: “Plus violente qu’aux Minguettes, la guerilla urbaine menace les cités-dortoirs. Et les problèmes de l’immigration, ou de l’intégration, prennent une nouvelle ampleur. » These riots took place after a youth, Thomas Claudio, 21 years old, died after falling off a motorcycle when being chased by the police. *Paris-Match* holds that urban policy was facing great challenges in the early 1990s, exemplified by urban violence, involving the projection of Molotov cocktails towards police cars: “La politique de réhabilitation des banlieues est mise en cause: immigration, chômage et délinquance, le cocktail demeure détonant. La preuve : dès lundi soir, la flambée de violence gagnait Meyzieu et Vénissieux. » There is a picture of a burning supermarket : « Soudain, le supermarché de Vaulx-en-Velin devient un gigantesque brasier. » The *champ lexical* of fire is used frequently in these articles (« la flambée » (« the blaze ») ; ...« un gigantesque brasier » (« a big inferno »), as if to match the appearance of these riots, and their destructive, fearsome nature in the suburbs. The magazine also offers

pictures of violent interactions between the French youth and the police : « Des centaines de jeunes émeutiers assaillent la police pendant trois nuits. » The article describes the violence of the *Beurs* against the French of European descent:

Haine des policiers, haine des autorités, haine des adultes. Systématiquement, pendant trois nuits, les manifestants s'en sont pris à tout ce qui s'apparentait de près ou de loin à l'ordre établi. Dès samedi, trois voitures avaient été incendiées. Une première barricade était érigée. Après une brève accalmie, dimanche matin, l'émeute reprenait de plus belle. Vitaines brisées, magasins pillés, combats de rue, Vaulx-en-Velin s'est soudain transformé en véritable champ de bataille. Dans un premier temps, les forces de l'ordre, pas assez nombreuses, ont dû reculer sous une grêle de projectiles diverses : pierres, boulons, cocktails Molotov. Sept pompiers ont été blessés, et plusieurs journalistes, sérieusement molestés, pendant que le centre commercial partait en fumée après avoir été cambriolé en règle. Les C.r.s. n'en rétablirent l'ordre qu'à la nuit. De toute façon, la situation de la ville est explosive : pour 50 000 habitants (dont 50% de moins de trente ans), Vaulx-en-Velin compte 20% de chômeurs. Et de nombreux immigrés.

In this article by Jacques-Marie Bourget, the journalist tells of his encounter with Marcel, a *Beur* who calls himself « enragé »; Marcel expresses his anger towards French society, through these riots. Marcel calls the group of his friends who rioted “sa légion étrangère,” composed of *Beurs*, Spanish, Portuguese, and Chinese youth, who burned six cars, reappropriating a term referring to soldiers from various countries fighting for France, located in Djibouti, in Africa. This multicultural group of friends and allies defies the expectation that some people have when they conceive of minorities of African descent in France as being an isolated group among French youth. Marcel says that the youth who rioted in 1990 listened to stories of the riots from eight years ago (1981, in les Minguettes) for inspiration. They were aiming to avenge the death of Claudio, who had been killed by police brutality, as was the case at the genesis of most of these urban riots.

Bourget remarks that the suburb of Vaulx-en-Velin looks innocent enough, a town that devotes most of its budget to culture, education, and sports. In this article, Bourget quotes a professor discussing problems in the suburbs; this professor feels that the riots could happen anywhere in France, since Vaulx-en-Velin, where they occurred in 1990, was no worse than most suburbs :

L'émeute de Vaulx est exemplaire, puisqu'elle ne se déroule pas dans une communauté abandonnée ou mal gérée. Cela signifie que la révolte va au-delà de la malaise matérielle. Il faut désormais savoir qu'en France, dans nos *banlieues*, il y a des milliers de jeunes, le plus souvent d'origine immigrée, dont certains sont des hors-la-loi. Hors d'une loi, d'une règle qu'ils ignorent, leur problème étant une improbable intégration. Le coup de fièvre de Vaulx peut, demain, se reproduire dans une *banlieue* quelconque, comme ce fût le cas aux Etats-Unis, il y a vingt ans, avec l'embrasement des quartiers noirs et mexicains.

The element of the lawlessness that seems to reign in the French suburbs during periods of urban rioting is evident even in this early period of the 1990s, although this lawlessness seems to be exacerbated by the time of the 2010 riots in Villeneuve, near Grenoble. Bourget interviews Marcel, who, like this professor, explains that other incidents, such as that of Vaulx-en-Velin, are possible and likely in the future: « Je sais que d'autres Vaulx sont maintenant possibles. » In this article, an effort is made to at least represent the viewpoints of both the *Beurs* and the French of European descent, a tendency which is an encouraging sign for a reciprocal, mutually-beneficial relationship, since Bourget interviews both Franco-French people (the professor), and the *Beur*, Marcel.

I will also analyze the article, found in the October 25, 1990, *Paris-Match*, entitled, "L'Avertissement de Rocard," by Michel Gonod. In this article, *Paris-Match*

asks Prime Minister Rocard whether he saw the urban policy that he proposed in June 1988 as a failure. Rocard responded that he just saw the incidents of Vaulx-en-Velin as a serious incident on a difficult journey: “Le temps nécessaire à la réalisation de l’intégration aux normes et aux valeurs de la société française demandera encore des années.” Rocard agrees with Gonod that the Molotov cocktails that were thrown were done so in reaction to unemployment, injustice, and anxiety about the future. Rocard believes that more incidents will happen: “La situation est trop inflammable pour que d’autres explosions ne se produisent pas.” Again, the vocabulary that is most common in these articles involves fire (« inflammable, »... « explosions »). Rocard blames the riots of Vaulx on the lack of connection between various partners in urban policy, producing difficulties in relations between the youth and the police. Rocard does not put all the responsibility for security on the shoulders of the police, instead asserting that civilians also have a duty to contribute to public safety. He does not approve of inflammatory language about the *Beurs*, such as *la contagion de cette infitada, à la française*, and he holds that the sentence for killing a minority is not enough, often consisting of only a prison sentence. Actually, Rocard pinpoints the problem of not being that of the *Beur* community, but rather of the youth, citing a friend, Jacques Voisard. *Paris-Match* cites Jean-Marie Le Pen’s stance that integration is not possible, that the *banlieues* are full of criminals, and that the left is too lax. Rocard, however, states that repression is not effective, either. Jean-Daniel Mercier, the head of the criminal section of urban security in Lyon, explains that the riots in Vaulx-en-Velin happened in 1990 because of police-minority conflicts (110). While this interview is representative of the viewpoint of the

French of European descent, this government official at least makes an effort to see the perspective of the *Beurs*, indicating potential for a healthier relationship.

The June 6, 1991, *Paris-Match* offers an article, “Le Match de la semaine: Mantes: Mortelle garde à vue,” featuring a picture of a van set afire. This article is in reaction to the riots that happened in Mantes-la-Jolie, where cars were burned, and Molotov cocktails thrown, after the death of a high schooler, Aïssa Ihich. In this article, Mantes-la-Jolie’s mayor, Paul Picard, responds to *Paris-Match*’s questions. The mayor compares the events that happened in Mantes to the events in 1986, with the death of Malik Oussekine: “...dans les deux cas, ce sont des jeunes malades qui n’ont pas été soignés.” In fact, in Mantes, 1991, Aïssa, a Moroccan-French youth, died from an asthma attack which led to a heart attack, after the police would not let his mother give him his asthma medication in jail (June 6, 1991, p. 89). This representation of the riots of 1991 is actually sympathetic to the situation of young minorities, since the mayor insists so much on what happened to this young Moroccan-Frenchman, due to the medical neglect of the French police.

In the June 20, 1991, *Paris-Match*, there is another article about the riots of the June 8th and June 9th in Mantes-la-Jolie. The title emphasizes the frequency of car burnings : “Les marginaux des *banlieues* ont inventé un jeu tragique: on vole une voiture, on pille, on joue les « Mad Max » et on la brûle. » There is a picture of a car in the night with a youth opening the door in a fog of smoke. The caption stresses the tendency of the youth to run the motors of stolen cars, before burning them, as they did in 1981 in les Minguettes, defying the opposition that the police show towards this behavior, and the

fact that their destructive tendencies with respect to cars even led to the death of a young female police officer:

Faire huler les pneus et rugir le moteur des voitures volées est pour eux un sport guerrier, une provocation gratuite face aux « keufs » (flics en verlan) qui, la plupart du temps, préfèrent ne pas intervenir afin d'éviter un affrontement violent. Mais les « rodéos » absurdes dont la mode est née aux Minguettes, et que les loubards de *banlieue* improvisent le week-end, dégénérent de plus en plus tragiquement. A Mantes-la-Jolie, dans la nuit des 8 et 9 juin, les jeunes voyous ne se sont pas contentés, comme ici, de « burner » (faire tourner les roues motrices à toute vitesse, en s'efforçant de faire du surplace) pour épater un public d'adolescents désœuvrés, puis d'incendier des véhicules... Pris en chasse, cette fois, par la police, ils ont délibérément foncé sur une voiture police qui leur barrait le passage et tué l'agent de la paix, qui tentait de se mettre à l'abri, une jeune femme de 32 ans. En le heurtant d'abord en plein fouet, puis en roulant sur elle pour l'écraser. Un équipier de la victime a abattu un autre de ces casseurs, revenus sur un lieu de la sanglante mise à mort. Le meurtrier de la femme policière avait, lui, déjà fui. Lâchement, comme il avait tué. Mais derrière ce drame, c'est toute la dérive de *banlieues* qui fait peur.

This caption explains that a group of youth hit the car of a young woman of 32 years, and then ran her over with their car. There are pictures of the French woman who died, Marie-Christine Baillett, a guardian of the police in Mantes-la-Jolie. The article describes her death : « C'est à quelques centaines de mètres de chez elle, que la jeune femme trouvera une mort atroce, sauvagement immolée par les adolescents qu'elle avait vu grandir et glisser vers la délinquance. Des adolescents qu'elle rêvait de ramener à la raison, et qui ont déchainé, sur elle, leur folie » (49). There is a tragic aspect to this article, as this caption stresses the way in which this young woman, Baillett, was murdered by young people whom she had known while they were growing up, only to turn into delinquents (and in this case, criminals). The article seems to take the side of the French of European descent, as it portrays this woman in a very sympathetic light,

stressing her sense of humor and her hard work ethic : « Au commissariat de Mantes, où elle est toute de suite nommée, elle séduit ses collègues par sa bonne humeur et sa conscience professionnelle... » Still, there is a tendency, among certain government officials, to detach this death from the problem of the suburbs : « La mort brutale de la jeune femme est «une affaire de banditisme,» très éloignée du mal de vivre des *banlieues* » estime le ministre de l'Intérieur, Philippe Marchand, qui dénonce la « volonté de nuire et de tuer » de son agresseur. » This representation is clearly one that stresses the point of view of the French of European descent, since much attention is paid to this death of this police officer. Moreover, there seems to be a legitimization of the fact that such atrocious events occur in the French suburbs: this reasoning dismisses the concept that there is a serious social pathology in these areas, these incidents occurring only occasionally. This type of approach seems to be a precursor of Sarkozy's claims in the mid-to-late 2000s, as he argued that there was no "social crisis" in France's suburbs; rather, he held that the problem consisted of the rise of *une voyoucratie*, an uncontrollably lawless underclass, intent on finding excuses to wreak havoc on the property of the French of European descent, and on their own living environments. Indeed, the excerpt from this article, cited above, makes use of the words, "voyous" and "loubards," emphasizing the critical role that young delinquents play in these riots, thereby reinforcing the dominant Franco-French philosophy, according to which there was no serious social dilemma in France's suburbs.

“Foucauldian” Representations of the Riots of 2005

Next, I will turn to “Foucauldian” representations of the riots of 2005. The most noteworthy representation of the riots can be found in the edition that came out in the *Paris-Match* from November 16th, 2005. In this edition, the cover features a picture of a man who just shot at the police, in a cloud of orange smoke with fire in the distance. The title emphasizes the danger in which France finds itself: “La République en état d’urgence.” This cover seems to lend itself to a sensationalist presentation of the riots, as importance is given to the dangerous conditions that France experienced at the time. This version stresses the violence of the Maghrebi-French, committed against the French of European descent, for example, the fact that there was a 60-year-old retired Frenchman who was killed by youth. It also tells the story of a curfew put on the most at-risk neighborhoods. Other pictures in this edition show police officers running away from Molotov cocktails. *Paris-Match*, at least in this instance, seems to tell the story from the point of view of the French of European descent. On one page, one reads that the cities have been taken “en état de siège.” This reading stresses the degree of violence committed by the *Beur* population. In this version, one also finds a profile of the average participants in the riots, a profile that is very eye-opening since it reveals that there were also Franco-French among the rioters, confirming our observations from Kassovitz’s films, including *La Haine* and *Café au lait*, that interracial and intercultural relationships can flourish even in racially-charged environments, providing each party with feelings of solidarity:

Ce sont eux, les casseurs, qui mettent le feu à leurs cités, avec une rage jubilatoire. Ils ont au maximum 25 ans, et sont majoritairement d'origine maghrébine ou subsaharienne. Mais il y aussi des French of European descent. Selon certains sources policières, leur violence serait manipulée par les caïdes, qui dirigent le business, à commencer par le trafic de drogue. En revanche, parmi les jeunes interpellés, rares sont ceux qui sont déjà connus de la justice. Près d'un sur deux est un mineur. Beaucoup sont issus de familles monoparentales aux faibles ressources.

