‘Briser tous les cadres’: Theatre Censorship and Decolonisation in Britain and France (1950-1969)

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Abbreviations

BL – British Library

BnF – Bibliothèque nationale de France

IMEC – Institut mémoire de l'édition contemporaine

LCP – Lord Chamberlain's Plays

LCP Corr – Lord Chamberlain's Plays Correspondence

LCP LR – Lord Chamberlain's Plays Licence Refused

V&A – Victoria and Albert Performance Archives

Declaration of originality

I declare that this is my own work and has not been published or submitted elsewhere in any capacity.

Abstract

The matter of 'decolonising culture' has become an integral part of twenty-first century cultural discourse and theatre is no exception to this. But how did theatre censors react to decolonisation when it was at its height during the 1950s and 1960s? This thesis provides the first comparative study of theatre censorship in Britain and France in relation to decolonisation from 1950 to 1969. I broaden the existent definition of censorship and apply this to plays which both addressed the question of decolonisation and also adopted a 'decolonising' form. A binary definition of 'hard' and 'soft' censorship is established and referred to throughout the thesis. However, ultimately, these two categories of censorship overlap and the case studies used challenge this framework, showing the plethora of ways in which censorship can be defined. The corpus puts little-known and widely-performed texts, written from both the metropolitan and colonial contexts, into dialogue with one another. This includes playwrighting from Mona Brand, John Arden, Barry Reckord, Michel Vinaver, Hocine Bouzaher and Kateb Yacine. Within these plays, the thesis tracks recurring themes and techniques, as well as different tactics employed to circumvent censorship while also addressing decolonisation. I illustrate the extent to which censorship is linked to colonialism via its desire to single out an 'univocal' language, fix meaning, categorise and essentialise human beings, thoughts and beliefs. Colonialism sought to control everyday experience and conceptions of time for capitalist and cultural gain, the plays in this thesis serve as examples of how artistic creation attempted to break away from these impositions. Theatre that attempted to *briser les cadres* was considered as a threat not only to the perpetuation of the colonial project but also to British and French conceptions of national identity and language.

> Par décolonisation, j'entends l'abolition de tout préjugé, de tout complexe de supériorité dans l'esprit du colonisateur, et aussi de tout complexe d'infériorité dans l'esprit du colonisé.[1]

Chapter 1: Understanding and Contextualising Theatre Censorship and Decolonisation

An article in the British political and literary magazine *Time & Tide* entitled 'Things Are Worse in France' appeared in April 1961.[2] The author Tom Milne, filling in for British theatre critic and campaigner against theatre censorship Richard Findlater, stated:

> France's desperate need now for such [political] theatre is demonstrated by the fact that, among senior playwrights, Britain's candidates look sadly silly alongside Beckett, Sartre and Genet: whilst, among the juniors, France can really only offer one – Michel Vinaver – on the same level as Britain's growing galaxy. Vinaver, moreover, has only had one play produced. His second, a political satire entitled *Les Huissiers* has never been performed. Scarcely surprisingly in a country where Roger Planchon, after receiving a government subsidy for his company, was discreetly blackmailed into dropping Adamov's abrasive satire on capitalist society.[3]

The suggestion of this article is that theatre censorship, here illustrated by the use of blackmail, was worse in early 1960s France than in Britain. Although this may be true, Bill Schwarz claims that in Britain there was a 'stunning lack of curiosity' in relation to the events of decolonisation as they were taking place.[4] This thesis will seek to investigate these claims, comparing theatre censorship in the two national contexts in relation to decolonisation during the period 1950 to 1969. According to the aforementioned French playwright Michel Vinaver, censorship is 'un chancre, lié aux régimes atteints par le virus autoritaire.'[5] The definition of censorship used in this research seeks to expand on Vinaver's understanding, looking at the connection between colonialism, categorisation and both external and internal forms of censorship.

The aims of this research are to investigate how theatrical responses to colonialism and decolonisation can be linked to censorship and how this shaped writers, authorities, directors, actors, and the public by the relationships between them. It will be important to acknowledge the specificities of theatre as a medium and the role that it played, and still plays, in both physical and ontological decolonisation. Moreover, how these two concepts, censorship and (de)colonisation, fit together and can be seen as mutually influential, is an essential element I

[1] Léopold Sédar Senghor, 'La Décolonisation: condition de la communauté franco-africaine', *Le Monde* (04/09/1957).
[2] IMEC file VNV 157.2 Tom Milne, 'Things Are Worse in France', *Time & Tide* (20/04/1961). Press file.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Bill Schwarz, 'The Only White Man in There: The Re-racialisation of England, 1956-1968', *Race & Class* 38.1 (1996), 65-78 (p. 65).
[5] Michel Vinaver interviewed by Rebecca Infield, (07/08/2018) in response to the question 'A votre avis, existe-t-il une censure positive, qui peut aider à la création artistique?'

consider. The main research questions are concerned with how theatre that attempted to break away from Western and colonial literary traditions was treated in terms of censorship. Were some writers targeted more than others? If so, why? Did some dramatic forms prove more problematic for censors than others? What does the censoring of these plays say about colonial ideology? How did playwrights or writing for the theatre attempt to 'decolonise' theatre and address the subject of decolonisation?

This thesis endeavours to illustrate the connivance between censorship and colonial tyranny. As the following three chapters explore, both censorship and colonisation seek to control cultural expression and homogenise national identity and language. Sue Curry Jansen relates censorship to a means of elitism, noting 'all histories of censorship are histories of elites.'[6] Censorship studies are therefore dedicated to 'recovering the "lost lives" of ordinary people' who 'advocate unconventional, heretical, or revolutionary ideas.'[7] The writers in this corpus can be seen to promote such ideas, defying colonialism and breaking away from colonial patterns of thinking, created by censorship which works to see 'minds changed, cultivated, or colonised to facilitate the purposes, priorities, and plans of distant elites.'[8] I also consider censorship as its original definition: a means to 'censure' or record and categorise people. In a similar way to censorship, colonialism functioned by using fabrication, concealment and the repression of ideas deemed to hinder its progress. This was achieved by re-packing and re-narrating how the colonial 'Other' should be perceived in order for Europeans to differentiate themselves. Spectacle and theatre, as a genre, took part in the construction of the colonial narrative but the process was all-encompassing, infiltrating all aspects of daily life.

Chapter Structure

This introductory chapter to the thesis seeks to outline the different forms of censorship in theory and in practice during the decolonisation of British and French empires from the period covering 1950 to 1969. It provides an overview and appraisal of existent scholarship on censorship and decolonisation. I argue that although much has been written on the concepts separately, they are rarely seen together and not in relation to theatre production. Drawing on a range of definitions from scholars such as Pierre Bourdieu, Judith Butler, Michael Holquist, Sue Curry Jansen and Nicholas Harrison I identify patterns in censorship analysis such as the more recent trend to consider the concept not as a unilateral process but as a bilateral

[6] Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship: The Knot that Binds Power and Knowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 28.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid., p. 24.

engagement. The thesis considers the apparent binary of 'hard' censorship meaning official or state-imposed versus 'soft' censorship relating to self-censorship, financial pressures and more insidious forms. It also highlights how more recent research focuses on the positive outcomes of censorship and that it can sometimes be a force for creative good, as explored in the final chapter. In terms of decolonisation, this chapter acknowledges the extensive, and ever-increasing, wealth of knowledge on the subject, often in explicit dialogue with contemporary social and political concerns. Using postcolonial and decolonial thinkers such as Achille Mbembe and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o I will introduce both the concrete and the ontological meanings of decolonisation: the removal of European presence in colonial territories but also its attempts to move beyond colonial ways of thinking, writing and creating in order to develop postcolonial perceptions of the world.

The next chapter, '"Off the Reckord": Tracking the Lord Chamberlain's Response to Decolonisation' contests the idea that the Lord Chamberlain served as a transparent and fair censor for theatre in Britain. It argues instead that the position was consistently subject to pressures from the government and often motivated by self-interest on the part of the named individual who took up the role. Frequently considered as an example for 'hard' censorship, the chapter takes four playwrights/collectives as case studies to show how the censor responded to decolonisation in Britain. Mona Brand, John Arden, the collaborative improvisation *Eleven Men Dead at Hola Camp* and Barry Reckord are used to illustrate the wilful repression of plays which sought to reveal the British government's brutal repression of independence movements in Malaysia and Kenya as well as shed light on the problems of inter-racial integration at home. The chapter examines the value judgements and alterations imposed on these writers and the disdain with which new forms of postcolonial theatre were met. These whitewashing tactics were enforced, not only by the Lord Chamberlain, but also by theatre directors and the British press who are viewed as imposing forms of 'soft' censorship, resulting in the self-censorship of writers such as Reckord. As decolonisation progressed, the Lord Chamberlain's power waned, culminating in the abolition of the position in 1968. The latter years of state theatre censorship present more underhand, off-the-record dealings with writers suggesting the British establishment's desire to hold onto declining imperial values and beliefs, even when it publicly claimed not. Their failure to do so was humiliating and therefore not to be documented at any cost. I argue that political censorship on behalf of the Lord Chamberlain was one of a number of reasons behind a perceived lack of plays concerning decolonisation, despite the role of the theatre censor being supposedly apolitical.

Chapter Three, 'Censoring the Contrapuntal: Decolonisation in *Les Coréens* (1956), *Les Huissiers* (1957) and *Iphigénie Hôtel* (1959) by Michel Vinaver' looks at French writer and dramaturge Michel Vinaver's experiences with censorship, both 'hard' and 'soft'. Vinaver's early work deals with French decolonisation both in metropolitan France and abroad, aiming to highlight the Fourth Republic's failure to quash independence movements and the government's preoccupation with modernisation and industrialisation at home. This chapter examines the initial 'hard' censorship imposed on Vinaver's first play *Les Coréens* (1956) and its impact upon both his subsequent plays and his career more widely. It uses memory studies by Michael Rothberg to draw parallels between Holocaust writing, the experiences of Nazi Occupation and dramatic techniques used by Vinaver to denounce colonialism, especially in Algeria. It also argues that Vinaver's work can be read in light of Edward Said's concept of a 'contrapuntal' perception of events and literature which Vinaver uses to underline the perspective of colonised subjects on stage. This involved presenting the audience with postcolonial readings on questions such as time, modernity and work and sets them in counterpoint to established, Western ways of living. Despite little having been written about him in Anglophone scholarship, Vinaver's contribution to Francophone postcolonial theatre is undeniable and his three early plays receive much less critical attention than his later, more contemporary writing.

Chapter Four, 'Francophone Algerian Writing as Constitutive Censorship: Kateb Yacine's *Le Cercle des représailles* (1959) and Hocine Bouzaher's *Des Voix dans la casbah* (1960)', follows the trend in more recent censorship scholarship which argues that censorship can be productive, or what Helen Freshwater, building on the work of Michel Foucault, has called 'constitutive censorship'.[9] Algerian writers Hocine Bouzaher and Kateb Yacine both wrote and published collections for the theatre in French whilst the Algerian War of Independence was taking place. Both authors were subject to 'hard' censorship: Kateb's play was unable to be staged in Paris in 1958 and Bouzaher's work was the only printed dramatic work to be censored in France during the war of independence. However, I consider the 'soft' censorship also at play, focusing on the imposition of language and writing in French as a form of censorship but via which Bouzaher and Yacine are able to express postcolonial ideas on time, women and blasphemy. The chapter also looks at the actor/director Jean-Marie Serreau, his friendship with Kateb and his involvement the left-wing Catholic movement, particularly in relation to Emmanuel Mounier, who founded the journal *Esprit*.

[9] Helen Freshwater, *Shadow Play: The Censorship of the Stage in Twentieth Century Britain* (unpublished PhD thesis: University of Edinburgh, 2002), p. 53.

Corpus

Mona Brand's *Strangers in the Land* (1954) provides a non-British (Australian) but European focused criticism of decolonisation in Malaysia. It acts as a straightforward example of 'hard' censorship imposed by the British establishment embodied by the Lord Chamberlain, a supposedly apolitical figure appointed by Parliament. However, Brand's case study also begins the thesis's discussion around the imposition of dramatic form and informal censorship. John Arden's work is well-known in Britain, however his play *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* (1959) has not been considered in light of censorship before or in comparison with the French production of his play, staged in Paris by Peter Brook. His voice also provides a British perspective on decolonisation, writing from the metropole. *Eleven Men Dead at Hola Camp* has been chosen as, although some references are made to the performance in passing, little has analysed the endeavour in detail or considered it in relationship to postcolonial theory. It also provides an insight into the experience of Black actors trying to find work in London during the late 1950s and early 1960s and the clash between what white, London-based directors and critics understood by decolonisation and the lived experience of being non-white in Britain at that time.[10] Barry Reckord's knowledge of decolonisation was first-hand and his autobiographical plays reflect his personal experience of censorship in the British theatre scene as a Jamaican writer. His case highlights the censorship imposed on more local issues in Britain as opposed to decolonisation wars taking place in what were perceived to be geographically far-off parts of the empire. Reckord is also a product of the colonial system, educated at Cambridge University providing the thesis with an example of both the benefits and consequences of such a colonial education.

The choice of Michel Vinaver in a thesis about decolonisation and censorship is clear: his first three plays all detail decolonisation as it was happening and they were all censored or refused a staging at their time of writing. His work emanates from the metropole, writing about decolonisation from France and therefore acts as a salient example of French state censorship imposed 'at home'. However, his work also draws together links between the Holocaust and decolonisation and calls into question accepted forms of theatre expression in France during the 1950s and 1960s. Moreover, despite considerable recognition in France, his work remains

[10] I have chosen to capitalise the word 'Black' throughout the thesis as it refers to the idea of race as an ideological construct rather than a scientific means of classification. In 2021, when this thesis was completed, many publications have adopted this same stance as 'Black' denotes the not skin colour but a political demand for justice and civil rights. Publications such as the *New York Times* have adopted this means of expression into their writing guidelines. For more information on this see: Nancy Coleman, 'Why we're capitalizing Black', *The New York Times* (05/07/2020).

overlooked in Anglophone scholarship, aside from the extensive work of David Bradby.[11] Although an unlikely figure to represent France due to his expulsion under the Vichy Regime, Vinaver is the only author in this thesis writing 'from' the metropole. His perspective is essential as it provides an insight into how censorship was carried out in France and its impact upon Vinaver's writing style and his depiction of decolonisation on the French stage.

Kateb Yacine's work is an obvious choice when considering writing on Algerian decolonisation and his plays are well-known by Francophone scholars. His voice provides an insight into living in colonial French Algeria to counterbalance those writing from the metropole. Kateb has spoken widely on his experiences of censorship both in France and independent Algeria. His work is also a good example of using French language as a means of resisting or repressing its colonial imposition. His refusal of literary form, which earned him the nickname 'Kateb le rebel' by Jacqueline Arnaud, also coincides with this thesis's interest in breaking the frame of literary traditions.[12] Kateb's place in this thesis serves as a comparison with another Algerian writer, Hocine Bouzaher. Bouzaher's work has received very little critical attention and his experience of 'hard' censorship makes him a more than appropriate choice for this corpus. Similarly to Kateb, his writing in French acts as an example of 'writing back' with a view to deconstructing or decolonising French-imposed ways of viewing religion, women and time. Although writing in French, the inclusion of these two authors in this corpus is to highlight the censorship imposed outside of France. Until the end of the Algerian War of Independence in 1962 Algeria was considered as a part of France and many Algerians had the right to French citizenship, although this was often limited certain categories such as pied-noirs (white, French people born in Algeria) and Algerian Jews. Nevertheless, this thesis considers Algeria as a separate country to France, and these two playwrights as Algerians, not as French citizens, despite France's occupation of Algeria during the period they in which they were writing. In this way, I am able to highlight how writers from outside of metropolitan France pushed back against censorship and how their writing was considered by French critics.

Cadre

The title of this thesis, 'briser tous les cadres' is taken from a quote by Kateb Yacine.[13] The word *cadre* can be defined in a plethora of ways including as an 'entourage, milieu, contexte'

[11] There are many examples of this which I will refer to in the third chapter, but his most famous and comprehensive work is: David Bradby, *The Theatre of Michel Vinaver* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1993).
[12] Charles Bonn and Richard Bjornson, 'Kateb Yacine', *Research in African Literatures*, 23. 2 (1992) 61-70 (p. 61).
[13] Kateb Yacine, 'Le Rôle de l'écrivain dans un état socialiste', *Anthologie des écrivains maghrébins d'expression française* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1965), pp. 179-8.

but also as something which 'borne, limite l'action de quelqu'un, de quelque chose; ce qui circonscrit un sujet.'[14] In terms of artistic creation, a *cadre* features in painting, film, staging and performance as a means of framing an artwork, a camera shot or the situation in which a play is seen on stage. The plays studied here not only sought to break away from the confines of theatrical presentation and imperial definitions of culture, they also envisaged a way of 'decolonising' theatre. This process can be seen as a *recadrage* of how literature is defined and a shift in perspective away from the colonial gaze and realignment of the position from which historical events are told, as these plays illustrate. I argue that plays which aimed to *décadrer* literature from the view of European life as central and non-European life as peripheral were actively censored by British and French governments and critics.[15] The plays in this corpus highlight the extent to which the world is 'multi-centred' and that life is lived centrally everywhere.[16] In other words, the practices, events, languages and ways of life that take place outside of the perceived European 'centre' have just as much significance and importance as those which are the subject and focus of Western media, cultural production and political discourse. In terms of censorship, *cadre* resonates with the need to categorise, define and control both peoples and cultural production. Therefore, theatrical writing which sought to break out of these *cadres* is repressed and censored. Several of the writers in this corpus can also be seen to actively defy *cadres* of identification, instead taking on multiple personas, names and functions. I will investigate whether plays were censored because they did not conform to the 'règles culturelles de la représentation' or because they posed a political threat to the government at their time of performance: breaking away from the myth of decolonisation as a peaceful process.[17]

Censoring Decolonisation/ Decolonising Censorship

As will be established, a wealth of literature exists on the subjects of censorship and decolonisation but considering them together and in relation to theatre has not been explored.[18] Furthermore, there does not exist, to my knowledge, a comparative study of the two national

[14] https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais 'cadre' [first accessed 01/02/2021].
[15] Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media (2nd ed.)* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 140.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Roland Barthes, 'L'effet de réel', *Recherches sémiologiques le vraisemblable* 11.1 (1968) 84-89 (p. 87).
[18] Several studies exist on censorship and literature during the Algerian War of Independence such as Benjamin Stora, *La Gangrène et l'oubli* (Paris: La Découverte, 1991) who consideres the stastics of censorship and Anne Simonin's *Le Droit de désobéissance: Les Éditions de Minuit en guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: La Découverte, 2012) considers French publishers experiences of censorship. Research on theatre censorship and colonialism in India has been undertaken by Nandi Bhatia in 'Censorship and the Politics of Nationalist Drama', *Acts of Authority, Acts of Resistance: Theatre and Politics in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004).

contexts in relation to theatre censorship, despite the above quotation's suggestion that it was a matter considered both by playwrights and theatre critics during the late 1950s and early 1960s.[19] When comparing these two historical contexts, that of the end of the British and French empires, it is essential to remember that although there were similarities, these were very different colonial and metropolitan situations. Therefore, the circumstances of decolonisation are not monolithic and will require careful contextualisation. The main point of study is the treatment of plays dealing with decolonisation during the aforementioned period, from a literary, critical perspective. This thesis will seek to prove the extent to which perceptions of passive decolonisation are misguided and that it is those acts of resistance, in theatrical expression, which censorship has sought to silence.

Initially I will highlight instances where the censor directly interfered with plays which were striving to reveal the realities (facts, figures etc.) and violence surrounding decolonisation: this is labelled as 'hard' censorship. I will then go on to consider how the imposition of form, as Bourdieu calls it, acts as a kind of censorship or *cadre* for playwrights to break away from.[20] Deconstructing national identity and Western models of behaviour have been central to postcolonial theatrical writing. I identify examples of writers who attempted to provide alternative ways of considering the everyday as a concept via the themes of time and work. The question of language is also integral to decolonisation: language was used a means of control during the colonial era and non-European languages were often banned from use by the French and the British. The thesis aims to illustrate instances of theatrical writing where colonial language, initially seen to be censoring creative expression, can be subverted and used as a means of resistance.

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[19] Debra Kelly and Martyn Cornick have investigated the French presence in London in *A History of the French in London: Liberty, Equality, Opportunity* (London: University of London Press, 2013) but not in specific relation to theatre. Several studies have looked at the construction of minority identities in the two nation states: Gino G. Raymond and Tariq Modood, *The Construction of Minority Identities in France and Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) and John Edwards and Jean-Paul Révauger, *Discourse on Inequality in France and Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998). In terms of the arts, Michael Scriven and Monia Lecomte provide an extensive comparative analysis of television in*: Television Broadcasting in Contemporary France and Britain* (Oxford: Berghahn, 1999). In *Britain, France and the Decolonisation of Africa* (London: UCL Press, 2017) Andrew W.M. Smith and Chris Jeppesen analyse the political implications and differences of decolonisation policy although their focus is neither on censorship neither on theatre. On comparisons of empire propaganda see**:** T. G. August, *The Selling of Empire: British and French Imperialist Propaganda 1890-1940* (Westport: CT, 1985). For a more general comparison of the decolonisation processes: W.H. Morris-Jones and Georges Fischer (eds.) *Decolonisation and After: the British and French Experience: Independence and Dependence* (London: Cass, 1980). The 2019/2020 exhibition in Paris, 'Paris/Londres: Music Migrations (1962-1989)' curated by Martin Evans and shown at the Palais de la Porte Dorée, compared the two capital cities and the experience of colonised and ex-colonised subjects coming to the metropoles in relation to musical production and expression.

[20] See chapter 'Censorship and the Imposition of Form' in Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, transl. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), pp. 137-162.

The playwrights, texts and case studies for this thesis are wide-ranging and diverse in both their approach to decolonisation and their experience of censorship. I have aimed to present both European and non-European perspectives as well as a number of different geographical examples of decolonisation. We will see that the perception of what could be considered as 'good' theatre or 'bad' theatre was inflicted upon both white and Black dramatists, often censored not only for the *content* of their plays but also for the *way* in which the drama was presented. The subsequent three chapters will focus on how decolonisation was represented in the theatre of the 1950s and 1960s in English and in French.

This timeframe has been chosen in order to focus on decolonisation as it was taking place and how writing for the theatre reacted to these events. Although decolonisation had begun prior to 1950, for instance when Indian independence from the British was achieved in 1947, the plays chosen for study here focus on the wave of decolonisation which spread across Africa and Asia in the 1950s and 1960s at a seemingly unstoppable pace.[21] This research is interested in how playwrights depicted these events and the reaction of censors to this form of cultural production, which, by 1950, had started to become more apparent in the French and British metropoles.

Problematising the Theatrical Archive

The ephemeral nature of theatre could be seen as hindering its potential for archival research given that theatre is never performed the same way twice. Therefore, how can we accurately archive theatrical material? This is partially answered by the fact that, as this section considers, archives are not only housed in libraries and catalogues. How do we decide what is worth archiving but also what constitutes an archive? Despite the limits of archives, discussed below, research for this thesis has required considerable archival research in European libraries including the British Library and the Victoria and Albert archives in London, Warwick University's Modern Records Centre, the Institut mémoires de l'édition contemporaine (IMEC) in Caen and the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) in Paris. I have consulted notebooks, correspondence, playscripts, newspaper reviews as well as conducted interviews (one via email and one in person) with the censored playwright, Michel Vinaver. Archives of course also come with gaps and I have been careful to remember that not everything is always recorded in the written form. In order to get around this I have considered the different ways

[21] Andrew W.M. Smith and Chris Jeppesen provide a helpful map of the African continent with dates of independence for each country. From this it is possible to see that a large proportion of (although not all) countries gained independence between 1950 and 1970. See: 'Introduction: Development, contingency and entanglement: Decolonization in the conditional' in *Britain, France and the Decolonisation of Africa* (2017), p. 3.

in which history is recorded including through oral transmission such as stories and legends but also via the body and movement.

I used these research methods to answer several research questions: what in particular caused plays to be censored? Were specific themes or subjects systematically banned? Which reasons were given by censors for the imposition of censorship? Do traces of censorship remain at all and if so what shape do they take? Can instances of self-censorship be recognised?

Using archives to study theatre and decolonisation brings up a number of issues, as has been explored by scholars such as Rebecca Schneider:

> If we consider performance as 'of' disappearance, if we think of ephemerality as 'vanishing', and if we think of performance as the antithesis of 'saving', do we limit ourselves to an understanding of performance predetermined by a cultural habituation to the patrilineal, West-identified (arguably white-cultural) logic of the Archive?[22]

The theatre archive, as we understand it, can be said to replicate colonial behaviours, focusing only on a European understanding of what is worth conserving. Schneider notes that

> documentation and preservation of text *as against performance* became imperial tools for the subjugation of colonized populations. It was important for the colonisers that live performance, oral traditions of transmission and embodied, performance-based ways of worlding the past, would *not* remain as valid indicators of history. The tracks of embodied knowledge, and body-to-body transmission in ritual, theatre, dance, sport, song, and folklore, had to be debased in relationship to the official history given only to exist in document – and object-based archives – archives controlled by the coloniser […] the body, was not to be considered an adequate archive, and bodily ways of knowing were not to be acknowledged as knowledge.[23]

This question of how to document history is essential to our understanding of censorship and decolonisation. Several of the playwrights in this corpus question the means via which history is recorded and told, it will therefore be essential to acknowledge that the archives I have used come with limits and do not necessarily represent the entirety of a historical event. This will also help to remind us that the written archive is not the only way of considering history and theatre together; theatre is passed on via the body, oral history as well as by notes, manuscripts and letters. Diana Taylor broadens out what we should consider as 'performance' and theatre, in order to decolonise theatre practices:

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[22] Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (Oxford: Routledge, 2001), p. 100.

[23] Rebecca Schneider, *Theatre & History* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 55-56. Diana Taylor looks further at the body as archive in *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003). More on the links between colonialism and the archive can be seen in Richard Thomas, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (New York: Verso, 1993) and Ann Laura Stoller, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

> 'Performance,' on one level, constitutes the object/process of analysis in performance studies, that is, the many practices and events—dance, theatre, ritual, political rallies, funerals—that involve theatrical, rehearsed, or conventional/event appropriate behaviours.[24]

Until the 1970s, performance that was not recognised as such by a Western audience was therefore left out of the cultural archive.[25] Similarly to how our understanding of what can be classified as an archive, or what can *be* archived has changed, our definition of censorship has also been broadened out to encompass not only the physical removal or prevention of a work, but also an internal process that cannot always be documented, as I explore below.

It is important to remember unprinted forms of the archive but also how an archive came into being. As Helen Freshwater points out, **'**the researcher should foreground the agency of the interpreter and acknowledge that this [the archive] is a recontextualisation of the past rather than a reconstruction.'[26] The researcher should be aware of potential removal, or censorship, of an archive before it is rendered public. Freshwater has written on the complexity of working with archives when investigating censorship, with particular reference to the Lord Chamberlain, the official British theatre censor until 1968 whose archive is now held at the British Library.[27] Her work highlights the restrictions of archival based research on this specific collection and, as I explore in the next chapter of this thesis, suggests that the archivists and staff of the Lord Chamberlain were complicit in the censoring of certain elements of the office's papers; a censoring of the censor's archive. This is evidenced in 'considerable disarrangement' and the possibility that some elements have been intentionally removed and new material inserted, during transportation of the files from the Lord Chamberlain's residency at St James's Palace to the British Library (then British Museum) in the 1990s.[28] Freshwater cites the example of a newspaper cutting reviewing Rolf Hochhuth's *Soldiers* (1967) from 1970 which was found amongst the Lord Chamberlain's materials, two years after the office had officially closed.[29] This discovery suggests that other, more incriminating items from the papers concerning theatre censorship could have been removed prior to making the collection public. Therefore, it is important to remember that although these materials are fascinating, the 'full story' behind the fate of each play is perhaps not available and there may be missing papers within the files.

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[24] Diana Taylor, *The Archive and The Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (2003), p. 3.
[25] Ibid., p. 8.
[26] Helen Freshwater, 'The Allure of the Archive' *Poetics Today* (2003) 24.4 729-758 (p. 739).
[27] Ibid.
[28] Helen Freshwater, 'The Allure of the Archive' (2003), p. 740. See footnote 'After the abolition of the Lord Chamberlain's censorship function, the files were purportedly closed and left untouched until John Johnston began his research on *The Lord Chamberlain's Blue Pencil* (1990), prior to their preservation at the British Library.'
[29] Ibid. See footnote 18 relating to the play *Soldiers* by Rolf Hochhuth.

Similarly, Todd Shepard discusses the complexities of accessing archives relating to the Algerian War of Independence and their intentional destruction at the end of French colonial rule.[30] Shepard displays the plethora of ways that French colonial authorities used and abused archives including drowning, burning, throwing away and allowing them to be stolen.[31] Further to this, archivist Sonia Combe discusses how, up to the present day, access to French archives concerning Algeria remains difficult and it is almost impossible to know what has been withdrawn from public consultation.[32] She notes that twenty percent of documents on the subject of Algeria (so 4000 boxes) have been deemed 'non-consultable' and that the reading room where these archives must be examined, named the 'Tour de Paris' only allowed in thirty-nine readers in 1992 and forty-four in 1993.[33] Nevertheless, with the 2018 declaration by Emmanuel Macron in which he recognised France's use of torture during the Algerian war and the killing of doctoral student Maurice Audin, access to these archives is set to become easier in the future.[34]

Thomas Postlewait reinforces the difficulty of using archives to research theatre, by noting that even if we have considerable contact with a play's history (performance scripts, newspaper reviews, directors' notebooks and so on) this does not mean that we have an accurate picture of the play's performance. He highlights the danger of 'compounding our mishandling of the documentary record' and as a result 'we sometimes adopt contextual and causal explanations that are inadequate, even inappropriate.'[35] As researchers in the archive, it is often easy to fall into the trap of looking for something that is not there and twisting the archival materials to our own advantage.

Studying printed archival material from the 1950s and 1960s is also not entirely reliable due to developments in technology including the use of the telephone. In the case of the Lord Chamberlain, conversations pertaining to certain edits or cuts in plays were no longer recorded (as they had been in the earlier generations of Lord Chamberlains and censors more widely) meaning that as a researcher, I did not have access to the complete treatment of playscripts by

[30] Todd Shepard explores this is in his article '"Of Sovereignty": Disputed Archives, "Wholly Modern" Archives, and the Post-Decolonization French and Algerian Republics, 1962-2012', *The American Historical Review*, 120. 3 (2015), 869-883.
[31] Ibid., p. 869.
[32] Sonia Combe, *Archives interdites* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994).
[33] Ibid., p. 241.
[34] Sylvie Thénault, 'Dérogation générale et déclassification des archives contemporaines: Le Cas d'Audin et des disparus de la Guerre d'indépendance algérienne', *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 74.3/4 (2019) 687-709. See also: 'Emmanuel Macron décide de faciliter la déclassification des archives de la guerre d'Algérie', Le Monde (09/03/2021):https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2021/03/09/emmanuel-macron-decide-de-faciliter-la-declassification-des-archives-de-la-guerre-d-algerie_6072475_823448.html. [First accessed 15/03/2021].
[35] Thomas Postlewait, *Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), p. 61.

the Lord Chamberlain's office. Despite these potential hindrances, using archives to locate or identify censorship is key to the methodology of this work. This has proved to be a fruitful and fascinating process which brought up many questions about how to define 'official' censorship given the instances of coercion, threat and blackmail that I have unearthed.

Why Theatre?

The choice of these playwrights to use theatre as a means of expressing their decolonisation message is not coincidental. Spectacle, performance and theatricality were essential parts of the colonial ideology and the means of its transmission. Nicolas Bancel highlights the presence of 'cabaret' shows in Paris at the turn of the century and in the inter-war period featuring Black fighters, Arab dancers and Cambodian ballerinas.[36] These shows sought to 'exoticise native bodies', a means of 'othering' those on stage, in relation to the Parisian audience.[37] The colonial exhibitions or *expositions universelles*, which took place all over Europe during the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries, also had a significant role to play in the justification of the colonial project. These exhibitions brought colonial subjects from all over the world to be displayed in Europe as a means of entrenching the differences between the supposedly 'civilised' Western world in comparison to those who were considered as 'uncivilised' or savages. As Sandrine Lemaire and Pascal Blanchard point out in relation to French colonialism, the goal of these exhibitions was to 'inform, illustrate and convince' the public of the benefits of their colonies.[38] These differentiation messages were achieved via the importation and installation of entire 'villages' in places such as the Bois de Vincennes in Paris where Europeans could visit and watch colonised people 'perform' daily tasks. Colonised individuals lived in these constructed areas alongside animals such as camels and monkeys, furthering their exoticism via staged 'performances'.[39]

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[36] Nicolas Bancel, 'The Colonial Bath: Colonial Culture in Everyday Life (1918-1931)' in Pascal Blanchard, et al., *Colonial Culture in France Since the Revolution,* transls. Alexis Pernsteiner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 200-208 (p. 204).

[37] Ibid.

[38] Sandrine Lemaire and Pascal Blanchard, 'Exhibitions, Expositions, Media Coverage and the Colonies (1870-1914)' in Pascal Blanchard, et al. (eds.), *Colonial Culture in France since the Revolution,* (eds.) (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), p. 90. Pascal Blanchard et al. also explore this in more detail in *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires* transl. Teresa Bridgeman (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008). Katelyn E. Knox also examines the impact of these exhibitions on children's literature in 'Civilized into the Civilizing Mission: The Gaze, Colonization, and Exposition Coloniale Children's Comics', *Race on Display in 20th and 21st Century France* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016), pp. 21-43. For a more specific analysis of the 1924-1925 colonial exhibition in Britain see: Daniel Mark Stephen, "'The White Man's Grave": British West Africa and the British Empire Exhibition of 1924-1925', *Journal of British Studies,* 48.1 (2009), 102-128. For a more modern summary of 'Human Zoos' in relation to theatre see: Lenore Manderson, 'Humans on Show: Performance, Race and Representation', *Critical African Studies* 10.3 (2018), 257-271.

[39] Sandrine Lemaire and Pascal Blanchard, 'Exhibitions, Expositions, Media Coverage and the Colonies (1870-1914)' (2014), p. 91.

However, in the wake of the First World War and the increasingly difficult economic situation for Europeans following the Wall Street Crash in 1929, enthusiasm in the colonial project waned and required a 're-branding'. This change in approach was evident in the 1931 Paris exhibition, and others like it at the same time, as Elizabeth Ezra points out, the exhibition 'constructed and promoted a unified identity for *la plus grande France,* imparting to the French a sense of belonging to a greater global community with a common purpose.'[40] Although still maintaining the difference and distance between colonial performer and European spectator, the emphasis was put on how France benefited from the colonies more concretely. The fabrication of materials and products used in France became the focus of this exhibition as opposed to showcasing France's dominance, as had been the case previously. These images of the colonised as 'Other' were reinforced by advertising and branding materials which used stereotyped depictions to sell their products: 'French entrepreneurs and their designers depicted Africans and Asians in ways that not only corresponded to how they perceived them visually, but also corresponded to the roles that they wanted them to fill in the empire.'[41] Writing for the theatre therefore allowed the colonised writer to return the colonial gaze and (re)claim the stage as a site of postcolonial expression. It means the writers in this corpus can use the colonial framework of the theatre as a means of transmitting an anti-colonial, or 'decolonised' message.[42]

In terms of censorship, theatre has often been targeted and viewed as a potentially 'dangerous' means of artistic expression. As Christopher Balme notes, 'censorship implies a deep conviction about the political potency of the theatrical gathering.'[43] In the case of Britain, it was the last artform to see official censorship removed in 1968 via the abolition of the Lord Chamberlain. Film and television censorship was separated from the British government in 1913 with the establishment of the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC), a non-governmental organisation.[44] In France, censorship was state-imposed, upheld by Napoleon

[40] Elizabeth Ezra, *The Colonial Unconscious* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018), p. 22.
[41] Dana S. Hale, 'French Images of Race on Product Trademarks during the Third Republic' *in The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France*, (eds.) Sue Peabody, and Tyler Stovall (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 131.
[42] Some postcolonial scholars have referred to this process as 'writing back' meaning taking works from the canon in order to highlight their colonial over or undertones. Theatre, as a structure or genre, could be seen to work in the same way here; a colonial structure repurposed and adopted for a postcolonial message. For more on this concept see: John Thieme, *Postcolonial Con-Texts: Writing Back to the Canon*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2002).
[43] Christopher Balme, *The Theatrical Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 16
[44] For more on television censorship in Britain: James C. Robertson, *The British Board of Film Censors: Film Censorship in Britain, 1896-1950* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), Julia Petley, *Film and Video Censorship in Modern Britain*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011). For press, Chandrika Kaul (ed.), *Media and the British Empire* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), in particular the chapter by Joanna Lewis and Philip Murphy

and then extended with great force during the nineteenth century as explained by Robert Goldstein.[45] Goldstein highlights the fact that theatre in particular was targeted by the government for censoring as although a large proportion of the population remained illiterate, 'they were not blind and thus were perceived as highly susceptible to subversive imagery, which was, moreover, viewed as having a far greater visceral impact than was the written word.'[46] The 'danger' of the theatre becomes apparent when looking at the violence provoked by theatre during the nineteenth century. Sean McEvoy focuses on several examples of theatre riots from the fifteenth century until the present day, citing cases in both France and Britain. He argues that it due to the 'live' nature of theatre and because 'what is on the stage, does not stay on the stage' that theatre is both a site of political (and sometimes violent) expression, but also the target of censorship.[47]

During the Second World War, state censorship in France came under the control of the Nazis and writers such as Jean Anouilh famously found ways of criticising the Germans using classical plays such as *Antigone* in 1944, without falling victim to censorship.[48] The Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) saw the re-instatement of censorship via the various versions of the 'état d'urgence' in 1955. This included the right to ban theatrical productions deemed as a running contrary to France's need to maintain the idea that 'L'Algérie, c'est la France', as then Ministre de l'Intérieur François Mitterrand infamously pronounced in 1954: the colonial ideology went hand in hand in censorship. Louis Brenner points out that, in France, censorship and the policing of knowledge was part of the colonial framework.[49] The 'état d'urgence' was symptomatic of this colonial censorship as it enabled,

> la fermeture de lieux publics, tels que des salles de spectacle, des cafés ou des salles de réunion, l'interdiction de réunions ou rassemblements, la confiscation des armes détenues par des particuliers, le contrôle de la presse, des publications, des émissions de radio ou encore des projections de cinéma et des représentations théâtrales.[50]

This meant that plays could be prevented from publication, stopped before and during performance or even 'saisies' if they were already published and printed. As expressed by David Bradby, '[in 1958] no French theatre would touch a play presenting the conflict [the

'"The Old Pals' Protection Society?" The Colonial Office and the British Press on the Eve of Decolonisation', pp. 55-69.

[45] See: Robert Goldstein, 'Fighting French Censorship, 1815-1881', *The French Review*, 71.5 (1998), 785-796.

[46] Ibid., p. 785.

[47] Sean McEvoy, *Theatrical Unrest* (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 5.

[48] This is explored in detail in the third chapter of this thesis.

[49] Louis Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge: Religion, Power, and Schooling in a West African Muslim Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

[50] Sylvie Thénault, 'L'état d'urgence (1955-2005). De l'Algérie coloniale à la France contemporaine: destin d'une loi', *Le Mouvement Social*, 218 (2007), 63-78 (p. 64).

Algerian War] from the Algerian perspective', the result of this being that Algerian writer, Kateb Yacine's first staging of *Le Cadavre encerclé* had to be in Brussels, to be explored in the final chapter.[51] No 'official line' was taken concerning theatre censorship and decolonisation in Britain, although the Lord Chamberlain certainly had a role to play in the upkeeping of the myth of peaceful decolonisation, as the next chapter shall explore.

These aforementioned instances can be viewed as 'hard' censorship, but many other forms of 'soft censorship' were also at work during both the Algerian War of Independence and the end of British colonial rule in Africa, the Caribbean and Asia. These include self-censorship or *autocensure*, which is more difficult to detect than 'hard' censorship. This can be defined as an author either consciously or unconsciously disallowing themselves to write about something or write in the way they wanted to. As Sylvie Ducas notes, 'les censures du texte [sont] *à la fois subies et consenties* par l'écrivain parce qu'elles relèvent de la relation à autrui, qu'il s'agisse d'un agent du champ littéraire (éditeur, critique, public…) ou d'un lecteur plus proche du cercle intime et de la sphère privée.'[52] One of the most famous theatrical examples of this is Jean-Paul Sartre who 'pensait situer l'action [de sa pièce] en France/Algérie et la repoussa en Allemagne par crainte de la censure',[53] in reference to the staging of his play *Les Séquestrés d'Altona* in 1959.[54] However, this thesis will argue that colonialism also acted as a means of imposing self-censorship, as the case of Barry Reckord in the next chapter illustrates.

In France, anti-colonial publications and publishing houses such as *Les Temps modernes*, *Présence Africaine*, *Esprit*, Editions Maspero and the Editions de Minuit worked to combat the state-imposed censorship and denounce the violence being committed, particularly in Algeria.[55] It was often via these publications that forms of postcolonial theatre and writing

[51] David Bradby, 'Images of the Algerian War on the French Stage 1988 – 1992', *Theatre Journal* 46.1 (1994), 375-384 (p. 375).
[52] Sylvie Ducas, 'Censure et autocensure de l'écrivain', *Ethnologie française*, 36.1 (2006), 111-119 (p. 111). For more on how self-censorship function see: Sonia Zlitni-Fitouri, 'Censure, autocensure et stratégies de détournement: le cas de Rachid Boudjedra', *Communications* 106.1 (2020), 55-65.
[53] Jean Carduner, 'Les Séquestrés d'Altona', *The French Review*, 34.6 (1961), 598-599 (p. 598).
[54] The play is critical of France's involvement in Algeria, in particular the brutal methods of repression such as torture. However, to avoid censorship, Sartre situated the play in Germany, just after the end of the Second World War making its criticism more universal.
[55] A wealth of scholarship exists on French anti-colonial publishing. A selection includes: Howard Davies, *Sartre and 'Les temps modernes'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), Anne Simonin *Le Droit de désobéissance: Les Editions de minuit en guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: La Découverte, 2012), Ruth Bush, 'Book-publishing at *Présence Africaine'* in *Publishing Africa in French: Literary Institutions and Decolonisation 1945-1967* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016), pp. 56-91, Hugh McDonnell, 'Complicity and Memory in Soldiers' Testimonies of the Algerian War of Decolonisation in *Esprit* and *Les Temps Modernes', Memory Studies*, 13. 6 (2020). 952–968 and Bruno Guichard, Julien Hage, Alain Léger (eds.), *François Maspero et les paysages humains* (Lyon: A plus d'un titre, 2009).

more generally were published. As we shall see in the final chapter, the work of actor and director Jean-Marie Serreau was essential to the location, promotion and staging of many Francophone postcolonial playwrights. In Britain, anti-colonial and anti-racism publications and movements had begun in the late 1920s during the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. This saw the creation of the *International African Opinion* attached to the International African Service Bureau and the League of Coloured People, founded in 1931. There was also *The Negro Worker* founded in 1928 and edited by George Padmore although this dissolved in 1937.[56] In the 1950s, radio programmes such as *African Writers' Club* (first established in the 1950s but not broadcasting until 1962) and the presentation of anti-colonial plays both at the Royal Court theatre and by the Unity Theatre did contribute to public awareness about decolonisation. Benjamin Poore points out the lack of plays written about British decolonisation at the time in which it was happening: 'In number and variety, […] recent plays on empire easily outstrip the cycle of British Empire plays of the 1960s and 1970s, which were staged when decolonization was still a recent memory […] Why should this be so?'[57] Not only was decolonisation 'a recent memory' but it was still taking place at this time, especially during the 1960s. In the next chapter I will explore how the Lord Chamberlain contributed to this apparent paucity of plays written in Britain concerning decolonisation from 1950 to 1969.

One reason for this is perhaps that the plays which denounced colonialism did not do so overtly. A common method for avoiding censorship is the use of hypothetical or counterfactual situations. Keir Elam points out that 'dramatic worlds are *hypothetical* ("as if") constructs, that is, they are recognized by the audience as *counterfactual* (i.e. non-real) states of affairs but are embodied as if in progress in the actual here and now.'[58] Therefore if the audience are aware that the action taking place before them on stage is potentially *counterfactual* but taking place in the 'here and now' there is a direct relationship to the present without over-labouring the relevance of the action on stage. This ability for the stage to present 'hypothetical' constructs could explain why it is so often used as a vehicle for political expression:

> As a live medium, theatre is not limited to the spoken word. It is inherently tied to the unspoken and the unspeakable: it exploits silence, site, the body, gesture and objects in order to speak to, for and against. By connecting directly with the communities to which they speak, theatre and performance interrogate anew the convention of representing human rights abuses as unspeakable, the unspoken expectations and

[56] A number of anti-colonial and anti-racism publications did exist in Britain but did not have the some longevity at those in France. In addition to *Negro Worker*, writers also published work via the 'League Against Imperialism' including C.L.R. James. See: Priyamvada Gopal, *Insurgent Empire: Anticolonial Resistance and British Dissent* (London: Verso, 2019), pp. 320-395.
[57] Benjamin Poore, *Theatre & Empire* (London: Palgrave, 2016), p. 5.
[58] Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 102.

> assumptions that drive forms of human rights advocacy, and the forms of unspeakability at the heart of certain political histories.[59]

Thus, it is the *flexible nature* of theatre that lends itself so well to political issues that are difficult to address. François Périer, director of the 1965 production of Jean-Paul Sartre's anti-colonial play, *Les Séquestrés d'Altona*, noted that 'la liberté d'expression au théâtre n'est pas un problème nouveau. L'auteur dramatique utilise l'un de ses personnages comme porte-parole […] pour exprimer des vérités qui seraient probablement soumises à la censure si elles faisaient l'objet d'un livre.'[60] Therefore, theatre is able to get away with criticism of elite power in ways that printed literature cannot.

But why is theatre so powerful? Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o notes that 'drama is closer to the dialectics of life than poetry and fiction' but it is perhaps because the act of seeing a play is a communal, shared experience making it different to reading a novel or a poem as well as the potential for contagion or interaction between actors and audience.[61] The theatre play text is itself a *re-creation,* a new combination of elements from the existing world configured into a new world of its own, but that world, once created, does not control the unlimited variations of individual productions coming from this basic text.[62] Therefore we are presented, not with a 'mirror up to nature', as Hamlet stated, but instead a 'new world' with elements recognisable from our own world. Nevertheless, it is also this close link with reality which renders theatre so volatile, open to political action and consequently a threat to the status quo. British playwright Edward Bond points out that: **'**All theatre is political […] and theatre always emphasises the social in art. The audience judges in the same complex way that is judged in ordinary life.'[63] Bond goes on to assess that theatre allows us to 'look at things [we] would normally run from in fear, turn from in embarrassment, prevent in anger, or pass by because they are hidden, either purposely or innocently. So audiences respond with all the faculties of their consciences that determine their social and private lives.'[64] It is the proximity to reality, or at least a world the audience is familiar with, that makes theatre so pertinent and potentially dangerous in terms of political unrest and disturbing the peace.

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[59] Mary Luckhurst and Emilie Morin, 'Introduction: Theatre and the Rise of Human Rights', in Mary Luckhurst and Emilie Morin (eds.), *Theatre and Human Rights after 1945: Things Unspeakable* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 6.
[60] (BnF) File 4-SW-1393 Thérèse de Saint-Phalle, [unknown title], *le Figaro Littéraire* (9/9/65).
[61] Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. *Decolonising the Mind* (Suffolk: James Currey, 1986), p. 54.
[62] Michael Y. Bennett, *Analytic Philosophy and the World of the Play* (Oxford an New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. xiii-xiv. [my emphases].
[63] Edward Bond cited in Sean McEvoy, *Theatrical Unrest* (Oxford: Routledge, 2016), p. 2.
[64] Ibid.

Sally Charnow, referring to the context of the French Third Republic, indicates that when a government feels threatened this leads to increased political repression of literary and artistic work, therefore the more politicised the repertory, the more often censorship is invoked.[65] Audiences are confronted with situations they can recognise and so are encouraged to apply what they have seen to the world beyond the onstage action. Anthropologist Victor Turner continues this idea as: 'The stage drama […] is a meta-commentary, explicit or implicit, witting or unwitting of the major social drama of its social context (wars revolutions, scandals, institutional changes.)'[66] Theatre, therefore, allows the unsaid to be said within a 'safe' context, because it is portrayed as fiction but with underlying tones of reality. It is perhaps for this reason that, in Britain at least, state theatre censorship remained in place for longer than any other form of centralised artistic censorship. Moreover, as described by Ngũgĩ, the state and the theatre have always been interlinked: 'The struggle between the arts and the state can best be seen in performance in general and in the battle over performance space in particular.'[67] Thus, for as long as the concepts of state and theatre have existed, there has always been a power struggle in terms of what is acceptable to be presented and what should be kept quiet.

Ngũgĩ continues to note that one of the first things the British outlawed in Kenya was a performance ceremony entitled Ituika in 1895, as it was taken as a challenge to the colonial empire's power.[68] In the fourth chapter of this thesis, we shall see how the same was true in French Algeria, where the practice of *Garagûz*, intended to mock political and religious leaders, was banned by the French authorities almost immediately after the conquest. Theatre and performance are therefore considered dangerous not because of what happens or could happen on the stage at any one time, but rather the control of continuous access and contact with the public. Censorship of improvisation in particular rules out this possibility of spontaneous audience interaction and ensures nothing unexpected will appear on stage without the consent of the authorities, the theatre management or funding bodies. In contrast with printed literature or cinema, because of the live nature of theatre, no two theatre performances are the same whereas the same film or book can be seen or read any number of times. It is this unpredictability of theatre that makes it such a danger or a threat to authorities. It is also the lack of control over a performance that makes theatre a 'struggle between the power of

[65] Sally Charnow, *Theatre, Politics, and Markets in Fin-de-Siècle Paris: Staging Modernity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 139.
[66] Sean McEvoy, *Theatrical Unrest* (2016), p. 16.
[67] Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, 'Enactments of Power: The Politics of Performance Space' in Biodun Jeyifo (ed.), *Modern African Drama* (London and New York: Norton, 2002), p. 434.
[68] Ibid., p. 436.

performance in the arts and the performance of power by the state – in short, enactments of power.'[69]

Thus, it would seem that playwrights chose to express decolonisation via the theatre because of the intrinsic link between staging and power.[70] As Jean-Paul Sartre noted in relation to writing about the Algerian War, 'c'est quand je suis en colère que j'écris pour le théâtre.'[71] Theatre acts as a means of engaging directly with an audience, an ability to depict events which reflect reality but under the guise of a hypothetical or counterfactual scenario. However, theatrical representations are unpredictable and therefore perceived as a potential threat to how events are portrayed and remembered. This potential to destabilise accepted narratives of history and dominant world-views is of particular interest for the playwrights in this thesis. It is this unpredictability and *way* of remembering or identifying that censorship sought to impose, often via violent action or refusal on behalf of the state. However, this was not the only way that censorship manifested itself.

Definitions of Censorship

In an article published by the British newspaper *The Guardian* in 2005, the Irish journalist Mary Kenny claimed that censorship means when 'you absolutely cannot access a particular text or piece of material because the authorities withhold it.'[72] This comment was made in reference to the banning of the show *Jerry Springer – The Opera*, streamed by BBC2 which received over 45,000 complaints from Christian groups and resulted in Roly Keating, then controller of the channel, going into hiding to protect himself and his family. The tensions between theatre, religion and censorship are a key focus of this thesis and will be explored further in chapter four. However, in terms of definitions of censorship, this example proves to

[69] Ibid., p. 439.

[70] Nevertheless, cinema, novels and the press were also targets of censorship when addressing decolonisation. The film *La Bataille d'Alger* (1966), the testimony by Henri Alleg *La Question* (1958), *Les Temps modernes* (review run by Sartre and seized by the government on several occasions in 1960-1961) were all censored by the French government either during or even after the Algerian War of Independence. Other examples of film censorship at the time were Alain Resnais's film *Muriel* (1959) and Jean-Luc Godard's *Le Petit soldat* (1960) neither of which was given a licence for public exhibition until 1963. For a detailed account of film censorship during the Algerian conflict see: Maria Flood, *France, Algeria and the Moving Image: Screening Histories of violence 1963-2010* (Cambridge: Legenda, 2017) in which she argues that knowledge of the 17 October 1961 massacre remained hidden from the public for so long thanks to the censorship of films such as Jacques Penijel's, *Octobre à Paris* (1961). She also references the censor of Paulette Péju's novel, *Ratonnades à Paris* published alongside *Les Harkis à Paris* by the Editions François Maspero in 1961.

[71] Jean-Paul Sartre cited in François Perier, 'Pourquoi je monte un chef d'œuvre' *Nouvel Observateur*. http://referentiel.nouvelobs.com/archives_pdf/OBS0043_19650908/OBS0043_19650908_027.pdf. [First accessed 10/10/2017].

[72] M. Kenny, 'Sense, not Censorship', *The Guardian*, (10/01/2005).

be overly simplistic when we consider it in light of the advancement of scholarship on the subject.

Laurent Martin reflects on the origins of the word censorship as 'la fonction du *censor* antique, la dignité du magistrat romain chargé du cens, du recrutement du sénat et de la surveillance des mœurs.'[73] Sue Curry Jansen, also cites the ancient origins of the word, however she calls attention to the dual meaning of censorship both ensuring that 'nothing immoral, heretical, or offensive to government' was published in written form or as 'dramatic pieces' and 'to estimate, rate, assess, be of opinion, judge and reckon.'[74] Jansen also notes the close relationship between the 'census' and the 'censor' in Ancient Rome; the census counted and classified people whereas the 'censor' assessed and classified the products of people's minds; ideas and their surrogates, books.[75] This opinion-based censorship which seeks to classify people is key to this thesis's understanding of censorship and decolonisation, as colonialism sought to regulate identity and fit people into pre-determined hierarchies and categories. As Hale notes:

> During the Third Republic, business owners adopted a common definition of race that separated humans into four categories based primarily on physical characteristics. The four races, according to a formulation greatly popularized by racial theorist Gustave Le Bon, were white, yellow, red, and black—in descending order of intelligence, beauty, culture, and moral qualities.[76]

These categories served to justify and entrench the colonial project, as Edward Said says: "they" were not like "us", and for that reason deserved to be ruled.[77] Further to this, censorship works to impose what Jansen calls a single, 'univocal' discourse[78] just as colonialism 'narrated' the nation in a particular way, as expressed by Homi Bhabha.[79] Said notes that the power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them. Most importantly, these narratives block or censor 'grand narratives of emancipation and enlightenment of mobilised people in the colonial world to rise up and throw off imperial subjection.'[80] Censorship can therefore be seen both as a function of the colonial project but also as acting in a similar way to colonialism.

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[73] Laurent Martin, 'Penser les censures dans l'histoire', *Sociétés et Représentations*, 21 (2006) 331-345, (p. 334).
[74] Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship* (1991), p. 14.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Dana S. Hale, 'French Images of Race on Product Trademarks during the Third Republic' *in The Color of Liberty : Histories of Race in France*, (eds.) Sue Peabody, and Tyler Stovall, (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 131-14 (p. 132).
[77] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1993), pp. xi-xii.
[78] Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship* (1991), p. 197.
[79] Homi Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 1990).
[80] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), p. xiii.

The academic perception of censorship seems to have undergone a real shift in perspective in the mid-1990s to the early 2000s. This could perhaps be explained the availability of information via the internet and twenty-four hour news media opening up the power-knowledge bind, and allowing individuals access to a variety of information sources. It could also be due to the censored person's or persons ability to raise awareness of their experiences via these news types of media. Prior to these technologies, censorship was perceived as institutional, state-imposed and often embodied by one individual or governmental body. In his book on the Lord Chamberlain, Richard Findlater provides an example of how theatre censorship was understood in 1960s Britain; it was perceived as a one-way action, with writers, artists being portrayed as the victims, with little agency or dialogue with censorial bodies.[81] However, writers such as Matthew Bunn, Helen Freshwater, Michael Holquist, Sue Curry Jansen, Nicholas Harrison, Richard Burt to name but a few, have deconstructed this seemingly unilateral approach, although their work only applies these new understandings of censorship to European situations, often overlooking censorship imposed during colonialism and decolonisation. Nicholas Harrison for example states that in France, 'the *de facto* absence of theatre censorship from 1906 was endorsed legislatively only in 1945' and at no other point in France's contemporary history, therefore entirely overlooking the censorship imposed during the Algeria War of Independence (1954-1962).[82]

Matthew Bunn refers to this new approach to censorship as 'New Censorship Theory', which suggests that not only can censorship be enforced by a whole range of agents but it can also be unconscious and even a force for good and creativity, in some cases.[83] Moreover, since the abolition of state censorship in liberal Western democracies most censorship takes place within the 'networks of communication, in the form of specialized languages, genre conventions, and euphemising strategies.'[84] Richard Burt invites us to suspend our usual conception of censorship which considers the process as a 'removal' and/or a 'replacement'.[85] He suggests that we, instead, visualize censorship as a matter of 'dispersal and displacement' and take less of a top-down approach, putting forward a pluri-factorial explanation when

[81] Richard Findlater, *Banned!: A Review of Theatrical Censorship* (London: Macgibbon and Kee Ltd, 1967).
[82] Nicholas Harrison, *Circles of Censorship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 35.
[83] Matthew Bunn, 'Reimaging Repression: New Censorship Theory and After' *History and Theory,* 54.1 (2015), 25-44. The recent publication, Catherine Brun and Philippe Roussin (eds.), 'Post-censure(s)', *Communications* 106.1 (2020) also considers the way censorship scholarship has evolved and the term can now be understood as an 'un élément omniprésent de la réalité sociale.' 'Liberté d'expression et nouvelles théories de la censure' in 'Post-censure(s)', *Communications* 106.1 (2020), 17-32.
[84] Matthew Bunn, 'Reimaging Repression: New Censorship Theory and After' (2015), p. 38.
[85] Richard Burt, '(Un) Censoring in Detail: The Fetish of Censorship in the Early Modern Past and the Postmodern Present' in Robert C. Post, *Censorship and Silencing: Practices of Cultural Regulation* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1998), p. 17.

considering censorship.[86] These factors include education, racism, and structures of media ownership and finance, state secrecy, regulations regarding privacy, or the extraordinary powers governments have always granted themselves during wars.[87] We therefore need to go beyond the initial statement that censorship is merely something withheld by 'the authorities' but that it can also be imposed by more informal 'gatekeepers' such as education, racism, media ownership, finance and political correctness.

A further shift that has come into public debate since the late 1990s to mid-2000s has been the placing of censorship on the political spectrum. In Britain, under the Lord Chamberlain, theatre censorship was perceived as something traditionally upheld by the Conservatives and the Royal Family in order to control the spread of 'illnesses' such as pornography and homosexuality.[88] However, in the last twenty years, with the perceived rise in political correctness and questions of racism and religion coming to the fore of both media and literary spheres, censorship seems to have become an issue for both politics both on the right and the left. Censorship no longer separates 'the liberals from the conservatives' and 'many conservatives have displayed a resurgent and largely libertarian appreciation of the value of freedom of expression' which marks a considerable deviation away from 'traditional political alignments.'[89] Robert Post puts this down to Foucault's influence on our understanding of power which we have 'begun to view […] as dispersed, as circulating, as spinning out from enactment of discursive and disciplinary practices.'[90] Thus, this move away from binary appropriations of censorship in the political sphere can also be applied more generally. Burt's aim to undermine any simple opposition 'between the censored and uncensored' thus calls into question traditional theories of free speech that rely on postulated polarities between repressed and authentic versions of an author's work.[91] Given that governments and establishments both on the left and the right have carried out censorship, we can, therefore, no longer understand censorship in terms of a straight-forward divide between

[86] Ibid.
[87] Nicholas Harrison, *Circles of Censorship* (1996), p. 87. My emphasis.
[88] Helen Freshwater, *Shadow Play: The Censorship of the Stage in Twentieth Century Britain* (unpublished PhD thesis: University of Edinburgh, 2002), p. 246.
[89] Robert C. Post, *Censorship and Silencing: Practices of Cultural Regulation* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1998), p. 2.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Richard Burt, '(Un) Censoring in Detail: The Fetish of Censorship in the Early Modern Past and the Postmodern Present', p. 5.

right and left politics or 'good' and 'bad' censors and the change is reflected theoretically as well as politically.[92]

Michael Holquist further deconstructs our accepted notions of the concept by putting forward that 'to be for or against censorship as such is to assume a freedom no one has. Censorship *is*.'[93] He continues that '[we] should know better than to accept the conventional 'either/or' hypothesis – the idea that censorship either exists or it does not.'[94] But how can we align the aforementioned omnipresent nature of censorship with academic study and consideration? It does seem problematic, especially for research as, if censorship is everywhere, how do we identify and categorise it in order to make its study worthwhile? Judith Butler problematises this, putting forward the solution that if

> censorship […] is a way of *producing* speech, constraining in advance what will and will not become acceptable speech, then it cannot be understood exclusively in terms of juridical power. In the conventional view, censorship appears to follow the utterance of offensive speech: speech has already become offensive, and then some recourse to a regulatory agency is made. But in the view that suggests that censorship *produces* speech, that temporal relation is inverted. Censorship precedes the text (by which I include 'speech' and other cultural expressions), and is in some sense responsible for its production.[95]

Therefore, if the act of censorship takes places prior to the act of creation not only is it untraceable in many cases but, as I previously expressed, the censoring takes place in a bilateral way. Butler's idea of censorship *producing* something instead of taking away from it speaks to the idea of censorship as a force for creative good.[96] Harrison seconds this by considering that,

> even in the sixteenth century it was apparent that censorship never operated as a purely negative, repressive force, in that it frequently proved (counter-) productive in terms of the interest it generated in a potential readership, and also in that the censor's non-opposition to a work began inevitably to be seen as a more active form of endorsement.[97]

This idea of censorship as productive can be seen in a recent example by Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti who faced the censorship of her play *Behzti* (meaning dishonour) in 2004. As a result of this violent action (during which a group of men from the local Sikh community stormed the theatre) Bhatti wrote her follow-up, and arguably better-received, play *Behud* (meaning beyond

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[92] For more on censorship in both the West and the East during the Cold War see: Nicole Moore, 'Print Censorship and the Cultural Cold War: Books in a Bounded World' in Andrew Hammond (ed.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Cold War Literature* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 43-61.
[93] Michael Holquist, 'Corrupt Originals: The Paradox of Censorship', *PMLA* 109.1 (1994), 14-25 (p. 16).
[94] Ibid.
[95] Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 128.
[96] Artists and editors have often been forced to think and act creatively in order to avoid censorship. In France's Third Republic, for example, the late nineteenth-century satirical newspaper *Le Triboulet* presented blank frames where images had been censored, but left the captions intact, so that the reader could mentally fill in the blanks. A similar tactic was used in a Chilean publication, *Cauce*, under the Pinochet regime, see for instance publication numbers 21 to 30 published between (03/09/1984) and (06/11/1984).
[97] Nick Harrison, *Circles of Censorship* (1996), p. 4.

belief) examining her experience of censorship.[98] This, Roland Barthes argues, is an even more effective way of being subversive than protesting against censorship: 'the greatest type of subversion or counter-censorship does not necessarily bring shocks to the law, the police, or to public opinion. Instead, it concerns the inventing of a paradoxical discourse in which invention proves to be a revolutionary act.'[99] The final chapter of this thesis deals in detail with the idea of censorship and invention via the use of French as a means of expressing anti-colonial discourse.

The concept of 'constitutive censorship' is essential here and can be defined as when there are several contributing factors to the act of censorship as well as several outcomes. As Freshwater contends, 'censorship is a process, realised through relationships between censorious agents rather than a series of isolated actions carried out by a discrete or isolated authority.'[100] These often less-identifiable forms of censorship reflect Bourdieu's idea that censorship is a structural necessity: an economy of choice governed by principles of selection and regulation.[101] Bourdieu places specific emphasis on the censorship of language and form and how social factors have a role to play in the likelihood of something being censored:

> *c'est la structure même du champ qui régit l'expression* en régissant à la fois *l'accès à l'expression* et *la forme de l'expression*, et non quelque instance juridique spécialement aménagée afin de désigner et de réprimer la transgression d'une sorte de code linguistique. Cette censure structurale s'exerce par l'intermédiaire des sanctions du champ fonctionnant comme un marché où se forment les prix des différentes sortes d'expression.[102]

Therefore, if censorship has been influenced by social factors and accepted ways of expression – 'la transgression d'une sorte de code linguistique' – it can also be used to create a certain type of identity and shape a perspective of one's place within society. Butler acknowledges that censorship is 'a necessary part of the process of nation-building' as it can be 'exercised by marginalized groups who seek to achieve cultural control over their own representation and narrativization.'[103] Bhabha's aforementioned idea of narrating the nation and Said's assertion of nationalism blocking discourses of resistance echo Butler's comments here. As this thesis will demonstrate, the imposition of censorship actually helped to reinforce divides within France and Algeria as well as between Britain and her waning empire .

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[98] For more on the censorship that took place see the article by Bhatti, published (01/02/2016) https://www.indexoncensorship.org/art-law-commentary-behzti-gurpreet-kaur-bhatti/ [First accessed 10/03/2021]. The plays can be found in Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti, *Plays One: Behsharam, Behzti, Behund, Fourteen, Khandan* (London: Oberon Books, 2014).
[99] Nick Harrison, *Circles of Censorship* (1996), p. 10.
[100] Helen Freshwater, *Shadow Play: The Censorship of the Stage in Twentieth Century Britain* (2002), p. 50.
[101] Pierre Bourdieu, 'Censure et mise en forme', in *Ce que parler veut dire* (Paris: Fayard, 1982), p. 168.
[102] Ibid. My emphases.
[103] Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech* (1997), pp. 131-132.

