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Reconciliations: Memory and Mediation in Narratives of Postcolonial Second Generations

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Reconciliations: Memory and Mediation in Narratives of Postcolonial Second Generations

by

Aména Moïnfar, M.A.

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Reconciliations: Memory and Mediation in Narratives of Postcolonial Second Generations

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This project examines narratives of transplanted identity-building and memory in European languages by second-generation non-European writers who choose to write their stories in European languages. The dissertation focuses on three books: *La colline aux oliviers* by Mehdi Lallaoui, a “Beur” (French Algerian) writer, *White Teeth* by British Caribbean Zadie Smith and *Lipstick Jihad* by *Do-rageh*/Iranian American Azadeh Moaveni. I argue that these three narratives use the language and memory sites of the host countries. They claim these as their own in order to recuperate events removed from historical memory by the violence of colonialism and the disruptive tide of exile and immigration. Because these children of immigrants are born and raised in the host country, they occupy a privileged position of being in-between that enables them to undertake reconciliatory mediation and assert the relevance of the colonized and imperialized experience for *all* its inheritors, both former colonizers and former colonized. Multiple choices eclipse the sense of dead end and rejection that characterizes literature of exile and colonization. To discuss these choices, I use Edward W. Said's concepts of filiation and affiliation. Filiation implicates the culture inherited from the

parents of second-generation characters whereas affiliation points to the place of birth and upbringing. Filiation and affiliation can be seen as contradictory and antagonistic, however I choose to use these terms as complementary and reconciliatory. If previous scholars consider second-generation immigrant narratives to reproduce the sense of displacement and bitterness experienced by their parents, I propose to examine how concepts such as Maurice Halbwachs'collective memory nevertheless occupy a positive strength in the second-generation immigrant narratives where memory and reconciliation are reclaimed.

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Introduction

My dissertation examines narratives written by the children of postcolonial immigrants and how they represent their transplanted identity-building and memory in European languages. I look at three main groups: French Algerians, British Jamaicans and Bengalis (Black British) and Iranian Americans.[1] I choose these three literatures because they offer emblematic moments of conflict between the first generation immigrants' country and the new home for the children. Algeria's colonization and decolonization alike were some of the bloodiest events in the history of colonization. The British Empire dehumanized and infantilized its colonized. As for Iran, it experienced a radical demonization in the US after the hostage crisis in 1979-80. These three groups face an image imposed on them based on how the West sees their country of origin. If for the first generation immigrants themselves this must be a dire experience to live, for their children who have no first-hand contact with their parents' homeland, resisting stereotypes must be even more challenging. In their literature, the three groups address discrimination and the acute difficulty of growing up in the shadow of stereotypes.[2] However, I decided to choose three texts from these literatures that examine moments of shared histories and conflicts between the parents' first generation and the host countries.

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[1] For the history of the term "Black British," see Paul Gilroy's '*There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (1991).

[2] See, for instance, Caryl Philips's *A Distant Shore* (2003); Akli Tadjer's *Les ANI du Tessali* (1987); Nahid Rachlin's *Foreigner* (1978).

Indeed, my dissertation focuses on three books: *La colline aux oliviers* (1998) by Mehdi Lallaoui, a “Beur” (French Algerian) writer, *White Teeth* (2000) by British Caribbean Zadie Smith and *Lipstick Jihad* (2005) by Do-rageh/Iranian American Azadeh Moaveni. I argue that these three narratives use the language of the host countries to construct sites of memory that help them negotiate their second-generation immigrant status. They claim these sites as their own in order to recuperate events removed from historical memory by the violence of colonialism and the disruptive tide of exile and immigration. Because these children of immigrants are born and/or raised in the host country, they occupy a privileged position of being in-between that enables them to undertake reconciliatory mediation and assert the relevance of the colonized and imperialized experience for *all* its inheritors, both former colonizers and former colonized.

I argue in my dissertation that second-generation immigrants seek a mirror that bridges the gaps between their parents' memory of their homeland and their own experience of the West where these children grow up. Instead of focusing on only the sense of "being out of place"—which is sometimes found in literature of second-generation immigrant writers—I prefer to look at how history and memory are used to claim a place in the metropolis but also in their understanding of the original culture from which their parents emigrated. By seeking a mirror, a place to not be strangers to themselves—to paraphrase Julia Kristeva—second-generation immigrant writers leave

behind the misery and sense of self-pity they might have experienced before.[3] True, racism is still prevalent in the experience of being a second-generation immigrant writer, but by reclaiming historical moments and insisting on the necessity of acknowledging the consequences of colonialism and empire, these writers become agents of history instead of its mere victims. It is not so much a decision to ignore racism, but rather one to look at its roots: racism was present before the arrival of the strangers; it was at the core of the empire's enterprise.[4]

The place of an "immigrant" in each host country, France, Britain and the US varies greatly.[5] For instance, France mostly recruited North African workers for its reconstruction after World War II not only because it lacked manpower due to war casualties, but also because French peasantry were more reluctant to leave the countryside for the cities.[6] Jamaicans came to England after World War II, seeking better opportunities in what they saw as their "mother country." However, even though most of

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[3] See Julia Kristeva's *Etrangers à nous-mêmes* (1991) translated into English under the following title *Strangers to Ourselves* (1991).

[4] See, for instance, the infamous "Minute on Indian Education " (1835) where Sir Thomas Babington Macaulay declares, "I am quite ready to take the oriental learning at the valuation of the Orientalists themselves. I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. The intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is indeed fully admitted by those members of the committee who support the oriental plan of education."
On theories concerning racism and colonization, see Albert Memmi's *Portrait du colonisé précédé du portrait du colonisateur* (1957); Frantz Fanon's *Peaux noires, masques blancs* (1952); Aimé Césaire's *Discours sur le colonialisme* (1955).

[5] I address the specificities regarding the relationship between the first generation immigrants and their host countries in each of my chapters.

[6] In *The French Melting-Pot* (1989), Gérard Noiriel shows that, thanks to the French Revolution (1789), French peasants owned their land to which they were deeply attached and were therefore reluctant to sell or forsake it to work in factories—which was not the case for British peasants, for instance. As a consequence, Noiriel demonstrates that the French proletariat was made of foreign workers: at first Belgian, then Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish and eventually North African.

them had participated in the war effort for England, they received a very cold welcome.[7] Iranians came to the US mostly because of the turmoil produced by the Islamic Revolution and were therefore, atypical immigrants since for most of them, going home was not an option.

Therefore, the writers in my dissertation also inherit the particular histories of immigration from their parents. Being the son of an immigrant is unfortunately used as an insult in France, for instance. Likewise, Moaveni regrets that the members of the diaspora she describes refuse to consider themselves immigrants. Moreover, second-generation immigrant writers are technically Westerners but their names underline their non-Western heritage, which leads me to ask the following questions: Can they be accepted as French, British or American, even though their parents were not? In the course of my research, I encountered terms trying to define or give an identity to these children. It is interesting that they cannot be quite considered Westerners. Indeed, the term that came back the most frequently was "second generation," used sometimes as a noun, an adjective or just a phrase.

Second Generation

If read literally, the term "second-generation immigrant" can be quite misleading. Indeed, one can interpret "second-generation immigrant" as referring to an immigration movement where members of the same group leave their homeland and go to the same destination but at *different* moments. For instance, that could be the case of an Algerian

[7] See *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-racial Britain* (1998), Mike and Trevor Phillips include oral memory from some of the Jamaican men and women who boarded the *USS Windrush* to reach England in 1948. It becomes apparent from reading the words of these men and women that they came to England not because they were recruited (like Algerians were by France) but because they wanted to.

father leaving France, followed decades later by his son/daughter. However, regarding the authors and people analyzed in this dissertation, this is not the case. Indeed, one quickly understands that the term second-generation immigrant is only applied to children born and raised in the West whose parents are from non-European places. Literally, these children *are* second generation—their parents being the first generation—, but they are *not* immigrants. Nevertheless, critics and authors alike use the term second generation—as an adjective or a noun, sometimes with and others without a hyphen—to name these children.[8] They belong to groups that used to be part of Empires or of imperial zones of influence (as in the case of Iran). The term is used to refer to individuals with a non-European ethnic heritage. For instance, Alec G. Hargreaves (1991) mentions the term "Beur" (piglatin for "Arab") to refer to French who have parents from North Africa. Persis M. Karim (1999) calls Iranian Americans "Do-rageh," and "second generation" or "Second G" appears recurrently as well in Smith's fiction and is used by critics such as Mark Stein (2004).[9]

Filiation and Affiliation

In the case of French Algerians, critics agree that terms such as “integrated" and “second generation” are applied only to these children of North Africans, and not, for instance, to the children of white immigrants. Gérard Noiriel emphasizes this unevenness by arguing that,

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[8] Even though he also uses "second-generation" to discuss Black British writers, Mark Stein (2004) also problematizes the term.

[9] See *A World Between: Poems, Short Stories and Essays by Iranian Americans*, ed. Persis M. Karim and Mehdi Khorrami (1999); Alec G. Hargreaves's *Voices from the North African Community in France: Immigration and Identity in Beur Fiction* (1991) and Mark Stein's *Black British Literature: Novels of Transformation* (2004).

> In France, the expression "second generation" has only been widely used for the past ten years [1978-1988]; it is applied essentially to the children of North African immigrants… In fact, the expression "second generation" came from outside the realm of scholarship and has yet to receive a specific definition, which for some is reason enough to disqualify the concept. (Noiriel 162)

The term "second generation" occupies an ambiguous and somewhat insulting connotation in French popular discourse since it is *only* applied to one specific category in France's immigrant population. Conscious of this, however, Noiriel offers a more positive definition of "second generation," that it "designates individuals who have been exposed to a sociological process, to contradictory forms of socialization, at the crucial stage of fundamental acquisitions: childhood" (Noiriel 162). The emphasis of childhood as a determinant factor to where one individual belongs and joins the ideas laid out by Edward W. Said in *The World, the Text and the Critic* (1983) concerning the concepts of filiation and affiliation, which I will explain later on in this introduction.

For instance, the 1980s literature produced by the children of North African immigrants coincided with the first march for racial equality orchestrated in 1983.[10] The children of Maghrebis called themselves "Beurs."[11] Consequently, the novels they wrote came under the category of "Beur literature" and, as according to Hargreaves (1991),

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[10] Some of these writers were able to pursue a career as serious literature figures while most of them fell into oblivion. One of the most successful of these writers is Azouz Begag.

[11] French piglatin of "Arabe," Beur" became a way for the children of North Africans to claim a hybridity that France had so far refused to acknowledge.

> They are part of the so-called "Beur" generation. Beur is a name popularly applied to the sons and daughters of North African immigrants. A longer-established label is that of "second-generation immigrants," but as most of those concerned were born in France, this is something of a misnomer, for they have never migrated from one country to another. In their daily lives the Beurs have, however, been compelled to migrate constantly between the secular culture of France and the traditions carried with them with their Muslim parents from across the Mediterranean. (1)

Beur is a piglatin form of "Arabe" and establishes that there is an absence in the French vocabulary of a name designating second-generation immigrants. In the 1980s, they called themselves "Beur" in order to claim a space and name for themselves in the French landscape. Here, one can find the empowerment of renaming oneself in the face of discrimination. Likewise, in England, second-generation immigrants ally themselves under the term "Black British" which rallied, at first, anyone who was not of European descent.

According to Yasmin Hussain (2005), "the label 'black' became representative of a body of literature which provided evidence of economic, social and cultural oppression in any minority framework and within a British context... But the label of black is contradictory in its conceptualisation because its expression is defined in terms of colour, yet it is an idea that transcends race" (Hussain 34). Facing discrimination and being defined by a homogenizing label which did not take into account their cultural differences, writers decided to use the concept of "black" as a positive one, thus forging

an alliance that made them stronger in the face of discrimination. Prabhu Guptar, in a bibliography on black British literature published in 1986, declares that "being 'black' is a matter of visibility, with social and political consequences... In my view, therefore, 'black Britons' are those people of non-European origin who are not, or were in the past, entitled to hold a British passport and displayed a substantial commitment to Britain" (46). This alliance was particularly necessary in the 1970s when second-generation immigrants started experiencing racism and discrimination.[12] Prominent figures like MP Enoch Powell spoke belligerently against "the invasion of barbarians."[13] But the alliances regrouped under the label "black" started to dissolve at the end of the 1990s and writers began to be categorized into sub-categories related to specific ethnic heritages.[14] Moreover, some critics acknowledge stages in the establishment of black British literature, not only in terms of ethnic origin but also in terms of generations.[15] Like "Beur", "black British" constitutes a term of empowerment and naming oneself when faced by discrimination. The field of Iranian American literature also feels the necessity to name itself.

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[12] See Caryl Phillips's essay "A Little Luggage" in *A New World Order: Essays* (2001). The son of Jamaican immigrants, Phillips remembers how racism punctuated his parents's lives and second- generation immigrants' as well: "By the 1970s... my generation was still subjected to the same prejudices which had blighted their [my parents] arrival, but we were not our parents. ... Whereas they could sustain themselves with the dream of one day "going home," we were already at home. We had nowhere to go and we needed to tell British society this" (242).

[13] Enoch Powell, MP founded the xenophobic *National Party* that aimed to reclaim whiteness British character.

[14] Stein lists examples of the black British literature separating into different categories. For instance, Saga was a literary prize for people with African ancestry only, created at the end of the 1990s; or the Asian Women Writers' Collective only allows a limited eligibility to join.

[15] See Mark Stein (2004) and Caryl Phillips (2001).

As Persis M. Karim (1999) emphasizes, the voices of Iranian Americans—whom she calls "Do-rageh" meaning two-veined in Persian—can be smothered by their parents' generation who do not understand how the young generation can feel lost or puzzled by their contradictory heritage. Indeed, until the mid-nineties, Do-rageh literature was yet to be acknowledged whether in the US or within the Iranian diaspora itself. In her preface to the first anthology on Iranian American Literature, *A World Between: Poems, Short Stories and Essays by Iranian Americans* (1999), co-edited with Mohammad Mehdi Khorrami, Persis M. Karim explains the importance of Do-rageh Literature:

> In the spring of 1990, I attended a panel discussion at a conference that concerned Iranian immigration to the United States after the revolution and the adjustment problems of expatriates and exiles in Los Angeles… At the end of the session, I raised my hand and asked the anthropologists about the children of these immigrants and the difficulties they faced in trying to bridge these two cultures. The woman seemed unfazed by my question. 'Those who were born here or who came here as children don't have any such problems. They speak the language comfortably, they live in American society, they have no difficulty *per se*.' (18)

Karim finds this answer misleading and not corresponding to her own experience as a child of an Iranian father (her mother is French) growing up in America. Like her parents, she lived through the anti-Iranian backlash in America following the hostage crisis, and

was sometimes uneasy about her heritage.[16] But, the question she asked at the conference and the unsatisfying response she received lead her to reflect on her identity and she declares that "When I finally learned the Persian word for people like me, *do-rageh* ('two veined'), with two bloods running through me, I began to embrace my complex heritage and to see that it enriched me" (19). Therefore, in the introduction to the anthology, Karim reinforces the validity of the Do-ragehs' voices:

> Growing up in the United States with unusual and perhaps difficult-to-pronounce names, or having dark skin, dark eyes, and noticeably pronounced features, have impressed many of these young writers with a sense both of their own difference and the urgency of finding a voice when it would have been easier to remain silent. (25)

Therefore, as "Beur" is for French North Africans and "black British" for those who find themselves a space under this phrase in England, "do-rageh" is extremely powerful in the case of Iranian Americans. Do-rageh acknowledges a dual and complementary heritage for Iranian Americans: on the one hand Do-rageh is a proud recuperation of the culture inherited from the richness of Iran's history and culture; and on the other hand Do-rageh appreciates the one culture they only know directly—without their parents' interference— the one in which they grow up in outside of their home. I see in the texts chosen for my dissertation a will to combine and integrate the past the writers inherit from their parents and the present they construct for themselves in the West. To analyze this dual

[16] I will discuss the hostage crisis in more details in my third chapter.

relationship in each of my three chapters, I use the concepts that Edward W. Said calls filiation and affiliation.

In *The World, the Text and the Critic* (1983), Edward Said defines filiation as the biological and cultural heritage transmitted from parents to children, whereas affiliation concerns the social institutions outside of the family realm:

> What I am describing is the transition from a failed idea or possibility or filiation to a kind of compensatory order that, whether it is a party, an institution, a culture, a set of beliefs, or even a world-vision, provides men and women with a new form of relationship, which I have been calling affiliation but which is also a new system… The filiative scheme belongs to the realms of nature and "life" whereas affiliation belongs exclusively to culture and society. (20)

Filiation refers to the family and the ethnic culture in which one is born; whereas affiliation constitutes the culture in which one grows up.[17] For second-generation immigrants, affiliation and filiation are not necessarily complementary and most of the time conflictual. For Do-rageh, Iranian family values do not place the individual above their families whereas American education promotes individualism. More generally, filiation and affiliation are crucial in second-generation immigrant writings; so many times there is a dilemma in having to choose between filiation and affiliation. Such a choice leads, either way, to the loss of one part of one's identity. However, more and

[17] However, I acknowledge that for Said affiliation is also mostly voluntary whereas you cannot choose your filiation.

more I see in second-generation immigrant literature a desire to acknowledge and incorporate *both* filiation and affiliation. There are many strategies at stake in this acknowledgement, but in my dissertation I decide to focus on one in particular: the importance of colonial history and memory. My dissertation demonstrates that second-generation immigrant writers revise the colonial past linking their parents' homeland to the West. Through this revision of history, writers remind their Western audience of ignored historical facts and heal unhealed colonial wounds.

Acknowledging history can resolve conflicts between cultures at odds. No longer condemned to choose between a homeland they hardly know—their parents' country—and the one they know best—the one where they grew up—the second-generation immigrant can choose to recuperate moments of colonial history and present it in a non-belligerent form. To redeem the ignored history or trauma between their parents' homeland and their own new land, second-generation immigrant writers look at moments of colonial trauma but also at moments of cooperation. For instance, Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* incorporates World War II as a shared experience for her characters Samad Iqbal and Archie Jones. In *La colline aux oliviers*, Mehdi Lallaoui reminds his readers of the Communards sent into exile for their ideals at the same time as the Algerians—Kabyle or Arabs—who fought against colonialism.[18]

Instead of emphasizing that they are "stranger in stranger lands" because of their parents' cultural heritage, second-generation immigrant writers focus on how the

[18] See my first chapter for more details on the Communards.

consequences of colonialism partly construct strangeness.[19] This dissertation looks at how the second-generation immigrant writers represent the weight of colonial history linking their parents' country to their country of affiliation. Rather than dwelling on the idea of victimhood and injustice, they position themselves and their characters as historians and archivists who remind or rather teach their audience about the past. If the West can sometimes choose amnesia regarding its actions during colonial and imperial times, the direct victims of these actions cannot let go of this past. To heal from the colonial trauma, it becomes crucial for these agents to acknowledge and remember these events in the public sphere. Second-generation immigrant writers use their language of affiliation, English or French, to present and *re*present the past that once linked the West to its colonies.

The strategies at stake are not confrontational. Instead, the collective memory of their parents finds a justification through what Pierre Nora calls *lieux de mémoire* within the metropolis. Museums, archives, statues containing memories of the colonial encounter punctuate the metropolis and second generation immigrant writers have their characters rediscover the truth which they share with people both within and outside their community.[20]

Iran

I am aware that including Iran in a dissertation devoted to postcolonial writings can trigger controversy. However, I position myself with scholars such as Nima Naghibi

[19] "Stranger in a stranger land" is a phrase found in Smith's *White Teeth* and probably borrowed from Robert A. Heinlein's science-fiction novel *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961).

[20] In the case of Iranian American writers, I found one *lieu de mémoire* missing though: the archives of the CIA for instance where one could find traces of the Ajax Operation and its development.

and Fatemeh Keshavarz who argue that the intervention of foreign powers in Iran since the end of the nineteenth century made Iran a satellite of interests profiting only Persian royalty and foreign powers such as Great Britain and Russia at first, and later the US.[21] Iran was never a settlement colony *per se*, but when citizens of a country have fewer rights than foreigners staying in their country; or when the original local culture is considered mediocre and ridiculed but Western culture is ontologically put on a pedestal; these are sure signs of colonialism. Moreover, ever since the 1979 Iranian revolution, monolithic representation(s) of Iran, of Iranians, and in particular of Iranian women, contribute to make Iran an enemy in the West and to prepare minds for an inevitable invasion.

Rather than using Iranian American fiction, I choose to focus on a memoir, *Lipstick Jihad*, written by Azadeh Moaveni, an Iranian American journalist. It is striking that most Do-rageh writing memoirs are actually journalists—in great majority women—who travel to and write on Iran. If their parents cannot live in Iran anymore and consequently preserve an exilic and painful image of Iran, Do-rageh memoirists seek to learn about Iran beyond their parental memories and the images distilled by the West. Moreover, by using their journalistic skills at reporting, Do-rageh writers seek to enlighten and remind their Western audience of the West's involvement—and I would add responsibility—in provoking such a revolution against the Shah. During a trip to Iran in 1977, President Jimmy Carter had declared Iran "to be an island of stability in a

[21] I dwell longer on Naghibi and Keshavarz in my last chapter.

turbulent corner of the world" (Milani 1).[22] This statement demonstrates how one could overlook the political instability at stake during the Iranian monarchy. Westerners were surprised by Iran's revolution, but I would argue it was because they did not care to know about all the facts concerning Iran.

Dissertation Outline

My dissertation contains three chapters each presenting a thorough literary and historical context in which I place the texts I analyze. My first chapter "In Search of Lost Kabyles in Mehdi Lallaoui's *La colline aux oliviers*" examines how Lallaoui uncovers a traumatic episode of the tumultuous and tainted relationship between France and Algeria—the Kabyle uprising of 1871 and its aftermath. Kamel, a young French Algerian man living in France is the main character of *La colline aux oliviers*. During a most recent visit to Algeria, in 1989, he reluctantly promises his grandfather to research the fate of a long lost relative who fought against the French during the 1871 uprising. Kamel's family project of investigation rapidly becomes a process of self-investigation to recover ethnic memory. My analysis of *La colline aux oliviers* enters into a dialogue with Alec G. Hargreaves and Mireille Rosello who have so far been the only critics to have taken interest in the novel. By using Pierre Nora's concept of *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory) as well as Maurice Halbwachs's theory of collective memory, I argue in this chapter that Lallaoui reconciles accounts of the 1871 uprising by showing the possibility

[22] See Mohsen M. Milani's *The Making of Iran's Islamic Revolution: From Monarchy to Islamic Republic* (1988).

of having French characters living in France searching for and accepting the postcolonial truth as a collective act of memory instead of an isolating process.

My second chapter, "'What Is Past Is Prologue': Realms of Memory and Imaginary Homelands in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*," examines how Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* reverses European travel narrative conventions by focusing on the non-Europeans who settle in London. The protagonists, who are of Caribbean and South Asian descent, negotiate their heritage through *lieux de mémoire* (such as the high school named for a slave owner in Jamaica) that mean little to English Londoners. Here, as in my first chapter, I adopt Pierre Nora's concept of *lieux de mémoire* to explain how the colonial metropole itself becomes a text readable for signs of past trauma. Through the second-generation immigrant characters of the Bengali Iqbal twins, Millat and Magid, and their Jamaican childhood friend Irie, Smith underscores how second generations finally overcome to transcend the denial of history by their parents in order to integrate a society. Even though critics have been quick to compare Smith to Salman Rushdie and Hanif Kureishi, I would argue in this chapter that what makes her distinct from them is how she creates a different kind of second-generation immigrants, one shaped by the forces of globalization and gender.

My last chapter "'Breaking 'the Spell of Nostalgia': Roots Tourism as Reconciliation(s) in Azadeh Moaveni's *Lipstick Jihad*" looks at how Iranian American journalist Azadeh Moaveni's *Lipstick Jihad* reclaims the Iranian American memoirist as more than the "native informant" denounced by Iranian literary critic Hamid Dabashi

(2006).[23] I suggest in my chapter that the real scandal of Moaveni's work for Iranian diaspora intellectuals may be less her depiction of Iran than her attack on certain members of the diaspora itself. Although not without problems, I argue that the book enacts a valuable critique of the mythic Orientalism of some diasporic representations of Iran, especially through its treatment of the author's relationship with her mother where collective memory is challenged and remodeled for the next generation. Furthermore, Moaveni occupies a distinctive place in Do-rageh Literature. Unlike most texts in this tradition, *Lipstick Jihad* refuses either to idealize or demonize any part of the writer's dual Iranian-American heritage. Moaveni nevertheless reminds the reader of the problematic relationship between the US and Iran and challenges her diaspora to seek reconciliation between Iran's realities and the diaspora's.[24]

In their respective narratives, Lallaoui, Moaveni and Smith warn of the mirage that roots tourism can be for second-generation immigrants. But they also underline the benefits that a journey to the parents' homeland can be if the journey is undertaken as a true desire to discover these parental countries rather than to soothe an identity crisis. For instance, Lallaoui's character, Kamel, can only appreciate Algeria when he visits it for non-selfish reasons. By recovering the truth of what happened to his ancestor, Si Larbi, Kamel can return to Algeria to preserve the olive grove's memory. Likewise, Smith's character, Irie Jones's roots tourism ends *White Teeth* once Irie has learned to accept herself, her heritage, and thus becoming successful at building her life in England. Smith

[23] See Hamid Dabashi's "Native Informants and the Making of the American Empire" (2006).
[24] I will dwell on the difficult relationship between Iran and the US in my chapter on *Lipstick Jihad*.

contrasts Irie's trip to Jamaica with Magid Iqbal's roots tourism that had been imposed by his father, Samad Iqbal. To prevent his son from becoming British, Samad kidnaps Magid without the latter's consent. But Magid is *already* English and is actually in exile in Bangladesh. Thus, Smith warns of the dangers of roots tourism as a remedy for identity crisis. Likewise, Moaveni candidly admits that going to Iran to feel more Iranian does not help her in her search for herself. But, by admitting this, Moaveni actually turns to listen to Iranians around her and does realize that she is more American than she had thought.

Roots tourism can be the result of what second-generation immigrants learn from their parents' memories on their homeland. Lallaoui, Moaveni and Smith offer a critical perspective on the strengths as well as the pitfalls present in what Maurice Halbwachs defines as collective memory. While on the one hand, collective memory operates as a safeguard for communities whose ethnic history has been either erased or horribly edited by colonialism and imperialism, it can at the same time lead to immobility and bitterness. Interestingly, each of these narratives respectfully acknowledges the importance of collective memory while also exposing its abuse and misuse as well. In other words, my dissertation argues that in the narratives of the second-generation immigrant, the character becomes the agent of memory and not only its passive recipient. By focusing on second-generation immigrant narratives that display originality in terms of looking at postcolonial and post-imperial realities, I look at how complexities of memories shape postcolonial experience. I agree with Anne McClintock (1995) that the term postcolonial implies the idea of a before and an after. My dissertation argues that the second-

generation immigrant narratives construct an acceptance of the past that neither forgets the present nor burdens the future.

Chapter One: In Search of Lost Kabyles in Mehdi Lallaoui's *La colline aux oliviers* (1998)

Forefathers' Souls

The first pages of Mehdi Lallaoui's book, *Kabyles du Pacifique* (1994), on the subject of the deported Algerian Kabyles punished by the French for their uprising in 1871, incorporate the following quotation from the famous twentieth-century Kabyle writer Kateb Yacine as an epigraph: "We are busy with our forefathers' souls, subjecting their ongoing ordeal to our youthful expectations, our impatience that of orphans who are bound to these fading ancestral shadows, shadows you can neither drink nor uproot."[25] Kateb Yacine fought all his life as an intellectual for Algeria's diversity and in particular for the right of Kabyles, a minority within Algeria, to have their language recognized as a national language for Algeria.[26]

It is significant that Mehdi Lallaoui, a writer born and raised in France but nevertheless considered in France as a "Beur (second-generation immigrant of North African descent) pays tribute to Yacine by quoting his masterpiece, *Nedjma* (1956).

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[25] I translated this quotation myself, here is the original in French: "Ce sont des âmes d'ancêtres qui nous occupent, substituant leur drame éternisé à notre juvénile attente, à notre patience d'orphelins, ligotés à leur ombre de plus en plus pâle, cette ombre impossible à boire ou à déraciner… "

[26] See Tassadit Yacine, "Les ancêtres redoublent de vérité," in *Hommage à Kateb Yacine*, ed. Nabil Boudraa (2006). In her essay, Tassadit Yacine emphasizes how Kateb Yacine denounced the post-independence imposition of Arabic as the only official national language for Algeria, which erased the cultural diversity of Algeria and did not take into account the importance of Kabyles. According to Patricia M.E. Lorcin (1995), "The Berbers of Algeria comprise the Chaouia of the Aurès mountains in southeastern Algeria, the Kabyles (the largest group) of what is now known as Kabylia, the Mozabites of the Mzab in the northern Saharan region and the Tuareg of the central Sahara" (4). Lorcin adds that, "individual exceptions apart, all but the Mozabites by their culture and language, of which there are several dialects, but there are none the less Arabic-speaking Berbers and Berber areas, among the Chaouia for example, where Arabic culture has been absorbed into their own" (4).

Lallaoui thus acknowledges the place of the earlier Algerian writer in his own intellectual journey to research, share, and publish the Kabyle experience within and outside Kabylia itself. The "forefathers' souls" contributed to shaping the destiny of many victims of and actors behind colonialism, and they occupy a crucial space in Lallaoui's works. As with so many other contemporary writers belonging to a dual cultural heritage, Lallaoui's birth as a writer corresponded with, and I would even argue, was triggered by particular socio-economic factors connected to colonialism.