The excerpt above reveals that the drug trade played a role in the riots of 2005, especially pertaining to the French of European descent who participated in this insurrection, although the urban riots of 2007 and 2010 are generally considered to be the periods of rioting most affected by drug-dealing among minority youth. One page of the article stresses the anger of the rioters; there is a picture of some rioters, both black and white, which says, « Ils ont la rage. » The magazine also features pictures of the police in pursuit of the youth. One can also find pictures of the Minister of the Interior at the time, Nicolas Sarkozy, in meetings with the police, in an effort to ensure order in the *banlieues*: “Contesté ou encensé, Sarko est sans cesse en première ligne.” This line seems to imply that even if the public disagreed with some of his decisions, he had great authority as Minister of the Interior.

In an interview in *Paris-Match*, conducted by Laurence Masurel and François de la Barre, with the Minister of Labor, Employment and Social Cohesion, Jean-Louis Barloo, the latter attributes the problems in the suburbs to two sources: the issues of the unemployment of the youth, especially the difficulty in translating the talent of the youth into professions that they could practice, and the problem of the system of integration, which never worked in France, since it was always assumed that equality of opportunity

would exist naturally in a “republican” country, guaranteeing equality for all, an expectation that never became reality.

Other representations of the riots of 2005 include pictures of the *cit * of la Courneuve, a block of small apartments with no distinguishing features, and no social ambiance. The only symbol of hope in this representation is a pharmacy and grocery store that had been recently installed underground. This picture supports the perception that many of the residents of *les banlieues* feel isolated from the amenities and resources which are found in most French communities, increasing their feeling of alienation from French society.

In an interview with Azouz Begag, novelist and sociologist, entitled, « Match de la semaine : Azouz Begag : son appel aux jeunes des quartiers, » Begag, the author of *Le Gone du Chaaba* and *B ni, ou le paradis priv *, comments about the causes of the riots:

Il y a en ce moment un double sympt me: d’une part, des gens qui ont envie de tout br ler, d’incendier le socle de la France, c’est classique dans toutes les p riodes pr electorales---des manipulateurs---; d’autre part, des jeunes qui ignorent la responsabilit  civique pour se confronter aux policiers. Parce que ceux-ci sont blancs, qu’ils sont les autres. C’est la preuve d’un rapport   l’espace public qui n’existe pas. Chez eux, ils ne se balancent pas de bombes. Mais la rue, ce n’est pas chez eux. Ils ne sentent pas copropri taires de la France.

Begag’s analysis attributes this outbreak of violence to an expression of malaise occurring before the major election period of 2007, when Sarkozy would run for, and win, the office of President, as well as the perception of many of the minority youth that police officers in France are Caucasian, and thus different, making it seemingly impossible to communicate and negotiate with them in any constructive way. The feeling

of alienation, which I just alluded to in my discussion of pictures of the suburbs as largely disconnected from common amenities and resources, is aggravated, according to this article, by the feeling of many of the Maghrebi-French, as they feel that they are not full citizens in France, despite their legal status that indicates otherwise.

Furthermore, the reader is privy to the results of opinion polls that gauge attitudes of the French towards the job Chirac was doing in restoring order to the *banlieues*; one poll reads that in November 2005, 56 percent of people did not approve of Chirac's performance. However, another poll holds that 58 of the French put faith in Sarkozy, Minister of the Interior at the time, to restore order in the suburbs.

An interesting consequence of the riots, according to *Paris-Match*, is the appearance of a number of blogs, relatively new forums of expression at the time, in 2005: "L'embrasement des *banlieues* favorise l'explosion des blogs," according to the article, "La *banlieues* fait exploser les blogs" (109). Some blogs are full of rage: "En substance, ils réunissent un florilège de diatribes contre les forces de l'ordre, des critiques virulentes à l'encontre du système politique, et des plaidoyers en faveur d'action violentes, comme de incendies de voiture...» (109). According to this description, these blogs contest the actions of the French forces of order, as well as those as the political system, even going so far as to encourage car burnings. The French seem to have been taking to personal expressions of their feelings towards the riots at this time.

It is illuminating to note, that according to an article in *Paris-Match*, most French TV channels made an effort not to contribute to the feelings of insecurity in France, and thus benefit Le Pen [Jean-Marie, in 2005, and not Marine, as in 2014] (108). Thus, they tried not to show the rioters unnecessarily on TV, and not to focus on the images of

vandalism to an excessive degree (108). Some of the sensationalist representations that can be found in this *Paris-Match* can be connected to information about the riots in November 2005, documented by the CSA Institute for the Commission nationale Consultative des Droits de l'homme, which found that:

...one week after the end of the riots.... people willing to declare themselves racist had jumped to 33 percent, from 25 percent in November 2004. Fifty-six percent (versus 38 percent in 2004), thought that there were too many foreigners in France; 55 percent (versus 46 percent in 2004) thought that there were too many immigrants.

(Laurence and Vaisse 54)

There was a definite turn in French public opinion concerning the situation of the Maghrebi-French, and we can see the media encouraging such attitudes, through the sensationalist representation of the riots. The sensationalist representation of the riots that *Paris-Match* offers represents, in large part, the viewpoint of the so-called “hosts” according to Derridean hospitality theory, who impose their laws and customs on the Maghrebi-French, the so-called “guests.”

I will also examine *Paris-Match* from November 17th-23rd, 2005; this issue also features articles on the riots. For example, there is a picture of Chirac in his office with Dominique de Villepin, in the article, “La République prend en marche le train de la *banlieues*” (46). The majesty of the Elysée Palace surrounds them as they discuss possible resolutions to the problems of the *banlieues*. The caption details a number of changes that Chirac wanted to make to fight discrimination and to create jobs for young people (51). A headline in the article mentions a minister’s sense of Chirac’s compassion

for the underprivileged : « Depuis 15 jours, je sens le président blessé. Il ne supporte pas de voir tant de jeunes si mal dans leur peau. » (50) One picture has Chirac in front of the *tricolore* flag, in an effort to look authoritative : “Lundi soir, devant un décor très sombre, Jacques Chirac a, pour la première fois depuis longtemps, gardé ses lunettes. Son allocution télévisée, délivrée parfois avec gravité et toujours sur un ton solennel, va durer 14 minutes» (51). Another picture in this issue is of the HLMs of Clichy-sous-blois, under a gray sky and over bleak puddles of water. The article reads that there is 25 percent unemployment, compared to 10 percent for the nation, in this area. Yet another photo lets us see pictures of the graffitied walls with youth standing in front of them. Rachida Dati, Sarkozy’s counselor, and the second child of twelve of a Moroccan father and an Algerian mother, complains that there are often claims that the Maghrebi-French are becoming integrated, but these successful people who are supposed proofs of integration are not representative of the whole (58). This representation of reactions to the riots is symbolic of both the viewpoints of the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French.

“Foucauldian” Representations of the Riots of 2007

The article, “Banlieues: le spectre d’un nouvel embrasement,” written by David Le Bailly, and published in *Paris-Match* on November 29th, 2007, addresses the 2007 riots in Villiers-le-Bel, a suburb of Paris (pages 40-45). Among the noteworthy aspects of *Paris-Match*’s coverage of the 2007 riots, are the emphasis that LeBailly places on the

use of armed weapons during urban riots, a first for minorities in French suburbs in the contemporary period; the measures that the riot police (the C.r.s.) had to take while trying to tame the unrest; the numerous police officers who were shot by youth (80 police officers, including five who were gravely wounded); and the more determined nature of the rioters of 2007, as opposed to those of 2005. All in all, the riots had reached a more severe degree of conflict than was observed previously, laying a precedent for a vicious struggle in Villeneuve, the Grenoblois suburb, in 2010.

The first page of the article, headlined by the words, “Après la mort accidentelle et dramatique de deux adolescents, Villiers-le-Bel s’est enflamé, et l’émeute s’est propagée dans les communes voisines. Des armes sont apparues!” The most conspicuous sentence of this headline is, “Des armes sont apparues!”, indicating that these riots of 2007 were the first episode in which armed weapons were employed by minorities in the suburbs against police.

This page features a picture of a police car, and behind it, two people in black, hooded outfits, one of them holding a stick in his hand, and raising it to the sky, taken by Julien Fourchet. The background of the picture depicts haze and in the background, a group of other people wearing dark clothing, and sitting down. The caption of the page reads: “26 novembre 2007, 19 h 56. Trois pompiers viennent d’éteindre une véhicule de police en flammes. Equipés de pistolets et d’une barre de fer, des émeutiers resteront maîtres des lieux pendant vingt minutes.”

This picture provides clear evidence that the authorities in Villiers-le-Bel, including firefighters putting out a police car on fire, have become engaged, in a hands-on manner, in their attempts to suppress urban unrest. These firefighters fought to

preserve the vehicle of their colleagues, the police, in a collective effort against delinquency. This caption also reveals that the rioters, at around 8 pm on November 26, 2007, dominated this area for around 20 minutes, using pistols and iron bars to secure their domination. This snapshot of this moment in time of the *banlieues* reveals that the firefighters were trying to salvage property that some youth had damaged, while other youth were acting as if they were the “kings of the *banlieue*,” however temporarily, intimidating the authorities with their iron bars and pistols. The author of this article seems to realize the extent to which control had been lost in Villiers-le-Bel during this time period. Despite the fact that urban riots have occurred repeatedly in the French suburbs, clearly, the idea of losing control was still threatening and distressing to those living in this area.

The text of the article is the following:

Prise de guerre à Villiers-le-Bel. La nuit commence. A 100 mètres de la rue où, la veille, sont morts Larami et Moushin, une centaine d'émeutiers viennent de faire reculer les C.r.s. En même temps que flamme un premier véhicule de police, les armes à feu entrent en action. Au moins un policier est blessé à l'oeil. Il ne reste bientôt plus qu'une quinzaine de C.r.s. sur place, pour protéger une station-service. Les insurgés triomphent au coeur de leur cité. Les conditions des affrontements de novembre 2005, qui avaient abouti à la mise en place d'un état d'urgence, sont réunies. Des polices, venus en renfort de toute la région parisienne, se heurtent à des adversaires qui, eux, “jouent à domicile.” On relevera plus de quatre-vingts blessés parmi les forces de l'ordre, dont cinq dans un état grave. Trois ont été victimes de tirs de chevrotine. L'un aurait même été touché à l'épaule par une balle de calibre 12, qui aurait transpercé son gilet pare-balles.

The second page of the article showcases a picture of five members of the C.r.s. forces, holding grenade-launchers towards the sky, with the *cités* (apartment buildings) of

Villiers-le-Bel, behind them. The words, “Tirs dans la nuit. Dans une nuage de gaz lacrimogènes, la bataille de la rue fait rage.” The caption of the photo, taken by Olivier Laban-Mattei, reads, “Une rue de Villiers-le-Bel, dans la lueur de l’incendie. Les C.r.s. équipés de lance-grenades se déploient et surveillent les immeubles qui les entourent.” The words, “...la bataille de la rue fait rage,” are particularly noteworthy, since they indicate that the reporter sees the events occurring in Villiers-le-Bel during these three days in November 7 as a virtual “raging battle of the street,” requiring the riot police, armed with tear gas grenades, and ready to throw them at possible offenders, to keep a close eye on the apartment buildings in the surrounding area. Additionally, the words, “dans la lueur de l’incendie,” evoke almost a ghostly feeling, as if these streets are haunted by the destructive effects of the fire that seems to be engulfing the neighborhood.

The third page of the article shows a member of the C.r.s., wearing a hard hat and a thick uniform, holding a gun towards a wall, with the bright light of a fire in the background, set in a background of gray and black, the oblivion of the nighttime sky. As in the last picture, this article makes good use of the effect of the light emanating from the fire that consumes several buildings and police vehicles.

The caption to this photo reads:

Au coeur de l’émeute depuis les heures, les forces de l’ordre font face à des assailants plus déterminés qu’en 2005, qu’ils tentent de disperser en utilisant des Flash-ball et des gaz lacrymogènes. Mais quand ce sont des tirs d’armes à feu qu’ils essuient, la crainte s’installe dans leurs rangs. L’Unsa police, premier syndicat de gardiens de la paix, indique qu’un “niveau supplémentaire dans l’échec des violences” urbaines vient d’être franchi, et Synergie affirme que leurs confrères sur le terrain sont “confrontés à des scènes de guerrilla urbaine”. Les petits groups d’individus encagoulés [hidden] qui les assaillent ne jouent plus seulement au chat et à la souris. Ils défient le C.r.s. et les affrontent en les bombardant de projectiles diverses et de cocktails Molotov. Une fois encore, la

révolte à la couleur du feu dans les communes du Val-d'Oise-Sarcelles, Garges-les-Gonesse, Cergy, Ermont, et Goussainville – où des affrontements éclatent. Soixante-trois véhicules et cinq bâtiments – une trésorerie, un supermarché, deux économies, et une bibliothèque – vont être incendiés.

The caption above is very telling, since it reveals that the police forces of l'UNSA feared the escalation of violence that had transpired in this suburb (“...la crainte s’installe dans leurs rangs...”). The confrontations in which these police officers are engaging are referred to as “scenes of guerrilla warfare,” (“...des scènes de la guerrilla urbaine...”), and some feel that a new level of conflict has been attained (“...un niveau supplémentaire dans l’échec des violences urbaines” a été “franchi”...). Unlike rioters in previous periods of unrest, the rioters of 2007 in Villiers-le-Bel have surpassed the level of playing cat and mouse with the police; rather, they are engaging in full confrontations with the police, throwing various objects and Molotov cocktails at them. The scene on the ground in this area is described as full of colorful outbursts of tear gas, Molotov cocktails, and gunfire exploding in the area, in a background setting in which 63 cars, and five essential buildings in the community have been lit on fire.