Therefore, as this thesis argues, the use of censorship as a tool to repress individualised 'representation' and 'narrativization' is key to highlighting how governmental discourses around decolonisation were imposed and deviations from the 'official line' on decolonisation were silenced. Nadine Holdsworth investigates the role that theatre has to play in nation-building and identity, stating that 'theatre is deeply implicated in constructing the nation through the imaginative realm and provides a site where the nation can be put under the microscope.'[104] Undoubtedly, this is due to the privileged position the theatre gives actors and playwrights; the ability to speak to wide-ranging audiences night after night, with the possibility and potential for improvisation and deviation from pre-agreed scripts. This thesis will illustrate that plays which did not or do not adhere to these national narratives of decolonisation were refused a staging, or had their production altered in order to maintain this constructed national identity. It will also demonstrate how plays (or playwrights) who questioned British or French identity as well as those which attempted the construction of a postcolonial identity, including through theatrical form and traditions, were criticised not only by state censors but by theatre managers, critics and sometimes even by themselves.

The notion of acceptable theatrical form is key here as it was often the *way* a play approached the subject of decolonisation which rendered it dangerous or unworthy in the censor's (or coloniser's) eyes. The title of this thesis *briser tous les cadres* refers to these dramatists' attempts at breaking away both from the colonial mindset and the need to liberate theatrical expression from the binds of imperial definitions of theatre. Theatrical work was judged in relation to European opinions on what makes 'good' theatre.[105] Bourdieu notes the role that form plays in censorship and how a subversive form will be assumed to depict subversive content:

> En imposant la mise en forme, la censure exercée par la structure du champ détermine la forme – que tous les formalistes entendent arracher aux déterminismes sociaux – et, inséparablement, le contenu, indissociable de son expression conforme, donc impensable (au sens vrai) en dehors des formes connues et des normes reconnues.[106]

Thus it is not only the perceived deviation away from national narratives on decolonisation that is considered as dangerous, but also the way in which these questions are addressed and presented on the stage. The two appear as inseparable which is of course not the case; a subversive play can have a traditional form and in the case of this thesis, Mona Brand's *Strangers in the Land* (1953) sought to denounce British violence during the Malaysian

[104] Nadine Holdsworth, *Theatre & Nation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 6.
[105] Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o references this with particular emphasis to the use of dance and singing in Kenyan theatre: *Decolonising the Mind* (Suffolk: James Currey, 1986), p. 56.
[106] Pierre Bourdieu, *Ce que parler veut dire* (1982), p. 170.

Emergency in 1950 but used a 'drawing-room drama' structure and a focus on white, British characters in order to do so.

Censorship can be understood to operate, impact and manifest itself (or not) in a plethora of ways. Its impact on national discourse as well as on cultural outputs in undeniable, in particular on writing for the theatre and theatrical performance. For the purposes of this thesis, it can be seen to act as a component of colonialism and sought to deny the possibility of decolonisation in both its material and ontological sense, both of which are explored in greater detail below.

Understanding Decolonisation

The first mentions of the term 'decolonisation' appeared as early as 1836 according to Todd Shepard: 'A Frenchman […] had come up with the word, and it was in reference to Algeria' but it had disappeared from circulation by the 1850s. Shepard notes that 'the word "decolonization" was invested with racist understandings' but which were contested by 'radical intellectuals from the colonized world' who developed 'the other important vision of "decolonization" in the 1950s and early 60s.' [107] This 'other' definition also argued that the term was inextricable from questions of race but was the result of 'contingent rather than structural processes, part of the realm of choice and historical action rather than historically inevitable.'[108] The idea of decolonisation as 'contigent' resonates with our understanding of censorship as constitutive: it is multifaceted and not imposed simply via a 'top-down' imposition of power. Therefore, decolonisation needs to be addressed both as an external and internal process, just like censorship. As Shepard describes, these 'radical intellectuals' helped to provide new understandings of how the concept of 'decolonisation' could be interpreted, although it is no doubt a continual process, consistently re-evaluated and re-examined.[109]

Some of the works by these 'radical intellectuals' included Frantz Fanon's *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952) followed by *Les Damnés de la terre* (1961) and Aimé Césaire's

[107] Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), p. 56. My emphasis.
[108] Ibid., p. 61. My emphases.
[109] For historical studies of Britain and France's experiences of decolonisation see: Berny Sèbe and Matthew G. Standard (eds.), *Decolonising Europe? Popular Responses to the End of Empire* (Oxford: Routledge, 2020). For the historical decolonisation of France see: Raymond F. Betts, *France and Decolonisation: 1900-1960* (London: Macmillan, 1991), James McDougall, 'The Impossible Republic: The Reconquest of Algeria and the Decolonization of France, 1945-1962', *Journal of Modern History* 89.4 (2017), 772-811, Bernard Droz, *Histoire de la décolonisation au XXe siècle* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2009) and Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, 'L'Afrique, La France et Les Français de 1871 à 1962', *Cahiers d'histoire* 134.1 (2017), 147-152. For historical approaches to the decolonisation of the British empire see: John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat from Empire in the Post-War World* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1988), David A. Percox, *Britain, Kenya and the Cold War: Imperial Defence, Colonial Security and Decolonisation* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2012).

Discours sur le colonialisme (1950) which expressed decolonisation as more than a political transition but, what Leopold Sédar Senghor called 'la décolonisation des esprits.'[110] For Fanon the word 'decolonisation' was problematic, he saw it as a European-inspired programme of 'incremental change' designed to absorb the pressures of anti-colonialism at a minimal cost to metropolitan influence and prestige, a perception that was entirely consistent with its contemporary usage.[111] According to Fanon, there could be no 'decolonisation aimable', because violent humiliation was integral to the task of breaking colonialism's psychological hold over its dehumanized subjects.[112] Decolonisation was therefore not the simple removal of imperial troops from colonised countries depicted through the raising of a national flag, establishment of a parliament and the (re)instatement of a national language but something less physical, less tangible. Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o continued this more theoretical take on decolonisation in his 1986 work *Decolonising the Mind* describing the extent to which cultural outputs by many African writers were still heavily dependent on colonial beliefs and often written in English – the language of the coloniser and the main weapon of British colonialism, although as chapter four of this thesis shows, the language of the coloniser can also be used as a means of resistance.[113]

Andrew Smith and Chris Jeppensen acknowledge that **'t**here was no straight, single path that led to the end of empire, just as there was never one united voice raised in defiance of colonial rule.'[114] They also raise the point that, despite the volume of work now being produced on decolonisation,

> there is a somewhat paradoxical affinity between older accounts of decolonisation, which see primary decision-making as taking place in the realm of high politics at the centres of empires, and the newer 'postcolonial approaches'. In the latter case, whether discussing economic theories of dependence and neo-colonialism or cultural histories of European imperialism as an intellectual/cultural matrix, Europeans remain central to the exercise of power, control, change and continuity.[115]

Contemporary discussions as to how to decolonise all aspects of twenty-first century life can be seen as a means to counter this 'centralisation of power'.[116] The decolonisation movement has become mainstream with students at University College London and SOAS protesting to

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[110] Léopold Sédar Senghor, 'La Décolonisation: condition de la communauté franco-africaine', *Le Monde* (04/09/1957).
[111] Stuart Ward, 'The European Provenance of Decolonization', *Past & Present*, 230.1 (2016), 227-260 (p. 255).
[112] Frantz Fanon, *Les Damnés de la terre* (Paris: La Découverte, 2002 [1961]), p. 40.
[113] Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind* (1986).
[114] Andrew W.M. Smith and Chris Jeppesen (eds.), *Britain, France and the Decolonisation of Africa: Future Imperfect?* (2017), p. 1.
[115] Ibid., p. 17.
[116] See for instance the campaign by Cambridge students in October 2017 to include more postcolonial texts, theories and readings into the English Literature syllabus for undergraduates. Marv Kennedy, 'Academics Seek to "decolonise" the English Syllabus', *The Guardian* (25/10/2017).

'decolonise' their curriculum from 2016 onwards as well as numerous other universities.[117] 2020 saw a focus on these calls to 'decolonise' in conjunction with the world-wide Black Lives Matter movement leading to greater scrutiny of cultural organisations, in particular museums, requiring them to decolonise their institutions.[118]

In terms of national consciousness, 2020 was also key in bringing questions of the legacy of colonialism to the fore. This was most starkly and performatively evidenced by the removal of several prominent European statues in the summer of 2020. The statue of slave-trader Edward Colston was forcibly removed from a plinth in Bristol in June 2020 by local residents and in the same month in Belgium, the statue of King Leopold II was taken off its plinth as a means of commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the Democratic Republic of Congo's independence from Belgian colonial rule. Since 2015, the Rhodes Must Fall movement has seen debate surrounding the statues of imperialist and former governor of South Africa (then Cape Colony), Cecil Rhodes. The movement began in South Africa and moved to Oxford in the UK and Harvard in the US. These events highlight how decolonisation has become part of everyday language and is now understood as going beyond the removal of occupying armies from colonised countries. It also proves the extent to which the term has become popularised and widened to include and necessitate a move away from Eurocentric perceptions of the world incorporating politics, literature and cultural production as well as environmental issues, to name but a few of the areas decolonisation is associated with in mainstream media and cultural forums.

In terms of academia, there has been no lull in publications on the subject, quite the contrary, the term seems to be ever-reinterpreted, re-defined and applied to new areas not previously associated with the concept.[119] To be clear, the area of decolonisation studies

[117] See: Priyamvada Gopal, 'Yes, We Must Decolonise: Our Teaching Has to Go Beyond Elite White Men', *The Guardian*, (27/10/2017).

[118] Despite its contemporaneity, a number of academic publications exist in relation to Black Lives Matter and world-wide decolonisation movements. Of particular interest for this thesis are those pertaining to France and Britain such as: Josephine Goldman, 'Can Black Lives Matter in a Race-Blind France? French Avoidance of "Race" and Mobilisation of Black Collective Identity in Response to Police Brutality', *Literature and Aesthetics* 30.2 (2020), 92-111 and Audrey Celestine and Nicolas Martin-Breteau, 'In and Beyond the Field: Researching Black Lives Matter from France', *American Studies Journal* 68.1 (2019) online [First accessed 11/03/2021]. Remi Joseph-Salisbury, Laura Connelly and Peninah Wangari-Jones, '"The UK Is Not Innocent": Black Lives Matter, Policing and Abolition in the UK', *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion an International Journal*, 40.1 (2020), 21-28 and Anthony G. Reddie, 'Do Black Lives Matter in Post-Brexit Britain?', *Studies in Christian Ethics*, 32.3 (2019), 387-401.

[119] For instance: Diana K. Davis and Edmund Burke (eds.), *Environmental Imaginaries of the Middle East and North Africa* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2011), Ron Eyerman and Giuseppe Sciortino (eds.), *The Cultural Trauma of Decolonization: Colonial Returnees in the National Imagination* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), Mark Sealy, *Decolonising the Camera: Photography in Racial Time* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2019) and Simon Faulkner and Anandi Ramamurthy (eds.), *Visual Culture and Decolonisation in Britain* (London: Routledge, 2018).

regularly encompasses also postcolonial studies and decolonial studies, the difference mainly being due to the origins of the fields of study; postcolonial is seen as coming from the study of ex-colonies in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean, whereas decolonial originated in South America with thinkers like Walter Mignolo.[120] Postcolonial studies, largely associated with the work of Edward Said, encompasses writing and thinking that seeks to construct a world away from the colonial mindset and considers the legacy of colonialism on former colonies, with particular regard to cultural production. Decolonial thinking is more centred on the links between modernity and coloniality, the focus being on enabling a 'shift that enables the histories and thought of other places to be understood as prior to European incursions.'[121] Anti-colonial movements, often beginning whilst colonialism was still in full force, focused specifically on the removal of colonial forces from occupied countries, in a more political sense than in consideration to cultural imperialism. Although writers such as Jean-Paul Sartre often expressed these anti-colonial views in plays, novels and essays.[122]

Amongst the academic literature on decolonisation, there is of course an awareness that the process is continual and ongoing, the presence of the 'informal empire' still maintains power in often invisible ways.[123] At the height of physical decolonisation, in 1956, Aimé Césaire noted, 'c'est un fait que la plupart des pays noirs vivent sous le régime colonial. Même un pays indépendant comme Haiti [technically independent since 1804] est en fait à bien des égards un pays semi-colonial.'[124] This lack of real freedom and refusal to acknowledge the persistent neo-colonialism in place in many ex-colonies again resonates with our understanding of censorship: something that it not always visible or even recognisable as such.

Previous scholarship on decolonisation focused on the positive or negative outcomes of the physical decolonising process. In 1978, Tony Smith claimed that Britain had done a better job of leaving its colonies than the French, because no major wars were declared as a result of Britain's withdrawal.[125] Chapter one proves that this was not the case and that this myth was carefully constructed and maintained by the British government working in

[120] See for instance Walter Mignolo's *The Idea of Latin America* (Malden: Blackwell, 2005).
[121] Walter Mignolo cited in Gurminder K Bhambra 'Postcolonial and decolonial dialogues', *Postcolonial Studies* 17.2 (2014), 115-121 (p. 119).
[122] Jane Hiddleston, 'Dialectic or Dissemination? Anti-Colonial Critique in Sartre and Derrida', *Sartre Studies International* 12.1 (2006), 33-49. Azzedine Haddour argues that Sartre uses the racist language of the colonial project despite his disavowal of colonialism in 'The Camus–Sartre Debate and the Colonial Question in Algeria' in Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (eds.), *Francophone Postcolonial Studies: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Routledge, 2003), 66-76 (p. 66).
[123] R.W. Winks, 'On Decolonization and "Informal Empire"', *American Historical Review* 81.1 (1976), 190-205.
[124] Aimé Césaire, 'Culture et Colonisation', *Présence Africaine* (1956) 8.10, 190-205 (p. 190).
[125] Tony Smith, 'A Comparative Study of French and British Decolonization', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 20.1 (1978), 70-102.

collaboration with individuals like the Lord Chamberlain. Smith refers to the Algerian and Indochinese wars as being due to the failure of the French government to develop 'before 1945, any mechanism which might have served as a bridge for the transfer of power to their colonial subjects after the [Second World] War', and goes on to suggest that the French policy of 'assimilation' could be another reason for this difficult divorce post-1945.[126]

These comparative analyses of 'who decolonised more efficiently' are now considered outdated although it is important to understand the mechanisms of the physical the decolonising process taking place from 1950 to 1969, the period chosen for this study. The colonial states intended that power be transferred to political parties not necessarily of their own choosing, but ones which would not threaten their 'special relationship' and so generally 'appropriate' leaders were sought out as collaborators.[127] Britain and France were 'if anything determined not to decolonise for fear of losing power, prestige, and economic strength […]' and that their motivations for decolonisation were mainly selfish as there was 'mutual suspicion between France, Britain and the United States as to each other's intentions.'[128] Thus the Western powers wanted to wash their hands of the situation but still maintain links which remained useful for them. According to Goldberg, for the French, not only was the special economic relationship intended to be maintained but also 'cultural ties'. However, as this thesis explores, these cultural limitations were felt in both British and French metropoles as well as in the ex-colonies.[129] Therefore, despite giving the appearance of decolonisation, British and French troops left their respective colonies with 'a framework primarily shaped by the colonial powers, and recognised their own interests in so doing.'[130] In addition to these political structures, the legacy of colonialism can be seen in academia and research via a 'hierarchy of languages' which infiltrated both academic institutions and publishers.[131]

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[126] Tony Smith, 'A Comparative Study of French and British Decolonization' (1978), p. 75.
[127] Melvin Goldberg, 'Decolonisation and Political Socialisation with Reference to West Africa', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 24.4 (1996) 663-677 (p. 672).
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid., p. 671.
[130] Ibid., p. 675.
[131] For academic decolonisation see Dipesh Chakrabarty on intellectual traditions in South Asia: 'Sad though it is, one result of European colonial rule in South Asia is that the intellectual traditions once unbroken and alive in Sanskrit or Persian or Arabic are now only matters of historical research for most – perhaps all – modern social scientists in the region. They treat these traditions as truly dead, as history. […] And yet past European thinkers and their categories are never quite dead for us in the same way. South Asian(ist) social scientists would argue passionately with a Marx or a Weber without feeling any need to historicize them or to place them in their European intellectual contexts. Sometimes— though this is rather rare— they would even argue with the ancient or medieval or early-modern predecessors of these European theorists.' *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) pp. 5-6. For literary and language analyses of decolonisation see: Ruth Bush, *Publishing Africa in French: literary institutions and decolonisation 1945-1967* (2016), Alain Ricard, 'Towards silence: Thomas Mofolo, Small Literatures and Poor Translation', *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde* 53.2 (2016), 48-62, Karin Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics*

Achille Mbembe questions the way in which scholars address African history and literature asking why 'African human experience constantly appears in the discourse of our times as an experience that can only be understood through a *negative interpretation*.'[132] He illustrates the extent to which 'more than any other region, Africa […] stands out as the supreme receptacle of the West's obsession with, and circular discourse about, the facts of "absence," "lack," and "non-being," of identity and difference, of negativeness— in short, of nothingness.'[133] Literature has a role to play in counteracting this 'lack' and 'negativeness': a means of proving postcolonial existence to counteract the perceived 'nothingness' of ?. Manifestos such as 'Pour une littérature monde' (2007) have tried to redress the balance of differential treatment given to writers from ex-colonies compared to their French counterparts.[134] In terms of French academia, scholars such as Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, Dominic Thomas and Sandrine Lemaire have looked into questions of cultural decolonisation and its links to memory, history and identity.[135] However, as V. Y. Mudimbe points out, it is now not only the ex-colonisers who maintain this neo-colonial cultural relationship that decolonised countries have to rely on, but also the USA.[136]

Theatre as a medium, has an essential role to play in the decolonisation discourse. It is a platform from which individuals can tell their story and remains essential for history and memory in a post-colonial society:

> [the] recourse to history in drama did not have only anti-colonial functions. That this theme continues to be prominent long after the 1960s is indicative of its importance also in the post-colonial era. Just as dramatists used this subject to provide people with ideal images, *exemplars* with which to meet the

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Chantal Zabus, *The African Palimpsest: Indigenization of Language in the West African Europhone Novel* (Amsterdam: BRILL, 2007).

[131] Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (California: University of California Press, 2001), p. 54. My emphases.

[132] Ibid. p. 9.

[133] Ibid., p. 10.

[134] The 'Pour une littérature monde' movement was both a publication of the same name by Gallimard, published in 2007 and an article 'manifesto' in the newspaper *Le Monde* (15/03/07). The movements called for an end to a France-focused perspective on literature and for the incorporation of Francophone writers from all over the world to be included into the French literary milieu and canon. The 'manifesto' was signed by 44 of the most well-known French-speaking contemporary writers such as Tahar Ben Jelloun, Maryse Condé, Édouard Glissant, Dany Laferrière, Alain Mabanckou and Boualem Sansal.

[135] See for instance Nicolas Bancel, Pascal Blanchard, Françoise Vergès, *La République coloniale* (Paris: Hachette, 2006), Pascal Blanchard, Sandrine Lemaire, Nicolas Bancel, and Dominic Thomas (eds.), *Colonial culture in France since the revolution*, transl. by Alexis Pernsteiner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, Sandrine Lemaire, 'Les Non-dits de l'antiracisme français: la "République colonial"', *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 61.1 (2000), 41-57.

[136] Pierre-Philippe Fraiture, 'V. Y. Mudimbe's 'Long Nineteenth Century', *Postcolonial Thought in the French Speaking World*, eds. Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press: 2009), pp. 136-146 (p. 139). 'Mudimbe acknowledges as a fait accompli African dependence on Europe and North America and therefore rejects all attempts to return to illusory authentic pasts or fictitious black essence such as that proposed by Négritude, or thinkers such as Cheikh Anta Diop or Martin Bernal.'

> challenges of the struggle for independence, with models of heroic virtue and behaviour, so now they are doing it to help their African spectators confront the problems of nation-building.[137]

This thesis will seek to prove that censorship actively worked to deny or restrict plays advocating for independence but also those presenting a postcolonial aesthetic. Censorship targeted plays written both in the metropole and in the colonial situation, experiencing decolonisation as it took place. Censorship aims to create absence, refuses discourse and in this case, strives to maintain national identity but these writers used colonial language to construct their own models and visions of a postcolonial, independent state. Kateb Yacine and Hocine Bouzaher sought to (re)claim or perhaps (re)construct Algerian identity through writing in French. This resonates with Ngũgĩ's struggle to breaking out of the mould of European definitions of theatre by opening it up and making the creative process more public:

> In the theatre that I was used to in school and colleges and in amateur circles, the actors rehearsed more or less in secrecy and then sprung their finished perfection on an unsuspecting audience who were, of course, surprised into envious admiration […] Such a theatre is part of the general bourgeois education system which practices as a process of weakening people, of making them feel that they cannot do this or that […] The open auditions and the rehearsals with everybody seeing all the elements that went into making a whole had the effect of demystifying the whole creative process.[138]

Decolonisation is therefore no longer simply understood as the 'withdrawal from its former colonies of a colonial power; the acquisition of political or economic independence by such colonies.'[139] It is questioning the very idea of creativity and what qualifies as art. These processes are essential to the decolonisation process and to break the silence and repressive functions of culture. Rothermund highlights that the

> belief in the *mission civilisatrice* did not end with decolonisation. In fact, this insistence on cultural superiority was most irksome to ex-colonials who felt that their own cultures had been fine and had been destroyed by their colonial rulers. When the ex-colonials asked for 'repentance' they had this aspect of colonial rule in mind rather than material compensation.[140]

Moreover, there is a 'social contract of silence' in post-imperial nations and this needs to be broken in order to allow for exploration of colonial memory.[141] He suggests that focussing on this 'silence' is more effective than considering colonial memory as 'amnesia'.[142] If 'silencing' is a better way of describing collective amnesia in terms of decolonisation memory, surely this is the same as censorship. Silencing implies an agency, whether it be on behalf of governments or previously colonised individuals whereas collective amnesia suggests something being done

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[137] John Conteh-Morgan, *Theatre and Drama in Francophone Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 71.
[138] Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind* (1986), p. 56.
[139] Oxford English Dictionary online, search 'decolonisation' [First accessed 28/05/2017].
[140] Dietmar Rothermund (ed.), *Memories of Post-Imperial Nations: The Aftermath of Decolonization 1945-2013* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 7-8.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid., pp. 5-6.

to someone passive. This echoes Mbembe's aforementioned notion of 'lack' and 'absence', an Africa that has no agency, a 'nothingness'.

This thesis will look at how the cultural legacy left behind by both France and Britain caused 'native' writers to self-censor or encounter censorship even once independence had been gained. John Darwin reminds us '[Harold] Macmillan insisted that the demission of empire was a voluntary act undertaken deliberately as colonial people reached their political maturity.'[143] However, as Priyamvada Gopal points out decolonisation was *not* the consequence of a metropolitan initiative: Britain was answering a demand from her subjects which she found it difficult to refuse.[144] Britain hoped to maintain its reputation as 'a liberal, progressive and open society',[145] but 'the foundation of Britain's claim to respect in the non-Western world – was fiercely at odds with a vision of a racially exclusive "Little England."'[146] This could explain why few British writers were addressing the issue of decolonisation in Britain during the 1950s and 60s. Darwin considers that 'so far as the British public was concerned, it was encouraged by opinion-formers to regard Britain's imperial career as a mission more or less satisfactorily accomplished, but no longer of relevance to its present or future'.[147] Therefore, if the public were encouraged to consider the empire as being done and dusted, there was nothing to write about. Darwin considers it true that public attitudes in

> Britain (as elsewhere in Europe) reflected the view (still almost commonplace until c.1960), that Black people were less sophisticated and culturally advanced than white people, and that their subordination (by colonialism), separation or segregation (and perhaps even exclusion) could be morally justified.[148]

These views were very much reflected in the reviews of writing and acting by Black playwrights and actors, as the next chapter highlights.

Theatre Censorship and Remembering (De)colonisation

In European theatre of the 1950s and 1960s, subjects other than colonialism such as questions of class seem to eclipse the events of decolonisation.[149] In 1963, *The Spectator*'s drama critic Anthony Hartley commented that there was a problem for any *engagé* playwright because 'at

[143] John Darwin, 'Memory of Empire in Britain', in *Memories of Post-Imperial Nations: The Aftermath of Decolonization 1945-2013* ed. Dietmar Rothermund (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 18-37 (p. 31).
[144] Priyamvada Gopal, *Insurgent Empire* (2019), p. 439.
[145] Ibid.
[146] John Darwin, 'Memory of Empire in Britain' (2015), p. 33.
[147] Ibid.
[148] John Darwin, 'Memory of Empire in Britain' (2015), p. 29.
[149] The plays of writers such as Harold Pinter, John Osborne and Edward Bond all dealt primarily with questions of class see: John McGrath, *A Good Night Out: Popular Theatre: Audience, Class and Form* (London: Nick Hern, 1996) and Dan Rebellato, *1956 and All That: The Making of Modern British Drama* (London: Psychology Press, 1999).

the minute there are no fundamental political problems in this country, so it is difficult to put politics on the stage.'[150] This would suggest a kind of historical amnesia or a selective ignorance of current affairs, as much of what was taking place in countries such as Kenya and Nigeria was widely documented in the national press.[151] As I prove, playwrights *were* trying to stage decolonisation but were prevented from doing so by the Lord Chamberlain.

On the contrary, in France cultural production on decolonisation, the Algerian War of Independence in particular, was prolific. Plays, films, novels and poetry were all written in an attempt to raise awareness about the violence being perpetrated or recently concluded in the name of France, although many of these were banned outright**.**[152] Benjamin Stora cites the banning of a total of 25 books from 1958 to 1962 from both the left-wing Editions de Minuit publishers and the clandestine Editions Maspero.[153] These studies suggest a concerted effort on behalf of the French authorities to keep the realities of war hidden from public knowledge, such as the use of torture and frequent massacres. However, unlike in the case of Britain and the Lord Chamberlain, there exists no readily available, consistent record of all the items banned during this period and when we look more closely, there often seems to be a real inconsistency in terms of what was censored and what was not. As Stora notes 'entre 1955 et 1962, les saisies, les interdictions, les censures sont pratiquées sans qu'une aucune règle, une doctrine bien définie déterminent leur exécution.'[154] This is perhaps explained by the fact that the 'état d'urgence' of 1955, under which a 'cortège de mesures permettant de contrôler l'espace, les idées, les individus, est alors créé pour répondre à la spécificité de cette situation.'[155] This exceptional situation is because France refused to acknowledge the war as

[150] Anthony Hartley, *A State of England* (London: Hutchinson, 1963), pp. 148-9.
[151] Joanna Lewis, '"Daddy Wouldn't Buy Me a Mau Mau": The British Popular Press & the Demoralization of Empire', in E.S. Atieno Odhiambo and John Lonsdale (eds.), *Mau Mau & Nationhood* (Oxford: James Currey, 2003), pp. 192-227.
[152] Some well-known examples of this include the film *Le Petit Soldat* by Jean-Luc Godard (completed in 1960 and not released until 1963) and a total of twelve books published by the Editions de Minuit from 1957 to 1962 whose editor, Jérôme Lindon, was targeted by the Organisation de l'armée secrète (OAS) in 1961**.** Benjamin Stora details these figures in *La Gangrène et l'oubli: La mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (1991). The table on p. 27 is of particular use however chapters two and three provide an overview of how censorship operated more generally, pp. 25-45. Stora cites figures which illustrate that at least 586 newspapers and periodicals were banned in Algeria during the war and that a further 269 were banned in the *hexagone* during the same period.[152] Anne Simonin has also looked extensively into the role that th**e** Editions de Minuit played during the Occupation of France (1940-1944) and during the Algerian War of Independence**:** Anne Simonin *Le Droit de désobéissance* (Paris: La Découverte, 2012).
[153] Benjamin Stora, *La Gangrène et l'oubli* (1991).
[154] Ibid., p. 26.
[155] Sylvie Thénault, 'L'état d'urgence (1955-2005)' (2007), p. 65.

such, it became known as 'la guerre sans nom' and only received official recognition as a war by the French government in 1999.[156]

Similarly to how Britain tried to maintain the guise of peaceful decolonisation, by refusing 'les événements' in Algeria the title of 'war' the French state could assure the public that it would be finished quickly, cleanly and would result in Algeria remaining French. Censorship therefore works not only in the short-term but also leaves traces on how decolonisation is remembered.[157] As Butler notes, censorship is used in the 'codification of memory' illustrated in 'state control over monument preservation and buildings, or in the insistence that certain kinds of 'historical' event only be narrated one way.[158] The field of Memory Studies has a key role to play in this 'decolonising' or refocusing of memory. Pierre Nora's *Lieux de Mémoire* (1984-1992) began academic discussions around memory politics, but has since been recognised as problematic due to its glaring lack of reference to colonialism, imperialism or slavery, as explored most recently in *Postcolonial Realms of Memory: Signs and Symbols in Modern France.*[159] Scholars such as Michael Rothberg, Stef Craps and Max Silverman focus specifically on the memory of colonialism and decolonisation, attempting to dissect the hierarchy of memory via their respective approaches: Multi-directional Memory, Post-Colonial Witnessing and Palimpsestic Memory.[160] Rothberg suggests that 'we consider memory as multidirectional: as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not privative.'[161] In a similar way, Stef Craps describes how certain groups are accorded more recognition than others in relation to their traumatic experiences, often a result of colonialism: 'Trauma theory's failure to give the sufferings of those belonging to non-Western or minority groups due recognition sits uneasily with the field's ethical aspirations.'[162] Max Silverman's palimpsestic approach highlights that we

[156] This was acknowledged via the law number 99-882, passed by the French government on (18/10/1999) which officially recognised the 'events' in Algeria as 'La guerre d'Algérie'.
[157] Marc Ferro describes the current situation in France as 'a situation in which the French public has turned its back on the work of historians and as a form of '"self-censorship by citizens," paired with a "censorship by the governing authorities."' He argues that this situation has come about because France refuses to acknowledge the breach of its 'Republican values' during colonialism as this would cause the country question 'the Republic itself.' Ferro cited in Pascal Blanchard, et al. (eds.), *Colonial Culture in France since the Revolution*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), p. 51.
[158] Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech* (1997) pp. 131-132.
[159] Etienne Achille, et al (eds.), *Postcolonial Realms of Memory: Signs and Symbols in Modern France* (Liverpool University Press, 2020), p. 4.
[160] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonisation* (Stanford University Press: Stanford, 2009), Stef Craps, *Postcolonial witnessing: Trauma out of bounds* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), Max Silverman, *Palimpsestic Memory: The Holocaust and Colonialism in French and Francophone Fiction and Film* (New York : Berghahn Books, 2013).
[161] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonisation* (2009), p. 3.
[162] Stef Craps, *Postcolonial Witnessing* (2013), p. 3.

should not consider events on their own, but part of a wider, layered history. He also advocates preventing individual groups from claiming histories: Palimpsestic memory brings to the politics of memory the challenging idea that memory does not function according to the linear trajectory of a particular ethno-cultural group and lead inexorably to the distinction (and often competition) between different groups.[163] The question of how to memorialise and the recognition of colonialism and decolonisation are key for this thesis as censorship was used to marginalise histories of the colonised and resistance movements. Writing for the theatre acts as a means of bearing witness to these events so that they are not forgotten. In Britain, the Lord Chamberlain's archive serves as an insight into how these discourses were stifled, as the next chapter explores.

[163] Max Silverman, *Palimpsestic Memory* (2013), p. 28.

Chapter Two: 'Off the Reckord': Tracking the Lord Chamberlain's Response to Decolonisation

The Myth of Peaceful Decolonisation

In 1957, *Declaration*, a manifesto of sorts, was published by a group of playwrights and critics informally known as the 'Angry Young Men'.[1] Here, theatre critic Kenneth Tynan claimed that West End plays were no longer in touch with the general population as they were 'written on the assumption that there are still people who live in awe of the Crown, the Empire, the established Church, the public school and upper classes.'[2] The Lord Chamberlain and his employees seemed to operate under the same assumption as West End plays, working to uphold the aforementioned institutions at all costs. In terms of empire, the office helped perpetuate the idea that British decolonisation was a peaceful process resulting in very few casualties. The office also worked to portray the violence in the colonies as being entirely the fault of the colonised. In France, this idea was already being countered by Jean-Paul Sartre who argued that the violence of independence movements was not initiated by the colonised but that it was, 'la nôtre, retournée, qui grandit et les déchire; et le premier mouvement de ces opprimés est d'enfouir profondément cette inavouable colère que leur morale et la nôtre réprouvent et qui n'est pourtant que le dernier réduit de leur humanité.'[3] The case studies in this chapter follow this logic, attempting to make the British audience aware of their own complicity in the violence being perpetrated to avoid the decolonisation of the British empire.

In terms of censorship, this chapter will examine the role that the Lord Chamberlain played in preventing this accusatory theatre as well as upholding the myth of peaceful decolonisation and its dissemination to the theatre-going British public. This type of censorship reflects Laurent Martin's statement that 'la censure est cet ensemble de règles, de règlements, de disciplines, de mesures contraignantes qui permettent d'empêcher la parole ou la pensée hétérodoxes, déviantes, et d'assurer le monopole de la "ligne droite."'[4] Here, the 'ligne droite' was to avoid public recognition that decolonisation was anything but peaceful. As Sue Curry

[1] This term was coined by the press officer of the Royal Court Theatre when promoting John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger*, first performed in 1956. For more on this movement see: Humphrey Carpenter, *The Angry Young Men: A Literary Comedy of the 1950s* (London: Allen Lane, 2002). For specific reference to the convergence of this literary movement with the end of empire see: Dan Rebellato, 'Look Back at Empire: British Theatre and Imperial Decline' in Stuart Ward, (ed.), *British Culture and the End of Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), pp. 73-90.

[2] Kenneth Tynan, 'Theatre and Living' in Tom Maschler (ed.), *Declaration* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1957). This collection of essays also included writing from John Osborne, Doris Lessing and Colin Wilson.

[3] Jean Paul Sartre, 'Préface de l'édition 1961'in Frantz Fanon, *Les Damnés de la terre* (Paris: François Maspero, 1968 [1961]), p. 26.

[4] Laurent Martin, 'Penser les censures dans l'histoire' (2006), p. 336.

Jansen points out, the imposition of this form of censorship acts as 'surveillance: a mechanism for gathering intelligence that the powerful can use to tighten control over people or ideas that threaten to disrupt established systems of order.'[5] The established order in question here is that of the British Empire and colonialism more widely.

Contrary to Jansen's claim that 'in Liberal societies censors seldom wear badges', the Lord Chamberlain was a recognised theatre censor, or 'licensor of plays'.[6] Despite this transparency of purpose, I will illustrate the extent to which Lord Chamberlain was not a transparent and fair censor for theatre in Britain and was instead subject to pressures from the government and often motivated by self-interest. Nevertheless, not only 'hard' censorship, embodied by the Lord Chamberlain, but also 'soft' censorship worked to perpetuate this myth: the policing of identity and an engrained colonial mindset will also be shown here to act as a form of censorship. Timothy Brennan has noted the importance of upholding the 'myth' of the nation as means of ensuring continued national identity and I argue that the Lord Chamberlain also had an integral role to play in this.[7]

Four playwrights/collectives are used as case studies to show how the censor responded to decolonisation in Britain: Mona Brand's *Strangers in the Land* (1953), John Arden's *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* (1963), Keith Johnstone & William Gaskill's improvised performance *Eleven Men Dead at Hola Camp* (1959) and Barry Reckord's *Skyvers* (1963). These plays exemplify different types of censorship imposed on theatre that dealt with decolonisation. Brand's *Strangers in the Land* is little-known in the UK and reflects 'hard' censorship imposed by the Lord Chamberlain. Arden is a well-known playwright, but this chapter examines the differences between a British and a French production of *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* and the censorship imposed by critics. *Eleven Men Dead at Hola Camp* is often referenced in passing when referring to Africa on the British stage.[8] Here I argue that the production itself was problematic and perpetuated the colonial mindset when it intended to do the opposite. Barry Reckord's *Skyvers* is often used as an example of drama which denounced class inequality in 1960s British society – I argue that the play was written with a Black cast in mind and as well as issues of class, is also concerned with racial inequality in British society. These examples have been chosen in order to expose the value judgements and alterations

[5] Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship* (1991), p. 14.
[6] Ibid., p. 16.
[7] Timothy Brennan, 'The National Longing for Form' in Homi Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 1990), 44-70 (p. 45).
[8] See for instance, Steve Nicholson, 'Africa on the British Stage, 1955-1966', in Tiziania Morosetti (ed.) *Africa on the Contemporary London Stage* (Cham (Switzerland): Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 45-65 (p. 47).

imposed on writers who sought to disprove the myth of peaceful decolonisation and the disdain with which new forms of postcolonial theatre were met.[9]

A significant bulk of scholarship has been dedicated to the Lord Chamberlain's archive including that with a focus on the censorship of homosexuality, feminism and communism.[10] Steve Nicholson's extensive work tracks the origins of the position to its abolition in 1968.[11] In terms of decolonisation and the Lord Chamberlain, Nicholson's work considering the office's reaction to Africa on the British stage are the closest to this chapter's aims, arguing that plays which incited 'exoticism, horrors, thrills, and cultural differences' were used 'in the struggle to control and exploit an Empire.'[12] This chapter will subvert this notion, aiming instead to highlight plays which sought to denounce Britain's colonial behaviour at the end of its empire and the Lord Chamberlain's attempts to repress these.

The Lord Chamberlain's office was one of the quirks of 1950s and 1960s Britain that continued from an era when governmental power overlapped with the British Royal Family in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries. By the early 1950s, the persistence of theatre censorship seemed anachronistic given that censorship of books and the press had been abolished in 1695.[13] Writers such as Richard Findlater made it their mission to remove the Lord Chamberlain from his position, arguing that for up-and-coming playwrights making a name for themselves in the newly upwardly mobile society of the time, the Lord Chamberlain was a real hindrance who 'appear[ed] as the symbol of a social, political and religious order, the relic of a dead England that won't lie down.'[14]

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[9] Other notable plays refused a licence during this period include Jean Genet's *Les Bonnes/The Maids* (submitted in 1952), *The Rosenberg Story* (submitted in 1953), *The Gold Mask* – a play about discovering buried gold in Algeria which had already been turned into a film in 1954 (submitted in 1955) and *A Patriot For Me* (1964) by John Osborne. These plays are listed in the 'Licence Refused' box which is available in the British Library Manuscripts reading room as part of the Lord Chamberlain's collection.

[10] For more on the Lord Chamberlain and homosexuality see Helen Freshwater, *Theatre Censorship in Britain: Silencing, Censure and Suppression*, (London: Palgrave Macmillian, 2009). For communism, Steve Nicholson, *British Theatre and the Red Peril: The Portrayal of Communism, 1917-45* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999) and 'Censoring Revolution: The Lord Chamberlain and the Soviet Union', *New Theatre Quarterly*, 8.32, (1992) 305-312.

[11] Steve Nicholson, *The Censorship of British Drama* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2015), Dominic Shellard and Steve Nicholson with Miriam Handley. *The Lord Chamberlain Regrets … A History of British Theatre Censorship* (London: British Library, 2004). See also: D. Thomas, D. Carlton, A. Etienne, *Theatre Censorship: From Walpole to Wilson* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[12] 'Images of Africa in Early Twentieth-Century British Theatre', M. Banham, J. Gibbs, & F. Osofisan (Eds.), *Histories 1850–1950*, (Suffolk, Boydell & Brewer, 2010), pp. 122-137 [p. 136]. See also the above mentioned Steve Nicholson, 'Africa on the British Stage, 1955-1966' (2018).

[13] Julian Petley, *Film and Video Censorship in Modern Britain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), p. 34.

[14] Richard Findlater, *Banned! A Review of Theatrical Censorship* (London: Macgibbon & Kee, 1967), p. 149.

The office was introduced to British government in 1576, around the time the first professional theatre opened its doors in London.[15] Initially, the aim of the censor was to protect 'both State and Church against religious and political heresy' and 'embarrassment' instead of 'questions of good or bad taste' as later seemed to be the case.[16] This was developed further with the passing of Robert Walpole's Licensing Act in 1737, which had been specifically designed to prevent criticism of his government and himself.[17] The Act required playwrights and theatre managers to submit scripts to the office fourteen days before a first performance, and warned of financial penalties if unlicensed plays were acted.[18] This was amended under the Theatres Act of 1843 which extended the Lord Chamberlain's authority to controlling all British theatres except music halls and dancing venues.[19] This act stated that the role of the Lord Chamberlain was to enforce 'order and decency' and that he should refuse a licence whenever he was 'of opinion that it is fitting for the preservation of good manners, decorum or of the public peace so to do.'[20] These criteria were largely upheld until the removal of the Lord Chamberlain in 1968 although there was some room for adaptation in accordance with changes in the law, for instance concerning the decriminalisation of homosexuality. Nevertheless, for nearly four centuries the Lord Chamberlain was censoring plays according to criteria that remained unchanged, despite great political and social upheaval.

Going from defending 'political heresy' in the Sixteenth Century, the Lord Chamberlain of the 1950s and 60s was not supposed to exercise political censorship or infringe on freedom of opinion which had already been firmly established in Britain in theory, by the

[15] Ibid., p. 15.
[16] In 1556 Elizabeth gave supervisory powers to municipal officers in the towns […] ordering them to prohibit all plays 'wherein either matters of religion or of the governance wherein either matters of religion or of the governance of the estate of the commonweal shall be handled, or treated; being no meet matters to be written or treated upon, but by men of authority, learning and wisdom, nor to be handled before any audience but of grave and discreet persons.' At the same time, the Master of Revels was selected as the first effective censor of the professional stage in England, working under the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain. Richard Findlater, *Banned!* (1967), pp. 17-19.
[17] The Licensing Act of 1737 allowed the Lord Chamberlain to give or refuse licences to plays depending on whether he thought them fit for public viewing. Any play deemed unsuitable was therefore banned and considered illegal. Steve Nicholson, *The Censorship of British Drama 1900-1968 – Volume 4 – The Sixties* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2015), p. 11.
[18] Dominic Shellard and Steve Nicholson, *The Lord Chamberlain Regrets…A History of British Theatre Censorship* (London: British Library, 2004), p. 9.
[19] Ibid., pp. 47 – 48.
[20] Steve Nicholson, 'Censoring Revolution: The Lord Chamberlain and the Soviet Union', *New Theatre Quarterly,* 8. 32, (1992), p. 306.

signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.[21] Despite this supposed impartiality, 1950s and 1960s playwrights and theatre directors saw him as a threat to British drama and freedom of expression. Several authors and theatre directors evoked these limitations being imposed by the Lord Chamberlain, reminding the office that this was not its job in twentieth century Britain, as explored below.

In the later years of the Lord Chamberlain's power, much of the office's dealings were conducted via informal means including playwrights and directors being invited into the Lord Chamberlain's office to discuss cuts and compromises over a glass of sherry.[22] These more underhand, off-the-record dealings with writers suggest that impartiality and transparency was certainly not how the office of the 1950s and 1960s operated.[23] An author who proved particularly unhappy or intractable would be invited for an interview at St James's Palace, where the Lord Chamberlain's office was located.[24] As a result, very few plays were banned outright but, as Nicholson points out, the real power of censorship is often insidious rather than conspicuous.[25] Writers and theatre managers knew the constraints within which they were expected to operate they 'were often able to adapt their work to meet the Lord Chamberlain's requirements.'[26] Furthermore, since the Lord Chamberlain and his readers believed that their own opinions were balanced, any play which contradicted these views must demonstrate 'bias', a claim to be disproved in this chapter and by the simple fact that the office appears to have been ready to ban a play which caused concern to anyone whose opinion was considered important.[27]

The process of censorship was complex and informal as illustrated in the archive by confidential notes and memoranda circulated among the staff of the Lord Chamberlain's office. These reveal private obsessions and prejudices which are transferred into decisions on licensing

[21] Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.' Julie Biando Edwards and Stephan P. Edwards, (eds.), *Beyond Article 19: Libraries and Social and Cultural Rights,* (Minnesota: Library Juice Press, 2010), p. 1.

[22] Steve Nicholson, *The Censorship of British Drama 1900-1968 – Volume 4 – The Sixties* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2015), p. 64. These meetings were conveniently conducted without minutes or any kind of recording, making it difficult to know what kind of negotiations took place behind closed doors.

[23] Examples of this outrage in relation to decolonisation include *The Little Mrs Foster Show* from 1966 which wanted to 'project photographs of mutilated African corpses' onto the stage. The author, Henry Livings described it as 'a matter of public interest' that the play be staged in this way. Livings threatens to speak to Richard Findlater about his experiences of censorship at the hands of the Lord Chamberlains if he is not granted a licence for the play as it stands. BL LC Archive, File number 1966/34, correspondence (10/08/1966 – 26/09/1966).

[24] Helen Freshwater, 'The Allure of the Archive' *Poetics Today*, 24.4, (2003), 729-758 (p. 743).

[25] Steve Nicholson, *British Theatre and the Red Peril: The Portrayal of Communism 1917-45* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), p. 311.

[26] John Johnston, *The Lord Chamberlain's Blue Pencil* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990), p. 21.

[27] Steve Nicholson, *British Theatre and the Red Peril* (1999), p. 311.

plays. Both the initial and more modern appointees to the office had a range of responsibilities outside of theatre censorship including head of the royal household, chairman of the household committee and senior courtier to the reigning monarch. When plays were submitted (along with a reading fee of one or two guineas) by authors or directors the scripts were more often than not assessed by a Reader or sometimes even a clerk working in the office. The Reader would then produce a Reader's Report detailing the outline of the play and where they thought cuts should be made if necessary. If a play proved difficult or contentious, it would be sent to the Lord Chamberlain who had the final word on granting a licence or not. In a number of rare instances, a Reader would be sent to watch the rehearsal of a play in order to decide if it was fit for public viewing.[28] However, more often than not, agreements and compromises were made between directors and authors with the Lord Chamberlain's office via letter or in later years by telephone in order to receive a licence.[29]

The Lord Chamberlain and his team of Readers were not drama or political experts and there does seem to have been a certain self-awareness of this. When considering the aforementioned *Number 10* by Ronald Miller in 1967 the Reader Heriot notes:

> This seems to me to be an amusing, exciting play without any personal axes to grind. I do not know why the Commonwealth Office should be 'interested' in it - *but I admit that, politically speaking, I am a moron, and that the interplay behind the scenes may be either too close to life or too frequently false to it.*[30]

This strange comment highlights the office's attempts to consistently 'read between the lines' of plays submitted for reading. The action of the play in question takes place in 10 Downing Street and follows a strike in the 'Zimbadian copper mines against European managers' as well as a potential 'entente between Zimbadia and Peking.'[31] Changes were imposed including the substitution of 'Lusaka for some mythical name', Lusaka being the capital of Zambia. This provoked a reaction from the author William Clarke (upon whose novel the play was based) who stated 'may I say as a writer that I am intrigued to find that your Office exerts this type of political censorship. I had thought your activities were confined to faith and morals…'[32]

The office was in regular, often informal and untraceable, contact with the Commonwealth Office to 'check' whether the readers had missed something potentially incriminating in plays submitted for licence. As Freshwater points out, the readers seem to have

[28] Richard Findlater, *Banned!* (1967), p. 13.
[29] Evidence of this can be found in a variety of letters in the British Library's LC Archive where written correspondence frequently refers to previously held and unrecorded telephone conversations in many of the censorship cases.
[30] BL file LCP LR 1967/35, Reader's Report by Heriot (6/8/67). My emphasis.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid. Letter from William Clarke (15/08/1967).

been 'possessed by a paranoiac fear of issuing any statement which would provide the press with controversial material' and so 'preferred to offer no explanation unless absolutely essential.'[33] In the case of the play mentioned above, Sir John Johnston of the Commonwealth Office went to 'discuss' the matter with the Assistant Comptroller, although there is no written evidence of their exact discussion.[34]

The careers of the last two Lord Chamberlains, Lord Scarborough and Lord Cobbold reflect this necessity to maintain the myth of peaceful decolonisation. Prior to his swearing in as Lord Chamberlain (in 1952) Scarborough was governor of 'Bombay' from 1937 to 1943 and held a personal interest in British relations with Asia, as shall be explored below. Cobbold, prior to being appointed Lord Chamberlain in 1963, was governor of the Bank of England until 1961 and then in 1962 became chairman of the Malaysia Commission of Enquiry. In the context of decolonisation, this is particularly important as it displays a lack of neutrality right from these individuals' appointments. Mona Brand's *Strangers in the Land*, a play that deals with British rule in Malaya (today Malaysia), illustrates how the political standpoint of the Lord Chamberlain could decide whether a play was granted a licence or not.

Censoring the Facts: *Strangers in the Land* (1950) by Mona Brand

In 1953 the Australian-born author Mona Brand (who also wrote under the pseudonym Alexis Fox) submitted a play to the Lord Chamberlain's office entitled *Strangers in the Land*. The play had previously been staged by the left-wing Unity Theatre company in London under club conditions (meaning privately) in 1950 and in 1953 an attempt by the same company was made to stage it publicly in Cardiff.[35] The plot references massacres and violent treatment of 'Malay' civilians at the hands of the British during what became known as the Malaya Emergency.[36] It was refused a licence outright by the censor due to 'communist doctrine', 'collective libel' and claims of 'a possible breach of the peace.'[37] However, it was not only the Lord Chamberlain who wanted to change the play and Brand's work came under attack from the Unity Theatre too, as this section shall explore.

The story follows a young protagonist named Christine who arrives in Malaya to join her fiancé Rod and their friends Joyce and her husband Douglas. Christine is uneasy from the

[33] Helen Freshwater, 'The Allure of the Archive' (2003), p.743.
[34] BL file LCP LR 1967/35 Note from Assistant Comptroller to Lord Chamberlain (08/08/1967).
[35] Plays which would not be granted a licence by the Lord Chamberlain could be staged in 'club conditions' meaning own members of the theatre and very small audiences could pay to attend.
[36] The Malayan Emergency began soon after the end of World War Two and escalated to a Communist insurrection by 1948. The British tried to eliminate the Communist threat which culminated in 1950 with the introduction of the Briggs Plan resulting in the displacement of nearly half a million people by 1952.
[37] BL file LCP LR Corr 1953/6, Reader's Report.

start of the play with the situation in Malaya. A string of violence ensues including another female character being delivered some severed heads to her door. Seng, the house servant to Christine and Rod, is suspected of being a terrorist and is ultimately shot by Rod. The play closes with Christine saying that she will pack her bags so she does not become 'like them', meaning her fellow colonial settlers who spend their time drinking and ridiculing the local population.

When interviewed, Brand explained that the play was inspired by a news report on the 'the Emergency',

> I was in London and I was very disturbed about what was going in Malaya. What annoyed me was – I used to read all the papers and *I got the feeling that nobody expected the 'Daily Worker', not read by many people, was giving the other side.* […] What set me going, I was listening to the radio and I heard a woman in Malaya interviewed. The interviewer said 'I see you have a bar here.' And she said 'Oh yes, we all have them.' Then he said 'what are those caps you've got above the bar?' And they were caps worn by dead guerrillas and she had them up like trophies.[38]

The play depicts the violence imposed on both colonials and colonised Malaysians. However, unlike John Arden's *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance*, to be explored next in this chapter, the form of the play was 'more like a British drawing-room drama for British audiences.'[39] The 'drawing-room drama' works to implicate the British audience in the on-stage events, presenting them with a familiar situation but that is then subverted to break down the 'veneer of civility.'[40]A traditional dramatic form to promote a subversive message, highly critical of the British government.

The Lord Chamberlain's office refused to licence the play despite (predictably) applauding its form but confirming that the content was problematic: 'The construction is quite deft, and the proper intelligent framework for making the desired propaganda points.'[41] The comment illustrates how the Readers of plays considered the drama 'deft' because it adhered to a traditional theatrical structure of a well-made play. Nevertheless, the use of the word 'propaganda' is particularly striking and highlights the office's aversion to any kind of communist inference.[42] In light of my argument about the 'myth' of peaceful decolonisation, which this play seeks to dispel, it seems ironic that the office should consider this play as 'propaganda': the play is actually trying to expose the *true* number of casualties in Malaya,

[38] Gaye Poole, 'A Very Humanitarian Type of Socialism: An Interview with Mona Brand', *Australasian Drama Studies*, 21.3 (1992), 3-22 (p. 9). My emphases.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] BL file LCP LR Corr 1953/6.
[42] There are many examples of plays being censored for political reasons but a particularly well-known case was the play *The Rosenberg Story* about a Jewish couple executed by Nixon for selling spies to the Russians in 1953. The refusal of a licence for Brand's play in this same year highlights the silencing both of anti-colonial and communist discourses by the Lord Chamberlain's office.

suggesting a form of *reverse censorship*, or a censorship of the truth, as I explore further below.[43] The play was outright refused a licence, along with a number of other texts in 1953, suggesting a conscious decision not to stage plays that were seen as 'communist propaganda' during that year.[44]

The main point of contention for the office was the number of displaced Malaysians. In the play, Brand's characters discuss the destruction of local villages:

> Chris. But when the village was destroyed, what did you do with the people – the villagers?
>
> Douglas. Oh they're safe enough. We got them settled into a nice little camp.
>
> Spencer. Do you know, Chris, we've got 500,000 natives in camps now. 500,000 bloody fools that won't open their mouths.
>
> Chris. What sort of camps?
>
> Spencer. The best sort – the sort they won't want to leave in a hurry – now that we've got those high tension wires and a couple of our chaps on the tower behind a machine gun. I think they'll like it better inside, don't you, Basil?[45]

The episode described here refers to reports of 500,000 Malayans and Chinese people forced to relocate to guarded camps which were known as 'new villages' under the controversial Briggs Plan.[46] The plan aimed to isolate the Malayan army from its sources of supply as well as from the general population by containing the soldiers in mountain and jungle bases, which could then be attacked using paratroopers and main-force units. Peasants, squatters, and ethnic Chinese who supported the Communist rebellion were forcibly removed from their communities into government-built new villages encircled by barbed wire and overseen by Malayan police. By 1952, when Brand had already written the play, 461,000 people had been relocated into more than five hundred new villages.[47] The Lord Chamberlain's office refuted

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[43] The construction and maintenance of the colonial mindset can also be considered as 'propaganda' imposed via marketing, repeated slogans and events such as the colonial exhibitions, as Nicolas Bancel points out in 'The Colonial Bath: Colonial Culture in Everyday Life (1918-1931)' in Pascal Blanchard, et al., *Colonial Culture in France Since the Revolution,* transls. Alexis Pernsteiner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 200-208 (p. 200).

[44] Considering that, in total, only six plays were refused a licence in the year 1953, and that two were banned because they were considered Communist plays, is certainly noteworthy. See: BL listings of Plays Refused a Licence organised by year in the BL Manuscripts Reading Room. Steve Nicholson mentions the refusal of a licence for *The Russian Monk* submitted in 1918, *Red Sunday* in 1929 and *Roar China* in 1931. 'Censoring Revolution: The Lord Chamberlain and the Soviet Union', New Theatre Quarterly, 8.32 (1992) 305-312 (p. 305).

[45] *Strangers in the Land* (London: Lawrence and Wishart Ltd, 1954), p. 30. Please note that the play was actually printed *after* it was rejected by the Lord Chamberlain. This suggests that Brand opted for the print form as a means of disseminating her anti-colonial message as opposed to seeing it performed in the theatre in Britain: a means of circumventing censorship.

[46] Spencer C. Tucker, *The Roots and Consequences of 20th-Century Warfare: Conflicts that Shaped the Modern World* (California: ABC-CLIO, 2016), p. 279. The Briggs Plan was named after Lieutenant General Sir Harold Briggs who was became director of operations in Malaya in 1950. Briggs co-ordinated the collection and management of Malaysian intelligence as well as implementing civil, military and police officials.

[47] Ibid.

the claim that '500,000 natives, evacuated from destroyed villages are held in concentration camps' along with several other contested facts highlighted in Brand's play.[48]

The contestation of these facts highlights the office's (and no doubt government's) willingness to hide the realities of the violence taking place in Malaysia. It also suggests their fear of being associated with the use of the term 'concentration camps' in the wake of the Holocaust only eight years prior. There is an awareness within the office that banning the play could bring into focus questions surrounding 'free speech' despite 'statutory censorship' when 'dealing with those who would at once destroy it.'[49] The office also claimed that the play was 'generally libellous' in its treatment of 'a subject of great importance to this country and others to which the Lord Chamberlain connects' and could 'lead to a breach of the peace.'[50]

These 'others' that are referred to by the Assistant Comptroller are undoubtedly other colonies that the then Lord Chamberlain, the Earl of Scarborough, had fought in the British Army to protect. An army general and from 1937 to 1943, Scarborough served as the Governor of what was then Bombay. Moreover, the Earl had a specific, personal interest in Asia and African studies, having run the Interdepartmental Commission of Enquiry on Oriental, Slavonic, East European and African Studies, established after World War Two. The aim was to increase research and training in these geographical areas in British university departments.[51] Therefore, a play displaying the brutalities of the 'Malayan Emergency' in 1953 would certainly have hindered the developments of such projects. Claims by the Lord Chamberlain's office that 'the ex-Service organisation in Cardiff that includes men who have fought in Malaya [might take] violent action against such defamation' seem to act as a means of justifying the Lord's vested interest.[52] Therefore, not only was political censorship implemented but personal motives, relating specifically to the Lord Chamberlain in question, contributed to the censorship of Brand's play.

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[48] BL file LCP LR Strangers in the Land 1953/6, Reader's Report: These include: 1) That the British Army brought in head-hunting Dyaks (presumably from Borneo) to the bandits they killed. 2) That villages of women and children are habitually razed to the ground as reprisals. 3) That certain other villages have their crops sprayed from the air with chemicals destroying those crops. 4) That other suspect villages are placed upon a starvation ration of food.

[49] BL file LCP LR Corr 1953/6. Letter from Letter from Miss Raia Marmach (13/12/1953) 'The committee [of the Union Theatre] is astonished that the LC should base his refusal of licence on the grounds that it "*might lead to a breach of the peace"* in view of the fact that in the three cities where it has already been performed the play has been most favourably received. As private performances are also subject to the laws of libel and no action has resulted it is felt that the Lord Chamberlain's use of the term 'libellous' is not only incorrect but warrants explanation.'[49]

[50] BL file LCP LR 1953/6, Letter from Assistant Comptroller (25/07/1953).

[51] *Report of the Sub-Committee on Oriental, Slavonic, East European and African Studies (Hayter Report)* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1961), pp. 6-40.

[52] BL file LCP LR Corr 1953/6. (My emphases).

Nevertheless, the Lord Chamberlain's views were not necessarily unanimously endorsed within the office, as displayed in some of the internal notes and memos. 'Quite a tricky one' writes the Assistant Comptroller to the Lord Chamberlain, implying that the Assistant Comptroller was not convinced that the right decision had been made.[53] By banning the play, the Lord Chamberlain's office and subsequently the government made it look like they were trying to conceal the violence being committed by the British Army in Malaysia. This was furthered by the play's success in Australia in 1953 and from 1954 onwards in the then USSR, Czechoslovakia, East Germany as well as in India, all either ex-colonies or part of the then Soviet Union. The play has never been staged publicly in UK to this day. It would therefore seem like a conscious effort was made to hide these events from the British public whereas they were openly discussed, and perhaps even ridiculed, in the Soviet Union and independent India and Australia.

However, the censorship inflicted on *Strangers in the Land* came not only from the Lord Chamberlain's office. A review of the play which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* from November 1952 refers to the 'peculiar point of view' and that 'the author [has] written parts without creating characters' and does not present 'any viewpoint but her own. She should have started an argument instead of presenting a case.'[54] What is odd about this review from 1952 is that the initial private performance of the play took place in 1950 at the Unity Theatre and the rejection of the licence in 1953. This would suggest another unlicenced performance in the interim although there is no other trace of this. There is an certain irony here given that Brand actually seems to presenting the point of view of the Malaysian population, victims of violence perpetrated by the British army, no doubt what is meant by 'peculiar', suggesting that this is the first time the Reader has encountered a play which portrays a non-Western perspective on decolonisation events.

This unfamiliarity with a non-British perspective of decolonisation is also reflected in Brand's own experience of the play's private staging with the Unity Theatre in 1950. Members of the group disagreed with its message for different reasons, as Brand explains:

> there were a lot of people there who weren't in favour of the [play]; they had a lot of […] sectarianism. They wanted me to change it to something far more revolutionary; to have the guerrillas coming in with red flags on the stage. *But my project was to make it more like a British drawing-room drama for British audiences […] so that it would be more familiar to the British audiences.* So I had dreadful struggles with the people in the theatre, […] *It was so awful that if I didn't go to rehearsal one evening I'd go the next night and I'd find it all changed. I finally had to appeal to a Malayan who was very high in the Communist Party and he said 'this is exactly how it ought to be' so he stepped in.* There was still this

[53] BL file LCP LR Strangers in the Land 1953/6, Memo attached to letter from Assistant Comptroller, (25/07/1953).
[54] V&A file THM/9/4/5/83, R.P.M.G, 'Slow Play About Malaya – First Night', *Daily Telegraph* (November 1952).

> feeling there was something wrong with the play until opening night. There was hesitation […] and then everybody clapped. And it did have a good season.[55]

Therefore, not only was the play disapproved of by the official censor, but the theatre company itself wished to change the text and place an emphasis on the communist element, suggesting a reluctance to understand the human cost of the fighting. The play avoids taking sides and presents a humanitarian view of the violence:

> Chris. But who are our own people? That's what I keep asking myself. I'm sorry, but for the life of me I can't feel more wretched about Basil Price [who was killed] than I can about … about those people I've seen in this little village down the road […]. They're *all* people.[56]

When asked where she had gathered these 'dangerous thoughts about people' Chris, the main character replies 'I think I first heard them in Sunday School.'[57] Brand therefore avoids presenting a binary 'us' versus 'them' narrative and simultaneously criticises British Christian values. The universality of her message is reinforced by her name as 'Chris' meaning that she could be male or female, although this could also be read as a reference to 'Christ': the character not judging the actions of individual characters and refusing to 'hate' anyone.

This balanced approach did not sit well with the Unity Theatre in London. Brand describes them as 'sectarian' and 'narrow-minded' and that they 'regarded Australia and New Zealand as the colonies – even people like that [left-wing], they were terribly narrow.'[58] Whereas Brand seems to have been interested in portraying the everyday existence of Malaysian citizens living under British rule (hence the play's domestic setting), the communist theatre group merely saw the play as a means of furthering their political message.

Therefore, we can confirm that *Strangers in the Land* was censored in order to maintain the myth of peaceful decolonisation for the British public. However, it also fell victim to a self-interested Lord Chamberlain and British-centric theatre group. The success of Brand's play abroad (in countries which felt less than favourably towards Britain in the 1950s and 1960s) is testament to its effectiveness in creating an emotive response to the Malaysian characters in the plot.

Victim of the Press: *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* (1959) by John Arden

In 1963, John Arden accused Samuel Beckett of a 'failure to write plays "about Algeria" publicly.'[59] In her chapter on Beckett and the Algerian War, Emilie Morin goes to great lengths to contradict this statement illustrating how Beckett's plays *did* reflect the horrors of the

[55] Mona Brand in Gaye Poole 'A Very Humanitarian Type of Socialism' (1992), p. 9.
[56] Mona Brand, *Strangers in the Land* (1954), p. 47.
[57] Ibid., p. 30.
[58] Ibid., p. 10.
[59] Emilie Morin, *Beckett's Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 184.

Algerian War, and in particular dealt with the theme of torture and interrogation.[60] Arden's own work, although anticolonial and strongly critical of the British government, does not directly denounce the atrocities taking place in specific countries such as Kenya and Cyprus at the time he was writing in 1959.[61] *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* instead, quite literally, points the finger at the audience accusing them of complicity in the violence being committed in the name of defending colonialism. It also requires them to read between the lines and through both an absurdist aesthetic and intentionally vague time-period, in order to fully understand the parallels being made between late nineteenth-century imperialism and the 1950s wars of decolonisation.

This section will explore how, despite receiving a licence from the Lord Chamberlain (subject to cuts), the play's attempts to discuss decolonisation were unsuccessful in garnering support from critics and consequently, audiences. I argue that this is due to Arden's displacement of the play's action away from a temporally recognisable setting, a tactic to avoid censorship. This attempt to critique the present by using the past is lost on critics who misunderstand and disregard the play, suggesting a disinterest or ignorance of news relating to decolonisation in 1959. The self-censorship used by Arden to get the play staged in London is evidenced in the 1963 production in France, which was able to be outwardly more critical of British colonial policy as not subject to scrutiny from the Lord Chamberlain. Further to this, the French *Musgrave* is able to further break away from traditional dramatic forms, particularly in relation to time and setting than the London production. A greater critique of nationalism and colonialism was made although this also did not convince the French press of the play's worth.

The play tells the story of three soldiers and a serjeant returning to Britain from an unnamed colony supposedly on a recruiting mission. However, as the play progresses, we discover that the soldiers are in fact deserters, returning the skeleton of Billy Hicks to his home town following his death in an unnamed colony. The soldiers aim to raise awareness in the metropole about the violence taking place abroad in the name of defending British colonialism. This culminates in a Gatling gun being turned on the audience and the skeleton of Hicks is

[60] Ibid. Morin claims Beckett's flat looked directly onto the Santé prison in Paris where many Algerian prisoners were held, tortured and executed. The result of this was that sketches such as *Rough for theatre II* and *Rough for Radio II* 'borrow heavily from the conventions of detective enquiry' and detail scenes which appear to have been lifted word for word from Henri Alleg's account of torture at the hands of the French army – *La Question,* published and banned in 1958, to be considered further in the next two chapters.