This chapter will look at how Lallaoui's second novel, *La colline aux oliviers* (The Olive Grove) (1998), revisits the concept of collective memory regarding one of too many episodes of confrontation between France and Algeria.[27] The idea of collective memory in Lallaoui transcends geographical borders and is resurrected beyond these borders by the descendants of this collective memory. I will explain why it is that Lallaoui occupies a distinctive place in Beur Literature. In the same vein as Richard Derderian (2002), my analysis of the novel will also use Pierre Nora's concepts of *lieux de mémoire* (realms of memory) and how they engage in the *devoir de mémoire* (duty to remember). Before moving to my argument about Lallaoui's *La colline aux oliviers* I will first summarize the way in which the 1980s prepared the literary soil for writers such as Lallaoui.

Indeed, the 1980s opened a decade of political and racial turmoil in France. First of all, the 1980 presidential election saw the socialist candidate François Miterrand

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[27] Mireille Rosello (2006) is the first one to have chosen to use "the Olive Grove" to translate "la colline aux oliviers."

putting a momentary end to the conservative and mostly Gaullist power that had prevailed on the French political scene ever since the birth of the Fifth Republic in 1958. Second, a new political party, le Front National, and its controversial leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen, voiced racist comments that resonated with a particular sector of the French population. The Front National's slogans resurrected the most abject colonial discourses on immigrants in general and on North Africans in particular. According to the French historian of immigration, Gérard Noiriel, the appearance of the Front National in France gave birth to the third wave of French xenophobic discourse that marked French history. In *Le Creuset Français: Histoire De L'immigration Xixe-Xxe Siècles* (1988), Noiriel identifies the first two crises as corresponding respectively to the Dreyfus Affair in the 1890s and then the fascist discourse in the 1930s that led to the Vichy Regime.[28] Noiriel shows that these two crises had appalling consequences: anti-Semitism, xenophobia and homophobia that led to the deportation of Jews, homosexuals, Africans and Roma people living in France (Noiriel 189-226).[29]

According to Noiriel, the third wave of xenophobic discourse spread in the middle of the period of catastrophic unemployment that hit France after the 1973 oil crisis. Foreigners and North African immigrants in particular were blamed for taking away French citizens' jobs. The Front National brought these once off-the-record discourses into the national and public arena. Sadly, this xenophobic party not only found an audience but also found supporters of its limited and limiting doctrine on the French

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[28] When quoting Noiriel, I will be using the English translation of his book: *The French Melting Pot: Immigration, Citizenship and National Identity* (1996).

[29] See Michelle Maillet's novel *L'étoile noire* (2006) about the forgotten fate of Africans and Blacks living in France and deported during the German occupation.

economic crisis. Discourses against North Africans (and foreigners in general) had always been present in France. However, if in the past the North African community had silenced itself or had been silenced to protest racist discourse and practices, the children (born and raised in France) of this community could not and would not be.[30]

In the 1980s a new wave of French literature erupted on the French literary scene. These writers were French citizens born and/or raised in France but were Muslims and most of them of Algerian descent.[31] In *Voices from the North African Immigrant Community in France: Immigration and Identity in Beur Fiction* (1991) Alec G. Hargreaves explains that these writers were the children of Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian immigrants who had come to France to work.[32] Their fathers had worked in mines, factories and in subways but,

> until the 1950s, very few immigrant workers brought their wives and children with them from North Africa. When the Algerian war of independence broke out in 1954, there were only 6,000 families of Algerian origin in France. … A wave of Algerian families settled in France during the war of independence, carrying the total from 6,000 at its inception to 30, 000 when the conflict ended in 1962. (Hargreaves 1)

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[30] The peaceful demonstration of Algerian immigrants in Paris on October 17th 1961 is a crude example of the violent silencing of this community. I will dwell on this painful and traumatic event in forthcoming paragraphs.

[31] Major publishers all "had" a Beur novel during the decade of the 1980s. For instance, J.C. Lattès published Akli Tadjer; Denoël, Nacer Kettane and Le Seuil, Azouz Begag.

[32] As Hargreaves and Laronde showed, most of these writers understandably were of Algerian descent since the Algerian immigrants represented the core of the North African immigration in France.

This influx of people remained invisible to the citizens of the French Republic.[33] The majority of these families could afford only to live in the outskirts of major French cities, in the *banlieues*. Shantytowns, and later on, projects, constituted the places to which the French Republic relegated these particular workers and their families.[34] Mothers and fathers from this community were for the most part illiterate and unaware of their legal rights. The French-Algerian war (1954-1962) accentuated discrimination and resentment, and this increased especially after Algeria's independence in 1962. If the parents lacked the tools necessary to claim and affirm their presence on French soil through literature, their children turned to cultural media such as literature, music, especially rap, and urban art such as graffiti and street theatre to claim their place.[35]

However, before this new literature known as "Beur literature" emerged, a Francophone Algerian literature already existed. Kateb Yacine's *Nedjma* (1956) is acknowledged as one of the major Francophone Algerian literary masterpieces and Yacine is proclaimed as the first "serious" Francophone Algerian writer. Assia Djebar also published as early as the end of the 1950s. Nevertheless, these earlier writers wrote as more or less assimilated members of French society, while, as Alec G. Hargreaves demonstrates, it became quickly apparent that,

> Unlike the older generation of North African writers... the Beurs have undergone their formative experiences as part of an ethnic minority within

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[33] See Yamina Benguigui's *Mémoires D'Immigrés: L'héritage Maghrébin* (1997). Benguigui regroups oral testimonies from fathers, mothers and children of this community.

[34] See Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot*, 119-21, 133.

[35] See *Black, Blanc, Beur: Rap Music and Hip-Hop Culture in the Francophone World* edited by Alain-Philippe Durand (2002). See also Carrie Tarr's *Reframing Difference: Beur and Banlieue Filmmaking in France* (2005).

> France, where they have shared through the family home in both the material disadvantages and the cultural traditions associated with first-generation immigrants. Beur authors have in this sense been the first to write from within the immigrant community itself. (Hargreaves 4)

Writing in French from a localized Algerian standpoint is radically different from writing in French and coming from an ostracized community in France. The Beurs are French but unlike other children of immigrants, they experienced the same forms of racial, social and legal discrimination as their parents.[36]

In the passage quoted above, Hargreaves underlines that the sense of self of these second-generation immigrant writers was molded within the "immigrant community itself" since French social practices put them into ethnic ghettos. Moreover, the French authorities deliberately emphasized the origins of these children in order to deny them their right to Frenchness. Hargreaves observes in *Multi-Ethnic France: Immigration, Politics, Culture and Society* (2007), that their North African heritage was also "widely portrayed as a serious threat to French national identity and social cohesion" (3). Therefore, "the central notion in political discourse about those minorities was the need for 'integration.' To the extent that 'integration' was not proceeding at the desired speed, this was commonly blamed on the alleged inability or unwillingness of Muslims to adjust to the cultural norms dominant in France" (Hargreaves 3). On the one hand, as

[36] I do not intend to either idealize or offer a pessimistic tableau of immigration. However, as Noiriel shows in *The French Melting Pot*, there is a belief central in any immigrant community as the idea that the parents, the first generation coming to France will have to undergo dire living circumstances so that their offspring, born and raised in France would not. They would be French and have advantages (civil and social) that their parents could not have claimed since they were not French in front of the law.

Hargreaves shows, what was seen by the French as the slowness of Muslims to integrate was seen by the Muslim community itself as deliberate prejudice from the French. On the other hand, Hargreaves is rightly critical of the fact that socioeconomic factors and discrimination were not taken into account in assessing the potential for the integration of the members of the second generation.

One could ask a simple rhetorical question: how is one to be integrated when one is born, raised, and educated in France itself? "Failure of integration" was an almost ontological view of the children of this community, whereas the true causes of the failure were mainly ignored since,

> In the 1980s France had been to a large extent a nation in denial, with many refusing to believe that immigrant minorities originating in former colonies in Africa and elsewhere could be incorporated into French society. Symptomatic of this conceptual blockage was the refusal to use terms which might appear to give recognition or legitimacy to immigrant minorities as structural parts of French society. (9)

What Hargreaves refers to as "the refusal to use terms" to reflect the reality—that these children were French citizens—gave birth to a linguistic phenomenon I call *citizenship euphemisms* that most Beur writers confront in their works.

Beur Literature(s)

From 1980 to 1989, Beur writers published twenty-seven novels.[37] Hargreaves and Michel Laronde were among the first academics to offer a useful taxonomy of Beur literature.[38] Hargreaves in particular argues that the Beur novels of the first wave usually involve the following themes: the violence of the urban landscape and living conditions; racial discrimination and racist violence; and cultural conflicts triggered by the generation conflicts between parents and children. Through the characters in their novels, the Beur writers underline the living conditions the North African community in France has experienced, such as moving from shantytowns to the subsidized housing estates located (always) in the outskirts of Paris or other major French cities (such as Lyons, as seen in Azouz Begag's *Le gone du Chaâba* (Shantytown Kid) (1989)). Poverty, drugs and the lack of soothing green spaces punctuate the daily lives of the characters in these novels. In addition, of course, clashes with representatives of French official power are usually highly traumatic. Police violence, racism at school and daily humiliations are emphasized. The "Arab"-looking youth is always under suspicion, but more than that, he is in constant danger. An encounter with the police leads most of the time to a deadly resolution. Like the Algerian during French colonial rule, the typical Beur protagonist quickly learns that he is always to be seen as both guilty and disposable by the French police. The police do not protect him but have *au contraire* his worst interests in mind.

[37] In the 1980s Beur writers were mostly male. Female Beur writers would appear later on the French literary scene, especially at the beginning of the 1990s.

[38] See for instance Michel Laronde, ed., *L'écriture décentrée: la langue de L'Autre dans le roman contemporain* (1996).

The 1980s Beur novels always incorporate a violent *death* (if not several as in the case of Kettane's *Le sourire de Brahim* (Brahim's Smile) (1985)) caused/provoked by the French police or racist French residents. The French police use brutality in their daily encounter with the Beurs in a manner comparable to the colonial practices demonstrated during France's presence in Algeria. In *Point kilométrique 190* (Milestone 190) (1986), Ahmed Kalouaz uses a real incident, involving a young French Algerian and four French Legion recruits, which led to the brutal killing of the young man. Kalouaz imagines the last moments of the young French Algerian before, during, and after—we are in the presence of a voice talking to the reader from beyond the grave—his murder while he is on the Bordeaux-Vintimille train. Kalouaz uses newspaper clippings as well as news broadcast to give voice to a person whose life was absurdly taken away. As a consequence, as is underlined by Mireille Rosello (2006), "novels written by contemporary authors of Algerian origin [i.e. Beurs] often seek to remember the lives of individuals either swallowed by the ideological presuppositions of the colonial archive or later dismissed by the logic of official post-independence national histories" (Rosello 201). Beur writers crystallize the ambivalent position of Beurs whose cultural memory is rejected as much by the French power as it is by the new Algerian power.

I now analyze the way these writers cope with this dual (French *and* Algerian) amnesia in their fictional writings. The idea of an "amputated memory" is central to Beur novels. The Beur writers connect the reason for the presence of Algerian workers in France to France's colonial past. Algerian workers did not come to France overnight. They came to work *for* France after having fought *for* France during World War II.

Sometimes the Algerian effort in World War I is even mentioned in Beur literature, for instance by Lallaoui in *La colline aux oliviers*.

The corpus of these books published between 1980 and 1998 also incorporates the Algerian war and the backlash occasioned against Algerians to which it led.[39] For instance, in Nacer Kettane's *Le sourire de Brahim* (1985), the eponymous character Brahim loses his childhood and *joie de vivre* after his younger brother Kader is killed during the F.L.N. (Front de Libération nationale) demonstration on October 17th 1961 in Paris.[40] Algerian workers left shantytowns that had relegated them to an invisible position in French society. They demonstrated—peacefully—against racist police curfew imposed on them and against intense racial profiling of which they were the regular targets. However, the French police met their demands with violence. Hundreds of unarmed Algerians, for whom the whole purpose of the demonstration was to be peaceful and dignified, were killed, thrown into the Seine while hundreds of others disappeared. The French press gave hardly any coverage to the demonstration and its aftermath. Like the Algerian war, the demonstration was amputated from French official memory but remained in the collective memory of the Algerian workers living in France.

Le sourire de Brahim (1985) begins with the preparations for the F.L.N. demonstration. The hope of the Algerian workers' community highly contrasts markedly with the disproportionate and violent response of the French government. Brahim's

[39] And beyond 1998 actually. But because I am situating Lallaoui's writing within a publishing timeframe, I am only referring to these novels published by Beur writers until 1989.

[40] Lallaoui himself wrote a novel on the demonstration. *Une nuit d'octobre* (An October night) (2001) was published for the fortieth anniversary of the demonstration.

seven-year-old brother, Kader, is killed, a victim of "collateral damage." By starting his novel with so much violence, Kettane reclaims part of the amputated memory of French/Algerian relationship. Many other novels written by Beur writers allude to the demonstration as well: for example Akli Tadjer's *Les ANI du Tassili* (The Tessali's NIA) (1984) and *Le porteur de cartable* (The Schoolbag Bearer) (2002) all mention the "incident." In *Les ANI du Tassili*, we follow the return from Algeria of a young Beur who has been endeavoring to find his "Algerianness." Traveling on the ship *Tassili* from Algiers to Marseilles, Omar meets a gallery of lively characters, among them some older Algerian factory workers who remember the October "events."[41] Tadjer goes even further in his novel *Le porteur de cartable* (2002), which shows a little boy helping his Algerian parents in their involvement with the F.L.N. Mehdi Charef's *Le harki de Meriem* (Meriem's Harki) (1989) and presents not only the demonstration but also the lack of unity in the Algerian community in France: the "Harkis" were Algerian collaborators working for France during the Algerian war.[42]

Moreover, most of the Beur novels involve a desire on the part of the Beur protagonist to connect with the parents' homeland. An idealization occurs, in which the protagonist has a firm hope of escaping the racial discrimination and disillusionment that he must face on an everyday basis in France. A "tourisme des racines" or "roots tourism" crosses the mind of the protagonist who fantasizes about his ancestral land.

[41] The acronym ANI means Arabes Non Identifiés/ Non Identified Arabs. By using it, Tadjer pinpoints how Arabs are deprived of any individuality.

[42] "Le problème des harkis" the harkis problem constitutes a complex theme in Beur literature since during and after the Algerian War, both the F.L.N. sympathizers *and* the harkis had to learn to cohabitate in the same French projects. Charef complicates the issue by showing how the Algerian revolution led or unled the national spirit of Algerians.

Unfortunately, most returns to the ancestral land result in complete disillusionment as, on the other side of the Mediterranean, the “Beur” is considered “French.” His presence appears to be clearly unwanted in Algeria. This double exclusion, this double sense of non-belonging, is illustrated in Ketane’s *Le sourire de Brahim* and in Tadjer’s *Les ANI du Tassili*.

In the Name of Memory

Mehdi Lallaoui's works differ from the conventions of Beur literature in important ways. First of all, Lallaoui’s works have not been published by any major mainstream French publishers. In 1990, Lallaoui created the association “Au nom de la mémoire” (In the Name of Memory) with journalist Samia Messaouid and historian Benjamin Stora, in order to promote the publication of books and documentaries on the Algerian presence in France and the conflictual encounters between the French government (and population) and Algerian immigrants. Lallaoui then transformed some of these documentaries into novels by incorporating the main topics of the documentaries as the central historical elements in the novels. Also, Lallaoui’s characters do not always necessarily live on the periphery of Paris or other major French cities.

In his first novel, *Les Beurs de Seine* (1986), Lallaoui does use some of the conventions of the Beur novel since we are in the presence of disenfranchised young Beurs. The protagonists fight discrimination by organizing a strike against their factory employers. Both the strike and the novel end tragically as one of the main characters falls victim to a racist crime. However, starting with his second novel, *La colline aux oliviers* (1998), Lallaoui derives his inspiration from forgotten historical events. Lallaoui’s most

recent novel, *Une nuit d'octobre* (An October Night) (2001) echoes the book and documentary *Le silence du fleuve* (The River's Silence) he made with Agnès Denis on the massacre of Algerian workers in Paris on October 17th 1961.[43]

The event at the core of *La colline aux oliviers* represents a deeper aspect of amputated memory with regard to France and Algeria, since very few people know about the 1871 Kabyle insurrection and, "the initial impetus for the novel came from a visit which Lallaoui made to the French Pacific colony of New Caledonia in 1983. He was intrigued and deeply moved to learn that more than a hundred years earlier, Algerians opposed to French rule had been deported to the island following an uprising in 1871" (Hargreaves 165).

The main protagonist in Lallaoui's novel, Kamel, although Beur, does not live *outside* of Paris. True, he lives in a roiling ethnic neighborhood of Paris, but it is still *in* Paris with its vivacity. The urban landscape is not one of desolation but of animation. No racist crime occurs and Kamel does not feel threatened unlike other protagonists in other Beur novels. Moreover, Kamel has an urban family of friends but his *direct* family—father, mother, and/or siblings—play no role in the narrative. There is no mention in the novel of Kamel's father's migration to France. The only time his father is mentioned is in relation to his grandfather's village to which his father took Kamel as a young child.

The *tourisme des racines* in this novel, then, happens by accident. At the beginning of the novel, Kamel travels to Algeria to paint some of its landscapes. He does

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[43] Anne Tristan published a book bearing the same title. Unfortunately (and not surprisingly, given French reluctance to remember the horror of the demonstration's repression) the book is out of print.

not yearn for an encounter with his roots. However, after seeing his grandfather Baba Mous again, Kamel must face the need to reconsider his priorities. Interestingly, the roots of Kamel's cultural heritage are lost *in* France, not in Algeria. Lallaoui develops a plot in which roots and memories of the French/Algerian encounter are visible only to those looking for them—in museums and archives, for instance. Moreover, the novel produces a series of Algerian characters who go to France to find the truth and not to escape the past or a bleak future. Kamel is a Parisian, a goofy and absent-minded artist like any other stereotypically Parisian artists. Algeria does not represent a lost homeland until Kamel goes there to visit a grandfather he had not seen since his early childhood. *Le tourisme des racines* is therefore accidental and not wanted or idealized by Kamel. But roots tourism is nevertheless crucial for Lallaoui as he states in an interview with Hargreaves:

> We were born here but it is as if there was nothing before us. There is something like a wall. You are over here and when you try to leave and look back, you see this wall. But precisely through the story of Baba Mous—at first subconsciously but since I finished writing it two months ago, I have had time to think about all this—immigrants, and I can breach the wall. Behind this wall, there is indeed the Mediterranean. And behind the Mediterranean, there is a country, which means that there is a life, a history and a legacy one should not forget. We are coming from the other

> side, we are coming from Africa. And with that comes a memory that we must cultivate and recover. (Hargreaves 151-52)[44]

Thus, Lallaoui—writer, film producer, and intellectual—sees the breaking down of dichotomies erected by amnesia as his mission. The importance of comprehending and accepting one's cultural heritage appears crucial in Lallaoui's work, not only for Lallaoui himself but for the Beurs and for France as well. Hence, we cannot conflate Lallaoui's protagonist's lack of interest in his roots with that of the author himself.[45]

Breaching the Wall

To better understand the distinctiveness of Lallaoui's version of *le tourisme des racines*, it is important to understand the connections between this novel and his non-fiction writing. Then, I would like to turn to the analysis of *La colline aux oliviers* (1998). I will first discuss the novel's plot before explaining the theoretical framework I am using to demonstrate how the tourism of roots occurs in Lallaoui's novel.

Mehdi Lallaoui has devoted two written works to the recovery of the memory of the 1871 Algerian insurrection and its aftermath.[46] The Algerian insurrection of 1871, led by the Mokrani brothers and Cheik El-Haddad, allied Arabs and Kabyles against the confiscation of their lands by the French. The French violently crushed the insurrection and deported the most important leaders from Arab and Kabyle tribes to penal colonies in New Caledonia. In his first book on the subject, *Kabyles du Pacifique* (1994), Lallaoui

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[44] In Hargreaves, *Voices from the North African Community* 151-52. Hargreaves includes the interview in French. The translation here is mine.

[45] Interview conducted on April 17th 1988 and included in Alec G. Hargreaves' *Voices from the North African Community.*

[46] Lallaoui also made a documentary on the deported Kabyles: *Ces Kabyles du Pacifique* (1993).

investigates not only military records but also the archives of Communards who were deported alongside the Kabyles. Lallaoui then wrote *La colline aux oliviers* (1998) which is also concerned with methods of recovering the past. In *La colline aux oliviers* we see how the protagonist Kamel embarks on a journey to discover what happened to his great uncle Si Larbi, a Kabyle insurgent against the French spoliation of Kabyle land at the end of the nineteenth century. Kamel is able to come to terms with the painful history of his great uncle, Si Larbi, and his family's involvement in the 1871 Kabyle insurrection only when he can identify *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory in France where the history is lodged unread.[47]

Lallaoui constructs his novel of recovered memory as a detective novel to foreground the connections between epistemology and geography for children of immigrants growing up in the society of the former colonizer. Paradoxically, clues to the violence of the past have not survived in the colonial site, but in the locations and institutions of the colonial power itself. Though the displacement is itself a remnant of colonial violence and dispossession, these second-generation exiles have no other sources of connection to the colonial past and must find maps to convert monuments to violence into sites of memory, occasions of brutal forgetting into sources of knowledge.

This chapter will now argue for the importance of *lieux de mémoire* as an analytic category in understanding Lallaoui's novel. My reading centers around the role of the titular olive grove in the novel as a symbol of the persistence of the Algerian past in

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[47] There is no English translation of Lallaoui's works. All the translated passages are mine.

contemporary France. I will show that for Kamel, the importance of the collective memory of his family present at the olive grove is at first only trivial and that it only manifests itself to the young man once he finds this memory entrenched within memory sites he recuperates in France. It is only after (re)discovering these memory sites that he accepts and fully acknowledges the crucial part he is to play in the survival of the collective memory. He takes up his *devoir de mémoire* (duty to remember), and thus his mission to contribute to the collective memory of the olive grove. Thus, as a child of immigrants marooned in France, Kamel must develop a sense of belonging that goes beyond geographical and chronological borders. Lallaoui's novel is a crucial endeavor to portray how the former colonial power stills bears traces on its own soil of its involvement in its former colonies.[48]

After stressing the intricacy of the plot, I will focus on how the novel uses the trope of the detective story since resolving what happened to Si Larbi, Kamel's great uncle and a victim of French colonial violence during the 1871 Algerian insurrection, is beyond anything else a mystery to be solved. Then, I will analyze how Kamel's views change regarding his role in the collective memory of the olive grove. This consciousness of his colonial heritage is paradoxically sparked by memory sites in France, especially archives that contain the key to the enigma concerning the insurgents of the Great Insurrection.

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[48] Unfortunately *La colline aux oliviers* is today out of print, which makes the task of recovering it even more important.

Mehdi Lallaoui’s *La colline aux oliviers* portrays the fulfillment of a promise made and kept over the course of three (not successive) generations, each bound to recover the fate of a lost relative: Baba Mous's father, Baba Ali; Baba Mous himself; and then Kamel. Kamel's father, Baba Mous's son, does not appear to have been involved in the quest since the novel is silent about him. In 1989, in France, Kamel receives a letter from his grandfather Baba Mous who asks his grandson to visit him in Algeria. For the first time since his early childhood, Kamel goes to the ancestral land of his family, the olive grove in Kabylia. Once the two men are reunited, it turns out that Baba Mous has a request to make of Kamel: he explains that the 1871 Algerian rebellion against the French resulted in the deportation of major Algerian leaders and fighters—one of them being Baba Mous’s uncle, Si Larbi. Si Larbi fought against the confiscation of the ancestral land, the olive grove. However, nothing was known of his whereabouts after he was arrested and deported by the French authorities. Baba Mous promised his father he would find out what had happened to Si Larbi. He spent his whole life trying to uncover the truth but could not keep his promise. In the evening of his life, he decides to ask his grandson to keep on searching for their lost ancestor.[49] Kamel’s quest opens forgotten pages of French history. Si Larbi was not only deported to a penal colony but he was also in the company of Communards defeated in 1871. Prison camps, penal institutions,

[49] The novel does not offer any information concerning the rest of Baba Mous's direct descendants. Kamel seems to appear as his only hope to uncover the truth, even though logically Baba Mous should have asked his son, Kamel's father. However, as I mentioned earlier, Kamel's father is surprisingly absent from the novel. We do not even know the name of Kamel's father. At this point, I think the text does not present enough elements to build any hypothesis as to what happened to Kamel's father or between him, his father and his son. One could nevertheless suggest that having only a grandfather and his grandson search for the truth might reflect a desire by Lallaoui to give more space to forgotten colonial memories from the nineteenth century in his novel than to the Algerian War (1954-1962). It is also possible to argue that the generation of Kamel's father constitutes another generation of "lost Kabyles."

prison and penal ships punctuate Kamel's quest. Each stage of the prisoner's travel can be traced in France by those prepared to undertake the quest. Through his journey in time, through readings of lost letters and discoveries of photographs from the past, Kamel meets, directly through conversation or indirectly through testimonies from the past, characters of various origins, French, African and Caledonian who all played roles in his great uncle's life. Kamel finally learns that Si Larbi had assumed another identity and called himself Slimane Chakkib when he was arrested by the French. Si Larbi later tried to communicate with his relatives using his new name but was unsuccessful. It was under the name of Slimane Chakkib that Si Larbi was deported to a penal colony in New Caledonia.

Theoretical Framework

To discuss the relevance of memory at stake in *La colline aux oliviers*, I will use three concepts in my reading of Lallaoui's novel: Maurice Halbwachs's collective memory and Pierre Nora's *devoir de mémoire* and *lieux de mémoire*. Each of these concepts speak to the others in terms of how an oppressed community, like that of the olive grove, cultivates, protects and preserves memory.

I would like to show how the idea of collective memory operates and how this idea can be applied to *La colline aux oliviers*. French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs devotes his book *The Collective Memory* (1950) to arguing that individual memory is not constructed on its own.[50] Indeed, individual memory is most of the time shaped by what

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[50] I will be using the following English translation of Halbwachs's *La mémoire collective*: *The Collective Memory*. Trans. Francis J. Ditter and Vida Yazdi Ditter (1980).

he called “collective memory.” In particular, in the case of communities that have been persecuted, collective memory represents a crucial element in conserving what the oppressors have been trying to erase, so that

> place and group have each received the imprint of the other. Therefore every phase of the group can be translated into spatial terms, and its residence is but the juncture of all these terms. Each aspect, each detail, of this place has a meaning intelligent [intelligible] only to members of the group, for each portion of its space corresponds to various and different aspects of the structure and life of their society at least of what is most stable in it. (Halbwachs 130-31)

The olive grove in Lallaoui’s novel works in a similar fashion, as the nineteenth-century characters follow an ancestral tradition that consists of planting an olive tree to commemorate each community member connected to the olive grove itself. For the society living on the olive grove, the visual and physical place “has a meaning intelligent only to the members of the group” since each tree corresponds to, and bears as a symbol, the mark of the year when the particular member of the community was born. As Rosello points out (2006), Lallaoui may also have been influenced by Moroccan author Khatibi’s *La mémoire tatouée* (The Tattooed Memory) (1971). In Lallaoui’s *La colline aux oliviers*, we are in the presence of a literal tattooed memory, since each male member of the community has a tattoo on his left shoulder that commemorates the olive grove:

> Just like all of those from the grove who were leaving for a long and uncertain journey, we had been tattooed with a caroubier [carob tree]

> branch on our left shoulder, three olive tree leaves, a sun, and our date of birth. Under each of the three leaves, there was a series of numbers… these numbers corresponded to the group of trees, the rows and the olive trees that represented each of us in the grove. We had thus been proceeding this way since immemorial times in order to permanently mark in our flesh our belonging to this land, to these stones, to this sky above the home of each of us. (Lallaoui 48-49)

Men carry the memory of the olive grove on their bodies as a mark that also serves as an oppressive identity card in the colonial context.[51] During French colonialism, the colonized, Arab and Kabyle, were given a second-class citizenship, not acknowledged as individuals but as a large anonymous group. The tattoo has then the dual importance of carrying ancestral memory as well as of creating a system of recognition among the members of the community. Identification through the tattoo reaches beyond the olive grove: "From that day on [the first day of fighting against the French], and until his disappearance, Si Larbi would be with Cheik el-Haddad's sons during battles. He would be wounded twice and left almost for dead in a ravine. But, thanks to his tattoo and to the old families that knew of our dynasty, he was always brought back to the grove" (Lallaoui 188). Arabs and Kabyle characters could understand Si Larbi's tattoo and therefore who he really was; whereas the French maybe only saw him as *just* a colonized person. Moreover, at the time of the insurrection tattoos in French culture were associated

[51] Interestingly we do not know whether the women from the olive grove have and had such a marker. The women are hardly ever mentioned and not even named. The text does not tell us the name of Baba Mous's mother nor his wife's name. Rosello mentions the androcentrism of the olive grove in "Tattoos or Earrings," 208-9.

with inmates, especially those sent to penal colonies. Those men and women were marked permanently with tattoos that linked them to their criminal past, thus preventing any possible return to a decent civilian life again since everyone could recognize and identify the mark of "shame."