The fourth page of the article features the headline, “La police compte ses victimes et traque [hunts down] brutalement les meneurs jusque dans la vieille ville,” as well as two pictures, one of some C.r.s. forces breaking down the door of an apartment at nighttime, and one of the C.r.s forces seated around a youth and another man whose face is hidden. The police are reported to have counted the victims of injury among the police forces, and to have hunted down the leaders of the riots.

The caption to the first picture on the fourth page reads:

A Villiers-le-Bel, des policiers tentent de s'introduire dans un bâtiment où pourraient s'être réfugiés les individus qui sont harcelés [being sought out]...une voiture renversée et incendiée, ainsi que des grilles [metal gates] et des poubelles, forment une barricade derrière laquelle des émeutiers invectivent [hurl abuses at] les policiers.

It seems that the police tried to enter some buildings where they may find some of the culprits of the violence. Meanwhile, some of the rioters who tried to evade the police hid behind garbage cans and metal fencing, in an attempt to escape punishment for their behavior.

The second picture reads, "Des policiers, et parmi eux, des femmes, ont transporté leurs confrères blessés à l'écart des affrontements pour leur apporter les premiers soins." This picture reveals that several police officers, including women, carried fellow police officers who had been wounded away from the confrontation scenes, in order for them to obtain first aid. This scene conveys sympathetic sentiments, as these police officers tried to ensure that their colleagues would be able to receive treatment for their injuries. The police are seen as demonstrating solidarity and support towards each other, despite the generally negative image that is made for them by many minority populations, as they perceive some of them as being responsible for brutality towards some of their peers.

The fifth and final page of the article, revealing two men standing in front of a burning car, carries the following commentary:

Quand le calme semble revenir dans le Val-d'Oise, les forces de l'ordre mettent leurs blessés à l'abri, et comprennent que, cette fois, on a frôlé la catastrophe avec l'utilisation d'armes à feu par les émeutiers les plus radicaux. L'un des policiers a été gravement atteint par une projectile de chasse capable de "traverser un moteur

de voiture.” D’autres pensent qu’ils n’ont dû leur salut qu’aux nouvelles projections dont ils sont équipées. Mais cela reste fragile. Surtout si ces affrontements devaient se dérouler hors de la présence de la presse. Des journalistes ont été blessés et détroussés par les émeutiers qui souhaitent, moins qu’on le prétend, se réjouir du récit de leurs actes devant la télévision. Mardi matin, alors que la polémique sur la police de proximité renaissait déjà, Michèle Alliot-Marie, Ministre de l’Intérieur, qui s’était entretenu par téléphone avec Nicolas Sarkozy en voyage en Chine, a appelé les populations des villes vandalisées à “isoler ceux qui sont des délinquants.”

This paragraph is also very telling, since it reveals that the authorities realized that, by using armed weapons against the delinquents in Villiers-le-Bel, they were walking a fine line of disaster, since these rioters were much more radical than those of 2005, 1990-1991, or 1981, as evidenced by the incident of a wounded officer, quoted above. Even some journalists were wounded, as if this were a true war scene, as on the international stage.

The remarks of Michèle Alliot-Marie, made towards then-President Sarkozy, then on vacation in China, and quoted at the end of the caption, are particularly ironic, as she calls for authorities to “isolate the delinquents” (“isoler ceux qui sont des délinquants”). This injunction seems particularly out of touch with reality, since it must have been difficult for the police, in such circumstances, in full conflict, to arrest these “delinquents.” To make matters worse, President Sarkozy was on vacation in China, as if to remove all relevance from her statement. Surely, Sarkozy could have not have had much effect on the situation in Paris from China. Even the word “délinquants” seems to be a weak choice of term in this case, since the violence that occurred in Villiers-le-Bel in November 2007 seems to have surpassed the level of delinquency, as it perhaps was in the “rodeo riots” of 1981, in which youth raced cars before burning them, in a

manifestation of their rebellion towards the police and French society, echoing the observation of some police officers, made earlier in the article, according to which the riots had reached an all-time high of seriousness. Indeed, in this case, the youth in Villiers-le-Bel had managed to secure armed weapons because of greater access to them that was made available after the breakdown of the borders of the Schengen states, as well as the weapons that were made more available after the conflicts in the Balkans, in the 1990s. While I maintain that the minorities in the suburbs of France were doubtlessly at a major disadvantage in this time period, of the mid-to-late 2000s, it seems more appropriate to call this behavior, of shooting police with pistols, “criminal,” instead of “delinquent,” indicating that, more than *Paris-Match* representing the conflict in a “Foucauldian” manner, the nature of the interactions between the youth and these police officers was truly of a Foucauldian nature, and to a greater degree than ever been witnessed.

“Foucauldian” Representations of the Riots of 2010

The *Paris-Match* article, dated “L’Actualité: Etat d’alerte à Grenoble: On n’avait jamais vu ça. Des centaines de police, des tirs à balles réelles, un quartier à feu et à sang,” dated July 29, 2010, like most of the articles portraying the French riots, certainly fits into the group of articles that present integration in a Foucauldian light, focusing especially on the way in which the unrest occurring in *les banlieues* had reached a new height in Villeneuve in 2010, compared to the level of unrest characteristic of 2005 and 2007’s riots. In particular, *Paris-Match*’s depiction of the 2010 Villeneuve riots is notably

Foucauldian, due to the way in which it focuses on the use of guns by the minorities in the *banlieues* during the riots, the number of police officers deployed to pacify the unrest in this city, Grenoble, not the capital Paris, but a city in the provinces, and the way in which the mayor of Grenoble realized that it was time for the French government to assume responsibility for unrest in the provinces, rather than rely on the mayors and the police to do. While similar techniques as were used in the coverage of riots in other years, such as sensationalistically-phrased headlines and pictures of cars in the middle of the street, featuring rioters and the police, are used in this article, the wording that is used in the article, and the repetition of the phrase, “armes de poing” (armed weapons), indicates that conditions had reached an un-previously-seen-before level, demonstrating that relations between the French of European descent authorities and the minorities in Villeneuve were notoriously tense, and that corrective action was imminent.

The only “Derridean” component of the article is the fact that Grenoble’s mayor, Michel Destot, reached the point where he saw that collective, and governmental, action was necessary to remedy the prospect of such catastrophic events to reproduce themselves, in Grenoble or elsewhere in France.

The headlines in red and white read, “On n’avait jamais vu ça. Des centaines de polices, des tirs à balles réeles, un quartier à feu et à sang. Parce que des voyous voulaient venger la mort d’un braqueur!”, set against a background picturing cars in the streets of Grenoble at nighttime. This title seems to put special emphasis on the words, “...Des centaines de polices, des tirs a balles réeles...Parce que les voyous voulaient venger la mort d’un braqueur!” These phrases seem to indicate that the events that occurred in Villeneuve were unheard of at the time, as these scenarios in which

rioting occurred usually did not involve hundreds of police officers or real bullets; likewise, it must have been unusual to see some “urchins” (*voyous*) trying to exact revenge for the death of an armed robber (*braqueur*). This title reveals that, in the eyes of the reporter who wrote this *Paris-Match* article, the situation in the *banlieue* had devolved to a new low in the history of the French suburbs; previously, conditions had never sunk as low as they had in 2010, in Villeneuve, outside of Grenoble. The most significant facts, surrounding the use of real bullets in the confrontation between the youth and the police, and the hundreds of policemen who were present at the scene, trying to pacify the rioting, are taken as proof that the tension in the suburbs had reached a critical point, demonstrating that the efforts taken since 2005 were not thoroughly effective. Additionally, there seems to be a touch of irony, a literacy device well-honed in the French literary tradition, in the phrase, “...Parce que des voyous voulaient venger la mort d’un braqueur!” The irony attached to this phrase is found in the way in which the author of these words seems to find it absurd, and uncalled for, that hundreds of policemen had been called to the scene of a confrontation involving real bullets (and thus the possible fate of hundreds of people, many of them innocent), due solely to the fact that these youth wanted to avenge the death of their friend, *le braqueur*, Karim Boudouda. The reporter seems to find it morally and ethically nonsensical that such a destructive event would occur in Villeneuve, as retaliation by the Maghrebi-French for the results of the police pursuit of a man who had tried to rob a casino, and thus, a criminal. The implication is that in this new, seemingly-lawless, world, law and order can be toppled temporarily by people who themselves behave destructively towards the government, in their support of an alleged robber.

The caption to the photo describes the nature of the riots, and refers to the reasons that provoked them:

Scène de guerre. Dans la nuit de vendredi à samedi, une quarantaine de jeunes du quartier sensible de la Villeneuve, dans le sud de Grenoble, se sont déchainés, incendiant des voitures et des commerces, avant de s'en prendre violemment aux forces de l'ordre. Alors que les policiers tentaient de ramener le calme, vers 2 heures du matin, on leur a tiré dessus avec une arme de poing. Pour assurer leur sécurité, ils ont dû, à leur tour, ouvrir le feu. A l'origine de l'émeute, la mort d'un délinquant du quartier, multirécidiviste, abattu jeudi par des hommes de la BAC [la brigade anti-criminalité), au terme d'une course-poursuite, Karim Boudouda, venait de braquer à l'arme lourde le Casino à Uriage-les-Bains, avec une complice. Samedi, lors d'une visite éclairée dans la préfecture iséroise, le ministre de l'Intérieur, Brice Hortefeux, a décidé de mobiliser, en renfort, les superflics du Caid et du GIPN. Le maire PS de la ville, Michel Destot, demande une "Grenelle de la sécurité urbaine."

Within this summary, the *Paris-Match* reporter who wrote the article seems to focus on the use of weapons and the role that they played in the confrontation between the police and youth. The police are portrayed as having no other choice but to fire at the youth, because of their duty to "ramener le calme" (restore order) to Villeneuve, in the face of the shots that were fired by the youth: "...on leur a tiré dessus avec des armes de poing."

The following excerpt from the article, "Des maires réclament une "Grenelle de la sécurité urbaine," posted on the RMC (Radio, Talk, Sport) website, on July 15, 2010, puts Destot's comment involving "la Grenelle de la sécurité urbaine," into greater context. Destot insisted on the need for "une grenelle" (a summit, meeting, or agreement, with a certain purpose in mind) to take place, led the French government, which he saw

as responsible for taking control of the anarchy characteristic of life in some of the suburbs, making it clear that neither the police nor the mayors were able to pacify unrest of such a degree, since the police forces had been reduced, and the mayors lacked the means. Destot remarked that the city of Grenoble was doing what it could at the time, through video-surveillance in places of public transportation [such as buses and trams], and that it was willing to assist the national government in the prevention of outbreaks of rioting, but that government support was essential to preventing and limiting such incidents:

Devant la multiplication des crimes ces derniers temps dans sa ville, le maire de Grenoble, Michel Destot, demande la mise en place d'une « Grenelle de la sécurité urbaine », sous la présidence du Premier ministre, et avec les ministres de la Justice et de l'Intérieur, et les élus.

Des agressions de plus en plus meurtrières, qui touchent Grenoble, mais aussi Nancy, Bordeaux, Toulouse ou Montpellier... Les Grenoblois ont le sentiment que l'insécurité augmente ; les effectifs de police ont diminué et les maires manquent de moyens, a expliqué Michel Destot, ce matin au micro de Jean-Jacques Bourdin, en appelant à la responsabilité de l'Etat :

« Nous, nous agissons là où nous avons des compétences. Nous le faisons en matière de prévention de la délinquance, avec les services municipaux, les associations, les services sociaux. Nous le faisons dans la limite de nos moyens avec la vidéosurveillance, notamment dans les transports en commun, mais au-delà de ça, c'est de la compétence de la police nationale et de la compétence de la Justice. Nous sommes prêts à collaborer, mais nous ne pouvons pas disposer des moyens et des compétences pour le faire. D'où cette nécessité d'une grande rencontre nationale, que nous pouvons appeler "Grenelle de la sécurité urbaine". Ce n'est pas le problème du mot, le problème, c'est l'action. »

A picture above this cover page of this *Paris-Match* article reads, “Les grands moyens,” set against a picture of youth shooting a gun in the streets. The caption of the photo, taken by Pascal Fayolle, reads:

Samedi: un homme du GIPN (Groupe d'intervention de la police nationale) surveille, au fusil à lunette (un Tikka 3 Tac), le quartier chaud de la Villeneuve, dans le sud de Grenoble. Ce genre d'armes, efficace jusqu'à 700 metres, ne peut être utilisé que par les tireurs de haute précision de la police, et les hommes des cellules observateurs-tireurs de la gendarmerie.

This caption indicates that this police officer, from the Intervention Orders of the National Police Forces, was watching, with a rifle in hand, *le quartier chaud* (the troublesome area) of Villeneuve, armed with a weapon of a high degree of accuracy, able to be used only by certain police officers, revealing that special police officers had been dispatched to la Villeneuve, and that the government must have felt that it was necessary that such specialized officers be present in this Grenoblois suburb, due to the level of calamity occurring there.

In another picture, taken by Philippe Merle, and entitled, “Bataille de rue,” four people, at least one of African descent, are pictured in front of a group of vehicles. The caption reads, “Quartier de la Villeneuve, dans la nuit de vendredi à samedi. L'affrontement entre les jeunes et les forces de l'ordre vire à la guerilla. Les plus enragés des émeutiers n'hésitent pas à sortir des armes de poing. Une cinquantaine de voitures seront incendiés, plus une dizaine d'autres la nuit suivante.” This caption refers to the confrontation occurring in Villeneuve as akin to “guerrilla” warfare, with guns being

used (instead of Molotov cocktails, which were the weapon used in most of the previous riots, of the 1980s, 1990s, and 2005), and some sixty cars being torched.