[61] This chapter will return to the Mau Mau crisis which took place during the 1950s in the next section. The Cyprus Emergency began in 1955 and ended in 1959. It was led by a number of Cypriot nationalist guerrilla organisations who demanded independence from Britain. In 1960 Cyprus became a republic and independent state.

strung up in the town's market square amongst bunting and flags. Musgrave explains that Hicks was shot in the back whilst returning from the opera by 'patriots' who were 'anti-British' and 'subversive'.[62] Reprisals were carried out by the British army resulting in the death of twenty-five men, nine women and a child.[63] Consequently, Musgrave concludes that 'twenty-five persons' will have to die, roughly the number assembled in the square.[64] The play concludes with Attercliffe and Musgrave in a police cell, having tried to shoot into the audience and being stopped by the 'dragoons'. They will inevitably be hung as a result of their actions.

The play opened in October 1959 at the Royal Court, filling less than a quarter of the theatre's seats.[65] One review notes, '[the play] misses its aim. It is an anti-war play; but as it contrives also to look with apparent sympathy at a savage threat of bloody revolution, it can hardly be accepted as a moving plea in favour of peace.'[66] Arden was also criticised for his lack of character development: 'Musgrave never really fulfils himself as a character' stated one reviewer and Harold Hobson in the *Sunday Times* called the play 'another frightful ordeal' complaining that 'it is time someone reminded our advanced dramatists that the principal function of the theatre is to give pleasure.'[67] It was also considered that the play was no longer relevant: 'Why was this piece put on? A play that was anti-Empire and anti-Army would conceivably have its appeal in Sloane Square, but surely not one that was eighty years out of date.'[68] Playwright John Osborne contradicted this, calling the reviews 'the most irresponsible for some time'[69] for not understanding the parallels between the contemporary decolonisation situation and the imperial wars of the late nineteenth century. Further to this, Albert Hunt wrote 'We still have some vital theatre left […] For God's sake let's have some vital critics'[70] suggesting that it was the press's uninterest in matters of decolonisation which led to their negative reviews of the play. Rebellato argues that this disinterest was perpetuated by theatre critics such as Anthony Hartley of *The Spectator* who claimed in the late 1950s that 'at the minute there are no fundamental political problems in this country, so it is difficult to put politics on the stage': the suggestion being that violence in the colonies was no longer relevant to metropolitan Britons.[71]

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[62] John Arden, *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1977 [1960]), p. 87.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid., p. 92.
[65] Michael Billington, 'Serjeant Musgrave rides again', *The Guardian*, (23/09/2003).
[66] V&A file THM/452/8/56 on *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance.*
[67] Ibid. Harold Hobson, quoted on a poster for *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* (1959).
[68] Ibid., [unknown author], press cuttings.
[69] Ibid., John Osbourne cited on poster.
[70] Albert Hunt quoted in Michael Billington 'Serjeant Musgrave rides again', *The Guardian* (23/09/2003).
[71] Anthony Hartley cited in Dan Rebellato, 'Look Back at Empire: British Theatre and Imperial Decline' (2017), p. 80.

The critics, like the Lord Chamberlain, were expecting theatre which adhered to a traditional dramatic tradition. British theatre in particular was overtly linked to nationalism given that during the 1960s audiences stood whilst the National Anthem was played in theatres before each performance.[72] As Alain Ricard points out, nationalism and literary tradition are interlinked:

> le nationalisme est volonté, action et quelquefois exclusion. Il est possible d'analyser dans le domaine littéraire les différentes parties de ce concept en les rapportant à des cadres géographiques ou sociologiques précis. L'écrivain est membre d'un groupe producteur de littérature dans un cadre déterminé. Il a une tradition littéraire sur laquelle il peut s'appuyer ou qu'il peut rejeter. L'œuvre nous montre pour chacune des composantes du nationalisme, langue, espace, religion, histoire et 'race', les structures de la visée nationale de l'écrivain.[73]

Therefore, when literature does not abide by the *cadres* or forms already in place, it acts as a threat to national identity and in this case, history. Arden's play refuses to adhere to these national narratives and is instead 'a demonstration of how a violent need to project a meaning can suddenly call into existence a wild unpredictable form.'[74]

The Lord Chamberlain's office dubbed the play 'another pretty queer affair' and focused on Arden's description of the play as 'an un-historical parable.'[75] However, the office *did* pick up on the parallel with contemporary news, recognising that the soldiers were returning from an 'overseas possession where the troops have been repressing rebels (a parallel with modern Cyprus is indicated.)'[76] This resonates with Michael Coveney's claims that the play was inspired by an incident in Cyprus in 1958, when British soldiers killed five innocent people in an anti-terrorist reprisal.[77] Arden never mentioned this, although given that the play was written in 1959, it seems plausible.

However, as the introduction to the Methuen edition instructs, the text strives for a transhistorical setting 'approximately between 1860 and 1880' with 'scarlet tunics and spiked helmets characteristic of the later (or 'Kipling') epoch' worn by British colonial forces during the nineteenth century.[78] The timeframe, 1860 to 1880, covers a period known as the 'Victoria Wars', a number of British colonial wars including the Asanti War (1873-4) the Zulu War (1879) and the First Boer War (1880). Rudyard Kipling was well-known for his support of imperial endeavours, evidenced in his (in)famous poem 'The White Man's Burden' (1899) in

[72] Steve Nicholson, *Modern British Playwriting: The 60s* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2012), p. 31.
[73] Alain Ricard, *Théâtre et nationalisme: Wole Soyinka et LeRoi Jones* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1972), p. 161.
[74] Peter Brook, *The Empty Space: A Book About the Theatre: Deadly, Holy, Rough, Immediate* (London: Scribner, 1996), p. 71.
[75] BL file LCP Corr 1959/171. Reader's report.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Michael Coveney, 'John Arden Obituary', *The Guardian* (20/03/2012).
[78] John Arden, 'Introduction', *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1977 [1960]), p. 5.

which he propagates white superiority over Black people and the white man's 'responsibility' to civilise his Black counterpart. Arden's play uses nineteenth-century imperialism to denounce contemporary colonialism and repression of resistance movements taking place in the late 1950s.

Despite the initially lukewarm reception for the performance at the Royal Court, *Musgrave's Dance* has since become Arden's 'best known play' according to Michael Patterson.[79] The script was turned into a Granada Television production in 1961 and in 1965 was adapted to be a BBC Schools three-part mini-series. Furthermore, the Coventry Belgrade Theatre applied for a licence to present a re-staging in 1963. However, they were required to make a number of cuts to the script in order to be granted a licence.[80] These included the deletion of 'a war of sin and unjust blood' and 'all wars is sin, Serjeant' to which the theatre management expressed some concern given that 'these seem to have no possible hint of bad language or persuasion to immorality.'[81] These changes were then revoked and the play was awarded a licence suggesting inconsistency concerning what was permitted on stage and what was not, prior to the theatre censor's abolition in 1968. In 1963 the role of the Lord Chamberlain changed hands from the Earl of Scarborough to Lord Cobbold, a fact that could explain this seemingly arbitrary approach to Arden's play. Similarly to Scarborough (as explored above), Cobbold had a personal interest in questions of empire, giving his name to the 'Cobbold Commission' which intended to 'discover whether the people of North Boneo and Sarawak wanted to join a Malaysian Federation.'[82] The Commission recommended in August 1962 that two-thirds of the population were favourable to the Federation.[83] A play criticising British army presence abroad would certainly have been unfavourable to Cobbold, who had a personal interest in maintaining peaceful and working relationships within the British overseas territories.

In addition to these later English productions, in 1964 a French staging of the play took place in Paris. It was directed by Peter Brook and entitled 'La Danse du sergent Musgrave'. The production's programme includes an actual timeline ranging from 1880 to 1990 and detailing the 'guerre anglo-boer' (1880) but also more French-centred events such as 'Les

[79] Michael Patterson, 'The "interventionist" strategy: poetic politics in John Arden's 'Serjeant Musgrave's Dance (1959)' in *Strategies of Political Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
[80] All scripts had to be sent to the Lord Chamberlain's office even if they had already been given a licence previously, if a reprisal or re-working of a play that already been performed it required a second licence.
[81] BL file LCP Corr 1959/171. Letter for a reprisal 23rd Sept 1963 at the Coventry Belgrade Theatre from Anthony Richardson to the Lord Chamberlain.
[82] Modern Records Centre, Warwick University Library, [Unknown author], [No title], *Londoner's Diary* (26/09/1966).
[83] Ibid.

Français abattent l'empire de Rabah au Tchad' (1900) and 'Expedition française à Madagascar' (1894). Interestingly, these are accompanied by literary publications such as 'Zola, "Germinal"' (1885) and 'Bergson, "Le rire"' (1900). The production seems to contextualise the onstage events for a French audience but also draws attention to the gap between the violence committed by European imperial armies abroad and the Eurocentric publications being produced in Europe. The texts included next to these important colonial wars highlight the ignorance of and lack of focus on the violence taking place abroad.

The programme for the French production also contains pictures and explanations pertaining to life in the British army. These include whipping as punishment for dissenting or deserting soldiers, entry to the army allowed aged fourteen upwards and discouragement from marriage whilst serving.[84] Despite these precisions, the French version of the play seems to have opened up the anti-colonial critique to apply to French colonialism as well as British. This is evidenced in the production's costumes which do not seem to include the 'spiked helmets' and 'scarlet tunics' mentioned above, but a more generic uniform including knee-high boots and a waistbelt more associated with contemporary warfare, or perhaps even Nazism.[85] This would suggest that the absence of a state theatre censor, particularly in 1963 after the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962), meant that the production could be brought into a more modern context as opposed to in London where fears of being refused a licence were legitimate in 1959.[86] This is reinforced in the French production by the presence of several large-scale Union Jacks strewn across the front of the stage and over some of the props, suggesting a targeted critique of British colonial policy, which was not able to be expressed under the Lord Chamberlain's watchful eye.[87]

In the text itself, the flag is key to the critique of jingoism and nationalism that Arden puts forward. Musgrave organises a 'recruiting' meeting which requires 'Flags, drums, shillings, sovereigns' but which ends in him recounting the events following Hicks's killing in the unnamed colony abroad.[88] In the centre of the market place there is 'the centre-piece […] a sort of Victorian clock-tower-cum lamppost-cum-market-cross, and it stands on a raised plinth' which is 'draped with bunting' and 'other colours.'[89] The events of this dramatic scene, the revealing of Hicks's skeleton strung up on the lamppost/market-cross and Musgrave

[84] V&A file THM/452/8/56. Programme for 'La Danse du sergent Musgrave'.
[85] Ibid. Pictures from programme of 'La Danse du sergent Musgrave'. See Appendix 1.
[86] Censorship still existed in France after the lifting of the 'état d'urgence' at the end of the Algerian war in March 1962. However, it was not enforced as rigidly as during the height of the conflict, as the next chapter explores.
[87] V&A file THM/452/5/38. Pictures of French performance.
[88] John Arden, *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance,* p. 74.
[89] Ibid., p. 76.

pointing the Gatling gun towards the audience, all take place in this atmosphere of pomp and ceremony. The Mayor wears his 'cocked hat and red robe and chain' whereas the Parson sports his 'gown and bands and carries a Bible' and all characters display 'bright cockades', presumably in red, white and blue.[90] By placing a scene of such violence within a visually striking *cadre* Arden illustrates the hypocrisy behind colonial wars fought to ensure that, 'in a little country without much importance except from the point of view that there's a Union Jack [flying] on it and the people of that country can write British Subject after their names. And that makes us proud!'[91] This meta-theatrical 'show' of nationalism echoes Sue Curry Jansen's affirmation that the enforcement of univocal discourse such as 'the president or party minister's account of the "state of the union" is [always] prefaced by prayers or pageants of patriotism, and it is always taken seriously.'[92] Here the univocal discourse is both the myth of peaceful decolonisation, as well as the propagation of the importance of maintaining the empire. In order to counter these kinds of discourses artists adopt a tactic of 'writing-between-the-lines' and attempt an 'equivocal discourse' meaning one which can be read in several ways or infused with irony: a means of countering the censorship imposed by the univocal discourse.[93] Arden presents a traditionally 'univocal' situation but with a 'equivocal' criticism of colonialism: using irony to *décadrer* constructs of nationalism and perhaps also as a means of avoiding censorship. Consequently, the message seems to have been perhaps too concealed for some of the above-mentioned critics. This use of 'too much equivocation' which ultimately 'leaves the listener/audience behind' occurs frequently in 'absurdist drama', leaving audiences unaware or unsure of the intended message.[94] This returns us to Arden's initial statement about Beckett: as Morin has proved, Beckett *was* critiquing colonialism, however, his use of equivocal discourse differed to that of Arden, taking a more symbolic, less didactic approach.[95] Beckett's work, like Arden's is for his critics, proved too equivocal for Arden, not evident enough in its critique of French colonialism in Algeria.

Again, we see the use of an equivocal discourse in relation to the Church used here by Arden to implicate them in the maintaining and justification of empire, and the need to put down 'the rebellions, they called it' as Mrs Hitchcock states.[96] The Parson declares:

[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid., p. 83.
[92] Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship* (1991), p. 197.
[93] Ibid., p. 194.
[94] Ibid., p. 201.
[95] Emilie Morin, *Beckett's Political Imagination* (2017), p. 237.
[96] John Arden, *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance,* p. 26.

> when called to shoulder our country's burdens we should do it with a glancing eye and a leaping heart, to draw the sword with gladness […] but all united under one brave flag, going forth in Christian resolution, and showing a manly spirit! The Empire calls!'[97]

Adler argues that this criticism is reflected in the 1959 staging for the play which suggests to the audience a re-enactment of the Crucifixion […] in the hoisting of the skeleton and Musgrave's demonic dance around it.[98] This is displayed in photographs of the English production which show very well how the cross-like formation of the centre-piece dominates the setting.[99] Contrary to this, the photographs from the French production show a skeleton strung up and hanging from above the stage but no trace of a cross or cross-shaped structure.[100] This reflects the production's director Peter Brook's reading of the market place scene as meta-theatrical and reminiscent of popular theatre with guns and flags as props: a scene from everyday life.[101] Perhaps a deliberate move on Brook's behalf, the removal of this religious element serves to avoid offending France's significant Catholic population but also as a means of broadening the anti-colonial message so that it applies to non-Christian situations as well. It could also be read as a means of indirect censorship: by making the performance less situation-specific, it is more difficult to pin-down and become the target of censorship. As the next chapter of this thesis shows in relation to Michel Vinaver, censors target indeterminacy and, as mentioned above, strive for the maintenance of a 'univocal' discourse.

These critiques resonates with Benedict Anderson's idea of the colonial project and nationalism more widely, which sees the nation (or in this case empire) as an 'imagined political community – imaged as both inherently limited and sovereign.'[102] Arden also suggests that the empire is somewhat 'imagined' as the play highlights how the flag and British citizenship are the only real things that far-away colonial subjects have in common with the characters presented in the play (in the metropole). As Anderson points out, this idea of the nation is 'imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.'[103] He argues that, in the case of the British Empire, 'only a minority of subjected peoples had any long-standing religious, linguistic, cultural, or even political and economic ties with the metropole.'[104] In order to counterbalance the idea of this 'imagined

[97] Ibid., p. 79.
[98] Thomas P. Adler, 'Religious Ritual in John Arden's *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance*', *Modern Drama*, 16.2 (Summer 1973), 163-166 (p. 164).
[99] Ibid.
[100] V&A file THM/452/5/38. Pictures of French performance. See Appendix 2.
[101] Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (1996), p. 20.
[102] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2016 [1983]), p. 6.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid, p. 92.

community' imposed via colonialism, Musgrave's dance, which comes towards the end of the play, displays what Mary O'Connell calls elements of contemporary folk ritual, replicating 'a ritual pattern which helped previous generations to cope with their particular world structures.'[105] The dance serves as a mean of breaking out of the *cadre* of nationalism and national structures and carving out a more equal, egalitarian model represented by 'each man [linking] wrists with the previous one, until all are dancing round the centre-piece in a chain, singing.'[106]

Brook's 1963 production furthers this questioning of the established order as he strove to break down Aristotelian notions of unity and time in the theatre by introducing a unity which 'violates history' in order to carry 'a great reality.'[107] In the French production this was achieved by using geographically unrelated props and bits of scenery and dressing the Parson in a costume from a different period to that of the soldiers.[108] Again, this can be seen in the production photographs[109] from scene Act Three, Scene One where the Parson, Mayor and Constable (representing the establishment) move 'downstage to [face] the platform and [are] covered by the gun.'[110] In the pictures we can see that these establishment figures are dressed sombrely in modern-looking black suits, white shirts and black ties as opposed to the traditional garb indicated in the stage directions mentioned above. The costumes also reflect Brook's belief that 'a selection of details that relate consistently to a certain historical period do not necessarily give the greatest reality and everydayness even to the period in question.'[111] Therefore, the soldiers traditional uniforms contrast with these more modern forms of dress, the effect being that the time period is unidentifiable and history is not portrayed as linear or teleological. The meta-theatricality of this final scene breaks the suspension of disbelief and reminds the audience that they are watching a play: even though the play is supposedly set in the previous century, the violence being committed abroad by British and French armies was made a current issue.

Despite the significant changes put in place for the French production, Brook acknowledges the venture was 'a true flop' and that 'almost all the press was bad', the cast

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[105] Mary B. O'Connell, 'Ritual Elements in John Arden's *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance*', *Modern Drama*, 13.4 (Winter 1970), 356-359, (p. 359).
[106] *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance,* p. 99.
[107] V&A file THM/452/4/48. Letter to Bamber Gascoigne of *The Observer* from Peter Brook (17/10/1963).
[108] Ibid. Brook asks the question: 'Why is it hard to accept that the most recognisable outline for a parson belongs to one period and that of a solider to another?'
[109] THM/452/5/38. Pictures of French performance. Appendix 3.
[110] John Arden, *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance,* p. 85.
[111] V&A file THM/452/4/48. Letter to Bamber Gascoigne of *The Observer* from Peter Brook (17/10/1963).

playing to 'almost virtually empty houses.'[112] In order to draw in bigger audiences the company decided to stage three, free performances which had the desired effect and saw crowds fighting to get in. At the end of the performance, the production team asked the audiences why they had not been to see the show before. The response was that 'it had a bad press', echoing the play's experience in London.[113] The French press, like the British, were looking to place the work in relation to the Western literary canon:

> Je cherche l'histoire. Elle ne tient pas debout. Je cherche les personnages. Ce sont des données, des fantoches, des postulats. Je cherche l'harmonie. Je ne trouve que la laideur ou l'horreur. Je cherche une détente ou il n'y a que crispation. Je cherche un monde, un univers, un milieu. Je ne découvre que des extrêmes dont personne n'a essayé de me rendre le mariage vraisemblable. Et si l'on me dit: c'est de la poésie, je réponds qu'elle ne m'est point perceptible. Marot, Villon, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Apollinaire étaient poètes. Je sens la poésie de Shakespeare, de Racine, de Claudel. Pourquoi faut-il que celle de M. John Arden m'échappe totalement?[114]

As Arden himself noted, 'critics and audiences liked to have a leading character with whom they could identify and follow. But there isn't one here.'[115] The protagonist, Serjeant Musgrave is cruel but vulnerable and certainly not likeable; following the tragic accidental death of Sparky his reaction is 'hide him away' and offers little sadness for his dead friend.[116] Arden refuses the theatrical tradition of empathy in a Brechtian fashion: 'I never write a scene so that the audience can identify with any particular character. I try and write the scene truthfully from the point of view of each individual character.'[117] In relation to empathy, Brecht considered that 'the spectator should not be sent off down the path of empathy', instead, a sort of communication takes place between the spectator and the actors address themselves directly to the spectator.[118]

Arden's accusatory play certainly engages and involves the audience in the play's action, making them part of the history of colonial violence. However, in his last interview, Arden acknowledged

> the relationship of the striking coal miners to the soldiers *wasn't very clear* […] there were a whole load of things like that […] but it was all in the nature of '*The plot is going to puzzle the audience unless we give them some clues*.' Reading it isn't the same as seeing it in the theatre. If people don't understand where it's going they're going to turn off and turn themselves out.[119]

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[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.
[114] V&A file THM/452/8/56. Jean-Jacques Gautier, 'Le Mariage invraisemblable des extrêmes', *Le Figaro* (12/10/1963) in programme for 'La Danse du sergent Musgrave'.
[115] Arden cited in Michael Billington, 'Serjeant Musgrave rides again', *The Guardian*, (23/09/2003).
[116] John Arden, *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance*, p. 70.
[117] John Arden, 'Arden on Theatre', *Encore*, 53/57 (1965), p. 15.
[118] Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, trans. John Willett (London: Bloomsbury, 2015) [1964], p. 75.
[119] Transcription of interview with John Arden and Margaretta D'Arcy by Bill McDonnell (5/1/2012), courtesy of Bill McDonnell. [Unpublished in this version.]

Involving the audiences and breaking the fourth wall is important to a Brechtian approach to theatre, however, the audience must also understand the parallels and comparisons being drawn in the play to begin with.

Arden's work consciously breaks and challenges the *cadre* within which theatre resides. However, as expressed above, his equivocal discourse and critique of colonialism are lost on critics expecting to relate his work to traditional theatre with plot, character development and recognisable setting. Jansen notes that the press has a significant role to play in censorship more generally and argues that it works to mediate 'the aesthetic of good taste' which influences 'the industrial education movement.'[120] In terms of colonialism, the press as arbiters of taste, help to reinforce accepted means of expression and therefore reject other forms of cultural production or creativity. Arden veering away from accepted aesthetics of 'good taste' is therefore victimised by the press. In the final chapter of this thesis, I explore how Kateb Yacine's work was met with the same problem: critics constantly attempting to apply or relate his work to pre-existing canonical works of theatre and rejecting it because it does not fit within the pre-determined cadre of theatrical expression.

Musgrave's Dance serves firstly as an example of the newly instated Lord Chamberlain wanting to impose illegal, political censorship on anti-war plays and being caught out. It also illustrates the informal restrictions imposed upon a play staged in London compared with the freedom visible in the Paris production. Finally, Arden's play can be seen as a victim of press expectations, resulting in it receiving smaller audiences and criticism based on an out-dated view of how theatre should be conducted. Brook and Arden's refusal to adhere to the pre-determined *cadre* of political theatre desired by the critics was detrimental to the play's success. Nevertheless, Arden's own views on what constitutes political theatre, as mentioned at the start of this chapter in relation to Beckett, also displays a narrow understanding of the different theatrical techniques and approaches to denouncing colonialism and advocating for decolonisation.

[120] Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship* (1991), p. 159.

A Colonial Aesthetic to Denounce Decolonisation Violence: *Eleven Dead at Hola Camp* (1959) by the Royal Court Collective

In his Nobel Prize acceptance speech in 1986, the Nigerian playwright, poet and essayist Wole Soyinka recalled a performance from his youth in 1959. Soyinka remembered a 'curious scene' in which he, an actor, 'refused to come on stage for his allocated role.'[121] The performance was *Eleven Men Dead at Hola Camp*, staged at the Royal Court Theatre as a one-off improvisation on the 19th July 1959 in one of the 'Sunday night slots' which Tiziana Morosetti argues, acted as 'a launching pad for a variety of authors from Africa or, more recently, of African descent.'[122] These shows were known as 'productions without decor', in which plays were 'rehearsed up to dress rehearsal point, but performed with only indications of scenery and costumes' and cost as little as £100 compared to the £5000 usually needed for a full production at the time.[123]

The improvisation in question was staged by Keith Johnstone and William Gaskill with music by Soyinka and included a large cast of Black actors.[124] The piece came amidst one of the most well-known decolonisation incidents referred to as the Mau Mau crisis which had begun in the early 1950s and continued until 1963, when Kenya eventually achieved independence from Britain. The performance took its name from the Hola Camp massacre which occurred in March 1959 and saw eleven men bludgeoned to death by camp guards. The incident is a key example of British attempts to cover up non-peaceful decolonisation; the deaths were explained away as the result of 'drinking from a water cart.'[125] The inquiry into the violence, which was printed in national newspapers, acted as a watershed moment for British decolonisation politics which both reinforced declining public support for the empire at home and did damage to the nation's reputation on the world stage.[126] As a result of the revelations of the inquiry, the Labour party (then in opposition) accused the government, headed by Harold Macmillan, of trying to impose censorship in the House of Commons.[127]

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[121] Wole Soyinka, 'This Past Must Address Its Present', *Nobel Lecture* (08/12/1986). Accessed via Nobel Prize website: https://www.nobelprize.org/mediaplayer/?id=1499 [First accessed 11/11/2017].

[122] Tiziana Morosetti, '"On One of Those Sunday Nights": 50 Years of Africa at the Royal Court Theatre', in, Tiziana Morosetti (eds) *Africa on the Contemporary London Stage* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 67-86 (p. 68).

[123] Ibid.

[124] It is interesting to compare the situation of the British in Kenya to the French in Algeria in 1959 as Labour Party MP Richard Crossman warned at the time: 'only a vast acceleration of that progress [decolonisation] can save East Africa and Central Africa from becoming another Algeria.' R.H.S. Crossman, Warwick University Modern Records Collection, File number MSS.154/4/BR/8/47 *International Commentary* No. 143 [Hola Massacre, Kenya; Unions and nuclear disarmament] [19/6/1959] p. 1.

[125] Ibid.

[126] See House of Commons. 1959. HC Debate 27 July 1959, vol. 610, cc.181–262. http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1959/jul/27/hola-campkenya-report.

[127] Ibid.

In terms of public consciousness, by 1959, the crisis had begotten a certain mythology in metropolitan Britain, 'Mau Mau' had become synonymous with demonic violence in excess of all justification.[128] Furthermore, the words had entered common parlance and 'Mau Mau' had become part of everyday dialect: parents disciplined delinquent offspring by threatening that the Mau Mau would come and get them if they did not eat their greens.[129] The press contributed to the mythologising and demonising of the Mau Mau, printing stories on the independence movement,

> non comme un mouvement nationaliste légitime, produit de la frustration contre l'oppression coloniale, mais comme une secte atavique, barbare, anti-européenne et antichrétienne, utilisant la terreur et l'intimidation pour mettre fin à la modernisation de la société kenyane.[130]

This refusal of modernity was portrayed in Reginald Craddock's 1955 play, *Night Returns to Africa*, staged with the aim to show that 'the foul cult of Mau Mau is not just a struggle of subjugated natives against white dominion', but something 'aimed at Europeans, Asian and decent African alike.'[131] *Eleven Men Dead at Hola Camp*'s aim was not so broad and instead intended to highlight the British government's brutally repressive colonial policy against the Mau Mau. Soyinka claims that to a major part of the audience, 'every death of a freedom fighter was a notch on a gun, the death of a fiend, an animal, a bestial mutant, not the martyrdom of a patriot.'[132] The performance seemed to want to contradict these views and humanise the Mau Mau cause by portraying the conditions in which the Hola Camp murders were committed.

This section will consider the 'pressures' and informal censorship put upon Johnstone and Gaskill when they were trying to stage the improvised performance. In addition to this top-down censorship, I will also illustrate why, despite good intentions, Johnstone and Gaskill's production led to Soyinka feeling 'an intense disquiet about his very presence on that stage.'[133] Nicholson has noted that 'the performance raised crucial ethical questions about the nature of acting and representation' and I argue that this is because of the actors performing within the frame of restrictive European theatrical traditions.[134]

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[128] Priyamvada Gopal, *Insurgent Empire: Anticolonial Resistance and British Dissent* (London: Verso, 2019), p. 396.
[129] Joanna Lewis, '"Daddy Wouldn't Buy Me a Mau Mau": The British popular press & the demoralization of empire', in E.S. Atieno Odhiambo and John Lonsdale (eds.), *Mau Mau & Nationhood* (Oxford: James Currey, 2003), pp. 192-227 (p. 227).
[130] David M. Anderson, 'La violence par procuration: Les Britanniques dans la guerre de Mau Mau du Kenya (1952-1960)' in Amaury Lorin and Christelle Taraud (eds.), *Nouvelle histoire des colonisations européennes (XIX^e^-XX^e^ siècles): Sociétés, cultures, politiques* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2013), pp. 181-195 (p. 182).
[131] Steve Nicholson, 'Africa on the British Stage, 1955-1966' (2018), p. 45.
[132] Wole Soyinka, 'This Past Must Address Its Present', *Nobel Lecture* (08/12/1986).
[133] Ibid.
[134] Steve Nicholson, 'Africa on the British Stage, 1955-1966'(2018), p. 49.

Although no script for the performance remains, several accounts written up by the press and by Soyinka give us a general idea of the events of the night. The performance was overseen by a 'narrator' who was played by Nigel Davenport, a famous British stage actor of the 1950s.[135] Davenport stood at a lectern under a spotlight, giving a 'dispassionate reading, deliberately clinical' of the Hansard papers pertaining to the events which took place in Hola Camp. The aim was to let 'the stark facts reveal the states of mind of torturers and victims' be conveyed to the audience.[136] Both versions of events were depicted whilst the reading took place. Firstly the killing of the prisoners by guards:

> A small ring of white officers, armed, moved in on the group of detainees who refused to get up and work. The inner ring of guards, the Blacks, moved in, lifted the bodies by hooking their hands underneath the armpits of the detainees, carried them like toads in a state of petrification to one side, divided them in groups. The beatings begin: Rhythmically. The cudgels swing in unison. The faces of the white guards glow with professional satisfaction, their arms gesture languidly from time to time, suggesting it is time to shift to the next batch, or beat a little more severely on the neglected side. In terms of images, a fluid, near balletic scene.[137]

And then the supposed poisoning:

> The prisoners filed to the water waggon, gasping with thirst. After the first two or three had drunk and commenced writhing with pain, these humane guards rushed to stop the others but no, they were already wild with thirst, fought their way past salvation and drank greedily the same source. The groans spread from one to the other, the writhing, the collapse - then agonized deaths. That was the version of the camp governors.[138]

It is unclear why the decision to stage both scenarios was made although the pressure put on Johnston and Gaskill by both the Royal Court and the government, as explored below, could explain this: a caveat added in order to avoid repercussions. The latter version of events of course worked to uphold the myth of peaceful decolonisation, whereas the former highlighted the extent of the violence committed against the Mau Maus.

The performance took place in 'club conditions' and therefore outside of the Lord Chamberlain's official sphere of influence. Improvisation of any kind was refused a licence by the office as they could not predict and approve or disapprove of what would take place on stage. Therefore, *Hola Camp* had to be performed under 'club conditions' meaning that only a select number of people who were official members of the theatre were allowed in. Some theatres used this loophole in order to get their plays seen by public audiences without a licence from the Lord Chamberlain's office. A famous example is that of the left-wing Unity Theatre, the same company to stage Brand's *Strangers in the Land.* The theatre extended the club 'device' so that block-booking of seats could be used during club nights allowing a potential

[135] V&A file THM/273/7/2/36. Reviews of Eleven Men Dead at Hola Camp, *Stage* (23/07/59).
[136] Wole Soyinka, 'This Past Must Address Its Present', *Nobel Lecture* (08/12/1986).
[137] V&A file THM/273/7/2/36. Reviews of Eleven Men Dead at Hola Camp, *Stage* (23/07/59).
[138] Ibid.

membership of millions.[139] According to their rules, any society or company could become a corporate member of the theatre, thereby enabling all its individual members to buy tickets. In the case of the T.U.C (Trade Union's Council), they could add eight million members, stretching the 'private club' label a bit far.[140] However, this strategy came with its own problems, as Nicholson points out, citing a club-manager trying to put on Communist plays in the late 1920s; the clubs also operated self-censorship, they were outside of the Censor's jurisdiction, and for that very reason had to be careful of the plays put on. If it got about that they were using their privilege to do improper plays, the membership would go down immediately.[141] Therefore, despite a freedom from establishment pressures, the club performances put each individual theatre's reputation at stake.

Johnstone and Gaskill's devotion to the *Hola Camp* project saw them risk their own careers and the reputation of the Royal Court in order to stage it. Despite the club conditions, the Royal Court Theatre Council insisted on contacting Sir Gerald Gardiner, a leading member of the Queen's Counsel concerning the show when it was announced for performance. Gardiner told Gaskill and Johnstone that they could not prove the claims made about Hola Camp in the production were true because 'all potential witnesses were held up in jail in Kenya' and that they risked being sued by the government if the production went ahead.[142] Despite Gardiner's advice, the Royal Court Council allowed the show to go on but disassociated itself entirely. Before the performance, Greville Poke, Secretary of the Royal Court's board announced to the audience that the board of directors had nothing to do with what was happening on stage. This then led to a violent discussion ('like a volcano') between the audience and the actors.[143] Gaskill remembered that 'We had never done anything as positively political as this before, nor had the Court, and the Council were shit-scared.'[144] By staging both sides of the story, the directors were able to avoid potential lawsuits however the political message was certainly watered down, implying a form of self-censorship.

However, the reviews indicate a more problematic element to the production as the mixing of theatre and fact proved to be a difficult combination which did not succeed in conveying the severity of the events. As Alan Brien pointed out, 'almost never did their

[139] Richard Findlater, *Banned!* (1967), p. 151.
[140] Ibid., pp. 151-152. As a result of these tactics, the Unity was taken to court by the Lord Chamberlain in 1951 although the charges brought against company were eventually dropped.
[141] Steve Nicholson, 'Censoring Revolution: The Lord Chamberlain and the Soviet Union' (1992), p. 306.
[142] Theresa Robbins Dudeck, *Keith Johnstone: A Critical Biography* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 46.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid.

dramatisation of the squalid shame of Hola, and the pitiful pomposity of its apologists in Parliament, have an impact equal to a simple reading of Hansard.'[145] Another review describes,

> the stage was bare, except for a few chairs […] The two producers, William Gaskill and Keith Johnstone, wandered on and off. Ten coloured actors played the parts […]. The props were minimal: spades, batons, *white masks.* The actors had to create the situations […] out of their impromptu feelings and such snatches of dialogue as occurred to them. Cram them into a square of light and they were in prison; *put white masks on them and they were the prison officers;* give them batons and they were warders, spades and they were work parties; set the drums beating and they began a Mau-Mau initiation rite.[146]

By staging Black actors in 'white masks', the racial element to the violence is eradicated. This is because the suspension of disbelief is removed by the continual reading of Hansard throughout the movements onstage, the facts and figures from a real report anchors the audience in reality. To return to Keir Elam's idea evoked in the introduction, 'the founding principle of dramatic representation [...] is the *fiction of the presence of a world known to be hypothetical:* the spectator allows the dramatis personae, through the actors, to *designate as the "here and now" a counterfactual construct*'[147] and so by using the Hansard report, the play no longer becomes hypothetical or counterfactual. Therefore, a Black actor hidden behind a white mask is less believable than if the performance had seemed entirely fictional. As Soyinka questioned 'When is playacting rebuked by reality? […] when is fictionalizing presumptuous?'[148] By portraying the Black actors (behind white masks) giving out orders to inflict violence, the Black actors (orchestrated by the white directors) become complicit in the violence. As opposed to the Fanonian understanding of the white mask whereby a Black individual adapts themselves to fit into white, European society, here the white mask serves to implicate the Black actor in the on-stage violence and, in the context of the performance, removes the blame for the murders from white colonials.

Moreover, by including the two versions of the story, death inflicted by beating or death by drinking poisoned water, the performance removes the culpability of the British forces in Kenya: this situation allows the audience to decide for themselves what to believe as opposed to denouncing colonial violence as the performance set out to do. For Soyinka, the production 'provoked a feeling of indecency', because he 'found the mode of presentation at war with the ugliness it tried to convey.'[149] The aforementioned 'intense disquiet' he felt at going on stage to perform his role was not doubt due to the production seeming to avoid putting blame on the colonial forces. He also perceived the British audience as having been 'collectively

[145] V&A file THM/273/7/2/36. Alain Brien, *The Spectator* (31/07/1959).
[146] Ibid. *The New Statesman*, (01/08/1959). (My emphases).
[147] Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 102.
[148] Wole Soyinka, 'This Past Must Address Its Present', *Nobel Lecture* (08/12/1986).
[149] Ibid.

responsible' in the colonial violence and so by not accurately representing these events on stage the performance allowed the audience to avoid feelings of responsibility. As Debarati Sanyal notes 'we are complicit and entangled in global patterns of violence by virtue of our knowledge as well as our actions, by simply being there.'[150] The British audience should have been implicated in the Hola Camp violence by their knowledge of the events (the widespread reports in the press) and by witnessing the events on stage. However, by presenting the two versions of the story and removing the racial element to the atrocities, the production avoided giving them this responsibility.

The aforementioned 'surrealist tableau' and 'near balletic scene' imply that it was the aesthetics of the performance which took priority over the content. It also reinforced the 'myth' and 'rituals' surrounding the Mau Mau, as depicted by the British press. Gopal notes that 'a campaign of "oathing"' practiced by the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA), a branch of the independence movement, which drew on existing secret societies and rituals in rural communities is what became most famously associated with Mau Mau. These practices were the subject of much lurid speculation and demonic speculation in Britain.[151] Therefore, by presenting a non-verbal 'surrealist tableau' juxtaposed against the reading of facts recounted by the only white (and recognisably well-known) actor on a lectern, the performance reinforced the myth surrounding the Mau Mau in the British press. It also provided a visual representation of the colonial dichotomy between the educated, white colonial and the silenced, subjugated colonised figure but instead of critiquing it, actually perpetuated it.

In addition to Soyinka's unhappiness, the critics picked up on a certain unease on the part of the actors: 'Quite obviously the two non-coloured and rather disorganised devisers of the improvisations took themselves extremely seriously. On the other hand, judging by their welcome flashes of natural humour, the cast appeared to be taking themselves considerably less so.'[152] The performance seems to be replicating the colonial situation in which white individuals, higher up in an imposed hierarchy (in this case the director/actor relationship), give orders to Black men. One critic notes 'the groups of coloured actors suffered under the limitations imposed upon them by their two white preceptors Keith Johnstone and William Gaskill.'[153] *The Jewish Chronicle* noted 'Keith Johnstone was constantly at loggerheads with his cast and it was only when M. Gaskill suggested he posed as a victim of MM [Mau Mau]

[150] Debarati Sanyal, *Memory and Complicity: Migrations of Holocaust Remembrance* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), p. 11.
[151] Priyamvada Gopal, *Insurgent Empire* (2019), p. 400.
[152] Ibid.
[153] V&A file THM/273/7/2/36, *Stage* (23/07/1959).

initiation that the actors seemed to treat the evening seriously.'[154] The actors therefore seem to have been aware of the visual dynamic Gaskill and Johnstone had unwittingly created, the only way of undoing this being for one of the directors to participate as an on stage victim. The role of the actor Nigel Davenport also contributed to this colonial aesthetic as the only white member of the cast who performed the 'civilised role' of reading and orating on a literal pedestal. Therefore, although trying to denounce colonial violence and structures, the performance ended up perpetuating these and becoming complicit in the violence. It also disallowed British audiences to feel culpable for the events depicted and recounted on stage.

The seemingly unintentionally maladroit production could also be explained simply by British theatre-makers ineptitude and inexperience of putting on improvisations. As the announcement for the performance read 'this is an experiment in a new form of theatre which we hope may be the first of a series.'[155] One review picked up on this, noting,

> [t]he Lord Chamberlain allows no unscripted public performances. This was a club function and so escaped his jurisdiction but the effect of his censorship is as if only the smallest of local weekly papers were able to print editorial comment. Because of this almost total ban there is no tradition at all in this country of public improvisation. This one reason why the evening was not really a success either as a documentary or entertainment.[156]

Informal censorship from the government, unconscious racial bias and a lack of practice all contributed to *Hola Camp,* despite good intentions, somewhat missing the mark when it came to denouncing decolonisation.

Nevertheless, the assumptions made about Black actors also seem to have contributed to the performance's incoherence and its reception in the press, as one reviewer pointed out:

> Why should it be imagined that ten talented young actors from different ends of the earth should know by instinct how to become Mau Mau diehards simply because their faces are different shades of coffee instead of different shades of pink? […] *Eleven Men Dead at Hola Camp* was neither good rhetoric nor good theatre. But if it sent the audience home to study the facts, it will have been worthwhile.[157]

Gopal refers to the Oxford scholar Margery Perham who noted 'there's a tendency to talk about Africans as an undifferentiated mass, whether as "natives", "hut and poll tax-payers", "native labour" or even as the "native problem", which serves to obscure, if not their humanity, their individuality.'[158] A review from the *Daily Mail* highlights the prevalence of this homogenised perspective within theatre criticism stating, 'any cast of born actors (which all coloured actors

[154] Ibid., C.L., *The Jewish Chronicle* (24/07/1959).
[155] V&A file THM/273/7/2/36 Announcement for Eleven Men Dead at Hola Camp.
[156] Ibid. Elizabeth Young, 'Gallant Attempt', *The Tribune (*24/7/59).
[157] Alan Brien, 'Double Bluffing', *The Spectator* (30/07/1959) [first accessed via The Spectator's online archive: http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/31st-july-1959/12/theatre 14/05/2017].
[158] Margery Perham cited in Priyamvada Gopal, *Insurgent Empire* (2019), p. 429.

seem to be) can manage very well without a playwright.'[159] Even more patronising was a review from *News Chronicle*:

> being coloured, they are born natural actors, whom after their first half-hour of nervousness and inaudibility perform as easily as children in a game of make-believe. When half a dozen of them were asked to pretend to be English officers in Kenya, they brought off some neat satirical strokes against the English attitude and the English accent and their glee was infectious. But the experiment would surely falter, if not fail with grown-up white actors. Children of any colour might be better worth watching.[160]

The comparison to children and use of 'them' speaks directly to the kind of racial hierarchy colonialism sought to entrench. As Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur note, 'literature, for adults and for children, music hall, cinema, newspapers, popular songs, exhibitions, missionary pamphlets, advertising and a myriad of other aspects, projected images of race, empire and jingoistic nationalism which contributed to British perceptions of their place in the world.'[161] This patronising, parental perception of the Black actors as children was the product of this kind of messaging as Ella Shohat and Robert Stam argue 'the trope of infantilization […] projects the colonized as embodying an earlier stage of individual human or broad cultural development', the colonised is refused the right to be considered as an equal, adult, member of humanity.[162]

Hola Camp used Black actors from a range of backgrounds and with a number of different accents to depict the violence in Kenya, seeming to perpetuate this view of an 'undifferentiated mass' able to take on the role of the Mau Mau simply because of their non-white appearance. By employing actors simply for the colour of their skin, the production fell into the trap of 'obscuring their individuality', as Soykina points out, it prevented the audience from seeing the victims 'as human beings' but simply as a representational group.[163] He compares the situation in Kenya to that of the Holocaust: 'Those who carried out orders (like Eichmann, to draw parallels from the white continent); they - whether as bureaucrats, technicians or camp governors had no conceptual space in their heads which could be filled - except very rarely and exceptionally - by "the Black as also human."'[164] This performance did not help to portray the Black actors nor the victims of Mau Mau as individuals, instead it perpetuated the view of them as interchangeable and denied or censored their humanity.

[159] V&A file THM/273/7/2/36 Cecil Wilson, 'No script but what passion', *Daily Mail* (20/07/1959).
[160] Ibid. Alan Dent, 'Born Actors – But Let's hear them', *News Chronicle* (20/07/1959).
[161] Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur (eds.), *Promoting the Colonial Idea: Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 3.
[162] Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media (2nd ed.)* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 139.
[163] Wole Soyinka, 'This Past Must Address Its Present', *Nobel Lecture* (08/12/1986).
[164] Ibid.

Writing, or behaviour, which showed Black individuals breaking out of this colonial *cadre* was altered, rejected or censored, as the next section explores.

Class, Race and Language in Britain: *Skyvers* (1963) by Barry Reckord

As established above, although *Eleven Men Dead at Hola Camp* managed to find enough Black actors to perform the improvisation, it was extremely problematic and a critical failure. A few years later in 1963, the playwright Barry Reckord was casting for his play *Skyvers* and claimed that there were not enough black actors to stage it in the way he had foreseen, with a Black or at least mixed cast. On the radio programme *African Writers' Club* the South African writer Lewis Nkosi opened an interview with Reckord as follows: 'Barry Reckord's most recent play *Skyvers* had an all English cast. There were no West Indians.'[165] The surprised tone and significance of this statement can be explained by the fact that Reckord's previous plays contained a mixed cast. *Flesh to a Tiger* was performed in 1958 at the Royal Court and was the first play by 'a Black British subject and the first production at the Court to have a substantial Black cast which was led by London-born Cleo Laine.'[166] Another Reckord play, *You in Your Small Corner* (1960), had been performed with a mixed-race cast for a limited number of shows and received a lukewarm critical reception.[167]

This section will focus on 'soft censorship' and factors outside of the Lord Chamberlain's office which led to *Skyvers*, instead of being a play about disenfranchised Black and white schoolboys, becoming entirely focused on the white, working-class. I argue that this is due to the theatre-going British audience's disinterest in questions pertaining to race, favouring instead issues of class. This reflects what Jansen calls 'market censorship', the theatre acting as a gatekeeper to the 'market place of ideas' and therefore deciding which ideas are allowed entry or not. This is related to profits as the theatre stages plays which will draw in the most financial revenue, they base their decisions on profit margins as opposed to quality of work.[168]

However, the change of cast from Black to white is also the result of self-censorship: Reckord's high expectations for West Indian actors to speak a certain type of English suggests

[165] 'Interview with Barry Reckord', *African Writers' Club,* BL Sound archive, file number C134/383. It should be noted that in the audio for this interview the programme is referred to as 'Africa Abroad' not 'African Writers' Club' suggesting some confusion over the archiving of this material.
[166] Colin Chambers, 'Black British Plays Post World War II -1970s', *National Theatre Black Plays Archive*, available on blackplaysarchive.org.uk [First accessed 07/10/2016].
[167] V&A file THM 273/7/2/63 You in Your Small Corner: *The Times* called it 'a disappointment' and 'unimpressive' (24/10/1960) whereas the Daily Express said it was 'far from perfect' and Reckord has 'more than enough to learn about technique' but that 'it is full of promise.' (24/10/1960).
[168] Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship* (1991), p. 16.

an internalised colonial view of what is correct or incorrect English and means of expressing oneself on stage. This is evidenced in his own clipped Cambridge accent, his frustration with West Indian actors unable to do the accent in question and his decision to give the leading roles in his plays to his brother, Lloyd Reckord, who spoke in a similar way to him, as can be heard via the radio interviews with them both. Reckord seems to adapt his plays for the British audience putting on what Fanon has called the 'masque blanc' and exhibiting a form of self-censorship.

Fanon highlights the importance of language, stating that 'nous attachons une importance fondamentale au phénomène du langage'[169] and goes on to suggest that those with Black skin put on a white mask in order to assimilate into French society more effectively or adapt the way they speak to sound more like the French from the 'métropole': 'Dans un groupe de jeunes Antillais, celui qui s'exprime bien, qui possède la maitrise de la langue est excessivement craint; il faut faire attention à lui, *c'est un quasi Blanc*. En France, on dit: *parler comme un livre*. En Martinique: *parler comme un Blanc*.'[170] He continues, that 'les Noirs qui reviennent près des leurs, donnent l'impression d'avoir achevé un cycle, de s'être ajouté quelque chose qui leur manquait, ils reviennent littéralement pleins d'eux-mêmes.'[171] Thus there is a real divide between 'l'indigène, celui-qui-n'est-jamais-sorti-de-son-trou' and 'le Noir qui pendant quelque temps a vécu en France […] radicalement transformé.'[172] Reckord's behaviour seems to exhibit some of these characteristics, including using a white cast to stage problems for the Black community and an insistence on acting and performing in a way, deemed acceptable by British audiences.

Reckord arrived in Britain from Kingston, Jamaica on a prestigious Issa scholarship enabling him to study English and then Theology at Emmanuel College, Cambridge before becoming a teacher and then playwright.[173] His ideas on colonialism and decolonisation are apparent in records of the Cambridge Debating Society, of which he was a member: in January 1952 he supported the motion 'this House would welcome immediate self-government for Africa' and in the same year, he opposed the motion 'that British colonial polity is neither Black nor White.'[174] His plays such as *Flesh to a Tiger, You in Your Small Corner* and *Skyvers*

[169] Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris: Editions du seuil, 1952), p. 13.
[170] Ibid., p. 16.
[171] Ibid., p. 15.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Archive materials from Emmanuel College highlight that Reckord changed courses from English to Theology in the final year of his studies suggesting a disenchantment with a European-focused literature syllabus. Email correspondence with Emmanuel College librarian Amanda Goode, (31/01/2018).
[174] Ibid.

deal with race, class and British society and were met with moderate success in Britain, despite Reckord's own tendency to be 'stupidly rude' and his refusal to befriend other playwrights of the same generation.[175]

Although Amanda Bidnall argues that 'taken as a whole, Reckord's plays represent a challenge to the dominance of the race relations narrative in British drama' they have been largely forgotten and little scholarship has been dedicated to them.[176] Nevertheless, his work is some of the first theatrical writing to deal with questions of race, identity and class on the British stage, resonating with the Royal Court's 'penchant for the radical, the political, and the subversive.'[177]

Reckord's most successful play *Skyvers* saw twenty-two performances with thirty-three percent of seats filled and box office takings of £1,710.[178] Bidnall argues that the success of this play was because Reckord was able to expand the creative range expected of a 'West Indian playwright' in London.[179] Mary F. Brewer counters this, acknowledging that by staging the play to deal with white working-class issues 'it further reduced the perception of British drama as anything but white authored.'[180] Somewhat in agreement with Brewer, I would go further and argue that this change of cast was the result of censorship: Reckord either chose or was coerced into using an all-white cast because he was frustrated with the way Black actors of the time spoke on stage and because the Royal Court prioritised the question of class over that of race.

Nevertheless, despite the white cast, the play *does* make reference to issues of race in contemporary Britain which, when examined more closely, cannot be applied to discussions around class. The change in cast therefore censors the presence of Black identity in British society. This could perhaps be a reaction to the persistent racial persecution taking place in Britain at the time *Skyvers* was being performed. As Peter Fryer points out, the late 1950s and early 1960s were the scene of extensive violence towards the Black community. Fryer argues that ten years after the arrival of the Empire Windrush in 1948, the British government had 'institutionalised, legitimised, and nationalised' racism via a number of laws, culminating in the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration. The Act sought to limit the 'flow of Black people' in

[175] These are claims made by Reckord himself. *For the Reckord* (London: Oberon, 2010), blurb.
[176] Amanda Bidnall, *The West Indian Generation: Remaking British Culture in London, 1945–1965* (Liverpool: LUP, 2017), p. 205.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid.
[180] Mary F. Brewer, 'Barry Reckord: Staging Social Change' in *Modern and Contemporary Black British Drama* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 55.

Britain, conceding that they were the problem, not the white prejudice exhibited by the British population.[181] Thus, *Skyvers* became a play about the British education system failing white working-class children as opposed to a play about how Black Britons were treated in British schools and marginalised in society.

The play follows a group of schoolboys and two girls in their last term at secondary school. Most of the boys are disillusioned by the education system and seemingly life in general, except for Cragge, who begins to show an interest in remaining at the school to take his exams. The ending of the play is unclear as to whether Cragge will continue with his education but concludes with him being publicly flogged by the school's headmaster for a misdemeanour he did not commit. He wrongly believed that he would avoid punishment when the headmaster heard his claims of innocence and instead became the scape-goat for his classmates' misbehaviour. Reckord's main criticism appears to be of the British education system that leaves students disenchanted and excluded from society as well as exposing the entrenched hierarchy of snobbery and hostility towards those who 'swear', 'smoke' and are perceived as 'filth'.[182] Reckord links class and race arguing that many of the assumptions made in British society about the white-working class can also be applied to Black Britons and that they share 'psychological difficulties'[183] as a result of these stereotypes, echoing Fanon's links between colonial racism and psychology and what he calls the 'aliénation du Noir'.[184]

However, the casting for the 1963 production of *Skyvers* at the Royal Court with an all-white cast, overshadows the links between class and race. A 1997 interview with Reckord sheds some light on the casting process: 'an interesting thing about *Skyvers* is that we…I wanted to cast it for Black, for five/six Black youngsters but we couldn't find any…it was, it was..impossible to find, at that stage, not now I mean now you could find five hundred probably.'[185] However when asked 'What form did the search for Black actors take? How were you actually looking for the Black actors at the time?', the transcription of the interview shows Reckord's answer as crossed out:

> There were none, I would …later on…a few years later on I needed a Black actor to play a lead in, in a comedy I wrote and we got a man called Kenny Lynch and [he wasn't any, he couldn't act] … it was a frightful business starting to get on an actor's back because he isn't getting the thing right…and watching him break…and finally, two days before we were supposed to open…him grabbing his jacket and just fucking off out of the place, it was…oh GOD, that scene…I mean it's a bad one… [but I mean

[181] Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 2018), p. 315.
[182] *Skyvers*, p. 151.
[183] BL Sound archive, file number C134/383. *African Writers' Club* interview.
[184] Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952), p. 169.
[185] V&A file TTC/10/1/4/8 'The First Conversation,' interview with Barry Reckord (22/04/1997).

> a .. and we couldn't think instantly of finding another Black ac…good Black actors weren't thick on the ground… [186]

Thus it would seem that, despite the availability of some Black actors at the time of casting, they did not meet Reckord's standards of acting. The fact that this section is crossed out in the transcription also suggests Reckord's retrospective uneasiness at admitting that he had sought out actors who spoke in a particular way. When I interviewed her, the Jamaican actress and theatre director Yvonne Brewster (who would go on to direct a production of *Skyvers* in 1971 at the Royal and then a musical version called *Streetwise* in 1982/3) furthered this idea stating that the 1963 production was,

> certainly conceived to *include* Black actors: the cast was intended to be multiracial […] Helen for one certainly was meant to be white as was Adams I think. In those days, however Black actors were few and far between especially those who may have come up to the level of expertise Barry insisted on…[187]

Skyvers was very successful after the initial 1963 production seeing both a revival in 1971 and a musical version, known as *Streetwise*, which Brewster describes as 'a tolerable success', when it was produced and toured in the 1980s. In this production, the cast of six was evenly distributed between the races.[188]

The above interviews suggest that Reckord's standards required of the Black actors indicate an internalised Western view of how English should be performed on the British stage. The argument that there were not enough available Black actors is contradicted by Roland Rees:

> Rees. Barry Reckord's *Skyvers* was produced with an all-white cast because, as Barry said, the Royal Court could not find any black actors. By the late Sixties, we were doing InterAction's seasons and Mustapha's plays with black casts. What happened? What had changed? Did this seem to you the start of something new?
>
> James. Listen, maybe the Royal Court and Barry did not look far enough! We were always there. You were the person, Roland, who went out and looked and found a cast for those InterAction plays. No black actors! That's an old excuse, which has been going on for ages.
>
> Matura. If we are talking about change, that is the change. Where you, Ronald, wanted to find black actors because you had some vision of truth or realism that had been introduced into the culture of the times. You determined to find West Indian actors, and the Royal Court and Barry were not interested.[189]

Oscar James seems to be suggesting that Reckord wilfully chose to agree with the Court and did not try to find a Black cast. It is almost impossible to know Reckord's intentions as he 'was

[186] Ibid.
[187] Email exchange with Yvonne Brewster, British-Jamaican actress and theatre director and close friend of Barry Reckord, (29/11/2017).
[188] Yvonne Brewster interviewed by Rebecca Infield via email (29/11/2017).
[189] Roland Rees, *Fringe First: Pioneers of Fringe Theatre on Record* (Oberon: London, 1992), p. 101.

in the habit of tossing stuff through his window onto Primrose Hill,'[190] and also because no copy of the original script has survived.

Nevertheless, a later script for Brewster's adaptation of the play in the 1980s shows that the play was changed in order to make more explicit reference to Black identity:

> Colley. Even when they wanna be, like, a footballer, they still wanna be a pop-singer, well suddenly I don't wanna be a pop-singer anymore, I'm a poet, babe. A writer is a king.
> Cragge. New black writer.
> Colley. Just writer.
> Cragge. If *yu* aint ethnic *yu* might as well be white, and who needs a white nigger. If yu gonna mek it you gotta be ethnic. Dub poet. Yu could mek the pub-scene.[191]

The dialogue is self-reflexive on the problem facing Black British writers: should they define themselves as a Black writer and therefore only write about 'ethnic' topics (Cragge's view) or aim to be perceived simply as a writer in their own right, without categorising themselves (Colley's perspective). This question does not appear in the original script where only one reference to Black culture stands out:

> Colman. You can borrow my shin guards if you like.
> Cragge. Miles Davis the trumpeter says he corrects his own faults.
> Colman. What's Miles Davis got to do with football?
> Cragge. I let mine slide.[192]

The language used in the latter production here is of note, differing from the standard English most commonly seen on stage at the Royal Court and I will return to the question of language and class later in this section. It would therefore seem that the choice to stage *Skyvers* with a white cast was in order to fit in with the theatrical tastes and interests of contemporary British audiences. As Reckord noted in an interview on the subject of writing for a white, European audience:

> As long as white [people] control the output, they want black in terms of white. Not black people just as human beings, but to show them in an exotic, entertaining sort of way, [the audience is] not interested in seeing them as people […] I'm concerned with the personality, with the feelings of [the characters], I'm writing a play about human beings.[193]

White people controlling what was deemed as good culture and seeing Black people in terms of white people was also reflected in a review of *You in Your Small Corner*: 'The cockney scenes are perhaps the most successful perhaps because the flamboyant West Indian speech and gestures, admirable in themselves, seemed exaggerated and artificial beside the dry London wit.'[194] The 'dry London wit' is seen as superior when put alongside the West Indian scenes of the play.

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[190] Yvonne Brewster interviewed by Rebecca Infield via email (29/11/2017).
[191] V&A file TTC/5/1/122, Typed script for 'Skyvers' by Barry Reckord.
[192] *Skyvers* in Barry Reckord, Yvonne Brewster (ed.), *For the Reckord: A Collection of Plays by Barry Reckord* (London: Oberon Books, 2010), p. 85.
[193] BL Sound archive, file number C134/383. *African Writers' Club* interview.
[194] Bamber Gascoigne, 'Vitiman Pill', *The Spectator* (28.10.60).

These expectations of literary production and what was defined as 'good culture' can also be seen in the context of French publishing during the same period. Ruth Bush argues that publishers were hostile to Francophone African writers whose stylistic and linguistic innovation was seen as a decisive break with European novelistic forms.'[195] As a consequence these writers were forced to deal with challenging and complicated institutions and Bush even cites unfounded accusations of plagiarism as means of humiliating writers trying to get their work published in France.[196] Here the British audience's expectation of how West Indian culture should be represented, a means of reinforcing the binary opposition between Black people and white people reflects the dialogue's concern about what a Black writer *should* write about. The idea of the Black individual being viewed only in relation to his interaction with the white individual, or through white eyes, resonates again with Fanon who states:

> le Noir n'a plus à être noir, mais plus à l'être en face du Blanc. Le Noir n'a pas de résistance ontologique aux yeux du Blanc. Les nègres, du jours au lendemain, ont eu deux systèmes de référence par rapport auquel il leur a fallu se situer […] leurs coutumes et les instances auxquelles elles renvoyaient, étaient abolies parce qu'elles se trouveraient en contradiction avec une civilisation qu'ils ignoraient et leur en imposait.[197]

'Le Noir' therefore had to adapt to the colonised society in which he found himself. By writing a play which, if the cast had been mixed or Black, dealt with characters simply as individuals with universal problems, Reckord refuses the expectation that Black writers must write about interactions between Black and white people interactions or what he calls 'the colour problem.'[198] The same can be seen in Reckord's play *You in Your Small Corner*, which focuses on the relationship of a white working-class woman and a Black Jamaican student at Cambridge (an autobiographical reflection of Reckord's experiences). Despite this mixed-race relationship, Reckord claims that his aim when writing the play was to portray 'the Negro personality […] What are my feelings about life? What is my personality?', and therefore was not to focus on the question of race relations.[199]

In addition to avoiding writing only about questions of race, Reckord strongly believed in the alignment of working-class difficulties and racial prejudice in 1950s and 1960s British society. He notes:

> I think, in England, class and colour problems are the same. A working class boy has his accent to contend with, the negro has his colour to contend with. The English boy who is trying to make his way up can

[195] Ruth Bush, *Publishing Africa in French: Literary Institutions and Decolonisation 1945-1967* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016), p. 6.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952), p. 89.
[198] BL Sound archive, file number C134/383. *African Writers' Club* interview.
[199] Ibid.

> shed his accent, the coloured person cannot shed his skin even if its desirable which I don't think it was.[200]

This again reflects Fanon: Je suis sur-déterminé de l'extérieur. Je ne suis pas l'esclave de "l'idée" que les autres ont de moi, mais de mon apparaître.'[201] The Black individual in Britain is unable to conceal his identity in the same way as a working class person. Reckord uses class as a means of talking about race and therefore avoids pigeon-holing (or categorising) himself as a 'negro writer'. In the next chapter, we will see how Vinaver does a similar thing: he uses decolonisation as a means of talking about the Holocaust in order to avoid being labelled as a 'Jewish writer'. Moreover, by focusing on class, Reckord's work fits in with theatre movements of the time. Language, or accent, and class were a popular subject for theatre in the 1950s and 1960s, especially for writers at the Royal Court. Reckord's work coincided with new plays such as John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1956), Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party* (1958), and later Edward Bond's *Saved* (1965) all of which dealt with the question of class and portrayed working-class situations and characters on stage for the first time.[202] This became known as 'kitchen-sink' theatre and included groups such as the aforementioned 'angry young men' movement, with which *Skyvers* was associated with in the play's reviews.[203] Dan Rebellato picks up on this white-centric focus of the Royal Court during the 50s and 60s when accusing the theatre of 'dubious imperial nostalgia' reflecting on the severe lack of plays dealing with decolonisation during the period. [204] *Skyvers* performed with a white cast therefore became entirely about class and any potential for the Black individual to 'tout simplement être homme parmi d'autres hommes' is denied.[205] Nevertheless, class and ethnicity are intrinsically linked as Ania Loomba points out:

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[200] Ibid.
[201] Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952), p. 93.
[202] Although it should be noted that Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* (1960) also explores issues of race, featuring a white working-class girl who has a baby with a black sailor.
[203] Amanda Bidnall cites a *Daily Sketch* reviewer who, in relation to Reckord's *Flesh to a Tiger*, complained that "the author has been too violent—too unrelenting—an Angry Young Negro, with no humour to lighten his passion," while the *South Wales Echo* wrote that the Cardiff production "is positively the latest angle on the Angry Young Man—the Angry Young Black Man." Amanda Bidnall, *The West Indian Generation: Remaking British Culture in London, 1945–1965* (2017), p. 20.
[204] Dan Rebellato, *1956 and All That: The Making of Modern British Drama* (London: Psychology Press, 1999), p. 153. Theatre critic Michael Billington strongly disagreed with this diagnosis including Reckord as an example of plays which dealt with decolonisation: '[Rebellato] makes no mention of a work such as Nigel Dennis's *The Making of Moo*, in which religion is seen as a malign instrument of colonial power, of the [Royal] Court's staging of plays by black writers such as Barry Reckord or Errol John or of one-off works of protest such as Keith Johnstone's *Eleven Men Dead at Hola Camp*.' 'The Angry Generation' in *The Guardian*, (17/07/1999).
[205] Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952), p. 91.

> The ideology of racial superiority translated easily into class terms. The superiority of the white races, one colonist argued, clearly implied that 'the black men must forever remain cheap labour and slaves.' Certain sections of people were thus racially identified as the natural working classes.[206]

Unlike the white working-class, the colonised are unable to exercise social mobility and adapt themselves so as to fit in with the higher echelons of society.

Aside from this informal 'soft' censorship, *Skyvers* also came under scrutiny from the Lord Chamberlain's office who described it as

> a group of 16 years old boys in a state comprehensive school. They are depicted as vicious, arrogant, foul mouthed, dirty minded, ignorant, uneducated beasts, already well on the way to approved schools and borstals, violent towards their schoolmasters and each other and brutally sexual toward their girlfriends. The only possible exception is a lad named Cragge who, at the end of the play, accepts a beating in front of the school for something his 'mates' but not himself were guilty of, in order to give himself the opportunity of staying on at school in a last, forlorn attempt to make something of his life.[207]

The production sparked a debate around the relevance of the Lord Chamberlain's position and saw George Devine, then director of the Royal Court, publicly complain about the changes imposed on Reckord's play:

> Reckord, a new writer of acknowledged seriousness [who] gave his characters so-called obscene words to speak because the speaking of them was not only characteristic but promoted the dramatic argument. By seeing the play without these words, removed in the interests of good taste, the public is seeing a watered-down version. Is this right?[208]

The wider issue of state censorship seems to overshadow interest in Reckord's play as many of the reviews focused on Devine's words in the programme instead of Reckord's writing. Headlines include 'Sense and Censorability' or 'Mr Devine Waives His Principles' and 'Obscene Words Were Cut' to introduce readers to the 1963 performance.[209] The misspelling of Reckord's name as Reckford, Beckford or Record in these reviews also highlights a lack of interest in the writer himself, or perhaps an attempt to make his name more familiar, more British-sounding, a domestication of sorts.[210] This imposed assimilation resonates with Bourdieu's structural censorship in which one must adapt oneself in order to fit into the pre-described structures of society, to the level of his own personal identity and spelling of names:

> En imposant la mise en forme, la censure exercée par la structure du champ détermine la forme – que tous les formalistes entendent arracher aux déterminismes sociaux – et, inséparablement, le contenu,

[206] Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 2015), p. 133.
[207] BL file LCP Corr 1963/4398.
[208] Ibid. Letter from George Devine to the Lord Chamberlain, (11/07/1963).
[209] Respective headlines in V&A press file THM 273/712/115: *Sunday Telegraph* (28/07/63), [Unknown author and unknown paper], *Birmingham Post* [date unknown]. See also E. Vickery, 'What about Censorship?', *The New Daily* (26/7/63) which begins 'More interesting than the play…' before going on to talk about censorship.
[210] V&A press file THM 273/712/115 'Reckford' is in: *The Tablet* (02/08/1963), *West London Observer* (16/08/1963), *Universe* (02/08/1963), *The Spectator* (19/04/1963), 'Beckford' is in the *West London and Fulham Gazette* (09/08/1963) and 'Record' is in *Stage* (11/04/1963).