The responsibility of the collective memory in the novel manifests itself through the concept of the *devoir de mémoire*. Indeed, in her article "Tattoos or Earrings: Two Models of Historical Writing in Mehdi Lallaoui's *La colline aux oliviers*," Rosello (2006) shows that what French historian Pierre Nora calls *le devoir de mémoire* (duty to remember) appears to be crucial in *La colline aux oliviers*. According to Nora, each individual has become his/her own historian, looking for his/her own roots and identity and by the same token preserving them:

> Historicized memory comes to us from without. Because it is no longer a social practice, we internalize it as an individual constraint. The transition from memory to history requires every social group to redefine its identity by dredging up its past. The resulting obligation to remember makes every man his own historian. Thus the historical imperative has reached well beyond the limited circle of professional historians… The commandment of the hour is thus "Thou shalt remember." It is the self that remembers, and what it remembers is itself. (Nora 11)

By introducing the idea of *devoir de mémoire*, Nora acknowledges the fact that memory stimulates the reflection on realms forgotten by history since *le devoir de mémoire* underscores the importance of keeping the memory of events, of cultures and of sites that

are crucial to a living community. However, as Derderian (2002) points out, Nora "devotes only one chapter to France's vast imperial holdings—and even this chapter is restricted to the 1931 colonial exhibition in Paris. As for the empire proper... *Realms of Memory* offers nothing but silence" (Derderian 28-29).

I agree with Rosello (2006) that "it may seem paradoxical to invoke Nora's work in a essay on Algerian memory considering that [Nora] deliberately excludes Algeria from his very corpus" (202). Nevertheless, as Rosello argues, "Nora's historical gaze and type of historical research is remarkably similar to the approach chosen by Franco-Maghrebi novelists who seek to redefine the narrative tools used by different generations in order to rewrite and manage their history" (202). In the case of *La colline aux oliviers*, Nora's concept of the duty to remember well describes the character of Baba Mous for whom it is inconceivable to relinquish his promise, even in the evening of his life. Si Larbi is part of the memory of the ancestral land represented by the olive grove; he is part of the land and thus part of the collective memory of the inhabitants of the olive grove. Baba Mous cannot forget either his promise or his uncle, as he, Baba Mous, respects the collective memory of which he is part.

Although Rosello does not mention this, in addition to the *devoir de mémoire*, the novel also puts to work the concept Nora calls *lieux de mémoire*: "A *lieu de mémoire* is any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community" (Nora XVII). To Baba Mous, it is the land that possesses the memory of his peopleThe land represents not only the memory of the Kabyles but also the precise reason

why they fought to keep this memory free and alive. But Kamel lacks the connection to the olive grove as a site of memory and thus lacks the duty to remember.[52] For instance when Baba Mous asks Kamel what the land represents for him, the young man is unable to give the expected answer. Baba Mous explains to Kamel that: "What really matters is the roots. Our land represents the depths of our memory... Memory, son, is the eyes of men from here. Without this light that unites them to their past, they are lost" (Lallaoui 64). Baba Mous emphasizes the connection between the olive grove, that is, the land, and the people who were born on the land. Therefore any event connected to the land is also connected to the people of the land.

A Detective (His)Story

The collective memory of people of the olive grove had been injured by the disappearance of Si Larbi. I intend to demonstrate here that the healing of the collective memory takes the shape of a detective (his)story. Keeping in mind how Tzvetan Todorov (1971) considers the detective story to be a story within a story, since "the first story, that of the crime, ends before the second begins. … the characters of the second story, the story of the investigation, do not act but learn. … the second story, the story of the investigation, thereby enjoys a particular status" (Todorov 45). I use the idea of the story within the story outlined by Todorov to look at the detective history composed by Lallaoui. Todorov argues that in a detective story, two stories are usually at stake. The first one portrays the murder or the object of the mystery. Without the initial mystery, the

[52] The text does not mention Kamel having a tattoo of the olive grove on his shoulder. We can interpret this omission as a sign that Kamel was not born and raised in the olive grove.

second story does not have any *raison d'être*. The second story, the one with the investigation, precisely occurs in order to solve the mystery of the first story. Using the idea of the story within the story, we can argue that Lallaoui indeed writes the novel in the format of a detective (his) story that takes place over the course of three generations. Kamel is the third detective of the collective memory, after his great-grandfather, Baba Ali, and more importantly his own grandfather Baba Mous. More than Baba Mous, Kamel conducts "the story of the investigation" since, as I have pointed out before, he is not in any danger. Baba Mous started the "story of the investigation" but could not complete it even though his community gave him what means they could provide him for his mission. Indeed, Baba Mous was trained by his father, Baba Ali, to become the family detective in order to search for his uncle, Si Larbi:

> Since my early childhood Baba Ali had been training me for something that I was far from realizing then, would actually take up my whole life. He chose me among all his sons because he detected in my eyes the expression in Si Larbi's, my uncle's. Finding out what had happened to his brother after the Great Revolt had been an obsession for Baba Ali for more than thirty winters. (12)

Baba Mous' whole education was devoted to learning how to observe, analyze and acquire the knowledge necessary to help him in his search for Si Larbi. Baba Ali had hired Cheikh Iskandar—a learned man who one day came to the olive grove—to tutor Baba Mous and thus prepare him for his mission. Therefore, the collective memory and *le devoir de mémoire* take the priority over Baba Mous's own personal ambitions. When

World War I starts, Baba Mous is drafted to fight in the trenches in France. Even though the draft once again shatters the fragile olive grove community, Baba Mous decides to consider it an opportunity to go to France where he can start his research on Si Larbi's disappearance.

During the great butchery of World War I, Baba Mous meets a dying soldier from the colonies. The dying soldier, who is black, has the same tattoo that Si Larbi legendarily had: "I realized that it was the exact same tattoo as Si Larbi's" (58). Baba Mous manages to obtain the name of the dying soldier, called Diallo Songda. When Baba Mous asked Diallo where his tattoo was made, the dying soldier mumbled some sounds that resemble "Paris." Baba Mous goes to Paris after the end of the war to search for his uncle—without any success. Before returning to Algeria, Baba Mous's path takes him to Lyons, where a drunken sailor describes Si Larbi's tattoo. Baba Mous then follows the sailor to Avignon, where he is supposed to live. Called back to Algeria to take care of his community, Baba Mous leaves France without finding any more clues as to the existence of his uncle or the identity of the mysterious drunk. In Algeria, the olive grove community receives fragments of a letter that bears the writing of Si Larbi but is signed "Slimane Chakkib." Again, Baba Mous looks for Slimane Chakkib. It is only at the end of the novel that, thanks to Kamel's investigation, the identity of Chakkib is revealed. Chakkib is the name taken by Si Larbi to escape capital punishment when the French army arrests him.

Many decades after the mysterious letter signed by "Slimane Chakkib" reaches the family, Kamel takes over the investigation at the request of Baba Mous. The old man

gives all his “files,” his notes and the information he has gathered in notebooks to his grandson. The notebooks constitute a crucial *lieu de mémoire* that Baba Mous has written not only for his investigation but also as a testimony to the whole community:

> One day, I decided to keep a travel journal. On notebook sheets, I would try to describe places I visited and people I met. This journal, where I would add daily entries, would go to my children. When I was with my children again, I would use the journal to teach them reading and to educate them on the history, the miseries and the beauties of their country… I wanted my descendants to understand fully where my search for Si Larbi was taking me. (96)

In his notebooks, Baba Mous writes everything that is relevant to his search for Si Larbi. However, very quickly the notebooks become a testimony about the situation of the colonized. Suffering dispossession, hunger and multiple injustices, the colonized are victims and objects in the hands of the colonizers. The notebooks function as a *devoir de mémoire* since they stand as a means of remembering those dreadful times and of understanding that the recovery of the memory of a lost relative leads to the excavation of the dark times of colonialism as well. Baba Mous takes on the role of a scribe who tells what the colonial power does not report. By describing the beauty and the misery he has seen, during his journeys, Baba Mous voices the beauty and the misery that French colonialism has ignored and marginalized.

Nevertheless, Kamel does not automatically appreciate the notebooks and has no desire to “fully understand where the search for Si Larbi” has taken Baba Mous. At first,

Kamel is indeed a reluctant "detective," who does not consider the quest a valuable or valid one. Kamel does not even experience guilt about the possibility of not pursuing the quest to its conclusion; to him it seems to be nothing but an embarrassing hobby. Because he is so far away from Kabylia, from the olive grove-this living memory site of roots—Kamel does not at first realize the importance of uncovering the truth. Without immediate reminders of the insurrection but also of the reasons for the insurrection—the confiscation of the ancestral land and therefore of the ancestral memory—Kamel is at first unable to understand what he sees as his grandfather's obsession.

Kamel understands himself as being mono-culturally French. Nowhere in the novel are we in presence of citizenship euphemisms such as "integrated" or "second-generation immigrants." Therefore Kamel does not feel the need to search for his origins. He is truly comfortable in his Parisian life:

> At the end of my walk, when I arrived at the Ourcq Canal, I felt indeed relieved. And there, my eyes on the grayish ice, I made my decision. I was going to stop my research… it is not a laughing matter anymore, I told myself. I am no detective…. Baba Mous's adventure might have been extraordinary but it does not concern me whatsoever. I had my own life, my own problems. (106)

Kamel is concerned with his own personal future, evidenced by "my own life," whereas Baba Mous, when he was Kamel's age, had devoted his life to his community and to discovering what had happened to Si Larbi, sacrificing even the love of his life, a young French woman called Marinette, whom he met in Avignon.

Rosello (2006) argues that,

> Two significant narrative choices thus distinguish Lallaoui's text from other fictional historiographies that seek to displace official discourse. First of all, the events that the novel allows us to discover (the 1871 uprising in Kabylia) are even less well known by the general public than the War of Independence. Then the novel tells us that it takes two generations to finally arrive at a complete narrative about the lost member of the community. In other words, this text also tells the story of a failure, of bad historiography. (205)

No doubt Lallaoui put into fiction what he himself had to go through in order to find out about the fate of the Kabyles and Arabs deported to New Caledonia. The novel illustrates the fact that it was literally impossible for a young Kabyle under French colonialism, such as Baba Mous, to rescue the memory of the olive grove through his search for Si Larbi. How could it have been otherwise? Kamel is able to solve the mystery because he *is* French, and Algeria is no longer French. He is not a second-class citizen. He is a city dweller, a Parisian, who has access to resources that were denied to his grandfather. He accepts that he is indeed a "detective," whether he likes it or not. Like a classic detective hero, Kamel must sift through the evidence, find the truth, and serve justice, simply because of who and where he is.

To discover the truth about the past, Kamel learns to rely on *lieux de mémoire*. However, at the beginning of the novel, he cannot yet read the olive grove as such a site. For Kamel, *lieux de mémoire* are places such as archives or photographs that have

somehow survived in contemporary France and still bear mute traces of the violence of the past. Kamel's work as a detective cannot succeed on its own. He needs the presence and assistance of the French characters because their histories are connected. The story of the Kabyle insurrection can be told only through a process of reconciliation between Kamel's Algerian heritage and his present-day French life.

Kamel decides to read Baba Mous's notebooks and use them as a precious source of information to start his investigation. Like Baba Mous before him, he will go after the first clue to Si Larbi: the tattoo on the dying Senegalese soldier. In order to find out who this man was, Kamel goes to the Military Archives in the Invalides in Paris. The Military Archives constitute the first *lieu de mémoire* in France. Baba Mous's notebooks are also a *lieu de mémoire*, as is the olive grove, for recovering the truth. The trail of the Senegalese soldier turns out to be a dead end when Kamel realizes that the dying soldier could not have had the name of Diallo Songda—the real Diallo registered in the Military Archives had died well before he was supposed to have met Baba Mous—but, Kamel nevertheless recovers a *lieu de mémoire* linked to the colonial experience. By researching the identity of the Senegalese soldier, the *faux* Songda Diallo, Kamel revives the memory of the soldiers from the French colonies who fought for France during World War I. Lallaoui pays tribute to these forgotten heroes, who died anonymously and without any reward from France.

The second clue left by Baba Mous proves to be more useful: the drunk man from Lyons who knew about Si Larbi and his tattoo. After a patient and meticulous investigation, Kamel discovers the name of this mysterious man: Octave Masson. Masson

was a sailor and, more importantly, the son of a prison guard, Emile Masson, whose life was saved by Si Larbi during a prison transfer. This part of the investigation brings back to life another key moment of the French-Algerian relationship: the first moments of Algerian immigration to France and the debt that France owes to the Algerians' underpaid labor.

As soon as Kamel starts finding memory sites that he can comprehend and observe—such as pictures of Octave and Emile Masson who knew Si Larbi, or letters describing the Kabyles in New Caledonia—he finally begins to accept his quest. When Kamel gains access to the archival list of the deported rebels to New Caledonia, the fact that these people actually existed and that the great insurrection actually occurred becomes a matter of vital importance to him.

The Tattoo of Evidence

Significantly, Kamel pays attention to the tattooed memory in the olive grove, which is why he is able to decipher the mystery of Slimane Chakkib. I would argue that Si Larbi's tattoo and Kamel's ability to identify it articulate the collective memory that Kamel now acknowledges. Indeed, Kamel reads the following description in the military archives: "Slimane Chakkib was among them. On a sheet of paper, across from his name, was written: 'Special Peculiarities: Arab, wears a tattoo on his left shoulder; condemned for insurrectional deeds'" (209). Kamel realizes that the French were unable to comprehend the tattoo displayed on Si Larbi's left shoulder: the intricate details of the tattoo are not even described. Moreover, the Chakkib clan did not have the same tradition of tattoos as the men from the olive grove, and thus no man bearing that tattoo could

really be Chakkib; but this was not a matter of interest or even curiosity to the French. Moreover, the tattoo operates as the main description of Si Larbi, as if we are present of a physical examination, comparable to an autopsy. Like a detective, Kamel observes and identifies the body of evidence, which here is Si Larbi's tattoo.

Kamel and his love interest Anne realize at the same time that Slimane Chakkib might very well be Si Larbi since both had the same complex and unique tattoo with the same series of drawings and numbers. Anne is actually the one who declares: "I strongly believe that Slimane Chakkib and Si Larbi were one and the same person" (218). Kamel shows that the *lieu de mémoire*, the French archive he consulted, is crucial in this interpretation as well: "As for me, I was equally convinced ever since I had looked up the register at the National Archives" (218). The narrative positions Anne's hypothesis, that Chakkib and Si Larbi were the same person, before Kamel's, thus emphasizing that one does not need to be from or to be related to the olive grove to have an interest in solving the mystery of Si Larbi's disappearance. Of course, Lallaoui adds a romantic twist to the character of Anne, since the young woman turns out to be the granddaughter of Marinette, who was Baba Mous's first and lost love. Anne and Kamel are not related and they meet by "accident" in Avignon. They represent the couple that Baba Mous and Marinette could never be. They need each other to heal the wounds of the past. Anne is also the one who realizes that Octave Masson's father, Emile, was a prison guard in the same prison as Si Larbi and that they had probably met.

A Communal Memory

Anne and Kamel visit together the crucial *lieux de mémoire*, in particular the Musée de la Commune in the town of Saint-Denis. This museum possesses extensive information on the Parisian Commune, in particular testimonies, letters and diaries written by Communards before, during and after the Commune.[53] These various pieces of writings by the Communards constitute essential *lieux de mémoire* through which Kamel will finally put together the pieces of the puzzle.[54] In this section, we will see how Lallaoui includes these alternative histories, narrated by marginalized French nationals, to create *lieux de mémoire* that function like testimonies in the detective (his) story that is *La colline aux oliviers*.

The Communards' writings that Anne and Kamel find clearly provoke an epiphany for Kamel. Indeed, the young man is able to reach beyond time to the memory of the olive grove, since through the Communards the presence of the colonized is witnessed and crystallized:

> We immersed ourselves … in the testimonies of the Parisian insurgents. Through them, we learnt the names of the islands where the Communards as well as the vanquished of the great Algerian insurrection had been sent… those vanquished were disappearing as if by magic from the list of prisoners, only to become anonymous numbers. (220-21)

[53] La Commune, also known as "La Commune de Paris" was a working-class uprising trying to rule Paris in 1871 after France's defeat in the French-Prussian War that saw the end of Napoléon III's reign. Anarchists and socialists rose to take power in Paris but were defeated by the III Republic. Most of the Communards, i.e. people who believed in La Commune, were arrested and deported, some to New Caledonia, like Louise Michel, others to Algeria even.

[54] Lallaoui made a documentary on La Commune: *La Commune de Paris 1871* (2004).

While the colonial power reduced the Algerian prisoners to mere numbers, the Communards' writings describe the particularities of some of the Algerians they met during the journey and after they arrived to the penal colony. Kamel reads a letter from an unnamed Communard, who mentions Si Larbi by his *real* name, which shows solidarity and trust between the two deported men:

> Dear father, there are three inmates from Africa with me. They help and support me as best as they can. … Si Larbi, also called Chakkib Slimane by his companions, was condemned for insurrectional deeds by the Court of Algeria. Prisoner Number 2825. Has a tattoo on his left shoulder. Some sort of symbol of three olive tree leaves. (223-24)

The letter written by the deported Communard to his father underlines the courage and empathy that Si Larbi displayed toward other prisoners and in particular toward a French man. Lallaoui includes this episode in order to develop the idea that Algerians, including Kabyles, used agency in differentiating between the colonial power's unfair policies and civilians who had nothing to do with these policies. Once again, Lallaoui disrupts colonial dichotomies: not all French people are depicted as merciless colonizers, and the Kabyles are not "savages" but men capable of empathy and bravery in dire times.

To engage with the memory of the real-life deported Kabyles, Lallaoui adds actual voices of marginalized French witnesses to the aftermath of the insurrection: the Communards who were deported alongside the Kabyles. Indeed, for instance, Kamel discovers that the historical figure Louise Michel, a very famous real-life Communard, was also deported to New Caledonia. By reading her memoirs, he finds out that she saw

and met Kabyles who had been deported to the same penal colony. Lallaoui includes the following quote from Louise Michel's actual memoirs: "These Orientals who are imprisoned far away from their tents and their herds, they were good and simple people with a great sense of justice. This is why they could not understand why they had been treated in such a way" (228). Louise Michel was one of the most famous women who took part in the Commune, but her fierce fight for social justice resulted in her deportation to New Caledonia.[55] By including the voice of this remarkable woman in French history, but also by selecting her thoughts on the deported Algerians, Lallaoui demonstrates that *some* French people already had the human and humane capacity to understand and respect the colonized who were fighting against the usurper of their land.

Besides Louise Michel's writings, Lallaoui includes other famous (but forgotten) names from the French Commune. For instance, Kamel reads the memoirs of Henri Bauer, who was one of Alexandre Dumas' illegitimate sons.[56] If the penal administration tried to silence the Algerian insurgents twice—first by deporting them to an island far away from their land and calling all of them Arabs, and by then registering them by their prisoner numbers and not by their names—Communards like Henri Bauer include them nevertheless:

> I skimmed through Henri Bauer's memoirs, Alexandre Dumas' illegitimate son. And I read Louis Barron's articles, secretary to the War Delegation under the Commune. Thanks to them, I finally learnt that

[55] See Louise Michel *Souvenirs et aventures de ma vie* (1886). Kateb Yacine wrote a play on Louise Michel's experience in New Caledonia entitled *Louise Michel et la Nouvelle Calédonie* (1972). It imagines Michel's encounter with El Mokrani, one of the leaders of the 1871 insurrection in Kabylia.

[56] See Henri Bauer's *Mémoires d'un jeune homme* (1895).

> Algerian insurgents had lived on Pines Island which was for simple deportees; and on Ducos Island in a fortified compound for convicted prisoners. (221)

Finally, when Kamel finishes reading and analyzing the writings of the Communards, he is able to feel for the olive grove, as much as Baba Mous and Si Larbi did: "I had a knot in my throat. Almost a century and a half after these forgotten torments, and thanks to the characters we had been following, I was recuperating in the most unlikely fashion, this concealed portion of our history. This history that was extending the memory of those of the olive grove by reminding men of their past" (225). For the first time in the novel, Kamel uses "our" in order to refer to the collective memory of the olive grove. This pronoun positions Kamel in relation to his responsibility as an heir to that memory. He could not do it before, precisely because he did not grow up surrounded by the physical markers of the olive grove. However, because he has used the *lieux de mémoire* present in France concerning the Great Insurrection, Kamel reclaims a crucial part in this collective memory he has been trying to ignore.

Moreover, as seen earlier, Kamel receives the help of characters who are also very passionate about discovering the truth. None of them are of Kabyle origin as he is. Sylvia, his neighbor, Anne, his love interest and Pol, his former high school teacher, are incredible sources of help in Kamel's quest. This network of friends is soon completed by "kind" strangers who agree to lend letters, diaries, and photographs that can contribute to uncovering the truth. Emile Masson's grandchildren gave their grandfather's entire

correspondence to Anne so that the young woman can discover the connection between the prison guard and the Algerian inmate, Si Larbi.

Lallaoui includes these French characters so that the history of the Great Insurrection and one of its main protagonists may actually be rediscovered by *all* kinds of French people, whether they are of Kabyle origin or not. For instance, Pol Rochardon, Kamel's former high school teacher, suggests he should follow the Communards' trail after Kamel finds out that the Parisian insurgents were probably deported to the same penal colonies as Si Larbi: "Then, we have to follow the path of the Parisian insurgents as well. The Communards' fate and that of the Algerian insurgents led them to the same prisons, and their final destination was almost certainly the same" (209). Anne accompanies Kamel to the Museum of the Commune. She reads with him the testimonial writings about the deportation to New Caledonia, testimonials written by the Communards. If Kamel resented starting his investigation on his own, by the end of the novel, the lonely "I" almost disappears, to be replaced by a collective "we," referring to Kamel *and* his non-Kabyle French companions.

Earrings of Truth

I would like here to bring back a character I mentioned very briefly before: Cheikh Iskandar, who was Baba Mous' tutor on the olive grove. Rosello analyzes Iskandar as providing "a different form of identification" (213) since he is a stranger to the village and does not bear the tattoo on his shoulder. Iskandar's teaching completes the oral memory of the olive grove received by Baba Mous. Because of his duty to educate Baba Mous, Iskandar is actually put in charge of preparing the young man to understand

and comprehend the world beyond the olive grove that has snatched away his uncle. However, Baba Mous's education is interrupted when he is drafted to fight for France during World War I. Before parting with his student, Cheikh Iskandar offers Baba Mous a pair of gold earrings, telling him to give them to the woman he will fall in love with:

> At the end, he pulled out from his burnous a box within which was a pair of fine gold gazelle-head-shaped earrings… "Take them, they are yours… They are my most precious possession. They are for me what the olive grove is for all of you here, the proof of our existence. The earrings used to belong to my mother and before that to the mother of my mother. They were from of a *sigaya* [goldsmith's shop] dating from the great lords of Africa at the far ends of the desert.[57] Take care of them as preciously as your life and then give them to the one woman that will carry them to your children." (48-49)

After the end of World War I, Baba Mous remains in France, where he searches for Si Larbi. He stays in Avignon where he meets Marinette, who helps him in his quest. However, Baba Mous suddenly has to leave France and Marinette, and he returns to Algeria where his father is dying. Heartbroken at having to leave his love in Avignon, Baba Mous gives one of the earrings to Marinette as a token of his affection, while he keeps the other one. We find out about the connections between the two generations (Baba Mous/Marinette and Kamel/Anne) thanks to the gold earrings. Indeed, fifty years

[57] At the end of *La colline*, Lallaoui provides a lexicon of the Arab and Kabyle words used in the novel. He gives the following French translation for sigaya: *orfèvrerie*, which means goldsmith's art and/or goldsmith's shop. See *La colline*, 235.

after Marinette receives one earring, Baba Mous gives the remaining earring to Kamel. When Anne comes to Paris to visit Kamel, she recognizes the earring as being the twin of her grandmother's and realizes that this cannot be a coincidence.

Rosello interpreted the earrings as a *lieu de mémoire* as follows: "Whereas olive trees keep the memory of a dynasty of men whose contingent birth attached them to a land, Iskandar's earrings preserve memory while authorizing exile and exogamous relationships. He gives Baba Mous the right to choose who will be the recipient of the story" (213). I would add that the fact that Iskandar gives a piece of jewelry that comes as a pair (instead of a ring, a necklace or a bracelet for instance) provokes the idea that history and memory function as a dual process where the remembrance of history, and memory itself in the case of the olive grove, necessitates a second party. In other words, the painful remembrance of the Kabyle insurrection and its aftermath needs to be achieved by *both* parties that have been involved in the insurrection: France and Algeria. Kamel *is* French but his Frenchness possesses the dual heritage of belonging to *both* the Algerian/Kabyle descent and the French affiliation. France needs to acknowledge its colonial past as well.

Consequently, because the olive grove's memory was shattered and traumatized by French colonialism, it becomes imperative that the healing of the olive grove should also involve the healing of France in relation to its colonial past. The amputation of memory happened in the olive grove physically and literally because Si Larbi, as well as the land, was snatched away from the community of the olive grove. However, this amputation became amnesia on the French side. Symbolically the two earrings cannot be

together in Baba Mous's and Marinette's time but can be reunited in 1989 France where Kamel and Anne can love each other since there is no colonial barrier. When Baba Mous's and Marinette's earrings are reunited, the fate of Si Larbi is finally known and Baba Mous is at peace, having kept the ancestral promise. Moreover, gender is finally reinscribed in the story of the olive grove, thanks to Iskandar's earrings. Rosello analyzes this reinscription of gender as crucial:

> That Anne should find the second earring at Kamel's and should suddenly recognize her grandmother's earring at the very moment when the two lovers can fit this last piece into the almost completely assembled puzzle is a fictional deus ex machina. At the same time, this narrative decision makes a point about the presence of women in this picture. … And yet Anne's discovery makes the point that her model of history, inherited from Iskandar, works perfectly. History as a gift, history as transmitted by women and by people who do not necessarily belong to the *colline aux oliviers*, is just as successful as Baba Mous's stubborn determination. (215)

Hargreaves sees Lallaoui's novel as different from the rest of the corpus of contemporary Beur novels, since "no [other] Beur novel ends with an unequivocal sense of completion" (165). I would also add that the originality of Lallaoui's novels lies in the fact that at no moment in the course of his quest does Kamel encounter racism or primal animosity from French people or the French authorities. Moreover, his non-Kabyle

friends are sometimes even more passionate and less discouraged than he is when a trail reveals itself to be of no use.

The action of the novel begins in July 1989. Kamel has just left France after July 14, Bastille Day. That year France's national holiday was no ordinary event, since the whole country was celebrating the bicentennial anniversary of the French Revolution. Nevertheless, some events such as the consequences of the revolution, the revolutionary wars and the spread of the French Empire were not commemorated. By setting the action of the novel in such a special year for French nationalism, Lallaoui reinscribes forgotten events into canonical French history.

Conclusion: Remembering the Great Insurrection

It is only after he finishes his investigation into what happened to his great-great uncle, Si Larbi, that Kamel is truly able to appreciate the significance of the land for his forefathers and for his grandfather. Kamel solves the mystery and through his investigation justice is restored and the *devoir de mémoire* has therefore been fulfilled. In some way, the reader follows Kamel's efforts to uncover the truth and then, like the young protagonist, has to wait until the end of the novel to understand how it all began. Si Larbi represents therefore more than a prison number. Indeed, it is only at the end of the novel that for the first time we hear words attributed to Si Larbi himself. Those words are remembered by Baba Mous, who recounts them when telling the history of the Great Insurrection to Kamel and other children of the olive grove. Baba Mous credits Si Larbi for having said "We belong to this land as much as it owns us. We have cherished it and it has cherished us since the beginning of the world. Men, women, children, and elders

have suffered for it. We must preserve it. What is better work of the human soul than to fight for this land that saw our birth?" (185) Si Larbi was once part of the ancestral community that lived by the olive grove for which he fought so fiercely. The use of "we" reinforces the idea of a community whose roots are merged in a land that should be protected against the usurper. Si Larbi's voice appears in the text only at the end of the novel because only then is Kamel able to understand and appreciate the words of his ancestor. The insurrection and Si Larbi's fate are now part of Kamel's own present-day identity and experience.

Therefore, just like Si Larbi's speech, the description of the Great Insurrection only appears at the end of the novel when Kamel goes once again to visit his grandfather at the olive grove. During the same occasion on which he recounts Si Larbi's words in front of a gathering of village children and elders, Baba Mous also retells the unfolding of the events of the insurrection:

> For the thousandth time, Baba Mous was making us relive the Great Insurrection. Relentlessly, with the same words, as a *Tuareg* [Berber/Kabyle nomadic tribe] storyteller would do, he was passing the message to the village children who were eager for emotions and adventures. But the elders also enjoyed remembering these old events that had harvested their field with blood. (178)

Baba Mous assumes the position of the community storyteller, and young and old listen, mesmerized by his retelling of the story of the Great Insurrection. Through his position as community storyteller, Baba Mous fulfills his *devoir de mémoire*, since he

passes on to the next generation the (his)story of the Great Insurrection that was fought to preserve the community of the olive grove and its collective memory.