The final picture of the article, picturing some men of African descent in front of a white van, one of them seemingly throwing a Molotov cocktail, features a headline in red and white: “Le ghetto d’une métropole américaine qui s’enflamme? Non, une grande ville de province française.” The caption, in white letters, reads:

L’émeute à débuté dans la soirée de vendredi, après la prière au mort récitée par un imam à l’occasion des funérailles de Karim Boudouda, le malfaiteur tué la veille, d’une balle en plein tête, alors qu’il tirait sur des polices en s’enfuyant. Les jeunes du quartier, qui, contestant la version des forces d’ordre, s’en sont alors pris à un tramway et à des Abribus, à coups des battes de base-ball. Deux d’entre eux ont été arretes. En dépit des renforts venus épauler les 300 gardes mobiles, les destructions, et les tirs à balles réeles ont repris dans la nuit de samedi à dimanche. Onze délinquants ont été interpellés. Dimanche matin, quatre suspects, soupçonnés d’être les auteurs des coups de feu, ont été places en garde à vue.

The author of this caption focuses on the way in which the riots began after the funeral rites for Karim Boudouda, the robber of the casino at Uriage-les-bains who was killed by a bullet from police while fleeing the crime scene, were spoken by an imam. In particular, the youth, opposing the police forces, attacked a tramway, using baseball bats, and even though police officers intervened, the chaos continued again on Saturday and Sunday, leading eleven youth to be taken in for questioning. Additionally, on Sunday morning, four people who were suspected of shooting police officers, were put under observation.

Articles Supporting a “Derridean” Framework of Hospitality, from 1990-1991

Another representation of integration can be found in the June 20th, 1990, article’s photo spread of immigrant youth: a group of smiling, cheering children behind a white fence, children of all different shades of color, with a caption: “Place du pas, ou le Carrefour de 49 nationalités.” There is also a title indicating that there is more trouble in the suburbs after the death of a Moroccan-French youth: “La mort d’Aïssa, un jeune Marocain, relance le grand problème de nos banlieues-ghettos. Nos reporters vous montrent l’une d’elles : Chanteloup. » The reader is given an explanation of this photo, which shows a very diverse group from a poor city area: « Ces enfants rassemblés sur la place du Pas, à Chanteloup-les-Vignes, représentent le futur d’un Zac (zone d’aménagement concerté) de 7, 700 habitants, dont 40% d’immigrés, appartenant à 49 nationalités différentes... » The article also explains that Edith Cresson, a politician, comments that the youth react in violence because they are frustrated : « S’ils cassent, c’est parce qu’explose un sentiment de frustration...Ils n’ont rien et ils veulent avoir quelque chose. » The next pages show a representation of people from various ethnic backgrounds: the Comorians, the Turks, the French, the Pakistanis. There is a picture of a Comorian family celebrating Aïd, and the children wear traditional clothes; the picture of the Turks is of a girl to be married showing her mother’s *trousseau*; the French picture discusses a woman with daughters married to Africans: “Mme Pavillon veut croire à l’harmonie dans les cités de la violence.” The picture of the Pakistanis is of a working man, who hopes that his son will leave the *banlieues*; there is also a picture of the rappers, young people from Moroccan and Senegalese backgrounds. There is graffiti on

the walls. There is also a picture of the Koranic school, with young boys: “Selon la volonté de leurs parents, de nombreux enfants fréquentent l’école coranique. Ils portent en eux une autre culture. Et, plus tard, il faudra que cette culture devienne pour eux un supplément d’âme, un lien, et non pas le symbole d’un répli, d’une non-intégration. »

There is also a picture of the *imam* of Chanteloup-les-vignes, along with Muslims celebrating Ramadan; this *imam* wants only peace in the suburbs. There is a picture of a boxer who wants to help the youth leave the *cités* without violence or drugs. This representation is one that recognizes the complexity of the situation in France and the diverse perspectives from which one can approach the problems in the cities. France’s multi-ethnic composition is recognized through the pictures of people of various backgrounds and ethnicities, revealing some opportunity for a more reciprocal guest-host relationship.

In the June 26th, 1991, *Paris-Match*, there is a very revealing article with an interview of a sociologist, Christian Jelen, who found that integration was on its way to being successful, at that time. The title is, “*Beurs et beurettes : Ils feront d’excellents Français!*” (3) Jelen found that the rioters were actually a minority, and that the integration of the *Beurs* was occurring. He even writes that they will become good Frenchmen. He published a book, *Ils Feront d’excellents Français!* *Paris-Match* calls this prediction optimistic, but Jelen insists that it is more realistic, based on a study that he led in the main areas where immigrants are numerous. In fact, Jelen even proclaims that integration will occur in a generation or so: “Dans une génération, deux tout au plus, cette intégration sera un problème résolu.” He holds that the *Beurs* are becoming integrated through the French school and language, and even calls the problem of the veil

a marginal problem and insists that there are not many fundamentalists in France. I must remark that the issue of the Muslim head coverings for women has, on the contrary, proved to be a very divisive issue. Jelen believes that in order to become integrated, a Muslim has to keep his religion private. He also cites a number of *Beurs* who have succeeded, even discussing the *Beurgeoisie*, holding that many *Beurs* are advancing socially. Jelen insists that rioters are not numerous. He concedes that integration can be difficult because of differences between the French family and the Maghrebin family; in the *Beurs'* families, the men have all the authority, women being treated like second-class citizens, while in France, the mother and the father are seen as equals. Jelen holds that society must help the *Beurs* find careers. He believes that to become a French person, a *Beur* must promote the values of equality, laicity, and liberty, and feels that the government must help families in difficulty (6). He blames multiculturalism, in which the rights of all ethnic groups are respected, for being harmful to France, and rejects *le droit à la différence*, since it leads to ghettos, racism, and fundamentalism. In order to accelerate integration, Jelen recommends that people stop talking about its failures, and that its successes be celebrated. He feels that minorities should respect the police more, and that they should stop portraying the French as racist (79).

It would seem that Jelen's theory was overly simplistic and optimistic at the time, since it has been more than a generation, and the Maghrebi-French are still far from being fully-integrated. There are some signs of integration, which I will discuss later in this dissertation, but Jelen's suggestions seem overly optimistic in light of the continued tendency of the suburban youth to riot.

Commentary on the Results of the Comparisons of *Paris-Match*'s Coverage of the Riots of 1990-1991, 2005, 2007, and 2010

Paris-Match, the popular tabloid, offers a representation of the riots largely from the viewpoint of the French of European descent, and has a tendency to be sensationalist. The perspective that one has determines, in large part, one's attitude towards these periods of urban unrest. In *Paris-Match*, the tabloid to which I devoted most of my attention, there has been a moderate change in attitudes towards integration in France, from the era in the early 1990s, when integration was portrayed as a process in the course of completion, despite other articles that supported a more Foucauldian interpretation of *Beur* integration; and 2005, when the French of European descent seemed to recognize, to a greater degree, the difficult truth about relations between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent, due to the first series of widespread urban riots involving the Maghrebi-French. 2007's coverage of the urban riots in Villiers-le-Bel revealed the reaction of *Paris-Match*'s reporters towards the noticeably more serious levels of conflict in the French suburbs, as some youth used firearms against police officers, injuring record numbers of them. The rhetoric that the magazine employed in the depiction of the 2007 riots was distinctly more inflammatory than was that used in 2005's coverage, since in 2007, the article on these urban riots characterized the youth causing the unrest as "des maîtres des lieux," engaging in "la guerilla urbaine." The journalists writing this article seem to lend their sympathies to the French police more than to the Maghrebi-French there is an entire section in the article on the way in which French police officers demonstrated solidarity towards each other, as over 80 officers

were shot, and five of them, gravely wounded. Likewise, in 2010, the Foucauldian nature of the suburban environment was again depicted as more amplified as compared to the level of conflict visible in 2007, as increasingly violent means were used by youth to protest police brutality and policies that favored their exclusion from society. While the riots in 2007 had seen the use of firearms by both the youth and the French of European descent police, who fired on the crowds, as they had refused to do in 2005, in 2007, the journalist writing the 2010 article expresses incredulosity at the idea that the man whose assassination by the police had sparked the riots, was not the typical youth victimized by such brutality; rather, he had been the armed robber of a casino in Uriage-les-Bains, near Grenoble. The idea that so many youth would take such a stand for someone in their ethnicity group who had actually engaged in crime related to his or her confrontation with the police, reveals that there is a strong trend among the members of the Beur community to defend each other.

With respect to the representation of the viewpoints of the Maghrebi-French, as well as that of the French of European descent, there are some instances in which I see minorities' attitudes towards integration in France expressed, but overall, the French press seems to stick to the viewpoint of the French of European descent, a tendency which indicates an unhealthy guest-host relationship where there is not enough sharing of power, at least in the representations offered in these articles from *Paris-Match*. In the 1990s, this tendency to represent the French of European descent viewpoint occurred most frequently in interviews with government officials, although *Paris-Match* tried to offer some representations of the perspectives of the *Beurs*. The *Beur* artistic works that I analyzed in Chapters 2-4 offer, doubtlessly, a greater number of opportunities to gain

insight into the struggles of minorities in France, rather than depicting this phenomenon of the co-existence of the French of European descent and people of African descent in France as one-dimensional or imbalanced, as *Paris-Match* tends to do. The press has a special ability to convey information about current events and other interests of temporary or a changing nature, while the study of *Beur* literature allows one to gain semi-autobiographical insight into the lives of the Maghrebi-French, especially given the fact that most of these novels were written by Maghrebi-French people. The *Paris-Match* articles of 2007 reveal an increasing distance from showing sympathy to the Maghrebi-French community, as the journalist writing the article depicts the French police, many of them injured by the youth, as the victims of this situation. Likewise, in 2010, there seems to be very little compassion shown towards the plight of the Maghrebi-French, some of whom the journalists depict as lawless and hardened criminals, aside from the acknowledgement that there are enduring socioeconomic problems in the banlieues, a reality so evident that Sarkozy's comments minimizing it, made in the 2005-2007 era of unrest, seem almost indefensible.

Conclusions to Chapter 5

In the analysis of these riots, it is essential to recognize the real concern of police brutality towards the Maghrebi-French, and along with this reality, the discrimination and xenophobia that those in the *Beur* community experience on a daily basis. The most recent urban riots in France occurred in July of 2013, in the Parisian suburb of Trappes.

Also, in October 2013, the French Guinean Minister of Justice, Christine Taubira, was likened to a monkey, by a candidate of le Front National, and represented as a banana by a child during an anti-gay marriage protest, according to the *New Yorker* article, “The Justice Minister and the Banana: How Racist is France?,” written by Alexander Stille. To add insult to injury, the right-wing magazine, *Minute*, published a cover story entitled, “Taubira Finds her Banana” (Stille 1). Similarly, in late 2013 and early 2014, the anti-Semitic gesture, *la quenelle*, was enacted by some French athletes, after it was made well-known by an anti-Semitic comedian, Dieudonné, who was himself banned from many comedy houses in France, due to the caustic nature of his comments about Jewish people. Additionally, as Thomas asks, did Sarkozy appoint three women of immigrant descent (Maghrebin-French Rachida Dati, as Minister of Justice; Maghrebin-French Fadela Amara, as Junior Minister for Urban Affairs; and Senegalese-French Rama Yade, as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Human Rights), to his cabinet in 2007, because of his faith in their abilities, or in order to demonstrate his deft political correctness, and openness towards people of diverse origins? (119) Even aside from this possibility, racism in France is alive and well, even if there are not large-scale riots, such as those of 2005, on a recurrent basis. The superficial appearance of racially-related incidents and controversies in the French press, involving celebrities and politicians, is only the proverbial tip of the iceberg of the tensions that underlie relationships between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French in France, leaving the suburbs vulnerable to periodic periods of inflammatory and dangerous conditions.

Some statistics also support this statement, namely, the idea that France seems to be more divided on issues of race and ethnicity than ever before. Indeed, according to

Stilles, writing in November, 2013, “The National Commission for the Rights of Man (C.N.C.D.H.), which has been charged by the French parliament to monitor incidents of racism in France, noted a twenty-three-per-cent increase in incidents of racism, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism last year, and a five-fold increase over the past twenty years” (1).

Additionally, the findings of several research groups regarding the results of the 2007 Presidential contest, in which it was found that 77 percent of French Catholics voted for Sarkozy, the law-and-order candidate, and that 80 percent of Muslims wanted to elect the Socialist candidate, Ségolène Royal (the former partner of current President, François Hollande), according to Thomas, confirm the thesis that the racially-charged environment in France is causing political divisions between those who would put security at a premium (the right), and those defending the rights of minorities (the left) (111). Also, 64 percent of those who voted for Sarkozy in 2007 also stated, in the same 2011 poll, that there are “too many immigrants in France” (Thomas 111), a statement evoking xenophobic sentiment.

As for the conditions in the suburbs in themselves, Chrisafis summarizes the grave disappointment that many residents of Clichy-sous-Bois, the suburb of Paris where the riots of 2005 started, feel towards current conditions in this area, as of 2012, seven years after the riots (1). Chrisafis documents her visit to the Chêne Pointu HLM estate in Clichy-sous-bois in this article, in which she describes deteriorated housing units in “France’s most run-down estate,” in the words of one Socialist politician. She also takes note of the high percentage, 70%, of people living under the poverty line, out of its 6,000

residents (Chrisafis 2). Chrisafis also remarks on the joblessness rate in this housing project, 40% (3).