> indissociable de son expression conforme, donc impensable (au sens vrai) en dehors des formes connues et des normes reconnues.[211]

In terms of decolonisation, this echoes Fanon's idea, evoked above, of 'le Noir' having to speak or become 'comme un Blanc' in order to assimilate and gain recognition of himself as an individual in society. In terms of colonialism, the question of an adapted or imposed name also echoes practices of enforced name changes, used as a means of control during the slave trade. As Ron Eyerman explores in the context of 1930s African-American communities, name changes, like the taking on of 'X' to replace the 'slave' name, were part of a process of decolonisation.[212] Here, it is the press who are imposing an altered version of Reckord's name, forcing him to take on a British version.

Not only names but also the way of expressing oneself was also policed as a function of colonialism, as the fourth chapter of this thesis explores in greater detail. Reckord attempts to subvert imposed language structures and ideas about 'correct' English in *Skyvers* despite his insistence on actors being able to express themselves for a European audience, as explored earlier. The text can be read as a means of challenging standardised English and drawing comparisons between Cockney slang and Caribbean Creole spoken in 1950s and 1960s Britain.[213] Reckord noted 'with plays, […] we have to speak on the stage in a way that Europeans will understand', a form of self-censorship. This kind of writing therefore ends up being what Donatus Nwoga, a literary critic from Nigeria, refers to as 'an unliterary act' full of 'long sociological explanations.'[214] In order to avoid this, *Skyvers* is told through heavily accented Cockney slang intended to destabilise a middle-class London audience. The inclusion of a glossary in the original programme of the play's first production further emphasises Reckord's aim to initiate the London, theatre-going audience to an unfamiliar language.[215]

The links between the Cockney of London's East End and racial identity can be seen in *Skyvers* and, as well as depicting white working-class language, can also be read as representing the Black individual and his 'position in the colonial race system.'[216] In the preface to the play, Reckord notes 'although I have avoided any artificially heightened language and

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[211] Pierre Bourdieu, *Langage et pouvoir symbolique* (Paris: Fayard, 2001), p. 167.
[212] Ron Eyerman, *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 192.
[213] For more on Jamaican creole spoken in London see: Mark Sebba, *London Jamaican: Language Systems in Interaction* (London: Longman, 1993).
[214] BL Sound archive, file number C134/383. *African Writers' Club* interview.
[215] See mention of a glossary in the review by Jon Higgins, 'Skyvers', *Financial Times*, (24/7/63).
[216] Mary F. Brewer, 'Barry Reckord: Staging Social Change' in Mary F. Brewer, Lynette Goddard, Deirdre Osborne (eds.), *Modern and Contemporary Black British Drama* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) pp. 47-61. (p. 56).

kept within the range of cockney idiom, the language in this play is clearly invented', again reinforcing the idea that it's not representative of how one specific group of people speaks.[217] As Brewer notes, the play

> presents a case in which a language identity as belonging to British white people of a lower economic class is being inscribed by a person who occupies a superior class position but a lower status in terms of racial identity. [Reckord's] choice of Cockney calls to mind M.M. Bakhtin's idea of hybridisation [and heteroglossia] as a 'mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter within the arena of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousness separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor' and *the effect of hybridisation is to undermine the concept of linguistic unity and authority*.[218]

Bourdieu recognises that the structures of the linguistic market impose themselves as a system of specific sanctions and censorships.[219] Reckord also examines the hierarchy of who can speak correctly or not, the Headteacher insisting to Cragge, 'You'll obey while you're here. You won't stand there dictating.'[220] Nevertheless, the Headteacher uses formal language only to berate and insult the boys, calling them 'scum'[221] and comments with clear racial overtones:

> Head. You're the sort I must make an example of to this school before I hand you over elsewhere […] you swear, you smoke and your mind's filthy.[222]
>
> […]
>
> Head. Frankly boy, the sort you are, if you touched a daughter of mine I'd strangle you. Go to the police.[223]

The violence of this language, when juxtaposed against Cragge's pastoral vision for Sylvia's weekend, is striking:

> Cragge. You should be doin' things like cycling down to Brighton and 'aving a picnic off the road in the beautiful countryside, with food and a transistor, then on to the road again, racin' quite fast with the breeze in your face and your legs glowin'. But you never.[224]

These differences are also visible in photographs of the production which depict the teachers in old-fashioned robes and gowns or suits compared with the students dressed in very informal attire.[225] Interestingly, despite being set in a school, the students are not wearing uniforms in the original 1963 production suggesting the applicability of the racial dynamics portrayed on stage to all kinds of situations, including the workplace.[226] The discrimination suffered by the main character of Cragge in the play could therefore represent the prejudice being experienced

[217] Barry Reckord, 'Preface' to *Skyvers* (2010), p. 77.
[218] Mary F. Brewer, 'Staging Social Change' (2015), pp. 56-57. (My emphasis).
[219] Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press:, 1991), p. 37.
[220] Ibid., p. 152.
[221] Barry Reckord, *Skyvers* (2010), p. 153.
[222] Ibid., p. 151.
[223] Ibid., p. 152.
[224] Ibid., p. 117.
[225] V&A file THM/273/6/1/474, photos of *Skyvers*. Appendix 4.
[226] Ibid. Appendix 5.

by Black workers in Britain from the late 1940s onwards. As Peter Fryer notes, the belief that people arriving from the West Indies in particular, were stealing 'British' jobs was widespread in the 1960s.[227] Discrimination in the workplace was commonplace and Fryer cites a particular instance in Wolverhampton whereby white bus drivers lead a strike to protest against increased numbers of Black employees.[228] Cragge questions why the boys should have to adhere to the rules decided and imposed by 'toffs', 'that bloody 'eadmaster, 'e's imposin' 'imself on us. Toffs don't eat in the street so we mustn't. We ain't toffs that's why 'e can't teach us nothin'.[229] This is reminiscent of the colonial imposition of ways of behaving, speaking and thinking, the colonised individual forced to adapted to a behaviour previously foreign to him.

The disregard of the teachers for anything other than standard English is also similar to the imposition of English in British colonies. The teachers discuss Cragge's way of speaking:

> Freeman. He talks, but he talks well.
>
> Webster. Cockney patter. No depth to it. You wanted a lift? [230]

Adapting to standardised English is also seen as the only way of being upwardly mobile in society:

> Colman. You couldn't be an officer with your accent.
>
> Cragge. I could change easy, I know I could. (*Imitates*). I do it all the time up West. I say to a bloke…
>
> Colman. (*Mocking*.) Bloke!
>
> Cragge. Gent.
>
> Colman: Gent! It's man, you nut.[231]

Nevertheless, the more meaningful and intellectual conversations that take place in the play are in non-standard English including on subjects such as the reliability of the media[232] and fee-paying education versus state education.[233] The boys are fascinated by language and writing. Cragge becomes obsessed with getting his write-up of a football match into the school magazine and performatively writes on stage, 'I gotta do this writin' any'ow.'[234] Therefore by highlighting the limitations of non-standard English as more generalised, Reckord is able to

[227] Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (2018), pp. 318-319.
[228] Ibid., p. 311. The agreement with the Workers's Union following this strike was that out of 900 bus drivers no more than 52 were allowed to be black.
[229] Barry Reckord, *Skyvers* (2010), p. 113.
[230] Ibid., p. 137.
[231] Ibid., p. 105.
[232] Ibid., pp. 86-87.
[233] Ibid., pp. 88-89.
[234] Ibid., p. 92.

open up the issue to apply not just to Cockney, white, working-class boys but also Black Britons.

In a similar way, the abuse that Cragge faces throughout the play is applicable outside the situation of a secondary school in 1960s London. The aforementioned costume choice contributes to this but Reckord also looks further back, drawing parallels with slavery. Cragge is publicly humiliated, firstly in front of his classmates by the Headmaster who 'whips' him with five strokes. There is no mention of a 'cane' which would have been the traditional method of corporal punishment in the 1960s British education system. Reckord's choice of 'whip' immediately returns Cragge to the colonial situation where the non-compliant colonised individual often faced public whippings and humiliation, a practice dating back to the slave trade.[235] In contrast to this, the last moments of the play see Cragge flogged in front of the entire school this time, the stage direction indicates: 'As Cragge bends over and Headmaster raises his cane, and the lights begin to fade. And the strokes are heard in the dark.'[236] The audience is therefore returned to the familiar school setting once again, Reckord avoiding making his references to slavery too overt for the British audience.

Nevertheless, there are several instances in the play where Reckord makes undeniable reference to the difficulties facing Black Britons. Cragge says 'you can say anything you like. I'd be a sittin' duck for cops wiv that bike and you know it', the implication being that he would be caught by the police and suspected of theft because of how he looks. There's also a reference to staying in school being 'better than pushing a barrow down Brixton', another implication that Cragge is intended to represent a Black character, given the area's association with Black culture, especially in the 1950s and 1960s.[237]

This 'allegory of an immigrant adrift in British society'[238] was picked up on by one reviewer of the production who recognised Cragge as 'An Outsider in Search of Identity'. The review points out that the play was really

> about an immigrant West Indian boy's struggle into the British tribal system. The hero of *Skyvers* is again an adolescent outsider in search of a social identity: the difference is that this time he is white. In Cragge, the 15 year old comprehensive school malcontent, Mr. Reckord has created the first white Negro to appear on the British stage.[239]

[235] Andrew Dix and Peter Templeton (eds.), *Violence from Slavery to #BlackLivesMatter African American History and Representation* (New York: Routledge, 2019). See the Introduction for specific histories of whipping in relationship to slavery, pp. 1-18.
[236] Barry Reckord, *Skyvers* (2010), p. 153.
[237] Ibid., p.121. For more on the topography of Black London see: Marc Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (California: University of California Press, 2015).
[238] Mary F. Brewer, 'Staging Social Change' (2015), p. 55.
[239] V&A file THM 273/712/115, [unknown author], 'An Outsider in Search of Identity' *The Times* (24/07/1963).

The reference here to 'the first white Negro' fits with Fanon's aforementioned notion of imposing 'whiteness' onto a Black individual in order for him to exist in society. In her book on *Censoring Translation* (2012), Michelle Woods examines the different ways that censorship can take form. She lists:

> [other] kinds of less overt censorship are at work: self-censorship (the playwright's awareness of the parameters of censoring authorities); translatorial censorship (*domesticating* the text to target language tastes); market censorship (the adaptation of the text to prevailing taste ultimately for economic reasons by publishers, producers, theatres etc.)[240]

The use of 'domesticating' is particularly pertinent for our white-cast-representing-a-Black context as Reckord's play was adapted in order to appeal to European theatre tastes and to accommodate their contemporary interest in questions of class over those of race: he is translating, or self-censoring his play for the British audience. The significance of seeing a Black cast on stage in 1950s Britain should not be underestimated, as Yvonne Brewster remembers when going to see *Flesh to a Tiger* in London, she was impressed at

> the thought of so many Caribbean people (the performing company was over 20 strong) on a London stage. [This] was profound, but actually hearing the once familiar drums, cadences and accents of my people, seeing and feeling the power of their body language, was an altogether empowering experience.[241]

By adapting the play in this way, Reckord makes the presence of Black people in British society less visible.

The British government's desire to control the influx of Black people into the country and was enshrined into law in 1962 which saw the passing of the Commonwealth Immigration Act. The law was rushed through parliament in three days to restrict entry to Britain for Kenyan Africans holding British passports whilst white ex-colonials returning from Kenya were allowed entry. This manifested the first comprehensive legislative attempt to racially control immigration into Britain.[242] It would therefore seem that controlling immigration and refusing the presence of Black people in all areas of society also applied in the theatre, where Black issues were only able to be staged under the guise of them relating to questions of class. As Lloyd Reckord noted:

> As a Negro actor, you are typecast and not in the obvious way 'you have a black skin so you can only play black parts' but because people have an idea about negroes, at least English people seem to have, they think Negroes are big, in their minds, not very clever. Sexually very potent and exciting and they can't speak the English language even if, as in my own case, it is my first language.[243]

[240] Michelle Woods, *Censoring Translation* (London: Continuum, 2012), p. 4. (My emphasis).
[241] Yvonne Brewster, 'Introduction', *For the Reckord* (2010), p. 14.
[242] Deirdre Osborne, *Modern and Contemporary Black British Drama* (London: Palgrave, 2014), p. 10.
[243] Lloyd Reckord in BL Sound archive, file number C134/383.

The Black actor and the Black playwright could only perform plays that adhered to the British narrative and expectations of how the Black individual existed in society and only in relation to his interaction with the white, British community. To return to our definition of censorship as 'censure' or categorisation, Reckord avoids being fixed to one identity by using a white cast to depict the violence and discrimination experienced by the Black community in 1950s and 1960s Britain. Nevertheless, he also seems to adopt the Fanonian 'white mask' via his requirements for Black actors as well as his own way of speaking and desire to pander to European theatrical tastes, a form of self-censorship. However, his obvious racial overtones did manage to convince at least one reviewer (mentioned above) of the racial critique *Skyvers* aimed to provoke. In a more complex way to that of Arden, Reckord creates an equivocal discourse, opening the play up via a type of counterfactuality by replacing race with class, perhaps, ultimately, a means of avoiding censorship from the Lord Chamberlain and ensuring interest from the British theatre-going public.

Conclusion

Theatre censorship in Britain during the period in question, can be seen as multifaceted, not only imposed by the Lord Chamberlain but also by theatre groups, managers, funding bodies and even playwrights themselves. Censorship can be seen at work in the way it dictated what qualified as 'good' theatre but also how it functioned in conjunction with the colonial mindset, entrenching hierarchies of race and the need to categorise people into groups. Firstly, this chapter explored the seemingly straight-forward censorship imposed upon *Strangers in the Land*. This case study illustrated the need for the British establishment to deny accusations of foul play and unwarranted violence as a means of preventing decolonisation in Malaysia. It also showed the Lord Chamberlain's vested interest and impartiality concerning plays dealing with decolonisation. However, colonial views of empire were entrenched even within the left-wing Unity Theatre, according to Brand, and they saw her play as an opportunity to promote communism as opposed to the humanitarian understanding of the violence she had intended. For John Arden, the criticism of British colonial policy was severely weakened by his attempts to avoid censorship and by placing the play's action away from the present. Moreover, his unconventional theatrical form was not accepted by British and French theatre critics who refused to acknowledge theatre which sought to break away from canonical and Aristotelian conceptions of time and history: a censoring of form. Despite trying to bear witness to history in *Hola Camp*, the improvised performance ended up perpetuating structures of racial hierarchy and censoring the voices of the victims of Hola Camp. It raised important questions about how

to effectively stage and memorialise colonial violence all the while making the audience aware of their complicity in these events. It presents an example of internalised colonialism acting as means of homogenising the 'Other' and refusing their individuality and suffering. For Barry Reckord, his play *Skyvers* was the focus of much debate around language censorship and swearing in the theatre which overshadowed the work and Reckord's message: using class prejudice to denounce racial discrimination. Reckord's own behaviour acts as a form of self-censorship, adopting a white cast to perform his anti-racism message. However, by partially adopting this kind of 'white mask', he also refuses critics the chance to categorise him as a 'Negro playwright', just as Michel Vinaver wanted to avoid being labelled a 'Jewish writer', as the next chapter will explore.

> Lorsqu'on allait au théâtre avec mon père pour voir ses pièces, il mettait une perruque avec des cheveux longs et il était toujours habillé comme un bandit.[1]

Chapter Three: Censoring the Contrapuntal: Decolonisation in *Les Coréens* (1956), *Les Huissiers* (1957) and *Iphigénie Hôtel* (1959) by Michel Vinaver

According to the French dramaturge and theatre director Jean-Pierre Sarrazac, 'un courant de désobéissance parcourt le théâtre de Michel Vinaver.'[2] Vinaver's disobedience as a writer is both political and literary. This chapter will focus on Vinaver's first three plays, *Les Coréens* (1956), *Les Huissiers* (1957), and *Iphigénie Hôtel* (1959). It will explore how the twentieth and twenty-first century writer's dramatic form breaks away from models of political theatre used by Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre, and instead takes a postcolonial perspective on decolonisation, which ultimately contributed to his experiences of censorship, both 'hard' and 'soft'.

Unlike in Britain, 'official' theatre censorship in France was not restricted to one office or individual. It is also more difficult to trace and Jansen claims that French censorship was (and arguably still is) more arbitrary, capricious, and irrational than in any other Western democracy.[3] Harrison accords this to the censorship of literature in the eighteenth century, which saw over fifty different censors each applying differing rules, despite attempts to organise them into a rational system.[4] Even though 'la liberté d'expression' was included into the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* in 1789 after the Revolution, censorship remained a feature of French society with a particular tightening and enforcement of restrictions under Napoleon. Krakovitch has shown that even though censorship was supposedly abolished from 1830 to 1835, theatre was not mentioned in the constitution and although some plays could be performed, censorship was still exercised.[5] Napoleonic censors targeted the topics of religion, immoral subjects, adultery, cross-dressing, excessive defamation of enemies, plots, and revolts for removal.[6] Later on, during the First World War, censorship

[1] Interview with Anouk Grinberg, Michel Vinaver's daughter, describing her first experiences of going to watch her father's plays before it was well-known that Michel Grinberg and Michel Vinaver were the same person: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvOgYipsIsg&ab_channel=INAArditube [first accessed 13/02/2021].
[2] Jean-Pierre Sarrazac, *L'Avenir du drame* (Lausanne: Editions de L'aire, 1981), p. 181.
[3] Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship* (1991), p. 79.
[4] Nicholas Harrison, *Circles of Censorship* (1996), p. 18.
[5] Odile Krakovitch, 'Les Romantiques et la censure au théâtre', *Romantisme*, 12 (1982), 33-46. See also: Margaret Sproule, 'Performing for the State: Censorship of the French Theatre under Napoleon', *The Corvette*, 2.1 (2013), 68-80.
[6] Odile Krakovitch, *Hugo Censuré: La Liberté au théâtre au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1985), p. 105.

was imposed as soon as war was declared and maintained via a central bureau situated within the war ministry employing a total of 5000 agents.[7] With the Occupation of France by Nazi Germany in 1940, censorship became preventative in Vichy France and newspapers were given instructions as to how to report events.[8] During this period, publishers were closed and theatrical productions were subject to strict surveillance, cuts and editing.

The 'official' censorship structures put in place during the Algerian War of Independence differ from these earlier impositions of censorship: the goal being to deny the very existence of a war. This has been explored in detail by Benjamin Stora, who argues:

> Entre 1955 et 1962, les interdictions, les censures sont pratiquées sans qu'une règle, une doctrine bien définie déterminent leur exécution […] Le 'sens' de la censure se trouve là: en dissimulant le secret d'une guerre qui s'accomplit, on entretien l'illusion qu'elle pourrait être courte, propre, se terminer autrement que par l'indépendance de l'Algérie.'[9]

In terms of law, censorship was enshrined under the 'état d'urgence' passed in 1955 and applied to all of metropolitan France as well as the three 'départements' in Algeria, so as to further prove François Mitterand's infamous 1954 declaration that 'l'Algérie, c'est la France.'[10] The law built on prior legislation created in 1938, which allowed public authorities the power to control public spaces and movement. This permitted the mass internment of civilians, the ability to declare a curfew, create special security zones, assign people considered as 'suspects' to their residence and forbid any meetings in public places including bars and cafés.[11] In terms of artistic expression, the law permitted 'all measures necessary to keep control' over publications, the press, radiophonic broadcasts, cinematic projections, and dramatic performances.[12] Although an 'état de siège' was not declared, the measures allowed 'les autorités administratives […] le droit de pratiquer des perquisitions, de jour comme de nuit, et la justice militaire peut être déclarée compétente.'[13] This law also permitted the construction

[7] See: Françoise Navet-Bouron, 'Censure et dessin de presse en France pendant La Grande Guerre', *Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains*, 50.197 (2000), 7-19.
[8] Marie-Geneviève Massiani, 'La Croix et la censure de Vichy (juillet 1940 – décembre 1942)', *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, 184.1 (1996), 109-127.
[9] Benjamin Stora, *La Gangrène et l'oubli: La mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: La Découverte, 1991), p. 26. For more on the censorship of publishers during the Algerian War of Independence see: Nicolas Hubert, *Editeurs et éditions en France pendant la guerre d'Algérie*, (Paris: Editions Bouchène, 2012) and Anne Simonin, *Le Droit de désobéissance* (Paris: La Découverte, 2012).
[10] This now infamous phrase was uttered whilst Mitterand was Ministre de l'intérieur in Pierre Mendes-France's government during a speech on the 5 of November 1954.
[11] This is as set out according to the Loi no. 55-385. Emilie Morin, *Beckett's Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 186-187.
[12] Sylvie Thénault, 'L'état d'urgence (1955-2005). De l'Algérie coloniale à la France contemporaine: destin d'une loi', *Le Mouvement Social*, 1.218 (2007) 63-78 (p. 64).

[13] Ibid., p. 65.

of concentration camps in Algeria and the internment of anyone that was considered a threat to the state.

These restrictions were furthered in 1956 by another decree (no. 56-274) which extended powers of censorship to 'all means of expression,' as part of a body of 'exceptional measures' giving 'special powers' to the government and the army in order to maintain public order and 'safeguard' the national territory in Algeria.[14] Essentially this permitted the control of 'l'espace, les idées, les individus.'[15] To counter this censorship of ideas, publishers such as Jérôme Lindon, Pierre Jean Oswald, Nils Andersson and François Maspero proved critical, raising awareness of the use of torture and its incompatibility with French republican ideals and post-war human rights legislation. Michael Holquist argues that censors are haunted by a

> 'monologic terror of indeterminacy': they are motivated by a desire to *fix meaning*, expunge ambiguity, to fill the vacuum into which interpretation rushes. Censors intend to construct rather than prohibit. *What they wish to make is a certain kind of text, one that can be read in only one way*: its grammatical (or logical) form will be seamlessly coterminous with all its rhetorical (or semiotic) implications.[16]

The censorship of ideas therefore seeks not only to hide unwanted messages, facts or figures but it is also a determination to fix a text's meaning, leaving no room for ambiguous interpretation. This has been evidenced in the previous chapter in the case of the Lord Chamberlain, who disallowed texts where he could not be sure of their meaning and forbade any type of theatrical improvisation.

Vinaver's three plays studied here are all concerned with decolonisation, however, like Vinaver himself, they refuse categorisation and deal with several themes, questions and historical situations simultaneously. This chapter will investigate how Vinaver's refusal to fix meaning within his work, adopting what Edward Said has called a 'contrapuntal' and 'polyphonic' perspective, resulted in censorship both 'hard' and 'soft' being imposed upon his first three original plays. Scholarship has not yet considered Vinaver's dramatic approach in light of Edward Said's understanding of 'polyphony'. Marianne Noujaim looks at polyphony in Vinaver but she uses a Bakhtinian approach considering, 'les enjeux liés aux notions de dialogisme et de polyphonie', particularly in how the novel form has influenced the dramatic works of Vinaver.[17] Said defines contrapuntal as one of

> the pleasures of exile […] there are some positive things to be said for a few of its conditions. Seeing 'the entire world as a foreign land' makes possible *originality of vision*. Most people are principally

[14] Martin Evans, *France's Undeclared War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 138.
[15] Sylvie Thénault, 'L'état d'urgence (1955-2005)' (2007), p. 65.
[16] Michael Holquist, 'Corrupt Originals: The Paradox of Censorship' *PMLA*, 109.1 (1994) 14-25 (p. 21). My emphasis.
[17] Marianne Noujaim, *Le théâtre de Michel Vinaver: Du dialogisme à la polyphonie* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2012), p. 13. See also: Eric Éigenmann, *La Parole empruntée: Sarraute, Pinget, Vinaver* (Paris: L'Arche, 1996) for a discussion of polyphony in Vinaver more generally.

> aware of one culture, one setting, one home; *exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that – borrow a phrase of music – is contrapuntal*.[18]

This 'plurality of vision' is key to Vinaver's theatrical work both in terms of form and content.

The three plays studied here deal with decolonisation thematically and attempt to adapt a kind of 'decolonised' perspective. *Les Coréens* presents French troops and Korean civilians in Korea, concluding with a French soldier potentially deserting his battalion to remain in a local village; *Les Huissiers* examines the Algerian War of Independence in the mid-1950s through the eyes of French government officials who are more concerned with their internal politicking than the war itself; *Iphigénie Hôtel* is also set against the backdrop of the Algerian War but takes place in a tourist hotel in Mycenae in Greece. The staff and guests within the hotel are principally preoccupied by their relationships with one another as opposed to the events of the outside world.

This chapter studies these three plays in dialogue with postcolonial theory and memory studies scholarship. It draws on two interviews I conducted with Michel Vinaver, one via e-mail and one in person, over the course of 2018 to 2019 which discussed his experience of censorship. I also use archive materials from the Institut mémoires de l'édition contemporaine (IMEC) to track Vinaver's creative process and responses to his work in the press. Although the chapter examines these plays separately, several themes resonate through them including the use of the everyday or *le quotidien,* deconstructing Western notions of time and teleological conceptions of history, as well as Vinaver's use of polyphony as a means to *décadrer* the audience's perspective on a chosen event or moment in time. I argue that Vinaver can be understood as an exile both in his biographical and literary lives, an element which has been touched upon by scholars such as Catherine Brun and David Bradby.[19] However I also examine his alignment of decolonisation with the events of the Holocaust, which has not previously been analysed. The focus of these plays on decolonisation could therefore be considered as a form of the Freudian concept 'Screen Memory', or *Deckerinnerung,* where a child's banal everyday memories substitute painful recollections in the person's consciousness.[20] Michael Rothberg understands screen memory as 'a remapping of memory in which links between

[18] Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 148. My emphases.
[19] See: Catherine Brun, *Michel Vinaver: une pensée du théâtre* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2015) and David Bradby, *The Theatre of Michel Vinaver* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1993).
[20] See Sigmund Freud, *Zur Psychopathologie des Alltagslebens: Über Vergessen, Versprechen, Vergreifen, Aberglaube und Irrtum* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 2000).

memories are formed and then redistributed between the conscious and unconscious.'[21] Simon Chemama emphasises Vinaver's 'informations biographiques' as 'importantes pour appréhender son œuvre'[22] and I further this, considering the convergence between Vinaver's childhood experiences and the constraints of French 1950s society. For both these reasons it was difficult to talk openly about the Holocaust and so writing about the everyday and decolonisation acts as a screen for this trauma, a kind of unconscious self-censorship. However, concealed references to the Holocaust can be teased out when looking closely at these three plays as this chapter aims to do. The links between the Holocaust and decolonisation have been noted by Rothberg:

> Besides being a topic of interest to the Parisian intelligentsia, the interrogation of everyday life was also a pressing question for survivors of the Nazi camps, who sometimes found themselves compelled to read their experiences in light of current events in the decolonizing world. This connection between the everyday, decolonization, and Holocaust memory shows up especially in the writings of [Charlotte] Delbo.[23]

Delbo's *Les Belles lettres* (1961) was published just after the three plays examined here and similarly to Vinaver, she draws links between the Holocaust and the Algerian War of Independence via a focus on everyday events, behaviours and rituals. Her work is inspired by her personal experiences in concentration camps. Although he did not experience the camps first-hand, Vinaver's refusal to fix his plays upon one single meaning, as the censor would wish, and his focus on the everyday, is undoubtedly influenced by his biographical life.

Vinaver's official name is Grinberg. In 1940, when Vinaver was 14 years old, the Germans occupied France and as Russian Jews, his family were no longer safe. As a result, they fled first to the *zone libre* in the South of France and then in 1941 to New York where Vinaver attended the Lycée Français. Vinaver became bilingual in French and English (adding to his familial knowledge of Russian), and went on to study as an undergraduate at Wesleyan University in Connecticut. As a student Vinaver began writing in both English and French, signing his work initially as 'Marcel Vinaver', before adopting 'Michel Vinaver', his mother's maiden name.[24] During this period, he met T.S. Eliot and produced the earliest translation of *The Wasteland* in French (in 1947), an experience which would have a profound effect on his

[21] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonisation* (2009), p 14.
[22] Simon Chemama, *Vinaver, le théâtre de l'immanence* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2016), p. 7.
[23] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory* (2009), pp. 203-204.
[24] BnF file AFF-33020 An early poster for *Les Coréens* (then titled 'Aujourd'hui'), directed by Roger Planchon 1956 in Lyon, displays the author's name as 'Marcel Vinaver'. Vinaver has also used 'Michel Vinavert' and 'Guy Nevers' at different points in his writing career.

writing.[25] Eliot's writing in the modernist vein included a collage-like approach, layering differing voices, literary traditions and discourses throughout his work. This influence can be seen in Vinaver's writing, as shall be explored below, via his use of 'entre-lacs' or overlapping sentences and themes all in the same scene. One of Vinaver's earliest pieces of writing entitled 'Le Gag de la charte' was published in *Les Temps modernes* in December 1950.[26] The influence of Eliot was apparent in this early work which draws parallels between Vinaver's experiences of ritual practices during 'rushing' at Wesleyan University in the United States and Greek rituals and the structure of Greek drama.

As this chapter explores, it is this ability to stage events from a number of perspectives which makes Vinaver's work resonate with decolonisation discourses of the 1950s and 1960s. It is also this technique, employed by Surrealist and Absurdists artists to complicate symbolism and meaning in artistic production, which makes Vinaver's work a necessary case study when considering the representation of decolonisation in the theatre. There certainly was overlap between Surrealist and Absurdist movements and postcolonial writing, both of which strove to push the boundaries of cultural expression. Just as these movements, which included European writers such as Eugene Ionesco and Samuel Beckett, employed methods such as using a comic form to express a tragic theme, decolonial theatre dealt with not only the *subject* of decolonisation but also deconstructed colonial models and forms of how theatre can be defined, interpreted and understood. Vinaver's work begins this thesis's discussion of breaking down accepted means of cultural expression and significance. His position as a previously exiled Jew but who worked as a *cadre* for the cosmetics company Gillette, also enables him a perspective which emanates both from the cultural centre of French society as well as the periphery. This 'decolonisation' of form is continued in the next chapter where we see Algerian writers Kateb Yacine and Hocine Bouzaher playing with traditional modes of dramatic expression but subverting them and undermining them as a means of regaining artistic freedom from colonial control.

In addition to this early work and the three plays studied in this chapter, Vinaver has written novels and plays and was awarded the Prix Fénéon in 1952 (for his novel *L'Objecteur*) and the Prix Lugné-Poe for *Les Coréens* in 1956. The award of the Prix Fénéon, named after

[25] David Bradby, 'La Réalité, la scène et leur rapport: Vinaver entre Brecht et Stanislavski', *Cahiers de l'Association Internationale Des Études Françaises* 46.1 (1994) 169-82 (p. 178).

[26] This essay is a critique of the initiation rituals practiced by 'rushing' American undergraduates at Wesleyan University where Vinaver was an undergraduate student. Parallels are drawn between what Vinaver considers to be Athenian tragedy and the ritualistic nature of these practices from the perspective of an outsider. *Les Temps modernes*, (01/12/1950), British Library microfilm MIC C882.

the anarchist art dealer Félix Fénéon, aptly translates Vinaver's tendency to stray from literary conventions. As Bradby points out he, 'has not become identified with any one theatre or dramatic movement, retaining his independence as an author from changing fashions in theatre production.'[27] This solitary position on the literary scene not only reinforces the 'disobedience' evoked by Sarrazac but also feeds into the idea of Vinaver as a writer who seeks to *briser les cadres* of canonical literary representation.

Despite this rebellious streak, Vinaver's professional life is one of conformity. At the age of twenty-three and upon his return to France in 1956, Vinaver began a career for the cosmetics company Gillette, where he entered as a 'stagiaire' and remained for twenty-seven years leaving as head of the European branch. When I asked about whether this choice was motivated by a need to avoid censorship, Vinaver explained:

> Je ne me suis jamais intéressé à ce type de risque ou de danger [la censure]. C'est pour ça que j'ai toujours voulu avoir un métier neutre, un métier comme de m'occuper de l'homme de rasoir à côté de mon activité d'écrivain. Depuis que j'étais tout jeune, enfant, j'ai décidé qu'il faut que j'aie un gagne-pain, qui soit pas du tout lié à la culture ou à l'art.[28]

This simultaneous career, conducted under his official name 'Grinberg' allowed Vinaver a freedom which other writers, dependent on their work in order to make a living, did not achieve.[29] It also provided him with an insight into the world of 1950s and 1960s cosmetics, globalisation, modernisation and above all, the Americanisation of France, particularly evident in *Iphigénie Hôtel*, as shall be explored. Vinaver maintained this double existence, wearing disguises when attending performances of his plays so as not to be recognised by his colleagues.[30] It was only when his play *King*, which recounted the true story of the invention of the Gillette razor (in 1895), was staged in 1999 at Théâtre de la Colline by Alain Françon, that his then ex-colleagues fully understood that Vinaver was in fact Grinberg. He can therefore be said to actively avoid fitting into the *cadre* of playwright or businessman.

The Intellectual in Exile

Vinaver has acknowledged the influence of his personal life, particularly that of his exile to the USA as a teenager, upon his writing and his approach to everyday existence:

> A l'égard du quotidien, j'ai un rapport ancien, un rapport enfantin. Un rapport qui remonte à l'enfance et qui n'a pas changé, et qui est au centre même de mon activité d'écrivain. Je crois bien qu'enfant, j'étais étonné qu'on me permette les choses les plus simples, comme de pousser une porte, de courir, de m'arrêter de courir, etc… j'étais étonné, émerveillé de ces droits qu'on me donnait, et j'étais toujours à

[27] David Bradby, *The Theatre of Michel Vinaver* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1993), p. 1.
[28] Michel Vinaver interviewed by Rebecca Infield (23/09/2019).
[29] Vinaver uses both Vinaver and Grinberg to this day: the doorbell to his Parisian apartment bears both names.
[30] Interview with Anouk Grinberg [first accessed 13/02/2021].

> craindre *qu'on me les retire*, qu'on me repousse dans la *non-existence*. De la sorte, le quotidien, c'était quelque chose de très vibrant, au bord de de l'interdit, en tous cas précaire, immérité.[31]

This concern with being forced into 'non-existence' or having his freedom to do daily activities taken away reflects a fear of being constrained or rejected again from society. When I interviewed him, Vinaver admitted to having consulted lawyers before embarking on more controversial subjects for his theatrical work that could have led to legal action against him, therefore suggesting a desire to push boundaries but without facing repercussions that could lead to his rejection from society.[32] The question of exile in relation to Vinaver's writing has already been raised by Catherine Brun, who notes the plethora of ways in which Vinaver can be considered an exile:

> Vinaver est un exilé définitif: exilé historique, comme tant de juifs sous la France vichyste, ne trouvant tout à fait sa place ni dans son pays de naissance ni sur sa terre d'accueil; exilé culturel, longtemps partagé entre ses responsabilités de chef d'entreprise et ses activités de créateur; exilé artistique, à la fois promoteur d'un objet théâtral irréductible et voué à la réalisation scénique.[33]

Edward Said's notion that the process of exile allows for a double perspective is useful here: 'because the exile sees things both in terms of what has been left behind and what is actual here and now, there is a *double perspective that never sees things in isolation*.'[34] The position of Vinaver as an exile during his early life and double career enabled him to develop this 'double perspective' and was a contributing factor to the censorship he experienced, 'soft' and 'hard'.

In this chapter I will argue that it is because of these experiences of exile that Vinaver was able to effectively and emotively portray a Korean perspective in *Les Coréens.* So effective was the play that a Korean production was made in 2006 (50 years after the first production by Roger Planchon):

> [les] Coréens du sud, […] qui ont découvert cette pièce, se sont dits 'c'est nous' et ils ont décidé de la monter et pourquoi? Parce que pour eux cette pièce était essentiellement une pièce sur la guerre fratricide et sur la tragédie que cela a été des deux côtés.[35]

It was this empathy, this equalising, the ability to see the perspective from both or several sides, which must have proved unnerving for the French government as it refused a binary construction of national identity, an 'us' versus 'them' mentality. Given that a French battalion

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[31] Michel Vinaver, *Ecrits sur le théâtre* (Lausanne: L'Aire théâtrale: 1982), p. 123. (My emphases).
[32] In response to the question 'Mais avec votre dernière pièce, *Bettencourt Boulevard*, même si vous avez cette double vie, les Bettencourts auraient pu très bien vous amener en procès s'ils avaient voulu. Vous aviez conscience que c'était une possibilité?' 'Oui. C'est un risque que j'ai pris et je l'ai pris justement parce que j'avais une activité autre que l'écriture et donc je pouvais supporter d'être attaqué en justice par exemple. J'ai consulté des avocats.' Michel Vinaver interviewed by Rebecca Infield (23/09/2019).
[33] Catherine Brun, *Michel Vinaver: une pensée du théâtre* (2015), p. 8.
[34] Edward Said, 'The Intellectual in Exile', *Reith Lectures* (1993): https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p00gxqz0 [first accessed 01/07/2019]. My emphasis.
[35] Michel Vinaver interviewed by Rebecca Infield (23/09/2019).

made up of army active and reserve soldiers was sent to Korea in September 1950 as part of the UN forces, there was a vested interest on behalf of the French government to keep morale high and to maintain the figure of the Orientalised 'Other' as an enemy.[36]

But Vinaver does not only question established notions of identity, he also provides a new dramatic method of conveying overlapping perspectives. Said refers to exiles as existing in a 'mediate state, neither at one with the current setting, nor fully disencumbered of the other […] beset with *half involvements* and *half-attachments* […]'[37]. Vinaver uses 'entre-lacs'; a dramatic device whereby characters speak over one another and about very different topics all at once.[38] There is therefore a plurality of experience for the audience listening to Vinaver's polyphonic dialogues, reflecting the plurality of his identity as a writer, the multiple themes in his plays as well as the varying perspectives of real-life situations that he presents onstage.

Simon Chemama has written on Vinaver and censorship, describing the 'hard' censorship imposed upon *Les Coréens* and what he refers to as 'obstacles administratifs majeurs rencontrés par [Vinver] ou ses metteurs en scène' in relation to *Les Huissiers* (1957), and *Iphigénie Hotel* (1959). These plays revealed Vinaver's 'potentiel déstabilisateur pour le pouvoir, même dans nos régimes occidentaux.'[39] Chemama focuses on the 'ensemble extérieur à l'œuvre publiée, qui va de l'histoire du monde jusqu'à la vie de l'auteur,'[40] highlighting Vinaver's penchant for writing about world events as evidenced in later plays such as a plane crash in the Andes in *L'Ordinaire* (1981), the fall of the Twin Towers in *11 septembre 2001* (2002) and financial corruption in France in *Boulevard Bettencourt* (2014). However, Chemama does not attribute these experiences of censorship to any particular element of Vinaver's work; nor does he evoke Vinaver's ability to take a *contrapuntal* approach; seeing events from the perspective of the colonised, as opposed to simply denouncing the behaviour of the coloniser. He also does not draw parallels between the presence of the Holocaust and decolonisation in Vinaver's work of the late 1950s.

[36] See for instance: Kenneth Hamburger, 'Le rôle du bataillon de Corée dans la guerre de Corée', *Revue historique des armées*, 246 (2007) 65-76. It is also important to remember that France was already embroiled in the Indochinese war at this moment as well. In 1956 the Korean War had been settled for three years but the events at Dien Bien Phu, which saw the capture of a French military base, in 1954 had forced a humiliating retreat from Souteast Asia. David Bradby, *The Theatre of Michel Vinaver* (1993), p. 18.
[37] Edward Said, 'The Intellectual in Exile' lecture (1993).
[38] Simon Chemama, 'L'œuvre romanesque de Michel Vinaver. L'écriture interstitielle', *Roman 20-50*, 54.2, (2012), 137-149 (p. 145). Chemama defines 'entrelacs' as writing which 'fait se croiser les discussions d'au moins deux groups.'
[39] Simon Chemama, *Vinaver, le théâtre de l'immanence* (2016), p. 368.
[40] Ibid., p. 11.

Vinaver and Double Consciousness

This diversity of voices within his plays is the result of Vinaver's obsession with writing about events *as they happen*. When asked why it was so important to write about current events at the moment they take place, Vinaver noted: 'Parce que je l'aime. J'aime l'actualité. J'aime être plongé dans le moment présent. Et même si à partir de cette plongée j'invente des histoires, j'ai un véritable attachement au présent, ce qui est un moteur même de la création.[41]' This method of writing the present is achieved by an industrial level of research, documented in the 300 boxes of archives now located at the IMEC in Caen. Vinaver collects newspaper cuttings in both French and English and immerses himself in events in order to then render them into a narrative onstage. This works as a means of bearing witness to contemporary events, using his plays as an onstage archive and therefore potentially 'dangerous' for censors trying to impose a certain narrative of the past: in this case the denial of Algeria as a war making it 'la guerre sans nom.'[42]

This link with the present was first noted by Vinaver's personal friend Roland Barthes who wrote several essays on Vinaver's work, praising his ability to 'donner à voir des aveugles, de faire prendre conscience d'une inconscience'[43] via the use of 'un théâtre objectif' or which later became known as the 'théâtre d'ordinaire', the theatre of the everyday. In a letter to Vinaver in January 1961, in reference to the play *Iphigénie Hôtel*, Barthes notes that: 'Oui, cette pièce me paraît bonne, la meilleure que j'ai lue de toi, dans notre génération, je ne vois que toi à disposer de ce mélange d'étonnant ambiguïté et de connexion, les autres sont ou brouillons […] ou idéologues.'[44] Antoine Vitez, who eventually staged the play *Iphigénie Hôtel* twenty-three years after it was written, also noted 'l'enchevêtrement des thèmes'[45] present in the play and throughout Vinaver's œuvre. There is therefore an ambiguity present, not only in

[41] Michel Vinaver interviewed by Rebecca Infield (23/09/2019).
[42] Sylvie Thénault, 'Armée et Justice En Guerre D'Algérie', *Revue D'histoire*, 57.1 (1998), 104-114 (p. 105). Thénault argues 'Cette guerre, non déclarée, est en effet comme telle source de polémique: de quelle nature peut se qualifier le conflit franco-algérien des années 1954 à 1962? Lutte nationale d'indépendance, de libération, opérations de maintien de l'ordre, de pacification? Un conflit armé et meurtrier, en tout cas. Mais qui pourrait tracer les cartes successives de l'évolution du front entre les deux parties en présence, écrire la chronologie des batailles, victoires ou défaites des uns et des autres? Une guerre sans front identifiable, ni batailles décisives, qu'est-elle donc?'
[43] Roland Barthes, 'A propos des *Coréens*', *Ecrits sur le théâtre* (Paris: Seuil, 2002) 200-225.
[44] IMEC file VNV 63 Letter from Roland Barthes to Michel Vinaver (05/01/1961). My emphasis. Interestingly, in the collection of unpublished letters that have been published by Eric Marty and translated into English by Jody Gladding, *Album: Unpublished Correspondence and Texts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018) this reads as 'Yes this play seems good to me, the best I've read of yours. In our generation, I find only you inclined toward an explosive mixture of ambiguity and correctness. The others are either muddleheads (that is to say bastards) or ideologues.' The translation of 'muddlehead' for 'brouillon' changes the meaning of the sentence implying in English that other writers of the generation are not just beginners but incapable of writing anything good.
[45] IMEC files, box VNV 67 Letter from Antoine Vitez to Michel Vinaver (11/01/1963).

Vinaver's life and his biographical history but also in his writing, which, according to Barthes, could not be found in other writers of Vinaver's generation, overly concerned with delivering a message or adhering to a certain type of political ideology.[46] This rendered his work problematic for the French authorities who, as established, under the *état d'urgence* law of 1955, could close down publishers and theatres.[47]

But it is not only the subject of Algeria that made these plays problematic. The links between the Holocaust and decolonisation are present in these early plays even if only implicitly. The frequency of references to the Holocaust increases across the three plays studied here, however it is not until after a ten-year writing hiatus that Vinaver fully addresses the question in *Par-dessus bord,* eventually completed in 1969, which follows two companies trying to work out how to market and sell toilet paper. Although not a 'Jewish' play as such, there are frequent allusions to Auschwitz and the Holocaust more generally, as explored by Michael David Fox.[48] Furthermore, the main characters Alex and Cohen are clearly Jewish, and David Fox argues that this is not accidental: 'The stage Jew is […] never merely himself or herself. Rather, the performance of Jewishness on stage is always a representative performance of Jews and Jewishness.'[49] Vinaver's early novel, *Lataume* (1950), also makes some references to the Holocaust including a 'train de déportation', suggesting a desire to address Jewish issues without making them the central theme of his work.[50] Numerous comparisons have been made between the situation of the colonial subject and that of the European Jew, especially in the post-war era following the events of the Holocaust. More recently, Ethan Katz et al's *Colonialism and the Jews* (2017) has explored how Jewish suffering is similar to that inflicted during decolonisation.[51] Etienne Balibar has also drawn similarities between these two historical events, noting that:

> the question, which is perpetually being revived, of the irreducibility of anti-Semitism to colonial racism is wrongly framed. The two have never been totally independent and they are not immutable. They have a joint descent which reacts back upon our analysis of their earlier forms.[52]

[46] See for instance Jean-Paul Sartre's play *Les Sequestrés D'Altona* (1959) in which he denounces the war in Algeria by using a post-1945 German setting. The play reflects Sartre's understanding of how man should understand his own guilt in the face of difficult historical events.
[47] Sylvie Thénault, 'L'état d'urgence (1955-2005)' (2007), p. 64. My emphasis.
[48] Michael David Fox, 'Anus Mundi: Jews, the Holocaust, and Excremental Assault in Michel Vinaver's *Overboard* (*Par-dessus bord*)', *Modern Drama* 45.1 (2002), pp. 35-60.
[49] Ibid., p. 35.
[50] Michel Vinaver, *Lataume* (Paris: Gallimard, 1950), p. 183.
[51] Ethan B. Katz, Lisa Moses Leff and Maud S. Mandel eds., *Colonialism and the Jews* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2017).
[52] Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* translated by Chris Turner (London: Verso, 1991) [Originally published in French in 1988 with *La Découverte*], p. 45.

The link between the two phenomena is undeniable, and it would seem that Vinaver's position as a previously exiled Jew both enables him to identify with colonial subjects striving for independence as well as making him a target for censorship by the French government. Frantz Fanon notes the similarity between anti-Semitism and 'negrophobia':

> C'est mon professeur de philosophie, d'origine antillaise, qui me le rappelait un jour: 'Quand vous entendez dire du mal des Juifs, dressez l'oreille. On parle de vous.' Et je pensais qu'il avait raison universellement, entendant par-là que j'étais responsable, dans mon corps et dans mon âme, du sort réservé à mon frère. Depuis lors, j'ai compris qu'il voulait tout simplement dire: un antisémite est forcément négrophobe.[53]

As a close personal friend of Albert Camus, who was a patron of the anti-colonial publication *Présence Africaine,* Vinaver would certainly have been aware of the *négritude* movement advocated by writers such as Aimé Césaire and Léopold Sédar Senghor.[54] In an interview from 2012, Vinaver remembers having lunch with Albert Camus and at their table was 'un noir, antillais Léon Gontran'.[55]

This sensibility for a *contrapuntal* perspective of events present in Vinaver's oeuvre contains parallels with the concept of 'double consciousness' coined by the African-American writer and philosopher, W.E.B. Du Bois.[56] When we consider Du Bois's interest in the Jewish population's situation in post-war Poland, as explored in his article 'The Negro and the Warsaw Ghetto' (first published in 1952 but based on several trips to Poland from 1949 onwards), the similarities between that of previously exiled Jew and the African-American become apparent:

> The result of these three visits [to Poland], and particularly of my view of the Warsaw ghetto, was not so much a clearer understanding of the Jewish problem in the world as it was a real and more complete understanding of the Negro problem. […] *The race problem in which I was interested cut across lines of*

[53] Frantz Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris: Seuil, 1952), p. 98.

[54] Simon Chemama (ed.), *Albert Camus/Michel Vinaver: S'engager? Correspondance (1946-1957)* (Paris: L'Arche, 2007). Also see Christiane Yandé Diop, '*Présence Africaine:* Foreword', in VY Mudimbe (ed.), *The Surreptitious Speech: Présence africaine and the Politics of otherness*, 1947–1987 (University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. xiv.

[55] Michel Vinaver interviewed by Antoine Perraud for 'Michel Vinaver et Albert Camus' for *Mediapart* (07/01/2012). Léon Gontran Damas, one of the founding members of the *négritude* movement in France, worked very closely alongside Aimé Césaire and was also integral to bringing jazz music into French culture. Born in Guyane, Gontran-Damas co-founded the *négritude* movement alongside Aimé Césaire and Léopold Sédar Senghor. One of the main themes within his written work (including the collection of poetry entitled *Pigments* from 1937) is the question of assimilation which, significantly, was censored upon its publication.

[56] 'It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on, in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face.' W.E.B. Du Bois, 'Of our spiritual strivings', *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Dover Publications, 1994 [1903]), p. 2. My emphases.

> *[colour] and physique and belief and status and was a matter of cultural patterns, perverted teaching and human hate and prejudice, which reached all sorts of people and caused endless evil to all men*.[57]

If Du Bois is able to acknowledge that it was not only colour that caused 'human hate and prejudice' but that it was 'cultural patterns' that caused this 'endless evil to all men' then this would suggest that Vinaver's situation as an 'intellectual in exile' would enable him to write plays giving voice to those undergoing decolonisation, as is the case in his play *Les Coréens.* The play uses a number of devices to challenge the idea of 'cultural patterns' including the swapping of army uniforms between North Korean and French soldiers as well as a mock ceremony or remembrance scene in which the French soldiers pretend to be a statue. The humour in these scenes highlights the ridiculous nature of 'cultural patterns' which are enforced, particularly in times of warfare and as a means of consolidating difference between different religious, national, regional or ethnic groups.

The pertinence of Du Bois's work as a means of understanding 'difference' and divisions both for Jews and for the question of race, has been pointed out by Michael Rothberg:

> Together with his writings on the [colour] line in *The Souls of Black Folk* and beyond, Du Bois's reflections on the landscape of Warsaw provide a complex portrait of how race and space are produced simultaneously: it is not only 'colour' that matters, the Warsaw article makes clear, but also especially the 'line' that articulates and produces spatial differences together with racial ones.[58]

These two questions of colour and space highlight how studies of race transcend specific moments in time: Du Bois initially acknowledged that he believed it was the 'colour line' which 'had been a real and efficient cause of misery' and that it was no more complex than that. Rothberg charts the development of double consciousness, noting that it is after Du Bois's trips to Warsaw, that the concept became,

> no longer simply a condition of African-American life or, for that matter, of Jewish life in Europe. Rather, it is a conceptual, discursive, or aesthetic structure through which the conditions of minority life are given shape in order to ground acts of resistance to the biopolitical order. Displacing the color line and the problem of race entails conceptual work as well as political engagement. That remains true today.[59]

What I would like to argue here, is that Vinaver, similarly to Du Bois, 'displaces' the problem of race and seeks to question national discourses upheld by the French government during the 1950s and 1960s, with regard to decolonisation.

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[57] W.E.B. Du Bois, 'Le Nègre et le ghetto de Varsovie (1949)', *Raisons politiques*, 21.1 (2006) 131-135. My emphases.

[58] Michael Rothberg, 'W.E.B. Du Bois in Warsaw: Holocaust Memory and the Color Line, 1949-1952', *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 14.1 (2001), 169-189 (p. 179).

[59] Ibid., p. 186.

Censoring *Les Coréens*

Despite being called *Les Coréens* (1956) and set during the Korean War (1950-1953) I contend that this play is not only about Korea but also about the decolonisation of Algeria (which had begun in 1954 and so was ongoing in 1956) as well as about the Holocaust and France coming to terms with its role in the deportation of Jews during the Occupation (1940-1944). The play's early drafts illustrate Vinaver's decision to modify the title from 'La Chanson de Bélair', to 'Aujourd'hui' to 'Les Coréens' suggesting a form of self-censorship: the emphasis instead being put on the Koreans at the play's completion, perhaps so as to detract from any possible reading of Algeria.[60] Of course, displacing the action of a play, using one political context to denounce another, is not a particularly new dramatic device. Several well-known examples of this in recent French history include Jean Anouilh's *Antigone* staged in 1944 in order to avoid the censorship imposed by the Nazis.[61]

Kevin Elstob argues that with this focus on the contemporary, Vinaver seeks to 'implicate the spectators in familiar political surroundings, and invite them to reconsider their political thoughts and views: "l'invitation à un changement immédiatement réel."'[62] But Vinaver's work is *not* a form of 'littérature engagée' as advocated by contemporaries such as Sartre.[63] Vinaver promotes a 'littérature dégagée' which he reads in René Etiemble's *Hygiène des lettres II. Littérature degagée*, a criticism of French society.[64] Vinaver criticises Sartre and questions the point of *engagement*: 'le seul engagement qui ait pour moi quelque signification c'est celui qui consiste à *faire prendre aux hommes la conscience de leur situation.* A leur faire recouvrer leur "réalité" à vider l'homme de sa monstrueuse "réalité."[65] However, there are similarities in Vinaver's and Sartre's work. In his play *Les Séquestrés d'Altona* (1959), Sartre displaces the action to Germany in the immediate post-war period in order to denounce the French state's use of torture in Algeria and man's collective responsibility to face up to history and historical events. The initial staging of the play in 1959 at the Théâtre de la Renaissance in Paris (when censorship was still heavily being imposed upon the arts in France) saw an

[60] IMEC file VNV 3.1 Handwritten manuscript of *Les Coréens.*
[61] *Antigone* by Jean Anouilh, first published in 1942. Anouilh famously denounced totalitarianism, using the classic play by Sophocles but brought it up to date by using modern dress and make-up to draw parallels with the present.
[62] Kevin Elstob, *The Plays of Michel Vinaver: Political Theatre in France* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), p. 59.
[63] Anne Simonin, 'La littérature saisie par l'histoire', *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, 111/112.1 (1996) 59-75 (p. 60).
[64] A specialist in Chinese language and literature, René Etiemble is considered as the founder of comparative literature studies in France. Published in 1955 his *Hygiène des lettres II. Littérature degagée* aimed to write about the state of French literature in the 1950s with particular emphasis on how French writers could produce literature with a political purpose.
[65] Simon Chemama (ed.), *S'engager?* (2012), p. 22, letter (15/11/1946) from Vinaver to Camus. My emphasis.

emphasis placed on the German aspects of the play (uniforms, setting, military medals etc). However, the revival of the play in 1965, at the Théâtre de l'Athenée, saw more direct links made with Algeria and included passages from anti-colonial writers such as Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire in the programme distributed to the audience.[66]

Thus, in the post-war period audiences (and perhaps censors) would have been familiar with this technique as a more-or-less accepted means of circumventing censorship. This could explain why, when the director Gabriel Monnet applied for approval from the Directeur général de la jeunesse et des sports, Gaston Roux, to stage Vinaver's play *Les Coréens* as part of a summer school in the Alpine town of Annecy in 1957[67], a decision was made to 'interdire la représentation des *Coréens'* on account of

> l'opportunité de ce spectacle, à ses intentions, à son orientation, aux problèmes qu'il veut soulever et *qui n'entrent pas dans la ligne d'une Education Populaire* dont la mission est d'abord et par-dessus tout de *promouvoir les grandes œuvres de notre littérature dramatique française.*[68]

Monnet insisted on the fact that the play was not political and cites Gabriel Marcel, 'membre de l'Institut, dans 'les nouvelles littéraires', who confirms its neutrality:

> D'autres critiques éminents qui ne sauraient davantage être soupçonnés d'un parti-pris politique – tels que Jacques (*Le Figaro Littéraire*), Georges l'Herminier (*Le Parisien libéré*) Robert Kemp (*Le Monde*) – ont souligné la valeur de cette pièce dont ni 'les intentions ni l'orientation' ne révèlent d'une idéologie existante, mais au contraire, visent à exalter ce qui est constant chez l'homme, la faim, l'amour, la gentillesse, la solidarité etc… De toute manière la pièce ne se situe en 'aucune façon sur le plan politique.'[69]

But despite Monnet's willingness to 'demander à l'auteur [Vinaver] d'apporter au texte de sa pièce, pour la réalisation envisagée, les quelques modifications aptes à dissiper toute équivoque', the decision to censor is maintained.[70] As a result of this, Monnet and Vinaver chose instead to stage a re-writing of Sophocles's *Antigone* with several passages adapted by Vinaver and in the costumes which had been destined for *Les Coréens*, which posed no problem to the censor.[71] Given its history during the Nazi Occupation, the choice of *Antigone* was

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[66] BnF file 4-SW-1393. Programme from 1965 programme of *Les Séquestrés d'Altona*.

[67] The chronology of the first stagings of the play are somewhat complicated. Vinaver's archives suggest that it was the summer school in Annecy which was censored by the ministry. However, a programme for Vinaver's later play *Par-Dessus Bord*, performed in London as *Overboard* at the Orange Tree Theatre in 1997 notes that it was for a staging in Serre-Ponçon during which the censorship occurred. See: V&A file: THM/LON/ORA/VNV.

[68] 4-Col-124 (6,3) BnF Richelieu fonds Michel Vinaver, Letter to Gabriel Monnet (08/06//1957) from Gaston Roux. (My emphases).

[69] BnF 4-Col-124 (6,3) Letter from Gabriel Monnet from Gaston Roux (13/06/1957).

[70] Ibid.

[71] Although Gabriel Monnet did resign from his post at the Annecy summer school as a result of this censorship: 'Nous étions en 1945. J'ai été nommé instructeur national: pendant 12 ans j'ai dirigé des stages. En 1957, j'ai démissionné de mon poste car la censure décida d'interdire *Les Coréens* la pièce de Michel Vinaver que j'étais en train de monter.' *Midi libre Montpellier* **(**18/08/1964).

certainly not coincidental, as Vinaver noted: 'le symbole de jouer *Antigone* dans les costumes des *Coréens,* c'était fort' and that the production was 'perfect':

> C'était splendide, parce que pour les publics, qui sont venus voir ce spectacle-là, …c'était des publics d'ouvrier et de cultivateur, ça leur était tout à fait égal que cela ne soit pas archéologiquement parlant…que ça [ne] soit pas conforme.[72]

The staging of *Antigone*, intentionally removed from its 'archaeological' setting, serves both as a means of denouncing repressive regimes (here French imperialism) all the while making reference to Occupation-era censorship: Vinaver aligns the two situations.[73]

The mention of the 'public d'ouvrier et de cultivateur' is important to note here as it highlights Vinaver's ability (and aim) to appeal to a non-bourgeois theatre audience. This was also the case with *Les Coréens*, a letter in the archives from 'Gimenez' describes a production in Vienne (presumably Vienne, Rhône-Alpes) as 'formidable. La presse parle de véritable succès parce qu'on a joué à guichets fermés. Mais pour moi le vrai succès c'est les copains de la boîte, des métallos qui ne vont jamais au théâtre, ils sont emballés, accrochés, ils reviendront.'[74] Thus, Vinaver's early work serves as a means of democratising theatre as well as denouncing colonial violence. As we shall see, *Les Huissiers* and *Iphigénie Hôtel* both actively critique working conditions and capitalism, both linked to the colonial project. Given Vinaver's 'day job' high up in the corporation Gillette, there is a certain irony in his criticism of capitalism: a further means of avoiding being categorised into a particular political movement, just as his anti-colonial critique is not only limited to Korea.

Les Coréens as Multidirectional Memory: The Holocaust and Decolonisation

In 1958, Elie Wiesel offered a first-hand account of his experiences in Nazi concentration camps in *La Nuit*.[75] Released in the same year as *Les Coréens,* Alain Resnais's film *Nuit et brouillard* along with *La Nuit,* are two of the first instances in which the details of the Holocaust, and France's involvement in it, began to emerge into the French public sphere. Resnais's film was censored because of its closing scene in which a photo of the Pithiviers camp shows the 'képi' of a French gendarme, therefore implying French complicity in the

[72] Michel Vinaver interviewed by Rebecca Infield (23/09/2019).
[73] Anouilh's Antigone was famous for its seemingly anachronistic references to modernity in his play, a means of drawing parallels with the present when it was staged in 1944. See: Murray Sachs, 'Notes on the Theatricality of Jean Anouilh's "Antigone"', *The French Review* 36.1 (1962), 3-11.
[74] IMEC file VNV 70.6 *Les Coréens.* Undated letter from Gimenez.

[75] Elie Wiesel, *La Nuit* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1958). The book continued the work of the film *Nuit et brouillard* by Alain Resnais, released in 1956, which had started discussions around France's role in the deportation of Jews during the Holocaust.

Holocaust.[76] At the same time as these seminal cultural productions, a new public entity appeared, what Rothberg has described as the Holocaust Survivor.[77] This 'emergence of the survivor from the private sphere to the public space of articulation [reflected a] new recognition of racialised state violence in decolonisation.'[78]

In Wiesel's text the action is set almost entirely in the present, except for the following extract which comes towards the end, during the Nazi death marches, when the prisoners have gone days without eating:

> Un jour que nous étions arrêtés, un ouvrier sortit de sa besace un bout de pain et la jeta dans un wagon. Ce fut une ruée. Des dizaines d'affamés s'entretuèrent pour quelques miettes. Les ouvriers allemands s'intéressèrent vivement à ce *spectacle*. Des années plus tard, *j'assistai* à un *spectacle* du même genre à Aden. Les passagers de notre navire s'amusaient à jeter des pièces de monnaie aux 'natifs', qui plongeaient pour les ramener. Une Parisienne d'allure aristocratique s'amusait beaucoup à ce jeu. J'aperçus soudain deux enfants qui se battaient à mort, l'un essayant d'étrangler l'autre, et j'implorai la dame:
>
> - Je vous en prie, ne jetez plus de monnaie!
> - Pourquoi pas ? dit-elle. J'aime faire la charité…[79]

Wiesel links the Holocaust and decolonisation, aligning Nazi death marches and the situation in Aden, Yemen. Yemen was one of the last countries to achieve independence from the British in November 1967 and was therefore still a British colony at the time Wiesel's book was published. It is interesting that Wiesel chose to describe these two events he experienced as 'spectacles'. In the first instance, the German workers are the spectators, watching the starved prisoners [of which Wiesel was one] fight over breadcrumbs. However, in the second situation, Wiesel himself is part of the audience complicit in witnessing ('j'assistai') the 'spectacle' of the Parisian throwing coins to 'natifs' as a form of 'charité'. Wiesel goes from being observed, in the position of the victim, to the (complicit) observer, in a similar way that Vinaver forces French audiences, previously Occupied by the Germans (when they were the ones being observed) to becoming passive observers of violence, during the Algerian War of Independence, as this section explores.

This alignment of the experiences of the Holocaust with those of the colonised resonates with Rothberg's concept of multidirectional memory, defined as 'subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not privative.'[80] By considering memory as such, we are able to 'to create new forms of solidarity and new visions of justice' by linking, in Rothberg's examples, the question of the Nazi genocide and

[76] Nelly Furman, 'Viewing Memory through Night and Fog, The Sorrow and the Pity and Shoah', *Journal of European Studies* 35.2 (2005) 169-85.
[77] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory* (2009), p. 193.
[78] Ibid., p. 195.
[79] Elie Wiesel, *La Nuit* (1958), p. 156. (My emphases).
[80] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory* (2009), p. 3.

decolonisation. Rothberg focuses on the film *Chronique d'un été,* released on the 20 of October 1961 – a significant date in the Algerian War given the massacre of Algerians living in Paris at the hands of the French police three days previously, a moment which has been viewed as a turning point in the Algerian War of Independence.[81] In the film, described as 'cinéma-vérité', we see interactions between the figure of Marceline, a Holocaust survivor (indicated by the camera zooming in on her tattoo) with two men, Landry from the Ivory Coast and Raymond from the Congo. Rothberg argues that 'Marceline's testimony was made possible by and became meaningful in a discursive context in which the association of torture, truth, testimony, and resistance underwrote a link between the Algerian War and Nazi atrocities.'[82] The question of decolonisation more generally, in the case of Vinaver's *Les Coréens,* therefore allows a situation in which Vinaver is able to talk about the Holocaust as well as contemporaneous events in Algeria, via what Rothberg considers to be an 'allegory for that which cannot be publicly spoken or that which the public does not want to hear': a means of circumventing imposed silence, or censorship.[83]

Les Coréens follows a number of French (and an American) soldiers who are either conscripted or go voluntarily to fight for the United Nations in Korea. One of these, Belair, is injured and gets left behind from the rest of his battalion only to be found and cared for by an eight-year-old Korean girl named Wen-Ta. Wen-Ta takes Belair to her village where he meets her family and witnesses the difficulties they face on a daily basis whilst their country is at war. Interspersed with these scenes, we follow the remaining soldiers from Belair's battalion including Lhomme and Lhorizon whose tokenistic names are juxtaposed against the individual names attributed to the Korean characters in the play. At the play's close we see Belair trying to decide whether he wants to stay in the village or go back to France. We also see the soldiers frightened by the natural surroundings they find themselves in, and mistaking each other for the enemy.