The Great Insurrection was triggered by the fact that Algeria was undergoing a change of rule. Since its invasion in 1830, Algeria had been under the French military control. However, in 1871, after the fall of the second Empire, French settlers in Algeria managed to obtain a civil rule in Algeria. In other words, the settlers were going to take full possession of the land and encourage settler immigration since “as a result of a series of decrees passed in the autumn of 1870 and culminating in 1871 with the appointment of Governor-General Vice-Admiral de Gueydon, the colonial administration of Algeria passed out of military hands” (Lorcin 167). Civilian rule meant more settlers, and more settlers meant more confiscation of native land: “the transformation of the economy enriched the settlers and accelerated the pauperization of the indigenous population in rural Algeria, driving it off the land into the cheap labour market, first in the colony and then in France” (Lorcin 167). Lallaoui incorporates agency on the part of the Kabyles by showing how they understood what civil rule entitled for them: full dispossession of their lands:

> In village assemblies, a single word kept on being muttered under the tone of fear and malediction, the word “dispossession.” … A decree gave away the military rule to the settlers. "What is civilian rule, according to you?” a settler asked an Arab one day. “Well, it is very simple,” answered the son of the land. “I have ten goats, you take eight of them. I have two thousand sheep. You only leave me eight to keep." (180-81)

This short dialogue is part of the history of the Great Insurrection that Baba Mous shares with the children of the village at the end of the novel. Positioning the Great Insurrection in the context of civilian rule not only demonstrates the importance of the land for the Kabyles, but also emphasizes the fact that after the Great Insurrection there was no end to full colonization of Algeria by the French settlers.[58]

Ironically the events are told on the Algerian side, but the evidence is found on the other side of the Mediterranean. Of the Great Insurrection, indeed, there is no visible physical trace, such as written accounts, in 1989 Algeria; whereas colonial archives in France have the minutes of the trials of the rebels as well as the names of the deportees. It seems that colonial memory has space only for the names of those that France, the colonial power, has punished for having crossed her path. On the other side of the Mediterranean, however, the memory of the events is passed on from one generation to another. For the Kabyles of the olive grove, the land *is* memory. More importantly any event linked to colonization is the knowledge engraved in the land. Indeed, colonization aimed at dispossessing the tribes of their land, therefore the Kabyles place time in relation of the land. The dispossession of the tribes from their land truly robs them of their history, for they tell time not by dates but in terms of the effects of events on the land itself. The Great Insurrection is not remembered as having taken place in 1871, but as having taken place in the year when the land was going to be taken away from the tribe.

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[58] For detailed historical information on the consequences of civilian rule in French Algeria, see Charles-Robert Ageron, *Les Algériens musulmans et la France (1871-1919)* (1968).

As already mentioned, Mehdi Lallaoui has created an association called "Au nom de la mémoire" (In the Name of Memory). Through this association, Lallaoui publishes, compiles documents and makes documentaries that retrace tumultuous moments in the French-Algerian relationship. Passionate about the Great Insurrection and its terrible aftermath, including both the unilateral seizing of native land in Algeria, and the deportation of the insurgents to New Caledonia, Lallaoui has tried to reach a wider audience by creating an original and innovative novel that Hargreaves calls "the story of a positive quest for origins. The problematic nature of the relationship between the Beur protagonists and the historical past is emphasized by the constant deferral within the text of what, in chronological terms, precedes and conditions everything else" (Hargreaves 151).

Having the reader learn about the events at the same time as the protagonists provokes curiosity, knowledge and empathy. The reader becomes as well an actor in "the positive quest for origins" since the rescue of Si Larbi's memory is an experience shared by people not necessarily of Kabyle origin. The novel is now out of print in France, which is unfortunate because Lallaoui brings a message of reconciliation, asking France to admit, acknowledge and accept its colonial past. Lallaoui achieves reconciliation by deconstructing simplistic dichotomies and valorizing complexities.

Chapter Two: 'What Past Is Prologue': Realms of Memory and Imaginary Homelands in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000)

"What is past is prologue," a quotation from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is used as an epigraph by Zadie Smith for her first novel *White Teeth* (2000) and summarizes the plot of a story that deals with immigrants and their children—called second-generation immigrants—in an England on the move to becoming an explosive multicultural society.[59] Displaying three families whose Englishness transforms London, the Bangladeshi Iqbals, the British-Jamaican Joneses, and the British Catholic-Eastern European Jewish Chalfens, *White Teeth* dramatizes the terms of accepting one's history with the new homeland's. A literary prodigy, Smith continues and expands the canon of black British literature. Her novel deals with a diversity of characters, not necessarily of only Jamaican descent as she herself is. Her Bangladeshi characters of first and second generations are almost more developed than her Jamaican characters even though she is not of South Asian origin.[60]

The choice of "What is past is prologue," as an epigraph by Zadie Smith for *White Teeth* has already been analyzed by certain critics. For Claire Squires (2002), the epigraph "declares the importance of the prehistory of her [Smith's] characters, the legacy of their origins and the question of how they arrived at the present, immediately giving a frame to the task she [Smith] is about to tell" (7). In a similar manner, Mark

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[59] In Act 2 Scene I of *The Tempest*, Antonio tries to convince Sebastian to murder Sebastian's brother Alonso, King of Naples: "We all were sea-swallowed, though some cast again, And by that destiny to perform an act/ Whereof what's past is prologue, what to come/ In yours and my discharge" (71). *The Tempest* also has a long history of being the most interesting Shakespeare play for postcolonial critics and writers. See, for instance, Aimé Césaire's reinterpretation in *Une Tempête* (1969).

[60] Smith's father is Anglo British and her mother is Jamaican.

Stein (2004) argues that by following Shakespeare's quote, "the novel [*White Teeth*] takes an interest in how history is used and misused, how it can affect young people growing up, and how they deal with the desire to know their history and to be unfettered from it" (XI). Squires and Stein interpret the epigraph to illustrate how characters, in particular second-generation immigrant characters, thrive from releasing themselves from the past and its burden. This chapter will show, however, that it is rather *how* the past is narrated than the past *per se* that burdens the second-generation immigrant characters in *White Teeth*. Actually, I consider the novel to suggest that the characters can liberate themselves from the wounds caused by the imperial past when they reassert and revise how this past is told and remembered. Kris Knauer (2008) also sees the imperial past occupying a crucial place for the second-generation immigrant characters because "the root canals of Irie Jones, Magid, and Millat Iqbal are inextricably *rooted in* and *rooted through* the history of the British Empire" (182). Agreeing with Knauer, I want to add, in this chapter, that second-generation immigrant characters contest the way the imperial past is *still* remembered in London. In other words, the characters strive to examine ignored and overlooked aspects of the imperial past. By doing so, Irie Jones—Archie and Clara Jones's daughter, Magid and Millat Iqbal—sons of Samad and Alsana Iqbal—contest their parents' versions of the imperial past as well as how their parents use the past to represent their original homeland.

Therefore, it is not surprising that, toward the end of *White Teeth*, the adolescent Irie Jones, daughter of Archie and Clara Jones, makes a stand against the parental narrations of the past. The scene takes place in a bus leading Irie, her parents and their

Bengali friends, Samad and Alsana Iqbal, to the launch of a new scientific project of Irie's tutor and employer's, Dr. Marcus Chalfen. The project is called FutureMouse. Irie bursts out into what I call "a second-generation immigrant manifesto," claiming the right to be like *other* families for whom,

> the biggest traumas of their lives are things like recarpeting... They don't mind what their kids do in life as long as they're reasonably, you know, *healthy*. And every single fucking day is not this huge battle between who they are and who they should be, what they were and what they will be... No attics. No shit in attics. No skeleton in cupboards... As far as they are concerned, it's the *past*... They just *get on with it*. (426)

Squires interprets Irie's outburst as emblematic of the character's refusal to accept the past she has inherited because "Irie's outburst, its rage against history, destiny, and the bonds of family, is prompted by her own situation" (28). Squires adds that "history and the past are formative and inescapable for the novel's characters. Irie's outburst on the bus expresses her extreme frustration at the knowledge that she cannot evade the burden of history " (44). I interpret Irie's outburst differently by taking into consideration the moment it happens in *White Teeth* and its crucial place in the development of Irie's character. At this point of the novel, Irie has made two major discoveries that help her shape her own future: she has uncovered on her own the impact colonialism had, not only on her mother's country, Jamaica, but also on her Jamaican family. Thanks to this discovery she has realized that England and Jamaica had had a longer relationship than she thought. Then, Irie finds out she is pregnant and that she might never know the

identity of her child's father since she had sex with each Iqbal twin—Magid and Millat Iqbal—on the same day. By knowing her family past and her pregnancy, Irie claims a new place for second-generation immigrant characters like her: she demands that the past be told and passed on to the next generation differently, as something collective rather than dogmatic. Irie's outburst emblematically illustrates how characters in *White Teeth* demand a revision, a rewriting of imperial history to soothe the pains of colonial trauma. This chapter demonstrates that, in *White Teeth*, the revising of the colonial past occurs on two levels: not only do second-generation immigrant characters acknowledge and revise the imperial past through *lieux de mémoire* either found or contested within London, but they also question and contest the imaginary homelands developed by first-generation immigrant characters.

Following three decades of the Iqbal and Jones households, *White Teeth* creates second-generation immigrant characters like the Iqbal twins Magid and Millat, their best friend Irie Jones and Joshua Chalfen who contest the history imposed by both their parents and British society. In the midst of carnivalesque resolutions, they construct their future, a future their parents could not foresee. Even though *White Teeth* raises a number of fascinating issues that have attracted considerable critical attention, I will limit myself to second-generation immigrant characters from the Iqbal and Jones family.[61] I will summarize *White Teeth*'s plot in order to then explain the concept of second-generation immigrants. I will turn to the importance of *lieux de mémoire* regarding the development

[61] Tracey L. Walters edited *Zadie Smith: Critical Essays* (2008) where critics examine a broad range of topics concerning Smith and her fiction. Essays on *White Teeth* focus on the Caribbean aspect of the novel, or on Islam.

of the second-generation immigrant characters and how they revise the colonial and parental past through imaginary homelands. I will finish this chapter with an analysis of the character of Irie Jones who is constructed by Smith as being ultimately the most successful character to revise the parental past in order to bring a resolution.

Summary

Samad Iqbal and his friend Archie Jones whom he meets during World War II as they fight together in a British regiment, have each married women twenty years younger than they. Alsana Begum, Samad's wife, came from Bangladesh to settle in London in 1973 with Samad, now a middle-aged man who is still working as a waiter in his cousin's Indian restaurant. After a first failed marriage that caused him to attempt suicide, Archie met and married Clara Bowden, a young Jamaican who tried to run away from her mother Hortense Bowden, a devout Jehovah's Witness. The Iqbals and Joneses live in the same neighborhood of Willesden and happen to have children at the same time. Magid and Millat, the Iqbal twins, and Irie Jones are second-generation immigrant characters struggling to find their own sense of history. Fearing to lose Bengali culture and Islam, Samad feels horribly guilty after he cheats on Alsana with his twins' art teacher, Miss Poppy Burt-Jones. To redeem himself, Samad sends eight-year-old Magid to Bangladesh; the twins will only see each other again eight years later. While in high school, Millat and Irie meet Joshua Chalfen with whom they are forced to spend time after the three of them are caught with marijuana on school grounds. As a constructive punishment, their school's principal decides that Millat and Irie should be tutored by Joshua's parents: geneticist Dr. Marcus Chalfen and his wife Joyce Chalfen. The Chalfens, a bohemian

bourgeois couple, celebrate the "exoticism" of Millat and Irie by using numerous benevolently racist stereotypes. However, thanks to the Chalfens, Millat and Irie discover a new kind of Englishness, which leads them to make their own choices, far away from their parents' gaze. Magid also meets Marcus Chalfen through a correspondence they start. When he comes back from Bangladesh, Magid is transformed into a secular law student. Meanwhile, Millat discovers a new kind of radical Islam with the *Keepers of the Eternal Islamic Nation*, ironically mentioned *in White Teeth* under their acronym, KEVIN.[62] Irie, who has always been in love with Millat, ends up sleeping with each Iqbal twin on the same day toward the end of the novel, which leads to the birth of a little girl whose father's identity will forever remain a mystery. *White Teeth* ends with Dr. Chalfen's genetic project, called The FutureMouse, being destroyed by the interventions of three fanatic groups: Millat and KEVIN, Hortense Bowden and Jehovah's witnesses, and Joshua Chalfen's radical animal rights activists. The reader learns that Irie has given birth to a little girl whom she raises, seven years later, with Joshua Chalfen. The novel ends with the couple and the little girl vacationing in Jamaica with Irie's grandmother, Hortense Bowden.

White Teeth has many second-generation immigrant characters and the term second-generation immigrant appears recurrently in the novel. However, its meaning is

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[62] By calling the fanatic group "KEVIN," Smith creates a satire of fundamentalist movements. Indeed, it is more than ironic that an Islamist group should have an acronym with strong Irish Catholic connotations since it is called KEVIN. When Irie meets one of the KEVIN, he tells her: "We are aware," said Hifan solemnly, pointing to the spot underneath the cupped flame where the initials were minutely embroidered, "that we have an acronym problem" to which Irie responds "Just a bit" (245). The *Keepers of the Eternal and Victorious Islamic Nation* cannot be taken seriously since they are not even capable of thinking of a name with an acronym reflecting their message.

sometimes contested by the characters, which I examine in the next section of this chapter.

Second G(eneration)

Some critics such as Mark Stein (2004) ponder on the use of "second" generation as applied to "new" kinds of British writers. The idea of "generation" does not necessarily reflect the respective and individual experiences of these writers. It can be used as an umbrella term that misleadingly homogenizes a group full of differences. Therefore, Stein says that "a second generation, however, is not only influenced by the preceding one, but also by the political climate *they* are born into, and by the cultures they inherit from various sources" (Stein 6). I understand "second-generation characters" in *White Teeth* as being actually the *first* generation of non-white British who are British because they are born and raised in England and not because they are part of the British empire.

The second-generation immigrant characters's attitude toward their Englishness thus does not derive from an object status—as being incorporated as subalterns into an empire—but from a subject position. Phylis Lassner (2004) argues that *White Teeth* is "situated in a Britain bounded by the historically verified racist origins and remains of colonialism in which Zadie Smith dramatizes a kind of fundamentalist agency that allows her young characters to free themselves from those postcolonial lessons that reify victimhood" (427). I agree with Lassner's take on the second-generation immigrant's refusal to be a victim and to remain passive—we will see this particular point when Magid comes back from Bangladesh for instance. Millat claims a Muslim British agency that is born and created *in* Britain since the founder of KEVIN is actually a convert from

Barbados, someone who "found" Islam for himself in England; and Irie claims a past of her own to liberate herself from family secrets. The three second-generation immigrant characters on which I base my analysis display and claim a unique subject position whether it is regarding England or, what I will discuss later on, the "imaginary homeland" of their filiation.

The term "second generation" appears several times in *White Teeth*. Used as an emphathetic term concerning Millat or Magid by Alsana Iqbal and her niece Neena Begum, it is a contested one for Samad Iqbal. For instance, Alsana tells her husband to accept their children as they are, i.e. different than their parents because of their British birth: "Let *go* Samad Miah. Let the boy go. He is second generation—he was born here—naturally he will do things differently" (240-41). Samad answers curtly with "don't speak to me of second generation! One generation! Indivisible! Eternal!" (241). Even the character of Samad refuses to acknowledge the idea that his children are different because of the fact that they are second-generation immigrants. Actually, the concept threatens Samad's view of how his children are to live unlike what he wants them to. The argument between Alsana and Samad underlines how there is no consensus in the novel concerning who is "second generation" and what it entails. For Samad the term appears taboo, while for Neena and Alsana it explains the cultural and generational differences between parents like the Iqbals and their children. For the latter, second generation is to be a positive term which allows Millat and Magid for instance to stray from the path that

their parents had elected for them especially when they decide to reinterpret *lieux de mémoire*.[63]

Lieux de mémoire

Smith stages two emblematic *lieux de mémoire* in relation to her black characters in *White Teeth*: a fictional one Glenard Oak, the high school attended by Irie and Millat when they are teenagers; and one found in real London, Havelock Statue on Trafalgar Square. Both *lieux de mémoire* testify to the encounter between England and its Empire and of the disastrous consequences for the non-English actors in this encounter. I will first look at how Smith presents Glenard Oak in terms of its relationship to her second-generation characters, and then I will turn to the historical relationship between Mangal Pande and Havelock Statue.

Glenard Oak or Forgotten Jamaicans

Glenard Oak High School represents a *lieu de mémoire* of the colonial history between Jamaica and England. Smith links the high school's history to the multicultural experiments undergone by its headmaster. After Millat and Irie are found in possession of marijuana, the headmaster decides to punish them constructively: they will have to accept being tutored by with Dr. Marcus Chalfen and his wife Joyce Chalfen. The headmaster argues to Irie and Millat that "this way Joshua's strengths can be shared equally among you, and the two of you can go to a stable environment, and one with the added advantage of keeping you both off the streets" (252). The headmaster adds that,

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[63] We will see later on in this chapter how Millat presents the term "second generation" as being an attitude, a posture that enables his agency.

> the exciting thing is, this could be a kind of guinea-pig project for a whole range of programs... Bringing children of disadvantaged or minority backgrounds into contact with kids who might have something to offer them. And there could be exchange, vice versa. Kids teaching kids basketball, football, et cetera. We could get *funding*. (256)

The emphasis on "funding" underlines that there is some financial gain at stake for the headmaster and his school thanks to the experiment of pairing students like Irie and Millat with Joshua Chalfen. Moreover, we can notice here how, for the headmaster, the supposed exchange at stake between Irie or Millat and Joshua actually implies an intellectual imbalance. Indeed, the intellectual aspect of the exchange lies in the potential of students like Joshua, whereas Irie and Millat are positioned as "disadvantaged" students because they are of minority backgrounds. Moreover, the headmaster places minority students' capacities on the physical side: they can only offer to teach basketball or football and do not seem to possess any other abilities to share. Smith positions the headmaster's "guinea pig" speech right after revealing to the reader the history of the Glenard Oak as a building.[64] This parenthesis demonstrates that the multicultural exchange is far from being a modern approach to pedagogy and that it already had dreadful consequences, overlooked and ignored by the Glenard Oak headmaster himself.

Indeed, we first learn that "a more thorough investigation in the archives of the local Grange Library would reveal Sir Edmund Flecker Glenard as a successful colonial

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[64] There is no indication if at this point of the novel any character knows the connections between Sir Edmund Glenard and the Bowden family. Irie will learn it later on when she moves in with her grandmother.

who had made a pretty sum in Jamaica, farming tobacco, or rather overseeing great tracts of land where tobacco was being farmed" (252). Glenard then decides to "educate" Jamaicans whose religious devotion contrasts with what Glenard considers "laziness at work." Because of a succession of strikes, led among others, by "a collective of mothers (Bowden women among them)," Glenard decides to send Jamaicans to England where they will work in his tobacco factory. Glenard envisions his experiment to influence both English and Jamaican workers since,

> One was impressed by the Jamaican's faith but despairing of his work ethic and education. Vice versa, one admired the Englishman's work ethic and education but despaired of his poorly kept faith. And now, as Sir Edmund turned to go back to his estate, he realized that he was in a position to influence the situation... Jamaicans could work side by side with Englishmen, packaging Sir Edmund's cigarettes and taking general instruction from the Englishmen in the evening. A small chapel was to be built as an annex to the main factory. And on Sundays... the Jamaicans were to take the Englishmen to church and show them what worship should look like. (254)

By positioning the story of "Glenard's Jamaicans" as an intermission to the headmaster's musings on the experiment he is about to unleash, Smith shows that the headmaster follows a very colonial approach to pedagogy. Similar to Glenard's attitude before him toward the Jamaicans he sent to England, the headmaster's attitude assumes Irie and Millat lack intellectual potential and are in dire need of help from true representatives of

British education. Glenard considers Jamaican worship as entertaining and wants it to influence and brighten English worship. In other words, Jamaicans are sent to England to brighten, entertain and alleviate British religious monotony. The headmaster assumes minority children to be intellectually deficient but physically fit and good at sports, and he considers sports a form of entertainment.

Glenard died during the 1907 Kingston Earthquake, which left the Jamaicans sent to England destitute since there was no more employer to pay the meager wages that would have allowed them to go back to Jamaica. Smith's narrator concludes the story of Glenard by saying that,

> Glenard's influence turned out to be personal, not professional or educational: it ran through people's blood and the blood of their families; it ran through three generations of immigrants who could feel both abandoned and hungry even when in the bosom of their families in front of a mighty feast; and it even ran through Irie Jones of Jamaica's Bowden clan, though she didn't know it... (255)

By emphasizing that Irie should have been told that her high school's material existence is connected to the British colonial project in Jamaica, Smith underlines how *lieux de mémoire* can punctuate the London landscape and are there to remind its inhabitants of the imperial past. We later learn the fate of the Jamaicans left behind because of Glenard's death: they all ended up poor and miserable. Some even took part in the human zoo of "The British Empire Exhibition of 1924, dressed up as Jamaicans in the Jamaican exhibit, acting out a horrible simulacrum of their previous existence—tin drums, coral

necklaces—for they were English now, more English than the English by virtue of their disappointments" (255). Glenard's experiment failed utterly and was not remembered as a warning lesson for the future. The factory later became Glenard Oak High School and people only remembered Sir Edmund Glenard as a philanthropist.

However sad the Jamaicans' fate is, Smith incorporates and reclaims a black British presence in London and reminds the reader of the pitfalls of multiculturalism. Indeed, the colonial history behind the Glenard school underlines that multiculturalism and its pitfalls are not a modern phenomenon, as Raphael Dalleo (2008) had already argued that "the narrative juxtaposes these moments to play up their historical irony; the multicultural present is both product and nearly repetition of the nearly erased Caribbean-based past" (Dalleo 99). Imposing multiculturalism as a concept and not as a reality proves to be catastrophic in *White Teeth*, and through this Jamaican example, to the colonized who are objectified for the sake of an experiment. Glenard Oak's headmaster recyles a history of pedagogy he ignores but that still influences modern thinking concerning "others" within British society.

In contrast to Glenard Oak as a *lieu de mémoire* devoid of remembrance, Smith includes an actual *lieu de mémoire*, Havelock Statue. However, instead of having endless debates on Havelock, Smith's characters concentrate on the role of the one vanquished by Havelock: Mangal Pande. I will first look at how parents in *White Teeth* discuss and debate Mangal Pande, and I will then contrast their retelling of the past with the one their offspring create to remember Pande.

Mangal Pande

For Samad Iqbal, the past remains the same painful "prologue" denying the place deserved by actors against British imperialism. Indeed, throughout *White Teeth*, Samad keeps on talking about his famous Bengali ancestor, Mangal Pande actual leader of the 1857 Sepoy Rebellion against the East Indian Company in Barrackpore.[65] Mangal Pande is a true historical character who rose against the East India Company whom he had been serving dutifully as a sepoy.[66] The East India Company had been oppressing the civil population in Bengal by forcing them to grow opium that was to be sold in China. However, Pande and his followers legendarily started a mutiny because they realized that the new bullets the company commanded them to use had been greased in pig and cow grease. In order to use the bullets, soldiers needed to bite into the bullets and would have therefore been in contact with the animal grease. This constituted a religious taboo since most sepoys did not eat either beef or pork for religious reasons. Pande decided it was time to rise against the East India Company. He tried to shoot one of his superiors, missed and then attempted to take his own life and missed again. Unfortunately, the East India Company crushed the rebellion and arrested Pande who legendarily refused to reveal who were his accomplices. Sentenced to death, Pande was hung by the orders of General Henry Havelock who helped crush the Sepoy mutiny in Barrackpore.

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[65] The spelling of "Mangal Pande" differs from one author to another who mentions or narrates the Sepoy Mutiny. Since Smith chose the spelling "Mangal Pande," I decided to abide to it. However Rudrangshu Mukherjee uses a slightly different spelling for his book *Mangal Pandey: Brave Martyr or Accidental Hero?* (2005)

[66] A sepoy was an Indian soldier serving the East India Company.

Even though, according to historians, Mangal Pande was a strictly Brahmin Hindu, Smith chooses to make this historic figure the great-grandfather of Samad Iqbal, who is a Muslim. The genealogy poses some problematic questions as to how a Muslim can have a Hindu ancestor, and more so, how Samad can trace his genealogy back to Pande without encountering any resistance on the part of his audience who might question this genealogy.[67] For Samad, Pande constitutes the ultimate prologue to explain the present; Samad never loses an occasion to draw a parallel between any situation and its unworthiness compared to the deeds of Mangal Pande. Samad's will to educate the world on Pande starts in the novel in 1945, when he first recounts the 1857 Sepoy Rebellion to Archie who, if at first a benevolent audience, will, three decades later, be more active than passive when listening to the retelling of the Pande story.

Samad Iqbal and Archie Jones meet during World War II while serving in the same five-man tank. Samad is the only non-white soldier in the tank and the other members taunt him by repeatedly calling him "Sultan."[68] Tired of what he considers to be more a geographical and historical inaccuracy than a racist one, Samad tells the story of Mangal Pande to the racist soldiers and to Archie:

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[67] *White Teeth* offers a silence on the problematic genealogy between Mangal Pande and Samad. Samad could have had a Hindu ancestor if there had been some religious conversion to Islam—very unlikely though—among his ancestors. However, there is absolutely no such detail concerning a conversion in *White Teeth*.

[68] In "Fundamental Differences in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*" (2008), Z.Esra Mirze has already underlined that Captain Dickinson-Smith, Archie and Samad's captain uses "sultan" as an exotic nickname for Samad because he is sexually attracted to the young Bengali: "Their captain, Dickinson-Smith ... *was* in passion over Samad's arse (but not only that; also his mind, also two tender muscular arms that could only make sense wrapped around a lover; also those luscious light green/brown eyes)" (72).

> "My great-grandfather Mangal Pande"—he looked around for the recognition the name deserved but, being met only with blank pancake English faces, continued—"was the great hero of the Indian Mutiny!" Silence. "Of 1857! It was he who shot the first hateful pigfat-smeared bullet and sent it spinning off into oblivion!" (74-75)

No one seems to know about Pande, and Samad's enthusiasm in mentioning his famous ancestor does not strike any chord with either his fellow soldiers or his superiors. However, Samad continues to mention Pande to Archie to whom he recites the history of the mutiny. If Archie had no idea who Mangal Pande was until he met Samad, he had nevertheless heard of "Pande" but as a word or an adjective designating a rebel:

> Well, that *is* something. Do you know: I remember it from school—I *do*—History of the Colonies, Mr. Juggs... You know, you still hear people in the regiments calling each other *Pandies*, you know if the bloke's bit of a rebel... I never thought where it came from... Pande was the rebel, didn't like the English. (84)

After Samad mentions Mangal Pande yet again, Archie experiences an etymological epiphany, finally realizing the origin of the word "Pandy" he had often heard, but in a different context. Smith demonstrates here how a colonial education tells the story from the side of the vanquishers and she shows as well that history enters popular memory. On the other hand, Samad's collective memory is from the side of the vanquished who see Pande as a hero and a martyr against imperialism. Moreover, the conversation between Archie and Samad, then both young soldiers, emphasizes how the colonizer's version of

history erases traces of rebellion in the contact zone as Samad proceeds to declare: "Naturally, you will get these petty English academics trying to discredit him, because they cannot bear to give an Indian his due. But he was a hero" (84). Archie only knew what a "Pandey" was, not who the man behind the word was. Therefore Archie acquiesces: "That's true, you know," said Archie thoughtfully. "They don't speak well about Indians back home; they certainly wouldn't like it if you said an Indian was a hero" (84). But Samad is adamant at convincing people *in* England—we have no mention if he ever did the same in Bangladesh—that Pande was indeed a *hero*. This commitment, I would argue, falls into what Mark Stein (2004) calls "the unfixing of empire" which he finds to be a leitmotiv in black British literature since,

> The British Empire cannot be *undone* in the sense of reversing it, or restoring preceding historical conditions. Likewise its effects cannot be annulled or canceled. However, *unfixing* the discourse of empire, opening it up, and interpreting its history and its current efficacy, such types of *undoing* are both possible and necessary. This *unfixing* of the discourse of empire is one vital aspect of black British literature and, more generally, post-colonial writing. (Stein 144)

This idea of "unfixing the discourse of empire" represents a highly personal quest, a redemption of a tarnished family hero for Samad, especially when he converses with Archie, whether it is during their very first conversation on Pande or when, as middle-aged men they are having a drink at their favorite pub, O'Connell's.

When Samad comes back to England in 1973 and starts rekindling his friendship with Archie, the two war veterans start going to a then freshly opened Irish pub, O'Connell's, whose owner is an Iraqi immigrant who calls himself "Abdul-Mickey" to give an Irishness to the pub. Samad and Archie meet at O'Connell's every night after Archie leaves work and before Samad starts his night shift as a waiter. Samad works at his cousin Ardashir's restaurant which is ironically located across from one *lieu de mémoire* of the Indian mutiny: "his [Pande] execution was ordered by one General Henry Havelock (a man honored, much to Samad's fury, by a statue just outside the Palace Restaurant, near Trafalgar Square, to the right of Nelson)" (212). Havelock's statue emblematically commemorates the 1857 Sepoy Rebellion's demise even though British characters like Archie only learn about the mutiny after meeting Samad. By reminding the reader of the presence of a statue erected for an actor in the history of the Sepoy Rebellion, Smith shows that this was not such a trivial event at some point of the British imperial history. In other words, Havelock's deeds, the crushing of Pande and his followers, are immortalized through his statue, a *lieu de mémoire* to the Sepoy Rebellion, easily visible since it is located on Trafalgar Square.