Furthermore, the families of the two youth electrocuted prior to the riots of 2005, Zyed Benna, 17, and Bouna Traoré, 15, were still fighting for a trial against the police officers in question, accused of refusing to aid the teenagers, as of the time of the publication of Christafis' article, in November, 2012. Police brutality, as Chrisafis, notes, was still a significant problem, as of 2012, in Clichy-sous-bois. One resident in this suburb, named Sana Abdelhafidh, a daycare worker who was born on Chêne Pointu, told Chrisafis, "It is terrible it has taken seven years to get a possibility of justice. But nothing's going to change here --- if anything, things have just got worse..." (2). In the same article, Chrisafis cites a community worker and founder of the community pressure group, AcLefeu, Mohamed Mechmeche: "This struggle for justice is not against the police; it about them taking the stand and saying what happened. If they are acquitted, it is important to be acquitted before a court. It has been hard to convince young people to move beyond that tense relationship with police, when they thought there was a sense of impunity, no justice" (4).

Chrisafis also comments that police identity checks, an apparent issue in the incident involving Benna and Traoré in 2005 in Clichy-sous-bois, are a strong source of contention in the suburbs: "This year [in 2012], more than 20 citizens sued the government over alleged racist policing, claiming that they were stopped by police purely because of the colour of their skin" (3). The CNRS has acknowledged that people who appear to be Arabs are eight times more likely to be the targets of police identity checks than Caucasians, and that people appearing to be of African origin, are six times more

likely; likewise, the US-based Human Rights Watch found that France performs some identity checks based on racial considerations (Chrisafis 3).

Lastly, the ultimate outcome of the struggle of the French government to maintain peaceful conditions in the suburbs, as well as to provide basically livable conditions for their inhabitants, may be heavily dependent on the extent to which the political dynamics in the French government unfold, especially after the municipal elections in early April, 2014, which resulted in Hollande's selection of a new Prime Minister, newly-appointed Manuel Valls, of the Socialist party, after the so-called "désaveu de Hollande": the resounding success of the right in most political contests; and the relative progress that the Front National made in this set of elections. Moreover, the way in which the European Parliamentary elections in France, resulting in a predominant vote for delegates from Le Front national, that took place in the spring of 2014, will impact the circumstances of the Maghrebi-French in France, as well as their West African, Jewish, and Franco-French counterparts, remains to be seen.

In conclusion to this last chapter of my dissertation, I find it necessary to reiterate my assertion that I made in the introduction to Chapter 5, according to which the episodes of rioting discussed in this Chapter often contribute to the further subjectification of the Maghrebi-French with respect to the French government. As this subjectification can severely compromise the well-being of the Maghrebi-French and complicate their relationships with the French of European descent, from whom they must seek some degree of cooperation as they try to improve intercultural relations in France, I advocate the use of other means of achieving desubjectification than rioting for the Maghrebi-French and as an alternative, the demonstration of solidarity and the use of negotiations

used by the *Beurs* in *la Marche des Beurs* in 1983, and the other means that I discuss in the Conclusions to this dissertation, which will follow.

Conclusions:

A Mixed Picture for Maghrebi-French Integration in France, and a Discussion of Factors that Seem to Promote the Integration of the Maghrebi-French

This dissertation, in its examination of the portrait of Maghrebi-French integration in *Beur* novels and films, as well as a selection of issues of *Paris-Match* dealing with the riots of 1990-91, 2005, 2007, and 2010, represents a commentary on the diversity of integration scenarios in France, featuring contexts in which integration is severely challenged, some in which it occurs to a degree, and others in which it is favored. While I acknowledge that these representations, consisting of the novels, films, and magazine articles, are not direct reflections on reality, it seems reasonable to suggest that the diversity of integration scenarios depicted in these samples of art bears some resemblance to the spectrum of types of treatment that the Maghrebi-French receive in contemporary France.

With regards to the prognosis for the situation of the Maghrebi-French, there are many obstacles to integration. Concerning these difficulties, I note, in particular, groups that have developed in recent years, including the right-wing political blog/website entitled, “Les Français de souche,” closely related to the Front national and which aims for the expulsion of all Muslims. This group fears the Islamization of France.

Indeed, the problematic nature of the social and cultural atmosphere in the French suburbs continues to have such potential for danger that, as recently as the summer of 2013, there were significant incidents of unrest in some of these areas. For example, as I briefly mentioned earlier, in July, 2013, there was one night of rioting in the Merisières *cité* of the Paris suburb of Trappes (Yvelines), from 8:30 pm to 4 am, according to an article by Stéphane Johnny (with Lucas Duvernet-Coppola), entitled, “Trappes: aux origines d’une nuit d’émeutes,” on the website for *le Journal du dimanche*, dated Sunday, July 21st, 2013. This article recounts a confrontation between a policeman and a fully-veiled woman, accompanied by her boyfriend (*compagnon*) or husband (*mari*), [depending on the source referred to], an altercation that was the source of tension that sparked rioting in Trappes, on the night of Thursday, July 18, 2013. The article presents two versions of the incendiary encounter, one from the perspective of the young woman and her boyfriend, and one from the policeman. The young woman, Cassandra B., was the target of a police identity check (*contrôle d’identité*), and claimed that the police officer shoved her mother, leading the young woman’s boyfriend to react. Cassandra claimed that the police officer then asked her boyfriend in an aggressive manner, “Tu vas faire quoi?”, and then grabbed her by her veil, and forced her into a car, while threatening her husband. Meanwhile, the police officer involved alleged that the young woman refused to obey his orders, and that the young man jumped up towards his neck, and punched him, trying to choke him. As of July, 2013, the young man still awaited judgment for this incident, although both he and his wife were released from police custody in the days following the incident (Johanny and Duvernet-Coppola 1).

The rioting that followed this confrontation involved torched garbage cans, the use of illegal fireworks, and the projection of other objects towards police officers, who were ordered to defend the police station, which was attacked by 200 people. Among them, six youth were arraigned for their behavior, mostly for voluntary violence. One youth was hit by a shot of a Flash-Ball, and was in serious condition at the time of the publication of the article. As with many other incidents of rioting, for example, the period of “rodeo rioting” in the summer of 1981 in the suburbs of Lyon, these riots occurred in a time of hot weather (Johanny and Duvernet-Copolla 1).

On a more general scale, beyond the epidemic of riots, that occur from time to time in France, and beyond the frequent occurrence of police identity checks performed towards people who are seemingly from diverse backgrounds, Muslim women in France frequently receive warnings from police for wearing the banned *voiles intégrales*, according to another article in *Le Journal du dimanche*, entitled, “La Voile intégrale: plus de 400 femmes verbalisées, dont 5 multirécidivistes,” dated on July 21, 2013. According to *L’Observatoire de la laïcité*, there had been 661 warnings given to 423 women for wearing *la voile intégrale*, mostly in the Parisian area, especially in Yvelines. Additionally, many women, as of July 2013, were also the victims of aggression for wearing veils (“La Voile integrale” 1).

The complexity of the socio-political context in France, already multi-layered and intricate, is magnified by the fact that even the words “immigrant” and “intégration,” so basic to discussing issues related to diversity, have become very loaded terms, ones that carry different connotations than they did during the generation of the original *Beurs*, in the 1980s, as Moran notes in his article, “Opposing Exclusion” (304).

More specifically, concerning the term, “immigrant,” Moran points out that the often-quoted phrase, “immigrant community,” now consists of three or even four generations. He also notes the frustration of many Maghrebi-French with the French of European descent perception that they are immigrants: “The majority of youths in the suburbs are French nationals, born and raised in France, with little or no connection to the past of their ancestors. They are French, especially in their eyes, even if they are labeled otherwise by certain social commentators...” (304). Moran’s findings, which he documented after interviewing several minority youths, are echoed in many of the attitudes of the protagonists to which I refer in my analyses of the *Beur* fictional works in Chapters 2-4 of my dissertation, namely, *Les Raisins de la galère*, by Ben Jelloun, *Béni, ou le paradis privé*, and *Le Gone du Chaaba*, by Azouz Begag.

Likewise, the term “intégration,” so fundamental to discourses on difference in France, is vexing to some minorities. Moran makes reference to a comment by a 20-year-old Maghrebi-French man, Mohamed, who remarked:

Moi, je comprends pas ce qu’ils veulent dire par l’intégration. Ça, je comprends pas, c’est quoi, l’intégration? C’est d’être né en France, d’avoir grandi en France? C’est l’intégration?...parce que là je suis intégré alors. Je suis né en France, j’ai grandi en France...je suis intégré! C’est quoi alors? C’est travailler pour la France? C’est payer ses impôts et tout?

(Moran 304)

For Moran, Mohamed’s quotation seems to indicate a deep lack of satisfaction with society’s expectations:

The term [*l'intégration*] has come to represent a two-speed society of sorts. While processes of acculturation have occurred in the suburbs, as successive generations of immigrant origins have become ever more deeply-embedded in French society and culture, official discourse has failed to take account of this. For certain inhabitants in the *banlieues*, continued calls for integration represent an unattainable illusion...Complete social access to the Republic appears to remain beyond reach.

(Moran 304)

According to Moran, not only does integration seem out of reach to minorities, they sometimes perceive that the French of European descent are reluctant to facilitate, or even permit, their integration (305).

Nonetheless, there has been substantial progress in the status of the Maghrebi-French in France, evidenced by phenomena at work in the fictional works in Chapter 4, on contexts of integration resembling the Derridean model of hospitality. Yet, in the face of such stark realities as the 2013 riots, it must be acknowledged that the mixed picture of integration in France is so complex that neither the theory of Derrida nor of Foucault suffices to capture the intricacies of the state of integration in France. Nevertheless, the contribution of each theorist with regards to relationships between people and groups sheds light on our study of the interactions between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French.

While diagnosing the state of Maghrebi-French integration is virtually impossible, my research can contribute to the existing body of knowledge on this topic, given the following observations that I have made of factors that ostensibly advance the

status of integration of the Maghrebi-French within French society. In this section, in which I compare and contrast the artistic works discussed in Chapter 4, which reveal generally positive relationships between their Franco-French and *Beur* characters, to the works that evoke the “Foucauldian” model of hospitality as a model for intercultural relationships in France, I will comment on my observations of the factors that I perceive as potentially conducive to promoting Maghrebi-French integration in France. The formulation of a theoretical construct on these factors that contribute to better contexts of integration for the Maghrebi-French may be useful in ameliorating these minorities’ experiences as bicultural citizens of France.

In the analyses of the *Beur* artistic works that I discussed in Chapters 2 through 4, I demonstrated that the *Beur* protagonists in these works seem to fare better, psychologically and functionally, when they achieve some level of desubjectification from the imperatives perpetuated by French society and some of their conservative families of Maghrebi descent. In Chapter 4, “Derridean-like” relationships between the Maghrebi-French and the French of European descent are key, and in some cases, surprisingly cooperative and egalitarian contexts occur, removing the need for this type of desubjectification. The works analyzed in Chapter 3 feature more instances of desubjectification than the ones in Chapter 2, although some of these examples of *Beur* desubjectification are largely psychological in nature, instead of functional. Meanwhile, several of the *Beur* protagonists in Chapter 2, on so-called “Foucauldian” hospitality as a paradigm for intercultural relationships, are severely limited in the degree of desubjectification that they can attain, either because of constraints such as the weight of the past, their unusually young age, or the social limitations implicit to living in *la*

banlieue. The fact that desubjectification allows for the amelioration of the situations of the *Beurs* featured in these works means that to the extent that it is possible, the Maghrebi-French should try to find ways to “remove themselves from themselves,” psychologically, removing hegemonic narratives that direct their conduct to be in line with the “tyranny of the norm,” of their power, and finding ways to affirm their uniqueness, their individual goals, and their dignity and integrity within French society.

An additional conclusion that I have made pertaining to *Beur* desubjectification is that, as I remarked in Chapter 5, on the riots between 1981 and 2010, violent means should be avoided as a way to demand better conditions for the Maghrebi-French, since rioting and other such violent methods of attracting attention to the need for change tend to further desubjectify the Maghrebi-French, legally and perhaps physically, as the French police feel compelled to control instances of rioting and to punish offenders of the common good, even when there is a legitimate cause for the government to change some of their policies towards minorities.

To that end, the following observations of factors that support Maghrebi-French integration, with respect to the situation of the Maghrebi-French in France, are made in the beliefs that Foucault’s concept of *desubjectification* can be very helpful to the Maghrebi-French in terms of their psychological and relational health and autonomy, but that violent means should not be used.

Personal relationships between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French

As demonstrated in Kassovitz's film, *Café au lait*, and Kechiche's film, *L'Esquive*, personal relationships, whether friendly, romantic, or familial or pseudo-familial, between the French of European descent and minorities in France can further integration, since, when each person has a personal stake in his or her relationship with someone of a different racial or cultural background, and when the relationship is sufficiently healthy, each person will likely make the strides necessary to ensure that the relationship is protected from the carelessness of either party, or from haphazard circumstances that may arrive.

For example, in *Café au lait*, since Jamel and Félix, the West African and Jewish men, respectively, are in love with the Martinican-French woman, Lola, they sacrifice each of their desires to be the only man in Lola's life, for the joy that they partake of in acting as concurrent husbands and fathers to Lola and her new child.

Similarly, in *L'Esquive*, the tension inherent to the situation created by Krime's romantic proposition to Lydia is tempered by the fact that, although there are negative stereotypes surrounding Lydia's reputation, ultimately, she is part of a close group of friends, thus, the existing tension that her potential relationship with Krime creates will not necessarily result in her removal from the group.