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[81] The 17 of October 1961 remains an important day in the memory of the Algerian War. The total number of deaths continues to be unconfirmed although in 1998 the French government admitted to 40 deaths. There are claims of between 100 to 300 dead but this is difficult to confirm. A documentary film, entitled *Octobre à Paris* by Jacques Panijel was made in 1962 but censured by the French state on its release. For a detailed investigation into the events see: Jim House and Neil MacMaster, *Paris 1961: Algerians, state terror, and memory* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) and Maria Flood, '(Un)Familiar Fictions: The 17 October 1961 Massacre and Jacques Panijel's Octobre à Paris (1962)', *Forum for Modern Language Studies,* 54.2 (2018) 157-175. Lia's Brogzal's *Absent the Archive: Cultural Traces of a Massacre in Paris, 17 October 1961* (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2020) considers the massacre's representation in literary productions. The chapter 'The Entangled Stories of October 17, Vichy, the Jews, and the Holocaust' (pp. 265-310) is particularly relevant here.

[82] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory* (2009), p. 195.

[83] Ibid., p. 197.

Vinaver's direct references to the Holocaust in the play are scarce, however his criticism of memory and memorials is present throughout. In scene XIII the two soldiers Lhomme and Lhorizon are 'camouflés de branchages' and 'scrutent la profondeur des buissons.'[84] The two soldiers have been chasing a young Korean boy but are also looking for the rest of their unit from whom they have been separated:

> Lhorizon. Oh! Mais je sens que ça va chauffer. C'est quelque part par là qu'il se cache, le *juif*. (*Silence*.) J'avais pourtant entendu quelque chose.
>
> Lhomme. Une taupe, sans doute. Ce que ces buissons peuvent contenir de toiles d'araignées! Tu sais, Lhorizon, je me sens prêt à tout.[85]

By using the word 'juif' to describe a Korean boy that the soldiers are searching for, Vinaver immediately opens up the play, making the victim not just Korean but also Jews as well as Algerians fighting for independence. 'Juif' is not just an insult thrown around by the soldiers, it denotes an alignment of the victims of decolonisation with those of the Holocaust.

This *multidirectionality* continues in the same scene of the play as we see the two soldiers change from their French uniforms into what they believe to be those of two North Koreans:

> Lhorizon. Regarde! On est les seuls soldats blancs dans toute cette immensité!
>
> […]
>
> Pour mener à bien notre opération, il faut se fondre dans la nature…
>
> […]
>
> De même que les caméléons et autres animaux de la nature prennent la couleur de la chose sur laquelle ils se posent…
>
> Lhomme. Tu veux te déguiser en Coréen?
>
> […]
>
> *Ils commencent à se changer*.
>
> Lhorizon. Tu étais quoi, toi, dans le civil?
>
> Lhomme. Moi? Chauffeur de taxi.
>
> Lhorizon. A Paris?
>
> Lhomme. Oui. Pouah! Avec la circulation qu'il y a. C'est plus possible.[86]

Although no mention of the Holocaust, Jews or Algeria directly, the self-identification of Lhorizon and Lhomme as 'les seuls soldats blancs' in the vicinity is surely a reference to the racialised nature of the Korean war (and that of Algeria and the Holocaust). However, Vinaver

[84] Michel Vinaver, *Aujourd'hui* ou *Les Coréens* (Arles: Actes Sud, 1986 [1958]) p. 71.
[85] Ibid. My emphasis.
[86] Ibid., pp. 72-73.

contests this as we see the facility with which the soldiers take off their uniform and don that of another country, and therefore of a different identity. The use of 'caméléons' represents the fluidity between different identities; the possibility for re-invention and for adaptation both personally and politically - 'prendre les couleurs' seems to be a political reference to changing sides or alliances. Given France's political context in 1956, this is surely a *clin d'œil* to the French Resistance fighters who had survived the Nazi Occupation but who were then in charge of implementing the repression of independence movements in Algeria.[87] When I asked Vinaver why he thought the play had been censored he noted, 'parce que les soldats français n'étaient pas dépeint avec le respect qu'ils auraient voulu. Ils étaient dépeint d'une façon on peut dire, grotesque.'[88] For him the play 'est vraiment une insulte à l'armée française qu'ils n'ont pas voulu couvrir.'[89] These are no doubt what Gaston Roux meant when he referred to the 'intentions', 'orientation' and 'problèmes' that the play 'veut soulever'.

Via its comic incongruence with the rest of this scene and its meta-theatricality, this exchange serves as a reminder to the audience that although they are in the theatre, watching a play, conscripts were currently in Algeria fighting a war. The inevitable laugh that these lines would have received from the audience (if staged in Lyon, most likely a knowing laugh about the traffic in Paris, if staged in Paris, a laugh of recognition relating to their daily experiences) also makes them complicit in the violence carried out to prevent decolonisation, being played out on stage. The play's original title 'Aujourd'hui' also serves as a continuous reminder of the link between the on-stage events and the contemporaneous political situation in France.[90] However, this link between Korea and Algeria was lost on certain critics who could not see past the 'Coréens' of the play's title:

> L'auteur M. Michel Vinaver, a sans doute été combattant en Corée. Il en a rapporté des impressions saisissantes. Et plutôt que d'en faire un reportage ou un roman, il a eu l'idée d'en tirer une pièce de théâtre. Certes, le théâtre a ses règles, qui sont strictes. Il y faut de l'action, du mouvement et que toutes les répliques concourent au dénouement.[91]

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[87] See for instance: Guy Mollet who was a decorated Resistance fight and Prime Minister of France from 1956-1957. Mollet oversaw the imposition of special laws which permitted violence against the FLN. Robert Lacoste, was a Socialist Party member, highly decorated for his service in the two world wars. He was a resident Minister in Algeria between 1956 and 1958 and he pursued a ruthless policy of reform and repression. The most famous example of this is Jacques Soustelle who had worked with Charles de Gaulle and Free France during the Occupation but was Governor-General of Algeria (1955-1956) and oversaw brutal repressions of the FLN. Martin Evans, *France's Undeclared War* (2012), pp. xxx-xxxi.

[88] Michel Vinaver interviewed by Rebecca Infield, (23/09/2019).

[89] Ibid.

[90] In the very first version of the script the play was entitled 'Les choses qui sont là' reinforcing the link to the present and the audience's reality throughout the play. Although this could also be interpreted as ironic given the soldiers' constant confusion concerning their surroundings and where the supposed enemy is located. IMEC file *Les Coréens,* VNV 3.1.

[91] Jean-Michel Renaitour, 'Les Coréens', *Dimanche Matin* (27/01/1957). It is important to note here that Jean-Michel Renaitour was not simply a theatre critic but a French politician who, before the outbreak of war, was

These 'rules' which Vinaver's play does not adhere to prove problematic for this reviewer, returning to us to the idea of censorship seeking to impose 'la mise en forme.'[92] By breaking away from these recognised 'formes' and 'normes' Vinaver challenges accepted forms of French drama but also presents a 'contenu' which denounces violence in Korea. The review also takes a literal approach to the play, unable to read into the 'equivocal discourse', here also seen as *multidirectionality*, in a similar way to Arden's critics and those who considered Reckord's play as only being concerned with class. The Korean setting acts as a means to voice a transcolonial critique, as Vinaver underlines, 'je n'ai pas connu d'acteurs de la guerre de Corée. Ce n'était pas le cas [que j'y sois allé] et il n'en a jamais été question. Je n'ai pas essayé et personne ne me l'a proposé.'[93]

The aforementioned transnationality and interchangeability of the soldiers and their causes is furthered as the play continues, moving to consider *how* the dead are remembered and memorialised. In scene III we see the soldiers 'playing' at being a monument and a discussion about whether or not a fellow soldier, Rossetti, is dead:

> Lhorizon. Pas si sûr que ça qu'il soit passé. Qui dit qu'il va pas rappliquer d'un moment à l'autre ? Pour être sûr attends qu'ils ramènent sa dépouille mortelle comme ils disent devant les monuments.
>
> Beaugeron. Et si on jouait au monument ?
>
> Bonassier. On n'est plus assez nombreux.
>
> Exaxergues. Et qui fera le monument ?
>
> Beaugeron. On est toujours assez nombreux. Amène le mouflet au milieu. Il fera le monument. (*Le garçon coréen est trainé au centre, on le fait tenir debout*.) Moi, je suis le préfet, toi t'es la veuve, toi t'es l'ancien combattant, toi le général, toi les enfants des écoles. (*La veuve se voile la tête d'un linge, l'ancien combattant présente une branche comme un drapeau, ils font cercle*.) Concitoyens, amis, vous autres femmes éplorées, vous autres jeunes espoirs de la France que je salue avec fierté, vous qui portez les culottes courtes, vos culottes bientôt deviendront longues, et vous autres, là…
>
> Lhomme. Le monument devrait être voilé.
>
> *On jette une vareuse sur la tête du petit Coréen.*
>
> Beaugeron. C'est avec une émotion indicible que je viens vous inviter, oui, je vous invite à vous incliner bien bas, très bas, devant la mémoire de ceux qui sont morts – allez, Bonassier, plus bas! – *qui sont morts pour beaucoup de choses à la fois, tellement de choses que tout ça, ça se mélange un peu, forcement. D'abord pour leurs aieux. Et puis, pour la gloire. Et puis, pour la liberté chérie. Et puis, pour leurs arbres et leur pays.*[94]

This scene, steeped in irony and sarcasm, returns us to the question of memory. It mixes high register, the 'dépouille mortelle' of formal or state funerals juxtaposed against the colloquial

decorated by the Nazis at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. A prolific author in his own right, he won the Grand prix de l'Académie française in 1952.

[92] Pierre Bourdieu, *Langage et pouvoir symbolique* (Paris: Fayard, 2001), p. 170.

[93] Michel Vinaver interviewed by Rebecca Infield (23/09/2019).

[94] Michel Vinaver, *Les Coréens*, pp. 28-29. (My emphasis).

exchanges of the soldiers. The 'ceremony' conducted on stage is again meta-theatrical, alienating the audience from the action and returning them to the present. However, the almost slapstick and very physical nature of the comic scene again makes the audience complicit in the actions on stage, laughing along with the on-stage events. In terms of reception, the aforementioned letter from 'Gimenez' describes the efficacy of this scene on the audience in terms of critiquing established forms of memorialisation:

> Pouvez-vous nous envoyer le texte de la pièce ou si c'est difficile, au moins le passage du 'monument'. Je vous signale au passage que le sous-préfet est parti à l'entr'acte je suppose que la scène du monument ne lui a pas convenu. Ce qui nous plaît en vous [Vinaver], c'est que vous osez dire la vérité, il y en a si peu qui osent. Merci.[95]

The scene therefore seems to have the desired effect of relating the situation in Korea and a non-specified memorial monument to the situation in Algeria, when the play was staged in 1956. It also highlights the negative reaction of the government, here presented by the 'sous-préfet', another indication as to why the play was initially censored. Another letter in the IMEC archives makes a link between this scene and the work of Charlie Chaplin: 'Le fait de jouer au monument avec un gosse qu'ils vont fusiller c'est du comique à la Chaplin. Ils se moquent de leur propre histoire. C'est tragiquement comique, ça c'est pas du music-hall, du comique à la Laurel et Hardy.'[96] The use of comedy to mock French history – 'leur propre histoire' – seems to have had the desired self-reflexive effect on how memory is created and weaponised, at least for this spectator.

According to Rothberg the crimes against humanity being committed in Algeria by the French were an open secret but 'the great majority of French people demonstrated an indifference to the truths that could be known despite the censorship, a censorship that was in fact applied inconsistently.'[97] Benjamin Stora, also confirmed this: '*La société sait*, mais se content de partager le secret d'une guerre non-déclarée.'[98] Echoing Rothberg, the reference in the above scene to those who are 'morts pour beaucoup de choses à la fois, tellement de choses que tout ça, ça se mélange un peu, forcement' is of particular interest. Although Ben Gurion, founding president of Israel, stated in the wake of the Eichmann trial (in 1960-1962) that the Nazi genocide was 'a unique episode that has no equal', Rothberg claims that the film *Chronique d'un été* refutes this idea and instead stages an encounter between colonial violence

[95] IMEC file VNV 70.6. Letter from Gimenez, [undated].

[96] IMEC file VNV 70.6. Anonymous letter addressed to Vinaver.
[97] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory* (2009), p. 196.
[98] Benjamin Stora, *La Gangrène et l'oubli* (1991), p. 73.

and the Holocaust.[99] Despite this, the film places an uneven emphasis on Marceline's emotional anecdote of her time in a concentration camp and more screen time is devoted to the question of the Holocaust than that of decolonisation. Vinaver appears to go a step further; by suggesting 'ça se mélange', all colonial wars and genocide victims are given equal importance (or perhaps unimportance in this scene), dying for their ancestors ('leurs aieux') and for their trees ('leurs arbres') going beyond simply soldiers dying in Korea.

Vinaver and Camus

In 1946, whilst studying in the USA, Vinaver accosted Albert Camus after a conference. A lasting friendship ensued, Camus helping Vinaver get his work published by Gallimard and giving him advice on writing. However, the differences in their approach to writing about decolonisation are apparent when considered in light of Said's criticism of Camus's work. Said argues that *L'Etranger* (1942), 'consolidates, and renders more precise the nature of the French enterprise [in Algeria]'[100] and goes on to state that the famous trial of Meursault (convicted of killing an unnamed Arab in the text) is in fact 'a surreptitious or unconscious justification of French rule [in Algeria] or an ideological attempt to pretty it.'[101] As Edward Hughes points out, Camus's impression of Algiers from the 1930s was 'focused squarely on the city's European population.'[102] This is due to Camus's position 'half as an insider, half as an ethnographer' with which he evoked European settler life.[103] Camus is therefore complicit in the perpetuation of the colonial conception of Algeria within French literature and this is seen in both *L'Etranger* and Camus's later novel *La Peste* (1947). For Said, Camus's work represents the colon writing for a French audience whose personal history, as a pied-noir, is tied irrevocably to this Southern department of France; a history taking place anywhere else is unintelligible.[104] Therefore, Camus is unable to present a *contrapuntal* reading of the Algerian situation, which

> must take account of both processes; that of imperialism and that of resistance to it, which can be done by extending our reading of the texts to include what was once forcibly excluded in *L'Etranger*, for example, the whole previous history of France's colonialism and its destruction of the Algerian state, and the later emergence of an independent Algeria (which Camus opposed).[105]

Correspondence between Vinaver and Camus highlights their differences of opinion, Vinaver seeming to imply that Camus should become more involved in denouncing French repression

[99] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory* (2009), p. 196.
[100] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), p. 211.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Edward J. Hughes, *Critical Lives: Albert Camus* (London: Reaktion, 2015), p. 40.
[103] Ibid., p. 45.
[104] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), p. 223. (My emphasis).
[105] Ibid., pp. 66-67.

in Algeria. Referring to a hypothetical well-known writer (presumably Camus), Vinaver suggests:

> Si sa signature est prestigieuse il peut en user pour pousser un cri d'alarme ou un cri de ralliement. Sinon il peut essayer de faire du bruit quand même. Enfin, il laissera la littérature et emploiera les armes de chacun. Je crois que nous sommes à présent tout près d'une telle urgence.[106]

But it is somewhat reductionist to claim that Camus was entirely complicit in the colonial regime in Algeria and his views on *la question algérienne* were perhaps more nuanced than Said gives him credit for.[107]

In contrast to this complex position, Vinaver's *contrapuntal* approach opens up the question of decolonisation, rendering it transnational and applicable to several different situations; notably that of Korea, Algeria and as a means of analysing the fallout of the Holocaust in French society. This is achieved via

> a process of *composition*, not of *interpretation*. The result aims to surprise, stimulate, and question its readers/spectators*; it will not preach to or attempt to convert them.* The author does not start with didactic intentions, does not claim to know something he can then pass on through his writing. In fact, his intention in composing the play is to create a work that will *to some extent resist interpretation*, in the sense of not being easily expressed in different terms, not reducible to paraphrase or to a 'message'.[108]

By resisting interpretation, Vinaver breaks the frame of accepted theatrical representation and also avoids seeing his work pinned down, categorised or tied to one specific critical discourse. The presence of the *contrapuntal* is clear right from the start of *Les Coréens*. The play is equally divided between the Western soldiers and the Korean peasants and they are given the same amount of stage time and number of lines. Moreover, the use of Korean names such as 'Ir-Won', 'Hun-Tan', 'Wou-Long' and 'Wen-Ta' already takes Vinaver's text one step further than that of Camus's: the non-Western characters have names and identities. In the 1986 republication of the 1956 version of *Les Coréens*, the Korean characters are also given specific ages next to their character names in the cast list, whereas the Western soldiers simply have their rank listed: either 'caporal' or 'soldat'.[109]

Brecht employs a similar device in his play *The Good Person of Szechwan* (completed in 1941 whilst Brecht was in exile in the USA) in which he includes characters such as Shen

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[106] Simon Chemama (ed.), *S'engager?* (2012), p. 59. Letter from Vinaver to Camus (30/06/1952).
[107] Agnès Spiquel discusses the misrepresentation of Camus's position: 'le public français n'a à sa disposition que des versions tronquées de ses déclarations de Stockholm et des interprétations tendancieuses de sa condamnation du terrorisme du FLN, interprétations qui font de lui un colonialiste pur et dur, partisan de l'Algérie française.' 'Algérie 1958: hésitations et certitudes de Camus, Genèse de l'avant-propos de Chroniques algériennes' in *Bulletin de la Société des Études camusiennes*, 88 (2009), p. 32.
[108] David Bradby, *The Theatre of Michel Vinaver* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1993), p. 2. My emphasis.
[109] Michel Vinaver, *Les Coréens* (1986 [1956]), p. 14.

The.[110] Similarly, Vinaver decentralises the Western focus of French (or German) theatre by presenting the audience with Belair and Wen-Ta who become friends and learn from one another across a cultural, national and (one would imagine) linguistic divide. The suspension of disbelief is no doubt necessary here, given that the Korean characters were all initially played by French actors.[111] This echoes the production *Eleven Men Dead at Hola Camp,* discussed in the previous chapter, however here there are no depictions of violence or visual structures of racial hierarchy.

The play's engagement to provide a *contrapuntal* reading of events extends to an early printed programme containing extracts of the text, published by the Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui – a travelling theatre group with sponsorship from the Alliance française and run by André Gintzburger. The cover of the programme shows a black and white photo of what we presume to be a Korean family, slightly out of focus.[112] They are sitting on the floor and looking directly at the camera. The back cover of the brochure shows French soldiers in uniform.[113] Further pictures in the document show the cast in costume as both Koreans and French soldiers.[114] The brochure then displays real photos (courtesy of professional war photographer Roger-Viollet and UNESCO) of, what we presume to be Korean villages with the captions 'Ils occupent le village' and then 'ils ont quitté le village'.[115] Visually, as readers, we are therefore exposed to the two sides of the war, and consider events from both the Koreans' and the French soldiers' perspectives. As Said notes in relation to Camus:

> As we look back at the cultural archive, we begin to reread it not univocally but contrapuntally, with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts.[116]

In terms of censorship, Jansen argues that it is exactly this *contrapuntal*, or what she calls 'equivocal', means of expression that censors aim to repress: 'Ideology pretends to speak with the authority of univocal discourse even though its symbolic content is always incompletely concealed. Ideologues claim (or simulate) a monopoly of explanatory powers by asserting that their position articulates a single vocabulary of truth.'[117] But in reality:

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[110] David Bradby notes that it was after seeing Roger Planchon's 1956 production of *The Good Woman of Setzuan* that he offered his then new play, *Les Coréens* to Planchon to stage. David Bradby, *The Theatre of Michel Vinaver* (*The Theatre of Michel Vinaver* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1993), p. 17.
[111] BnF file 4-COL-124(4) As evidenced in the cast list for the 1956 production in Lyon by Roger Planchon and also in BnF file 4-COL-112 (59, 2) Pictures of the production in newspaper cuttings.
[112] See appendix 6.
[113] See appendix 7.
[114] See appendix 8.
[115] *Les Coréens* programme by the Alliance française and the Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui [without date], [Author's own document], p.11. See appendix 8.
[116] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 51. My emphasis.
[117] Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship* (1991), p. 194.

> all discourse […] requires a double-reading because language itself has a dual nature. *It is both univocal and equivocal.* It is a process and product of culture. It not only refers to it, it refers back. It draws upon (infers, evokes, and embraces) the 'symbols' – the historical testaments, traditions, desires, and mythos – that make up the collective memory and future hopes of a people.[118]

As opposed to Arden's use of the equivocal discourse to deconstruct British conceptions of the nation and patriotism, here Vinaver presents us with a double reading of colonial history, going beyond Sartre's denunciation of torture in Algeria (in *Les Séquestrés d'Altona*) by staging an encounter between Belair and Wen-Ta: fully-formed Korean characters and their daily experiences of war alongside those of the French soldiers.[119] The effectiveness of this approach can be seen by the Korean reaction to Vinaver's play, many years after its initial production, as Vinaver explains:

> *Les Coréens,* a été traduite en Corée, en Coréen. Et joué en Corée, mais en Corée du sud. Alors que le point de vue de l'écrivain de cette pièce était plutôt d'être sympathisant de la Corée du nord. Mais il y a eu d'ailleurs une tentative d'intéresser les Coréens du nord á cette pièce et c'est Armand Gatti qui était proche des Coréens du nord et il a fait plusieurs séjours en Corée du nord. Et il a essayé de faire accepter cette pièce là-bas mais ça n'a pas marché. Il n'y a peu eu de suite. En revanche, ce sont des Coréens du sud, beaucoup plus tard, qui ont découvert cette pièce et qui se sont dits 'c'est nous' et ils ont décidé de la monter. Et pourquoi? Parce que pour eux cette pièce était essentiellement une pièce sur la guerre fratricide et sur la tragédie que cela a été des deux côtes.[120]

Vinaver effectively manages to portray 'both sides of the story', in a context which can be applied not just to Korea, also to the Algerian War of Independence, taking place as the play was written and staged.

Decolonising Time

As established, *Les Coréens* focuses on the question of mutual understanding of two different cultures, which is depicted via the relationship of the French soldier Belair and Wen-Ta, a 'fille de 8 ans', who takes him into her village to be cared for. Two different worldviews of how to consider daily life, or *le quotidien,* are embodied here by the interactions between the two characters. In this section we shall see how, through exposing the audience to differing measurements and understandings of time, Vinaver is able to provide a decolonial reading of the Korean (and as we have seen, Algerian) War whilst at the same time suggesting a Marxist critique of daily working life. Vinaver admitted that the play 'avait un billet pour le côté communiste', even if he believed that the principal cause of its 'official' censoring was due to

[118] Ibid., p. 197.
[119] *Les Coréens* programme by the Alliance française and the Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui. Visibly French actors playing Koreans. The 1956 production of *Les Coreéns* was staged at the Théâtre de la Comédie in Lyon, directed by Roger Planchon and from the 24 of October. The 1957 production in Paris at the Alliance française by the company Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui was directed by Jean-Marie Serreau from the 18 of January 1957.
[120] Michel Vinaver interviewed by Rebecca Infield (23/09/2019).

its disrespect of the army.[121] However, to return to our idea of censorship as a facet of colonialism, Vinaver presents a *contrapuntal* perspective of daily life and routine, away from those imposed by imperial rule. Giordano Nanni has noted the importance of time in colonial rule and how its enforcement enabled 'Christianising and "civilising" […] imposing the temporal rituals and routines of the dominant society, whilst disempowering, subsuming and reforming competing modes of temporal practice and perception.'[122]

Putting Western 'accepted' notions of 'clock time' in juxtaposition with other cultures' equally established means of telling time is a trope often used in postcolonial literature and cultural production in order to highlight the extent to which colonial forces dominated all aspects of life. It can be seen in works such as Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) in which he highlights the change from a generations'-old means of measuring time via nature, weather, crop success and in particular the coming of locusts (or not).[123] Achebe tracks how these traditions changed with the arrival of Western missionaries and the building of a Christian church who imposed 'clock time' upon the population. Vinaver, writing prior to the publication of Achebe's book, also focuses on these different measurements. In scene II of *Les Coréens* we witness the following exchange:

> Ir-Won. Il y aura cinq ans. Mon Wang venait de naître et ce soir-là la pluie tambourinait sur le toit.
>
> Hun-Tan. Il pleuvait, mais ton Wang marchait déjà et il y aura quatre ans de cela au printemps et non pas cinq, c'était quelques jours après le départ de Ten.[124]

Further on in the same scene

> Hun-Tan. C'est l'âne de Mio-Wan qui se demande ce qui s'est passé cette nuit. Beaucoup de choses se sont passées! Il brait encore une fois. Tu as entendu ? Quand le soleil sera sorti il cessera de braire.
>
> Wou-Long. Le soleil ne se décide pas à sortir.[125]

Vinaver plays with the unreliability of Western time (here expressed by the use of 'years') as the characters in question appear more reliant upon the natural events (the rain) than how much 'clock' time has passed since the event in question. Further to this, the response from Wou-Long echoes the kind of understanding a *colon*, imposing a Western time structure, would retort when the idea of the sun having agency was expressed. Not only does this perspective refuse to give agency or importance to nature as a means of tracking time, it also suggests an

[121] Ibid.
[122] Giordano Nanni, *The Colonisation of Time: Ritual, Routine and Resistance in the British Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), p. 3.
[123] Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (London: Penguin, 2006 [1958]).
[124] Michel Vinaver, *Les Coréens* (1986 [1956]), p. 21.
[125] Ibid., p. 22. The references to the sun could also be a *clin d'œil* to the Algerian context and the Maghreb more widely: 'Maghreb' meaning 'where the sun sets' in Arabic.

anthropocentric view of nature with human perspective at the centre of everything and superior to natural cycles, another feature of European colonialism. As Alain Ruscio argues, the goal of colonialism was to tame nature.[126]

Although Vinaver does seem to be using 'natural time' as a means of critiquing imperialist impositions of clock-time, Johannes Fabian argues that this approach can also be considered to further entrench differences between coloniser and colonised: 'anthropology's efforts to construct relations with its Other by means of temporal devices implied affirmation of difference as *distance*.'[127] However, this could also be a Marxist critique given that writers such as E.P. Thompson pointed out how, similar to the colonised, 'early factory workers were disciplined into internalising a vision of time which no longer relied on the categories of sun or season.'[128] Again, Vinaver's discourse is equivocal here, seeming to critique capitalism and colonialism simultaneously, although of course, these two phenomena are inter-linked.

Vinaver uses the Western character of Belair as a means of expressing these different approaches to time. Belair is reassured to see 'clock' time in scene XII when he is taken to the 'maison de Mio-Wan' by Wen-Ta:

> Belair. Celle-ci est donc ta fille? (*Silence.*) Donc toi tu es sa mère? (*Silence.*) Je te tire mon chapeau, tu as une fille comme ça. (*Silence.*) Je me mêle peut-être de ce qui ne me regarde pas? (*Silence.*) C'est vrai, si l'on veut. Une pendule. Elle marche. Made in Japan. Deux heures et demie. Tu ne peux pas savoir l'effet que ça me fait de voir l'heure. (*Silence.*)[129]

Belair's relief at seeing the time suggests the extent to which he feels out of place having been taken to the village of Hu-Won. The pauses between each sentence also seem to reflect beats in time, Belair pausing respectfully or perhaps reluctantly before speaking again after each sentence. By placing the 'soldat blanc' as he is referred to in the play, out of his 'natural habitat' (that of his battalion), Vinaver reverses the experience of the colonised who, for generations, was forced to adhere to Western notions of time and space. In the programme for the Planchon production he notes, 'c'est la pièce entière qui doit chercher à figurer dans son progrès l'avènement d'un "temps neuf" d'un monde délivré de tout process, ouvert à tout mouvement.'[130] This would seem to reject the European model of time as teleological and progressive, as historian David Landes points out:

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[126] Alain Ruscio, 'Literature, Song, and the Colonies (1900-1920)', in Pascal Blanchard, et al. (eds.), *Colonial Culture in France since the Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 106-115 (p. 110).
[127] Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), p. 16.
[128] E. P. Thompson cited in Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship* (1991), p. 21.
[129] Michel Vinaver, *Les Coréens* (1986 [1956]), p. 66.
[130] BnF file 4-COL-124(4) Michel Vinaver in the programme for 1956 production of *Les Coréens* by Roger Planchon.

> the invention of the mechanical clock towards the end of the Middle Ages, was one of the technological advances that turned Europe from a weak, peripheral, and highly vulnerable outpost of Mediterranean civilization into a hegemonic aggressor; and *which made possible, for better or for worse, a civilisation attentive to the passage of time, hence to productivity and performance*.[131]

By enforcing the same time upon colonised communities, the West was able to maximise productivity and dismiss existent practices of time-telling as part of an 'uncivilised society'.[132]

But the imposition of time did not stop at the use of clocks or the advent of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), it fed into the daily working routines of individuals. As Jansen notes, 'the installation of Big Ben in the centre of London symbolized the new mechanized conception of time.'[133] This imposition of one, homogenised way of telling time imposed a discipline into Western society that could be manipulated into capital gains for factory owners. *Le quotidien*, or daily life, was also essential to colonial rule as it enabled a regulated working week but also ensured that Sunday, the Sabbath, was respected so that the Christianisation of colonial populations could be maintained.

We have already seen the importance of *le quotidien* in reference to Edgar Morin and Jean Rouch's 1961 film *Chronique d'un été* in which we follow several characters going about their daily life, especially their work routines in places such as factories. However, prior to this, Rouch produced the 1959 film *Moi, un noir*; a kind of pseudo-documentary which follows the daily lives of several young Nigerien migrants in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Each part of the week is documented via words which flash up on the screen in between takes: 'le lundi', 'le vendredi', 'le samedi' and 'le dimanche'.[134] *Moi, un noir* has been described as 'ethno-fiction' by Laure Astourian and she argues that Jean-Luc Godard was so influenced by the film that he decided to use similar techniques but on French 'subjects' in his film *A bout de souffle*

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[131] David Landes cited in Giordano Nanni in *The Colonisation of Time: Ritual, Routine and Resistance in the British Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), p. 2. (My emphasis).

[132] By this I mean a society which had not yet been forced to participate in the 'civilising mission' that European colonial powers took it upon themselves to impose.

[133] Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship* (1991), p. 21.

[134] We see the characters travelling to work, working, having lunch, resting on the street after lunch, finishing their working day and then going home. We also see them 'letting off steam' at the weekend, drinking, going dancing and trying to meet women. It is of particular interest to note that, if we follow the chronology of the film, it would seem that the characters go out and drink (excessively) on the Sunday, followed by the scene where Robinson fights the 'Italian' on the Monday morning. This would suggest a subversion of the Western timetable in which Sunday is a 'holy' day or day of rest and the characters are therefore flouting the imposed Sabbath by drinking heavily. Furthermore, by placing the fight scene on Monday morning Rouch invites the spectator to participate in the Robinson's frustration at the life imposed on him in Abidjan, where he struggles to make a living, doing difficult, hard labour, moving 'sacs' in the sun. A key moment in the film is a fight between the central character of Robinson (an alias for actor and friend of Rouch's, Oumarou Ganda) and an Italian (played by André Lubin, Rouch's French sound technician). Justin Izzo, 'Narrative, contingency, modernity: Jean Rouch's *Moi, un Noir* (1958)', *International Journal of Francophone Studies*, 14.1-2 (2011) 205-220 (p. 213).

(1960).[135] Vinaver, several years earlier than Godard, makes a similar transition when he moves from focusing on Korean daily life during wartime, to writing his next two plays *Les Huissiers* (1957) and *Iphigénie Hôtel* (1959). These plays turn the camera (or in this case, the theatrical focus) from abroad (Korea) to France, and invites the audience to look at themselves, through an ethnographic lens. Neither of these plays were staged at their time of writing, suggesting a wilful repression of criticism of French society and government.

Alienation, Polyphonic readings and *Le quotidien*

Les Huissiers sees Vinaver turning his attention to France, all the while strengthening the *multidirectional* approach to history mentioned above. However, here, instead of Korea, he uses the *cadre* of a Greek drama to illustrate the hypocrisy of those in power, the violence taking place in Algeria, modernisation and aesthetic trends pertaining to hairstyles. The question of history and remembering resurges constantly in the play, only to fall back, polyphonically, into menial discussions surrounding daily activities. The elements of the play concerning decolonisation are therefore 'watered down' compared with *Les Coréens*, no doubt in an effort to avoid censorship, albeit an unsuccessful one given that the play was not staged until 1980. However, the polyphonic format that the play takes can be read as an attempt to 'decolonise' theatrical discourse: moving away from the dominant univocal format of traditional theatre, as I argue here.

When I interviewed him, Vinaver admitted that *Les Huissiers* marked a change of direction in his writing as it is 'une pièce beaucoup plus sombre que *Les Coréens*.'[136] However, when the play was partially published in the March 1959 edition of the review *Théâtre Populaire*, it was subtitled as a 'comédie inédite en deux actes' suggesting an emphasis on the comic, or perhaps tragicomic, not seen in *Les Coréens*.[137] Nevertheless, when attempts were made to stage the play Vinaver encountered reluctance. In interview he explained:

> [Roger] Planchon avait annoncé l'intention de monter [*Les Huissiers*], mais cela lui a été 'déconseillé' par les autorités culturelles alors que les négociations battaient leur plein concernant sa nomination au Théâtre National Populaire, à Villeurbanne (banlieue de Lyon) dont l'installation était envisagée. Il n'y a pas eu de décision de censure, mais appelons ça des... pressions.[138]

Critic Emile Copfermann also picked up on this difficulty after having read the play:

[135] Laure Astourian, 'Jean Rouch's *Moi, un noir* in the French New Wave', *Studies in French Cinema*, 18.3 (2018) 252-266 (p. 257).
[136] Michel Vinaver interviewed by Rebecca Infield (23/09/2019).
[137] *Théâtre populaire*, March 1959, Number 29.
[138] Interview between Michel Vinaver and Rebecca Infield via email. (20/08/2018). David Bradby also notes that Planchon felt he could not take the risk of staging *Les Huissiers* given his recent move to the large theatre in Villeurbanne. David Bradby, *The Theatre of Michel Vinaver* (1993), p. 20.

> Ecrite dans une langue claire, directe, efficace, sans ces schématismes qui guettent l'œuvre de 'circonstance', en évitant *l'écueil du manichéisme*, [un] découpage épique, la 'comédie' sur un sujet d'actualité de Michel Vinaver devrait connaître un accueil favorable du public. Mais faudrait-il trouver quelqu'un qui osât la monter.[139]

Unfortunately, no one dared stage the show until 1980 when it was put on in Lyon and directed by Gilles Chavassieux from the 22 of April to the 24 of May. Thus, although it did not receive the same 'hard' censorship, as with *Les Coréens*, there certainly was a reluctance to stage it and 'pressures', similar to those experienced by Gaskill and Johnstone in the last chapter, were used to discourage potential directors away from Vinaver's work.

Les Huissiers takes place in the 'ministère de la Défense nationale' and tracks the everyday goings on between the staff and politicians at work. The play frequently makes reference to 'les événements' in Algeria but this is interspersed with comments concerning an ongoing battle between 'les cheveux courts' and 'les cheveux longs'. Further to this, there are several references to World War Two and the Nazi occupation (especially torture). These multiple layers of action and focus within the play speak to the concept of polyphony, and Bradby's assertion that 'Vinaver ne se laissera pas facilement réduire à un message.'[140]

Said writes, again in relation to Camus's *L'Etranger*, that polyphony is an essential part of contrapuntal reading: it allows for both Meursault and the 'voiceless Arab' to be heard. Polyphony is defined by Said as:

> In the counterpoint of Western classical music, *various themes play off one another, with only a provisional privilege being given to any particular* one; *yet in the resulting polyphony there is concert and order, an organized interplay that derives from the themes, not from a rigorous melodic or formal principle outside the work*. In the same way, I believe, we can read and interpret English novels, for example, whose engagement (usually suppressed for the most part) with the West Indies or India, say, is shaped and perhaps even determined by the specific history of colonization, resistance, and finally native nationalism. At this point alternative or new narratives emerge, and they become institutionalized or discursively stable entities.[141]

Henri Lefebvre, writing about James Joyce's work, also notes the importance and effects of taking a polyphonic approach: 'Joyce travaille sur une matière: le langage écrit. Il la travaille pour la rendre polyphonique, pour qu'elle recueille et accueille la parole, pour que le lecteur entende sous l'écrit, à travers le discours scripturaire, la parole du Sujet et les multiples connotations de la subjectivité'.[142] Although Lefebvre and Said are writing in reference to a style employed mainly in novels, the same principle of employing a polyphonic approach also

[139] BNF file 4 COL-124 (15,1) Emile Copfermann 'Une pièce sur l'Algérie' *France observateur* (24/04/1958). My emphasis.

[140] David Bradby, 'La Réalité, la scène et leur rapport' (1994), p. 177.
[141] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1993), p. 51.
[142] Henri Lefebvre *La Vie quotidienne dans le monde moderne - Tome 3* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1968), p. 14. My emphasis.

applies to Vinaver's theatre. In fact, Vinaver's theatre has often been compared with novel writing, Antoine Vitez claiming 'Je me sens devant votre pièce comme devant un roman' after reading *Iphigénie Hôtel*.[143] This polyphonic form allows for several themes to be addressed at once.

Building on the deconstruction of time explored in *Les Coréens, Les Huissiers* and *Iphigénie Hôtel* (explored below) further critique daily rituals and every day activities or banalities. The analysis of *le quotidien* was not new to the post-World War Two era. Simone Weil's *Journal d'usine (1934-1935)* documented her life as an 'intellectuelle à l'usine' whilst working for the car manufacturer Renault over a period of sixteen weeks. During this study she concluded that this kind of work had the result (and is perhaps intended to) make the *ouvriers* forget themselves and their ability to think entirely:

> L'épuisement finit par me faire oublier les raisons véritables de mon séjour en usine, rend presque invincible pour moi la tentation la plus forte que comporte cette vie: celle de ne plus penser, seul et unique moyen de ne pas en souffrir. C'est seulement le samedi après-midi et le dimanche que me reviennent des souvenirs, des lambeaux d'idées, que je me souviens que je suis aussi un être pensant.[144]

This 'épuisement' which disallowed workers the ability to think and create, relates directly to the Marxist concept of alienation. This is sometimes referred to as 'estrangement' but very generally pertains to the idea that through excessive working, human beings become distanced from their own humanity. Alienation is key to Lefebvre's work *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, published over three volumes (1947, 1961, 1968) as he argues that in a capitalist economy, 'consciousness of alienation is short-circuited through ideologies of consumption. Satisfaction is promised in the act of consumption. Happiness is defined as the joy of consuming.'[145]

In *Les Huissiers* the character of Paidoux recounts his own experiences with 'les usines inhumaines' which saw him 'coule le métal en fusion' and learn 'la solidarité des travailleurs du monde entier.'[146] This is no doubt a reference to the 'Union générale des travailleurs d'Afrique noire' established in 1957 (the year the play was written) by the first president of independent Republic of Guinea, Ahmed Sékou Touré.[147] Although it is probably also a reference to the idea of socialist internationalism which saw a resurgence in the post-war era.[148] Therefore, as established, Vinaver's critique is both anti-capitalist and anti-colonial, intended

[143] IMEC file VNV Letter from Antoine Vitez to Michel Vinaver (11/011963).
[144] Simone Weil, *La Condition ouvrière* (Paris: Folio essais, 1951), p. 45.
[145] Arthur Hirsh, *The French New Left: An Intellectual History from Sartre to Gorz* (Boston: South End Press, 1981), p. 99.
[146] Michel Vinaver, *Les Huissiers* (1998), p. 202.
[147] For more on the movement and the figure of Touré see: Angie Epifano,'The Image of Sékou Touré: Art and the Making of Postcolonial Guinea' in Charlotte Baker and Hannah Grayson (eds.), *Fictions of African Dictatorship: Postcolonial Power Across Genres*, (Oxford: Peter Lang 2018), pp. 13-36.
[148] See for instance: Jan De Graaf, *Socialism across the Iron Curtain: Socialist Parties in East and West and the Reconstruction of Europe after 1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

to speak to both colonised and metropolitan French workers oppressed by capitalism and colonialism and the need to overcome this alienation imposed via hard labour. The speech by Paidoux continues, 'j'ai compris que pour lutter il fallait connaître. Chancelant de fatigue le soir je me rendais à l'école du soir.' We learn that after being in 'Alger' and then fighting the Germans 'sur la frontière belge' he was 'decoré par Weygand.' The speech concludes with 'la vie politique est une grosse meule qui […] émousse les souvenirs de ceux qui la font tourner.'[149] Here, more overtly than in *Les Coreéns,* Vinaver criticises the ruling political classes for 'forgetting' the events of World War Two whilst, in the same speech, delivering an anti-colonial and anti-capitalist message and the alienation imposed on workers by capitalism: a truly polyphonic overlapping of themes but with the main goal of critiquing French imperialism.

Aside from its Marxist usage, the concept of alienation is famously associated with the German dramatist Bertolt Brecht. Brecht's concept aimed to 'combat the process of "free" association and to prevent the spectator becoming "immersed" in the events on the stage' via several theatrical devices.[150] These include a non-Aristotelian conceptualisation of time, projecting film or images onto the stage, breaking the 'fourth wall' (speaking directly to the audience), chorus/song and an emphasis on the actors avoiding any kind of 'sentimentalization'.[151] Instead the actors must 'do all they can to make their presence felt in between the audience and the incident. This *making-one's-presence-felt* also contributes to the desired effect of indirect impact.'[152]

Vinaver's relationship with Brecht is a complicated one, as David Bradby has explored, the press often tried to categorise his work as Brechtian but Vinaver refused this label.[153] *Les Huissiers* and *Iphigénie Hôtel* both make use of the *le quotidien* by depicting the everyday workings of a governmental ministry and a touristic hotel respectively. Thus, I suggest, that by turning his attention to the situation in France, Vinaver creates a form of alienation but instead of breaking the 'fourth wall' as Brecht does, he uses *polyphony* to render the audience complicit in the violence discussed onstage. As Bradby notes, 'à la différence de Brecht et de la plupart des auteurs politiques, Vinaver refuse la dimension eschatologique. Ses pièces ne racontent pas des histoire de luttes réussies […] elles refusent le mouvement linéaire au profit d'une

[149] Michel Vinaver, *Les Huissiers* (1998), p. 202
[150] Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*, eds. Marc Silverman, Steve Giles and Tom Kuhn (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015 [1964]), translt. by John Willett, p. 102.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid., pp. 98-99.
[153] David Bradby, 'La Réalité, la scène et leur rapport' (1994).

construction à couches multiples […] elles [observent] plusieurs perspectives à la fois.'[154] This polyphony is achieved through a number of on-stage devices including the presence of an Aristotelian-style chorus. These 'huissiers' who are present throughout the play provide both a musically polyphonic aspect but also serve as a means of imposing an alienation effect:

> 4e HUISSIER. Je suis le témoin.
>
> 3e HUISSIER. Décoré.
>
> 2e HUISSIER. Affairé.
>
> 1er HUISSIER. Minutieux.
>
> 5e HUISSIER. Silencieux.
>
> 4e HUISSIER. Des scènes de la vie suivez-moi c'est par là.
>
> 3e HUISSIER. La vie de tous les jours par ici par ici.
>
> 2e HUISSIER. Les jours où se joue je vous prie c'est par là
>
> 1er HUISSIER. Ah se joue se joue suivez-moi suivez-moi. [155]

The unnamed but numbered 'huissiers' recall the depersonalised names given to the soldiers in *Les Coréens.* In *Les Coréens* this works to make the audience identify less with characters named 'Lhomme' or 'Lhorizon' whereas the Koreans are given individual names and therefore identities. However, here the numbers attributed to the *huissiers* suggests a desire not to give preference or prominence to any particular voice in the play and reflect the idea of seeing employees, not as individuals, but as numbers to be exploited for profit. They are interchangeable bodies without differential characteristics by which to identify them. They also serve to testify ('témoin') the events taking place on stage, a way of remembering the violence and actions of the French government.

The reference to 'la vie de tous les jours' anchors the audience in the present and returns us to the idea of *le quotidien.* Brecht underlined the importance of using chorus on stage as a means of achieving alienation and, similarly to Jean Rouch's voiceovers during *Moi, un noir*, this serves to remind the audience that they are not simply passive spectators of a show:

> To combat the process of 'free' association and to prevent the spectator becoming 'immersed' in the events on stage, small choruses can be positioned around the auditorium to demonstrate the correct attitude to the spectators and invite them to form opinions, call upon their own experience, and exercise control. *Choruses like this appeal to the pragmatist in the spectator*. They call on spectators to free themselves from the world represented on stage and from representation itself.[156]

[154] Bradby argues that Vinaver's theatre follows the patterns of Vinaver's uncle, the academic Eugene Vinaver. Eugene claimed that theatre could be divided into two categories: plays which could easily be summarised such as *Bérénice*, easily summed up by Racine and in the second category, plays which require more explanation and carry several themes and plots simultaneously. David Bradby, 'La Réalité, la scène et leur rapport' (1994), pp. 178-180.
[155] Michel Vinaver, *Les Huissiers* (1986 [1998]), p. 189.
[156] Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*, (2015 [1964]), p. 102.

Rancière goes one step further than Brecht stating that, 'Le spectateur […] agit, comme l'élève ou le savant. Il observe, il sélectionne, il compare, il interprète. *Il lie ce qu'il voit à bien d'autres choses qu'il a vues sur d'autres scènes, en d'autres sortes de lieux*. Il compose son propre poème avec les éléments du poème en face de lui.'[157] This notion of applying what one has seen in other circumstances outside of the theatre or in other plays echoes our understanding of 'polyphony': each individual spectator interpreting the onstage events in their own way and not needing to be told what they should decipher from the play. This is evident in *Iphigénie Hôtel* which sees the same scenes take place twice but told from two or three different perspectives, as explored further below. Here, although not situated around the theatre, the presence of the chorus/'huissiers' on stage and their repetitive reminders about 'la vie de tous les jours' or *le quotidien* aims to keep the spectator alienated and alert from falling back into believing that what they are watching is entirely fictional; in a similar way to Paidoux's calls to 'connaître' as a means of avoiding the alienation imposed via hard labour and capitalism.

At the play's opening, we learn that the minister is sleeping at the office 'à cause de la situation', no doubt another euphemism for the war in Algeria:

> 2e HUISSIER. Il y couche, notre ministre.
>
> […]
>
> 4e HUISSIER. Il se débarbouille dans notre lavabo.
>
> LES HUISSIERS A L'UNISSON (*scandé, martelé*). Le ministre de la Défense nationale.[158]

From the start of the play, everyday activities, work and home life are mixed together. Later in the same scene we see the minister enter 'en robe de chambre' whilst discussing how to manage to the situation in Algeria: war is interspersed with every-day, routine activities:

> PAIDOUX. Encore faudrait-il que les fellaghas comprennent […] Tout mon plan de la journée qui s'écroule comme un château de cartes
>
> […]
>
> TIGON. N'avez-vous pas vous-même poussé monsieur Letazine à le nommer ministre résident?
>
> PAIDOUX. Du caractère. Un cerveau. Une fatalité. A peine installé à Alger, les colons ont su l'enjôler. Le retourner.
>
> *Mademoiselle Simène est entrée, elle s'est installée à son bureau face à madame Tigon et elle a sorti de ses tiroirs un certain nombre d'objets et de papiers.*
>
> TIGON. Vous devriez aller vous raser, vous habiller.

[157] Jacques Rancière, *Le Spectateur émancipé* (Paris: La Fabrique, 2008), p. 19.
[158] Michel Vinaver, *Les Huissiers* (1986 [1998]), p. 147.

> SIMÈNE. Vous avez vu dans la presse du matin ce massacre? C'est dégoûtant.
>
> PAIDOUX. Montrez.
>
> SIMÈNE. Vous avez bien dormi?[159]

The massacre mentioned here is referred to later in the text as Zéboula, a thinly veiled reference to the massacre de Melouza.[160] Similar to the dark humour of the monument scene in *Les Coréens*, this section also works to make the audience complicit in the massacre mentioned above. However, here the emphasis is on the *le quotidien*: the placement of everyday objects and activities such as a dressing-gown, shaving, dressing and sleeping makes the scene feel incongruent, however, it also normalises the atrocities taking place in Algeria. Furthermore, the use of such familiar objects and activities ensures that there is an 'impact that bridges all social and other differences between individuals.'[161] These commonplace phenomena therefore create a 'common humanity' shared by all listeners in the theatre, as desired by Brecht.[162]

The incongruence of these items also has the desired effect of 'making the familiar strange' and thus pointing a lens at our own habits and routines, leaving our behaviours open for ethnographic study. Lefebvre argues that the use of everyday objects had the same effect in the early films of Charlie Chaplin who took up battles with everyday objects. Chaplin was,

> always surprised, always delighted by the strangeness and richness of things, always awkward when faced with ritualized practices (essential behaviour, necessary conditioning) […] He comes as a stranger into the familiar world, […] *Suddenly he disorientates us, but only to show us what we are when faced with objects: and these objects become suddenly alien, the familiar is no longer familiar*.[163]

The practice of torture during the Algerian War of Independence used commonplace objects to carry out horrific atrocities, making familiar items suddenly become threats. In scene three of *Les Huissiers* we see Letaize and Paidoux reminisce about their time in the Resistance and their torture at the hands of the Germans:

> LETAIZE. Ça m'a fait quelque chose, de t'entendre évoquer ces anciens souvenirs. Te rappelles-tu que cette même nuit où nous avons été ramassés par la Gestapo…
>
> PAIDOUX. Nous nous sommes trouvés nez à nez dans la petite pièce attendant à *la baignoire…*
>
> LETAIZE. Et nous nous demandions, chacun de notre côté, qui de nous deux avait le plus peur, pas de *la baignoire*, mais de l'effet qu'aurait sur l'autre *la baignoire*?

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[159] Ibid., 156-157.
[160] Martin Evans, *Algeria: France's Undeclared War* (2012), pp. 216-217. This took place in 1957, the year the play was written, and saw the brutal murder of around 300 villagers in Melouza. The perpetrators of this violence remain unclear as Evans notes, 'internationally the FLN laid the blame on the French' however the French used it as an excuse to align the actions of the FLN with the Nazi massacre at Oradour, during the Occupation.
[161] Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre* (2015 [1964]), p. 103.
[162] Ibid., p. 104.
[163] Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life: The One-Volume Edition*, transl. John Moore (London: Verso, 2014 [1991]), , p. 32.

PAIDOUX. Ces choses-là, on ne les oublie pas.

LETAIZE. Crois-tu vraiment? Au contraire, on les oublie.[164]

The mention of 'la baignoire' here is referring to the torture method of 'waterboarding', a practice commonplace both during World War Two and the Algerian War of Independence.[165] Thus, an everyday object such as a bath, becomes a dangerous tool used for harm.

Letaize's admission that this is an experience that can be forgotten, refers to the fact that some of those carrying out torture in Algeria had been tortured by the Nazis during World War Two.[166] It also returns us to the question of memory, Vinaver, more fervently here, accusing the French government of conveniently 'forgetting' their role in the French Resistance and replicating the same Nazi behaviours in Algeria via the use of *le quotidien.* Vinaver also includes a scene with 'Madame Aiguedon', intended to represent the wife of Maurice Audin. The doctoral student was killed by French forces 'au cours d'une tentative d'évasion' as both Vinaver and the official reports of the press reported it.[167] This euphemism was a way of covering up the fact that Audin was tortured to death by the French army, a fact only recognised as the 'true story' by president Emmanuel Macron in 2018. The repetition of 'je suis le témoin' uttered by different 'huissiers' throughout the play reinforces this emphasis on memory and witnessing. Vinaver's second original play acts as a historical document which serves to remind the French audience of the violence in Algeria: the theatre becomes a site of memory. However, it transcends the era in which it was written and can be applied to different historical, geographical and political contexts, as Vinaver noted to me:

> *Les Huissiers* par exemple, on est toujours dans *Les Huissiers* aujourd'hui. Le fonctionnement du pouvoir reste…le pouvoir tel que nous le connaissons aujourd'hui…la pièce garde son actualité. Il m'arrive assez souvent que des gens me disent aujourd'hui, tient ça c'est *Les Huissiers*, la façon dont ça se passe.[168]

Polyphony works to present several points of view, overlapping themes and adds a musicality to the play which serve to alienate the audience and, to recall the words of Barthes, 'prendre conscience d'une inconscience', here being the repeating patterns of violence inflicted first on the French and now by the French on Algerians. These tactics can be seen as attempts to avoid censorship, mixing several messages, themes and historical periods together, in a similar way

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[164] Michel Vinaver, *Les Huissiers* (1986 [1998]), p. 182. (My emphasis).

[165] For more on practices of torture during the Algerian War of Independence see: Raphaëlle Branche *La Torture et l'armée pendant la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001). Branche also notes the use of everyday items such as the telephone used as tools for torture. [Page number unavailable].

[166] Sylvie Thénault and Raphaëlle Branche, 'Le Secret sur la torture pendant la guerre d'Algérie', *Matériaux Pour l'histoire de Notre Temps*, 58.1 (2000) 57-63 (p. 63).

[167] Michel Vinaver, *Les Huissiers* (1986), p. 186. For more on the reporting of the 'fictious evasion' see: François-René Julliard, 'Le Comité Maurice Audin: S'organiser contre la Torture', *Le Mouvement Social*, 267.2 (2019), 63-79 (p. 66).

[168] Michel Vinaver interviewed by Rebecca Infield (23/09/2019).

to Arden's use of nineteenth century imperialism to denounce British decolonisation violence. Here, Vinaver uses the recent Nazi atrocities to denounce French violence in Algeria. This mixing of time periods, and in Vinaver's case, themes, reflects Holquist's aforementioned idea that censors try to 'fix meaning', which Vinaver clearly refuses. The play's themes and polyphonic form also deny 'univocal' discourses imposed by nationalism, presenting history as *multidirectional*.

Iphigénie Hôtel: An Uncivil War

Iphigénie Hôtel met the same long delay in staging as *Les Huissiers* , waiting until March 1977 to be staged at the Centre Georges Pompidou and directed by Antoine Vitez. As Vinaver explains:

> Planchon était bien décidé à la monter, et puis le projet s'est enlisé, prenant le chemin des *Huissiers*. Sans que jamais une raison claire m'en soit donnée. Disons que les deux pièces étaient déplaisantes à l'Etat qui était embourbé dans le conflit algérien.[169]

But this was not for want of trying. Several letters indicate that Vinaver had sent the play's script to his contacts around Europe including the then director of the Royal Court Theatre in London, George Devine, already mentioned in the previous chapter of this thesis. Devine writes,

> il y a longtemps que vous avez eu la gentillesse de m'envoyer une copie de votre pièce *Iphigénie Hôtel* avec un message de sympathie. Je vois, en effet, que c'est écrit en Anglais so I can change language and thank you in English for your very kind thought and for the pleasure of reading the play as well. Has it been translated into English yet? I should like to see it, if so.[170]

This friendly and bilingual letter from an important figure in the London theatre scene suggests Vinaver had been keen to stage the play outside of Paris as a means of circumventing French censorship, however when I interviewed him, he claimed he had not thought about making changes to the play or staging it abroad.[171] This rather contradicts Catherine Brun's detailed work on *Iphigénie Hôtel* which documents how during a re-writing of the play in 1960 Vinaver deliberately removes more overt references to the Algerian War of Independence in order to make the parallels between onstage and current events less evident: a very obvious case of self-censorship.[172] This denial of self-censorship resonates somewhat with Reckord's remembering

[169] Michel Vinaver interviewed by Rebecca Infield via email. (20/08/2018).
[170] IMEC file VNV 72.4 Letter from Georges Devine to Vinaver (30/12/1963).
[171] Response to the question: 'Pour *Iphigénie Hôtel*, est-ce que, avec Planchon, vous avez considéré des changements/des façons de monter la pièce en France en évitant la censure? Ou à l'étranger?' Michel Vinaver: 'Certainement pas.' Michel Vinaver interviewed by Rebecca Infield via email. (20/08/2018).
[172] Catherine Brun, 'Michel Vinaver: Iphigénie Hôtel et l'utopie de l'objet théâtral', *Genesis (Manuscrits-Recherche-Invention)* 26.1 (2005) 71-90 (p. 84). See in particular the replacement of the word 'parachutistes' with 'jeunesse'.

of his casting process for *Skyvers* and the crossed out sections of an interview concerning this subject, many years after the initial production. Vinaver's letter to Devine also underlines the interconnectedness of theatre movements across the Channel in addition to the aforementioned staging of the Arden/Brook staging in Paris. This method of staging plays abroad to avoid censorship in France is explored further in the next chapter where Kateb Yacine's play was staged in Brussels in 1958.

In contrast to *Les Huissiers*, political events are not the continuous focus of *Iphigénie Hôtel*, they enter in and out of conversation and hearing, often interrupting the dialogue via reports on the radio. Nevertheless, by using the reporting of contemporaneous events taking place in May 1958 in France, Vinaver is simultaneously able to denounce the use of torture in Algeria and encourage memories of the Holocaust and Nazi Occupation of France to reappear. This is achieved by building on the aforementioned polyphony of the onstage dialogues in which we see daily activities taking the fore, furthering the use of *le quotidien* to alienate the French audience. As Vinaver described in the notes for the play: 'Peut-être pourrait-on comparer la pièce à un volume en incessante transformation dont les pans se coupent et se reposent constamment à différents angles' which can only be achieved by 'le dispositif scénique [qui] devrait […] aider à éviter une structure en tableaux en multipliant les angles de vision, les ruptures.' [173] We witness the dissection of the on-stage events by different characters, almost constantly. To return to Jansen's idea of the 'univocal' discourse, here the approach is more than just 'equivocal' but polyphonic, going a step further than we have seen in Arden's, Brand's or perhaps even Reckord's work. It seems to foreshadow the use of screens to depict different perspectives in Kateb's work when staged by Jean-Marie Serreau, explored in the next chapter. Via this polyphony, Vinaver encourages the audience to question what a 'civilised society' really means, especially in the wake of revelations such as Henri Alleg's *La Question* (published by the Editions Maspero and confiscated by the French police in 1958) confirming the use of torture in Algeria.[174]

We have seen how by situating *Les Coreéns* in Korea, Vinaver intentionally made his criticism of the French government's actions in Algeria more ambiguous and also more universal. Camus described the play as being

> dépaysante à souhait, son mouvement est bon […] c'est du Brecht réussi, je veux dire sans la propagande et le didactisme germanique. Personnellement, c'est d'un autre théâtre que je rêve. Mais je salue et j'applaudis, de tout cœur, votre succès.[175]

[173] IMEC file VNV 72.4, notes for *Iphigénie Hôtel.*
[174] Henri Alleg, *La Question* (Paris: Editions Maspero, 1958).
[175] Simon Chemama (ed.), *S'engager?* (2012). Letter from Albert Camus to Michel Vinaver (20/03/1956).

If *Les Coreéns* is 'dépaysante' then *Iphigénie Hôtel* (1959) has quite the opposite effect.[176] Despite also being set abroad in Mycenae, Greece, famous for having been a hub for Greek civilisation in the second millennium Before Christ, there is a familiarity in the everyday events of this touristic hotel and the staff and guests we find there. With a cast of over twenty actors including French, Greek and English characters, the focus here is Western and concerns these, on the whole, realistic but unlikeable individuals, reflecting Vinaver's desire to write a play which would 'montrer le réel sous forme négative'.[177] The critical lens, at first pointed at the audience and their complacency in *Les Coreéns*, then switched to focus on the government in *Les Huissiers,* here it returns to French contemporary society but with characters who are recognisable from everyday working life the play reading as an ethnographic study of French society.[178]

Thus, even if the form of the theatre and its focus adheres more to what Brecht would consider 'bourgeois theatre' with the construction of recognisably French, Greek and English characters with names such as Alain, Patrocle and Mr and Mrs Babcock, Vinaver is continuing to use the polyphonic approach seen in the previous two plays to distort any kind of linear or coherent plot progression. Here we also find alienation, working in this play by presenting the audience with familiar scenes (as well as Greek myths which would have been well-known amongst bourgeois theatre-goers of the late 1950s), but instead *refuses* to present easily drawn allegories or parallels with the situation in France in 1958. As Judith D. Suther has noted, 'instead of causing his characters […] to derive their reality from the myths evoked, he causes the myths to derive their reality from the characters.'[179]

First published in *Théâtre populaire* (number 39) in 1959, the play is set over three days: 'Les 26, 27 et 28 mai 1958', dates of great significance for the French state as they came in the aftermath of the attempted *coup d'état* by General Massu on the 13 May 1958. On 26/27 de Gaulle tried to persuade the Prime Minister Pierre Pflimlin to resign and on 28 May there was a mass demonstration in Paris organized by the Parti communiste français (PCF), in which de Gaulle was depicted as the new Maréchal Pétain.[180] These events subsequently saw the

[176] The play was the last to be written by Vinaver during this period. His next play *Par-dessus bord* was not written until ten years later in 1969.
[177] IMEC file VNV 72.4, notes for *Iphigénie Hôtel.*
[178] This is not the only time he examines the French in this way. He published an essay entitled *Les Français vus par les Français* (Paris: Editions Bernard Barrault, 1985) under the pseudonym Guy Nevers.
[179] Judith D. Suther, 'The Medium Is Not the Message: Myth in Vinaver's Iphigénie Hôtel', *The French Review,* XLV.6 (1972) 1106-1116 (p. 1107).
[180] Pétain was head of state during the Nazi Occupation of France and collaborated with the German forces. He also oversaw France's role in the Holocaust. For a detailed account of the complex events of May 1958 see Martin Evan's section on 'May 1958 Crisis and Return of de Gaulle' in *France's Undeclared War* (2012), pp. 231-236.

dissolution of the Fourth Republic, the return to power of Charles de Gaulle and the establishment of the Fifth Republic. Historians such as Martin Evans and Grey Anderson have considered these events as a 'guerre civile' within the French Republic.[181] Evans also argues that it was a carefully curated image of De Gaulle as the leader of the French Resistance during the Occupation that gave him the legitimacy to take power.[182] Thus, the setting of Vinaver's play in Greece is far from coincidental, given that the Greeks had endured their own civil war from 1946 to 1949, suggesting a parallel with the events of 1958 in France. In addition to this, the Greek setting works to mock Western 'civilised' society throughout the play, challenging the Eurocentric assumption that the 'origins' of civilization were founded in Greece and not Africa, an idea propagated by colonialism.[183] Via an overall sense of destitution and dilapidation in the décor of the hotel, it also works to signal the 'decay' of Western morality in light of the revelations of France's use of torture in Algeria.

Iphigénie Hôtel was initially entitled *Les Mycéniens* and subsequently *Les Spectres* reinforcing Vinaver's intention for the play to draw links between past and present.[184] The play opens with the death of the hotel's manager Oreste, suggesting the end of an era and the start of a new 'reign' of power amongst the staff. This is embodied in the character of the Frenchman Alain, whose desire to take power is hardly concealed. It is Alain who instructs the two maids Laure and Pierrette to clean Oreste's room not with 'l'eau de Javel' but instead with 'formol' because 'où que j'aille, j'en emporte une bouteille.'[185] Formol, is defined as being a 'solution aqueuse d'aldéhyde formique, employée comme désinfectant et comme conservateur des tissus en laboratoire'[186], formaldehyde in English. Thus, not only is there a desire to wash away or clean the past, but to preserve it as something to be observed and examined. As Todd Shepard points out, with the arrival of de Gaulle to power in 1958, the decolonising of Algeria became a *fait accompli*. The French considered the events as 'an unfortunate colonial detour', erasing the fact that they had claimed that Algeria was a part of France since 1830 and sought to wash away this past via a means of 'intentional forgetting.'[187] By insisting on the use of 'formol' and not bleach, Vinaver seems to be reminding the audience of the need to preserve history and

[181] See: Grey Anderson, *La Guerre civile en France, 1958-1962* (Paris: La Fabrique, 2018) and Martin Evans, *France's Undeclared War* (2012).
[182] Martin Evans, *France's Undeclared War* (2012), p. 236.
[183] Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media (2nd ed.)* (2014), pp. 55-57.
[184] IMEC file VNV 72.4, notes for *Iphigénie Hôtel.*
[185] Michel Vinaver, *Iphigénie Hôtel* (Arles: Actes Sud, 2003), p. 101.
[186] Larousse: search 'formol' https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/formol/34663?q=formol#34624 [first accessed 06/05/2020].
[187] Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization* (2008), pp. 2-11.

recent memories of violence and not wash them away. An important element of this dark moment of France's history that needed to be 'forgotten' and censored, was of course torture, carried out in a way to 'leave no traces', both on its victims and on French society.[188]

Vinaver's references to torture in *Iphigénie Hôtel* are less obvious than in *Les Huissiers*. The 'gouvernante' Emilie mentions 'Je lui tordrai le cou, moi, à ce Massu' to which Alain responds with a wink, 'Attendez seulement qu'il ait fait son travail.'[189] Emilie's comment seems to make reference to the old-fashioned torture or execution device known as 'la garotte' which twisted the victim's neck until death. Alain's comment, however, appears to be a direct allusion to the torture taking place in Algeria which Henri Alleg describes in his testimony: 'Pendant qu'Érulin, Charbonnier et les autres s'occupaient de moi, le reste de l'équipe avait poursuivi son "*travail*" avec la planche et le magnéto disponibles.'[190] Alain's wink to the audience breaks the fourth wall but again makes the audience complicit in the joke as they are *aware* of the torture taking place in Algeria, as Alleg puts it, 'DANS LEUR NOM' at the end of his book.[191] Although censorship was in place in 1959 when Vinaver was writing the play, there was a consciousness of the torture taking place in Algeria with articles and in the press and accounts such as Alleg's circulating clandestinely.[192] Rothberg argues that it was not the official censorship which succeeded in eliminating the French public's awareness of the use of torture in Algeria, but that they were conditioned into not thinking about it.[193] Everyday concerns about work and the soar of modernisation, served as a distraction from the events in Algeria and arguably took over the capacity for resistance. Vinaver reflects this lack of focus in the play, as we see discussions alternating between the weather, relationships, personal objects, fashion and Greek myths to the backdrop of events unfolding in Paris and Algiers.