If Havelock has a statue, Pande overbears O'Connell's. Indeed, O'Connell's becomes a site of historical relativity where history in general and Mangal Pande in particular become a central topic of conversation between Archie and Samad. But, if Archie religiously listens to Samad during their very first conversation with World War II as a background, at O'Connell's he questions Mangal Pande's heroism because of what a "Pandy" means in British English slang:

> Again and again he [Samad] had argued the toss with Archie over this issue. Over the years they had sat in O'Connell's and returned to the same debate, sometimes with new information gleaned from Samad's continual research into the matter—but ever since Archie found out the "truth" about Pande, circa 1953, there was no changing his mind. Pande's only claim to fame, as Archie was at pains to point out, was his etymological gift to the English language by the way of the word "Pandy..." (Smith 209)[69]

Archie finds the truth about Pande, i.e. not Samad's version of who Pande was, in the *OED* (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Here is the definition that Smith includes:

> **Pandy** /'pandi/n. *2 colloq.* (now *Hist.*) Also **-dee.** M19 [Perh. f. the surname of the first mutineer among the high-caste sepoys in the Bengal army.] **I** Any sepoy who revolted in the Indian mutiny of 1857-9 **2** Any mutineer or traitor **3** Any fool or coward in a military situation (209).

The definition hardly mentions who Pande really was and what were the reasons behind him launching the mutiny. A context concerning imperial India is not mentioned either. But the second and third definitions imply negative connotations that serve the British imperial version of history on the Sepoy mutiny. However, Archie uses the *OED* definition to support the idea that Pande was not the hero Samad continually presents:

> "Plain as the pie on your face, my friend." And here Archie would close

[69] It is unclear whether Smith implies that Archie found the "truth" for himself in 1953 or that he found it in a dictionary published in 1953. Since Samad and Archie part ways after the end of WWII and only meet again in 1973 when Samad moves to London with Alsana, there can be no debate between the two of them *in* 1953 at O'Connell's . Moreover, O'Connell's cannot be a place to debate anything in 1953 as it only opens in 1973.

> the book with an exultant slam. And I don't need a dictionary to tell me that—but neither do you. It's common parlance. When you and me were in the army: same. You tried to put one over me once, but the truth will out, mate. 'Pandy' only ever meant one thing. If I were you, I'd start playing down the family connection, rather that bending everybody's ear twenty-four hours a bloody day. (209)

The dictionary becomes a corroborative agent of truth for Archie, or rather an ultimate confirmer of what he had thought to be true. Archie's behavior when he closes the dictionary with "an exultant slam" suggests that he is more than satisfied with the definition he just read. The dictionary "tells" Archie about Pande as if it were a living thing and not an inanimate object. This personification of a book that Archie blindly believes to recite ultimate truths underlines the idea of the written word as being superior to oral memory. Likewise, the dictionary also represents an agent of empire since it does not include any context as to the reasons of the mutiny. It produces scholarship that reinforces what the (ex) colonizer believed to be true on the (ex) colonized. For Samad Iqbal the dictionary is an agent of empire:

> Archibald, just because the word exists, it does not follow that it is a correct representation of the character of Mangal Pande. The first definition we agree on: my great-grandfather was a mutineer and I am proud to say this. I concede matters did not go quite according to plan. But traitor? Coward? The dictionary you show me is old- these definitions are now out of currency. Pande was no traitor and no coward. (209)

If the dictionary is "old," one could argue that it still "fixes the discourse of empire."[70] Pande can only mean something negative because he endangered the British Empire by leading a threatening rebellion. Archie uses the English dictionary to prove his point, but Samad only has the inheritance of his "collective/oral memory" to argue back with his friend. The written word bears more weight in the search of truth for Archie, than the word of his friend who is actually from Bangladesh where Samad had probably grown up hearing all about Pande.[71] Samad asks for a revision of history, which represents an argument about modernity: imperial history needs to be rewritten to allow modern interpretations taking into account *all* aspects of the rebellion.

If the dictionary allows Archie to reach the truth he wants to know about Pande, other academic resources prove to be helpful as well. Archie and Samad's discussions on Pande evolve during the years and Pande's real motives for actions replace etymological debates. Pande attacked one of his superiors and then attempted to shoot himself. Some British historians argue that he undertook these actions on his own and not as a leader of a rebellious movement; others consider Pande's actions to be extremely heroic—during his trial Pande refused to denounce any of his fellow mutineers. Samad believes the version of the second category of historians whereas for Archie, "*there's no smoke without fire*" (Smith 209). Pande cannot be a hero since so many British academic sources include more or less the same details about him, especially concerning the fact

[70] If the conversation takes place in the 1970s and if Archie uses a 1953 *OED*, Samad might have a point at calling the dictionary "old."
[71] I assume this point about Samad's upbringing. Indeed, Samad mentions Pande for the first time during WWII when he is still a subject of the British Empire. This detail proves that even though Samad could have had a colonial education under the British Raj, he nevertheless knew about Pande and did not hesitate to share his knowledge with his comrades in the five-man tank.

that Pande allegedly took "bhangh, a hemp drink taken in small doses for medicinal purposes" before rebelling against the East India Company (Smith 212).

Academics, presented as Archie's "pile of skeptics" corroborate the idea that Pande was under the influence of drugs at the time of his actions: W.H. Fitchett, Michael Edwardes, P.J.O. Taylor and Syed Moinul Haq.[72] By claiming that Pande was under the influence of bhangh, historians reduce the mutiny to the decision of a drug addict not in control of his reactions. Samad refutes this view; and *White Teeth*'s narrator sides with him concerning "modern" scholarship on Pande:

> But like a Chinese whisper, Fitchett's intoxicated, incompetent Pande had passed down a line of subsequent historians, the truth mutating, bending, receding as the whisper continued. It did not matter that bhang, a hemp drink taken in small doses for medicinal purposes, was extremely unlikely to cause intoxication of this kind or that Pande, a strict Hindu, was extremely unlikely to drink it. It didn't matter that Samad could find not one piece of corroborating evidence that Pande had taken bhang that morning. The story sill clung, like a gigantic misquote, to the Iqbal reputation... (212-13)

The narrator underlines how Fitchett's version of the events serves to influence historians after him. In other words, the narrator suggests that historians writing after Fitchett—whether his contemporaries or belonging to newer generations of historians—did not

[72] See Edwardes, Michael, *Battles of the Indian Mutiny* (1963); Fitchett, W.H. *The Tale of the Great Mutiny* (1902); Haq, Siyed Moinul, *A Short History of the Sultanate of Delhi* (1956); Taylor P.J.O. *What Really Happened During the Mutiny: a Day-By-Day Account of the Major Events of 1857-1859 in India* (1997).

bring more light on the rebellion but rather reiterated Fitchett's version on the rebellion and on Pande. The passage suggests that imperial historians continuously validate imperial actions without looking at the colonized's agency and the reasons behind the rebellion. The narrator emphasizes also how Archie's sources as well as Archie himself overlook cultural practices such as Pande's strict Hinduism and its incompatibility with the taking of "bhang." If Pande had started the rebellion because of the animal grease found on the cartridges, it might seem contradictory that he would break another religious taboo by taking drugs. The narrator points out how historians display a cultural insensitivity in order to validate imperial history. However, if Archie does not question the sources *he* finds, he never hesitates to doubt the validity of Samad's sources.

Indeed, when Samad does find a book that corroborates *his* version of who Mangal Pande was, Archie does not take it seriously because the book is written by "A.S. Misra. Respected Indian civil servant," whom Archie calls "a madman" (213-14). Having Misra as a source allows Samad to reclaim the memory of Pande through a written word.[73] Interestingly, it is Samad's nephew, Rajnu who finds the book written by Misra on Pande. A second-generation character who studies at a—non-specified by Smith—Cambridge College, Rajnu becomes the bridge to reclaim memory for Samad.[74] Young Rajnu does research on Pande and finds the book in the library of his Cambridge College

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[73] It would be interesting to know if Smith actually was in contact with Amaresh Misra who wrote *Mangal Pandey: the True Story of an Indian Revolutionary*. This was published in 2005, so five years after *White Teeth* was published and some twenty-three years after Samad finds a book by A.S. Misra in the Cambridge College library.

[74] We do not know in which college of Cambridge University Rajnu studies. *White Teeth* only mentions that "One of Samad's nephews, Rajnu, had written to him in the spring of '81 from his Cambridge College" (214). The book was "in his [Rajnu's] college library" (214).

that happens to possess the only surviving copy of Misra's book. I here interpret both Misra's book and Cambridge College as *lieux de mémoire*.[75] The library contains archives to prove any research and because it is a scholastic environment, memory can be fortified there. Misra's book constitutes a hidden treasure for someone like Samad, who, when he fills in the library visitors' book, writes that his research project is "the truth."[76] Moreover, before going to the library together, Samad asks Rajnu: "'It is a great book, isn't it Rajnu?' asked Samad pleadingly... 'It is recognized, isn't it?' Rajnu knew in his heart that the book was an inferior, insignificant, forgotten piece of scholarship, but he loved his uncle, so he smiled, nodded, and smiled firmly again" (214). Asking Rajnu whether the book "is recognized" implies that Samad realizes a recognition in terms of *British* scholarship as necessarily being believed. Misra's book includes a picture of Mangal Pande under which a caption strengthens Samad's version of the 1857 mutiny:

> "*Mangal Pande fired the first bullet of the 1857 movement. His self-sacrifice gave the siren to the nation to take up arms against an alien ruler, culminating in a mass uprising with no parallel in world history. Though the effort failed in its immediate consequences, it succeeded in laying the foundations of the Independence to be won in 1947. For his patriotism he paid with his life. But until his last breath he refused to disclose the names of those who were preparing for, and instigating, the great uprising.*" Samad sat down... and wept. (215)

[75] See my previous chapter where I provided Pierre Nora's definition of *lieux de mémoire* (realms of memory).
[76] However Rajnu adds "tragedy" next to "truth" on the library visitors' book (Smith 214).

If we compare this paragraph with Archie's brief dictionary definition, we can see how Misra emphasizes heroism and positive qualities concerning Pande. Linking Pande with India's independence recaptures the idea that colonial violence and oppositions to the colonial rule in the British Raj did not start and end with Gandhi or Nehru but were actually more common than hoe colonial memory allowed it to be remembered. Rajnu finds *the* book that proves Samad's side of the story in a library that belongs to the former Empire. The library symbolizes the possibility of finding *lieux de mémoire* that testify to colonial violence.

Even after the finding of Misra's book, Archie keeps on arguing that his dictionary and the additional sources *he* has found provide the truth about Pande.[77] Misra's book does look at archives of Pande's military records which Samad uses to prove how Archie's "historians" might have ignored some valuable resources. Samad reminds Archie that "A.S. Misra produces a copy of a record stating that Pande trained in a special guard for one year, specially trained in the use of muskets;" which, for Samad explains the reason why Pande missed to kill his adversary, "the only possible explanation is that the gun was faulty" (Smith 216). Samad does not realize that Pande can also be an ambiguous figure, and he therefore finds an answer for any historical details on his hero. For Samad, Pande could only have missed killing his officer because the gun he used was faulty. But, if Pande was so skilled at shooting targets, he could have chosen a better gun.

[77] We are never provided with the title of Misra's book. We only know that Rajnu found a book by A.S. Misra in the Cambridge College Library. Therefore, I refer to Misra's book without a title.

Through Samad's version of Pande, Smith warns on the importance of acknowledging history and not idealizing it.

Moreover, Misra's scholarship and research serve to contest the scholarship used by Archie. Smith emphasizes how history, especially colonial history is a process requiring constant revision. The discussions between Samad and Archie symbolize how colonial history is remembered differently by two different inheritors of the British Empire's legacy. Nevertheless, Samad and Archie can still be friends, which emphasizes the idea that the past is indeed a prologue and can be part of an everyday conversation without causing further damage. O'Connell's, as stated earlier, is a site of historical relativism between Samad and Archie. Pande occupies most of their discussions when they are at the pub.

Thanks to O'Connell's, Pande has reached a status worthy of discussions: even though Archie does not yield to Samad's interpretations on Pande, he does nevertheless listen to his friend and tries to educate himself as much as possible on the 1857 Sepoy Rebellion. Samad asks Abul-Mickey to display the only portrait he owns of Mangal Pande at O'Connells; we can interpret Samad's request as a desire to transform O'Connell's into a *lieu de mémoire* dedicated to Pande. Havelock might have a statue on Trafalgar Square, but Pande has his portrait in a post-imperial place par excellence, a faux Irish pub owned by an Iraqi and used as a domestic refuge for Samad and Archie's friendship and for other immigrants such as the two old Jamaican men, Clarence and Denzel who play dominoes at O'Connell's every night.

Samad wants the imperial past to be revised so that Pande occupies the place he thinks he should. For Samad, repairing history is regaining the honor of his blood; therefore he feels compelled to mention Pande's heroic actions at any occasion. The impact of "Pandying"—as Clara names Samad mentioning Pande over and over again—on second-generation immigrant characters differs but implies a different interpretation of the past by these second-generation immigrant characters. Irie Jones considers that fathers like Samad "drag ancient history around like a ball and a chain... neck-deep and sinking in the quagmire of the past" (271). The image of a quagmire conveys the idea that the past as retold by Samad, suffocates and bogs down not only himself but also anyone who has to listen to the retelling. The past according to Samad does not allow any possible present or future. Irie's character constantly contests how Samad smothers and harasses any present moment by making the same references to Mangal Pande. When the Joneses and Iqbals watch the fall of the Berlin Wall on television for instance, Samad mentions Pande as a greater figure of rebellion than people destroying the Berlin Wall: "We were there. Not all of us think fondly of a united Germany... It is not that I disagree with rebellious acts *per se*. It is simply that if you are to throw over an old order, you must be sure that you can offer something of a substance to replace it... As an example, take my great-grandfather Mangal Pande" (199). But to Samad's patronizing attitude to Germany, Irie responds "Well! Here he goes on like he knows everything. Everything's always about *him*—and *I'm* trying to talk about now, *today*, Germany" (199). The reason that Irie interrupts Samad is not so much that she does not want to hear about the past, rather that she does not want to hear *how* Samad talks about the past since Irie adds "I

know more about it [Germany] than you do. Go on. Try me. I've been studying it all term. Oh, and by the way: you *weren't* there. You and Dad left in 1945. They didn't do the wall until *1961*" (199). Irie demonstrates her own knowledge of history and of how Samad tries to censor the past by mentioning Pande again. This example underlines that Irie wants a different version of history to be told, one on which a Samad or any older generation does not possess a generational monopoly. Samad uses Pande as a constant justification for how he wants the past to be retold and if Irie contests this attitude with her own knowledge, the Iqbal twins adopt different postures.

Magid Iqbal appreciates the transformation of O'Connell's into a shrine to Pande: "I noticed it [Pande's portrait] the moment I came in, and I can assure you, Michael, my soul is very grateful for it" (371).[78] His calm and posed attitude illustrates Magid's desire to move on from the fatality of the past and build a future based on rationality and forces he considers modern: science and the law. For Magid, Pande deserves acknowledgment but cannot be the only factor determining his life as a young second-generation immigrant character. Magid's attitude deeply contrasts with his father's who moans how Pande was a victim of not only imperialism but of modern scholarship.

In contrast to his twin, Millat refuses to celebrate his ancestor precisely because he interprets Pande's demise as a failure combined with a status of perpetual victimhood. Samad's constant litanies on Pande bring the opposite reactions in Millat: by retelling how Pande died for his ideals of independence from the East India Company, Samad emphasizes that his ancestor lost to a stronger enemy. Millat's own "Pande" version

[78] Magid calls Abdul-Mickey "Michael."

suggests that his ancestor's tragic story does not deserve more attention than these few lines: "Look... I'll do the short version. Great-grandfather... decides to fuck the English... to *rebel* against the English, all on his Jack-Jones, spliffed up to the eyeballs, tries to shoot his captain, misses, tries to shoot himself, misses, gets hung... End of story. *Bor*-ing" (188).[79] Millat recapitulates Pande's story with apparently no appreciation for his ancestor's deeds. But this lack of appreciation resonates with Millat's view of Pande as a losing victim to imperial history. Pande represents a forgotten anger, one that was vanquished and victimized. Even before he joins the radical Muslims of KEVIN, Millat participates in the *autodafé* of a book considered injurious to Islam, not because of true Islamic faith since "Millat hadn't read it. Millat knew nothing about the writer, nothing about the book; could not identify the book if it lay in a pile of other books; could not pick up the writer in a lineup of other writers" (194). Millat participates in the outburst against the writer because,

> he knew that he, Millat, was a Paki no matter where he came from...he knew he had no face in this country, no voice in the country, until the week before last when suddenly people like Millat were on every channel and every radio and every newspaper and they were angry, and Millat recognized the anger, thought it recognized him, and grabbed it with both hands. (194)

[79] Millat calls Pande his great-grandfather even though Pande is supposed to be his great-great-grandfather. He also uses "hung" instead of "hanged."

Millat hence interprets his father's perpetual tribute to Pande as a complaint concerning the victimization of the colonized. By joining KEVIN, Millat adopts a different attitude than his father's toward the past: he refuses to become its hereditary victim but falls into fanaticism, which *White Teeth* satiricizes. Toward the end of the novel, as he approaches Dr. Chalfen's exhibit, Millat stops by two *lieux de mémoire* acknowledged by his father but that he interprets differently than Samad.

Before the birth of his children, Samad carved his last name, Iqbal, on a bench in a London square. Later on, he tells his sons that "it meant *I wanted to write my name on the world*. It meant *I presumed*. Like the Englishmen who named streets in Keral after their wives, like the Americans who shoved their flag in the moon. It was a warning from Allah. He was saying: Iqbal, you *are becoming like them*. That's what it meant" (418-19). But Millat's interpretation contests Samad's humility "it just meant *you're nothing*. And looking at it [the bench] now, Millat felt nothing but contempt. All his life he wanted a Godfather, and all he got was Samad. A faulty, broken, stupid, one-handed waiter of a man and made no more mark than this" (419).[80] Symbolically, Millat decides to visit the bench *and* Havelock's statue on the same night before he is goes to Dr. Chalfen's FutureMouse Exhibit. By placing the bench and statue episode on the same pilgrimage, Smith associates Samad's failures with Pande's. Millat refuses the past's burden to make him a victim of imperial and colonial history. Therefore, when he reaches the second *lieu*

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[80] Millat is obsessed with gangster movies such as *The Godfather* (1972), *Scarface* (1983) or *Goodfellas* (1990).

de mémoire, the statue of Henry Havelock—who arrested and condemned Pande—Millat goes

> over to Havelock, to look Havelock in his stony eye. *It means you're nothing and he's something*. And that's it. That's why Pande hung from a tree while Havelock the executioner sat on a chaise longue in Delhi. Pande was no one and Havelock was someone. No need for library books and debates and reconstructions. *Don't you see Abba?* whispered Millat. *That's it. That's the long, long history of us and them. That's how it was. But no more*. (419)

In Samad's eyes, Havelock's statue represents an offense to Pande's memory and heroic actions; however, for Millat, the statue constitutes a monument to the defeat and failure of his ancestor and thus a warning for his descendants. Samad strives to emulate Pande's actions, Millat wants to rise above them "because Millat was here to finish it. To revenge it. To turn history around. He liked to think he had a different attitude, a second-generation attitude... Where Pande misfooted he would step sure. Where Pande chose A, Millat would choose B" (419). I interpret Millat's attitude toward Pande as a reaction against his father's vision of the past: the demise of Pande occupies a central position in Samad's life and eclipses a brighter future for Pande's descendants. By only focusing on how Pande was unjustly defeated, Samad constantly emphasizes not only the blood connection between himself and Pande but also the status of victimhood of Pande, and therefore his own in front of his children.

Millat supersedes familial and personal limitations; he chooses militant and direct actions. However, the KEVIN brothers are extremely disturbing, and if they act instead of lamenting like Samad does, they are fanatic lunatics. Although *White Teeth*'s narrator is compassionate toward Millat's frustration, its voice is satirical towards KEVIN (hence the silly acronym). Millat's twin, Magid, refuses to accept fatalism: he focuses on what he *can* master and control, sciences and the law. The Iqbal twins's respective attitudes toward Pande's legacy illustrate their need to interpret the colonial past themselves in order to move on toward a future that contains a resolution without parental suffocations.

Moreover, if Samad constantly needs to invoke Mangal Pande in conversation, he is even more obsessed about Bangladesh: he does not accept any revision on how *he* sees his homeland Bangladesh and his own children, twins Magid and Millat. Smith shows how Samad's vision of his homeland can be misleading, and I would add, paraphrasing Salman Rushdie, "imaginary." I will now show how not only Samad but also Alsana claim authority on Bangladesh in front of their children and how *White Teeth* mocks both visions.

Imaginary Homeland(s)

In his essay "Imaginary Homelands" (1991) which gave its name to a collection of critical essays, Salman Rushdie articulates how immigrants or exiles from India can never hope to see the same homeland they left behind. Rushdie writes of how difficult it is for these immigrants to capture an India that has been in motion:

> It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back,

> even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge—which gives rise to profound uncertainties—that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind. (Rushdie 10)

Rushdie argues here that the physical absence from India deters the immigrant from accepting that his homeland is changing as he/she is. But if one refuses, like the character of Samad does, to acknowledge that the homeland cannot stay frozen in time, one is bound to fall into the realm of fantasy. The phrase "Indias of the mind" underlines the fact that each immigrant from India will create his or her own India, related to the time they left their homeland. Therefore, Samad, who is twenty years older than Alsana, still remembers the British presence in Bengal, whereas Alsana has experienced post-colonial India, then East Pakistan, then Bangladesh. The Iqbal couple each created their own "Bangladeshes of the mind."

Talking constantly about going "home" anytime his life in England overwhelms him, but lacking the will power to execute what is finally a "return fantasy," Samad decides to live this fantasy by imposing it on his British-born offspring. The idea of "return" punctuates many second-generation narratives as Mark Stein (2004) notices,

> "Return" is a prevalent theme in post-colonial literature. It often takes the form of actual, physical returning, but spiritual, notional, and intellectual

> returns are also prominent. Returning is related to seeking an earlier state or position, to giving in to nostalgia and a yearning for home. It is encumbered by the weight of tradition; yet the absence of a tradition, its inaccessibility, can be as weighty and return-inducing. But if tradition is always a motivated reinvention of the past to serve the requirements of the present, then returns signify agency and are geared toward the production of agency. (Stein 57)

Samad feels powerless in England and fantasizes that only in Bangladesh will his sons appreciate "traditions" that will therefore be more "accessible." However, Samad himself does *not* return to Bangladesh. Instead he imposes a forced roots tourism, a "turn" more than a "return," on his son Magid because he cannot afford to send both of his children to Bangladesh on a one-way ticket. Constantly hesitating about which one of the twins he is going to send away, Samad arbitrarily makes up his mind by flipping a coin: with the complicity of his female relative Zinat and of Samad's old friend Archie, Samad kidnaps Magid in the middle of a slumber party held at the Joneses. Magid is sent to Bangladesh where Samad hopes he will become a true Muslim "uncorrupted by the West." It is interesting that to wash off what he feels constitutes the shame of having had an affair with his children's art teacher, Poppy Burt-Jones, Samad cleanses his "sin" by separating his twins. Bangladesh represents a static place for Samad who, even though he is a Bangladeshi character, constantly uses Orientalist clichés concerning Bangladesh. The following passage underlines this idea:

> I have been corrupted by England, I see that now—my children, my wife, they too have been corrupted... I don't wish to be a modern man! I wish to live as I was always meant to! I wish to return to the East! ... I should never have come here—that's where every problem has come from. Never should have had my sons here, so far from God. Willesden Green! Visiting cards in sweetshop windows, Judy Blume in the school, condom on the pavement. Harvest Festival, teacher-temptresses! (120)

Samad's use of the passive voice conveys the idea that the Iqbals are vulnerable to the crushing force and decadence of the West. In Samad's eyes, the West corrupts because of a lack of spirituality and an overbearing modernity. On the contrary, Samad imagines Bangladesh to remain a spiritual place thanks to a refusal of modernity. The West appears modern, moving and fast-paced in Samad's mind whereas the East in general, and Bangladesh in particular remains traditional, anachronistic, static and immobile. This dichotomy is reminiscent of Edward W. Said's denunciation of Western stereotypes of Islam (1981): "the assumption is that whereas the 'West' is greater than and has surpassed the stage of Christianity, its principal religion, the world of Islam—its varied societies, histories, and languages notwithstanding—is still mired in religion, primitivity, and backwardness" (Said 10). According to Said, modern Orientalism grants modernity as an ontological privilege and quality belonging exclusively to the Christian West. Islam represents the reverse and negative reflections of the West. Samad's words, however, convey an internalized Orientalism where progress becomes a corollary of decadence ontologically attached to the West while the East constitutes a paradise frozen in time.

Therefore, by refusing to admit that Bangladesh has changed after his departure, Samad constructs an " imaginary homeland."

If Samad believes Bangladesh to be the ultimate heaven and haven from an infernal and decadent West, his wife, Alsana only keeps apocalyptic memories of her homeland. Instead of a fantasy homeland, she remembers an "infernal homeland" where ethnic rivalries, natural disasters and cataclysmic poverty lead to shortened lives and violent deaths. For instance, Alsana collapses into tears after she hears the news of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination. After leaving his mistress, Samad returns to his home extremely late, thinking Alsana has realized what he has been doing since he finds her crying in the kitchen. Finally Alsana reveals that Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had just been assassinated. As mentioned in a previous section, Samad is obsessed with Pande as far as Bengali heritage is concerned whereas Alsana follows its current affairs. Alsana fears of what is to happen in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan in the aftermath of Ms. Gandhi's death:

> *Bhainchute*! I am not crying for her, you idiot, I am crying for my *friends*. There will be blood on the streets back home because of this, India *and* Bangladesh. There will be riots—knives, guns. Public death, I have seen it. It will be like Mahshar, Judgment Day—people will die in the streets Samad. You know and I know. And Delhi will be the worst of it, is always the worst of it. I have some family in Delhi, I have friends...I am crying with misery for those poor families and out of *relief* for my own children!

> Their father ignores them, yes, but at least they will not die on the streets like rats. (165)[81]

The use of the future demonstrates the ineluctability of the horrors that Alsana believes will fall on India and Bangladesh. Moreover, the image of violent death, and the idea of a Judgment Day whose outcome is only pain for innocent people convey the idea of an apocalyptic future. Alsana's anger and passion toward this gloomy future enhances her feisty spirit: she does not hesitate to insult her husband since he does not seem to really care about their homeland's dire situation.[82] The "relief" that Alsana experiences thinking her children are safer in England contrasts with Samad's own relief of sending one of his twins to Bangladesh in order to be protected from "decadent" London.

Besides the political Bengali context that Alsana envisions to be dangerously unstable, Smith incorporates the idea of a dangerously unstable landscape as well. Chapter Nine ("The Mutiny") opens up with Alsana's reactions after Samad has kidnapped Magid:

> Born of a green and pleasant land, a temperate land, the English have a basic inability to conceive of disaster, even when it is man-made. It is different for the people of Bangladesh, formerly East Pakistan, formerly India, formerly Bengal. They live under the invisible finger of random

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[81] Smith gives the following translation for "bhainchute": "someone who, put it simply, fucks their sisters" (Smith 165).

[82] Alsana belies the stereotype of the meek and passive Bengali wife found in other second-generation immigrant litterature such as Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*. She is outspoken and fights back Samad, whether verbally or physically whenever he is abusive to her. She also has a social life of her own, meeting with a diverse group of women of South Asian origin with whom she watches Bollywood films. She also goes to see French *avant-garde* movies with Clara Jones.

> disaster, of flood and cyclone, hurricane and mudslide. Half the time half their country lies under water; generations wiped out as regularly as clockwork; individual life expectancy an optimistic fifty-two, and they are coolly aware that when you talk about apocalypse, when you talk about random death en masse, well, they are leading the way in that particular field, they will be the first to go.... The facts of disaster are the facts of their lives. (176)

This paragraph starts with an idyllic vision of England with images of life and renewal from Shakespeare's *Henry IV*—"green and pleasant land"—that contrasts with the velocity of the description of what "happens" in Bangladesh too frequently. The rapidity of the tone mimics the idea of lives taken suddenly and frequently. Hyperbolic images of apocalypse seem unavoidable since the use of the future does not leave any doubt as to what Alsana imagines her country to be going to live and relive endlessly. Most of these facts are certainly more than plausible but I would say that Smith creates the Iqbal couple as the two extremes of the first generation: on the one hand Samad's imaginary homeland that cannot be damaged by time, nature or human folly; and on the other hand Alsana's apocalyptic homeland where no one can ever be safe. Of course, I am not saying that most of these facts on Bangladesh are not plausible, but it is interesting that *White Teeth* never portrays Alsana happy about her homeland. She does not seem to have any positive memory or feeling about it. I would argue that it might be because she associates her peculiar marriage to Samad to a homeland that let her marry such a man.

Right after the apocalyptic description of Bangladesh, Alsana's anger is explained:

> And this is what Alsana really held against Samad, if you want the truth, more than the betrayal, more than the lies, more than the basic facts of a kidnap: that Magid should *learn to hold his life lightly*. Even though he was relatively safe up there in the Chittagong Hills, the highest point of that low-lying, flatland country, still she hated the thought that Magid should be as she had once been: holding on to a life no heavier than a paisa coin, wading thoughtlessly through floods, shuddering underneath the weight of black skies... (176)

For Samad, Bangladesh is synonymous with spiritual salvation, for Alsana with physical harm. Unfortunately for both Samad and Alsana, Magid comes back from Bangladesh with a very different kind of agency than his parents had envisioned for him. Indeed, now a young man of nearly seventeen Magid henceforth asserts his own authority on Bangladesh since he has experienced it firsthand and not through the mediation of his father. Even worse, Magid supersedes his parents since he has been to the more modern Bangladesh, the "post" postcolonial Bangladesh that the first generation of Iqbals in London never managed to know since they had settled in London in 1973, a year after Bangladesh's independence, without ever going back to Bangladesh. I propose to look in the next section of this chapter at how not only Magid and Millat's agencies shatter the first generation take on the imaginary homeland but also a second-generation immigrant character like Neena Begum, Alsana's niece.