An optimistic perception of the prospects for integration

In three of the works, Guène's novel, *Kiffe kiffe demain*, James' song, "Banlieusards," and Diam's song, "Ma France à moi," a positive attitude towards the potential for better socio-economic and cultural conditions to come to fruition for minorities can facilitate progress towards the realization of this goal. In particular, in the songs, "Ma France à moi" and "Banlieusards," both from 2008, the female, French-Cyprian, rapper, Diam's, and the male, Haitian rapper, Kery James, respectively, envision a separation between their Frances, characterized by openness, honesty, and effort to make beneficial contributions to society, and the general French society, which has tendencies to be xenophobic. Kery, in particular, admonishes his fellow minorities in France to refuse to surrender their dreams to fate, encouraging them to keep learning, and growing, with the promise that, like many other Maghrebi-French and French people of West African and Antillean descent in France, other minorities can enrich French society, thereby also carving niches for themselves. If one does submit to the failures of integration, and abdicate one's responsibility to fate, one's chance to become part of France, as a full-fledged and participating member, will be diminished, according to James' train of thought.

Likewise, Doria, in Guène's *Kiffe kiffe demain*, comes to this discovery, only in the final segment of the novel, realizing that she has to build on her strengths, rather than harping on her weaknesses. For instance, while she has no father, at least in France, such an important part of traditional Algerian culture, she has a mother, and she realizes that

being part of a single-parent family is not so unusual, nor is it a huge handicap. The more optimistic outlook that she adopts also leads her to look for love where she already seen it expressed, namely, in Nabil, her tutor, rather than imagining it in the more-difficult-to-attain Hamoudi, who ultimately marries another woman.

Awareness of the history of the colonial and post-colonial eras

Additionally, a recognition of the strides already made by the North African community, and the progress still left to be made, can have practical effects on the extent of *Beur* integration, demonstrated most visibly, and practically, by Rachid Bouchareb's 2006 film, *Indigènes (Days of Glory)*. This film called attention to the fact that the North African members of the World War II Free French Forces never received their pensions, from 1959, until 2009, when the French government finally reactivated them. This film, which simultaneously showed the courageous sacrifices made by men from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, then French colonies and protectorates, in order to free France from the stronghold of the Nazi Occupation, from 1940-1945, as well as the heartbreaking extent of discrimination against them from some of the members of the French military, and from French society as a whole, ends with a message at the bottom of the screen, indicating that the French government had, until the time of the film's release in 2007, never paid these North African soldiers the full amount of money that they had secured for themselves while fighting for France against Hitler. It is remarkable that this film, truly part of *le cinéma engagé*," sparked society's consciousness towards

this issue, and brought French society to address this long-neglected duty that France had never fulfilled. In this sense, an examination of history can be truly useful, since it uncovers aspects of the collective Maghrebi-French experience that are not discussed in adequate depth, and these opportunities for examination can unearth areas of correction that need to be studied and addressed.

The importance of this examination of the past is confirmed by Guène, author of *Kiffe Kiffe demain*, who advocates an exploration of colonial and post-colonial issues, in order to deconstruct the mentality that retains the French of European descent in the superior position of colonizer, holding the peoples formerly in the position of the colonized, in deferential and subjugated positions: “Je crois que sortir du schéma colonisateur-colonisé ne sera possible qu’à partir du moment où on fera la lumière sur les histoires occultées à cette époque. Ma génération porte les stigmates des non-dits et des injustices. Je crois qu’il y a encore du travail à faire car c’est surtout les esprits qu’il faut décoloniser,” as cited in an article based on an interview with Laura Ceia-Minjares, “DJ Zaïfe: Remix de la cité du Paradis: Interview avec Faiza Guène, écrivaine” (97).

Education and employment

Nini’s *Ils disent que je suis une Beurette*, analyzed in Chapter 4, is a commentary on the power that educational and employment opportunities have to energize the ability of youth to carve out niches for themselves in French society, an idea also alluded to in James’ “Banlieusards,” featuring images of several successful ethnic minorities, who have found ways to contribute to society in ways that are also respectful of their unique

gifts and identities. In Nini's work, Samia realizes that while it is important for her to become educated in order to be able to one day obtain employment, she is still free to choose a career that is appropriate to her personality and interests. The decision to pursue a career as a cultural activity director leads her to greater opportunities to become more independent of her family, to gain self-respect, and to become more able to support herself, thus growing into a full-fledged member of French society.

Opportunities for the Maghrebi-French to Operate within the System, but in Creative Ways that are Beneficial to Them

Additionally, Nini's work suggests that integration can be facilitated by the acquisition of the skills that the Maghrebi-French need to work within the boundaries of the social systems governing their existence, while at the same benefiting from some of the ways in which the system facilitates their autonomy. Samia, in *Ils disent que*, assures herself more autonomy when she finds that she is able to obey her parents' rules for her social life in general, but bend them to her own advantage.

Political Advocacy

Another avenue to greater integration in France is political advocacy, as suggested in Diam's "Ma France à moi," confirmed by the rapper's own actual participation in politics, and Guène's *Kiffe kiffe demain*. The political action involving the issue over North African soldiers' pensions, provoked by the film, *Indigènes*, also suggests that the

Maghrebi-French can make progress in defending themselves from oppression and discrimination by representing their beliefs and stances in the political arena. Of course, in Ben Jelloun's *Les Raisins de la galère*, his character Nadia does not manage to achieve a position in political office, but she has the hope that one day, a person of immigrant origin will obtain a seat in the European Parliament.

As demonstrated in Chapter 5, it is regrettable that the disenfranchised in France have not acquired access to the channels through which they could express their alienation from French society, and their disappointment with the French government. Arguably, within a democratic country such as France, people disillusioned with the government would ideally be able to seize an opportunity to express themselves, express their needs, and ask for clarification on issues that obscure their understanding of the government's initiatives, or lack of them. If this communication was held in the proper context, and in the proper manner, it may have beneficial effects on the problematic rapport between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French, yet it is possible that some minorities in France may feel that this type of communication would not be as striking, noticeable, and potentially effective as the violent means that a minority of them use in the periods of rioting in the suburbs. It is true that thousands of burning cars are a strong manifestation of discontent, yet how much more effective it would be, if these youth had the chance to submit their concerns to government officials, and even to discuss these issues with them. As a commentator on Simpson's BBC article expressed it, "Rather than laying down the law with heavy-handed tactics, isn't it about time somebody finally sat up and listened to the everyday problems and grievances of

these people and strive to find a solution? Maybe it's time for a different kind of French revolution" (Simpson 5).

Similarly, according to an article in the magazine, *America*, "French Bishops Blame Riots on Decision-Makers," the Catholic bishops of France implored France's politicians to take softer approaches to violence enacted by minorities: "Collective responsibility rests with the political and economic decision-makers," reads a statement signed by the conference of bishops' president, Archbishop Jean-Pierre Ricard of Bordeaux, and issued on November 9, 2005, after the period of rioting in 2005, at a bishops' plenary assembly in Lourdes, the same day, ironically, that Sarkozy had approved the expulsion of foreign-born rioters from France (7).

At this plenary assembly, the bishops also resolved that the Catholic Church has a responsibility to work against social exclusion: "Our choices, individually and collectively, concerning the organization of life in society, can lead us to create or to remove situations of exclusion and ghettoization," read another part of the statement.

Given the proper implementation of such communicative channels, it is possible that the government would suspend the use of its often-arrogant tone towards these minorities, and refrain from using language such as *la racaille*, the term that Sarkozy used to describe some French youth in the suburbs, during the riots of 2005, when he was Minister of the Interior. The use of terms such as *la racaille*, and the evocation of imagery of washing away "scum" by using a high-powered hose in the suburbs, are indicative of a visceral reaction, which may not have been thoughtfully conceived of by Sarkozy, but it is clear that these types of comments reveal a gross insensitivity towards

the concerns of citizens of the French republic, and above all, human beings caught in a very unjust situation in France.

Subsequent to Sarkozy's remarks, according to the article, "Chirac, Lover of Spotlight, Avoids Glare of France's Fires," as published in *The New York Times*, from November 10th, 2005, some luminaries in the *Beur* community, such as Azouz Begag, sociologist, author of *Le Gone du Chaaba*, and *Béni, ou le paradis privé* [analyzed in Chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation], and then-Minister for the Promotion of Equality of Opportunities, advised Sarkozy to "choose [his] words" more carefully, claiming that the visits that Sarkozy made to *les banlieues* were made only for the sake of publicity. Begag criticized Sarkozy for using the term *la racaille*, since many people attributed this rhetoric, featuring *le champ lexical* of scum and hoses, evoking garbage in the streets that had to be hosed away, as one of the causes of the 2005 riots, as well as another term that he used, in his promise to make "war without mercy" against rioters. Like Zebda, who mocked Chirac's 1991 blatant, although seemingly-innocuous, racism in his comment about "le bruit et l'odeur" of the immigrant community, made in Orléans, where his remarks are still quoted, in their song of the same title, analyzed in the second chapter of my dissertation, Begag, another member of the *Beur* artistic community, expressed his rejection of the rhetoric that French politicians used to describe their fellow citizens of immigrant descent.

If Sarkozy and others were able to see these people in a crowd as individuals, worthy of their time, attention, and concern, perhaps it would be more difficult for them to dismiss them as the equivalent of "scum." This tendency, for government officials to see the youth as solely troublemakers, instead of victims with valid concerns, affirms the

idea that human beings tend to dehumanize, delegitimize, and to want to silence people whom they view as inimical to their goals and views. Chirac himself, through the language that he used in his comments on “le bruit et l’odeur” of minorities, in Orléans, also seems to have dehumanized the people he was referring to, seeing them as almost animalistic, as if they were farm animals, emitting noises and emanating smells that were perceived as inconvenient for many French of European descent.

Surely it is within government officials’ power to rise to a higher level of decency and ethical treatment of their citizens, than using this type of language, and demonstrating such hostile attitudes towards minorities. If the French government can hold diplomatic talks with nations that are sometimes politically adversarial to the European Union and the United States, such as Russia, as it did in March, 2014, as it tried to prevent Russia from invading Ukraine, certainly it can make effort to resolve their concerns with its own citizens. One British commentator who wrote a post in response to John Simpson’s article on BBC, “Violence exposes France’s weaknesses,” published on November 7th, 2005, named Luigi Pacelli, asked the rhetorical question:

If the French treat large segments of their own population with the same arrogance they do to the rest of the world, is it really any wonder that it ends in mass rioting? France needs to focus on its domestic affairs and inject some fresh thinking that doesn’t involve referring to citizens as scum. After all, can anyone imagine a UK minister still being in office if they ever used similar language?

(Simpson 3)

The folly of Sarkozy's hard-line, law-and-order, approach towards the inhabitants of the suburbs is demonstrated by several statistics, as illustrated by Moran, in the article, "Opposing Exclusion: the Political Significance of the Riots in French Suburbs (2005-2007)":

A study of prosecutions following the 2005 riots, undertaken by sociologists Beaud and Pialoux (2006, p. 19), revealed that---contrary to Sarkozy's claim that 80% of those involved were "already known to police"---the majority had had no previous dealings with police. It is worth noting that this situation was repeated in Villiers-le-Bel, where it was revealed that of the first youths to be brought before the courts in Pontoise, only one already had a criminal record and this was due to a conviction for driving without insurance...Recent years have seen a rise in violence between the three *quartiers sensibles* that form part of the commune of Villiers-le-Bel...However, despite the existence of these rivalries between different groups within the community, the riots of 2007 saw young people from all three *quartiers sensibles* united in their opposition to the police...Local oppositions, normally intense, were left aside as the riots engendered a community-wide revolt against exclusion and marginalization, perceived to be represented tangibly by the forces of order.

(Moran 302)

The agency of women

The sub-genre of the *Beurette* novel, composed of novels about Maghrebi-French women, seems to be the ideal forum for the type of social change called for by Faïza Guène, as she explains in an interview that Laura Ceia-Minjares conducted with her in 2007, summarized in an article, entitled, "DJ Zaïfe: Remix de la *cit * du Paradis: Interview avec Faïza Guène,  crivaine": change effected by women. Guène comments on her philosophy, which holds women as being responsible for social change:

J'ai toujours dit que le changement appartient aux femmes, il leur fait moins peur qu'aux hommes. Et je crois que cela a un écho dans tous les milieux. Peut-être alors que cela résonne avec encore plus de force dans les milieux défavorisés, car il y a une nécessité de faire changer les choses. De plus, n'oublions pas que malgré les apparences, ce sont les femmes qui ont fait les rapports hommes-femmes d'aujourd'hui, même ceux qui sont problématiques. C'est Amin Malouf qui a écrit que la misogynie se transmet de mère en fils...

(Guène, as cited in Ceia-Minjares 96)

Guène made this comment in response to a lead question from Minjares: "Votre livre se déroule dans un milieu de femmes, des femmes qui prennent la parole, des femmes fortes qui rient, qui souffrent, qui invitent à la réconciliation, tout en essayant dans un univers qui leur semble doublement hostile: d'un côté, c'est la *banlieue*, de l'autre, c'est un monde patriarcal qui étouffe..." (Ceia-Minjares 96). Guène's idea, that it is not necessary to have to recruit men to support feminist causes before women devote themselves to furthering the expansion of their rights, spurs women to be active agents of the change that they wish to see in French society.

The quotation above by Guène, cited in this 2007 interview, evokes the concept of the danger of norms to make people complicit in their subjugation. The power that the perpetuation of norms has to make people feel that they have to execute culturally-encouraged imperatives, even when they run counter to their own interest, makes one think of Bourdieu's concept of *symbolic violence*, discussed in his 1979 *La Distinction*, and mentioned earlier in this dissertation.

The issue of women's rights has great relevancy to the paradigm of Maghrebi-French integration, since Muslim fundamentalism can be an obstacle towards the equal

treatment of *Beurettes* within their own families and social circles. In this sense, women have a great privilege and responsibility in the advancement of Maghrebi-French integration.