However, Vinaver, unlike his contemporaries Sartre and Beckett, does not lift passages or phrasing directly from Alleg's text and put them into his play, as he had done in *Les Huissiers* in reference to the disappearance of Audin.[194] Instead allusions to torture appear

[188] Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1995). In particular the chapter 'Hygiene and Modernisation', pp. 73-122.
[189] Michel Vinaver, *Iphigénie Hôtel* (2003), p. 78.
[190] Henri Alleg, *La Question* (Paris: Editions Maspero, 1958), p. 27.
[191] Ibid., p. 81.
[192] See: Barbara Vignaux, 'L'Agence France-Presse en guerre d'Algérie', *Revue d'histoire*, 83. 3 (2004), 121-130.
[193] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory* (2009), p. 216. In the next chapter I illustrate how Alleg's publication was circulated widely outside of France particularly in Belgium and in Switzerland.
[194] See: Emilie Morin, *Beckett's Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). Especially the chapter 'Turning Points' pp. 184-237. Sartre included a section of Alleg's account in the programme of his 1965 production of *Les Séquestrés d'Altona*: 'Il y a maintenant plus de trois mois que j'ai été arrêté. J'ai côtoyé durant ce temps tant de douleurs et tant d'humiliations que je n'oserais plus parler encore de ces journées et de ces nuits de supplices si je ne savais que cela peut être utile, que faire connaitre la vérité c'est aussi une manière d'aider aux cessez-le-feu et à la paix. Des nuits entières, durant un mois, j'ai entendu hurler

seemingly at random interspersed with every day activities and conversations: Laure is concerned about being condemned to 'les travaux forcés à perpétuité' and tells Pierrette 'attends de te faire passer à la question par un flic une nuit entière et tu verras. Ils interrogeront tout le monde ici.'[195] The mention of 'la question' is surely not an accident, referring to the title of Alleg's text. Further on in the same scene, Pierrette recounts how 'je lui [Jacques] ai bandé les yeux' again employing the language of torture but placing it in a context where it could also be interpreted as a kind of sexual game.[196] Given that at the play's close, Jacques disappears to join the 'paras', this scene would suggest a kind of pre-empting of Jacques future employment. Therefore, the implication of violence and torture from the authorities is present throughout the play, but it is not limited to Alleg's or the Algerian context alone. Instead, these references could be applied to events taking place at different points in history, or in different geographical locations, again opening up the possibility for *multidirectional* understanding.

However, Vinaver goes further than simply inserting references to torture within the play. He puts them in juxtaposition with the modernisation of French society and the aspiration to be more like the Americans. As Ross has pointed out, General Massu desired to create a kind of 'functional torture' for use in Algeria: 'something comparable to the medical interventions of a surgeon or dentist, as opposed to the premodern, "artisanal" torture practiced in other wars and thus far in Algeria.'[197] In *Iphigénie Hôtel* we witness the models, Judy and Yvette, appear on stage: 'leurs vêtements s'inspirent, d'aussi près que la pudeur l'autorise, des déesses au serpent des Cnossos, des fresques de Tirynth, des représentations féminines sur les bijoux crétois et mycéniens'.[198] These traditional costumes require the girls to 'partir de zéro…faut qu'elles rapprennent à mettre un pied devant l'autre, à s'asseoir. A regarder.'[199] Judy then explains 'J'ai du mal à respirer' to which the response is 'A respirer. Faudra réapprendre à respirer' before demanding 'Desserrez…Desserrez un peu ces baleines.'[200] This torturous scene which not only highlights the ridiculous nature of fashion, another aspect of the everyday, also resonates with Alleg's testimony of torture: 'Pour me forcer à obéir, il me serra les narines et, au moment où j'ouvrais la bouche pour *respirer*, il m'enfonça le fil dénudé très loin, jusqu'au fond du palais, tandis que Charbonnier mettait en branle le magnéto.'[201] At the end of

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des hommes que l'on torturait et leurs cris résonnent pour toujours dans ma mémoire. Alleg quoted in the programme of *Les Séquestrés D'Altona*, 1965, Théâtre de l'Athénée, BNF File 4-SW-1393

[195] Michel Vinaver, *Iphigénie Hôtel* (2003), p. 106.

[196] Ibid., p. 107.

[197] Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies* (1995), p. 118.

[198] Michel Vinaver, *Iphigénie Hôtel* (2003), p. 210.

[199] Ibid.

[200] Ibid., pp. 210-211.

[201] Henri Alleg, *La Question* (1958), p. 37.

Alleg's ordeal, just after hearing, who he presumes to be Audin executed, he stands by the window 'pour le plus longtemps possible *respirer* l'air de la nuit et voir les lumières de la ville.'[202] Therefore, by placing these two models who have to learn how to breathe again, in traditional Greek costume, Vinaver draws a parallel with the very real torture taking place in Algeria. Furthermore, the idea that these models need to 're-learn' how to walk and how to sit in these new costumes, also echoes the idea of re-integrating into society following the experience of torture. By using fashion as a distraction, Vinaver draws the audience's attention to torture, but without presenting it directly onstage.

Not only is torture made clinical, but cleanliness became an integral part of identity construction for France in the process of decolonisation. Ross explores France's new obsession with cleanliness as a means of defining itself as a 'modernised' nation, aspiring to be just as clean and shiny as America: 'if Algeria is becoming an independent nation, then France must become a modern nation: some distinction between the two must still prevail. France must, so to speak, clean [the] house; reinventing the home is reinventing the nation.'[203] Vinaver, working for the cosmetics company Gillette, would certainly have had an insider knowledge of this new market for cleanliness in France and America. His cynicism concerning the advertising of beauty and cleaning products is apparent in *Iphigénie Hôtel* as well as in *Les Huissiers*.[204]

The character of Patrocle, a local Greek 'muletier' is used by Vinaver in order to display the disdain and disgust the French employees Alain and Pierrette have for the local community and their hygiene. Patrocle is constantly being told that he smells, and this is therefore a reason for Alain to mistrust him:

> ALAIN: Il est toujours à traîner dedans et toujours et particulièrement du côté du garde-manger. C'est l'évidence même qu'il est de mèche avec la population du village […] Suffit de les [les gens du village] regarder pour voir qu'ils sont dégénérés sans principes, sans rien. Une fois qu'ils ont récolté leur tabac, qu'est-ce qu'ils font? Rien. Ils rodent dans leur guenilles, *ces loqueteux qui se lavent jamais. Le ventre vide, naturellement.* Alors? [205]

These tropes of dirtiness and laziness are rife in colonial literature and enable a differentiation to be made been the coloniser and the colonised.[206] This kind of racism serves to separate the 'modern' individual, from the 'unmodern' who continues to maintain

[202] Ibid., p. 79.
[203] Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies* (1995), p. 78.
[204] Particularly concerning the battle of long hair versus short hair on pp. 170-171.
[205] Michel Vinaver, *Iphigénie Hôtel* (2003), p. 122. (My emphasis).
[206] See for instance Benjamin Stora, 'Images of an Empire's Demise, in Pascal Blanchard, et al. (eds.), *Colonial Culture in France since the Revolution* (2013), 235-249 (p. 241).

'supposedly racial traits, such as laziness or filth'.[207] Vinaver seems to be partially re-creating the colonial situation by depicting the hierarchy of Western guests, French and Greek hotel staff as well as the local Greeks who are stereotyped and poorly treated. Although, in true *vinavérien* fashion, this could also be a critique of French society whereby Parisian elites look down upon French *paysans.*

Patrocle (or Patroclus in English) was one of the warriors at Troy who fought beside Achilles, suggesting an irony given that the character spends most of the play asleep on the floor. This could also be read as a counterfactual presentation of the European as lazy, subverting the colonial trop of the 'native' as lazy; a reflection on Western civilisation's lack of progress since the supposed flourishing and strength of Ancient Greece. Patrocle is the first character to enter the stage at the start of the play and yet he remains silent throughout except for one line at the end: 'Vive de Gaulle!', no doubt an ironic comment given Patrocle's associations with 'the old world' and the nostalgia apparent in his name.[208] Nevertheless, he is almost continuously present onstage, similar to the *huissiers*: a constant reminder of the situation in Algeria and just *who* Alain is referring to when he launches into his tirades about French superiority over local Greek traditions.

However, aside from Alain's disgust at Patrocle, Christophe, a fashion photographer, who comes to the hotel for a fashion shoot, takes a great interest in Patrocle. In scene four, 'l'œil au viseur de son Leica, il tourne lentement sur lui-même. Il s'accroupit. On entend un déclic au moment où le coin où se trouve Patrocle endormi entre dans son champ.'[209] Christophe's interest in Patrocle and taking his picture whilst he is asleep suggests a different perspective from that of Alain. Instead of outright disgust, there is curiosity but still from an 'othered' perspective. This is reflected by the use of a camera lens, objectifying Patrocle, and despite an interest taken in him, does not show him as an equal to Christophe the photographer turning him into a 'knowable object' synonymous with Orientalism.[210]

[207] Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies* (1995), p. 9.
[208] Michel Vinaver, *Iphigénie Hôtel* (2003), p. 135. Patrocle's only line comes at the end of the play and is pronounced when he is carried by the models Judy and Yvette 'en triomphe'. This follows a mock trial presided over by M. Veluze and which sees Patrocle and Laure tried in the place of Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus. The cast cries 'on acquitte' at the end of the 'trial'.
[209] Michel Vinaver, *Iphigénie Hôtel* (2003), p. 210.
[210] Said notes, 'Orientalism […] promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, "us") and the strange (the Orient, the East, "them"). Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin, 2019 [1978]), p. 43. See also: Paul Landau, 'Empires of the Visual: Photography and Colonial Administration in Africa' in Paul Landau and Deborah Kaspin (eds.), *Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*, (Berkley and London: University of California Press, 2002) pp. 141-162.

It is only at the play's close that we see Patrocle given any kind of agency, when he leans in to kiss the French character, Laure. But even then, he is used as a means for Laure to work out her own frustrations and impose her customs and beliefs upon him:

> Allez! Remue-toi! (*Elle se tient devant Patrocle et lui donne un coup de pied dans le mollet.)* […] Tu déplais à ses narines [de Alain]. Y a de quoi. Et puis, tu sais quoi? Tu dépares les lieux. Dans un hôtel bien, tu sers à rien. Faudra se débarrasser de toi. Voilà. Faudra se débarrasser de la petite Laure, aussi. Vous vous débraillez tous les jours un peu plus, Laure. Devriez prendre modèle sur Pierrette. […] Non on se débarrassera pas de Laure. Y a toujours de quoi lui faire faire. Fera la vaisselle. Fera le lit de m'sieu Alain et Madame Pierrette. Reniflera leurs draps. Videra leur pot. Tout le monde a le droit de gagner sa vie. Heureusement il y a des lois. (*Patrocle attire Laure à lui. Il l'embrasse avec toute la force et la douceur du monde. Laure n'est pas seulement consentante.*) Laure couchera à l'écurie. Avec Patrocle. Si Patrocle veut bien. (*Elle promène ses lèvres sur le visage de Patrocle.)* Elle lavera Patrocle…Si Patrocle veut bien…Lui raccommodera son pantalon…Lui chantera une chanson…(*Jacques est entré. L'apercevant, Laure se dégage, mais sans hâte et chantonne.*) Frère Jacques, frère Jacques…[211]

Laure's decision to sleep in the stable with Patrocle seems like a resignation, a defeat, not a choice that she makes willingly and that is only driven by her bitterness and jealously of Pierrette who has made a romantic and strategic alliance with Alain. Furthermore, Laure's desire to wash Patrocle, fix his trousers and sing to him is but a further example of an attempt to 'civilise' him. The use of the song 'Frère Jacques' again reinforces this as it is the typical song for teaching French to non-French speakers all over the world and therefore a means of colonial control. It is also infantilising, recalling the reviews of *Eleven Men Dead at Hola Camp*, seen in the second chapter of the thesis. Thus, Patrocle represents the submissive colonial upon whom the various frustrations, curiosities and desires of the coloniser are transferred onto. He acts as both a metaphorical (emotional) and physical punching ball for the French staff but with a name that represents strength and pride in European achievements, a counterfactual presentation of the everyday experience of the colonised.

This sense of superiority over the Greeks by the French hotel staff and guests, is maintained (largely by the character of Alain) throughout the play. Not only via Alain's disgust at Patrocle's smell but also his complaints about the food cooked by the Greek chefs in the hotel: 'Madame Hermione nous prépare un déjeuner spécial pour le retour [after Oreste's funeral.] Ceux qui disent qu'elle est mauvaise cuisinière, ça n'est pas vrai, suffit qu'elle veuille bien se donner la peine, elle est capable de mijoter un bon petit plat, je ne dis pas *un bon petit plat à la française, comme chez nous*.'[212] As Edward Said has pointed out: 'the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-

[211] Michel Vinaver, *Iphigénie Hôtel* (2003), p. 215.
[212] Michel Vinaver, *Iphigénie Hôtel* (2003), p. 149. (My emphasis).

European peoples and cultures.'[213] In this case, we are not seeing the imposition of a superiority over the Orient, as Said was exploring, but over the Greeks. By constructing a dynamic whereby the Greeks are viewed as 'less civilised' than the French, Vinaver is poking fun at the French mentality of the 'mission civilisatrice' because Greece and the Greeks are widely considered as being the founders of Western civilisation.

Furthermore, using his polyphonic staging device of 'entre-lacs', or characters speaking over one another and having different conversations simultaneously, Vinaver also reminds the audience of the inventions of the Greeks:

> PIERETTE. Madame Ellénore, dans ses salons de New York et de Los Angeles, pour les femmes les plus riches, qui peuvent vraiment payer, elle leur applique la formule, c'est que ça revient cher. Elle dit que les anciens Grecs, ils avaient tout inventé. Qu'on n'a jamais rien fait de mieux depuis. Ils avaient même inventé les poids et mesures.[214]

This juxtaposition between the old traditions of the Greeks against the new model of modernisation and femininity is striking. 'Ellénore' suggests a reference to the invention of the world-famous women's magazine 'Elle', founded in 1944 and which Ross points out 'played a leading role in disseminating and normalizing the state led modernization effort.'[215] The ancient Greeks' use of 'poids et mesures' certainly allowed for modernisation at the time of their invention and goes against Alain's incessant complaints about the Greek hotel staff's backwardness. If we assume that the Greeks here are representative of a generalised colonial 'other' this could also be a critique of the Eurocentric discourse which 'has systematically degraded Africa as deficient according to Europe's own arbitrary criteria (the presence of monumental architecture, literate culture) and hierarchies (melody over percussion, brick over thatch, clothing over body decoration).'[216] This discourse led to the ideological invention whereby anything African was considered as being 'inferior' thus suggesting that pre-colonial systems of metrics existed prior to the imposition of colonial systems.[217]

However, the question of 'civilisation' and what a 'civilised' society can be defined as does not remain as a simple French/Greek binary seen above. Vinaver opens up the question of what makes civilisation by, right at the play's beginning, making reference to concentration camps:

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[213] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (2019 [1978]), p. 7.
[214] Michel Vinaver, *Iphigénie Hôtel* (2003), p. 128.
[215] Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies* (1995), p. 79.
[216] Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (2014), p. 57
[217] Ibid. For more on the imposition of French metric systems in France's colonies see John J. McCusker, 'Les équivalents métriques des poids et mesures du commerce colonial aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles', *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer*, 61.224, (1974) 349-365. McCusker notes that 'à partir des années 1660, la loi imposait au colonies françaises l'usage des poids et mesures de Paris.' p. 350.

> MME LHOSPITALLIER. Mais non. Il y avait un article dans *Les Nouvelles littéraires* ou dans *Le Figaro littéraire*, où ils expliquaient comment ils comptaient faire revivre *l'origine de la civilisation*. *Quand on y pense c'est plutôt l'origine de toutes les horreurs qui ont abouti de nos jours aux camps de concentration.* Qu'est-ce qu'ils n'ont pas fait, dans les murs de ce palais. Passe encore pour les incestes et les assassinats. Mais ce qui m'est resté en travers, ce sont ces deux frères dont l'un a servi à l'autre un ragoût fait de la chair de ses propres enfants.[218]

By aligning the horrors of the concentration camps with those of, what we presume to be, the Greek myth of Thyestes whose sons were killed by Atreus and fed to him, Vinaver suggests a kind of *multidirectional* remembering of the history of humankind. However, by comparing the Holocaust to a story that is considered as a *myth* the whole notion of a 'civilised society' crumbles and exposes the meaninglessness of the need to 'civilise', just as the failure of France's colonial project in Algeria caused a *mise en question* of what it meant to be French.[219] Furthermore, by drawing parallels between a myth and a real historical event, Vinaver refutes the claim made by Ben-Gurion that the Holocaust is 'a unique event that has no equal' and to which comparisons cannot be made.[220] Vinaver's notes on the play are interesting here as they include a handwritten quote from a scholar named 'Thomson':

> Archaeology has put an end to the academic exception of many nineteenth century scholars, who dismissed the heroes and heroines of Greek legend as wholly unhistorical. It is now acknowledged that, however encrusted with fabulous accretion, these traditions contain in most cases a kernel of fact.[221]

Vinaver's refusal of a clear-cut reading of history is at its most apparent here. He could be suggesting that despite their fictional nature, Greek myths do retain an element of truth given their 'fabulous accretion' echoing Silverman's concept of 'palimpsestic memory' whereby historical events should not be considered on their own but as part of a wider, layered history.[222] The audience's perception of history is therefore challenged, calling into question the way in which national 'univocal', discourses about wars and historical events are constructed, in a similar way to Arden's deconstruction of the idea of the nation in *Serjeant Musgrave*. However, here, the polyphonic nature of the play uses comedy to imply the uncomfortable subject of the Holocaust: Mme Lhospitallier asking M. Sorbet, 'Mais votre femme, elle ne se sent pas bien?' returning the conversation to *le quotidien*.

[218] Michel Vinaver, *Iphigénie Hôtel* (2003), p. 42.
[219] Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization* (2008): 'faced with the collapse of efforts to keep Algeria French [the end of French rule in Algeria] challenged understandings that modern France, its form of government and its values offered a universal template for progress. Independence raised questions about what it meant to be French when France gave up trying to force Algerians to be French.' pp. 4-6.
[220] David Ben-Gurion cited in Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory* (2009), p. 176.
[221] IMEC file VNV 72.4, notes for *Iphigénie Hôtel.*
[222] Max Silverman, *Palimpsestic Memory* (2013), p. 28.

The recent and distant past encroaching on the present is also depicted on stage by the use of a 'livre d'or' or guestbook which M. and Mme. Sorbet take great interest in:

> ALAIN. Il est rare de voir ça ici au milieu du mois de mai. Il est vrai que nous approchons de la fin mai. Vous avez aimé les ruines ? (*Se tournant vers Jacques*) Jacques, le livre d'or. Ça n'a pas la perfection de certains temples, naturellement. Mais il faut penser que ces pierres ont été posées il y a trois mille cinq cent ans.
>
> *Il ouvre le livre devant eux, cherche une page, et pose son doigt au milieu.*
>
> M. SORBET. Edouard Herriot? (*Alain tourne la page.)* Goering. Himmler…
>
> ALAIN. Oui, et Goebbels. C'était en juin 1935. (*M. et Mme Sorbet se penchent sur le livre. Alain, satisfait, suit Jacques qui n'a jamais été plus pâle ni plus tremblant*.) Et la mère et la fille du 51, qu'est-ce qu'elles ont décidé, à la fin? Elles partent ou elles restent?

The visual image of M. and Mme. Sorbet quite literally turning the pages of history onstage serves to remind the audience of the interconnectedness of historical events, a dramatic device which allows the play to 'transgress historical boundaries.'[223] The mention of three of Hitler's most important inner circle figures as having been visitors to the French-owned hotel suggests collaboration and that the French government, here represented by Alain, are following in the path of the Nazis who previously inhabited the hotel.

When the play was finally staged in 1977, there was an awareness of the censorship it had experienced at the time of writing:

> lorsque Jacques Rosner découvrit la pièce en 1960, elle ne fut pas montée. Ceci fait peut-être la lumière sur deux ou trois points importants concernant la situation de l'auteur en France, victimes des caprices des modes et du temps et soumis par nécessite à l'évolution dialectique des politiques théâtrales des metteurs en scène qui, sans le vouloir certes, opèrent par leur choix *une forme de censure souvent inavouée.*[224]

Thus, it was not just the content of the play which was targeted for censorship but also the *form* that it took, as one reviewer pointed out 'Vinaver ne délivre rien. Pas même de message.'[225] The critics wanted to categorise the play, whereas Vinaver refuses a facile understanding and avoids drawing easy parallels between the stage and current affairs via polyphonic dialogues and polyphonic themes.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the ways in which Vinaver's early work pushes at the boundaries of theatrical expression during the mid to late 1950s. Firstly, I have shown how, perhaps due to his own experiences of exile, Vinaver is able to achieve a 'double consciousness' which leads him to present a contrapuntal reading of decolonisation wars but also a 'decolonised'

[223] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory* (2009), p. 211.
[224] Alain Leblanc, [no title], *Le Quotidien de Paris* (01/03/1977). IMEC file VNV 72.4.

[225] Lucien Attoun, [no title], *Nouvelles Littéraires* (10/04/1977). IMEC file VNV 72.4.

perspective on history and time in *Les Coréens*. This *décadrage* of perspective as well as his unfavourable portrayal of soldiers no doubt led to the 'official' censorship of his play. But Vinaver also illustrates how his writing challenges the 'univocal' understanding of events imposed by colonialism: a censoring of alternative historical narratives. *Les Coréens* also begins the parallels drawn between the Nazi Occupation of France, Resistance fighters in power in post-war France, the Holocaust and decolonisation, exploring the *multidirectionality* of history and how it is remembered. In *Les Huissiers*, Vinaver focuses on French politics, more overtly criticising the government for 'forgetting' their treatment at the hands of the Nazis and perpetuating this violence onto Algerians. However, here his work becomes polyphonic, adopting a musicality but also an overlapping of themes and dialogues. *Le quotidien* is a dominant focus of the play, used to alienate audiences and 'make the familiar strange' which works to make French society the subject for scrutiny and ethnographic study. Vinaver also introduces the idea of testimony, *Les Huissiers* being his first play heavily based on research done in newspapers, as the extensive boxes of cuttings at the IMEC testify. *Iphigénie Hôtel* continues both the ethnographic study of French society but this time from a more sociological perspective, following the daily lives of people going about their work. Polyphony is used here but to an even greater extent than in *Les Huissiers*, with ancient and modern histories overlapping and a large cast of characters having multiple conversations at once. These plays also seek to address the question of torture but do so by situating it in relation to *le quotidien*, indicating how the practice became normalised as it was used by the French army in Algeria. Although Kevin Elstob points out that the play seeks to debunk patriotic assumptions and ridicules Alain's pride in his Frenchness, I have shown how Vinaver's work can also be read as a critique of colonialism and presents 'decolonised' understandings of every day features such as measurements.[226] It also draws parallels between the anti-capitalist and anti-colonial struggles, denouncing working conditions both in the metropole and in the colonies. Vinaver uses the character of Petrocle as a contrapuntal theatrical device onto which colonial stereotypes are cast which works both to mock the 'cradle' of Western civilisation but also deplore the treatment of colonised peoples.

To return to Holquist's initial statement concerning the censor's need to 'fix meaning', Vinaver's oeuvre refuses to present a 'univocal' criticism of any of the themes addressed in these plays. Everything is steeped in ambiguity and double-meaning, no doubt an attempt to circumvent censorship but also a means of challenging what constitutes theatrical

[226] Kevin Elstob, *The Plays of Michel Vinaver: Political Theatre in France* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), p. 69.

representation. The aforementioned review which states that his play does not give 'even a message' speaks volumes about what theatre critics of the period were expecting from writing for the theatre: A political message that could be applied directly to contemporary events. By adopting firstly a contrapuntal perspective and then a polyphonic form, Vinaver actively attempts to *briser les cadres* of theatrical expression. More recently, a contrapuntal perspective of events can be seen in his play *Septembre 11 2001/11 Septembre 2001* (2002). This work is made up entirely of snippets from printed press and media and tells the story of 9/11 from the perspective of both perpetrator and victim. This play also fell victim to censorship, seeing its 'soutien financier et logistique des services culturels français aux USA […] retiré, par crainte de réactions diplomatiques défavorables de la part des tenants du pouvoir américain.'[227] The contrapuntal reading of contemporary events therefore remains contentious, more than forty-five years after *Les Coréens* was censored, suggesting the continued censorship of how history is created and related. Kateb Yacine furthers this critique of how history is constructed, as the next chapter explores.

[227] Interview between Michel Vinaver and Rebecca Infield via email. (20/08/2018).

> Les français qui sont allés en Algérie pensaient apporter la révolution là-bas. Fallait les prendre dans son jeu et le retourner, leur langue incarné par un algérien – une contradiction réussite.[1]
>
> Je suis anti-nationaliste, je suis internationaliste.[2]

Chapter Four: Francophone Algerian Writing as Constitutive Censorship: Kateb Yacine's *Le Cercle des représailles* (1959) and Hocine Bouzaher's *Des voix dans la casbah* (1960)

So far in this thesis we have seen the destructive nature of censorship, acting as a 'chancre' (canker) as Michel Vinaver described it in my interview with him.[3] We have explored how censors and censorship (although sometimes masquerading under different names) aimed to stifle aspects of postcolonial writing and approaches to theatre as well as plays that criticised the French and British governments' repression of decolonisation movements. As in the previous chapters, the collections chosen for study here have both been victim to censorship in the traditional 'hard' understanding of the term but, as we shall see, they were also subject to 'soft' censorship.

This chapter will explore how writing in French by two Algerian writers, Kateb Yacine and Hocine Bouzaher, can be considered as a means of reformulating imposed language censorship during French colonial rule in Algeria. This reflects what Helen Freshwater has referred to as 'constitutive censorship': the realisation that the censored [individual] may at times be complicit in the system of censorship and that they can use this to form a new creative space.[4] Freshwater views this complicity as positive because with restrictions and boundaries come creativity and innovation.[5] Judith Butler has also examined the idea that censorship can be productive: 'Censorship precedes the text [including] "speech" and other cultural expressions, and is in some sense *responsible for its production*.'[6] Sue Carry Jansen adds that constitutive censorship is essential for communication and we must recognise that 'censorship

[1]RFI radio, 'Kateb Yacine, un artiste majeur', first broadcast (14/08/2018) https://www.rfi.fr/fr/emission/20180814-yacine-kateb-khellouti-romancier-poete-dramaturge-essayiste. [first accessed 15/01/2021].
[2] Ibid.
[3] Interview between Michel Vinaver and Rebecca Infield via email, (20/08/2018).
[4] Helen Freshwater, *Theatre Censorship in Britain*: *Silencing, Censure and Suppression* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 4.
[5] Helen Freshwater, *Shadow Play: The Censorship of the Stage in Twentieth Century Britain* (unpublished PhD thesis: University of Edinburgh, 2002), p. 53. In relation to the context of Victoria novels, Nora Gilbert has explored the potential positive outcomes of censorship: Nora Gilbert, *Better Left Unsaid: Victorian Novels, Hays Code Films, and the Benefits of Censorship* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).
[6] Judith Butler, 'Implicit Censorship and Discursive Agency', *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 128.

is not just something that others do, but also something I must do and we must do if we are able to create order and achieve communication and community.'[7] John Steel claims that 'language is […] a potent, limiting force and its capacity to act to coerce and constrain [is] manifested through the mechanism of constitutive censorship.'[8] Therefore, censorship is not unilateral but bilateral, the writers in this chapter having participated in self-censorship in order to make writing in French a politically charged act.[9]

The French language was imposed in schools all over the empire as the only permitted way of expressing oneself in public and children were often beaten or humiliated for speaking their mother tongue in and outside of the classroom.[10] Here, however, the French language is manipulated by the authors in this chapter in order to express and address ideas and opinions they were unable to articulate in their mother tongues (Berber or Arabic). Nicholas Harrison argues that the imposition of French language and culture in colonial Algeria resulted in children feeling alienated from their families and their own cultures. However he points out that a *colonial* education could also be 'fruitful' for some students because it allowed them to use French as a means of questioning colonial rule.[11] The result of the educational experience was 'a new pride in an identity that was distinctly not French' and this education made it 'increasingly possible to think of an Algerian "pays" or "patrie" in national/nationalist terms.'[12] The French language therefore actually contributed to the liberation movement and anticolonial mindset that the colonial forces were trying to suppress. As Cheikh Anta Diop notes, culture (and therefore language) and imperialism were interconnected as a means of control: 'l'impérialisme culturel est la vis de sécurité de l'impérialisme économique; détruire les bases du premier c'est donc contribuer à la suppression du second.'[13] Therefore, by removing French language from its purpose to impose French culture, it became a tool for resistance.

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[7] Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship: The Knot That Binds Power and Knowledge* (1991), p. 94.
[8] John Steel, *Journalism and Free Speech* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 170.
[9] A wealth of scholarship has been produced on the politics of writing in French for (post)colonial writers. Examples include: Patrick Crowley (ed.), *Algeria: Nation, Culture and Transnationalism (1988-2015)* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017), Peter Dunwoodie, *Francophone Writing in Transition: Algeria (1900-1945)* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005), Charles Bonn, *La Littérature algérienne de langue française et ses lectures: Imaginaire et discours d'idées* (Montreal: Editions Naaman, 1974).
[10] See: Tony Chafer, 'Education and Political Socialisation of a National-Colonial Political Elite in French West Africa, 1936-47', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 35.3 (2007), 437–458. It is also important to note that with passing of the Ferry laws from 1881 onwards, French was also imposed all across metropolitan France as a means of forging linguistic and national unity and therefore repressing local and regional dialects.
[11] Nicholas Harrison, *Our Civilizing Mission: The Lessons of Colonial Education* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019), p. 221.
[12] Ibid., p. 238.
[13] Cheikh Anta Diop, *Nations nègres et culture: De l'antiquité nègre égyptienne aux problèmes culturels de l'Afrique noire aujourd'hui* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1979 [1954]), p. 407.

Although writing in French left Algerian authors open to potential censorship in France and from the French authorities, French also allowed for wider possibilities. It enabled them to broach taboo or controversial subjects such as the role of women, different conceptions of and behaviours relating to sexuality, criticism of religion and new definitions of blasphemy, all of which would have been more problematic in their mother tongues (in the case of Algeria, Arabic or Berber). Algerian writer Mohamed Kacimi who arrived in France in 1981 describes how writing in French allows him to forget

> le regard de Dieu et de la tribu, inventer ma marge illusoire mais vitale, mon espace intime, forger ma solitude et ma mémoire, réaliser la rupture avec cette longue chaîne de traditions, d'héritages, de legs, que les miens assument depuis des millénaires. C'est nier le dogme pour célébrer toute transgression. Je n'écris pas en français. J'écris en 'moi-même'.[14]

Therefore writing in French acts as a means of breaking away from traditions which impose certain ideas and allows writers the possibility to carve out a new means of expression which is neither their mother tongue nor an exact replica of the language of the coloniser. As Chantal Zabus has extensively explored, language variance is a means of decolonising colonial impositions of European language:

> When 'the Empire writes back to the centre,' it does this not so much with a vengeance as 'with an accent', by using a language that topples discourse conventions of the so-called 'centre' and by inscribing postcolonial language variants from 'the margin' or 'the periphery' in the text. [15]

The Afghan writer and film director Atiq Rahimi, forced to take refuge in France as a political exile, furthers this idea:

> Ma langue maternelle, le persan, m'impose des tabous, des interdits. La langue maternelle dit l'intime, c'est elle qui nous apprend la vie, l'amour, la souffrance, elle qui nous ouvre au monde. *C'est aussi la langue de l'autocensure.* Avec le français, j'étais libéré de tonnes de contraintes affectives.[16]

For Rahimi, his mother tongue enforces a type of self-censorship which writing in French does not. This will be key to our understanding of how writing in French enables greater freedom for Kateb and Bouzaher.

Writing in French also brings with it a level of self-consciousness as has been discussed by several North African writers, in particular the Moroccan Abdelkebir Khatibi, described by Jane Hiddleston and Kyalid Lyamlahy as aiming to 'connect aesthetics and politics while expanding and redefining the role of the North African intellectual.'[17] In his autobiographical

[14] Mohamed Kacimi cited in Martine Paulin, 'Langue maternelle et langue d'écriture', *Hommes & Migrations,* 1288. 6 (2010), 118-128 (p. 120).
[15] Chantal Zabus, *The African Palimpsest: Indigenization of Language in the West African Europhone Novel, 2nd ed.* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), p. xv.
[16] Atiq Rahimi cited in Martine Paulin, 'Langue maternelle et langue d'écriture' (2010), p. 120. My emphases.
[17] Jane Hiddleston and Kyalid Lyamlahy (eds.), *Abdelkebir Khatibi: Postcolonialism, Transnationalism and Culture in the Maghreb and Beyond* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020), p. 12.

work *La Mémoire tatouée* Khatibi explores the impact of this imposed language upon his way of thinking: 'Chacun est le flic de ses mots, ainsi tourne la culture,'[18] meaning that despite a certain degree of liberation, self-censorship applies also when writing in French.[19]

The policing of language is apparent right from the beginning of Bouzaher's *Des voix dans la casbah.* In a mock interview which opens the text he states:

> Il faut noter que ces drames furent initialement rédigés à l'intention d'un public algérien ou, pour être plus exact, du public moghrebin, parce que particulièrement apte à saisir la leçon des faits. C'est seulement sur le ferme conseil de certains amis que le texte a été 'converti' en français.[20]

Bouzaher draws attention to the fact that he is writing in French by inserting the spelling of 'moghrebin' as opposed to the modern spelling 'maghrébin'. The former could reflect a direct phonetic transcription from Arabic into French or a reference to a more old-fashioned spelling of the word indicating to the reader that the writer is pushing against established French conceptions of the Maghreb and its culture and a departure from the imposition of French labels and language.[21] The reference to 'converti' acts as a *clin d'œil* to religious conversion under colonial rule; religion is a key focus in the text as this chapter will explore. Moreover, Bouzaher is playing with the idea that, even if he has chosen to write this collection in French, it is only out of pure necessity and with a political motive.

Bouzaher's work remains relatively unknown with few publications in French and only one (to my knowledge) in English dedicated to him by Emilie Morin.[22] In terms of scholarship, Bouzaher is sometimes mentioned in passing or as an entry in overviews and encyclopaedias of Algerian writing. Born in Liana in 1935 he studied at university in Bordeaux but was also editor of several anti-colonial North African publications such as *Résistance Algérienne*, published in Tetouan (Morocco) and *El Moudjahid* where he worked briefly alongside Frantz Fanon.[23] He worked for the Front de Libération National (FLN) in 1960, acting as treasurer and going between France and Algeria as well as a stint in Germany. *Des voix dans la casbah* was written whilst he was on the move between these countries and the plays in this collection have never been staged either in France or Algeria. Bouzaher's identity remains somewhat

[18] Abdelkebir Khatibi, *La Mémoire tatouée* (Paris: Denoël, 1971), p. 58.
[19] Abiola Irele calls this a kind of alienation and argues that this can be a productive and positive process: 'In Praise of Alienation', in Valentin Yves Mudimbe (ed.), *The Surreptitious Speech: Présence Africaine and the Politics of Otherness, 1947–1987* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 201-224.
[20] Hocine Bouzaher, *Des voix dans la casbah* (Paris: Maspero, 1960), p. 7.
[21] Although he might also have used the more obsolete adjective, referring to the older word 'Moghreb'.
[22] Bouzaher is sometimes mentioned in passing or as an entry in overviews of Algerian writing. Emilie Morin's chapter presents a detailed comparison of Bouzaher's *Des voix dans la casbah* and Henri Kréa's *Le Séisme* (1962). Emilie Morin, 'Unspeakable Tragedies: Censorship and the New Political Theatre of the Algerian War of Independence', in Mary Luckhurst and Emilie Morin (eds.), *Theatre and Human Rights after 1945: Things Unspeakable,* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 21-38.
[23] Hocine Bouzaher, *Algérie 1954-1962 guerre indépendance au jour le jour* (Houma: Editions Houma, 2004).

elusive as François Maspero 'misspelt' his name as 'Bouhazer' in his haste to get the collection printed.[24] This of course worked in his favour as it made him difficult to track down by the French police when the collection was banned, as is explored in more detailed below. Going beyond the Hocine Bouhazer/Bouzaher mix-up, the BnF records Bouzaher's documents under the name 'Hocine Salim Bouzaher' as well as Si Salim and the British Library records his work under 'Husain Abu Zāhir.' These varied identities resonate with Vinaver's use of multiple pseudonyms as a means of avoiding categorisation. However, if Maspero unintentionally misspelt the name this could imply a similar situation to that of Reckord's name being 'domesticated' by the critics in the second chapter of this thesis. In addition to *Des voix dans la casbah,* Bouzaher wrote another play and a novel entitled *Les Cinq doigts du jour* (1961) all focused on the events of the Algerian War of Independence.[25]

Bouzaher's collection consists of two plays, 'On ne capture pas le soleil' and 'Serkaji' as well as a series of poems, which Emilie Morin has qualified as being 'historically-inflected […] in the Surrealist vein.'[26] As already established, there certainly were dialogues between postcolonial writers and the Surrealist, avant-gardist and Absurdist movements taking place in France during the 1950s and 1960s. Writers such as Jean Genet were involved in decolonisation movements and his plays such as *Les Paravents* (1958) and *Les Nègres* (1959) dealt with the violence and racism taking place in the name of colonialism by using an Absurdist aesthetic. These artistic movements can be seen as sharing common goals with postcolonial writers as both sought to push the boundaries of expression accepted by centralised power, embodied by literary scholars and critics or politicians. Absurdist writing for the theatre often emanated from the periphery (Beckett and Ionesco both being non-native French speakers for example) and postcolonial writers such as Kateb and Bouzaher have a similar distance from the language, enabling them a peripheral view. Nevertheless, although these movements certainly did have an influence on some postcolonial writers, I would argue that these poems by Bouzaher are *not* Surrealist despite their non-conventional structure and presentation Surrealist poetry entails incongruous juxtapositions of words and images (for instance in the work of Guillaume Apollinaire), whereas Bouzaher's poem 'J'ai oublié' at the end of his collection, is transparent and didactic in its message: he is saying that words are no longer powerful enough and that

[24] A later collection of Bouzaher's work entitled *L'Honneur réconcilié* (Alger: Entreprise nationale du livre, 1988) is published with the spelling Bouzaher suggesting that the Maspero printing had been an error and was not a pseudonym.
[25] The novel: *Les Cinq doigts du jour* (Alger: Editions nationales algériennes, 1961) and the play: *L'Honneur réconcilié* (Alger: Entreprise nationale du livre, 1988).
[26] Emilie Morin, 'Unspeakable Tragedies: Censorship and the New Political Theatre of the Algerian War of Independence' (2015), p. 24.

revolution is what is now needed. Bouzaher therefore seems to be subverting what the French Surrealists would have identified as a Surrealist form although he is still undermining accepted means of expression in the French language. He rejects any kind of colonial control, be it the physical occupation of Algeria or the cultural impositions of literary form and linguistic expression. Nevertheless, there is an apologetic sense to this outwardly violent, anticolonial and militant literature, reflecting the collection's subtitle of 'théâtre algérien militant':

J'ai oublié l'arrangement des vers
le balancement des phrases et
des mots la musique

Je n'ai pas de livre
mais un fusil
[…]
Je ne sais plus jouer
au jeu
de la littérature imprimée
ma pensée est un
tract un tract est
ma pensée[27]

Bouzaher seems to suggest that this is not the literature he intended to or wanted to write but, given the situation in Algeria, political writing is essential as a testimony and means of bearing witness to these violent events. Moreover the circularity of the last three lines aims to draw attention to the limits of the language in which he is trying to express himself. It reflects a kind of self-censorship, not writing the work that he aspires to produce but that end goal of Algerian independence justifies the means, writing militant literature French. This echoes the idea expressed in the mock interview at the start of the collection, whereby the plays were not originally intended to be written in French, but that French was necessary because, '[le peuple algérien] ne permet plus que l'on parle pour lui.'[28] French therefore serves both as a means of communication and taking back control.[29]

In terms of 'hard' censorship the text was published by the Editions Maspero in December 1960 and then seized by the French police in early January 1961 and copies were

[27] Hocine Bouzaher, *Des voix dans la casbah* (1960), p. 120.
[28] Ibid., p. 10.
[29] The concept of using French as a means of resistance and also as a way of 'writing back' to the French coloniser has been explored widely, beginning whilst the Algerian War of Independence was still taking place. Jacqueline Arnaud's work has been integral to this field of research, in particular: *La Littérature maghrébine de langue française, Tome I: Origines et perspectives* (Paris: Publisud, 1986). Jean Déjeux's work is also of note: 'Francophone Literature in the Maghreb: The Problem and the Possibility', *Research in African Literatures*, 23:2 (1996), 5-19 and Marc Gontard's work in reference to the Moroccan context: *Le Moi étrange: littérature marocaine de langue francaise* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993). For more recent work on Francophone writing in the Maghreb more generally see: Edwige Tamalet Talbayev, *The Transcontinental Maghreb: Francophone Literature across the Mediterranean* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2017). For Francophone writing during the 'black decade' see: Joesph Ford, *Writing the Black Decade: Conflict and Criticism in Francophone Algerian Literature* (London: Lexington Books, 2021).

banned all over metropolitan France as well as in its colonies.[30] However, due to Maspero's effective advertising and campaigning a number of copies had already been sent out to friends and sympathisers of Bouzaher and the Algerian independence cause.[31] It is significant to point out that Bouzaher's collection was the only printed *dramatic* text to be censored during the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) whereas the other plays examined in this chapter encountered difficulties with staging but not with printing circulation.[32] The banning of his text did not go unnoticed and was picked up by the newspaper *Le Monde* in 1961:

> [C]onsidéré comme portant atteinte à la sûreté de l'État, l'ouvrage d'un jeune poète algérien, Hocine Bouhazer, qui a groupé des poèmes et deux pièces de théâtre sous le titre 'Des voix dans la casbah', a été saisi samedi par la police dans toutes les librairies. Ce livre, dont le dépôt légal avait été fait régulièrement dans le courant du mois de décembre, avait eu le temps d'être diffusé et de faire l'objet de comptes rendus dans la presse. Son éditeur, M. François Maspero, a élevé une protestation au terme de laquelle il conclut 'que les responsables de l'ordre français ne craignent plus de s'attaquer aux poètes, qu'il leur faut toutefois plus d'un mois pour apprécier la nocivité exacte d'un texte poétique et appliquer contre lui l'article 30 du code pénal concernant les cas "d'urgence."'[33]

The 'article 30 du code pénal' mentioned here seems to refer to a law from 1791 which allowed the public humiliation of any individual deemed to have committed a form of 'degradation civique'.[34] The mention of 'urgence' reminds readers of the 'état d'urgence', explored in the previous chapter, which allowed the banning and repression of ideas deemed as contrary to France's battle to retain Algeria as French. Maspero's disparaging comments here highlight the somewhat arbitrary enforcement of censorship in place during the Algerian War of Independence as explored in the previous chapter. This is further reinforced as six months later, *Le Monde* reports the 'restitution' of the text along with that of another banned book, *La Révolution algérienne par les textes* by André Mandouze.[35] Although it would therefore seem that the censorship was revoked in this case, the lasting effect on Bouzaher's collection is that it has never been republished, remains largely unknown and is particularly difficult to obtain.

By contrast, Kateb Yacine is one of Algeria's best-known Francophone writers. Kateb's experience with French censorship manifested itself not in the banning of his theatrical

[30] Emilie Morin, 'Unspeakable Tragedies: Censorship and the New Political Theatre of the Algerian War of Independence' (2015), p. 24.
[31] The editor François Maspero fled to Tunis at this point in time and was charged *in absentia* by the French government with insulting the French army in 1961.
[32] Emilie Morin, 'Unspeakable Tragedies: Censorship and the New Political Theatre of the Algerian War of Independence' (2015), p. 24.
[33] [Unknown author], 'Saisie de l'ouvrage "Des voix dans la casbah"', *Le Monde* (31/01/1961).
[34] More on this can be found in: 'Adoption des articles 30 à 33 du décret sur le Code pénal, lors de la séance du 3 juin 1791', *Archives Parlementaires de 1787 à 1860 - Première série (1787-1799) Tome XXVI - Du 12 mai au 5 juin 1791* (Paris: Librairie Administrative P. Dupont, 1887), pp. 724-725.
[35] [Unknown author], 'Le Parquet ordonne la restitution de deux livres saisis', *Le Monde* (12/07/1961).

collection but in the impossibility of staging *Le Cadavre encerclé*.[36] The play was part of his collection *Le Cercle des représailles* (1959) which also contained 'La Poudre de l'intelligence' and 'Les Ancêtres redoublent de férocité' which later became 'La Femme sauvage'. The text had been met with significant praise when it was printed in the review *Esprit* in 1954 but was unable to find a theatre that would accept it in Paris in 1958. Consequently, Kateb and director Jean-Marie Serreau staged the play at the Théâtre Molière in Brussels on the 25th and 26th November 1958. The Franco-Belgian production of the play was only able to be staged due to donations from sympathisers to the Algerian independence cause.

In terms of theatre concerned with decolonisation, the director Jean-Marie Serreau was integral to the publication, promotion and staging of postcolonial writers and writing. In 1957 he staged Vinaver's *Les Coréens*, explored in the previous chapter, before going on to stage Kateb's *Le Cadavre encerclé* in 1958 and then working with a number of writers such as Aimé Cèsaire, René Depestre and Paol Keineg. Serreau's interest in decolonisation was undeniable, indeed, a special issue entitled 'Jean-Marie Serreau et les scènes de la décolonisation' was produced in 2013 including interviews with the Senegalese actor and Serreau's collaborator Douta Seck as well as a personal dedication from Vinaver.[37] Serreau was famous for using actors from all over the world and 'dès ses premières mises en scène de Brecht, il intègre des acteurs noirs à sa distribution. L'humanité n'est pas monochrome, et c'est bien ce qu'il travaille à l'image du plateau.'[38] Serreau's focus on decolonisation and the question of postcolonial theatre no doubt influenced Vinaver's work, especially when compared to fellow director of *Les Coréens*, Roger Planchon. Planchon is described as someone who privileged 'l'architecture du sens, la netteté de la ligne générale' whereas Serreau was more concerned with 'la densité poétique, la sensibilité.'[39] For Kateb Yacine, it was Serreau who sought him out following the partial publication of *Le Cadavre enerclé* in the left-wing journal *Esprit*, in 1954 as this chapter shall explore further.

In order to help finance the first production of *Le Cadavre enerclé* Serreau sent letters to his friends and newspapers. These can be seen at the IMEC and track the numerous drafts of an 'appel aux soutiens', also published in the *Nouvel Observateur* newspaper.[40] A few days

[36] To be clear: this title is italicised when it is referring to the play as a stand-alone production, performed in the theatre. When it is referred to in quotes, I am referring to the play as a part of the collection *Le Cercle des représailles*.
[37] Michel Vinaver, 'Jean-Marie Serreau et les scènes de la décolonisation', *Revue d'histoire du théâtre* (2013) 4. 260, [pp. not available].
[38] Sylvie Chalaye, 'Jean-Marie Serreau: L'architecte d'un rêve théâtral aux couleurs d'Afrique' in 'Jean-Marie Serreau et les scènes de la décolonisation', *Revue d'histoire du théâtre* (2013) 4. 260, p. 354.
[39] Michel Vinaver, 'Jean Marie Serreau par Michel Vinaver' (2013) 4. 260, p. 349.
[40] IMEC file KTB 24.3 Letters.

after the Brussels production, on the 16 of December, a clandestine reading of the play took place in Paris, as recounted by the writer and expert on Sufism, Michel Chodkiewicz:

> C'est le mardi 16 qu'aura lieu, sous l'égide de la Défense du Théâtre, la lecture, au théâtre Récamier, d'extraits [de 'Le Cadavre encerclé'] et ['Les Ancêtres redoublent de férocité'], la deuxième tragédie de Kateb. J'assisterai à la séance et apporterai donc à Yacine, et à vous-même, des nouvelles toutes fraîches.[41]

The clandestine nature of the performance in France contrasts with the Belgian production which is referred to as an 'événement' by the press.[42] In addition to the Belgian performance, Kateb's play was staged in 'semi-clandestinité' twice in Brussels and then in Paris 'à bureaux fermés' in the same year.[43] Reviews of these initial performances in the Belgian press highlight the miscomprehension with which Kateb's work was met stating that, 'la critique […] (et c'est certes ce qui compte le moins) part perdante devant cette œuvre née du drame algérien.'[44] This negative reaction was because the play

> n'est pas le chef-d'œuvre renouvelant le genre tragique que nous annonce, dans son introduction au spectacle, le poète martiniquais Edouard Glissant […] c'est en vain que le spectateur attend des personnages qu'ils l'introduisent, en le bouleversant, dans la réalité tragique révélée, par exemple, dans les entretiens qu'eut Germaine Tillion avec des responsables algériens et qu'évoquent si naturellement les photographies projetées, pendant la représentation, sur l'écran.[45]

Glissant wrote the foreword to the published edition of *Le Cercle des représailles*, lauding Kateb's work as being 'un cas exemple de cette tragédie moderne' and of 'réalisme poétique.'[46] This poetic realism differs significantly from didactic and violent images depicted in Bouzaher's theatre, as this chapter shall explore. Glissant also acknowledged Kateb's innovative writing style which meant that it was no longer possible to 'méconnaitre les forces nouvelles qui brisent et refaçonnent toutes conceptions de l'existence et de l'art.'[47] Contrary to the Belgian review above, Glissant recognises Kateb's potential to reformulate and reconceptualise what is considered as art by a European audience: an attempt to *briser tous les cadres*. Glissant's perspective also echoes that of director Jean-Marie Serreau who noted that

[41] IMEC file KTB 26.14 Letter from Michel Chodkiewicz to Paul Anrieu [co-director of *Le Cadavre encerclé* in Brussels] (08/12/1958),
[42] J.T., 'Le Cadavre encerclé ', *Le Soir* (27/11/1958).
[43] Elisabeth Auclaire - Tamaroff and Barthélémy, *Jean-Marie Serreau: Découvreur des théâtres* (1986), p. 114.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid. Germaine Tillion was a Resistance heroine, deported to Ravensbruck during the Nazi occupation of France. In the 1930s she conducted ethnographic research in Algeria looking into the living conditions of people in the Aurès region. The outbreak of the Algerian War of Independence led her to return to Algeria which resulted in her book *L'Algérie en 1957* (Paris: Editions de minuit, 1957). The book argues for a continued relationship between Algeria and France, falling short of full independence and was criticised by the left for not being critical enough of colonialism. For more on Tillion and her role in both Algeria and the Resistance see: Julien Blanc, 'Two Trajectories in the Memory of the Resistance: The Testimonies of Agnès Humbert and Germaine Tillion' in Jessica Wardhaugh (ed.), *Politics and the Individual in France 1930-1950*, (Oxford: Legenda, 2015), 77-88.
[46] Edouard Glissant, 'Le Chant profond de Kateb Yacine', in Kateb Yacine, *Le Cercle des représailles* (Paris: Seuil, 1959), pp. 9-13 (p. 11).
[47] Ibid.

for him, Kateb opened 'les portes d'un autre monde: les portes de l'Afrique…' away from the limits of Brecht, Beckett and Ionesco.[48] Kateb was overtly critical of Brecht, claiming that his artistic creation was restricted due to his espousal of 'une doctrine'[49], this echoes the attempted censorship of Brand's play due to the Unity Theatre wanting to use her play as a means to promote the communist message but also Vinaver's refusal to adopt a linear critique of capitalism or colonialism.

The review's mention of the ethnographer Germaine Tillion suggests that the Belgian reviewer's interest in Algeria is based purely on fact and physical evidence, as illustrated in the photos Kateb and Serreau projected on the stage during the performance. Tillion, a famous member of the French Resistance and survivor of the concentration camp Ravensbruck, visited Algeria from 1954 to 1955.[50] Her work offered 'a dispassionate, demographic analysis of the clash between "non-adapted" and "industrialized" peoples' and painted a stark contrast between France's achievements and failures during colonialism: 'Tout-ce-que-la-France-a-fait-en-Algérie' (des hôpitaux, des routes, des installations portuaires, des grandes villes, une petite industrie, le quart des écoles nécessaires)' compared with 'Tout-que-la-France-n'a-pas-fait-en-Algérie' (les trois-quarts des écoles nécessaires, d'autres industries, un plan agricole avec la réforme agraire et les techniciens qu'elle exige).'[51] The Belgian reviewer's disdain for the performance in 1954 suggests a reluctance to view events from the Algerian perspective as well as being unable to understand this new interpretations of what 'tragédie' could be defined as, directly in conflict with Glissant's statement that 'la réalité exprimée ici est celle du peuple algérien.'[52] Although important, the work of Tillion does not present the Algerian perspective per se and or the emotions behind it (the description of her work as 'dispassionate' is testament to this).

Despite this review, it has been difficult to track down much information regarding these early staging endeavours in the French press, except via interviews with Serreau and reviews of a later production in Paris in 1967. Interestingly, it is the Jewish-founded post-war newspaper, *Droit et liberté*, in which the 1967 production received a double-paged spread, surrounded by articles on 'Les Français sont-ils racistes?' and membership forms for the

[48] Jean-Marie-Serreau, 'Jean-Marie à propos de Kateb Yacine' in Elisabeth Auclaire - Tamaroff and Barthélémy, *Jean-Marie Serreau: Découvreur des théâtres* (Paris: L'Arbre verdoyant, 1986), p. 113.
[49] Charles Bonn and Richard Bjornson, 'Kateb Yacine', *Research in African Literatures,* 23.2 (1992) 61-70 (p. 63).
[50] Julien Blanc, 'Two Trajectories in the Memory of the Resistance: The Testimonies of Agnès Humbert and Germaine Tillion' (2015), p. 78.
[51] Sarah Wilson, 'A Dying Colonialism, A Dying Orientalism' in Jessica Wardhaugh (ed.), *Politics and the Individual in France 1930-1950* (Oxford: Legenda, 2015), 135-151 (p. 144).
[52] Edouard Glissant, 'Le Chant profond de Kateb Yacine'(1959), p. 11.

M.R.A.P (Mouvement contre le racisme et l'amitié des peuples).[53] Echoing the previous chapter of the thesis, this alignment of antisemitism and the recognition of the Holocaust in France with the decolonisation of Algeria is reinforced here, uniting the two struggles.

The staging difficulties experienced by Serreau and Kateb are reminiscent of those experienced by Vinaver. Similarities between the staging of Kateb's play and that of Vinaver's *Les Coréens* are numerous, including them both being directed by Serreau and both sets designed by the Algiers-educated André Acquart. Furthermore, as already established, the influence of Henri Alleg's *La Question* upon Vinaver's plays was undeniable. The resonance of Alleg's infamous text was also felt at the first stagings of Kateb's *Le Cadavre encerclé*, as a letter from Jérôme Lindon (founder and publisher of the Editions de Minuit) to Paul Anrieu highlights:

> Monsieur Jean-Marie Serreau me demande de vous envoyer directement la maquette de notre insertion publicitaire dans le programme pour la pièce de Kateb Yacine. Je vous prie donc de la trouver ci-jointe. D'autre part, Monsieur Serreau me dit qu'à l'occasion de ces représentations vous seriez intéressé par la vente d'exemplaires de LA QUESTION d'Henri Alleg. L'Edition française, comme vous le savez, est saisie, mais vous pouvez vous procurer autant d'exemplaires que vous le désirez de l'édition suisse (la même que le nôtre avec en plus une préface de Jean-Paul Sartre).[54]

Audiences attending the Brussels production of Kateb's *Le Cadavre encerclé* in November 1958 would therefore have been able to purchase Alleg's banned or 'saisie' text before the performance encouraging links between the onstage events of Kateb's theatre and the reality of Alleg's experiences. The similarities between Vinaver and Kateb go beyond these superficial connections as parallels can be drawn between the texts themselves: both authors make use of the motif of orange fruit and orange trees. In *Les Coréens*, Belair makes references to how to eat an orange during his first encounter with Wen-Ta.[55] There certainly seems to be some resonance between this scene and Francis Ponge's essay *L'Orange* (1942) in which he describes in great detail the process of eating an orange, a means of underlining 'la multiplicité stratifiée des significations et des associations attachées à chaque mot'.[56] This would suggest a reading of the play not just as applying to the Korean situation, but also Algeria and decolonisation more widely as well as the Holocaust, as established in the previous chapter. For Kateb, the use of an 'oranger' throughout *Le Cercle des représailles* could be seen as a

[53] See for instance an article by C.S., 'Avec Jean-Marie Serreau "découvreur" de talents nouveaux', *Le Monde* (22/06/1957) in which he champions both Kateb's novel and collection of plays as being 'une inspiration nouvelle à mi-chemin entre l'univers brechtien - un monde qui n'en finit pas de commencer - et celui de Beckett - un monde qui n'en finit pas de finir.' For the 1967 production at the Théâtre National de Paris (T.N.P.) coverage from the Jewish-founded post-war newspaper *Droit et liberté*, includes a two-page spread, photos and interviews with Serreau and Kateb.

[54] IMEC file KTB 26.14 Letter from Jérôme Lindon to Paul Anrieu (18/11/1958),

[55] Michel Vinaver, *Aujourd'hui ou Les Coréens* (Arles: Actes Sud, 1986 [1956]), pp. 19-20.

[56] Cornelia Tenney, 'Frances Ponge: La Poétique Et "L'orange."' *SubStance*, 1.1 (1971), 11–1 (p. 12).

continuing reference to Algerian independence, as Andrew Stafford and Naaman Kessous have explored in relation to Aziz Chouaki's play *Les Oranges* (1998)[57] or it could be a reference to agricultural colonialism and exploitation, citrus fruit being one of the main exports from French Algeria.[58] Unfortunately, there is not the space nor scope for this to be explored in greater detail in this chapter but these overlapping motifs certainly merit further discussion. Despite these similarities in staging and within the texts, Vinaver's experience of censorship, colonialism and decolonisation differs greatly from that of Kateb and Bouzaher, who were both born and brought up in Algeria under French colonial rule.

Kateb (1929-1989) went to a French-speaking school near Sétif, which was to be the site of his arrest (and politicisation) following the independence protests and subsequent massacre on the 8 of May 1945. These events greatly marked both him and his mother who suffered psychological problems as a result of the trauma. During the Algerian War of Independence Kateb became an 'écrivain errant', moving constantly between France, Algeria, Morocco, Germany, Belgium and so on. In 1966 the Moroccan writer Tahar Ben Jelloun referred to Kateb as 'le plus grand écrivain du Maghreb […] qui écrit en français', and in 1988 he was awarded the Grand prix national des Lettres. The use of 'national' in the title of this prize seems to suggest that France wanted to claim Kateb as a French writer, a kind of 'récupération' as Jean Déjeux calls it.[59] This idea is reinforced when one considers that Kateb was the first and seemingly only non-European writer to be awarded the prize in its forty-eight year history. Nevertheless, Kateb *did* accept the prize, further reinforcing Charles Bonn's reading of him as a perpetual contradiction.[60]

His plays have recently been staged in France, including a production of *Le Cadavre encerclé* at the Théâtre des Halles in Avignon in December 2016. A meta-theatrical reflection on the difficulties facing Kateb and Serreau during the initial staging of Kateb's play in Brussels, entitled *Et le cœur fume encore*, took place at the Théâtre Gérard Philipe in Paris in 2020, highlighting a renewed interest in the play's genesis and the playwright's relevance in present day remembrance of the Algerian War of Independence.[61]

[57] Andrew Stafford and Naaman Kessous, 'Récit, Monologue et Polémique dans *Les Oranges* d'Aziz Chouaki', *ASCALF Yearbook 4* (London: The Book Factory, 2000), pp. 168-178.
[58] Georges Mutin, 'L'Algérie et ses agrumes', *Revue de géographie de Lyon*, 44.1 (1969). 5-36.
[59] Jean Déjeux, 'Kateb Yacine, Grand Prix national des Lettres', *Hommes et Migrations* 1101.1 (1987), pp. 11-12.
[60] Charles Bonn and Richard Bjornson, 'Kateb Yacine' (1992), p. 62.
[61] The play was written by Margaux Eskenazi and Alice Carré and the production was directed by Margaux Eskenazi.

In 1971 Kateb stopped writing in French and returned the language to 'sa place d'instrument imposé par la colonisation.'[62] Kateb began to write Arabic dialect plays and to produce them in Algeria and in group homes for Algerian workers in Europe.[63] By doing so, Kateb avoids falling into the trap that some postcolonial criticism can be accused of, making the assumption that 'with modernity, expression in indigenous languages has come to a full stop, and is to live on only in translated borrowings and echoes.'[64] Kateb instead focused on indigenous Berber languages, as he explained when interviewed, 'on a chez nous des tas de poètes qui ne sait ni lire ni écrire', emphasisng the importance of maintaining oral, theatrical tradition.[65] He has talked extensively about his switch from writing in French in his early work (the novel *Nedjma* published in 1956 and *Le Cercle des représailles*) to later work translated and performed in Arabic and in Berber.[66] His relationship with the three languages is complicated but for him French is ultimately a more impersonal, less emotional language:

> La plupart de mes souvenirs, sensations, rêveries, monologues intérieurs, se rapportent à mon pays. Il est naturel que je les ressente sous leur forme première, dans ma langue maternelle, l'arabe. Mais je ne puis les élaborer, les exprimer qu'en français. Au fond, la chose est simple: mon pays, mon peuple sont l'immense réserve où je vais tout naturellement m'abreuver.[67]

Writing in French, therefore, is a means to critique colonialism and an attempt to construct a postcolonial Algeria, as Patrick CorKoran has pointed out:

> It is true that the first generation of Maghrebi authors scrutinised the colonial relationship and its aftermath but they did so *by scrutinising and interrogating Maghrebi social structures, patriarchy, family relations, group and individual identity issues, as well as a mosaic of diverse indigenous cultural traditions* […] So if it is true to say that this literature emerges as a literature of decolonisation, what this meant in reality was the gradual emergence of a literature that expressed a *Maghrebi view of the world and which implicitly or explicitly challenged the dominant Francocentric view*.[68]

For Kateb and Bouzaher their writing for the theatre strives not only to denounce the atrocities being committed in Algeria by the French army, but also to 'challenge the dominant Francocentric view' by producing writing in French which pushed the language to its limits, battling against Said's notion of 'cultural imperialism'. It also forces 'nous autres Français,

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[62] Jacques Alessandra, 'Pour/Quoi Kateb Yacine a-t-Il abandonné l'écriture française?', *Francofonia*, 3.1 (1982), pp. 111-114 (p. 111).
[63] Charles Bonn and Richard Bjornson, 'Kateb Yacine' (1992), p. 68.
[64] Karin Barber, 'African-Language Literature and Postcolonial Criticism', *Research in African Literatures*, 26.4 (1995), 3–30 (p. 8).
[65] Kateb Yacine, interviewed (23/02/1967) https://www.rfi.fr/fr/emission/20180814-yacine-kateb-khellouti-romancier-poete-dramaturge-essayiste [first accessed 15/02/2021].
[66] Ibid.
[67] Kateb Yacine cited in Jacqueline Arnaud, *Recherches sur la littérature maghrébine de langue française: le cas de Kateb Yacine* (Lille: Reproduction des thèses, Université de Lille III, 1982), p. 88.
[68] Patrick Corcoran, *The Cambridge Introduction to Francophone Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 28. My emphases.

Européens, à être vus par les autres, les autres étant le tiers-monde.'[69] As Kateb controversially stated, he had to 'violer' the language in order to 'domestiquer' it.[70] The violence in this statement is key to understanding the political statement made by writing about Algerian independence and criticising Western/French culture in French.