Imaginary Sons

Neena Begum, Alsana's niece who lives in London, represents a successful second-generation character with fewer identity problems. True, Neena only appears sporadically in *White Teeth*, but always at key moments to soothe other characters's identity crises. Neena proves to be extremely useful to her aunt Alsana who ironically adopts a patronizing attitude toward Neena even though the young women are only two years apart. A successful businesswoman who learns to mend shoes and then started her own cobbler shop, Neena dramatizes the second-generation immigrant experience: not only does she have to go through the cultural misunderstandings occurring between her family and England, but she also has to assert her sexual identity as well. Neena is a proud lesbian in a fulfilling relationship with her partner, Maxine. Nevertheless, Neena faces abuse, especially from Alsana who keeps on calling her "Niece-of-Shame" in reference to her homosexuality.

Neena, as stated before, intervenes at key moments in *White Teeth* as for instance when Alsana fears to lose Millat to Englishness incarnated through Joyce and Marcus Chalfen who tutor her son. Neena responds with an emblematic call to let second-generation immigrants like Millat find their own true selves: "What are you afraid of, Alsi? He's [Millat] second generation... you need to let them go their own way... look what happened to me, blah, blah, blah—I may be Niece-of-Shame to you, Alsi, but I earn a good living out of my shoes...and I live a pretty good life—you know, I live by principles" (287). Neena has accepted and claimed her identity, culturally, socially, economically and of course sexually as she reminds her "auntie,"Alsana. Neena offers

herself as a successful example of a second-generation immigrant whose advice is not only pragmatic but also applicable because she has been through the second-generation immigrant's growing pains already. By being a lesbian she probably had had to fight twice as much as the other second-generation immigrants: her community calling her "Niece-of-Shame" and people like Joyce Chalfen not understanding why one would prefer women to men.[83] However, ironically Alsana seeks Neena's presence: the two of them see each other regularly for instance.[84] Neena's call for understanding constitutes a plea for the Iqbals to start accepting their sons as they are, and not by associating them with a past they cannot control.

By sending Magid to Bangladesh, Samad dismisses successes such Neena's as positive second-generation immigrant experiences. Instead, he constructs a future for his son that was to mimic a fantasized past in an imaginary homeland. Samad wanted Magid to become a type of Bengali that he himself had never managed to be. For instance, when the Iqbals receive a letter written by Magid from Bangladesh, after Magid broke his nose due to the fall of a vase in a mosque, Samad interprets his son's reaction differently than Clara Jones who reads the letter as well. In his letter, Magid declares "When I grow up I think I should like to make sure vases are not put in such silly places where they can be dangerous and I would complain about other dangerous things too" (179). Samad

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[83] Neena goes to the Chalfens's in order to investigate how they treat Irie and Millat. She brings her partner Maxine. The dinner turns into a total disaster since Joyce and Marcus ask very inappropriate questions concerning Neena and Maxine's sexual lives.

[84] Smith defuses Alsana's homophobia by showing that it lies more in the fact that Alsana is a sexually frustrated housewife more than anything else as the following quotation might suggest: "I'm as liberal as the next person," complained Alsana... "But why do they always have to be laughing and making a song-and-dance about everything? I cannot believe homosexuality is that much fun. Heterosexuality certainly is not" (238).

interprets that "clearly he [Magid] disapproves of iconography in the mosque, he dislikes all heathen, unnecessary, dangerous decoration! A boy like that is destined for greatness, isn't he?" (179). Clara answers that "Maybe he [Magid] will go into government, maybe the law" to which Samad snaps "Rubbish! My son is for God, not men. He is not fearful of his duty. He is not fearful to be a real Bengali, a proper Muslim" (179). Samad cannot imagine that one could live in Bangladesh and desire to be secular, to be other than a religious man.

Like his vision of a static homeland, Samad composes a similar one of a static Magid and does not take into account the fact that his son had spent the first nine years of his life in England, which is a determinant factor in Magid's development as a young individual. By imagining a "perfect" son, Samad can create a dichotomy between the twins, one perfect because out of sight and one bound to fail because in London and too visible:

> Two sons. One invisible and perfect, frozen at the pleasant age of nine, static in a picture frame... nothing but an apparition. A ghostly daguerreotype formed from the quicksilver of the father's imagination, preserved by the salt solution of maternal tears. This son stood silent, distant, and "presumed" well...This son Samad could not see. And Samad had long learned to worship what he could not see. As for the son he *could* see, the one who was under his feet and in his hair, well, it is best not to get Samad started up on that subject, the subject of *The Trouble with Millat*, but *here goes*: he is the second son, late like a bus, late like cheap

> postage, the slowcoach, the catch-up kid... the loser of two vital minutes that he would never make up... not *in his father's eyes*. (180-81)

I notice here a parallel between the fact that Samad idealizes both Magid and Bangladesh because he does not have to see either of them. He does not yearn to see them in person since he never visits either his homeland or his son. I see Rushdie's "imaginary homeland" embodied in an "imaginary son" since it is only through letters, containing photos already obsolete when they manage to reach London, that Samad keeps in touch with his son's well-being, just like he kept track of his country's changes. Arbitrarily, Samad positions Millat into an everlasting second position, which should not necessarily be bad but *is* because Samad decided it to be. Millat can only "be in trouble" because he happens to be the second generation growing up *in* London where he can never be a *pure* Bengali.

Ironically, Millat blindly embraces radical Islam in London by joining KEVIN, and by taking to drastic actions such as, for instance, the burning of an offensive book that has been claimed to have insulted Islam.[85] Magid chooses pure science and atheism as lifestyles finding support with Dr. Chalfen with whom he has started a correspondence revolving around science. Magid comes back to England thanks to Marcus Chalfen's sponsorship for his law degree. This turn to law and science angers Samad who had in mind a totally different Bengali experience for Magid: "Allah knows how I pinned all my

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[85] Neither the book nor the author in question are named in *White Teeth*. Because the outrage and autodafé are supposed to happen at the beginning of 1989, one can deduce that Smith is making a reference to the controversy surrounding Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* (1988). In his novel *Black Album* (1995), Hanif Kureishi also deals with Rushdie's persecution and also portrays the anger as a catalyst for ethnic recognition by some fanatical groups. Both Smith and Kureishi make a farce of an Islamic reaction that they portray as disproportionate.

hopes on Magid. And now he says he is coming back to study the English law— paid by these Chalfen people. He wants to enforce the laws of men rather than the laws of God" (336). Magid's epiphany is to use the law to alleviate Bangladesh's woes. But Samad's imaginary homeland is one that should not be changed or modulated. The fact that Magid becomes secular in Bangladesh whereas Millat is a *bona fide* born-again Muslim, torments Samad who declares to Irie that "the one [twin] I send home comes out a pukka Englishman, white-suited, silly wig-lawyer.[86] The one I keep here is fully paid-up green-bow-tie-wearing fundamentalist terrorist" (336). The idea of "home" refers to the imaginary Bangladesh constructed in Samad's mind. However, Samad never really tries to understand his sons and their aspirations.

Magid's inclination toward secularism and science proves to follow his childhood dreams. Magid always aspires to assimilate into English society. For instance, when, as a child, he attends Manor School, he desperately wants a chemical set to conduct experiments; he also makes himself known as "Mark Smith" in his chess club. The night his father kidnaps him Magid asks Samad: "Will I be back in time for Monday—only I've got to see how my photosynthesis is for science—I took two plants: put one in the cupboard and one in the sunlight—and I've got to *see* Abba, *I've got to see which one...* Will I get back for school Abba?" (174). Magid has always wanted to be an Englishman, secular and scientist, but, as Z. Esra Mirze (2008) points out that "what Samad does not understand... is that Magid is not at home in Bangladesh, but rather has been sent into

[86] The phrase "born-again Muslim" is mine. I find it *à propos* to describe KEVIN since the group is composed of converts and of strayed souls who claimed peace of mind by turning to the particular vision of Islam preached by KEVIN.

exile, just as out of touch with the new realities forced upon him as Samad was when he arrived in England. As a result, Magid, rather than turning Bangladeshi, becomes more "English" and secular" (Mirze 194). Consequently, Mirze explains that

> Magid's removal from British soil does not create the outcome Samad anticipates. Magid becomes an exile, one whose subjectivity is still influenced by the values he was raised with rather than the ones that are imposed on him in Bangladesh. Being in exile shapes him as a free thinker, denouncing faith and fatalism on the basis of their escapist implications. (195)

White Teeth provides proleptic moments announcing Magid's predilections for secularism and science. Likewise, the novel shows that already at an early age Magid contests religious fanaticism. Besides the examples I mentioned earlier—such as the chemistry set episode or Magid expressing his desire to be in school to show his scientific project as his father is kidnapping him—Magid protests his father's decision to prevent him and Millat from participating in the Harvest Festival. He decides to not talk directly to Samad and writes him messages instead. Samad responds to this vow of silence with "Magid, I *told* you the condition upon which you would be allowed. You come with me on hajj. If I am to touch that black stone before I die I will do it with my eldest son by my side" (127).[87] Magid answers "IT'S NOT FAIR! I CAN'T GO ON HAJJ. I'VE GOT TO GO TO SCHOOL. I DON'T HAVE TIME TO GO TO MECCA. IT'S NOT FAIR!" (127). Magid places the importance of British and secular education over Islamic rules. Even at a

[87] Hajj refers to the pilgrimage to Mecca Muslims are supposed to undertake at least once in their lives.

young age, Magid argues for the impossibility for him to concile religious faith with secular education. Moreover, not only does Magid contest his father's decision to boycott the Harvest Festival but he denounces how Samad's take on the festival also affected Irie, a non Muslim, a non Bengladeshi "YOU TOLD HER FATHER [Irie's] NOT TO LET HER GO" (127). The nine-year-old Magid, pre Bengali exile, already displays strong opinions on how Samad's religious interpretations can be questioned. Like Mirze, I see "Magid's new found devotion to Western values is not the work of an abstract "them;" rather, it is Magid's own decision, his way of avoiding the mistakes of his father, who so readily accepted his limitations as an immigrant by taking refuge in religion" (Mirze 195).

Magid rejects religion whereas his twin Millat embraces Islam and becomes a born-again Muslim to challenge his father's own vision of Islam. Samad justifies any woes in his existence as a moral and spiritual trial sent to test his faith; Millat uses Islam to support his anger and rebellion. For instance, Millat tells Irie that "he [Samad] is a bloody hypocrite... he prays five times a day but he still drinks and he doesn't have any Muslim friends, then he has to go at me for fucking a white girl... I'm more of a fucking Muslim than he is" (277). Millat discovers another version of Islam with KEVIN and he denounces his father's "Cafeteria Islam."[88] I interpret this passage as Millat's decision to

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[88] I owe the phrase "Cafeteria Muslim" to my friend Philip Slaughter. I here understand it as a Muslim picking and choosing what suits him/her in Islam. In the case of Samad, we can see several instances where his character imposes Islamic rules on his family while not following them himself. Here is an example "Samad gave up masturbation so that he might drink. It was a deal, a business proposition, that he had made with God: Samad being the party on the first part, God being the sleeping partner" (117). However, Samad does not approve that any member of his family would also be a Cafeteria Muslim or even a Cafeteria Bengali. For instance, he keeps on criticizing how much Alsana has forgotten to be Bengali.

be the Muslim his father could never be; a reactive Muslim rather than a passive one.

Once again, Smith positions the second-generation immigrant's view as a challenge to the parent's imposition of an outdated existence that they are not even able as first generation immigrant to recapture. If an imaginary homeland yields to fanaticism and oppression for second-generation immigrants, the absence of reference to the land of "origins" can provoke a gap that a character like Irie Jones needs to fill up on her own in order to understand and claim London.

Iri(e)descence/ (I)r(i)enaissance

While Samad obsesses about his imaginary homeland and defends its superiority to his family, Clara Bowden Jones, Archie's wife and Irie's mother, hardly ever speaks about her country, Jamaica. This silence might be due to the fact that even though Clara came to London as a first generation immigrant, she broke all relationship with her mother, Hortense Bowden, a fervent Jehovah's Witness, who cut her out her life because Clara married Archie Jones, a non Jehovah's witness. Clara loses even her Jamaican accent by making an effort to hide it, as if she wants to forget anything that could remind her of Jamaica, and by the same token, her mother. Even though she tries to lose her Jamaican heritage, Clara chooses to name her daughter after a Jamaican noun as she explains to Alsana: "I like *Irie*. It patois. Means everything *OK, cool, peaceful*" (64).

This denial of one's origins, or to quote Salman Rushdie the desire "to be more English than the English," dramatically backfires once Irie reaches adolescence. Irie's past is an unknown prologue that her mother keeps secret from her. This past nevertheless haunts Irie, especially during the growing pains of adolescence. For

instance, the young girl takes after her mother's Jamaican side and does not "fit in" with her white classmates. To worsen her sense of alienation, she is in love with Millat who is blatantly partial to white girls with straight hair. The dire pains of adolescence are accentuated in Irie's self-hatred due to her lack of the Englishness she is desperately striving to attain. Since she does not know her Jamaican family history, she cannot appreciate its legacy for most of the novel.

Nevertheless, Irie becomes aware of the reflection of a black presence in England, not necessarily linked to her mother's arrival in London. Indeed, Smith includes a scene that emphasizes how a *lieu de mémoire* of the black presence in London can be found even in literature. Irie's English teacher Mrs. Olive Roody, has the class study Sonnets 127, 129, 130, 131 and 132. These sonnets deal with Shakespeare's love for his black mistress.[89] If Mrs. Roody argues that at Shakespeare's time there was no such thing as a Black presence in England, Irie's radical readings of the sonnets endeavor to belie this very idea. I think it is useful to quote Sonnet 127 in his entirety in order to explain its importance regarding Irie's growing pains. The sonnet, short but concise, celebrates natural beauty in the mysterious black woman who does not play with artifice to change her appearance as so many women did at Shakespeare's time, and still do:

> In the old age black was not counted fair,
>
> Or if it were, it bore not beauty's name;
>
> But now is black beauty's successive heir,

[89] I am only going to retranscribe Sonnet 127 in the body of my chapter. See next notes for the transcriptions of Sonnets 129 to 132.

And beauty slandered with a bastard shame:

For since each hand hath put on nature's power,

Fairing the foul with Art's false borrowed face,

Sweet beauty hath no name, no holy bower,

But is profaned, if not lives in disgrace.

Therefore my mistress's eyes are raven-black,

Her eyes so suited, and their mourners seem

At such who, not born fair, no beauty lack,

Sland'ring creation with a false esteem.

Yet so they mourn becoming of their woe,

That every tongue says beauty should look so.

At first, Irie does not pay attention to any of the sonnets. She does not even realize the negative language used by Shakespeare such as "bastard shame or "disgrace," for instance. Nevertheless, Smith superposes passages from the sonnets with Irie's inner thoughts of self-hatred. Each passage from the sonnets quoted during Irie's class illustrates Irie's musings. Shakespeare's satirical celebration of his lover reflects Irie's self-dissatisfaction. "*In the old age black was not counted fair*" resonates with "Irie didn't know she was fine. There was England, a gigantic mirror, and there was Irie, without reflection. A stranger in a stranger land" (222). Moreover, Shakespeare's attacks on his mistress's physical beauty with" '*Therefore my mistress' eyes are raven black, her brows so suited, and they mourners seem... My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun; Coral is far more red than her lips' red. If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun...*'";

resonate with how Irie sees her physical Jamaican heritage. Indeed, Irie "believed she had been dealt the dodgy cards: mountainous curves, buckteeth and thick metal retainer, impossible Afro hair, and to top it off mole-ish eyesight that in turn required Coke-bottle spectacles in a light shade of pink," which leads to "this belief in her ugliness, in her *wrongness*, had subdued her; she kept her smart-ass comments to herself these days, she kept her right hand on her stomach. She was all *wrong*" (224). This belief in her wrongness lies in the fact Irie cannot find her heritage in modern London, which prevents her from encountering any reflection of herself.

To stop feeling "a stranger in a stranger land," Irie needs a sign that she belongs to England. She lacks "a reflection" in the mirror of Britishness but by paying attention to the sonnets, Irie "had thought, just then, that she had seen something like a reflection" (227). By repeating the word "reflection," Smith reminds us that black Britishness can find its place through a different reading of Shakespeare's sonnets. Physical details concerning the dark lady awaken Irie's desire to interpret the poems as descriptions of a very literal black woman. Irie thus continually challenges her teacher by quoting specific passages of the poems; her postcolonial readings of Shakespeare's sonnets call for an acknowledgement of a Black presence in London that had long been ignored. In other words, Irie's radical readings of the poems challenge the idea that blackness in London has only been a recent phenomenon. Smith engages the reader to examine why one could

only keep on understanding Shakespeare's dark lady as only a metaphor without including a different kind of reading, one that would prove to be more postcolonial.[90]

Shakespeare seems to denounce artificial canons of beauty that deny the idea of different kinds of natural beauty. Fair beauty is arbitrarily claimed to be the only type of accepted and acceptable beauty. But, the mysterious mistress whose eyes are "raven black" bears her beauty with dignity, pride and without any artifice. In Sonnet 131 Shakespeare keeps on describing and also satirizing his mistress's blackness: " Thy black is fairest in my judgment's place./ In nothing art thou black save in thy deeds, /And thence this slander, as I think, proceeds."[91] Intrigued and hopeful, Irie asks Mrs. Roody if the "black lady" is "black." But Mrs. Roody answers: "No, dear, she's *dark*. She's not black in the modern sense. There weren't any... well Afro-Carri-bee-yans in England at that time, dear. That's more a modern phenomenon, as I'm sure you know. ... unless she

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[90] Katarzyna Jakubiak (2008) argues that "Irie understands 'wires' of Shakespeare's Dark Lady as 'kinky hair' because she wants to translate British literary tradition into something meaningful for herself" (Jakubiak 214). Irie might indeed need to find a Black presence in literature but the Shakespeare's passages chosen by Smith for the English class scene strongly suggest that Irie's interpretation of the sonnets might not be so radical if one were to look at the poems literally.

[91] Shakespeare's Sonnet 131
Thou art as tyrannous, so as thou art
As those whose beauties proudly make them cruel,
For well thou know'st to my dear doting heart
Thou art the fairest and most precious jewel.
Yet, in good faith, some say that thee behold
Thy face hath not the power to make love groan.
To say they err I dare not be so bold,
Although I swear it to myself alone;
And, to be sure that is not false I swear,
A thousand groans but thinking on thy face,
One on another's neck do witness bear
Thy black is fairest in my judgment's place.
In nothing art thou black save in thy deeds,
And thence this slander, as I think, proceeds.

was a slave of some kind, and he seems unlikely to have written a series of sonnets to a lord and then a slave" (227). Irie reads the sonnets as love declarations to a dark lady who must have been black: "I just thought... like when he says, here: *Then will I swear, beauty herself is black*... And the curly hair thing, black wires—" (227). Unfortunately, this interpretation is shattered by Mrs. Roody's denial of a Black presence *in* England before the *Windrush* Generation.[92] Even though Irie tried to argue by quoting the sonnets with precision, Roody brushes aside the modern idea of blackness and makes an example of Irie's imagination by declaring: "No dear, you're reading it with a modern ear. Never read what is old with a modern ear. In fact, that will serve as today's principle- can you all write that down, please" (227).[93] By only considering Black Britishness as a modern and fairly recent phenomenon, Mrs. Roody closes the door to investigating how the Caribbean and England met before the arrival of immigrants on the *Windrush*.[94] However short-lived, Irie had a first glimpse of a "reflection" of a black presence in London. As

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[92] The *Windrush* Generation refers to the first wave of Jamaican immigration when Jamaicans boarded on the *USS Windrush* in 1948 to reach England. The Jamaican arrival allegedly started Jamaican immigration to England. Mark Stein (2007) calls second-generation immigrant writers "the post-*Windrush* Generation" (Stein, 7).

[93] Shakespeare's Sonnet 132
Thine eyes I Love, and they, as pitying me-
Knowing thy heart torment me with disdain-
Have put on black, and loving mourners be,
Looking with pretty ruth upon my pain;
And truly, not the morning sun of heaven
Better becomes the gray cheeks of the east,
Nor that full star that ushers in the even
Doth half that glory to the sober west,
As those two mourning eyes become thy face.
O, let it then as well beseem thy heart
To mourn for me, since mourning doth thee grace,
And suit thy pity like in every part.
Then I will swear beauty herself is black,
And all they foul that thy complexion lack.

[94] See Peter Fryer's *Staying Power: the History of Black People in Britain* (1984).

her character evolves, Irie encounters more opportunities to dig up this presence.[95] But before she appreciates her Jamaican heritage, Irie fights it through the straightening of her hair. Smith places what I call "the hair salon scene" right after the English class on Shakespeare. I interpret Irie's drastic decision to put ammonia in her hair as an illustration of the loss of "a reflection" that Irie experiences in class when her interpretation on Shakespeare are denied. Millat associates himself with anger to find his own reflection in England, Irie with self-inflicted pain.

If Shakespeare urges his dark lover to keep her natural beauty, Irie does the total opposite to herself. Smith seems to comment on how blackness still represents a contested terrain in the England of *White Teeth*. Indeed, *P.K.'s Afro Hair: Design and Management*, the salon where Irie goes to have her hair straightened, resembles a torture factory for masochists. There are a male and a female section at P.K.'s. But while "the male section was all laughter, all talk, all play; there was an easiness that sprang from no male haircut ever costing over six pounds or taking more than fifteen minutes," "the female section... was a deathly thing. Here the impossible desire for straightness and 'movement' fought daily with the stubborn determination of the curved African follicle; here ammonia, hot combs, clips, pins, and simple fire had all been enlisted in the war and were doing their damnedest to beat each curly hair into submission" (229). The male section is described in terms of positive euphoria where a haircut becomes a moment of camaraderie, short-lived but efficient, whereas the female section conveys the idea of a

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[95] The scene ends with Irie receiving a note from anonymous classmates: "By William Shakespeare: ODE TO LETITIA AND ALL MY KINKY-AIRED BIG-ASS BITCHEZ" (227). Despite its offensiveness, the note acknowledges the possibility of Shakespeare talking about a real black lady.

long and horribly painful process, and is "a competition in agony" (230). Smith goes even further in this idea of self-inflicted pain by showing a few pages later that P.K.'s hair salon is not even owned by an Afro-Caribbean but by a white man who realized that he could profit from the desperation to reach beauty through pain:

> Looking for a new idea, he read in the lifestyle section of his breakfast paper that black women spend five times as much as white women on beauty products and nine times as much on their hair... He was amazed to discover that women on low income were indeed prepared to spend hundreds of pounds per month on their hair and yet more on nails and accessories. He was vaguely amused when Andrea [his wife] first explained to him that physical pain was also part of the process. And the best part of it was there was no question of suing—they *expected* the burns. Perfect business. (232)

I would interpret this passage as a critique by Smith of the commodification of black women's bodies. Especially if we keep in mind Shakespeare's sonnets, the idea of fighting natural blackness is therefore far from being a modern phenomenon. But the patrons of P.K.'s salon participate in the exploitation of blackness as not being enough since they pay to be treated this way.

Irie not only does not escape "agony" but she actually loses her hair and has to buy a wig to hide the burns on her scalp. The wig store sells natural hair that is either "natural Thai," "natural Pakistani," "natural Chinese" or simply synthetic. It is interesting that the salon and wig store both exploit and sell hair from former members of the

English empire. Another patron who is buying hairpins at the wig store makes this interesting comment: "Some of us are happy with our African hair, thank you very much. I don't want to buy some poor Indian girl's hair. And I wish to God I could buy black hair products from black people for once. How we going to make it in this country if we don't make our own business?" (234)[96] This comment emphasizes the idea that African bodies are still made profitable, from cheap labor they became high priced commodities for transformation. Just like Shakespeare's sonnets, black beauty is endangered by the industry of cosmetics.

Thinking she has finally achieved the beauty that Millat will appreciate, Irie is brought back to reality by the usual voice of wisdom in *White Teeth*: Neena, aka *Niece-of-Shame* who tells Irie to "reeducate yourself. Realize your value, stop the slavish devotion and get a life... The Afro was cool, man. It was wicked. It was *yours*" (237). Interestingly, it is another fake body acquisition that pushes Irie toward to question the way the past has been shared between her parents and her.

Her growing pains reach their climax when she finds out that Clara has been wearing fake teeth. Clara had a scooter accident before she met Archie and lost her two front teeth. Shortly before her wedding she had a prosthesis made to replace her missing teeth, but had never told this anatomical detail to Irie. Wanting to pester her parents for the permission to go to Africa after she graduates from high school, Irie goes into their bedroom in the middle of the night. Instead of her parents' approval, she discovers the teeth in a glass:

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[96] The patron omits the use of "are" in "how we going to make it in this country."

> But Irie was sixteen and everything feels deliberate at that age. To her, this was yet another item in a long list of parental hypocrisies and untruths, this was another example of the Jones/Bowden gift for secret histories, stories you never got told, history you never entirely uncovered, rumor you never unraveled, which would be fine if every day was not littered with clues, and suggestions; shrapnel in Archie's leg... photo of strange white Grandpa Durham... Millat was right: these parents were damaged people, missing hands, missing teeth. These parents were full of information you wanted to know but were too scared to hear. But she didn't want it anymore, she was tired of it. She was sick of never getting the whole truth. (314)

Irie's realization about Clara's false teeth is a catalyst for the idea that she considers her family history as having been faked and having been de-routed, uprooted to be replaced by fake memories. Irie wants to be part of her family history and she decides to discover her real roots. Her mother's white lie about her teeth represents the impossibility of sharing the Bowden history from mother to daughter. Therefore, Smith situates Irie's move to live with her grandmother, Hortense Bowden, right after the "teeth episode." Hortense's oral and collective memory and the *lieux de mémoire* that she keeps in her apartment allow Irie to discover the Bowden roots connected not only to Jamaica but to colonialism as well. In other words Irie embarks on the quest to uncover the prologue of her family.

After spending time with the Chalfens, Irie realizes the importance of writing one's genealogical tree, especially since Marcus Chalfen is the son of Holocaust survivors who fled Eastern Europe to settle in England. But despite the fact that they had to leave most of their loved ones behind and had to change their names in order to "assimilate" in their new home, they were able to pass on their family history to Marcus who knows his ancestors' names with accuracy. Irie decides to fill in the gaps of her family memory by learning it from her grandmother. Since she had been working for Marcus Chalfen as a secretary, Irie knew how to classify, to organize information. It is therefore an easy task for her to find what she is looking for at Hortense's. The uncovering of the family truth represents a thrilling task for Irie since,

> That house was an *adventure*. In cupboards and neglected drawers, and in grimy frames were the secrets that had been hoarded for so long, as if secrets were going out of fashion. She found pictures of her great-grandmother Ambrosia, a bony, beautiful thing, with huge almond eyes, and one of Charlie "Whitey" Durham standing in a pile of rubble with a sepia-print sea behind him. She found a Bible with one line torn from it. She found photo-booth snaps of Clara in school uniform, grinning maniacally, the true horror of the teeth revealed. (330)

The anaphora of "found" underlines the idea that Irie makes discoveries by herself, like a researcher scavenging through obscure archives. It also emphasizes that the process of discoveries has just began and that there is more to learn about her history. Photographs constitute *lieux de mémoire* kept by Hortense as part of a collective memory that can now

be given to her granddaughter. By finding her great grandmother "beautiful," Irie learns to reclaim beauty as being black. Her joy at finding the photograph and of taking the time to appreciate her great-grandmother's beauty contrasts with Irie's previous self-hatred of her blackness that led her to the torture hair salon. Moreover, these "found" photographs constitute the proof that Ambrosia, Hortense's mother and Irie's great-grandmother, had an affair with Durham who in the fictional world of *White Teeth* really existed. The photographs of Durham and Ambrosia posing together provide snapshots of Irie's lineage. Captain Durham was a close friend of Glenard who gave his name to Irie's high school.[97] Furthermore, Hortense possesses an extensive library where Bibles share shelves with history books on Jamaica. Irie hence savors learning about the Arawaks and Jamaica's painful history and,

> She laid claim to the past—her version of the past, aggressively, as if retrieving misdirected mail. So *this* is where she came from. This all *belonged* to her, her birthright, like a pair of pearl earrings of a post office bond. X marks the spot, and Irie put an X on everything she found, collecting bits and pieces (birth certificates, maps, army reports, news articles) and storing them under the sofa, so that as if by osmosis the richness of them would pass through the fabric while she was sleeping and seep right into her. (331)

Irie enthusiastically becomes her family archivist, organizing the collective memory of the Bowden women. This sense of euphoria deeply contrasts with Irie's previous

[97] I will talk about this connection in further details at the end of this section.

melancholy of not knowing her place in England. Now that she realizes that she comes from somewhere, "she laid claim to the past," to move forward with her future as second generation. As mentioned before, Durham, her great-grandfather knew Glenard who gave his name to Irie's high school. He "gave" Ambrosia's education to Glenard, which shows how Jamaica and England had had an older history than what Irie had thought.

Conclusion: "What Is Past Is *Only* a Prologue"

Even though she does not know the truth about her high school, Irie feels she has attained the truth concerning her origins. However, she also falls into the idea of an imaginary homeland where she fantasizes she could be more accepted there than in England. Smith uses a vocabulary of fairy tale to describe Irie's vision of the "homeland": "no fictions, no myths, no lies, no tangled webs- this is how Irie imagined her homeland. Because *homeland* is one of the magical fantasy words like *unicorn* and *soul* and *infinity* that have now passed into the language. And the particular magic of *homeland*, its particular spell over Irie, was that it sounded like a beginning" (332). Like any work of the imagination, the homeland becomes a chimera, an ultimate refuge against the disappointments of English life. It is interesting that Irie experiences such a fantasy since she is a second-generation immigrant with a mother silent about the "homeland." In the Iqbals's home, the imaginary homeland oppresses the twins who are indifferent to it. On the contrary, Irie welcomes the past as a liberator not as an oppressor for her future.