Some initiatives that the government had already implemented, as of December 1, 2005

In the article, “Understanding Urban Riots in France,” dated December 1, 2005, Laurence and Vaisse cite some measures that the French government has taken within the last 30 years, since the early 1980s, in order to resolve the periodic turbulence in the riots. Laurence and Vaisse hold that, while many people claim that the French government, clinging excessively to the “republican” model, has not taken action in order to improve conditions in *les banlieues*, France has indeed taken several such measures, some of which are analogous to the American practice of affirmative action: namely, focusing educational resources on the Zones of Educational Priority (the ZEPs); creating zones free of taxes, *les zones franches*, in order to encourage commerce; rehabilitating crumbling housing units in certain areas, through *la politique de la ville*; and mandating that private firms and *les grandes écoles*, such as Sciences-Po in Paris, try to recruit minorities, in order to promote diversity. Additionally, there was one organization formed in order to monitor discriminatory practices, entitled the HALDE, la Haute Autorité de Lutte contre les Discriminations et pour l’Egalité (Laurence and Vaisse 1). In addition, Vaisse and Laurence report that as of 2005, the government was in the process

of tearing down HLMs, and building newer housing units (4). Laurence and Vaisse assert that truly, the French government has made efforts to ameliorate life for minorities, but qualify their statement, by adding that at times, these efforts have not been appropriately implemented (1).

In fact, it is indisputable that some of the government's initiatives have not been fully put into practice. For example, while the government tried to address the grievances of youth to events such as the First Employment Crisis (2006), namely, by proposing *le Contrat du premier emploi* (CPE), the government has not taken adequate action to resolve the problems of racism and social exclusion in the *banlieues* (Sahlins). Indeed, the riots of 2005 revealed that many of the neighborhoods that had been targeted for urban policy improvements were not immune from periods of unrest (Dikeç).

There seems to be another action that the French government could take again, repeating their initiatives of the late 1970s: constructing additional sites of worship for Muslims. Until this period, as Moran writes in the work, *The Republic and the Riots*, there were not many facilities in France where Muslims could practice their religion, and Islam was generally not seen as a threat to French society. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's government fostered the construction of a number of mosques, often hidden in other buildings so as to be inconspicuous, in alignment with the practice of *la laïcité*, with the goal of accommodating the large Muslim population existing in France after the reunification of many North African fathers with their wives and children, circa 1974. Giscard d'Estaing's goal to encourage social order among immigrants was realized, as their integration was indeed promoted, and the threat of an Islamic-based *communautarianisme*, thwarted (Moran 126). Indeed, Moran cites Henri Rey, in the

work, *La Peur des banlieues* (1996), who attributes the construction of these facilities designed for Islamic practice, to the large role that Islam played in the life of many *Beurs* in the 1980s, the generation that initiated the creation of the *Beur* novel. In Islam, many of these youth found a source of community, affiliation, and identity, as they frequented these Islamic associations and religious sites (Moran 126). While subsequent events in the 1980s and 1990s led to many French people's conception of Islam as being linked to Islamism and terrorism (Moran 128), the relative social order that was facilitated by Giscard van d'Estaing's motion to construct religious sites of worship for France's Muslims seems to have been beneficial, in reducing tensions that are obstructive towards integration.

The establishment of social networks, as there were in Marseille, in 2005

Unlike many other French cities, rocked by riots, Marseille remained generally stable throughout the difficult weeks in October and November, 2005. Lawrence and Vaisse allude to the fact that while there are many minorities in Marseille, most of them with origins in the Maghreb and the Comoros Islands, Marseille was relatively calm during the episode of severe rioting in 2005, even as other cities were torn by violence. Lawrence and Vaisse cite studies that claim that the peaceful situation in Marseille was due to the existence of social networks, and the resulting cohesiveness, a result of the work by social workers, associations, and mediators, as well as the smaller socio-

economic gaps existing between people living in the downtown and the suburbs, when compared to these inequalities in other French cities.

Encouraging people from the middle and upper classes to live in the suburbs

Another measure that has been taken in the French suburbs is to create a more heterogenous environment in the suburbs, with respect to social class. Bouclay, in his article, “Grenoble: la Villeneuve, de l’utopie à l’horreur” cites Safar, who proposed inviting people from the middle and upper classes to join the residents in la Villeneuve, in order to balance the social environment there, and to encourage the youth to see models of prosperity (3).

Police training to deal with incidents involving youth

Bouclay’s article on the Villeneuve riots in 2010 also refers to the communist mayor in nearby Echirolles, Renzo Sulli, who claimed that the means that the police take to ensure order should be formalized into a universal policy, which focuses on creating a social link with the youth, in order to decrease friction between the police order and the youth (3).

Closing Remarks

The sensitive, intricate, and dynamic nature of Franco-French---*Beur* interactions notwithstanding, it seems that there are a certain number of measures that have been taken to spur the integration of the Maghrebi-French in France, given the list of factors that I have just listed, as I observed them in both artistic works and through the study of current events. It is true that there is some *décollage* between what occurs in fictional works and in real life, yet given the fact that *Beur* artistic works are generally written by people who have lived as Maghrebi-French in France, it seems plausible to conclude that the measures that these authors promote as beneficial to relationships between the French of European descent and the Maghrebi-French, are, at least in a generalized sense, applicable to real life.

In terms of the future application of these and other strategies, as with any other complex phenomenon in life, there is the potentiality both for tremendous progress, and for crushing disappointment, and there is no set formula for success, since conditions will change over time, and so with them, will the appropriate measures to take. At the same time, it seems rational to suggest, based on Foucault's theory on resistance, postulating that even in adversity, it is better to strive for better conditions, that it is worthwhile to thoughtfully apply measures that will promote healthier interactions between the Maghrebi-French and the French, and the advancement of better treatment of all people who differ from the norm, on a grander scale.

In closing, a message of hope prevails, despite the numerous challenges that exist to the integration of the Maghrebi-French: based on the way in which the integration of

African-Americans within American society occurred slowly and gradually, over several decades, it seems likely that the integration of the Maghrebi-French is in progress, although this progress is extremely slow, and gradual.

More specifically, a *survol* of American history concerning the integration of people of African descent can be instructive when contextualizing the situation in France. As is well known, the way in which people of African descent were treated in the American colonies and during the first century of American history, in the period during which “the peculiar institution” was practiced, before slavery was outlawed at the end of the American Civil War, in 1865, was characterized by egregious human rights abuses, finally put to a stop by an increasingly powerful moral and humane consciousness, in the form of the abolitionist movement. At the time of the writing of Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville’s *De la démocratie en Amérique*, in 1835, he remarked that people of African descent in the United States were largely treated like objects and exploited, if they were not ignored. In France’s colonies, meanwhile, there was an attempt to abolish slavery in 1794, after *la Grande Révolution*, with it being definitively abolished in 1848.

Subsequently, from the 1920s and 1930s, decades during which African-Americans became visible in American culture in the entertainment industry, to the 1950s, when African-American athletes, including Jackie Robinson, became more prevalent, to the present era (2014, at the time of the writing of this dissertation), African-Americans have become represented in an increasingly large number of professions. After emerging in sports, African-Americans started to be featured increasingly in films, contrasting with the 1950s, when the only African-Americans in most films played roles such as trumpet players, like Louis Armstrong. President Lyndon B. Johnson’s Great

Society, conceived of in the mid-1960s, envisioned the foundation of an American middle class, and for the first time in American history, African-Americans were included in this conception of the middle class. The 1980s TV show, *The Bill Cosby Show*, portrays a husband and wife doctor and lawyer, Bill and Clair Huxtable (played by Bill Cosby and Phylicia Rashād), living rather affluently, and giving a complete sense of normalcy to the concept of the African-American upper middle class of the 1980s. It seems that the more that these images of successful and integrated African-Americans appear in American culture, the more that the wider society accepts them as individuals in their own right, slowly eroding racially-based stereotypes. In the last 20 years, since the 1990s, there has been tremendous progress in the official ideology of most Americans concerning African-Americans. While in the 1970s and 1980s, racism was implicit in many attitudes of Americans, it has a steady and strong opposition, as of 2014. A current look at the cover of *People* magazine reveals pictures of Beyoncé, Jay-Z, Rihanna, and other African-American celebrities, on a regular basis.

Based on this evolution in American society, it seems feasible to predict a slow, gradual, but steady improvement in the degree to which the Maghrebi-French are seen, and treated, as integral members of French society. While this path towards integration is taking different forms than it has taken in American society, the prospect for improved degrees of integration in France is promising. French-American basketball player, Tony Parker, and former tennis great, and recording artist, Yannick Noah, and others have been particularly prominent in this path towards integration in France. I recognize the fact that while Yannick Noah and Tony Parker are symbols of success and integration in France, their situation cannot be at all generalized to the vast majority of the Maghrebi-French,

who will never attain this degree of professional success, or cultural acclaim, yet by and large, there has been tremendous progress in the degree to which ethnic minorities in France are accepted, respected, and represented in the larger society.

Another manifestation of the more open-minded mentality in effect in much of France, is found in the fact the French President from 2007 to 2012, Nicolas Sarkozy, is Hungarian-French, with a Hungarian, aristocrat father, and a French mother. Additionally, Sarkozy made a point of appointing several ministers of diverse origins during his *mandat*, including Rachid Dati as the Minister of Justice, who is currently, as of November, 2014, a member of the European Parliament. With these changes, it became clear that the French political class was at last evolving, in terms of diversity, and gender parity.

While racist rhetoric does exist in France, as has been used against the Ministry of Justice, Christiane Taubira, from French Guinea (in South America, but technically part of France), the vast majority of French people reject this type of treatment, and such rhetoric seems to be one of the unfortunate remnants of the French Empire, and that of a fringe of society. Some of the people, and newspapers, who have mocked Taubira, have faced sentencing, and there is a French law punishing incitation to violence, whether sexual or legal, as opposed to the American legal system, which authorizes complete free speech.

One must also ask the question of why there are seemingly greater challenges to integration in France, than there are in the United States, as of the end of 2014. Granted, at the time of the final stages of the writing of this dissertation, in November, 2014, there are significant racial riots in St. Louis and other American cities, over the fact that St.

Louis police officer, Darren Wilson, a Caucasian, was not indicted by a grand jury after the fatal shooting of Michael Brown, an 18-year-old African-American. Globally, however, it seems that racial issues have been negotiated to a more significant degree in the US than in France. It is likely that this more advanced progress in the US is due to the fact that Americans dealt with racially-charged issues from the very genesis of the British colonies in America, and experienced the Civil War (1861-65) and Civil Rights Era (the 1950s and 1960s), at a far earlier time than the French learned to process their attitudes towards the presence of the Maghrebi-French in France (the 1980s and 1990s). For metropolitan French people, for centuries, the presence of French-speaking people of African descent was conceived of as being far from France, thus they did not deal with the way in which they saw them, largely, until the time after family reunification of Maghrebi-French families in the 1970s, and *La Marche des Beurs*, in 1983. There are still vestiges of attitudes tainted by racism and conservatism among some French people of European descent. In the US, by comparison, while the growing process was painful and very slow, Caucasian Americans came to gradually accept African-Americans as their equals and as human beings deserving of respect, largely due to the fact that the process of progress towards this type of acceptance began long ago in the US, as compared to when it did in France. In the United States, despite the fact that the relationships between African-Americans and the police remain tenuous, there is a great difference between the way in which they were perceived and treated during the 1970s, when racist rhetoric was still prevalent, and the current era, when such thinking is steadily opposed, and socially- punished. It thus becomes more understandable why controversial incidents such as suburban riots have occurred with far greater frequency

over the last 30 years in France, than in the US, although, of course, it is deeply regrettable that there is still such racial strife in many French cities. The struggles that France has experienced with its populations of other ethnic backgrounds, have had their counterparts in Spain, the UK, and Italy, thus France is far from being the only former colonial power that has had difficulties in integrating people into the greater society.

As a caveat, I find it essential to state that given the difficulty of changing mentalities, it is important to be pragmatic, taking into account the likelihood of certain people or behaviors to be accepted within the wider culture. When there is progress, there is also resistance, so encountering difficulties on the way to a more full integration of the Maghrebi-French is to be expected, although, of course, these obstacles are not desirable.

Progress is possible, however, through non-violent means, through the representation, in various forms of cultural expression, of members of the minority culture who have succeeded or have managed to become integrated within this society. This progress, in music, the arts, and sports, is encouraging, and encourages people to be more open-minded.

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Appendix A: “Le Bruit et l’odeur” (Zebda, 1995)

“Si j’suis tombé par terre
C’est pas la faute à Voltaire
Le nez dans le ruisseau
Y avait pas Dolto
Si y’a pas plus d’anges
Dans le ciel et sur la terre
Pourquoi faut-il qu’on crève dans le ghetto?”