Towards a Postcolonial Francophone Algerian Literature

Although restrictive in its linguistic nature, writing in French ultimately becomes more liberating for Kateb and Bouzaher, as Kateb explains:

> La situation de l'écrivain algérien d'expression française entre deux lignes l'oblige à inventer, à improviser à innover […] il s'agit de recréer en français des sensations, souvenirs, rêveries, conçus d'abord en arabe dialectal.[71]

The situation of the Francophone Algerian therefore incites creativity and innovation, just as censorship has been proven to do.[72] Extensive research has been carried out on the question of Algerian writers who write in French. Indeed, Jaqueline Arnaud's expansive study of North African writers during the independence wars and the immediate aftermath reads almost like a catalogue of authors with varying interpretations of what writing in French means to them:

> Certains ont vécu dramatiquement l'impossibilité de s'exprimer autrement que dans la langue du colonisateur; ils ont tous utilisé le français pour revendiquer en faveur de leur langue maternelle; enfin ils ont adapté le français aux besoins de leur expression, et il s'agit d'étudier comment ils l'ont traité, voire déformé et remodelé, pour le plier à leurs exigences.[73]

For the Francophone Algerian writer and journalist Jean Amrouche, speaking or using French was a skill that was lent to those in the colonised situation, and that was not supposed to be used for criticising colonialism. Amrouche spoke ironically about the imposition of French on colonised individuals:

> Vous êtes tenu d'user de cette langue qu'on vous a prêtée, dont vous n'êtes qu'un usufruitier et non pas le propriétaire légitime d'un seul usage. Vous devez en user à une seule fin qui est de louanger éternellement le colonisateur et dès que vous voulez utiliser librement cette langue et au besoin même lui faire violence, pour vous exprimer vous-même, ou dès que vous voulez en utiliser toutes les possibilités dans l'attaque, dans la critique, alors vous commettez un sacrilège et même on vous a fait la grâce de vous enseigner le français ce n'était pas pour que vous retourniez cette langue contre le colonisateur […]. Combien de fois m'a-t-on dit: vous êtes le nourrisson qui bat sa nourrice.[74]

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[69] Jean-Marie Serreau cited in Elisabeth Auclaire-Tamaroff, and Barthélémy (eds.), *Jean-Marie Serreau: Découvreur des théâtres* (1986), p. 113.
[70] Jacques Alessandra, 'Pour/Quoi Kateb Yacine a-t-Il abandonné l'écriture française?' (1982), p. 111.
[71] Kateb Yacine cited in Jacqueline Arnaud, *Recherches sur la littérature maghrébine de langue française: le cas de Kateb Yacine* (1982), p. 111.
[72] See for instance: Nora Gilbert, *Better Left Unsaid: Victorian Novels, Hays Code Films, and the Benefits of Censorship* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).
[73] Jacqueline Arnaud, *Recherches sur la littérature maghrébine de langue française: le cas de Kateb Yacine* (1982), p. 81.
[74] Jean Amrouche quoted in Ibid., p. 83.

Amrouche's tone is evidently critical and sarcastic but also contains significant religious undertones. Vocabulary such as 'louanger', 'éternellement', 'sacrilège' and 'grâce' all play on the imposition not just of French forms of speaking but also religious instruction. Amrouche also seems to play on the idea of the sanctity of the French language: a key element in the construction of French identity as well as in the entrenching of colonial hierarchy.[75] As will be seen later on in this chapter, Bouzaher uses similarly religious words when referring to Algerian women's role in the independence movement.

The question of who 'owns' a language and the politics behind writing in the language of the coloniser has been addressed by numerous North African writers both during and since the end of the French empire.[76] The philosopher Jacques Derrida considers that being 'franco-maghrébin […] ce n'est pas, pas surtout, surtout pas, un surcroît ou une richesse d'identités, d'attributs ou de ce noms' but a '*trouble de l'identité*.'[77] This 'trouble' comes partially from colonial linguistic identity, which Derrida contests:

> contrairement à ce qu'on est le plus souvent tenté de croire, le maître n'est rien. Et il n'a rien en propre. Parce que le maître ne possède pas en propre, naturellement, ce qu'il appelle pourtant sa langue; parce que, quoi qu'il veuille ou fasse, il ne peut entretenir avec elle des rapports de propriété ou d'identités naturels, nationaux, congénitaux, ontologiques; […] parce que la langue n'est pas son bien naturel, par cela même il peut historiquement, à travers le viol d'une usurpation culturelle, c'est-à-dire toujours d'essence coloniale, feindre de se l'approprier pour l'imposer comme 'la sienne'.[78]

By writing in French, Kateb and Bouzaher deny the coloniser the ownership of the language and its 'accepted' means of manipulation by inserting words in Berber and Arabic into their texts without explanation, therefore alienating but also perhaps intriguing metropolitan French-speaking audiences.[79] This also serves to highlight the duality or multi-faceted make-up of their linguistic and cultural identities. Similarly to Vinaver, this technique turns the objectifying lens onto the French audience/reader and their language, as Sartre describes in his preface to Fanon's *Les Damnés de la terre* (1961): 'Un ex-indigène "de langue française" plie [la langue française] à des exigences nouvelles, […] nous sommes les objets du discours.'[80] This has the

[75] Mohamed Benrabah describes this in detail in the chapter 'Frenchification: Annihilating Indigenous Languages', *Language Conflict in Algeria* (Bristol, Blue Ridge Summit: Multilingual Matters, 2013), pp. 21-50.
[76] See for instance Albert Memmi, *Portrait du colonisé* (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1957), Adbelkebir Khatibi, *La Langue de l'autre* (New York, Tunis: Les Mains Secrètes: 1999), *Amour bilingue* (Casablanca: Eddif, 1992).
[77] Jacques Derrida, *Le Monolinguisme de l'autre* (Paris: Galilée, 1996), p. 32.
[78] Ibid, p. 45.
[79] This is reminiscent of Frantz Fanon's concept of 'aliénation culturelle' imposed upon colonised subjects during the colonial period. Bouzaher and Kateb are subverting this, putting the coloniser into the alienated position but all the while using his language. Frantz Fanon, *Les Damnés de la terre* (Paris: La Découverte, 2002 [1961]), p. 201.
[80] Jean Paul Sartre, 'Préface de l'édition 1961' in Ibid, p. 19.

purpose to show us 'ce que nous avons fait [aux colonisés] pour que nous connaissions ce que nous avons fait de nous.'[81]

As Bouzaher explains, the idea is not to pretend that colonialism never happened but to integrate it into a new, forward-looking artform:

> Il existe une culture populaire algérienne d'une richesse remarquable. C'est à sa restauration que nous nous attacherons demain, avec la participation confiante et réfléchie de notre peuple, qui ne renie pas systématiquement ce qui appartient au passé. *Ensuite nous emprunterons aux cultures étrangères ce qu'elles comportent de meilleur et l'assimilerons correctement*.'[82]

This 'borrowing' from other cultures suggests paving out a new means of expression, moving away from a binary expression which had to be *either* in French *or* in the author's mother tongue. It reflects Christopher Balme's concept of 'syncretic theatre' which 'utilises the performance forms of both European and indigenous cultures in a creative recombination of their respective elements, without slavish adherence to one tradition or the other.'[83]

Adbelkebir Khatibi's work is exemplary in using French to explore controversial and difficult ideas that would have been impossible to print or even express in Arabic. His autobiographic work is sexually explicit evoking scenes of prostitution, incest, child abuse but also extremely self-reflexive in its writing style. Khatibi highlights the political nature of writing in French: 'écrire, bien écrire, devenait notre technique terroriste, notre lien secret', and he makes the reader aware of his fascination with the language, 'la lecture me rendait à la vie, à la mort. Le parfum d'un mot me bouleversait. Je tremblais. Quel travail forcené que d'avaler le dictionnaire des rimes et celui des synonymes!'[84] At the same time, he declares his interest for 'bedouine' poetry and 'des bardes préislamiques et surtout Imrou Al Qais', a sixth century Arabic poet.[85] Khatibi therefore pushes at the boundaries of acceptable means of expression in French including North African cultural references to show that Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria, like France, had a literary culture and history, as Bouzaher and Kateb illustrate. The integrating of diverse elements to create what Bouzaher calls a 'culture populaire algérienne' resonates with Fanon's call not to turn one's back on the artwork created during colonialism:

> Ces artistes, qui ont cependant approfondi les techniques modernes et participé aux grands courants de la peinture ou de l'architecture contemporaine, tournent le dos, contestent la culture étrangère et partant à la recherche du vrai national privilégient ce qu'ils croient être les constantes d'un art national. *Mais ces créateurs oublient que les formes de pensée, que l'alimentation, les techniques modernes d'information, du langage et de l'habillement ont réorganisé dialectiquement le cerveau du peuple et que les constantes*

[81] Ibid., p. 22.
[82] Hocine Bouzaher, *Des Voix dans la casbah* (1960), p. 11. My emphasis.
[83] Christopher Balme, *Decolonizing the Stage: Theatrical Syncretism and Post-Colonial Drama* (1999), p. 2.
[84] Adbelkebir Khatibi, *La Mémoire tatouée* (Paris: Denoël, 1971), p. 81.
[85] Ibid., p. 80.

> *qui furent les garde-fous pendant la période coloniale sont en train de subir des mutations terriblement radicales.*[86]

By simultaneously comparing and contrasting Kateb and Bouzaher's work, this chapter will consider what Francophone Algerian writing means and how this can be considered as a form of resistance, a positive product of censorship which allowed postcolonial writers to begin the construction of a postcolonial perception of the world and a national Algerian identity, without the constraints and self-censorship which comes with writing in their mother tongue. Then it will go on to examine simultaneously how both Kateb and Bouzaher self-consciously use the French language in their plays to make reflections upon the language itself. It will also highlight how by writing in French, both writers are able to criticise not just French colonialism and the imposition of Western models of time, work and inter-gender relationships, but also the practices of the FLN fighting for an independent Algeria, the use of blasphemy and criticism of religious practices in Algeria.

Re-appropriating Time for the Post-colonial Era

The cyclical nature of time and the notion of the past presenting itself in the present day are reflected in Kateb's titles; *Le Cercle des représailles* and the *Le Cadavre encerclé*. As Jane Hiddleston has pointed out: 'If humanity is continually being reinvented, then […] Kateb's poetics still situate that reinvention in an ongoing relationship with the past.'[87] As Kateb explains:

> Cette obsession du cercle, c'est simplement une façon de ressentir et de décrire ma condition d'homme situé sur une terre en perpétuelle rotation. Celui qui se place sur une seule ligne droite ne va jamais bien loin. C'est le cas de tout le théâtre bourgeois, unilatéral donc limité.[88]

Unlike the 'théâtre bourgeois' Kateb's theatrical work is not linear or unilateral. As in Vinaver's three plays, explored in the previous chapter, time was an essential component of the colonial machine. Both its imposition and manipulation enabled the coloniser to maintain control over colonised populations, all the while reaping the benefits of capitalist gain from the exploitation of this workforce. As Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, notes 'the realm aim of colonialism was to control the people's wealth: what they produced, how they produced it, and how it was distributed.'[89] Time is essential to both these collections, Kateb deftly imposing a non-linear or almost polyphonic approach making it difficult to follow the sequences of events. Bouzaher

[86] Frantz Fanon, *Les Damnés de la terre* (2002 [1961]), p. 213.
[87] Jane Hiddleston, 'Man in Motion: Kateb Yacine and the poetics of revolution', *International journal of Francophone studies*, 15.3/4 (2013), pp. 435-454 (p. 437).
[88] Kateb Yacine, 'Dialogue avec Jean-Marie Serreau', *Le poète comme un boxeur, entretiens/textes réunis et présentés par Gilles Carpentier* (Paris: Seuil, 1994), p. 42.
[89] Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind* (Suffolk: James Currey, 1986), p. 16.

firmly anchors his plays in the present by using dates and real historical world events to bookend the first play in the collection 'On ne capture pas le soleil'. However, for Bouzaher, these dates are not chronological and jump around from 1956 to 1957, but also back to the Nuremberg trials which took place from 1945 to 1946. The omnipresence of the past in the present, *the present past*, unites Kateb's and Bouzaher's plays and although they portray this differently, the effect is the same: the onstage events are both forward-looking all the while not forgetting the colonial past, reminiscent of what Aleida Assmann has called the 'hot' past, that which will not fade away.[90] Kateb and Bouzaher use French to denounce colonial rule, highlight the violent attempts to repress independence movements in Algeria but also to push the language to its limits, re-appropriating it to allow them greater freedom to talk about taboo subjects, difficult to address in Arabic or Berber. This postcolonial vision of the world, present in both their collections, begins by deconstructing Western notions of time and chronology.

In his seminal work on Francophone Algerian literature, Charles Bonn focuses on the importance of 'terre' and 'cité' as two significant and opposing elements which differentiate Francophone Algerian writing from that of the metropole.[91] Further to this, he highlights the role that time has to play in the creation of these two settings, particularly in the work of Kateb. In Kateb's novel *Nedjma*, (1956) the question of time recurs frequently both in relation to the time of day but also the chronology of events in the book:

> nul ne lève la tête devant le Dieu des païens parvenu à son quotidien pouvoir: midi, réflexion d'Africa en peine de son ombre, inapprochable nudité de continent mangeur d'empires, plaine gorgée de vin de et tabac; midi endort autant qu'un temple, submergé le voyageur; midi! ajoute l'horloge, en sa rondeur sacerdotale, et l'heure semble ralentie avec la machine sous la ventilation des palmes, et le train vide perd ses charmes, tyran abandonné; le 15 septembre 1945, la gare de Bône est assiégée comme chaque jour [...].[92]

Bône is not an accidental choice: the city was one of the first to be populated with European settlers and emptied of Algerians at the start of French occupation in 1830.[93] By describing it here as 'assiégée' Kateb immediately draws our attention to the persistence of colonialism in Algeria, seen to be holding the town in perpetual a siege and thus the past remains in the present. Bonn argues that the 'horloge de la gare' at Bône is an 'introducteur d'un temps autre: celui de l'Histoire, celui de la *Cité*, celui de l'étranger, qui pénètre ainsi jusqu'aux habitudes profondes des citadins acculturés.'[94] The use of a Western time object here echoes Vinaver's insertion of a watch into his play *Les Coréens* as a means of differentiating between the soldier

[90] Aleida Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives* (Cambridge: CUP, 2011), p. xi.
[91] Charles Bonn, *La Littérature algérienne de langue française et ses lectures* (Montréal: Editions Naaman, 1974).
[92] Kateb Yacine, *Nedjma* (Paris: Editions du seuil, 1996 [1956]), p. 65.
[93] As explained by Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1993), p. 207.
[94] Charles Bonn, *La Littérature algérienne de langue française et ses lectures* (1974), p. 25.

Belair and the Korean villagers way of tracking the passing of time. However, here, time is used as a signifier for history, the above citation exemplifies Kateb's ability to simultaneously talk about past and present; the specificity of the date the 15th of September 1945 juxtaposed against 'midi' on any given day and the cyclical description of any possible train arriving at that time ('comme chaque jour'). Moreover, by referencing the 'Dieu des païens' in the same breath as the 'quotidien pouvoir' of time Kateb further contrasts the Western and 'African' way of perceiving time. His choice of including the word 'Africa' here in English (or perhaps Latin, the language of the Catholic Church) and without placing it in Italics works to open up the sense that the entire continent - not just Algeria - is still victim to this imposed Western, clock-time which is to be given a religious (sacerdotal) observance.

Building on the work of Charles Bonn, I would like to argue that both Kateb and Bouzaher incorporate this reflection on time into their dramatic work. The two writers go beyond the imperial imposition of linear time with a coherent past, present and future and instead bringing these three temporal dimensions into question via events that appear non-linear on the page and on the stage. By doing so they are not only critiquing Western time-keeping but also employing a non-chronological methodology which seeks to refuse the colonial notion of time as progressive and evolutionary, in order to articulate a new form of African modernity and modern writing all the while denouncing the violence of the Algerian War of Independence.[95]

Serreau had a crucial role in expressing how time could be challenged on the stage. Pushing the boundaries of received conceptions of time was already commonplace in French theatre of the late 1940s and early 1950s for instance in Samuel Beckett's *En attendant Godot*, in which the two halves of the play seem to repeat themselves and which does not provide any kind of catharsis or conclusion. The play had been staged in 1953 by Serreau and his company, The Théâtre de Babylone. Serreau championed Kateb's plays and directed the 1958 Franco-Belgian production of *Le Cadavre encerclé* in Brussels (as well as playing the character of Lakhdar). During the Occupation, Serreau participated in 'Jeune France', a Catholic organisation which also collaborated with the French resistance. Serreau worked clandestinely to hide and save Jews persecuted under France's German occupation, often keeping them hidden in the 'Jeune France' facilities.[96] His friend Jean-Marie Soutou from this time described

[95] See: Souleymane Bachir Diagne, *Postcolonial Bergson* (transl. by) Lindsay Turner (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019), in particular the chapter 'Time and Fatalism', pp. 77-94.
[96] Daniel Lee, *Pétain's Jewish Children. French Jewish Youth and the Vichy Regime, 1940-42* (Oxford: OUP, 2014), p. 106.

him as being 'un jeune homme d'une foi ardente, extrêmement pratiquant' but who never talked about his faith openly.[97]

Another friend of Serreau's from this period was Emmanuel Mounier, founder of the left-wing Christian magazine *Esprit* in 1932, in which an extract of Kateb's *Le Cadavre encerclé* was first published in 1954.[98] *Esprit* became an important site of postcolonial scholarship and literature, due to its freedom from government subventions and its editorial independence, and was the first review to publish Fanon's *Peau noire, masques blancs* in 1952.[99] Mounier himself was a strong believer in making a 'break from the Christian order and established disorder [...] one way to accomplish this was a resolute openness to the positive contributions of non-Catholics.'[100] The motivations behind Mounier's publication and Serreau's 'théâtre de la décolonisation' seem therefore to overlap, both aiming to present non-Western focused readings of time and history. As Serreau notes, Kateb's theatre allowed the audience to 'jeter un autre regard sur l'histoire' and that this is best achieved by 'des écrivains de notre langue, en dehors de l'Hexagone.'[101] It is most likely that Serreau and Mounier worked together to promote the work of authors coming from colonial or recently decolonised situations.[102] Serreau's link to the left-wing Catholic movement is reiterated in a letter referring to the novelist and Catholic campaigner François Mauriac. Mauriac seems to have been asked by Serreau to 'patronner' the 1958 Belgian production of *Le Cadavre encerclé*, but decided that he could not take on the role because he was,

> actuellement en but à de très violentes attaques personnelles de la part des militaires d'Alger qui 'l'attendent au tournant' […] il trouve donc qu'il ne peut se permettre de s'engager maintenant à l'étranger (si la création avait lieu en France sa position serait différente). D'autre part, certains milieux catholiques et réactionnaires belges l'ont empêché dernièrement de faire une conférence à l'Université par ailleurs la situation se développant en France, il apparaît que le patronage de Mauriac serait mal compris et finalement prendrait le caractère explosif que nous ne souhaitons pas (c'est en tous cas son avis).[103]

As established, this production was supported by a series of funding campaigns launched by Serreau, evidenced in letters held at the IMEC. Mauriac, a famous name in the mid-1950s

[97] Ibid.
[98] Although it should be noted that Mounier died in 1950, the publication continued on under the direction of Albert Béguin.
[99] David Macey, *Fanon: A Biography* (London: Verso Books, 2012), p. 153.
[100] Oscar L. Arnal, 'Alternatives to the Third Republic among Catholic Leftists in the 1930s', *Historical Reflections* 2.1 (1978) pp. 177-195, (p. 183).
[101] Jean-Marie Serreau quoted in Elisabeth Auclaire - Tamaroff and Barthélémy, *Jean-Marie Serreau: Découvreur des théâtres* (1986) p. 114.
[102] The edition of *Esprit* from January 1941 contains an article by Jean-Marie Guilcher and Jean-Marie Serreau on 'La chant et la danse populaire. Eléments de culture française' suggesting Serreau's involvement with the journal in its beginnings; *Esprit* was started up again by Mounier in 1940 following France's capitulation to Germany.
[103] IMEC file KTB 26.14 Letter from [unknown] to Paul Anrieu, received (12/09/1958).

following his Nobel Prize for literature award in 1952, would certainly have helped promote Kateb's play, however the letter seems to suggest that Mauriac was under the threat from the Organisation Armée Secrète (OAS) which targeted other pro-Algerian independence writers such as Jean-Paul Sartre at this time: proof that censorship was being imposed not just by the French government.

Serreau's work advocated for both physical decolonisation and, what Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o calls, the 'decolonisation of minds.'[104] Serreau notes, 'je pense que les problèmes que notre civilisation doit affronter sont, précisément, les problèmes de la décolonisation des ex-colonisés.'[105] Serreau was a firm believer in linking decolonisation to European capitals and acknowledging that it would not be limited to countries going through the decolonisation process:

> Je pense que la forme traditionnelle du théâtre en Occident, à Paris en tout cas, paraît ne plus correspondre aux exigences de la société moderne et que le public a besoin d'un théâtre qui le mette en rapport avec les problèmes du monde dans son ensemble. Il a besoin de se décrocher de son vieux nationalisme.[106]

A fully-qualified architect, Serreau lost the sight in one eye during his studies, making it difficult for him to practice professionally, although he brought this expertise to his productions by working simultaneously to direct but also stage plays.[107] The resonance of both these experiences can be felt in Serreau's staging of Kateb's work which encouraged a polyphonous approach, as exemplified by his use of technology in the theatre:

> Une fois Kateb est arrivé, la collaboration avec Serreau tint du combat [...] c'était au tour de Serreau d'inventer tous les jours un autre jeu pour les acteurs, d'autres projections sur l'écran qui dédoublaient la dimension poétique dans le temps et dans l'espace, montrant en contrepoint, aux épisodes de la guerre d'Algérie, des images d'Epinal de la conquête, des visages de Vietnamiens, des visages en gros plan des acteurs [...].[108]

The production therefore became a transcolonial critique presenting a generalised anti-colonial message as opposed to focusing only on Algeria. This also reflects Kateb's own experience of having visited Vietnam, where he says they 'emportaient toute leur histoire au théâtre' meaning theatre acts as a means of conserving and transmitting history.[109]

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[104] Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind* (1986).
[105] Jean-Marie Serreau quoted in Elisabeth Auclaire - Tamaroff and Barthélémy, *Jean-Marie Serreau: Découvreur des théâtres* (1986), p. 110.
[106] Noured Ayouch, 'Entrevue avec Jean-Marie Serreau', *Souffles: Revue culturelle arabe du Maghreb*, 13/14 (1969), p. 17.
[107] Elisabeth Auclaire - Tamaroff and Barthélémy, 'Les décors dans la mise en scène', *Jean-Marie Serreau: Découvreur des théâtres* (1986), pp. 169-186. The chapter focuses on the set design and architectural plans of Jean-Marie Serreau for his productions.
[108] Kateb Yacine cited Ibid, p. 119.
[109] Interview with Kateb Yacine: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XE5QTw0-dOQ&ab_channel=zingaQszoo, [first accessed 20/12/2019].

Serreau provided the atmosphere and physical space in which postcolonial theatre could thrive without the limits of censorship and could develop in a variety of different forms, both European and non-European. As Kateb remembered:

> Dans *Les Ancêtres*, je voyais un vautour projeté sur l'écran. Mais Serreau eut l'idée toute simple de faire jouer le vautour par un acteur. Il pensa tout de suite à Bachir Touré, un excellent acteur sénégalais. Celui-ci retrouva un vieux chant du Sénégal, où il était question d'ancêtres et de vautour...C'est ainsi qu'un Français aida deux Africains à retrouver leurs sources.[110]

Serreau championed non-European actors and his performances are a testament to this. Nevertheless, marrying tradition and modernity proved difficult for many aspects of Serreau's plays, as Gilbert Amy who produced the music for the 1958 production of *Le Cadavre encerclé* also notes:

> Il y avait, à l'origine, deux tentations également dangereuses pour les musiciens. La première était de puiser largement dans le folklore nord-africain sans grand souci de chronologie ni de géographie (entreprise impossible), et d'en rapporter, sinon une citation littérale, du moins une couleur locale approximative. La second peut se définir ainsi: s'éloignant complètement de la réalité ethnique de la pièce et la plaçant hors de ses coordonnées initiales, définir par rapport à elle le décor sonore comme superposition 'occidentale', ou 'européenne', le clivage des deux mondes se faisant tant bien que mal.[111]

This question of how to deal with the mix of new technology and old traditions, and 'occidentale' versus African, present in both Kateb's and Bouzaher's collections, returns us to the question of modernity.

In his essay on the concept of 'reprendre' the Congolese philosopher V.Y. Mudimbe grapples with how to produce artwork and writing in European languages whilst maintaining an African tradition or literature without simply becoming a passive vehicle for imported Western writing techniques. He defines the term 'reprendre' as:

> taking up an interrupted tradition, *not out of a desire for purity,* which could testify only to the imaginations of dead ancestors, *but in a way that reflects the conditions of today*. Second, 'reprendre' suggests a methodical assessment, the artist's labour beginning, in effect, with an evaluation of the tools, means, and projects of art within a social context *transformed by colonialism and by later currents, influences, and fashions from abroad*. Finally, 'reprendre' implies a pause, a meditation, a query on the meaning of the two preceding exercises.[112]

The incorporation and marrying of tradition with modernity is key to both Kateb's and Bouzaher's use of time; both meander in and out of the present and back into the past almost seamlessly and without necessarily signalling it to the audience.

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[110] Kateb Yacine cited in Elisabeth Auclaire - Tamaroff and Barthélémy, *Jean-Marie Serreau: Découvreur des théâtres* (1986), p. 121.
[111] Gilbert Amy, 'A propos d'une musique de scène pour *Le Cadavre encerclé*' in Kateb Yacine, *Le Cercle des représailles* (Paris: Seuil, 1959), p. 68.
[112] V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press; London: James Currey, 1988), p. 155. My emphases.

'Le Cadavre encerclé' follows the fate of Lakhdar, injured or possibly dead at the play's opening but who goes on to look for his lover Nedjma whilst also encountering his friends Mustapha, Hassan, Tahar and a French woman named Marguerite. Lakhdar finds himself imprisoned and dealing with the police as well as listening to a 'chœur de femmes' representing the voices of the Algerian people more generally. Time is non-linear and non-chronological in 'Le Cadavre encerclé', returning us to Glissant's description of it as 'réalisme poétique […] lequel ne veut rien oublier'[113], it serves to bear witness to French colonialism, in particular the Massacre de Sétif on 8 May 1945.[114] The play opens with the main protagonist Lakhdar, an 'homme tué pour une cause apparemment inexplicable tant que [sa] mort n'a pas donné de fruit.'[115] However, in this same monologue Lakhdar mentions that 'Ici c'est la rue des vandales [...] ici que je suis né.'[116] At the very start of the play the French audience is plunged into confusion as to whether the character in front of us is alive or dead, undermining traditional Aristotelian notions of drama and catharsis, which normally sees the death of the protagonist at the end of a play, not the start. The uncertainty as to Lakhdar's state of being continues in the play's next scene where the stage direction reads 'Nedjma aperçoit Lakhdar parmi les cadavres', but then Lakhdar speaks 'Je me retrouve dans notre ville [...] Je sors enfin de cette Mort tenace et de la ville morte où me voici enseveli.'[117] The ambiguous language here, playing on the word 'mort' meaning death but also its more informal adjective, here implying an empty or uneventful town, makes it unclear whether he has really been buried or it is simply a metaphor for escaping the desolation of his home town. As the scene progresses Nedjma and Lakhdar begin to speak to one another about the events leading up to the 'monceau de cadavres débordant sur le pan de mur' present at the play's opening scene suggesting that the play's events are happening perhaps in reverse order.[118] According to the stage direction, these bodies 's'agitent dans la rue' and a spotlight is placed upon them, refusing the French audience the possibility of looking away from the violence being committed in Algeria.[119]

[113] Edouard Glissant, 'Le Chant profond de Kateb Yacine', in Kateb Yacine, *Le Cercle des représailles* (1959), p. 10.
[114] On the 8 of May 1945, VE Day in Europe, in French Algeria celebrations in Sétif and Guelma were cut short when soldiers fired on Algerians carrying the Algerian flag in the street. This lead to hundreds of deaths (the official number is still unknown) and thousands imprisoned. For more on these massacres see: Mehdi Lallaoui, 'L'autre 8 mai 1945', *Hommes et Migrations*, 1187.1 (1995), 62-63 and Jean-Louis Planche, *Sétif 1945, Histoire d'un massacre annoncé* (Paris: Perrin, 2006).
[115] Kateb Yacine, *Le Cercle des représailles* (1959), p. 16.
[116] Ibid., p. 15.
[117] Ibid., p. 25.
[118] Ibid., p. 15.
[119] Ibid.

This refusal of a traditional plot line and linear narrative serves to remind the audience of the cyclical nature of violence, perpetuated throughout the history of humankind. This is achieved by anchoring the play neither in the past nor the present, again emphasising the resurgence of past events into the everyday. As Jane Hiddleston notes, 'the movement of man is not simply a journey of linear progress, but a cyclical motion of simultaneous projection and retrojection.'[120] Kateb reinforces this cyclical notion by re-introducing the same characters across all of his work, both prose and theatre: Lakhdar, Nedjma, Mustapha, Hassan and Tahar all featuring and re-appearing in several of the plays and the novel as an ongoing haunting presence. Although not ghosts per se, the comings and goings of these ethereal characters echo what Clare Finburgh Delijani has noted in relation to Jean Genet's work: They serve to remember those who were killed at Sétif, and prevent them from fading into oblivion but without monumentalising them.[121] Thus differently to Vinaver's 'monument scene', explored in the previous chapter, Kateb remembers and bears witness to the dead of Sétif by placing them, quite literally, in the spotlight on stage.

Attempting to track the logic behind African literature written in European languages, Mudimbe contends that:

> [it] has been suggested that there are two main sociological explanations for the genesis of African literature in European languages: first, that this literature is a direct consequence of colonization; second, that it has been made possible by the Western system of schooling. *In other words, these explanations imply that African literary works as well as commentaries on them depend on, and at the same time can be accounted for by, the European norms of social appropriations of discourse*. Thus, this literature, if it makes sense, would do so only insofar as these external conditions of possibility determine it as literature.[122]

Therefore, despite attempts to achieve new forms of African literature in European languages, it will still be judged and held up against European norms of what is 'good' literature, somewhat reminiscent of the value judgements imposed on plays by the Lord Chamberlain's Readers in the second chapter of this thesis and the censorship of form. This is reinforced by the fact that most French-language publishing houses in the 1950s and 1960s would have been based in Paris, an issue which has only begun to change in the last few decades.[123] This meant only writers with contacts in France could be published and that their work had to appeal to a metropolitan French readership. By introducing an unfamiliar structure and chronology in his

[120] Jane Hiddleston, 'Man in Motion: Kateb Yacine and the poetics of revolution' (2013), p. 437.
[121] Clare Finburgh Delijani, 'The Anti-Monumental Cemetery: Ghosts in Jean Genet's "Quatre Heures à Chatila"', *French Studies* 74.4 (2020) 587–604 (p. 587).
[122] V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa* (1988), p. 179. My emphasis.
[123] For more information on publishing trends in Francophone literature see: Ruth Bush, *Publishing Africa in French: Literary Institutions and Decolonisation 1945-1967* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016).

plays, Kateb avoids these 'external conditions' as he explains, 'je rejette le monde de creation, dit cultivé'[124] meaning pandering to European tastes, avoiding the problems incurred by Reckord in the second chapter of this thesis. As Raymond O. Elaho points out, Kateb's work avoids all attempts at definition because it removes 'toute distinction de genres' and is most accurately referred to simply as a 'text'.[125] Thus, to return to our definition of censorship as means to *censure* or categorise, Kateb actively avoids this, instead presenting both his plays and novel as one extended piece of work, eventually encapsulated by the title *Le Polygone étoilé* in 1966. Time and chronology therefore work to both destabilise the reader or audience and avoid classifying Kateb's work into any kind of literary movement or genre.

In a similar way, Bouzaher manipulates the audience's accepted, Western notion of time by using real events and dates but interspersing them with more localised, personal events, presenting a mixture of Western and non-Western *faits divers*. The play 'On ne capture pas le soleil' imagines the final conversations between victims 'écroués dans une cuve à vin' who were 'asphyxiés' at the hands of the French army.[126] Two 'acteurs' start the play asking the question 'Que s'est-il passé le 13 et le 14 mars 1957?':

> Une voix. Le gouvernement indonésien avait démissionné.
>
> Une voix. Six personnes avaient été tuées à la suite d'un accident d'avion près de la Nouvelle-Delhi.
>
> Une voix. Le personnel des P.T.T. et le personnel au sol d'Air-France avaient fait grève.
>
> Une voix. A Colomb-Béchard le général de Gaulle, qui n'était pas encore chef du gouvernement de Paris, avait déclaré: 'Le Sahara français est, pour notre pays, une chance immense. Il ne s'agit pas que nous le perdions et nous ne le perdrons pas, grâce surtout à l'armée française.[127]

Although some of these dates seem to be reliable, others are not. The Indonesian president Sukarno declared a military coup on the 14 of March 1957, suggesting that Bouzaher's dates are accurate. However, the plane crash in New Delhi appears to have happened in 1958 and the speech given by de Gaulle took place in November/December 1959, as an article from the *Le Monde* newspaper attests:

> Tout récemment, à la suite de la décision officielle du gouvernement français de faire exploser une bombe atomique au Sahara, décision annoncée par le ministre français des armées, le gouvernement marocain a renouvelé par note verbale ses démarches auprès de la France, afin qu'elle renonce à son projet.[128]

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[124] Kateb Yacine, interviewed (23/02/1967) https://www.rfi.fr/fr/emission/20180814-yacine-kateb-khellouti-romancier-poete-dramaturge-essayiste [first accessed 15/02/2021].
[125] Raymond O. Elaho, 'A la recherche du "Nouveau Roman" Africain: "Le Polygone Étoilé" de Kateb Yacine', *Présence Africaine*, 107.1 (1978), 162-174 (p. 165).
[126] Hocine Bouzaher, *Des voix dans la casbah* (1960), p. 25. These are real events which did happen on several occasions during the War of Independence. See for instance Raphaëlle Branche's *La Torture et l'armée pendant la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), p. 158.
[127] Ibid., p. 24.
[128] [unknown author], *Le Monde*, (30/12/1959). See also article in *Le Monde* 'Politique atomique: "La France, en se dotant de l'armement nucléaire rend service à l'équilibre du monde."' (12/11/1959). Despite this speech, de Gaulle does seem to have visited the area in March 1957 but does not seem to have given a speech at the time.

Bouzaher therefore seems to be playing with the audience's sense of time and reliable press information. In a similar way to that of Kateb, he is undermining the French audience's means of relating the passing of time, suggesting that it is untrustworthy but also that the events described have relevance both in the past and the present, such that their exact date is rendered irrelevant.

Further to this, the events of the massacre in Algeria on the 13th and 14th of March 1957 are read out by the 'acteur' from a copy of '*Resistance Algérienne* […] à la page 5 du numéro 32 paru entre le 1er et le 10 juin 1957':

> une centaine d'Algériens sont arrêtés et conduits au poste militaire d'Ain-Isser […] 250 nouvelles personnes furent ramenés au post-militaire [ils] se virent entassées dans les cuves de vin d'une ferme post-militaire. Cette nuit-là, des grenades lacrymogènes jetées dans deux cuves entrainèrent la mort par asphyxie de 43 civils.[129]

This technique of reading out the historical facts of an event recalls both Vinaver's *Huissiers* and *Eleven Men Dead at Hola Camp*. However, Vinaver intersperses the facts about Algeria with comedy, superficial conversations about hair length and the internal politics of the French government. *Hola Camp* used the Hansard reports of the Hola Camp killings but set them to improvised movements attempting to recreate the violence inflicted on the Mau Mau. Bouzaher's play sees the events read out and then enacted on stage in the scenes that follow, the reading acting as a preface as opposed to a part of the action. Nevertheless, the effect is the same: the past becomes the present, the stage acting as a site of memory to the victims, the audience bearing witness to these terrible events and the play itself serving as a lasting testimony to these deaths. At the play's close, Bouzaher returns to the untrustworthy nature of Western time, reflecting Johannes Fabian's idea that 'time seeks to objectify […] the primitive, the Other' and that due to colonialism 'there is no knowledge of the Other which is not also a temporal, historical, a political act.'[130] Bouzaher challenges this, situating the onstage events in the context of the Western world however, unlike at the play's opening, no dates are given here:

> Deuxième Acteur. A Paris, une foule nombreuse se bouscule devant les guichets des cinémas, sur les grands boulevards. Les films primés à Cannes et à Venise tiennent l'affiche.
>
> Premier Acteur. La Croix-Rouge Internationale a toujours son siège à Genève, au cœur de l'Europe.

[129] Hocine Bouzaher, *Des voix dans la casbah* (1960), p. 25.
[130] Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York and Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2014), p. 1.

> Deuxième Acteur. Et à Nuremberg, au sortir de la deuxième guerre mondiale, le juge américain près le tribunal militaire international déclarait solennellement que 'la civilisation ne pourrait pas survivre, si ces crimes devaient à nouveau être commis.[131]

By removing the dates featured at the beginning of the play, Bouzaher aims to widen the relevance of these events and bring the past, in this case the Nazi genocide, into the present. By doing so, he draws parallels between the present situation of torture and murder in Algeria and that of the Holocaust. In a similar way to Vinaver's plays, time becomes expandable and reaches across from the Nuremberg trials to the ongoing Algerian war in 1960, echoing Rothberg's aforementioned concept of *multidirectional* memory as a means of transcending time.[132] As Fabian points out, postcolonial writing undermines colonialism's use of time which used 'one-way history: progress, development, modernity (and their negative mirror images: stagnation, underdevelopment, tradition)' to justify its 'civilising' project.[133]

This *décadrage* of time, opens up possibilities for Bouzaher to bring into question the double standards applied by the French when it came to human rights and the treatment (and torture) of Algerian prisoners. Kateb, more indirectly, presents an alternative means of perceiving time and history which adheres neither to Western clock time nor the Christian meaning of life and death. As Jansen notes 'every reading of history is [...] a re-reading […] and in a sense a violation of history "as it really happened."'[134] Kateb and Bouzaher provide us with an alternative reading of history to counterbalance the Eurocentric perspective imposed by colonialism.

Depictions of Women

In addition to using French as a means of opening up our understandings of time and history, Kateb and Bouzaher use the language of the coloniser to present the role of women in the Algerian revolution and discuss their position in Algerian society more generally. Although female revolutionary agency has been explored retrospectively in the works of Francophone Algerian writers such as Assia Djebar, Leïla Sebbar, Hélène Cixous and Maïssa Bey as well as in the well-known film *La Bataille d'Alger*, writing acknowledging their contribution as the war was taking place remains obscure. [135] The links between time, gender and nationalism have been noted by Anne McClintock who argues that:

> Women are [often] represented as the atavistic and authentic body of national tradition (inert, backward-looking and natural) *embodying nationalism's conservative principle of continuity*. *Men, by contrast,*

[131] Hocine Bouzaher, *Des voix dans la casbah* (1960), p. 76.
[132] See introduction of previous chapter for a full definition of Rothberg's concept, multi-directional memory.
[133] Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (2014), p. 144.
[134] Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship* (1991), p. 27.
[135] Gillo Pontecorvo, *La Bataille d'Alger* (1966). Women can be seen smuggling bombs and equipment in their clothes to help the FLN.

> *represent the progressive agent of national modernity* (forward-thrusting, potent and historic), embodying nationalism's progressive, or revolutionary principle of discontinuity. Nationalism's anomalous relation to time is thus managed as a natural relation to gender.[136]

Women's role in the construction of a nation and national identity is key and, in the case of the Algerian War of Independence, their involvement took several different forms. Natalya Vince has highlighted the varying ways women contributed to the fight for an independent Algeria which included nursing, cooking, fighting, spying, making and planting bombs, to name but a few activities.[137] Women from all over Algeria, both rural and urban, as well as some European women were involved in the independence movement, ultimately helping to defeat the French colonial forces.

In the midst of the conflict itself (in 1959), Fanon wrote about the role of Algerian women in his essay 'L'Algérie se dévoile' in which he considers the desire of the coloniser to 'dévoiler' the Algerian woman:

> Dans le programme colonialiste, c'est à la femme que revient la mission historique de bousculer l'homme algérien. Convertir la femme, la gagner aux valeurs étrangères, l'arracher à son statut, *c'est à la fois conquérir un pouvoir réel sur l'homme et posséder les moyens pratiques, efficaces, de déstructurer la culture algérienne*.[138]

French colonisers went to great lengths to win over the Algerian female population, in order to then influence their male counterparts. Fanon's essay, although enlightening in terms of the roles undertaken by women and the male perception of female independence fights, is somewhat limited in that he assumes women had no prior involvement in the Algerian revolution and that until 1955 the fight was led exclusively by men:

> Les caractéristiques révolutionnaires de ce combat, la nécessité d'une clandestinité absolue obligent le militant à tenir sa femme dans une ignorance absolue. Au fur et à mesure de l'adaptation de l'ennemi aux formes de combat, des difficultés nouvelles apparaissent qui nécessitent des solutions originales. La décision d'engager les femmes comme éléments actifs dans la Révolution algérienne ne fut pas prise à la légère.[139]

Fanon's refusal to acknowledge the agency of Algerian women has been noted both by McClintock and Vince who argue that Algerian women *were* involved in the conflict right from its beginnings and even before.[140] One of Vince's interviewees, Lucette Hadj Ali, explains how

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[136] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality In the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 359. My emphases.
[137] Natalya Vince, *Our Fighting Sisters: Nation, Memory and Gender in Algeria, 1954-2012* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), p. 4.
[138] Frantz Fanon, *L'an V de la révolution algérienne* (Paris: Maspero, 1959), p. 22. My emphases.
[139] Ibid., p. 30.
[140] McClintock argues: '[Fanon] takes pains to point out that women's militancy does not precede the national revolution. Algerian women are not self-motivating agents, nor do they have prior histories or consciousness of revolt from which to draw. Their initiation in the revolution is learned, but it is not learned from other women or from other societies, nor is it transferred analogously from local feminist grievances.' Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather* (1995), p. 365.

she helped Algerian women get the vote when, in 1945, it had been given to European women. Hadj Ali participated in the organisation of demonstrations demanding the same opportunity be allowed for Algerian women.[141]

Kateb and Bouzaher's depictions and acknowledgements of female involvement in the conflict take advantage of writing in French in order to convey to the metropolitan French audience the sacrifices made in the name of independence. Bouzaher presents us with a dedication to the women of Algeria as a kind of preface to the start of his first play 'On ne capture pas le soleil'. Despite addressing 'nos mères', 'nos sœurs', 'nos épouses', 'nos filles', 'nos veuves' and 'nos orphelines de guerre',[142] the text seems to be more of a triumphant illustration of female involvement and sacrifice than a text intended to be read by Algerian women, especially given that in 1954 'ninety-one percent of the Algerian or "French Muslim" population was illiterate' and only 4.5 percent of women could read and write, and thirteen percent of men.'[143] Moreover, Bouzaher seems to acknowledge female participation in the Algerian revolution but does not consider them as having agency in the situation: their role is secondary. His address to all Algerian women, echoes Fanon's approach which Woodhull understands as 'all Algerian women are the Algerian nation and, by implication, all Algerian women are embodied in a single female figure—as if women in Algeria comprised a homogeneous, monolithic group.'[144] As we shall see, Kateb's approach is more nuanced than this homogenised perspective.

The question of the intended audience of Francophone Algerian (or African) dramaturgy was a matter of great concern for Jean-Marie Serreau. In an interview with the Moroccan writer Noured Ayouch in 1972, Serreau fiercely defends his troupe's decision to perform African theatre in France, in French. When asked if the 'peuples africains' should be the 'priorité' in order to '[atteindre] un public qui [est] privé de théâtre [car] les premiers lésés dans l'affaire sont les pays d'origine', Serreau retorts that African theatres are welcome to adapt the plays into their own languages and perform them outside of France. However, for him:

> Il faut autant se battre pour *imposer* ces pièces en France que pour les *imposer* en Afrique. C'est là où l'on a probablement affaire à des hommes libres, des vrais; je parle de Kateb et de Césaire. Depestre aussi. Et c'est vrai qu'il y a combat sur les deux fronts. Ce n'est pas tellement facile.[145]

[141] Lucette Hadj Ali quoted in Natalya Vince, *Our Fighting Sisters* (2015), p. 53.
[142] Hocine Bouzaher, *Des voix dans la casbah* (1960), p. 13.
[143] Natalya Vince, *Our Fighting Sisters* (2015), p. 40.
[144] Winifred Woodhull, *Transfigurations of the Maghreb: Feminism, Decolonization, and Literatures* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 2.
[145] Jean-Marie Serreau quoted in Noured Ayouch, 'entrevue avec Jean-Marie Serreau' (01/01/1969), p. 17. My emphases.

Serreau's choice of the verb 'imposer' here is not coincidental, recalling the imposition of language in French colonies. Therefore, by *imposing* his 'théâtre de la décolonisation' in France, it forces the French audience to face up to the realities of colonialism and the wars of decolonisation: a means of refocussing or *recadrage* of the French audience's perspective. By referring to 'des hommes libres, des vrais' as being in Africa, Serreau again subverts the French audience's assumption that the European individual lives in greater liberty than his African counterpart.

Similarly, Bouzaher subverts cultural assumptions surrounding religion when addressing Algerian women in his collection. The dedication to women, appearing after his mock interview and before the text of 'On ne capture pas le soleil' carries the epigraph 'Dans tout le monde, on racontera à la louange de cette femme ce qu'elle vient de faire' from 'Saint Marc (XIV, 9)', again suggesting that the collection was destined for a metropolitan French audience (even more so when we consider that it was printed by Maspero in Paris).[146] As this would have been difficult to stage, perhaps the play was intended to be read out loud as opposed to performed in its entirety, Bouzaher knowing that it would be impossible to put the play on in France in 1960. Emilie Morin notes certain difficulties faced by Bouzaher, beyond the initial censorship:

> in the Editions Maspero's literary magazine *Partisans*, Georges Dupré, one of Bouzaher's few contemporary critics, suggested that theatre directors had been approached (possibly by him) to discuss a possible performance, and that their negative responses crystallized around 'le problème Bouzaher', leading to verdicts such as '[t]his is not theatre!' and 'this is theatre for illiterate militants.'[147]

Thus, again, we see a further instance of censorship being imposed not only by the government but also by the literary *milieu* and their expectations of what theatre should and should not do. Nevertheless, the Biblical quotation is significant, recognisably taken from the Bible and famously ambiguous as to whether the woman referenced is Mary Magdalene or a woman Christ encounters in the street who pours perfume on his head. By including a Christian, Western reference illustrating female participation in the burial ritual, Bouzaher seems to be using the teachings of the *mission civilisatrice* (which included adhering to French, Christian values) and appropriating it to apply to the cause of Algerian independence. Christianity therefore no longer 'belongs' only to the French but can be used and applied in the fight against colonialism.

[146] Hocine Bouzaher, *Des voix dans la casbah* (1960), p. 13.
[147] Emilie Morin, 'Unspeakable Tragedies: Censorship and the New Political Theatre of the Algerian War of Independence'(2015), pp. 34-35.

Unlike Fanon, Bouzaher *does* acknowledge the involvement of women in the independence movement prior to the start of the war:

> Bien avant le matin brumeux du 1er novembre 1954, vous avez payé au prix fort, dans votre cœur, dans votre corps, de lourdes dettes.
>
> […]
>
> Bien avant le matin brumeux du 1er novembre 1954, vous êtes demeurées le foyer inextinguible où se raniment les vertus patriotiques d'un peuple indomptable, d'un peuple qui a toujours dit non à l'occupant étranger et oppresseur.
>
> Votre deuil […] refugié au cœur des carrières et fours à chaux de Guelma, sur les hauts plateaux sétifiens, entre les gorges de Kerrata, aux approches de Monte-Cassino et dans les deltas d'Indochine […] votre deuil […] n'était que la promesse de fruits mûrs, de lendemains meilleurs.
>
> […]
>
> Aujourd'hui […] l'Histoire vous trouve sur le champ de bataille […] luttant coude à coude avec vos frères
>
> […] héroïnes obscures qui travaillez en silence pour le triomphe de nos idéaux nationaux […] le monde entier connaitra ce à quoi vous avez consenti.[148]

The use of the verb 'consenti' returns us to the lack of agency with which Bouzaher views Algerian women. They have not chosen to act in these events but have agreed to or consented to it but it is not *of their own doing*. Bouzaher's recognition of the sacrifice and fighting of Algerian women reads like a speech, rehearsed and edited to contain repeated sentences and rhetoric, two sections beginning 'Bien avant' and another two 'Aujourd'hui'. The clarity of this timeline of events again reinforces the idea that this text was destined for audiences in the *hexagone*. The vocabulary employed, 'inextinguible' and 'indomptable' is pompous and grandiose echoing political 'langue de bois' from French politicians. Further to this, the geographical descriptions include key locations in Algeria (Guelma in the North East of the country and Sétif both famous for the massacres that began there on 8th May 1945) but then extended to 'Monte-Cassino' and 'Indochine'.

Monte-Cassino was a famous battle that took place in Italy during World War Two from January to May 1944 and it is especially well-known in ex-French colonies because of huge numbers of casualties suffered, particularly in the North African regiments.[149] By including this episode which has become emblematic of the exploitation of colonial troops for European gains alongside that of 'Indochine' which obtained independence in 1954, Bouzaher exposes the transnational and transcolonial fight for independence from French colonial rule, both past and present. The promise that the world will be told of women's fighting in this war of independence seems hopeful but, as Vince points out, this never occurred: 'a patriarchal

[148] Hocine Bouzaher, *Des voix dans la casbah* (1960), pp. 14-15.
[149] The battle and the extent of the casualties are effectively depicted in the 2006 film *Indigènes* directed by Rachid Bouchareb.

nationalist movement […] removed [female fighters] from the historical narrative, apart from as fetishized symbols, and denied them any real role in the post-colonial project.'[150] Furthermore, in 1974, out of 336, 784 officially recognised veterans, only 10, 949 were women again suggesting that many have been overlooked or forgotten. [151]

Aside from this dedication at the front of the collection, Bouzaher's plays do not contain a single female character, although it could be argued that his characters are gender-neutral as they are not given names as such but ungendered professions. Nevertheless, his praising of the role of women in the fight for independence serves to signal to the French reader or audience the extent to which Algerians are invested in the fight for independence. Although it does seem that Bouzaher includes this homage as an obligation, or perhaps as an afterthought, instead of integrating it into the main text along with the introductory 'interview' which opens the collection. The absence of recognition for women's work in the liberation movement is therefore pre-empted by Bouzaher here, just as their voices and legacy seems to have been silenced, forgotten or censored in post-colonial Algeria.[152] Bouzaher therefore uses French as a means of re-appropriating Algerian women from the coloniser, in a similar way to Fanon, re-claiming this perceived monolithic group for the Algerian cause. As Woodhull notes in reference to Fanon he fails to notice the potential dangers for women that Algerian nationalism might cause.[153]

Contrary to this, Kateb's consideration of women is more nuanced: he considers the impact of the colonial situation, the war of independence and the postcolonial situation of both European and Algerian women. His novel, *Nedjma* (meaning star) is named after the book's female protagonist whom the four main characters Rachid, Mourad, Lakhdar and Mustapha orbit around. Nedjma also features heavily in *Le Cercle des représailles* in which she seems to have more agency and character development than in the novel, which sees her only through the lens of the male gaze, and where she remains what Edward Still calls, 'an anxiogenic figure of obsession for masculine protagonists.'[154] Much has been written on Nedjma and Kateb's portrayal of her which is often read as a symbol for Algerian independence (the star on the Algerian flag).[155] Jacqueline Arnaud concluded that 'Nedjma n'est plus une femme mais un

[150] Natalya Vince, *Our Fighting Sisters* (2015), p. 4.
[151] Ibid., p. 17.
[152] For more information on the post-colonial legacy of female fighters see Natalya Vince's chapter 'Being remembered and being forgotten' in Ibid, pp. 212 – 251.
[153] Winifred Woodhull, *Transfigurations of the Maghreb: Feminism, Decolonization, and Literatures* (1993), p. 2.
[154] Edward Still, *Representing Algerian Women* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), p. 37.
[155] More recent studies have considered this more closely and suggest that this reading is overly simplistic: 'close reading of the work actually unsettles any straightforward association between Nedjma and Algeria, and she turns

mythe de la femme.'[156] Nedjma is certainly ethereal in many ways, especially the juxtaposition of her against the character of Marguerite, a French officer's daughter, who appears in 'Le Cadavre encerclé' and, as well as Nedjma, develops a romantic attachment to Lakhdar, the play's protagonist. The choice of Marguerite as a name is significant given the history of the French-settler town of Margueritte which was consistently attacked by members of the Righa tribe. Most famously, in 1901 the European men of the town were held hostage until they agreed to recite Islamic prayers and wear North African dress.[157] Marguerite therefore seems to embody the dual identity of French Algeria, Kateb offering up a more ambiguous allegiance in the ongoing war of independence than that presented in Bouzaher's text.

When we first encounter Nedjma in the play, 'elle déchire son voile, sa joue, sa robe et se lamente'[158] which seems to play on the Western fantasies and frustrations surrounding the 'veiled woman' in the aforementioned essay by Fanon.[159] By beginning the play in this way, Kateb immediately draws in the European spectator desirous to find out the reason behind this unusual behaviour. It could also be symbolic of Nedjma's decision to join the independence cause, which for many women, did require them to stop wearing a veil either as a way of blending in with European women in cities such as Algiers or because, as Fanon points out, 'le voile est abandonné au cours de l'action révolutionnaire.'[160]

In contrast to Nedjma, Kateb introduces the character of Marguerite, who, when we first see her on stage with Lakhdar repeatedly makes references to the fact that she was 'au volant' and had to break, in order to avoid running him over with her car.[161] Marguerite is therefore the picture of a modern, French woman and as the daughter of an 'officier' she is the epitome of the enemy to Algerian independence. The characters of Marguerite and Nedjma are juxtaposed against one another; as one leaves the stage, the other appears.[162] Marguerite displays a significant sense of agency in her few seconds on stage; driving, helping Lakhdar

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out also not to fulfil the characters', or the author's, putative dream of a hybridized but liberated new community. She remains, however, a site for a complex interweaving of a nexus of frustrated sexual and cultural desires.' Jane Hiddleston, 'That Obscure Subject of Desire: France, Algeria, and the Circumscription of the Feminine in Kateb Yacine's "Nedjma"', *French Forum*, 38.3 (2013) 133-145 (p. 134).

[156] Jacqueline Arnaud, *Recherches sur la littérature maghrébine de langue française: le cas de Kateb Yacine* (1982), p. 722.

[157] Jennifer Sessions, 'Making Settlers Muslim: Religion, Resistance and Everyday Life in Nineteenth-Century French Algeria', *French History*, 33.2 (June 2019), 259-77 (p. 260).

[158] Kateb Yacine, *Le Cercle des représailles* (Paris: Seuil, 1959), p. 18.

[159] Frantz Fanon, *L'An V de la révolution algérienne* (1959), p. 26: 'L'Européen face à l'Algérienne veut voir. Il réagit de façon agressive devant cette limitation de sa perception […] C'est la rage de colonialiste à vouloir dévoiler l'algérienne, c'est son parti de gagner coûte que coûte la victoire du voile qui vont provoquer l'arc-boutant de l'autochtone.'

[160] Ibid., p. 43.

[161] Kateb Yacine, *Le Cercle des représailles* (1959), p. 34.

[162] Ibid., p. 36.

up and onto the bed and her job as an 'infirmière'. Contrary to this, when Nedjma appears she explains 'je porte le deuil, mais tu n'es mort que pour moi', suggesting a passivity and helplessness in the face of Lakhdar's death, even though it is unclear whether he is actually dead.[163]

The differences between the two women are not so much articulated but played out via the use of 'cinq projecteurs': 'le troisième projecteur désigne l'impuissante provocation de Nedjma, dont l'œil amer semble dissoudre la douceur rivale.'[164] By concluding the scene in this way Kateb, helped by Serreau, succeeds in refusing a Manichean understanding of events; presenting the complexity of the characters as well as projecting their faces onto the stage, the production focuses on each individual's lived experience of the war, as opposed to two opposing discourses. For the audience, this allows for understanding, both on the side of the nationalist fighting for independence, the French army and the 'pied-noir' population defending what they felt to be their right to remain in Algeria after several generations of settler colonialism.[165] In a similar way to Vinaver's Belair and Wen-Ta in *Les Coréens*, the juxtaposition of the two women here works to highlight these differences and, although not necessarily symbolic of the Algerian conflict, their mutual presence on stage is representative of the different kinds of women involved. This is complicated further by Marguerite when she says, 'Je vais fermer la porte' signalling her agreement to hide the events taking place from her father. Following an explosion, a stage direction reads, 'Marguerite vacille, puis se place résolument au centre de l'action. Elle enjambe le corps de son père pour se saisir de Lakhdar, qui se débat abasourdi', making her complicit in the actions of what we imagine to be members of the FLN.[166] The presence of these two seemingly opposing women on stage could reflect the tradition of Algeria theatre to present 'doubling of consciousness' and the 'simultaneous operation of different levels of reality.'[167] The audience is therefore encouraged to imagine the onstage events from a variety of perspectives, helped via the use of screens, Kateb combining Algerian theatrical form into theatre written in French. By nuancing the juxtaposition of these two female characters, Kateb avoids falling into the trap of pitting 'Western modernity' against 'traditionalism' which Woodhull describes as contributing to the

[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid., p. 38.
[165] For more on 'pied-noir' presence and experience in Algeria see: Claire Eldridge, *From Empire to Exile: History and Memory within the Pied-Noir and Harki Communities, 1962-2012* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).
[166] Kateb Yacine, *Le Cercle des représailles* (1959), pp. 38-40.
[167] Khalid Amine and Marvin Carlso, *The Theatres of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia: Performance Traditions of the Maghreb* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 39.

> production and perpetuation of Western power and privilege, for in those discourses, Western subjects — specifically, Western women—are identified with modernity, rationality, individual autonomy, and freedom, all of which depend symbolically and materially on the backwardness, mystification, subordination, and unfreedom of their third-world other-opposites.[168]

Despite her commendable research, Germaine Tillion fed into this discourse as she set the 'tradition-bound female sphere in opposition to the modern nation.'[169] Thus, although the aforementioned Belgian reviewer claiming that Tillion's work was more effective at portraying the 'réalité tragique révélée' of the war in Algeria than Kateb's play, Kateb in fact manages to present a less binary, more nuanced view of the situation of the Algerian woman: another means of breaking away from the *cadre* within which the Algerian woman was viewed through the colonial gaze.

Charles Bonn, points out 'le lecteur étranger à la réalité maghrébine qui ouvre pour la première fois un roman [ou pièce] algérien y cherche le plus souvent un document sur une société qu'il ne connait pas.'[170] Kateb, unlike Bouzaher, problematises the notion of loyalty and complicates any kind of realistic depiction of events taking place in Algeria in 1959, opting instead for what Glissant calls 'realisme poétique.'[171] Unlike in Tillion's work or even in Bouzaher's factual plays, Kateb avoids any kind of 'document sur une société', or didacticism expected by the Western reader. To return to the Belgian review of *Le Cadavre encerclé*, the critics accused the play of:

> mêlant constamment le symbole à l'événement […] la pièce de Kateb Yacine aboutit finalement à ce paradoxe de paraître 'littéraire' alors que l'on sent et que l'on sait son auteur tout nourri de la vérité qu'il entend servir (il suffit, pour s'en convaincre, de relire son très beau roman *Les Boucs*)[172]

Les Boucs (1955) is in fact a book by Moroccan writer Driss Chraïbi, implying a confusion probably with Kateb's *Nedjma* and also a difficulty distinguishing between North African writers, suggesting a homogenous view of North Africans more generally. This resonates with the racist comments written by reviewers concerning the Black actors in *Eleven Men Dead at Hola Camp*: they were perceived as a group without individuality, just as Francophone North African writing seems to be here. In terms of censorship, these examples serve as proof of the colonial mindset's need to categorise and 'censure' colonised peoples into groups. Postcolonial literature is given the same treatment as there seems to be an expectation of what any given North African writer should provide: a clear-cut message concerning the violence taking place

[168] Winifred Woodhull, *Transfigurations of the Maghreb: Feminism, Decolonization, and Literatures* (1993), p. 4.
[169] Ibid., p. 8
[170] Charles Bonn, *Kateb Yacine: Nedjma* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1990), p. 5.
[171] Edouard Glissant, 'Le Chant profond de Kateb Yacine' (1959), p. 10.
[172] J.T., 'Le Cadavre encerclé ', *Le Soir* (27/11/1958).

in Algeria (or Tunisia or Morocco) based on personal, lived experience. When this is not the case, the reviewer is disappointed and disapproving.

In addition to Nedjma and Marguerite, Kateb also presents the audience with the figure of 'la mère de Mustapha' who appears towards the end of 'Le Cadavre encerclé'. Referred to persistently as 'la mère', the absence of a first name designates the intended universality of the character, seeming to represent all mothers mourning for their dead sons:

> Elle porte la tunique bleue des hopitaux psychiatriques […] ni sa silhouette cassée ni ses gestes de douleur n'ont plus rien de féminin […] Elle prononce 'Mustapha!' d'une voix différente, comme si elle pouvait, à travers ce nom mue en formule magique, saisir l'image dissipée de son fils.[173]

Bouzaher makes reference to the sacrifices of mothers in his address 'aux Algériennes' but here Kateb stages, with great poignancy, the tragedy and individual sacrifice experienced across Algeria. The mentally unwell figure of the mother also seems to reflect his own mother's struggles following the massacre is Sétif in which she saw her family decimated.[174] Kateb is therefore able to visually depict the unspeakable and inexpressible pain of sacrifices made in the fight for independence through the voice, or lack thereof, his female characters. Charles Bonn reads the character Nedjma present in *Le Cercle des représailles* as 'un personnage complexe' whose,

> présence-absence tragique en laquelle on peut retrouver l'inscription de l'écriture dans la perte et la folie de la mère de l'écrivain, c'est encore une fois la dynamique ambivalente de l'écriture qu'on retrouve: fécondité qui ne vaut que dans sa propre perte, étrangeté du *pharmakos* grec, bouc émissaire singulier dont le sacrifice permet l'être collectif, et néanmoins multiple.[175]

Thus, Nedjma can be seen to represent the individuality of each Algerian woman and their collective trauma.

Addressing Religion and Blasphemy in French

Religion and blasphemy, along with sexuality, are, and have always been, one of the most common causes of censorship in the theatre. As highlighted in the second chapter of this thesis, the Lord Chamberlain was required to censor any play considered to be blasphemous and Victor Hugo had to 'supprimer les personnages d'évêques' in his play *Amy Robsart* in 1828 because 'les censures […] étaient devenus très sourcilleux sur toutes les références religieuses.'[176] More recently, religion has been the reason for several productions being removed from the stage including *Behzti* (2004) by Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti, banned by the Sikh

[173] Kateb Yacine, *Le Cercle des représailles* (1960), p. 60.
[174] Charles Bonn and Richard Bjornson, 'Kateb Yacine' (1992), p. 63.
[175] Charles Bonn, 'Féminité de l'écriture chez quelques "classiques" masculins algériens: la subversion subvertie ?' https://www.limag.com/Textes/Bonn/FeminiteEcriture.htm [First accessed 30/01/2021].
[176] Odile Krakovitch, *Hugo Censuré: La Liberté au théâtre au XIX siècle* (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1985), p. 41.

community in Birmingham and accused of being blasphemous.[177] In terms of Islam, the most famous contemporary example of religious censorship in literature (within the Anglophone world) is Salmon Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* (1988) which resulted in a *fatwa* placed upon the author on behalf of the Iranian government.[178]

In the post-colonial Maghreb, the possibility of political, or religious censorship has sometimes encouraged Maghreb dramatists to publish possibly troubling works in French, and indeed in France.[179] Kateb has certainly been victim to this post-colonial censorship and gave a speech denouncing religious censorship in Algeria in 1987.[180] Despite this, religion is the focus of many Francophone North African writers such as the aforementioned Abdelkébir Khatibi who uses French to write about intimate, religious practice in Morocco. As Alison Rice has pointed out, writing in French allows for a rejection of French cultural hegemony.[181] Therefore, whilst still using the French tongue as a means of expression many North African Francophone writers adopt a strategy of 'violence' in their writing.[182] Rice cites a particular episode in Khatibi's work *La Mémoire tatouée* (1971) concerning circumscision: 'Regarde les fleurs au plafond; je regardai et mon prépuce tomba'.[183] Rice argues that:

> this [circumcision] ritual is not explained or justified for a foreign readership; it is simply transposed in all its vertiginous fury into the French language. The translation in this text takes place not only on a *semantic* level, but also, and more importantly, on the level of *syntax*.[184]

In other words, it is not just *what* is being said about religion but also *how* it is expressed in French. John Erickson argues that, despite being critical about Islam and religious practices, most Francophone North African writers are not

> set on rejecting Islam and Muhammad, most [of these writers] reject only the dictates imposed by Islamic extremists. Nor is it valid to see them as uncategorically rejecting the religious and social beliefs and practices of the Western cultures in which they have been schooled, for it is only the hegemonic tendencies of those cultures and their discourses, and the ideologically driven aspects of their languages, that they resist.[185]

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[177] For more on the details of these events see: https://www.indexoncensorship.org/2005/01/birmingham-repertory-theatre-behzti/ [First accessed 08/03/2021].
[178] For an extensive study of theatrical production, religion and secularism see: Milija Gluhovic, Jisha Menon (eds.), *Performing the Secular: Religion, Representation, and Politics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, (2017).
[179] Khalid Amine and Marvin Carlso, *The Theatres of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia*: *Performance Traditions of the Maghreb* (2011), p. 3.
[180] For more on Kateb's experiences of censorship post-independence see: Mehana Amrani, 'Le discours préfaciel de Kateb Yacine', *Études littéraires*, 38.2/3 (2007) 201-213.
[181] Alison Rice, 'Translating Plurality: Abdelkébir Khatibi and Postcolonial Writing in French from the Maghreb' in Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (eds.), *Postcolonial Thought in the French Speaking World* (Liverpool: LUP, 2009), p. 116.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Abdelkébir Khatibi, *La Mémoire tatouée* (1971), p. 36.
[184] Alison Rice, 'Translating Plurality: Abdelkébir Khatibi and Postcolonial Writing in French from the Maghreb' (2009), p. 121.
[185] John Erickson, *Islam and Postcolonial Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 2.