First generation immigrants may feel smothered by their past, hence their bitterness or silence about it. Irie does claim the "past as a prologue," which explains her outburst toward the end of the novel—and with which I started this chapter—when the

Iqbals and Joneses go to the FutureMouse inauguration together. Irie has finally found her voice to present a different version of the past than her parents. The novel ends ten pages later briefly summarizing the seven years following the FutureMouse fiasco. Irie becomes a dentist and raises her daughter—extending the matrilineality of her family—with Joshua Chalfen. The couple vacations with Hortense Bowden in Jamaica for the millenium New Year's Eve. Thus, Irie completes the promise she made to her grandmother seven years earlier to wait with her in Jamaica for the end of the world predicted by the Jehovah's Witnesses to happen on the first day of 2000. I interpret Irie's trip to Jamaica as a positive roots tourism: the young woman has learned on her own about her Jamaican heritage and how to appreciate it. Her character does not go to Jamaica to flee from the present; because bringing her companion Joshua Chalfen and her daughter along symbolizes the possibility of sharing Jamaica and its history with people outside of this precise history.

Chapter Three: Breaking "the Spell of Nostalgia": Roots Tourism as Reconciliation(s) in Azadeh Moaveni's *Lipstick Jihad* (2005)

Azadeh Moaveni’s 2005 memoir, *Lipstick Jihad: A Memoir of Growing up Iranian in America and American in Iran* has been criticized for promoting a negative image of contemporary Iran. The publication of yet another memoir by a female writer of Iranian descent happened to correspond to the beginning of the controversy outlined by Hamid Dabashi in a 2006 article.[98] Dabashi denounces what he sees as the class of “comprador native intellectuals,” namely certain published and publishable Iranian or Iranian-descended writers who in his view serve American imperialist interests by smearing Iran’s image. Ali Behdad makes a similar point, arguing that Moaveni’s memoir serves anti-Iranian and Western imperialist interests by catering to the worst stereotypes of a repressive, static Islamist state in its depiction of Iran.[99] While I do not entirely disagree with either Dabashi’s or Behdad’s critiques, I want to suggest in my chapter that the real scandal of Moaveni’s work for Iranian diaspora intellectuals may be less her depiction of Iran than her attack on the diaspora itself and how the diaspora constructs Iran to a Western audience. Although not without problems, I argue that the book enacts a valuable critique of the mythic Orientalism of many diasporic representations of Iran, especially through its treatment of the author’s relationship with her mother. This critique can be interpreted as a powerful one since it emanates from an

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[98] I discuss Dabashi's article "Native Informants and the Making of the American Empire" (2006) in my section "Memoirs, Orientalism and (Comprador) Intellectuals."

[99] See Ali Behdad's “Critical Historicism" (2007).

Iranian American, one born and raised in the US, who offers a different take on Iran than the first generation of Iranians settling in the US.

As mentioned in my introduction, Persis M. Karim (1999) uses the term Do-rageh to designate Iranian Americans. Karim declares that "when I finally learned the Persian word for people like me, *do-rageh* ('two veined), with two bloods running through me, I began to embrace my complex heritage and to see that it enriched me" (Karim 19). Even though "Do-rageh" is not commonly used outside of academia—as "Beur" is in France, for instance—I choose to use it in my discussion of Moaveni's memoir. In *Lipstick Jihad*, Moaveni "embraces her complex heritage," as Persis M. Karim did, and therefore offers the Do-rageh's take on not only Iran but on its diaspora as well. She spares neither modern Iran nor how the diaspora constructs Iran. By claiming a voice on Iran, Moaveni shatters the idea that Iran's history only concerns the first generation of Iranian exiles; she sees herself as an American denied, what she calls, "the privilege of shredding history" (Moaveni 236). Nevertheless, unlike most other Do-rageh memoirists, who were born and raised in Iran before the Revolution, Moaveni represents the voice of one Do-rageh born and raised in the US and yet still claims authority on Iran.

Indeed, the first generation of Do-rageh writing memoirs in English are children in exile since they were born and raised in Iran until the Revolution that made their parents flee their homeland to resettle in America. Some of these Do-rageh even have a parent that is American, as Tara Bahrampour for instance. They have vivid childhood memories of Iran that haunt them, and had exposure to the turmoil in Iran following the revolution. Azadeh Moaveni presents the originality of being a Do-rageh who is

American by birth but Iranian by sentiment and filiation.[100] She was born—in 1976, three years before the revolution—and raised in America; Iran is, at first, a place of vacation where she went as a five-year-old-in the summer of 1980. It is only when she is a grown woman, working as a journalist for *Time* Magazine that she is able to go back to Iran on her own terms, at the end of the 1990s, during President Khatami's first term as the president of Iran. Moaveni's (re) turn to Iran endeavors to show how Iranian youth of the new millenium that she meets, shatter Orientalist clichés whether promoted by the West, the Iranian regime, or the Iranian diaspora.

While books written by Iranians living in the West and by Do-rageh usually trigger passionate debate on Iran, I choose to look at how Moaveni challenges her own diaspora in order to seek reconciliation not only between her filiation and affiliation, but between Iran's realities and the diaspora's. She appeals also to her American audience by acknowledging and challenging their views on Iran since the diaspora's Orientalist take on Iran is complicit with American Orientalism as well.

The first generation of Iranians living in America write mostly about the loss of their homeland and their inability to mourn it. They need to present Iran as encapsulated in 1979 or so, when they had to leave it. While I understand why this perspective is prevalent, especially in the US, I argue in my chapter that the second generation, the Do-rageh, push their vision of Iran further by establishing a relationship with Iran thirty years after the exile. I show that *Lipstick Jihad* is not so much about Iran as it is about the

[100] Other memoirs by Do-rageh born in America have been published since Moaveni's. For instance, Said Sayrafiezadeh's 2009 *When Skateboards Will Be Free: A Memoir of a Political Childhood*. At the time I began my project though Moaveni had been the only American-born Do-rageh writing her memoir.

diaspora that refuses to see Iran change. By refusing to see Iran change, the diaspora inadvertently contributes to an American colonial and Orientalist project on Iran.

Iran at a Crossroads

Nima Naghibi (2007), an Iranian feminist, not only proposes to look at the impact of Western colonialism and imperialism in Iran in the twentieth century but also examines the presence of Western feminist intervention in Iran and how it uses a colonial agenda. Even though this interest is more than valid, many scholars refuse to consider Iran through post-colonial theory, arguing that Iran was never *per se* a colony. Anticipating this critique, Naghibi points out that,

> Although Persia was never a formal colony of a European power, it was subjected to indirect political and economic rule for centuries. Because of its strategic geographical location, neighboring countries such as Afghanistan, India, and Russia, and because of its oil-rich territories, Iran figured as an object of desire for England and Russia, and later for the United States. (2)

Indeed, as early as the 1850s, Iran—then still called Persia—gave rise to competing interests between Russia and Great Britain. Despite their animosity, these two powers came to an agreement in August 1907, under the infamous Anglo-Russian Treaty “that proposed to divide Iran into three sections: northern and central Iran would fall under Russian influence, southeastern Iran would fall under British influence, and the area in between was declared the neutral zone" (Naghibi 2-3). Naghibi adds that "the agreement was drawn up between the two countries without the consent of the Iranian government”

(Naghibi 2-3). Iran's political future was henceforth deprived of independence since Great Britain and Russia—until its revolution in 1917—interfered remorselessly and repeatedly in Iran's political process. Great Britain in particular made sure to push for Persian leaders who kept on supporting the British monopoly on oil extraction in Iran and "encouraged" a young man from the military Cossack regiment to take power in 1923.[101] This young man became Reza Shah and founded the Pahlavi dynasty. However, Reza Shah tried to move away from British influence during WWII by forging an alliance with Germany. The allies then invaded Iran in 1941—and would occupy it until the end of the war—, removed the Shah, sent him to exile and replaced him with his young and inexperienced son, Mohammad Reza. The new young monarch was portrayed as weak and easily manipulated by the British.

However, in 1953, Mohammad Reza Shah's unstable popularity became jeopardized by his Prime Minister: Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh nationalized Iranian oil in 1951 and "pledged to throw the company [the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company] out of Iran, reclaim the country's vast petroleum reserves, and free Iran from subjection to foreign power… he nationalized Anglo-Iranian, the most profitable British business in the world" (Kinzer 2). Mossadegh's fame reached even America as "*Time* magazine chose him—not

[101] And not only oil production. For instance Kinzer (2003) mentions the Tobacco Boycott. "Nasir al-Din Shah… in 1891… sold the Iranian tobacco industry for the sum of 15,000 pounds. Under the terms of the concession, every farmer who grew tobacco was required to sell it to the British Imperial Tobacco Company, and every smoker had to buy it at a shop that was part of the British Imperial's retail network" (Kinzer 32). Because Iranians, from the richest to the poorest enjoyed smoking, this privatization was seen as another mark of British imperialism. Therefore the greatest majority of Iranians boycotted smoking. Even the Shah's wives and his harem concubines quit smoking. The Shah had to finally cancel his agreement with the British company. I am mentioning this anecdote here to show that even though Iran was not officially occupied, the British Empire greed considered Iran to be part of its sphere of interests.

Harry Truman, Dwight Einsenhower, or Winston Churchill—as its Man of the Year" in 1951 (Kinzer 132).

After two years of intense but nevertheless unsuccessful pressure on Iran, the British decided to ask America for help. If the Truman administration refused to interfere and actually had been favorable to the democratic movement in Iran, the Einsenhower administration was convinced immediately to remove—at all costs—Mossadegh from power, and so as soon as it landed at the White House.[102] Portraying Mossadegh as a Communist—which he was not—and deciding on a campaign of intense vilification, "Operation Ajax," the first CIA coup to topple a foreign government, occurred on August 19, 1953 under the leadership of Kermit Roosevelt.[103] With one million dollars, and mostly plotted in the American Embassy's basement, the Coup failed the first time despite propaganda in a press bought for the occasion, and massively paid rioters to bring chaos to Tehran. However, the second attempt was successful and Mohammad Reza Shah—who had left during the first attempt, afraid that his complicity with the Coup was going to be exposed—came back immediately from Rome and was reinstated. For the rest of his reign (until 1979), Iranians would know that he owed his throne to "Operation Ajax." To prevent any other Mossadegh-like politician, the Shah created a secret police called SAVAK that spied on and terrorized Iranians and decided to invest most of Iran's oil revenues in its military.[104]

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[102] For more details, see Kinzer, 3.

[103] Kermit Roosevelt was a grandson of Teddy Roosevelt.

[104] Because the American government generously gave him massive loans not only for the military but for his expensive way of life, Mohammad Reza Shah encouraged a bill in 1965 that granted full amnesty to any

Finally in 1979, a massive discontentment shook Iranian society: people took to the streets to protest against the Shah. Thousands demonstrated, demanding an end to a monarchy they saw as corrupt. A diverse movement that allied nationalists, seculars, intellectuals, and religious sympathizers brought the unthinkable: the end of three thousand years of monarchy. Khomeini came back to Iran after the Shah had left with his family for Mexico and then Egypt. Diagnosed with cancer, Mohammad Reza Shah went to New York for treatment. Fearing another humiliating American intervention in their country similar to Operation Ajax, a group of students claiming allegiance to Khomeini took over the American Embassy in Tehran on November 4th 1979, and held its diplomats hostage for more than 300 days. This dramatic event led to the end of diplomatic relations between Iran and the United States, tarnishing and demonizing Iran's image in America.

Even though the hostages were finally released in 1980, Iran's image kept on being tarnished by the crisis, which led the international community to remain silent on the war crimes Saddam Hussein would lead against Iran during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988). One of the most brutal combat wars of the twentieth century, this war would last eight years, claiming one million dead and maiming thousands.[105] It strengthened the

American committing a crime in Iran. I would argue that such a bill considered Iranians inferior to Americans in their own country. If citizens of a country have to accommodate foreign interests and rights above their own interests and rights, it can be interpreted as a form of colonialism. Khomeini, then an obscure cleric in Qom, gave a speech denouncing a law that would put any non-Iranian citizen not abiding Iranian laws, above all Iranians, even the Shah. His incendiary denunciation led to his exile, first in Iraq, then later in France.

[105] See *The Iran-Iraq War: The Politics of Aggression* (1993) ed. Fahrang Rajaee.

Islamic take on the Revolution that was to become an Islamic Republic.[106] As a result of the new regime and the eight-year war, three million Iranians left Iran giving birth to a massive Iranian diaspora. Most of them went to America, and in particular Los Angeles. Sadly, the shadow of the hostage crisis and the Islamic Republic's rogue state reputation toward American interests followed them there even though they were not supporters of the regime they had fled. Do-rageh literature depicts how the hostage crisis affected their lives in America, therefore a more thorough context on the Iranian diaspora helps us understand how Moaveni challenges her diaspora and how they represent Iran.

Dual Marginals

Initially written in 1977, Maboud Ansari's sociological study, *The Making of the Iranian Community in America* (1992) shows how radically different the Iranian community in the United States became after 1979. Ansari added an additional chapter for the revised edition of his study, a chapter that takes into account these changes as well as how some of his theories collapsed when a massive influx of Iranians arrived in the U.S. Ansari uses the concept of "Dual Marginality," borrowed from social theorists such as Robert E. Park that refers to an individual marginalized in his home country as well as in his guest country, thus producing a sense of insecurity and not belonging. Ansari shows how the strenuous relationships between Iran and America transformed how Iranians presented themselves as immigrants:

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[106] For instance, Iranian women were not legally made to wear the veil until 1983, three years after the beginning of the war. Under attack, the country had to remain united, even though this was to cost women's rights. See Shirin Ebadi's *Iran Awakening: One Woman's Journey to Reclaim Her Life and Country* (2006).

> In a manner reminiscent of the experiences of Japanese Americans in the 1940s, Iranians in the United States became scapegoats and suffered harassment and covert discrimination, mainly because of their national heritage. The anti-Iranian reaction was so widespread that it forced Iranian-Americans to misrepresent their ethnic identity. Such experience, which has several parallels in the history of immigrants in the United States, made Iranian-Americans aware that no matter how Americanized they may be, they are considered by the native-born Americans as aliens. (121)

The sense of exile as a perpetual in-between, of refusing to see the temporary stay as one that will be everlasting, is also exacerbated because of the way Iranians were/are portrayed in American media. Therefore, "Iranian immigrants and the political refugees who allied themselves with Americans against the extremist religious government in Iran felt that Americans resented them and unfairly blamed them for the hostage crisis" (Ansari 153). The backlash targeted the Iranian community living in the US, which Edward W. Said (1981) explains by offering a rigorous analysis of how the media covered the crisis and portrayed Iran.[107] According to Said, Iranians were represented as a monolithic group, full of rage and anti-American sentiment despite the fact that the alliances forged to topple the Shah showed how diverse Iranian society's attitude was toward the revolution. Moreover, the fact that these alliances were already eroding and

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[107] See Edward W. Said's *Covering Islam*... (1981). Said devotes one whole part of his book to the Iranian Revolution and to the hostage crisis, see "The Iran Story" (80-133).

that Iranians were the first victims of the Revolution came to be totally ignored by the media and their gullible audience: "with very few exceptions, the media's purpose seemed to be to wage a kind of war against Iran" (101). The American public are not really to blame when they are not provided with the full facts concerning the Revolution and who took the American Embassy in hostage, and how Iranians left their country *en masse* since "there was no help to be had in analyzing the complicated politics of what was taking place, and surely no one came away with a sense that the media were recording the complex and sometimes bewildering processes of history (102)." The way Iran was covered during the hostage crisis had a deep impact on how Iranians came to negotiate, or rather renegotiate, their own identity in America.

To renegotiate their safety meant dealing with a strong sense of shame and self-hatred because, since according to Ansari, "during the hostage crisis, one's Iranian identity became a stigma to be hidden or evaded as much as possible. To avoid potential confrontations and differential treatment, most Iranian-Americans started to call themselves Persian-Americans" (153).[108] Discriminations against the parents had also dire consequences for the children.[109] In the chapter he devotes to children of these exiles, Ansari shows that parents and their children alike experienced this ambiguous position,

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[108] Ansari goes on to prove the hostile "reaction" to Iranians living in the US at the time of the crisis: "the incidents included fire bombings of Iranian businesses, physical assaults, the firing of Iranian nationals (for instance, the firing of Iranian bus drivers in the South), the posting of such signs as 'no dogs and no Iranians allowed,' and the expulsion of Iranian students and the doubling of their tuition at one of the colleges of Mississippi" (153).

[109] See in particular *Islamophobia: Making Muslims the Enemy* (2008) by Peter Gottschalk and Gabriel Greenberg. Gottschalk and Greenberg examine the use of political cartoons caricaturing Muslims in American newspapers. Their section on the Iranian Revolution and the Hostage Crisis (124-29) reproduces caricatures that vilify Iranians through Khomeini. One can imagine the effect of these cartoons on Iranians living in the US at the time.

trauma and uncertainty, while living in America during the hostage crisis.[110] For Ansari, these children experienced a dual marginality as well.

Although the phrase "dual marginals" is helpful, I prefer using Said's concepts of filiation and affiliation in relation to Do-rageh literature. I consider these concepts as positive to discuss the Do-rageh's sense of identity. "Dual marginals" reflect a perpetual position of insanity that does not give credit to the importance of writing strength and pride in their dual heritage to achieve a reconciliation that I see at stake in the writings of Do-rageh in general, and of Moaveni in particular.

For children of the Iranian diaspora, the balance between filiation and affiliation reveals itself to be more arduous and somehow one could even say more threatening. To juggle their conflicting identities, such as being Iranian American when at first glance the two terms represent an extraordinary oxymoron, produces a different kind of self-introspection. This might be the reason why these hyphenated Iranians have a tendency to write memoirs more than novels or even short stories. There *are* novels, poems and short stories written by Do-rageh, however during my preliminary research, I was struck by the number of memoirs written and published by Do-rageh carving a space for their experience in an already saturated genre by first generation Iranians.[111]

[110] Even bi-cultural families, i.e. when one parent was Iranian and the other American experienced the backlash. Pulitzer Prize novelist Anne Tyler's, for instance. Married to an Iranian psychiatrist who had settled in America in the 1960s, Tyler recounts how she had to console her daughters-young little girls at the time of the hostage crisis and nevertheless targeted by anti-Iranian sentiment at school. See Robert William Croft's 1995 *Anne Tyler: a Bio-Bibliography* (55).

[111] Most novels written by Do-rageh take place in a non-contemporary Iran. Gina B. Nahai pays tribute to the Jewish Iranian heritage in her novels such as *Cry of the Peacock* (1991). Anita Amirrezvani's *The Blood of Flowers* (2007) looks at rug makers in seventeenth century Isfahan. So far, Porochista Khakpour's *Sons*

Memoirs, Orientalism and (Comprador) Intellectuals

Most first generation Iranian writers publishing in English are women writing memoirs and tend to follow a similar pattern: Iran is a place dangerous for women in general and for the memoir writers in particular; Life is unbearable, persecutions are legion and the author/heroine must leave Iran after having suffered tremendously, personally, socially and politically. Exile to the West on a one-way ticket terminates the Iranian experience.[112] Even though I do not intend to question the veracity of these memoirs—I will dwell on one in particular in the next section of my chapter—I cannot avoid seeing how they act as ultimate truths on Iran because they cater to a certain preconceived view on Iran, prevalent in the West, a view inherited from European Orientalism.

In his groundbreaking archival work, *Orientalism* (1978) Edward W. Said demonstrates how Orientalism is a multi-leveled discourse used during—and/or preparing for—European imperial incursions into the Orient to symbolically construct and fashion this very Orient. By positioning the exotic, the feminine, the primitive on the side of the Orient, the West constructs its own strengths through limited and limiting dichotomies: "The Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, "different"; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, 'normal'" (Said 40). A body of knowledge is used or misused to claim authority on the Orient and the Oriental and justifies any action

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and Other Flammable Objects (2007) is the only Do-rageh novel with a plot centered on modern relationships between Iran and America.

[112] Indeed, for instance ,during her lecture's Q/A given at the University of Texas in Austin, in April 2007, Dr. Farzaneh Milani declared that "these women authors always wrote to show how much they suffered and how they overcame these sufferings." These sufferings are implicitly or explicitly always the result of the Iranian revolution.

against the Orient or taken on the Orient. Though mostly French and British, Orientalism persists, despite the fall of the French and British Empires and has been recycled into an American Orientalism where clichés are kept but with their own specificity; "a learned perspective can support the caricatures propagated in the popular culture... the most current transformation overtaking Orientalism: its conversion from a fundamentally philological discipline and a vaguely apprehension of the Orient into a social science specialty" (290). I will add that how these first generation Iranian writers experience Iran is reminiscent of one of the most famous memoirs on Iran that helped shape the most prevalent representation on Iran in America: *Not Without My Daughter* (1987). Indeed, ever since Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* (1987), memoirs dealing with Iran— especially if they depict a negative image of Iran—act as truth formulas to corroborate Orientalist ideas about Iran.

By looking at the discourses on Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2004), I want to emphasize how first-generation exiles fight over what constitutes a "real" representation of Iran. *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, published shortly after Iran was once again in the American media due to the infamous "Axis of Evil" (2002) speech given by President George W. Bush, contributed to the negative image of Iran according to some Iranian intellectuals. Here I will only address Hami Dabashi and Fatemeh Keshavarz' reactions. I see it important to acknowledge the presence of this debate since the critique made on *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by these intellectuals does not come from Iran but from American academia where Dabashi and Keshavarz are both professors.

Nafisi, a literature professor as well, relates in her memoir *Reading Lolita in Tehran* how in 1995 Iran she started an underground book club with favorite students of hers. The book club met clandestinely to discuss great masterpieces of *Western* literature. Nafisi positions herself as a savior of literature surrounded by fanaticism and obscuranticism.[113] Hamid Dabashi responded virulently to Nafisi's memoir in his article "Native Informants and the Making of the American Empire" (2006). Dabashi denounces what he sees as "selective memory," referring to how the portrayal of the tense relationships between Iran and the US fails to mention Operation Ajax and the support of the Shah's dictatorship. But, he accuses members of the Iranian diaspora itself of fueling the selective memory:

> One may also argue that this act of *collective amnesia* accompanies a strategy of *selective memory*—two pathological cases that in fact augment or corroborate each other. A particular powerful case of such selective memories is now fully evident in an increasing body of mémoire by people from an Islamic background that has over the last half a decade, ever since of the commencement of its "War on Terrorism," flooded the US market.

By using phrases such as "Collective amnesia" and "selective memory," Dabashi denounces how some Iranian writers publishing in the West have an agenda to avoid

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[113] Nafisi considers Islam as a dangerous religion. But, one could ask innocently how can one decide that Islam promotes May-December unions between women and men, and then at the same time defends Nabokov's *Lolita* when it deals with pretty much the same. Of course, on the one hand we have religion, and on the other fiction. However, I cannot help but see a paradox here.

enlightening their audience on the complexity of not only the Iranian Revolution but on Iranians as well. Dabashi then targets Nafisi in particular, and declares that,

> With one strike, Azar Nafisi has achieved three simultaneous objectives: (1) systematically and unfailingly denigrating an entire culture of revolutionary resistance to a history of savage colonialism; (2) doing so by blatantly advancing the presumed cultural foregrounding of a predatory empire; and (3) while at the very same time catering to the most retrograde and reactionary forces within the United States, waging an all out war against a pride of place by various immigrant communities and racialised minorities seeking curricular recognition on university campuses and in the American society at large.

Nafisi pleases the American audience with a corroboration of what they supposed Iran to be, but by doing so, Dabashi argues, she further endangers the sense of pride of Iranians striving to make their lives bearable in the West. Dabashi goes even as far as comparing *Reading Lolita in Tehran*'s effects to Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* because "so far as its unfailing hatred of everything Iranian- from its literary masterpieces to its ordinary people- is concerned, not since Betty Mahmoody's notorious book *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) as a text exuded so systematic a visceral hatred of everything Iranian" (3).[114] Dabashi considers Nafisi's initiative not to be personal but rather to be significant of belonging to a class of "comprador intellectuals" and sees that,

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[114] Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) is a captivity narrative. Mahmoody, when she worked as a nurse met her Iranian husband, a doctor in Michigan. They married and had a daughter,

> Their the task is to feign authority, authenticity, and native knowledge and thus to inform the US public of the atrocities that are taking place throughout the world, in the region of their native birth in particular, by way of justifying the imperial designs of the US as liberating these nations from the evil of their own designs. (5-6)

By positioning themselves as experts on a culture they know because they used to be part of, the comprador intellectuals are complicit in promoting and justifying negative views on Iran. I agree with Dabashi in the sense that being part of a culture does not grant one access to comprehensive truth about it. In other words, skepticism and questioning are necessary reading duties. For instance, Dabashi demonstrates that the photograph used for the cover of *Reading Lolita in Tehran*—where one sees two young veiled girls who seem to be reading something with delight—was misleading because taken outside of its original context. Since the title of the memoir refers to Nabokov's novel, the innocent reader could think that the two young girls are in fact reading his novel. But, Dabashi found what was the origin of the picture: "The original picture from which this cover is excised is lifted off a news report during the parliamentary election of February 2000 in Iran. In the original picture, the two young women are in fact reading the leading

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Mahtob. According to Mahmoody's memoir, her husband took their family to Iran in 1984 for a two-week vacation at the end of which he did not let them go. He changed, started abusing her physically and emotionally. But, the whole memoir does not only vilify Moody but all Iranians and Iranian culture. A masterpiece of anti-Iranian progaganda, the memoir was actually co-written with William Hoffer (who also co-authored *Midnight Express*). In 1991, a film adapted from the memoir was also released—and accidentally shot in Israel—and gave even more success to Mahmoody's story. However, there are always two sides of any story and I will recommend *Without My Daughter*, which is a documentary on Dr. Mahmoody. It gives us his version of what happened between his wife and him.

reformist newspaper *Mosharekat*."[115] By using this example, Dabashi asks for an active contextualization of *Reading Lolita in Tehran* rather than an easy acceptance that this memoir represents the truth for *all* Iranian women.

Even though I understand Dabashi's criticism of *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, I would argue though, that *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, its media coverage and its success actually served a beneficial purpose for the Iranian diaspora. It pushed Iranians living in the US and having access to the media themselves as intellectuals, artists or even academics, to step out of their comfort zone and their ivory tower. For instance Fatemeh Keshavarz' *Jasmine and Stars: Reading More than* Lolita *in Tehran* (2007) is a fairly accessible semi-memoir and a response to Nafisi's:

> in some ways, the views portrayed in *Reading Lolita in Tehran* may, in effect, prepare the American public for a tough line against Iran. The seldom-smiling monsters that emerge from the memoir do not seem to be doing anything other that hating, fighting, suppressing women, and trampling the American flag anyway. Moreover, their violence is not presented as an aberration but rather as endemic to the local culture, which makes a harsh move against the culture seem justified, perhaps even necessary. (29)

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[115] Dabashi adds that "Azar Nafisi and her publisher may have thought that the world is not looking, and that they can distort the history of a people any way they wish. But the original picture from which this cover steals its idea speaks to the fact of this falsehood." I would also wonder who paid copyrights to the Iranian photograph who took the pictures of these two girls and if these two young girls were asked their permission to have their faces sold on a book criticizing their country.

Like Dabashi, Keshavarz questions the agenda of Iranians writing memoirs. If for Dabashi, they are comprador intellectuals, Keshavarz adds that works like Nafisi's belong to a "New Orientalism," one born from Iranian exiles. Therefore, Keshavarz wants to show more than the calamities of Iran, hence the first part of her book's title, which she explains in a peaceful and very poetic metaphor:

> If I told you only about the grasshoppers, you would never look for the stars or the jasmine of my summer nights. Especially if all you had ever heard about was the attack of the grasshoppers. That is why I am writing this book, I am piecing together a colorful tapestry of events, people, and books to give you a new picture of the place in which I grew up. Too many good things fall through the cracks in many books written about the country of my birth and the people who nurtured me. So I have decided to write one that focuses on the good things, one that gives voice to what has previously been silenced or overlooked. (15-16)

Keshavarz demonstrates that Iran has "jasmine and stars" as well. She feels the need to respond to "*Reading Lolita in Tehran* [that] presents fathers, brothers, and uncles primarily as a menacing group of people" (61-62). Even though she is less virulent than Hamid Dabashi, which actually makes her argument stronger, Keshavarz underlines the responsibility of the Iranian diaspora in propagating a negative agenda of their own, especially since "one important issue that works such as *Reading Lolita in Tehran* raise for those of us in the academy is the responsibility of the intellectual from the non-Western world representing the culture of her origin" (29). Contrary to Dabashi's

emotional response to Nafisi, Keshavarz seems more poised and therefore successful at demonstrating and proving her critique. As mentioned earlier, Keshavarz underlines that the Iranians who write on Iran do not live *in* Iran anymore. Iran becomes a memory for first generation Iranian writing their memoirs; but for Do-rageh Iran represents a current destination to be attained.