“Plutôt que d’être issu d’un peuple qui a trop souffert
J’aime mieux élaborer une thèse
Qui est de pas laisser à ces messieurs
Qui légifèrent [legislate] le soin de me balancer
Des ancêtres”

“On a beau être né
Rive gauche de la Garonne
Converser avec l’accent des cigales
Ils sont pas des kilos dans la cité gasconne

A faire qu'elle ne soit pas qu'une escale

On peut mourir au front

Et faire toutes les guerres

Et beau défendre un si joli drapeau

Il en faut toujours plus

Pourtant y a un hommage à faire

A ceux tombés à Montécassino”

“Le bruit et l'odeur

Le bruit et l'odeur

Le bruit du marteau-piqueur {x4} [jackhammer]”

“La peur est assassine

Alors c'est vrai je pénalise

Ceux qui flinguent les mêmes [gun down children]

Qu'ont pas la pelouse [lawn] en bas

Je suis un rêveur

Et pourtant ami j'analyse

Je suis un érudit et je vous dis:

Je suis serbo-croate et musulman

Voilà le hic [problem]

Un prêtre polonais républicain
Et laïque
Et si certains regrettent
De pas être noir de peau
Je n'ai qu'une réponse les gars
Vous avez du pot ("You're lucky")

"L'égalité mes frères
N'existe que dans les rêves
Mais je n'abdique (give up) pas pour autant
Si la peur est un bras qui nous soulève (an arm that lifts us up)
Elle nous décime
J'en ai peur pour la nuit des temps"

"Elle aime Noah
Mais faut qu'y gagne les tournois [the championships]
Elle aime Boli mais a jamais rien aboli {x2}"

"Le bruit et l'odeur
Le bruit et l'odeur
Le bruit du marteau-piqueur {x4}"

“Qui a construit cette route?
Qui a bâti cette ville?
Et qui l’habite pas?
A ceux qui se plaignent du bruit
A ceux qui condamnent l’odeur
Je me présente”

“Je m’appelle Larbi, Mamadou Juan et faites place
Guido, Henri, Chino Ali je ne suis pas de glace
Une voix m’a dit "Marathon" cherche la lumière
Du gouffre j’ai puisé un combat "la bonne affaire"

“J’en ai bavé [I suffered from it] de la peur que j’ai lu dans les yeux
De ceux qui ont trois fois rien et qui le croisaient précieux
Quand j’ai compris la loi, j’ai compris ma défaite
Intégrez-vous disait-elle, c’était chose faite”

“Le bruit et l’odeur
Le bruit et l’odeur
Le bruit du marteau-piqueur {x4”

“Le bruit du marteau-piqueur dans tes oreilles
Tu finis ta vie, elles bourdonnent les abeilles. {x2}

“Le bruit et l’odeur
Le bruit et l’odeur
Le bruit du marteau-piqueur {x4}”

Jacques Chirac:

“Comment voulez-vous que le travailleur français qui travaille avec sa femme et qui ensemble gagnent environ 15 000 FF et qui voit sur le palier à côté de son HLM entassée, une famille avec un père de famille, trois ou quatre épouses et une vingtaine de gosse et qui gagne 50 000FF de prestation sociale sans naturellement travailler. Si vous ajoutez à cela le bruit et l’odeur, eh bien le travailleur français sur le palier, il devient fou. Et ce n’est pas être raciste que de dire cela.

Nous n'avons plus les moyens d'honorer le regroupement familial et il faut enfin ouvrir le débat qui s'impose dans notre pays qui est un vrai débat moral pour savoir si il est naturel que les étrangers puissent bénéficier au même titre que les Français d'une solidarité nationale à laquelle ils ne participent pas puisqu'ils ne payent pas d'impôts.
Le bruit et l’odeur”

Appendix B: “Ma France à moi” (Diam’s, 2008)

“Ma France à moi elle parle fort, elle vit à bout de rêves,
Elle vit en groupe, parle de bled et déteste les règles,
Elle sèche les cours, le plus souvent pour ne rien foutre,
Elle joue au foot sous le soleil souvent du Coca dans la gourde,
C'est le hip-hop qui la fait danser sur les pistes,
Parfois elle kiffe un peu d'rock, ouais, si la mélodie est triste,
Elle fume des clopes et un peu d'shit, mais jamais de drogues dures,
Héroïne, cocaïne et crack égal ordures,
Souvent en guerre contre les administrations,
Leur BEP mécanique ne permettront pas d'être patron,
Alors elle se démène et vend de la merde à des bourges,
Mais la merde ca ramène à la mère un peu de bouffe, ouais.
Parce que la famille c'est l'amour et que l'amour se fait rare
Elle se bat tant bien que mal pour les mettre à l'écart,
Elle a des valeurs, des principes et des codes,
Elle se couche à l'heure du coq, car elle passe toutes ses nuits au phone.
Elle paraît fignante mais dans le fond, elle perd pas d'temps,
Certains la craignent car les médias s'acharnent à faire d'elle un cancre,
Et si ma France à moi se valorise c'est bien sûr pour mieux régner,

Elle s'intériorise et s'interdit de saigner. Non...

C'est pas ma France à moi cette France profonde
Celle qui nous fout la honte et aimerait que l'on plonge
Ma France à moi ne vit pas dans l'mensonge
Avec le coeur et la rage, à la lumière, pas dans l'ombre.

Refrain(x2)

Ma France à moi elle parle en SMS, travaille par MSN,
Se réconcilie en mail et se rencontre en MMS,
Elle se déplace en skate, en scoot ou en bolide,
Basile Boli est un mythe et Zinedine son synonyme.
Elle, y faut pas croire qu'on la déteste mais elle nous ment,
Car nos parents travaillent depuis 20 ans pour le même montant,
Elle nous a donné des ailes mais le ciel est V.I.P.,
Peu importe ce qu'ils disent elle sait gérer une entreprise.
Elle vit à l'heure Américaine, KFC, MTV Base
Foot Locker, Mac Do et 50 Cent.
Elle, c'est des p'tits mecs qui jouent au basket à pas d'heure,
Qui rêve d'être Tony Parker sur le parquet des Spurs,
Elle, c'est des p'tites femmes qui se débrouillent entre l'amour,
les cours et les embrouilles,

Qui écoutent du Raï, Rnb et du Zouk.
Ma France à moi se mélange, ouais, c'est un arc en ciel,
Elle te dérange, je le sais, car elle ne te veut pas pour modèle.

Refrain

x2

Ma France à moi elle a des halls et des chambres où elle s'enferme,
Elle est drôle et Jamel Debbouze pourrait être son frère,
Elle repeint les murs et les trains parce qu'ils sont ternes
Elle se plait à foutre la merde car on la pousse à ne rien faire.
Elle a besoin de sport et de danse pour évacuer,
Elle va au bout de ses folies au risque de se tuer,
Mais ma France à moi elle vit, au moins elle l'ouvre, au moins elle rie,
Et refuse de se soumettre à cette France qui voudrait qu'on bouge.
Ma France à moi, c'est pas la leur, celle qui vote extrême,
Celle qui bannit les jeunes, anti-rap sur la FM,
Celle qui s'croit au Texas, celle qui à peur de nos bandes,
Celle qui vénère Sarko, intolérante et gênante.
Celle qui regarde Julie Lescaut et regrette le temps des Choristes,
Qui laisse crever les pauvres, et met ses propres parents à l'hospice,
Non, ma France à moi c'est pas la leur qui fête le Beaujolais,
Et qui prétend s'être fait baiser par l'arrivée des immigrés,
Celle qui pue le racisme mais qui fait semblant d'être ouverte,

Cette France hypocrite qui est peut être sous ma fenêtre,
Celle qui pense que la police a toujours bien fait son travail,
Celle qui se gratte les couilles à table en regardant Laurent Gerra,
Non, c'est pas ma France à moi, cette France profonde...
Alors peut être qu'on dérange mais nos valeurs vaincraient...
Et si on est des citoyens, alors aux armes la jeunesse,
Ma France à moi leur tiendra tête, jusqu'à ce qu'ils nous respectent.”

Appendix C: “Banlieusards” (Kery James, 2008)

On n'est pas condamné à l'échec, voilà l'chant des combattants
Banlieusard et fier de l'être, j'ai écrit l'hymne des battants
Ceux qui n'font pas toujours ce qu'on attend d'eux
Qui n'disent pas toujours c'que l'on veut entendre d'eux
Parce que la vie est un combat
Pour ceux d'en haut comme pour ceux d'en bas
Si t'acceptes pas ça tu n'est qu'un lâche
Lève toi et marche !!!
C'est 1 pour les miens, arabes et noirs pour la plupart
Et pour mes babtous, prolétaires et banlieusards
Le 2, ce sera pour ceux qui rêvent d'une France unifiée
Car à ce jour y'a deux France, qui peut le nier ?
Et moi je serai de la 2^{ème} France, celle de l'insécurité
Des terroristes potentiels, des assistés
C'est c'qu'ils attendent de nous, mais j'ai d'autres projets qu'ils retiennent ça
Je ne suis pas une victime mais un soldat
Regarde moi, j'suis noir et fier de l'être
J'manie la langue de Molière, j'en maîtrise les lettres
Français parce que la France a colonisé mes ancêtres

Mais mon esprit est libre et mon Afrique n'a aucune dette
Je suis parti de rien, les pieds entravés
Le système ne m'a rien donné, j'ai du le braver
Depuis la ligne de départ, ils ont piégé ma course
Pendant que les keufs me couraient, eux investissaient en bourse
J'étais censé échouer, finir écroué
La peau trouée... Et si j'en parle la gorge nouée
C'est que j'ai nagé dans des eaux profondes sans bouée
J'ai le ghetto tatoué, dans la peau, j'suis Rebel comme Ekoué
Mais l'espoir ne m'a jamais quitté
En attendant des jours meilleurs, j'ai résisté
Et je continue encore
Je suis le capitaine dans le bateau de mes efforts
J'n'attend rien du système, je suis un indépendant
J'aspire à être un gagnant donné perdant
Parce qu'on vient de la banlieue,
C'est vrai, qu'on a grandi, non Les yeux dans les bleus mais des bleus dans les yeux
Pourquoi nous dans les ghettos, eux à l'ENA
Nous derrière les barreaux, eux au sénat
Ils défendent leurs intérêts, éludent nos problèmes
Mais une question reste en suspens, qu'a-t-on fait pour nous-mêmes ?
Qu'a-t-on fait pour protéger les nôtres
Des mêmes erreurs que les nôtres ?

Regarde c'que deviennent nos petits frères
D'abord c'est l'échec scolaire, l'exclusion donc la colère
La violence et les civières, la prison ou le cimetière
On n'est pas condamné à l'échec
Pour nous c'est dur, mais ça ne doit pas devenir un prétexte
Par honneur pour ce qu'ont accompli nos parents
On n'peut pas baisser les bras
Malgré les déceptions et les dépressions
Suite à la pression, que chacun d'entre nous ressent
Malgré la répression et les oppressions
Les discriminations, puis les arrestations
Malgré les provocations, les incarcérations
Le manque de compréhension, les peurs et les pulsions
Leur désir, de nous maintenir la tête sous l'eau
Transcende ma motivation
Nourrit mon ambition
Il est temps que la 2^{ème} France s'éveille
J'ai envie d'être plus direct, il est temps qu'on fasse de l'oseille (argent)
C'que la France ne nous donne pas on va lui prendre
J'veux pas brûler des voitures, mais en construire, puis en vendre
Si on est livré à nous-mêmes, le combat faut qu'on le livre nous-mêmes
Il ne suffit pas de chanter, « regarde comme ils nous malmèment »
Il faut que tu apprennes, que tu comprennes et que t'entreprennes

Avant de crier « c'est pas la peine ! Quoi qu'il advienne, le système nous freine ! »

A toi de voir ! T'es un lâche ou un soldat ?

Brandis l'épée du courage, entreprend et bat toi !

Banlieusard et fier de l'être

On n'est pas condamné à l'échec

Diplômés, éclairés ou paumés

En 4x4 en tromé (metro), gentils ou chantmé (mechant)

La banlieue a trop chômé, je sais c'que la France promet

Mais que c'est un crime contre notre avenir que la France commet

C'est pour les discriminés, souvent incriminés

Les innocents, qu'ils traîtes comme de vrais criminels

On a l'image des prédateurs, mais on est que des proies

Capables mais coupables et exclus de l'emploi

Si j'rugis comme un lion c'est qu'j'compte pas m'laisser faire

J'suis pas un mendiant, j'suis venu prendre c'qu'ils m'ont promis hier

Même s'il me faut 2 fois plus de courage, 2 fois plus de rage

Car y'a 2 fois plus d'obstacles et 2 fois moins d'avantages

Et alors ?! Ma victoire aura 2 fois plus de goût

Avant d'pouvoir la savourer, j'prendrai 2 fois plus de coups

Les pièges sont nombreux, il faut qu'j'sois 2 fois plus attentif

2 fois plus qualifié et 2 fois plus motivé

Si t'aimes pleurer sur ton sort, reste pas à côté d'moi

J'te l'répète, je n'suis pas une victime et un soldat

Banlieusard et fier de l'être
On n'est pas condamné à l'échec !

On est condamné à réussir
A franchir les barrières, construire des carrières
Regarde c'qu'ont accompli nos parents
C'qu'ils ont subi pour qu'on accède à l'éducation
Ou serait-on sans leurs sacrifices ?
Comme Mahmoud pour Thays.....
Bien sûr que le travail a du mérite
O combien j'admire nos pères
Manutentionnaires mais fiers
Si on gâche tout où est le respect ?
Si on échoué où est le progrès ?
Chaque fils d'immigré est en mission
Chaque fils de pauvres doit avoir de l'ambition
Tu peux pas laisser, s'évaporer tes rêves en fumée
Dans un hall enfumé
A fumer des substances qui brisent ta volonté
Anesthésient tes désirs et noient tes capacités
On vaut mieux que ça !
Rien n'arrête un banlieusard qui se bat
On est jeunes, forts et nos sœurs sont belles

Immense est le talent qu'elles portent en elle

Vois-tu des faibles ici ?

Je ne vois que des hommes qui portent le glaive ici

Banlieusards et fiers de l'être

On n'est pas condamné a l'échec !

Ce texte je vous le devais

Même si j'l'écris le cœur serré

Et si tu pleures, pleure des larmes de détermination

Car ceci n'est pas une plainte, c'est une révolution !

Apprendre, comprendre, entreprendre

Même si on a mal!

Se lever, progresser, lutter

Même quand on a mal!