Bouzaher and Kateb do not reject Islam, instead they examine Islam and religion more generally as well as inter-religious relations. This section focuses on how Bouzaher and Kateb use French in order to address questions surrounding religion and blasphemy and push the language to its limits, in a similar way to that of Khatibi. Writing in French therefore becomes liberating and subversive as opposed to oppressive. By critiquing the practice of Islam within Algerian culture and the French colonial perspective on religion, both authors foreshadow the repressive regime that was to be installed in post-independence Algeria and headed by Ahmed Ben Bella, elected in a one-sided vote towards the end of 1962.[186] In the context of Algeria and Islam, theatre written in French under colonial rule could be considered blasphemous by Catholic colonisers as well as local Muslim and Jewish groups. Religion and religious motifs feature heavily in Bouzaher and Kateb's work, containing references to all three of the Abrahamic religions.

The second play in Kateb's collection, 'La Poudre de l'intelligence', differs from both 'Le Cadavre encerclé' and 'Les Ancêtres redoublent de férocité' due to its use of comedy and farce genre. Going on to win the prix du Jury at the Festival d'Arras, the production was staged in late 1967 at the Théâtre de l'Epée de Bois in the Bois de Vincennes, in Paris. This is an interesting choice of location given the Bois de Vincennes's history of colonial exhibitions in 1907 and 1931. It suggests that a site which previously used spectacle as a means of entrenching and perpetuating the message of colonial dominance, was later used to mock both Western Christianity as well as Islam: a 'decolonising' or 're-claiming' of the stage.

Although not censored when it was performed, Kateb heavily revised the play for the performance as he wanted to 'laisser "en attente" la fin de la pièce, dans l'espoir que les faits lui permettront de conclure, plus tard, dans une perspective révolutionnaire.'[187] The performance ended with 'le massacre du sultan, de son ministre Oufrik, du mufti et des Frères musulmans'[188] whereas in the text it is only the prince whose death is implied via the stage direction 'râles du prince' and then the 'chœur' who chant 'le prince rêve son dernier rêve'.[189] This would suggest that Kateb reinforced the critique of Islam and implications of blasphemy for the production, which he felt unable to write in the printed text. As one critic remarked:

[186] James McDougall explores the imposition of religious laws and the construction of the post-colonial state in his chapter on 'The Unfinished Revolution, 1962–1992', *A History of Algeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2017) pp. 235-289.
[187] Nicole Zand, 'Trois spectacles sur la rive gauche', *Le Monde* (23/12/1967).
[188] Ibid.
[189] Kateb Yacine, *Le Cercle des représailles* (1959), p. 120.

> Car, jamais, pour Kateb Yacine, cette œuvre qu'il reprend et modèle sans arrêt, ne doit être figée, ossifiée, afin de donner à la communauté musulmane, en quête de sa propre terre, de sa culture, de sa langue, de son passé, une sorte de réactualisation constante.[190]

The refusal to fix meaning, or even an end to the play, returns us to the question of the nature of theatre; unlike a film or a book, an ending can be changed and performed differently with each production or even performance. As already established, this makes theatre and writing for the theatre a potential target for state censorship and could explain the reluctance for a revival. Although this may also be down to the heavy-handed, farcical nature of the play or perhaps due to its overt criticism and ridicule of Islam.

The play follows the character named 'Nuage de Fumée', potentially a reference to chapter 44, verses 11-12 of the Koran in which smoke is said to be a sign of the presence of the prophet Mohammed although in Catholicism, white smoke also signifies the election of a new Pope, suggesting a broader criticism of religion. For Kateb the character serves a comic purpose aiming to outwit and trick the Sultan in power into believing that there is a 'poudre de l'intelligence' which makes life easier and allows individuals to persuade others to do their bidding. As the farce continues, Nuage de Fumée finds himself in a number of sticky situations ultimately resulting in him being named the 'précepteur unique du prince héritier'.[191] Kateb uses the character (and several others) as a mouthpiece via which his scepticism about religion is made clear. His personal criticism of Islam is reflected in an anecdote he recounts about his sister who was unable to get divorced when her husband imposed a second wife on their marriage and in their home. Kateb recounts how he tried to help by getting the Minister of Justice to intervene but religion was more powerful than government and so he was unable to anything.[192] Bonn also claims that Kateb's own trip to Mecca made him 'aggressive toward Islam, transforming the pilgrimage to Mecca into a burlesque (and failed) epic.[193] Nuage de Fumée acts as a kind of Shakespearean fool character, saying what the other characters in the play are not allowed to. However, this could also be a reference to the Algerian theatrical practice of *Garagûz*, 'le théâtre d'ombres' in which comedy is used to mock important figures within the community[194]:

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[190] Nicole Zand, 'Trois spectacles sur la rive gauche', *Le Monde* (23/12/1967).
[191] Kateb Yacine, *Le Cercle des représailles* (1959), p. 110.
[192] See interview with Kateb Yacine: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XE5QTw0-dOQ&ab_channel=zingaQszoo [First accessed 12/12/2020].
[193] Charles Bonn and Richard Bjornson, 'Kateb Yacine' (1992), p. 67.
[194] Arlette Roth points out that it is near impossible to track the history/origins of Algerian theatre. She refers to 'L'échec partiel du théâtre algérien sur le plan esthétique' being due to 'toutes les difficultés affrontées' and in particular those 'dues à la situation coloniale.' *Le Théâtre algérien: De langue dialectale 1926–1954* (Paris: Maspero, 1965), p. 9. She also notes 'Il faut vraisemblablement lier à l'irruption de la civilisation occidentale l'apparition d'un besoin d'expression dramatique', p. 13. However, Khalid Amine and Marvin Carlson have

> Le Policier. Circulez! Circulez! Vous savez bien que nos Ulémas ont interdit le maraboutisme.
>
> Nuage de Fumée. … Pour en avoir le monopole.[195]

The reference here to 'maraboutisme', a particular branch of Islam present in North Africa but more widespread in West Africa, being banned, suggests a form of repression going beyond French colonial rule and within Muslim circles, aiming to reach a transcolonial audience.[196] Kateb also implies that the 'Ulémas', Islamic theologians, maintain the power within the region, again highlighting the limits of French influence on Algerian Muslims. The play's self-conscious use of humour reflects Kateb's efforts to push the boundaries of what was acceptable, calling out the use of blasphemy in his own play:

> Nuage de Fumée (*prononçant des formules*). Ouac, ouac, ô sultan des sultans, ton esprit va s'élancer dans l'espace tu vas rejoindre les prophètes, peut-être même le Créateur.
>
> Le Sultan. Ne blasphémons pas. Tout est prêt?[197]

By mentioning blasphemy directly Kateb meta-theatrically makes the audience aware that he is critiquing religious practices and ridiculing the hierarchy of not just Islam but religious authorities more generally: the mention of 'Le Créateur' here could encompass all three of the Abrahamic religions. However, he is simultaneously mocking hyperbolic French language via the employment of the informal 'tu' form, when addressing the sultan, whom he is supposed to respect.[198] The grandeur of 'ô sultan des sultans' is juxtaposed against the comedy of 'Ouac, ouac', resembling the sound 'couac' used in French to signify a blunder or mistake. French as a language is therefore ridiculed, showing the French audience the ridiculousness of the formalities their language entails. Jacques Alessandra calls this a 'climat de bizutage' in which 'la langue française est pulvérisée, atomisée, reléguée dans son plus simple appareil, débarassée de son lest académique.'[199] By ridiculing French and its usage, Kateb removes it from the pedestal it had been placed on during his colonial education.

Further to this disrespect of the sultan, Kateb reinforces the arbitrary nature of religious fasting rituals, considered to be sacred:

> *Le chœur occupe la scène, muni de balais.*

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disproved this with their extensive study on the history of North African theatre, in particular with reference to the practice of *Garagûz* in *The Theatres of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia: Performance Traditions of the Maghreb* (2011), pp. 38-43.

[195] Kateb Yacine, *Le Cercle des représailles* (1959), p. 88.

[196] For more on marabutism see: Louis Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge: Religion, Power, and Schooling in a West African Muslim Society* (2001), particularly the criticism of the practice on p. 142.

[197] Kateb Yacine, *Le Cercle des représailles* (1959), p. 90.

[198] This can also be seen as a means of denouncing the colonial tendency to address colonised individuals in the 'tu' form, immediately rendering them 'lesser' than the French colonials who called each other 'vous.'

[199] Jacques Alessandra, 'Pour/Quoi Kateb Yacine a-t-il abandonné l'écriture française?' (1982), p. 112.

Premier Balayeur (*fixant le ciel*). C'est bientôt l'heure de rompre le jeûne.

Second Balayeur. Attends au moins que le soleil se couche.

Premier Balayeur. Je te dis que c'est l'heure.

Second Balayeur. Je te dis que non.

Premier Balayeur. Tais-toi!

Second Balayeur. Crapule!

Premier Balayeur. Cornard![200]

The dissection of language continues here with the intentional misspelling of the word 'cornard'. Although perhaps changed in order to avoid censorship, the result is that it again makes the French audience self-conscious of their own language.

The 'jeûne' here presumably refers to the annual fast of Ramadan which ends each day at sunset. The comedic routine of these two sweepers and their disagreement about whether the sun has set or not, is reminiscent of the Vaudeville tradition or the comic dialogues of the double act Vladimir and Estragon in Beckett's *Godot* (1952). However, they could also be a reference to the aforementioned North African tradition of *Garagûz*, 'le théâtre d'ombres' that was played traditionally 'pour la rupture du jeûne du Ramadan.'[201] This 'shadow theatre' is thought to have appeared in Algeria during the sixteenth century, at the same time that Algeria joined the Ottoman Empire.[202] The performances were made up of 'short comic dialogues, dances, and scenes normally involving linguistic misunderstandings, violence, surprising turns, and sexual innuendo.'[203] The practice was regularly witnessed by European travellers in the nineteenth-century and was often an excuse for comic and lewd representations, including Satan dressed in a French uniform.[204] The practice was banned in Algeria in 1843 and then again in 1911.[205] By making reference to a previously censored dramatic practice, Kateb and Bouzaher use French, the language of the coloniser, as a means of circumventing colonial censorship via its own means: the censorship of language thus becomes subverted and French becomes a means of liberation. Thus Kateb seems to be using comedy, just as in the *Garagûz* tradition, to debase an important and sacred religious ritual by finishing the scene with insults and slapstick humour. The criticism continues with Kateb poking fun at the concept of divine intervention, the sultan asks the mufti 'Dis-moi, mufti, as-tu connaissance de cette divine

[200] Kateb Yacine, *Le Cercle des représailles* (1959), pp. 95-96.
[201] Arlette Roth, *Le Théâtre algérien* (1965), p. 14.
[202] Khalid Amine and Marvin Carlso, *The Theatres of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia: Performance Traditions of the Maghreb* (2011), p. 38.
[203] Ibid., p. 39.
[204] Arlette Roth, *Le Théâtre algérien* (1965), pp. 14-15.
[205] Khalid Amine and Marvin Carlso, *The Theatres of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia* (2011), p. 39.

invention, la poudre d'intelligence? […] Peut-etre même figure-t-elle dans le Koran?' To which the mufti replies 'Dans le Koran, tout est dit, noir sur blanc. Rien n'est passé sous silence.'[206] This again seems reminiscent of *Garagûz* which included imitating the local 'commandant', 'les officiers des bureaux arabes' and 'les touristes'.[207]

Bouzaher also seems to makes use of *Garagûz* or shadow theatre, via the inclusion of a 'projecteur' which 'balaie lentement les murs, tour à tour'.[208] In the play 'Serajki' we note the projection of 'la boîte du petit cireur'[209] and 'Alger, vue d'un balcon se presentant au port' accompanied by 'le narrateur' who begins the play 'dans l'ombre'.[210] Further to this, the subtitle of 'Serajki' is 'A l'ombre de Barberousse'. One of the key elements of *Garagûz* was interaction with the audience[211] suggesting an influence upon Bouzaher's intended staging of his plays: 'On ne capture pas le soleil' begins with: 'Y a-t-il quelqu'un dans la salle ? Il me semble entendre des chouchotements.'[212] Morin argues that the employment of this Algerian theatrical tradition is a means of 'dramatising that which cannot be spoken' but I suggest that it also serves to appropriate French, not just as the language of the coloniser, but a means of expressing Algerian theatrical form, repressed by colonial rule.[213]

Similarly, Kateb's criticism is not just of colonial restrictions and repressions he also mocks arbitrary rules, religious enforcement and hierarchy and the exploitative nature of religion:

> Chœur. Il nous faut travailler pour vivre, Dieu l'a dit,
>
> Le sultan l'a dit, le mufti l'a dit.
>
> Il nous faut travailler pour vivre.[214]

Here the satirical tone of the play becomes a serious critique and Kateb draws parallels between exploiting individuals for their religious beliefs and their work. Those in power, here 'Dieu', the sultan and the mufti are seen as being a part of the capitalist system at work. Later comments from Nuage de Fumée underline this hypocrisy: 'O Arabes, pourquoi inventer l'alcool et mourir assoiffés?'[215] and 'C'est à la mosquée que j'ai appris à voler. [216] Nuage de Fumée's

[206] Kateb Yacine, *Le Cercle des représailles* (1959), p. 109.
[207] Arlette Roth *Le Théâtre algérien* (1965), p. 16.
[208] Hocine Bouzaher, *Des voix dans la casbah* (1960), p. 86.
[209] Ibid., p. 84.
[210] Ibid., p. 81.
[211] Khalid Amine and Marvin Carlso, *The Theatres of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia* (2011), p. 39.
[212] Hocine Bouzaher, *Des voix dans la casbah* (1960), p. 19.
[213] Emilie Morin, 'Unspeakable Tragedies: Censorship and the New Political Theatre of the Algerian War of Independence' (2015), p. 28.
[214] Kateb Yacine, *Le Cercle des représailles* (1959), p. 100.
[215] Ibid., p. 101.
[216] Ibid., p. 115.

cynical view of prayer sees him ask God for 'cent pièces d'or',[217] again highlighting the links between religion and capitalism. The irony of Algerian Muslims dying in wine barrels and being tortured using religious abuse at the hands of French troops was not lost on Bouzaher either: 'ils lui versèrent de l'anisette "pour aller droit au Paradis"' [in reference to another prisoner and his torture experience.][218] This anti-capitalist critique resonates with Vinaver's stance in *Les Coréens*, in which he exposed the exploitation of the Korean villagers by the local rice vender, a cog in the capitalist machine. Here, the Muslim Algerian population is taken advantage of both by their supposed spiritual leaders and the French.

The farcical nature of the play and the mockery of religion, which, although it references the Koran, does seem to be applicable to all forms of organised religion, makes it reminiscent of a play staged in London in 1957. *The Making of Moo* by Nigel Dennis takes place in an unnamed colony and sees a colonial family converted to the religion of 'moo'. The play caused quite a controversy when it was staged, accused of being insulting to Christians by members of the public, despite the Lord Chamberlain having awarded it a licence.[219] This begs the question; if it is religion in general and as a concept that is being ridiculed, can it still be counted as blasphemy? In the eyes of the Lord Chamberlain, it was difficult to justify censoring a play which did not directly offend one specific religion and so it was granted a licence.

Although doubtlessly banned in France for its direct calls to arms and detailed descriptions of torture used by the French army, Bouzaher's work also critiques religion, and more generally than Kateb's. We have already referenced Bouzaher's use of a religious quotation from the Bible in relation to women in the previous section of this chapter. Nevertheless, Bouzaher includes several more references to, not just Islam, but different religious beliefs across the collection. He also uses comedy as a means of expressing religious disparity between colonial forces and Algerian Muslims, taking the form of insults. But early on in 'On ne capture pas le soleil' he destabilises the European audience, introducing Arabic words and Islamic concepts into the text and aligning them with European traditions.

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[217] Ibid., p. 102.
[218] Hocine Bouzaher, *Des voix dans la casbah* (1960), p. 89.
[219] BL file LCP 1957/23 The Making of Moo. The Readers Report concluded 'It is intelligent, adult, completely irreverent and anti-religious, without being in my view blasphemous',. However, letters were sent to the Lord Chamberlain to complain about the play and also directly to the Queen, see: BL file LCP CORR 1957/59, letter to 'Your Gracious Majesty' from Mrs F. Looker (11/07/1957). There were also several complaints in the press comparing Dennis to Jean Genet: 'Nigel Dennis's new play is revolutionary: several people on the first night found it revolting. So far as I am aware it is the most deliberately self-confessed attack upon Christianity yet made upon a public stage in Britain. But it is not blasphemous. Mr Dennis is wanting in the primary qualification of the blasphemer which, paradoxically, is a belief in the existence and the power of God. In this he differs from Jean Genet, with whom in a literary, though not in a moral sense (for Mr Dennis is a most respectable man) one might usefully compare him.' Harold Hobson, 'Mr Dennis's New Play', *Sunday Times* (30/06/1957).

> Premier Acteur. Ce que nous pouvons dire tout de suite, c'est qu'il n'y a pas d'entremetteuse, de divorce, d'avare, de fils prodigue, de belle-mère, de djinn.[220]
>
> Deuxième Acteur. Nous voulons connaitre les réactions du public.
>
> Premier Acteur. Mieux nous voulons le faire participer, le faire vivre…
>
> […]
>
> Je ne voudrais pas être déçu. Ecoute, pas un siège grince.
>
> Deuxième Acteur. On se croirait dans une mosquée après la cinquième prière du soir.[221]

The inclusion of 'djinn', understood to mean a low-ranking spirit or 'genie', is placed at the end of a list of traditional European plotlines. Although the term would perhaps have been familiar with French audiences at the time, by aligning it with familiar plot devices, Bouzaher takes the European spectator out of their comfort zone and temporarily creates what Khatibi calls a *bi-langue*.[222] In Khatibi's *Amour bilingue* (1983) he inserts words in Arabic and Berber into the French prose, reflecting what he considers to be the plurality of Maghreb language and culture. Françoise Lionnet contends that this serves as 'a means of translating into the coloniser's language a different sensibility, a different vision of the world, a means, therefore, of transforming the dominant conceptions circulated by the more standard idiom.'[223] This 'different sensibility' is created by Bouzaher's use of a previously 'othered' concept which is then followed by a direct address to the audience and a reference to the 'cinquième prière du soir' working to 'write back' against French colonial culture and put the audience outside of their sphere of reference and familiarity, the commonplace references used in metropolitan French theatre are refused here.

Contrary to this intentional destabilising, Bouzaher then makes use of 'la légende des sept dormantes d'Ephèse'[224] to draw a parallel between the prisoners stuck in a wine barrel and the 'sept dormantes' from the myth who supposedly remained in a cave for more than 300 years:

> Le Premier Paysan. Il y avait fête ce jour-là à Ephèse. Tout le monde allait visiter les idoles. Un jeune homme cependant, bientôt suivi de six autres, refusait de participer aux réjouissances. Il n'y avait entre eux aucun degré de parenté. Seule les liait la foi en Dieu l'Unique.[225]

The legend is relatively well-known in both Christian and Muslim religious teaching and is said to originate from the Syrian region. By referring to a myth that is familiar in both the

[220] Hocine Bouzaher, *Des voix dans la casbah* (1960), p. 20.
[221] Ibid., p. 21.
[222] Abdelkébir Khatibi, *Maghreb pluriel* (Paris: Denoel, 1983), p. 181.
[223] Françoise Lionnet, '"Logiques métisses": Cultural Appropriation and Postcolonial Representations', *College Literature*, 12/20.3/1 (1993), 100-120 (p. 104).
[224] Hocine Bouzaher, *Des voix dans la casbah* (1960), p. 66.
[225] Ibid.

Christian and Islamic religious teachings, Bouzaher questions the origins but also the ownership of such legends, refusing the binary divisions between the three Abrahamic religions and making reference to the religious plurality of the history of the Maghreb.[226] Further to this, the sentence 'seul les liait la foi en Dieu l'Unique' is of great significance here, acting as a metaphor for the need to assemble Algerians of all monotheistic religions in the fight for independence.

Bouzaher returns to this idea of religious unification in the final play of the collection 'Serkaji': 'Dans nos rangs, dans les cellules des prisons, ici même, se sont rejoints des hommes de toutes confessions. Vous avez des Israélites, des Musulmans, des Catholiques et des athées aussi.'[227] This coming together of religions, both in the Maghreb and in metropolitan France, seems to be reflected in the aforementioned work of the left-wing Catholic movement in the Algerian War of Independence, in particular that of Serreau and Mounier, who were committed to publishing and publicising postcolonial writing from the Maghreb. Some Jews also participated in the fight although this is a complicated history to untangle.[228] Kateb also fleetingly makes references to inter-religious relationships in 'Les Ancêtres redoublent de férocité' when Hassan and Mustapha are fighting:

> Mustapha. Il y avait avec nous, la première fois qu'on a été coffrés […] un type à qui on avait coupé le nez dans une affaire […] Sais-tu pourquoi il était là, en tôle, avec les patriotes? Pour avoir tué un petit juif de treize ans, notre ami d'enfance, à Lakhdar et à moi […]
>
> Hassan. En somme, tu prêches le Grand Pardon, à la mémoire de ce petit juif?[229]

Mustapha's recognition that inter-religious mixing was commonplace in colonial Algeria reinforces Bouzaher's unification message. However it is important to remember that since the Crémieux decree in 1870 Algerian Jews were given full French citizenship and Muslims were not.[230] This was often exploited by the coloniser to stir up religious hatred and divisions between different groups. In a similar way here, Hassan's sarcastic tone undermines this attempt to recognise Jewish/Muslim interaction and Kateb's decision to refuse the 'petit juif' a name further depersonalises what could have been a very emotive memory.

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[226] Benjamin Stora has written widely on the presence of Jews in the Maghreb but most recently with Abdelwahab Meddeb in *A History of Jewish-Muslim Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014). On more recent Jewish-Muslims interactions see: Michael M. Laskier, *North African Jewry in the Twentieth Century* (New York, USA: New York University Press, 1997) and Samuel Sami Everett and Rebekah Vince (eds.), *Jewish-Muslim Interactions: Performing Cultures between North Africa and France* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020). For the history of Christianity in the Maghreb see: Katia Boissevain, 'Dilemmas of Sharing Religious Space: Christian Migrants in the Maghreb', *Common Knowledge*, 26.2 (2020) 290–297.

[227] Hocine Bouzaher, *Des voix dans la casbah* (1960), p. 93.

[228] See for instance: Pierre-Jean Le Foll-Luciani, *Les juifs algériens dans la lutte anticoloniale: Trajectoires dissidentes (1934-1965)* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015).

[229] Kateb Yacine, *Le Cercle des représailles* (1959), p. 130.

[230] This citizenship was revoked during the Vichy regime from 1940 to 1944.

As mentioned, Khatibi uses the concept of a *pensée-autre* or 'other-thought' which occurs alongside a 'double critique' that critically examines the dual inheritance of Maghrebian intellectuals: that of the 'West' and that of 'notre patrimoine, si théologique, si charismatique, si patriarchal.'[231] The *pensée-autre* breaks away from the idea that there is one unitary language but that languages are flexible and incorporate intertextuality. Echoing Jansen's earlier claims that censorship seeks to create 'univocal' discourse, the creation of a *pensée-autre* serves as a means of decolonising the language imposed by the coloniser.[232] Both Kateb and Bouzaher attempt to portray this *pensée-autre* but in different ways. Kateb's language and presentation is both elusive and opaque, to use Glissant's terminology, refusing the audience an easy takeaway message from his texts, resonating somewhat with Vinaver's use of polyphony. Kateb's critiques are multi-faceted and require careful attention to be fully understood, as Bonn notes, their circularity is key and 'everything in his work is connected with everything else.'[233] This recalls notes from Vinaver's notebook on *Les Huissiers*, published in 1981 which state, in bold 'tout est lié.'[234] Contrary to this, although he refuses a linear chronology, Bouzaher's theatre is didactic, delivering his political and militant message directly to the audience. Both writers incorporate elements from Maghreb culture and French colonial rule into their dramatic work in French by mocking religious practice, both Christian and Islamic and drawing on the tradition of *Garagûz*. Kateb and Bouzaher do not reject Islamic teaching and practice entirely, instead they use French as a means to critique it and open it up to the metropolitan French audience. As Kateb noted: 'le vrai message du poète c'est ça […] c'est justement de *briser tous les cadres* qui ont été tracés autour d'eux [les lecteurs] pour qu'ils puissent rebondir.'[235] By 'breaking all frames', presumably those imposed by colonial rule, the two writers avoid falling into what Benita Parry calls a 'nativist topology':

> Inside/outside, indigene/alien, western/traditional – it installs a topology of its own, where the colonizer is dynamic donor and the colonized is docile recipient, where the west initiates and the native imitates. Thus while the reciprocity of the colonial relationship is stressed, all power remains with western discourse.[236]

Instead, via the use of a *bi-langue* and *pensée-autre* they lay the foundations for a postcolonial understanding of religion in Francophone Algerian theatre.

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[231] Abdelkébir Khatibi, *Maghreb pluriel* (Paris: Denoël, 1983), p. 12.
[232] Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship* (1991), p. 197.
[233] Charles Bonn and Richard Bjornson, 'Kateb Yacine' (1992), p. 61.
[234] Michel Vinaver and Michelle Henry, *Le Livres des Huissiers* (Paris: Les Imprimeurs Libres, 1981), p. 79.
[235] Kateb Yacine, 'Le rôle de l'écrivain dans un état socialiste', *Anthologie des écrivains maghrébins d'expression française* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1965), pp. 179-8. My emphasis.
[236] Benita Parry, *A Materialist Critique* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2004), p. 41.

Conclusion

Kateb and Bouzaher, writing in the same year, in a similar context, and in the same language, both use French as a means of broadening and breaking away from Western constraints of conceptions of time, the role of women and to criticise religious practice. They simultaneously denounce the trauma, violence and cruelty taking place in Algeria from 1954 to 1962. Both experienced 'hard' censorship when their work was first published, however, as we have examined, they used the self-censorship imposed from writing in French to deconstruct colonial language and look towards a new form of expression. However, their work differs greatly in terms of how they use French to express their frustration and horror at the events and injustices which, to repeat Alleg's aforementioned statement, are being carried out in the French audience's name.[237] Kateb adopts a 'réalisme poétique' as opposed to the militant theatre used by Bouzaher. These differences in writing technique also seem to reflect the two writer's relationship with Algerian independence: Bouzaher editing the revolutionary, anti-colonial newspapers whereas Bonn notes that Kateb quarrelled with *Alger Republican*, not wanting to be limited to writing with a doctrine or pinned to a particular political movement.[238] Instead of advocating purely for political freedom from the coloniser, Kateb sought to retrieve his freedom from the formal limits of literary culture.[239]

The choice to write for the theatre is not insignificant here, both authors opting for the novel form at different points in their careers. As this thesis has shown, the directness of theatre, its unpredictability as well as the proximity to the audience and therefore potential for civil unrest within the general public, often made it the focus of state censorship. Just as with Vinaver, the plays render the audience complicit and guilty in the French government's actions in Algeria. For Bouzaher this is achieved through a didactic approach which uses facts, figures and real-life events to make the French audience aware of their complicity in the violence in Algeria. Contrary to this Kateb presents both an *œuvre* and a language which refuses to conform to linguistic and literary traditions. It draws on Algerian traditions and religion and puts them into dialogue with French language and culture. Both writers push the boundaries and possibilities of writing in French, enabling the envisioning of an independent and postcolonial Algeria. This legacy of writing in French as a means of circumventing censorship lives on and the possibility of political, or more recently religious censorship has encouraged Maghreb

[237] Henri Alleg, *La Question* (Paris: Editions Maspero, 1958), p. 81.
[238] Charles Bonn 'Kateb Yacine (1929-1989)', *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 52/53.1 (1989) 273-279 (p. 278).
[239] Jacqueline Kay and Abdelhamid Zoubir, 'Popular Aesthetics and Idioms in Yacine's Theatre' in Biodun Jeyifo (ed.), *Modern African Drama* (London and New York: Norton, 2002), pp. 509-518 (p. 510).

dramatists to publish possibly troubling works in French, and indeed in France.[240] Therefore, what began as a problem is converted not just into an advantage, but into a trump card: in wrestling with the chosen tongue these writers enrich and transform it.[241] This chapter has underlined the contribution of these two early examples of using constitutive censorship as a purpose for political, cultural and linguistic critique: a means of decolonising language.

[240] Khalid Amine and Marvin Carlso, *The Theatres of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia*: *Performance Traditions of the Maghreb* (2011), p. 3. However, Christopher Balme notes that 'the choice of the colonial language as primary means of theatrical communication is by no means an uncontroversial one. Particularly in Africa there has been and still is a lively discussion on the question of using colonial languages as an adequate and legitimate means of literary or theatrical expression.' Christopher Balme, *Decolonizing the Stage: Theatrical Syncretism and Post-Colonial Drama* (Oxford: OUP, 1999), p. 108.
[241] Karin Barber, 'African-Language Literature and Postcolonial Criticism' (1995), p. 8.

Conclusion: 'Il faut se méfier de la Culture avec un grand C'[1]

This thesis has illustrated the direct links between censorship and decolonisation. It has examined the concerted effort that British and French governments, institutions, theatre critics, directors and managements exercised in order to maintain the myth of peaceful decolonisation. Censorship has proved to be an integral part of this process, acting as a means of control and a way to infiltrate and influence all areas of both external and internal life, bearing strong similarities to colonialism. I have reflected on how theatre censorship during the 1950s and 1960s impacted upon questions of class, race, work, time, language, humour, witnessing and national identity. Here, censorship can be seen as returning to its original meaning: to categorise people, ideas and cultural productions as a means of constructing and perpetuating colonial hierarchies and structures and repressing knowledge. Theatre which presented non-Western perspectives, breaking away from homogenised colonial discourses, was censored and refused. Therefore, decolonisation, in both its physical and more ontological sense, has proved to be the target of this censorship. The writers in this corpus present plays which fall outside of the literary *cadre* imposed upon them by British and French dramatic traditions. They also offer up new understandings of identity, the realities of colonialism and the construction of a postcolonial identity. It is for these reasons that the authors in this corpus found themselves rebuffed and obstacles placed in their way so as to prevent their plays being staged. In order to effectively begin to decolonise literature it is important to identify instances of censorship imposed by colonialism as a modus operandi. To return to Jansen's question in the introduction of this thesis, it has been essential not to ask 'is there censorship?' but 'what kind of censorship?'[2]

Firstly, this thesis has examined the censorship of plays and playwrights who tried to address the realities of colonialism and the violence being committed by the British army to prevent decolonisation. The case study of *Strangers in the Land* initially seemed to be a straightforward example of 'hard' censorship, the government (embodied by the Lord Chamberlain) aiming to suppress information about the displacement of Malaysians by the British army during the Malayan Emergency. Further to this, the Unity Theatre's left-wing theatre attempted to construct a political narrative and promote their ideology ultimately revealing an imposition of form and avoidance of humanitarian interest, which the author Mona

[1] Interview with Kateb Yacine (23/02/1967) https://www.rfi.fr/fr/emission/20180814-yacine-kateb-khellouti-romancier-poete-dramaturge-essayiste [first accessed 15/02/2021].
[2] Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship* (1991), p. 25.

Brand had hoped to achieve. John Arden, although not a victim of state censorship, saw his play refused by critics and consequently attracted little interest from audiences. The case of *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* illustrates how preconceived notions of 'literature' and in this case 'theatre' can act as a type of censorship: work which does not conform to these norms is disregarded and discouraged from being produced. Comparisons to the literary canon also work to 'censor' new types of writing: the gatekeepers or arbiters of 'taste' in the form of literary critics enforce these unwritten rules of dramaturgy and expression. In a Bourdieusian sense, a writer is required to have a certain amount of cultural capital in order to succeed in their profession. Writers who do not are deemed unworthy and uninteresting:

> [t]he capacities for material appropriation of the instruments of material or cultural production (economic capital) and of the capacities for symbolic appropriation of these instruments (cultural capital), determines, directly and indirectly, through the position it receives from collective classifications, the representations that each agent forms of his or her position and his strategies of 'presentation of self' […] that is, the staging of his position that he deploys.[3]

There is also the necessity to make a profit from theatrical creation and so economic capital depends on cultural production. Work which goes beyond the accepted *cadre* of theatre risks losing economic capital as it cannot be incorporated into a form of cultural capital.

Following on from these examples of external impositions of censorship, *Eleven Men Dead at Hola Camp* began my discussion and attempt to analyse systems of self-censorship or in this case, internalised forms of colonial categorisation and hierarchy. The performance, unable to be staged publicly due to the Lord Chamberlain's blanket ban on improvisation, attempted to depict the deaths of Kenyan anti-colonial Mau Mau fighters. Non-visible censorship was imposed on the performance in the form of 'pressures' placed on the directors to prevent them from staging the work as, similarly to *Strangers in the Land*, it went against the idea of peaceful decolonisation and revealed the lies told by the British government to maintain this myth. However, more subtly, although intending to denounce colonial practices, the performance somewhat perpetuated the colonial mindset: the silent Black actors intended to re-enact the atrocities at Hola Camp contrasted against the single white actor, on a podium, reading out the Hansard report of the events. To return to the definition of censorship as to 'censure' or to categorise, the performance maintained colonial categorisations of race.

In a similar way, Barry Reckord's experience of censorship with his play *Skyvers* also highlighted how censorship can be internalised, echoing Frantz Fanon's concept of the *masque blanc*. By using a white cast instead of Black for the play, the Black experience is censored and

[3] Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant,'Symbolic Capital and Social Classes', *Journal of Classical Sociology*, 13.2 (2013) 292–302 (p. 295).

replaced by questions pertaining to class. Nevertheless, as I have examined, the play *does* consider what it meant to be a young, Black teenager in late 1950s Britain and this was accentuated further in later productions of *Skyvers*. Reckord's insistence on Black actors doing 'the accent' appropriate for the British stage and his own comments on how he adapted his work for a European audience further emphasise the self-censorship required in order for the Black writer to succeed within the late 1950s Western literary *cadre*. This behaviour also reflects the above quotation from Bourdieu: writers must adapt their work to suit audience tastes, therefore Reckord seems to be victim to both self-censorship but also market censorship given the need for the Royal Court to make a profit from his plays.

Michel Vinaver's three early plays also can also be understood as experiencing and manifesting these multiple definitions of censorship. His first play *Les Coréens* was censored by the French government during the Algeria War of Independence, when state censorship was given free rein to ban anything which tried to denounce practices used by the French army in Algeria. However, Vinaver's work is more complicated and presents more than a simple anti-colonial message. His plays give a voice to the colonised and present a *contrapuntal* approach to decolonisation as well as examining postcolonial understandings of concepts such as time and work. He also uses references to both World Wars and the Holocaust in order to draw parallels with France's behaviour in Algeria. He questions both a linear approach to history and to theatrical form providing a truly polyphonic theatrical experience. The use of overlapping themes such work, the everyday, politics, pensions, holidays and modernisation makes his work difficult to pin down and therefore almost impossible to categorise, making him a problem for censors.

The final chapter of this thesis has shown how Algerian writers Kateb Yacine and Hocine Bouzaher experienced 'hard' censorship in that their work could not be performed or that it was removed from circulation. Similarly to in the case studies of Arden and Reckord, French critics imposed their view of drama on these works and what the metropolitan French audience expected to read in Francophone Algerian writing: their own visions of Algeria and Algerians. However, further to this, Kateb and Bouzaher use the censorship of local languages and the imposition of French as a means of colonial control, to subvert language and employ French for their own anti-colonial message. I use Fanon's critique of national culture and Jacques Derrida's consideration of language ownership as a means to analyse Kateb's and Bouzaher's reappropriation of the French language. This tactic enables these writers to address

a French audience but also carve out a new means of postcolonial thinking and expression, later articulated by writers such as Abdelkebir Khatibi and his idea of the *Maghreb pluriel*.[4]

The means and methods for circumventing censorship in the theatre often overlap within this corpus. Examples include the thinly veiled changing of place names: the 1957 Mélouza massacre becomes Zéboula in Vinaver's *Les Huissiers* and Lusaka (the capital of Zambia) is required to be replaced by 'some mythical name' by the Lord Chamberlain for Ronald Miller's *No 10*.[5] Furthermore, displacing action away from the colonial situation in question also serves to distract the censor's attention. Vinaver uses Korea to talk about Algeria whereas Arden uses an unnamed colony to talk about Cyprus. In terms of form, patterns can also be seen across the English/French language divide: the plays written in Britain by white British playwrights often used farce to ridicule colonial rule whereas writing from the French metropole took a more absurdist approach as evidenced in plays such as Vinaver's *Les Huissiers* and Jean Genet's *Les Paravents* which provoked rioting during its performance in 1966.[6]

Further to these avoidance techniques, reoccurring themes pertaining to decolonisation have been established in this thesis. The deconstruction of everyday life and tasks is key to Reckord's, Vinaver's, Kateb's and Bouzaher's critique of colonialism. Whereas Reckord focuses on the question of education and language, Vinaver zooms in on time and daily routines as a means of both highlighting and then ridiculing the colonial imposition of clock-time and everyday rituals. Similarly, Kateb presents plays which resist Western chronology and a teleological understanding of history. Bouzaher uses specific dates but presents them in a non-chronological order therefore making his use of time purposefully unreliable.

The 'hard' censorship structures in place during the period in question also bear similarities and differences. As we have established, the Lord Chamberlain was a part of the British establishment and used by the government to make sure anti-colonial rhetoric was kept to a minimum. However, the Readers and the Lord Chamberlain himself also imposed their own tastes and decisions on what they considered to be 'acceptable' theatre, often including comments on dramatic form and composition in their Readers' Reports. In France, the imposition of censorship was intended to deny the very existence of a war, similar to the

[4] Abdelkebir Khatibi, *Maghreb pluriel* (Paris: Denoël, 1983).
[5] In the 1970s and 1980s, many African writers such as Ahmadou Kourouma, Sony Labou Tansi, Williams Sassine and Tierno Monénembo used fictional locations to criticise post-colonial regimes. See: Charlotte Baker and Hannah Grayson (eds.), *Fictions of African Dictatorship: Postcolonial Power Across Genres* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2018).
[6] For more on the censorship and controversy surrounding Jean Genet's *Les Paravents* see: *La Bataille des Paravents* (Paris: Editions IMEC, 1991).

perpetuation of the British myth of peaceful decolonisation: in Britain the various rebellions were referred to as 'emergencies' whereas in France it was 'la question algérienne' or 'les événements'. These euphemisms fed into plays written at the time and were often used as fodder for comic effect. Arden and Vinaver both play on phrases used to infer colonial violence without actually articulating the actions carried out: In *Les Huissiers* we are told about 'la situation en Algérie'[7] whereas Arden refers to 'rebellions, or that's what they called them.'[8] This reflects the way both the French and British governments and press refused to acknowledge that the process of decolonisation was anything but peaceful.

Nevertheless, the day-to-day use of censorship seems more arbitrary and less systematic in France, perhaps because it was not centralised into one office. Unlike in Britain, theatre censorship from the Algerian War can therefore not be tracked as systematically and the materials which detail this information are not housed in one location. The police no doubt had a role to play in the censoring but it is unclear who made the decisions on what was permitted and what was to be banned. Further to this, in France, the critics had a significant role to play in the success of a production and imposed French literary expectations, judging and comparing new writing to existent canonical works. A particularly pertinent example of this is Kateb Yacine being interviewed by a French literary critic who asks him several times who his literary influences are, to which Kateb responds eventually: 'Je rejette celui [l'écrivain] qui se entourne de livres et puis recrache ce qu'il a lu pour en faire un autre […] Il vaut mieux lire le moins de livres possible […] il faut que je reste barbare.'[9] The literary hierarchy requires writers to feed off pre-existing work in order to keep the canon in its place. By refusing to name his influences or perhaps refusing any kind of influence *tout court* Kateb lays the foundations for postcolonial writers to develop new ways of conceiving and presenting literature away from the constraints of the Western canon. To return to the title of this conclusion, Kateb encourages writers to mistrust established definitions of 'Culture avec un grand C', as it acts as another form of colonial imposition and, to use Said's terminology, cultural imperialism.

Comedy is key both as a means of circumventing censorship but also rendering the audience complicit in the action on stage. Arden's play is riddled with double meanings and Vinaver makes use of heavy irony, especially in his two later plays. Irony and double meaning are key targets for censorship, and as Jansen has pointed out, 'irony's mischief is calculated to

[7] Michel Vinaver, *Les Huissiers*, p. 151.
[8] John Arden, *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance*, p. 26.
[9] Interview with Kateb Yacine (23/02/1967) https://www.rfi.fr/fr/emission/20180814-yacine-kateb-khellouti-romancier-poete-dramaturge-essayiste [first accessed 15/02/2021].

puncture our complacency.'[10] In terms of decolonisation, irony and comedy have been shown to involve audiences in the violence taking place in their name and also to mock colonial ideas on religion, cleanliness and education.

The policing of identity has also been proved as a motivation for censorship. We have seen how Barry Reckord's name was frequently misspelt in the press who tried to classify him as a 'Negro writer' but one who speaks like an upper-class Briton and is Cambridge-educated. Moreover, he is able to talk about issues beyond 'the colour question', making him difficult to categorise. Similarly, Vinaver slips between identities, using several pseudonyms (and disguises) as well as his professional life as a cover for his controversial writing. Bouzaher, whose name was misspelt by his publisher Maspero, also uses multiple identities in his writing including both prior to and after independence in Algeria. To return to Holquist's notion that censors are afraid of indeterminacy, creating and using multiple identities proves problematic and a cause for censorship to be imposed.

Theatre itself has proved to be a fruitful arena in which to consider censorship and decolonisation. The history of spectacle and its relationship to colonialism makes it an important site for decolonisation. As explored in the introduction, spectacle was used a means of disseminating the colonial message to metropolitan audiences effectively, widely and quickly. The *expositions universelles* held all over Europe throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century embedded the difference and distance between the coloniser and colonised. By choosing to write for the theatre, these authors (re)claim the stage as a site for postcolonial expression and a means of returning the colonial gaze onto metropolitan audiences. In terms of censorship, the stage also acts as a site of memory for the events which censors aimed to suppress. Vinaver's artistic methodology is particularly relevant here given his meticulous archiving of press and, in the case of *11 September 2001*, television, internet and radio. His plays therefore act both as memorials and as artefacts which bear witness to events such as the Algerian War of Independence that censors wilfully repressed. Vinaver's 'huissiers' also proudly and repeatedly tell the audience, 'je suis le témoin', their continuous presence on stage rendering them witnesses to the events in Algeria. Similarly, Bouzaher's characters also tell the audience how 'Le témoin est là derrière ce rideau' at the start of the play.[11] Bouzaher uses the stage as a site of memory to record and remind French audiences of the exact date, place and number of deaths carried outby French troops. For Kateb, his initial plays written in French served their purpose of raising consciousness in French audiences about

[10] Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship* (1991), p. 195.
[11] Hocine Bouzaher, *Des voix dans la casbah*, p. 30.

the atrocities in Algeria. However, once independence had been gained and he returned to Algeria from exile, he used oral traditions and theatre which was not written down to develop a 'new Algerian theatre' in Berber or more specifically, Tamazight.[12] These later endeavours merit proper critical analysis because, as Karin Barber notes 'the oral tradition and its "values" and "wisdom" are often left unanalysed: their function is simply alterity.'[13] These more recent plays also act a site of recognition and renewal for languages which were repressed under French colonial rule and arguably post-independence with the mass-imposition of Arabic in Algerian schools.[14]

Further avenues of study are boundless when it comes to theatre censorship and decolonisation. Focussing on these authors, there is potential for an in-depth comparative study of Jean-Marie Serreau's staging of Michel Vinaver's *Les Coréens* in Paris in 1957 and Kateb Yacine's *Le Cadavre encerclé* in Brussels the following year. Further research on Serreau as a pioneer of 'decolonisation theatre' is certainly necessary and archival work looking at how metropolitan French theatres and audiences responded to his work both in the 1950s and 1960s but also looking further into the 1970s would no doubt further develop my arguments on critical receptions of postcolonial theatrical form. It would also be essential to track Serreau's battle against censorship in metropolitan France during his attempts to stage plays addressing and promoting decolonisation. Further to this, writing for the stage by Wole Soyinka and the Lord Chamberlain's reaction to his plays such as *The Lion and the Jewel* (1959) and critical reception of *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975) necessitate further analysis, particularly in reference to Adewale Maja-Pearce's 1991 collection of essays *Who's Afraid of Wole Soyinka?: Essays on censorship.*[15]

Applying what Bunn calls 'New Censorship Theory' to postcolonial writing and experience more widely would help to build on the work of Jansen who, writing in the late 1980s, applied the concept briefly to feminism.[16] Jansen explores how feminist messages fought against censorship by using 'the language of counterfactuality' and because 'fiction

[12] Bonn, Charles, and Richard Bjornson, 'Kateb Yacine', (1992), p. 66.

[13] Karin Barber, 'African-Language Literature and Postcolonial Criticism', *Research in African Literatures*, 26.4 (Winter, 1995), 3-30 (p. 8).

[14] See: Mohamed Benrabah, *Language Conflict in Algeria* (Bristol, Blue Ridge Summit: Multilingual Matters, 2013).

[15] Adewale Maja-Pearce, *Who's Afraid of Wole Soyinka?: Essays on Censorship* (Oxford and New Hampshire: Heinmann, 1991). This collection of essays explores processes of censorship in modern post-colonial Africa, asking difficult questions about corruption, neo-colonialism and persistent racism in the West.

[16] Matthew Bunn, 'Reimaging Repression: New Censorship Theory and After' *History and Theory*, 54.1 (2015) 25-44. 'Ultimately, New Censorship Theory overturns liberalism's "common sense" view of censorship as external, coercive, and repressive, not by inverting this view of censorship entirely but by positing such structures as only a restricted subset of a larger phenomenon', p. 38.

permits a protagonist […] to come to life and defy readers' taken-for-granted assumptions about gender, social order, and rationality.'[17] We have seen that writers such as Reckord, Kateb and Vinaver make use of counterfactual narratives to respond to colonial ideas about categorisation: Reckord's changing between a white and Black cast, Kateb's juxtaposition of the characters Marguerite and Nedjma and Vinaver's placing of Belair in the alienated situation of the Koreans and his use of Petrocle as a vehicle to depict colonial tropes. Kateb and Vinaver also use the counterfactual via the employment of uniforms: Kateb dresses Hassan and Mustapha in 'uniforme d'officiers de l'armée française'[18] whereas Vinaver's soldiers take off their own uniforms and put on those of the Koreans.[19] These scenes serve to challenge the audience's pre-conceived ideas about belonging and national identity whilst these wars of decolonisation were taking place.

But it is also important to consider the legacy of 1950s and 1960s theatre censorship on decolonisation today. Of course it is impossible to know how many plays 'might' have been written if it were not for state censorship or self-censorship, what Steve Nicholson refers to as the 'unborn children.'[20] Nevertheless, as the second chapter of this thesis has shown, the Lord Chamberlain's office certainly contributed to the collective amnesia in British society concerning empire and decolonisation, which has only begun to change recently in the wake of the international Black Lives Matter movements. Creative actions to bring the events of decolonisation to the fore of theatrical creation, education and cultural production more widely can be seen as part of recent 'decolonising' endeavours.[21] These projects also seek to 'decolonise' by moving the focus of creation away from Europe and European history and languages. Recent examples of this include Temi Wilkey's *The High Table* (2020), performed at the Bush Theatre, which was set in contemporary London but drew on Yoruba language, rituals and mythology.[22] As Barber points out, it is essential for scholarship and cultural institutions to acknowledge the significance of such languages not as minorities or traditional but as relevant to huge sections of the global population: 'There are more Yoruba speakers than

[17] Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship* (1991), p. 193.
[18] Kateb Yacine, *Le Cercle des représailles* (1959), p. 127.
[19] Michel Vinaver,, *Aujourd'hui ou Les Coréens* (1986 [1956]), p. 73.
[20] Hubert Griffith talking in 1934 in relation to plays concerning the Russian Revolution cited in Steve Nicholson, 'Censoring Revolution: The Lord Chamberlain and the Soviet Union', *New Theatre Quarterly*, 8.32 (1992) 305-312 (p. 311).
[21] See for instance: S. Bala, 'Decolonising Theatre and Performance Studies' *Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies* 20.3 (2017) 333-345 and
[22] See: Arifa Akbar, 'The High Table review – coming out and coming together in tender debut', *The Guardian* (17/02/2020). https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2020/feb/17/the-high-table-review-coming-out-and-coming-together-in-tender-debut [04/03/2021].

speakers of Swedish, Norwegian and Danish put together.'[23] Similarly, the rapper Testament's play *Black Men Walking* (2018) sought both to reclaim the countryside as a space for Black experience but also debunk the myth that the presence of Black people in Britain only began because of slavery.[24]

In France, as Benjamin Stora's concept of 'guerre des mémoires' illustrates how the events of the Algerian War of Independence are still constantly debated and questioned, silence and censorship surrounding the war continued long after the fighting ended in 1962.[25] Recent theatrical productions such as *Monique H., Nanterre 1961* (2014) by Mehdi Lallaoui focuses on the experiences of the *bidonvilles*, largely populated by Algerian workers and their families, continue the task of remembering the events of the Algeria War of Independence.[26] In terms of scholarship there is an increased awareness of the necessity to talk about decolonisation in the theatre, as Olivier Neveux has explored.[27] Questions of censorship and free speech in France are of utmost relevance in the wake of the Charlie Hebdo attacks in 2015 and the 2020 murder of schoolteacher Samuel Paty following a class in which he showed cartoons of the prophet Mohamed, previously printed by Charlie Hebdo. Censorship has taken on new forms, adapted itself to modern technology and media. Those previously identifiable figures of censorship (the government, the police, even theatre directors and arts funding bodies), have now been replaced with anonymous gatekeepers. As Laurent Martin points out, 'la censure, comme le diable, prouverait donc son existence par son acharnement à faire croire à sa disparition', thus it is key to keep re-evaluating and re-examining our understanding of censorship in light of modern forms of communication.[28]

Despite their experiences of censorship in the 1950s and 1960s, a renewed interest in the work of these playwrights can be observed in the last few years. Barry Reckord's plays are beginning to gain more recognition: *Skyvers* and *Flesh to a Tiger* featured on the recent *That Black Theatre Podcast* (2020) produced by the National Theatre[29] and *You in Your Small*

[23] Karin Barber, 'African-Language Literature and Postcolonial Criticism' (1995), p. 13.
[24] See: Bridget Minamore ,'Black Men Walking: a hilly hike through 500 years of black British history', *The Guardian* (23/01/2018). https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/jan/23/black-men-walking-royal-exchange-manchester-testament [First accessed 04/03/2021].
[25] Benjamin Stora, 'Guerre d'Algérie: 1999-2003, Les Accélérations de La Mémoire', *Hommes et Migrations*, 1244. 1 (2003) 83-95 (p. 84).
[26] Mehdi Lalloaui, *Monique H., Nanterre 1961* (Montigny-les-Cormeilles: Au Nom de la Mémoire, 2014).
[27] Olivier Neveux, 'Le théâtre de la décolonisation' in *Théâtres en lutte: Le théâtre militant en France des années 1960 à nos jours*, (Paris: La Découverte, 2007) pp. 25-33.
[28] Laurent Martin, 'Censure répressive et censure structurale: comment penser la censure dans le processus de communication ?', *Questions de communication*, 15.1 (2009), 67-78 (p. 73).
[29] See: https://www.buzzsprout.com/1358422/5934694-that-black-theatre-podcast-1960s-colonisation-and-class-barry-reckord-wole-soyinka [First accessed 30/10/2020].

Corner was included in a British Film Institute (BFI) series of projections entitled 'Forgotten Black TV Drama' in late 2019.[30] For Kateb Yacine, the production *Et le cœur fume encore* performed at the Théâtre Gérard Philipe in 2020 used extracts of his writing and placed them in dialogue with the words of another Algerian writer, Assia Djebar. It also meta-theatrically depicts the difficulties Serreau and Kateb had in staging *Le Cadavre encerclé* in 1958 via imagined dialogues and interspersed with snippets from Kateb's texts. The aim of the production was to discuss the Algerian War of Independence from a number of different perspectives including career soldiers and *appelés* alongside FLN fighters, *harkis* and *pied-noirs*. The youth of those involved in the project highlights the relevance of Kateb's work in modern France and its capacity to be adapted and updated for a modern audience.

Facing up to colonial rule and colonial violence is an essential part of the decolonisation process. Jansen argues that

> since 1945 ideological discourse in both Soviet and capitalist spheres have used the Nazi precedent as a cathartic sponge to both deny and excuse their own crimes. Hangman's justice allows them to both deny and excuse their own crimes. Hangman's justice allowed them to view Nazism as different 'in kind' from other systems of power-knowledge […] the Nazis have become the bogeyman of history […] They have deflected attention away from reflections on American racism.[31]

In the case of this thesis these 'winners of history' — Britain and France — have used Nazi history as a means to vindicate their own violence.[32] Vinaver, Kateb and Bouzaher all draw parallels between Nazi brutality and European colonialism and their work acts as a lasting reminder, disallowing the similarities between these two movements to be forgotten.

In France, the potential for further investigation into censorship has been renewed since the opening of archives relating to Algeria under the Macron government. Lia Brozgal has explored in detail the censoring of documents, testimonies and reports relating in particular to the 17 October 1961 massacre.[33] However, these archives may also shed some light on further theatrical texts and publications banned whilst the *état d'urgence* was in place. Furthermore, the transfer of François Maspero's early publishing papers from their current status as a private, family collection to the IMEC, will also enable further insight into the censoring of texts such as Bouzaher's *Des voix dans la casbah*. Aside from this collection, Bouzaher also wrote a novel during the War of Independence and another play about the period but in 1988.[34] Both texts

[30] See: Steve Rose, 'When the kissing stopped: why did Britain turn its back on black TV?' *The Guardian* (07/02/2019).
[31] Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship* (1991), p. 29.
[32] Ibid., p. 30.
[33] Lia Brozgal, *Absent the Archive: Cultural Traces of a Massacre in Paris, 17 October 1961* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020).
34 The novel: *Les Cinq doigts du jour* (Alger: Editions nationales algériennes, 1961) and the play *L'Honneur réconcilié* (Alger: Entreprise nationale du livre, 1988).

merit further examination as contributions to Francophone Algerian writing. On both sides of the Channel the question of how to successfully remember colonialism and its practices in the theatre has proved to be complex. The controversial interactive performance piece *Exhibit B* by South African artist Brett Bailey was staged in London in September 2014 and then in Paris in December 2014. The piece aimed to 'chart the colonial histories of various European countries during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when scientists formulated pseudo-scientific racial theories that continue to warp perceptions with horrific consequences.'[35] The show consisted of recreating the human zoos, already mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, with live actors chained up in cages, in order to shock audiences into thinking about interrogating empire. In London, the performance was met with huge protests as it was considered insulting to the Black community and was subsequently cancelled. In Paris, violent protests broke out in front of the Théâtre Gérard Philipe where the play was supposed to be put on, however, unlike in London, the performance *was* maintained for six consecutive nights, as planned. This case study raises difficult questions about productive ways of remembering colonial violence. It bears a number of similarities with *Eleven Men Dead at Hola Camp* in that the director seemingly intended to use the performance as a means of exposing untold or unfamiliar stories surrounding colonialism. However, like Gaskill and Johnstone, the *cadre* in which these messages were set worked instead to objectify and 'other' the actors as opposed to educating audiences, despite Bailey's claims that the production was intended to return the colonial gaze.[36] As Megan Lewis has pointed out in relation to *Exhibit B*, such performances raise the question of whether white artists (or directors) can ever defy their own hegemony.[37] In terms of censorship, this example highlights not only the continued difference in its application between the UK and France, but also its prevalence in contemporary society and its now even more complicated relationship with decolonisation and theatre. Instead of promoting or defending colonialism as in the 1950s and 1960s, here censorship works to protect viewers from potentially sensitive and triggering scenes. Thus the censorship structures created by colonial ideology to disseminate racial difference and superiority are now subverted, or decolonised, and used as a means of preventing these ideas from being reproduced in the twenty-first century.

[35] Julia Farrington, 'Brett Bailey/Exhibit B' in *Index on Censorship* (15 May 2019). Accessed online: https://www.indexoncensorship.org/2019/05/brett-bailey-exhibit-b/ [First accessed 27/02/2021].
[36] Brett Bailey quoted in Megan Lewis, 'Until You See the Whites of Their Eyes: Brett Bailey's Exhibit B and the Consequences of Staging the Colonial Gaze', *Theatre History Studies*, 37.1 (Feb. 2019) 115–144 (p. 121).
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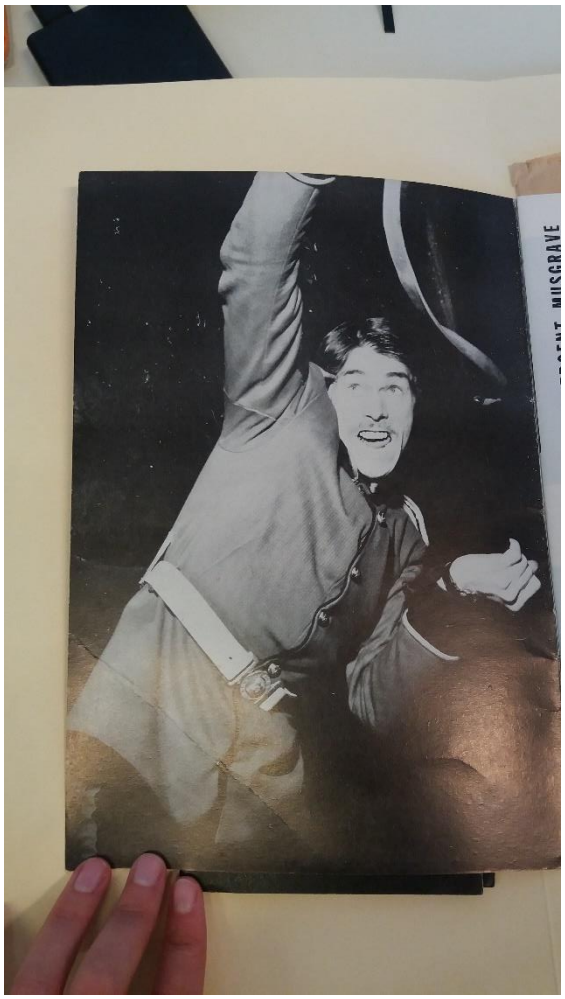
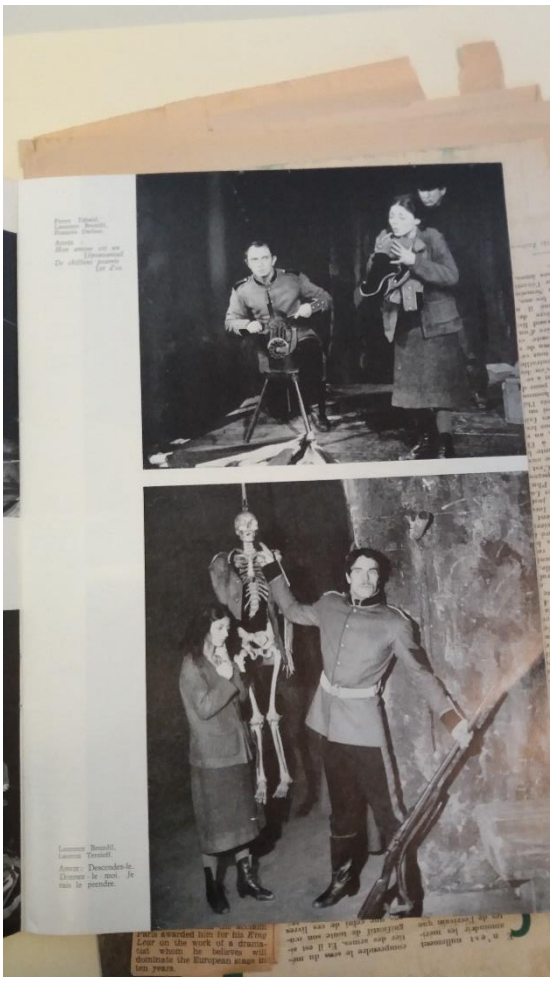
Miscellaneous

Les Coréens programme by the Alliance française and the Théâtre d’Aujourd’hui [without date].

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Serjeant Musgrave's Dance performed in Paris in 1963 and directed by Peter Brook. V&A file THM/452/8/56.

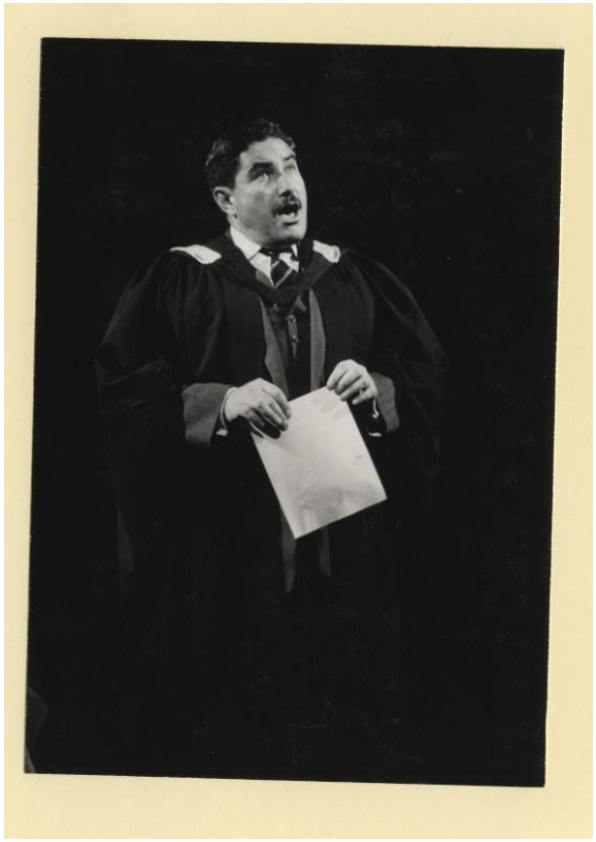




Appendix 2 - Serjeant Musgrave's Dance performed in Paris in 1963 and directed by Peter Brook. V&A file THM/452/8/56.

Appendix 3 - Serjeant Musgrave's Dance performed in Paris in 1963 and directed by Peter Brook. V&A file THM/452/8/56.

Appendix 4 – Barry Reckord's Skyvers. V&A file THM/273/6/1/474.



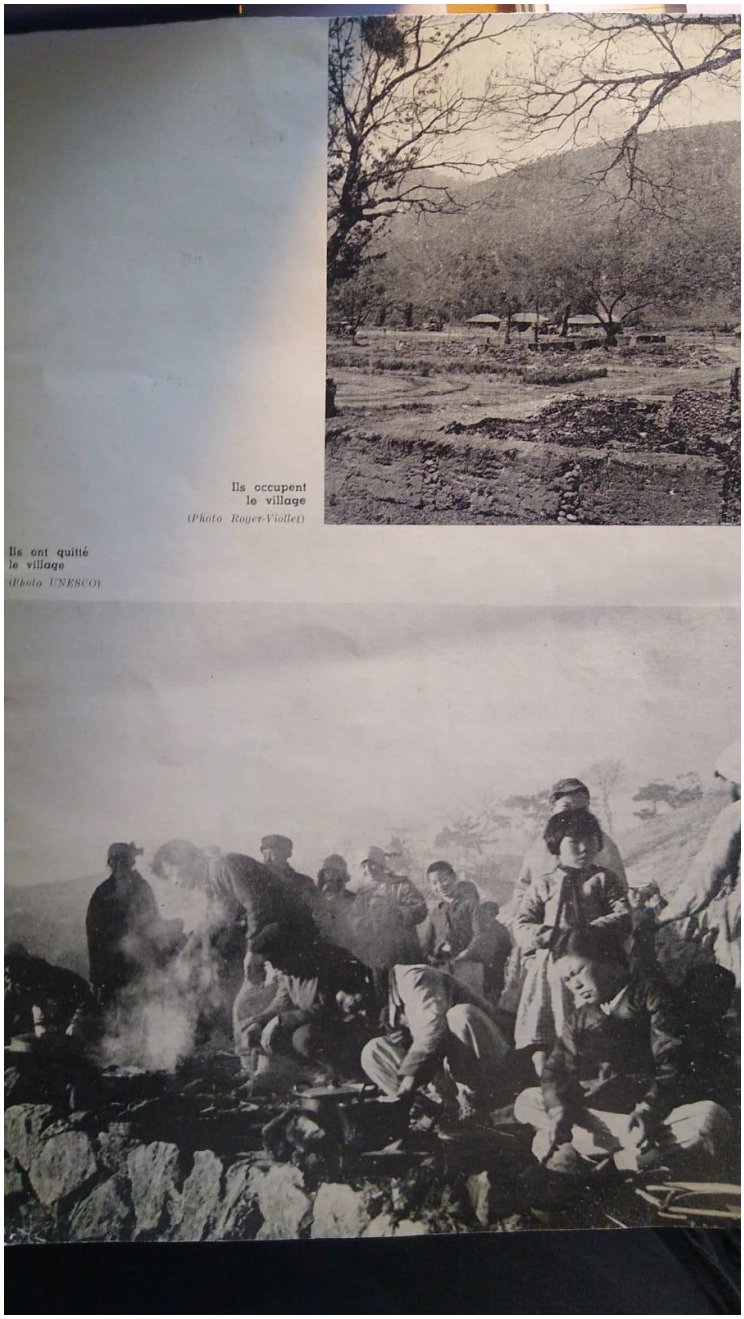
Appendix 5 – Barry Reckord's Skyvers. V&A file THM/273/6/1/474.

Appendix 6 – Programme for the Alliance française production of *Les Coréens.*

Appendix 7 – Programme for the Alliance française production of *Les Coréens*

Appendix 8 – Programme for the Alliance française production of *Les Coréens.*

Appendix 8 – Programme for the Alliance française production of *Les Coréens.*



Ils occupent
le village
(Photo Roger-Viollet)

Ils ont quitté
le village
(Photo UNESCO)