Indeed, Do-rageh's memoirs present a desire to return or rather turn to Iran in order to know first-hand this country. Interestingly, these Do-rageh writers are in great majority journalists and they use their skills at observing and reporting to offer their experience on Iran to their readers.[116] Like other Do-rageh memoirs before, *Lipstick Jihad* differs from the formula of unilaterally discrediting the Islamic Republic that one can notice in first generation Iranians.[117] Instead, it offers complexities regarding Moaveni's experience as a woman of the Iranian diaspora and more precisely as a second-generation immigrant writer.

"Living Under the Spell of Nostalgia"

Even though she was born in California in 1976, Moaveni shows how the Iranian diaspora with whom she lives, feel very strongly about their lost homeland and how these feelings affected her. The idea of nostalgia and longing for a lost homeland punctuates *Lipstick Jihad* and Moaveni demonstrates that not only the Iranian community made of

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[116] Tara Bahrampour, author of *To See and See Again: A Life in Iran and America* (1999); Gelareh Asayesh, author of *Saffron Sky: A Life Between Iran and America* (1999) are, like Moaveni, journalists. It is interesting to note here how the subtitles chosen for their respective memoirs emphasize the continuing bridge they build in their memoirs between Iran and America. For first generation Iranians this bridge is broken by exile; for Do-rageh it is constantly reclaimed.

[117] See for instance Davar Ardalan's *My Name Is Iran: A Memoir* (2007). Nahid Rachlin is considered a pioneer in the field on Iranian American literature with her first novel *Foreigner* (1978). Likewise, see Anahita Firouz's *In the Walled Gardens* (2003).

first-generation exiles lives under “ the spell of nostalgia” but their children as well, including Moaveni. In her introduction, Moaveni presents the problematic of her identity toward Iran, a country she has known through what she depicts as a dangerous and (somewhat) misleading prism of a nostalgia instilled in her rather than a loss directly experienced by her:

> I was born in Palo Alto, California, into the lap of an Iranian diaspora community awash in nostalgia and longing for an Iran many thousands of miles away. As a girl, raised on the distorting myths of exile, I imagined myself a Persian princess, estranged from my homeland—a place of light, poetry and nightingales—by a dark, evil force called the Revolution. (VII)

By starting her memoir with this passage, Moaveni engages her reader to realize how nostalgia played a major part in her construction as an individual in America. Indeed, this passage underlines how Moaveni, whom we later learn, had only visited Iran once when she was a child, came to believe that pre-Revolution Iran was a perfect place for *all* Iranians and her exiled community in particular. This view encourages her to construct simplistic dichotomies between before and after 1979. She is raised to believe that post-1979 cannot be otherwise but extremely negative for *all* Iranians and not only those living in exile. This passage shows the importance Maurice Halbwachs's “collective memory.” Collective memory has a crucial significance for people who are not necessarily deprived of history but are erased from history because of traumatic events such as war, genocide or deportation. For these cultures, the place of the homeland becomes memory rather than geography. When a people is exiled from its homeland,

memories are passed orally and constitute an alternate history to the official one of the new host country, which tends to ignore, erase or distort the history of the disenfranchised minority in its midst.

The nostalgia toward Iran accompanies how the exiles are treated and viewed in the US. For Do-rageh like Moaveni, the hostage crisis represents the major way Iran is understood in the US. I would add that a sense of shame aggregates itself because of the hostage crisis:

> The hostage crisis had forever stained our image in the American psyche, and slowly I saw how this shaped so much of what we did and strove for as immigrants. We could never take for granted that ordinary Americans—people Maman would encounter at PTA meetings, or at work—would know that the very fact of living in the U.S. differentiated us from the type of Iranians who held U.S. diplomats at gunpoint for 444 days. Each time I told someone I was Iranian, I would search for a sign that they understood this. (25)

Because of the recurrent presence of "we" instead of "they," or even a nuance referring to the previous generation, it is obvious that Moaveni includes herself in the group that has to work twice as hard to prove itself to the host society, but cannot even enjoy and own its success as being proud of their filiation:

> Iranians coped with this oppressive legacy in various ways. Some, like parts of my family, willed it away by losing any trace of a Persian accent, and becoming so professionally successful that they entered a stratum of

> American society sophisticated enough to understand and appreciate their contribution... But the image of that Islam-intoxicated, wild-eyed hostage taker was still a shadow that dogged all of us. Whether we were monarchists or not, whether we took some responsibility for what happened in Iran or blamed others, the shame of the revolution placed enormous pressure to be successful, but discreet about being Iranian... Redemption became our burden. (25)

The shame is also mingled with fear of an unpredictable backlash—dependent on the US-Iran relationship, thus provoking a constant “camouflage” of one’s identity. Even though one could sadly understand this situation for Moaveni’s mother—due to her recognizable Iranian accent and demeanor—it is interesting to realize that through this passage Moaveni underlines that she also shares the “burden” and that nothing is “for granted,” despite the fact that she is American born. Collective responsibility for the hostage crisis is assigned to Moaveni's community just on the grounds that they are of Iranian heritage, which proves problematic for Moaveni to be proud of this very heritage: "For many years my overriding objective in meeting new people was to avoid mention of my Iranianness... I wasn't sure what made me feel more wretched: being embarrassed to be Iranian, or guilt at being embarrassed. Saying I was Persian helped" (9). Moaveni presents how ambivalent she is about her heritage, and the fact that she needs to think about strategies to "reveal" it or not, underlines how it is question crucial to Do-rageh.

Later on, in order to further explain her difficult relationship to filiation, Moaveni introduces her parents. We learn that her parents permanently settled to the US in 1976,

shortly before her birth that same year, and divorced after she was born. Moaveni does not provide the names of her parents (to find out, the reader needs to look at her Acknowledgments Page). She dedicates a paragraph to her father—Sassan Moaveni—whereas she lingers more on her mother—Fariba Katouzi—whom she calls her "nemesis." Her father is described as an "atheist" and her mother is a "living room" activist, always ready to help "the latest Iranian charity case" (8). Because Iran and the U.S. have such a conflictual political relationship, filiation and affiliation would be hard to balance for any Iranian growing up in America in the 1980s. However, Moaveni blames this tension more on her mother than on politics. Fariba first and foremost considers herself an exile in a land she resents for its involvement in Iranian and Third World politics in general. For Fariba, her daughter is certainly not American. Moaveni denounces the constant repetition of this notion of exile, which she sees as a hereditary burden that impedes her. She says of herself and the children of her parents' Iranian friends:

> We had little consciousness of assimilation, because we were in denial of our permanence in America. My mother always made this perfectly clear. We are *not* immigrants. Immigrants come on boats. We came on planes. We were *émigrés*, exiles, mentally still in between. In such an atmosphere, I had never felt American at all, and so I dispensed altogether with the idea of being a hyphenated American. (28)

The home atmosphere prevents Moaveni from feeling American. It creates a sense of Iranian identity that is mythic, fragile and even shameful, rather than producing the pride

in Iranian heritage that her mother wanted. The use of the pronoun "we" instead of "I" in the passage I just quoted underlines the fact that Moaveni struggles to create her own identity and relationship to both Iran and the United States. Contrary to other immigrants who come to America in order to melt into the pot, Moaveni's mother and maternal aunts, especially Khaleh Farzi, refuse to be considered immigrants. Immigrants leave their country willingly, and hope to assimilate and stay in America. By assuming the identity of immigrants, Fariba and Khaleh Farzi would have had to admit having chosen to leave, read abandon, Iran on a permanent basis. Instead, they see their departure as a forced and ultimately a temporary one. Not feeling American, Moaveni cannot put into action affiliation, the sense of belonging to American society.

Indeed, if her mother and her maternal aunt Khaleh Farzi see themselves as constant "tragic émigrés," Moaveni shows how this nostalgia affects the children of these exiles, such as her, especially concerning "the burden of redemption" mentioned earlier:

> These were the preoccupations of my parents' generation of exiles, and it left little energy for ministering to the second generation's delicate cultural transition. We were on our own, as our parents struggled with their nostalgia and political anger. As a teenager I felt there was nowhere to turn, and I often felt invisible, alone with two irreconcilable halves. (26)

The "we" refers to Do-rageh like Moaveni who must feel like her. Here we have the idea that nostalgia puts a wall of separation between parents and their offspring. Interestingly Moaveni associates "nostalgia" with "political anger," which explains why she actually represents her mother as perpetually angry and nostalgic. The only member of her

California diasporic community who is not mocked by Moaveni is her maternal grandfather Agha Joon, probably because he hardly speaks English nor does he express himself too much in Persian and therefore has little opportunity to offend Moaveni.

By contrast, each time Moaveni mentions her mother, we meet a loud, perpetually angry and bitter person:

> Maman imposed on our life in California her strict sense of justice, which others seemed to find noble but which to me was simply an effort to destroy my peace of mind as fate, it seemed, had dealt me a mother who night after night shook her fist at the television, decrying America's latest interference in Latin America, or the brutal crimes being perpetrated against Palestinians... The high volume of Maman's emotional politics made me feel even more estranged from my friends at school, at an age when nothing is more painful. (8)

It is more than clear that Moaveni resents any authority her mother has over her, especially concerning all things Iranian. By portraying her mother this way, Moaveni constructs a critique of the diaspora of her mother’s generation, whom she seems to accuse of mediating and meddling with Iran’s image for their offspring.

Even though Moaveni seems to resent the imposed nostalgia, she actually inherits it since she claims Iran as the place to resolve her identity crisis and reconcile her "two irreconcilable halves." Ironically it is through affiliation that Moaveni manages her filiation on her own terms, i.e. without the mediation of her mother. First, Moaveni describes her desire to take courses on Iran while attending college at the University of

California at Santa Cruz as "an explosive possibility that I would be confident about who I was, the idea that being Iranian didn't have to be about silly emotional culture clashes with my mother, but a sense of self anchored in history" (27). Clearly, filiation as transmitted from her mother is in Moaveni's mind synonymous to a constant battle and strain on her growth as a young woman. In other words, filiation does not represent a source of strength but rather an emotional drain. Attachment to Iran is associated with pain not necessarily because of Iran itself but because of her mother's mediation of Moaveni's access to Iran.

The choice of "history" as academic self-discovery instead of family memory constitutes an emblematic strategy on the part of Moaveni. This represents the first bold move to negotiate her relationship with Iran on her own terms. She seeks to create a self outside of the diaspora and closer to Iran to be able to talk back to her mother and symbolically to the diaspora as a whole. At Santa Cruz, she writes, "Iran was demystified—it became a subject I could learn about on my own, a civilization that I could approach from whatever direction I chose... I began to feel, for the first time in my life, that Iranianness was not an obstacle to my independence" (28). Again, we are in the presence of a strong sense of self that claims Iran *outside* of the mother since "It scared Maman a little, I think… that her hold over me was no longer exclusively in her hands" (28). By emphasizing the lack of support of Fariba concerning her desire to learn more about Iran, Moaveni presents her mother as resentful of her learning on Iran outside of her home environment. This passage is problematic since Moaveni keeps on positioning her mother and I would argue any person she knows belonging to the first generation

exile as unsupportive of her will to experience anything related to Iran outside of their control. It does not do justice to the importance of collective memory—of her family's fierce commitment to Iran—in her later wanting to learn more about Iran. Nor does Moaveni ever acknowledge the evident irony that it is in an American institution of higher education that she becomes independently Iranian and makes the decision to go live and work in Iran.

Indeed, later on in her memoir, Moaveni justifies the reason for what she calls a return—I would actually call it an "arrival," as I will discuss below. In Iran, she goes to work as a correspondent for *Time Magazine* as an opportunity "to figure out my relationship to this other country, to Iran… to see whether the ties that bound me were real, or flimsy threads of inherited nostalgia" (32-33). The notion of "figuring out" her relationship underlines how Moaveni is longing to establish a bond of her own with Iran that would not be mediated by the nostalgia of others or the collective memory passed on by her mother, Fariba, and other family members, such as Moaveni's maternal aunt, Khaleh Farzi. By deciding to go to Iran without consulting either of her parents, Moaveni negotiates a rapport with Iran outside of the filiation inherited from the exiled diaspora and her mother in particular.

Therefore, Moaveni declares, "I endured a second, equally fraught coming of age-this time as a Californian in Iran. I never intended my Iranian odyssey as a search for self, but a very different me emerged at its end" (VIII). The choice of words here is interesting and perplexing. "Odyssey" conveys the feeling of a difficult journey, a quest full of hardship and sidetracking adventures from the return to the homeland. The quest for Iran

leads to a "second coming of age" implies how painful and eye-opening the journey is to Moaveni's development as a Do-rageh. True, one could argue that the choice of “odyssey” appears slightly melodramatic, but this choice underlines the fact that Azadeh lives the ordeal of exile, even though she was born and raised before the revolution and before the exile itself.

Homecoming(s)

By going to Iran on her own terms, as a journalist, Moaveni positions her independence toward the Iranian diaspora in the following terms: she will be financially independent in Iran since she is to earn her own money and she will be able to experience contemporary Iran outside of not only her diaspora but of the American view of Iran as well. Through her work, she meets people outside of her family circle and can learn to know Iran on her own. But, one needs to nuance her experience of Iran here. Indeed, besides Qom, Moaveni does not mention visiting any other place outside of Tehran. Because Tehran was the center of the revolution and of the hostage crisis in 1980, Moaveni seems to focus her memoir more on it.[118]

Henceforth, the part of the memoir that precedes her so-called return to Iran, is haunted by the memory of the five-year-old Moaveni concerning the garden of her paternal grandfather Pedar Joon. She is looking desperately for this garden and strongly believes that a return to Iran will solve the uneasiness at stake in her identity that seems

[118] This is somehow peculiar since during her college years when she learnt about Iran, Persepolis must have been mentioned or at least introduced. Nevertheless, Moaveni never mentions either Persepolis or Shiraz even once in her memoir. Likewise, she does not seem curious to visit Isfahan, legendary city illustrating the magnificence of her Persian heritage.

to be more, again, about her mother's own uneasiness. In Iran, in the childhood memory, Fariba is a happy mother and woman:

> In Tehran that summer, I wasn't the only one unleashed. My mother could barely stay put, flitting from house to house, from Tehran to the Caspian and back again; even when she was at home, sitting down, she was gulping in space… as though her lungs had only been partially breathing the whole time she'd been away. I finally saw Maman, my beautiful, proud, mad mother, laughing gustily, instead of the tight-lipped smile she wore as she chauffeured me around San Jose… (4)

Jasmin Darznik (2008) comes to the conclusion that most memoirs written by writers from the Iranian diaspora fall into the a category she relevantly calls "return narratives." According to Darznik, memoirs such as Moaveni's are "at once acts of political witness and intimate self-revelation [which] demonstrate a persistent feature of Iranian immigrant literature: the dominance of Iran—its history as well as its contemporary culture and politics—in the exploration and articulation of Iranian American identity" (56). Darznik makes the brilliant analogy that these memoirs could actually be considered as travel narratives, in the Western sense of the term. I would add that there is in fact an important difference between the return narrative and the travel narrative: one *returns* to a place one has been before, but in the Robinson Crusoe tradition, one *travels* to somewhere exotic and undiscovered. Moaveni's book, I would argue, is rather a travel narrative and *not* a return narrative.

Moaveni entitles the chapter that opens her return to Iran as "homecoming." The choice of such a title emphasizes the fact that young Moaveni saw Iran as her organic home. The title "homecoming" to Iran is I would argue misleading and symptomatic of Moaveni's inherited nostalgia. A homecoming or return implies the repetition of her presence in Iran and a certain sense of entitlement. She belongs there and Iran belongs to her as well. The word "homecoming" demonstrates a certain lack of humility since she expects to be "welcomed" like a long gone prodigal daughter whereas she was only once physically there until her journey as a grown woman.

Very soon, Moaveni realizes that as an Iranian raised in America, she longs for her civil liberties in Iran. For instance, she is discussing this with her cousin Daria, who like her grew up in America but is visiting Iran:

> We had not been prepared to find the cosmologies of our universe so skewed. In California, where I was obsessed with Middle East politics and he was obsessed with the Iranian national soccer team, we had assumed here, in this country where people could pronounce our names, our world would expand. Instead, we felt constricted. Everywhere, it seemed, there were barriers. Of thought and behavior, of places and time. (55)

But even though Moaveni complains a lot about feeling out of place in Iran and not finding the connections she is desperate to achieve, she does manage to have several love relationships. She cannot display them on the public sphere, but the fact that she does have boyfriends shows that young Iranian men are willing to have a relationship—and not just a brief affair—with her despite the fact that sexual relationships are forbidden

outside of marriage in the Islamic Republic. But, here Moaveni receives a lesson in humility in the sense that the young people she meets are not as deprived as she thinks them to be and that she herself is unable to possess,

> a culture of transgression that could only be learned through firsthand experience. For women, there were eternal limits on dress and comportment, but they could be flaunted easily—in the right neighborhood, at the right time of the day or month, in the right way. Young couples also faced endless prohibitions, but these too could be circumvented, with the right verbal pretexts, at the right times, in the right places. Ignorance of this culture made you a victim, marooned at home with bad Islamic television. Knowing how to navigate its rules gave you freedom, to choose a lifestyle as sedentary or riotous as you pleased. (55)

This "culture of transgression" is not admitted by the diaspora who presents Iran and all Iranians as being dehumanized and deprived of any agency by the repressive regime. Even though freedom is not as blatant in America, it might actually be more appreciated since it is a daily struggle to find it. Realizing this, Moaveni proceeds to denounce how the diaspora refuses to allow this agency to the Iranians back in Iran: “Confronted with an oppressive system, we instinctively viewed the Iranians around us as victims, because armed with only our knowledge of California highways and the mall, we had not the slightest idea how to exercise freedom” (55). I would argue that this passage underlines a lesson in humility on the part of Moaveni: because she has assumptions about what constitutes a victim, and she seems to consider herself as a different kind of Iranian, a

superior kind who has all the answers about freedom; she can only be mortified to realize that Iranians in Iran do not actually need her to know what freedom is. They might enjoy it more than her because, Moaveni seems to say, they seek and take it instead of receiving it without any effort.

Therefore, her memoir's title *Lipstick Jihad* could be interpreted in two different ways. Because Jihad means "holy war/struggle," one could think that the title refers to the backlash of the regime against women who wear make up. On the other hand, women are launching their own war by wearing make-up as a sign of rebellion, among other things, as Moaveni emphasizes in her introduction:

> Iran's young generation—the generation born just before the revolution or along with it—is transforming Iran from below… Parliament never officially pardoned color, sanctioned the exposure of toes and waistlines. Young women did it themselves, en masse, a slow, deliberate, widespread act of defiance. A jihad, in the classical sense of the word: a struggle. (VIII- IX)

By acknowledging the "act of defiance," Moaveni teaches the reader—whether from the diaspora or American—that women in Iran are taking agency wherever they can. This shatters the assumption that one could have after reading memoirs such *Reading Lolita in Tehran* that Iranian women born after the revolution are reduced to silence.

The "culture of transgression" might have encroached on Iranians who enjoyed more freedom before the Revolution. However, Moaveni shows that the Revolution *did* actually contribute to push forward the rights of *religious* women. As a Westerner,

Moaveni sees the chador as a symbol of female oppression. But she discovers how some chadori women—religious women who wear the chador freely—are quite independent. For instance, she presents Fatimeh, a young and talented press photographer. Here is a description of Fatimeh taking pictures while wearing her chador:

> I smiled my thanks to the fascinating, black-clad creature that had appeared next to me. She wore the full-length *chador*, with an elastic strap over the top of her head, to keep the fabric in place. Underneath each arm, swinging back and forth amidst the folds, hung a camera. She chirped hello, in her cheery, brusque tone, and inspected me with equal curiosity… she maneuvered her way to the front of the photographers, juggling cameras, clicking with one then the other, somehow managing it all gracefully—under a hot sun—while swathed in yards of black nylon. (181)

Rather objectifying, this passage presents Fatimeh not as herself *per se* but through the object of her veil. Hyperboles abound, especially with "yards of black nylon" since in reality, unless the person is very big, a chador cannot be that long. By introducing Fatimeh as a "black-clad creature," Moaveni takes away the humanity of the young photographer. Fatimeh is dehumanized at first, precisely because Moaveni is the one dehumanizing her through her description. Moaveni imagines Fatimeh to be silenced and dehumanized, therefore she dehumanizes her as well because she cannot imagine her to be otherwise. I think Moaveni plays with the reader's own Orientalism and wants to shatter it since Fatimeh wears her chador to accommodate her movements: she has an

elastic strap, which shows a will to combine her religious piety—wearing the chador—with her work, being able to take pictures quickly and with efficiency. She is not as shy either, since she does not stay in the back, whereas she is the only woman present at the press conference besides Moaveni who mentioned this detail shortly before the paragraph I just quoted.

To explain such a paradox in Western eyes—a chadori woman who works as a press photographer—Moaveni shows that Fatimeh is actually very representative of her class:

> She came from a traditional, pious family that was exhibiting exceptional openness by allowing her this independence, letting her out of the house at all hours alone, to pursue her work… The revolution rolled back the legal rights of Iranian women, but it transformed the lives and horizons of women like Fatimeh. Under the Shah's regime, traditional parents like hers would never have let their daughters stray out into society. (181)

Thanks to this new "freedom," Fatimeh can explore her own talents that Moaveni describes as "obvious." By providing the example of Fatimeh, Moaveni challenges the diaspora's views that *all* women under the Islamic Republic are prevented from working and choosing a career they love. True, for elite and middle-class secular women, the new regime destroyed most of the rights and privilege they experienced under the Shah, but for religious women it did create surprising opportunities. This view is rarely acknowledged by writers as for instance, Azar Nafisi who gain more in propagating an Orientalist view of Iran.

Talking Back to the Diaspora

I would now like to show how Moaveni seriously questions the diaspora's attitude toward contemporary Iran. At several instances in *Lipstick Jihad*, she denounces how the diaspora *refuses* to acknowledge the modernity of contemporary Iran. This refusal occurs both when the diaspora visits Iran for what I call "roots tourism" and when they leave it once again.

Moaveni's critique of diasporic views reappears when Fariba visits her daughter in Iran. She refuses to believe her daughter's observations about contemporary Iranian culture and politics because "although she had not visited Iran in a decade, she already knew the country she wanted to find—materially deprived by the revolution, but blissfully unsoiled by the West—and she edited reality to fit this conception" (209). By limiting her reunion with her mother to a depiction of this conflict, Moaveni underlines the idea that she did not feel Iranian as a child not because of Iran itself, but because of *her mother's attitude* to Iran and the conflict this caused in the mother-daughter relationship. Through her stay in Iran, Moaveni assumes the authority to criticize other members of the diaspora who similar to her mother, need to frame Iran into what she considers a hermetic concept, static and outdated. She meets another Iranian expatriate living in America who visits Iran. Because she has now experienced Iran first-hand, Moaveni is not shy anymore about denouncing what she sees as the diaspora's excess through the figure of Fred:

> Driven by guilt for having left, or by traumatic, early encounters with the regime, or by some nostalgic loyalty to the monarchy—or some

> combination of all three—he was keen to portray Iran as *exclusively* static, declining, and repressive. For many Iranian exiles, this image of Iran was both useful and necessary… In California and New York this dated, self-serving vision was irritating, but in Tehran it infuriated me, because it ignored all the vibrant, important ways Iran was changing. (143)

Indeed, Moaveni constantly emphasizes in her memoir how Iran, and in particular Tehran, shatters the diaspora's image of the homeland. It is interesting that she does not include other members of the diaspora who think like her. Instead, she conflates her mother's attitudes with the whole diaspora's rather than specifying that her mother's attitudes do not necessarily equate the whole Iranian diaspora's. For instance, Fred and her mother similarly behave since they both refuse to accept Iran's changes even when they are physically in Iran. Through these two examples, Moaveni exposes how some members of the diaspora continue to create the Iran they want to see even when a different Iran is before their eyes. This critique is strengthened by Moaveni's inclusion of observations by Dariush, her love interest. Dariush refuses to take care of Fred by being friendly with him as Iranian tradition entails. To justify his behavior, Dariush explains:

> Do you know how many … times I've been in that situation? With my own best friends from elementary school, who come back from UCLA and want to scam all summer? With my cousins, who treat Tehran as a summer playground, that's barely palatable for some exotic diversion, then back to the real world where they'll get on with their real lives, real educations, and real jobs?... This is my goddam life here, for me this is it,

> there isn't anything better lined up. This is the totality of my existence, and I can’t stand being the tour guide of its limited use. (144)

By including Dariush’s voice here, Moaveni acknowledges how the presence of some children of exiles in Iran can resemble a problematic “roots tourism.” On the one hand, members of the diaspora may claim their Iranian heritage, but on the other hand they behave as if they are tourists who expect the local Iranians to cater to them and provide them with no more than a diverting vacation. They criticize Iran when they visit, and then leave it to criticize more abroad. By refusing to play the tour guide, Dariush demonstrates that he will not engage in the comprador intellectual game. This is a powerful critique, but it must be noted that Moaveni chooses never to depict successful stories of Iranian Americans traveling to Iran, happy to be reunited with long lost relatives or to show these relatives happy as well. In this regard, Moaveni paints a limiting and one could say unfair portrait of the diaspora’s return experience to Iran in her own right.

Becoming Iranian American

Later on, Dariush brings more light to the idea of Iranian-ness. In the text one is under the impression that Dariush contributes to Moaveni’s realization and acknowledgment of her dual identity and how she needs to claim her Iranian-ness differently. The young couple argues about Moaveni’s claim of being Iranian and not considered as such in Tehran. Dariush then responds to her:

> Don’t demand what’s not yours, he told me peevishly. You weren’t here during the war, when Iraqi airplanes were flying over Tehran. You didn’t have to run into bomb shelters, or duck when windows shattered, or call

> around to see if your relatives were alive, the mornings after. You don't know what we *endured*. So don't show up here and start calling yourself Iranian. (108)

In America being Iranian was a burden to bear for Moaveni. In Iran it is a *privilege* to which she does not have access because two different types of collective memory are at stake: the exile's memories and the ones of those who stayed despite everything. Dariush belonged to an aristocrat family who as a result of the revolution became declassed. Nevertheless, they stayed in Iran. By including Dariush's voice, Moaveni brings forward the diversity of those who stayed behind, who were not only profiteers of the revolution. Moaveni also gives a history lesson to her Western reader concerning a Western-financed war, hardly known in the West: the Iran-Iraq war. Interestingly, voices criticizing the American involvement in the Middle East are Iranian voices; Moaveni never overtly criticizes America. By reproducing Iranian voices in such a context, Moaveni protects her integrity vis-à-vis her readers while having them read about something they may have not known or wanted to know before.

Moaveni finally puts the two parts of her identity together by henceforth calling herself Iranian American instead of Persian American as she used to do in California to avoid backlash. This act of self-nomination reconciles the filiation and affiliation: "As my sense of Iranianness simultaneously diminished and altered, my American consciousness grew—not in proportion to anything, or larger than before, but in my awareness of its existence… Of course I was partly American" (136). By calling herself Iranian American, Moaveni presents herself to the American reader as a subject of both

modern Iran and America, she disposes of the apologetic euphemism "Persian" that had before hidden her ethnic connection to and heritage from Iran.

By claiming a modern connection to contemporary Iran, Moaveni is able to be more critical of other "Persians" outside of Iran who keep on representing a negative and unfortunately expected discourse on Iran. By criticizing this Persian representation of Iran, Moaveni challenges expectations about the Iranian-American memoir.

Promoted Orientalism

During her memoir, Moaveni describes her experience attending performances and visiting art galleries where Iranian artists in exile find it useful to show Iran as “static,” just like the rest of the diaspora in exile does:

> For artists of Iranian origin, based for decades in New York or London, it [presenting Iran as exclusively static] lent an air of authenticity to tired, exotic images of women prostrate in pain, stranded on mountains in *chador*, in all sorts of positions in which most Iranian women—busy working and getting on with their daily lives—rarely found themselves. Because this sort of visual imagery was deemed authentic, depicting the “real” of modern Iranian existence, it was elevated to high art, celebrated in sophisticated, urban settings by important cultural institutions, and always billed as Iranian art, though none of it ever came from Iran. (143)

This passage exposes two views on Iran that Moaveni denounces: the Western view and the (complicit) Iranian's in exile. Indeed, by showing that what she considers mis-representations of Iranian women are made by artists of Iranian descent, Moaveni

denounces the fact that those artists do might be art but should not be called "authentic." Because she has lived in contemporary Iran, Moaveni establishes her credibility to the reader by providing examples showing the diversity of Iranian women. She has met many women who work, whether they wear the chador or the *roopoosh*.[119] Moaveni reminds her reader of the misleading representation of Iranian art in this "authentic art."

Furthermore, this kind of art receives success and patronage while at the same time being celebrated in "sophisticated urban settings" for engulfing Iran outside of its own modernity. This creates a contrast that does not really exist, and comforts the West's Orientalist vision of Iran. The artists collaborate with this view, which leads Moaveni to question their attitude even more: "Was Iran not already considered exotic enough in America and Europe? Why were Iranians, who knew better, producing art that made Iran seem like Saudi Arabia, a place where women actually *were* covered in black all the time?" (143) Moaveni implies here that these Iranians mislead their Western audience instead of enlightening them in order to make a profit thanks to Orientalist views on Iran. I would argue here that this is the most groundbreaking critique Moaveni is making of the diaspora, is how some Iranians in exile financially exploit Iran by misrepresenting its contemporary reality. The economic elite under the Shah was for the most part very content with the regime, not so much from a socio-cultural point of view, but from an economic one since it was easier for them to make a profit out of Iran for lack of fair competition—only the elite could afford to go to university and study abroad to further

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[119] The *roopoosh*, also called *manteau*, is some sort of uniform that Iranian women have to wear if they are not chadori: a trenchcoat covering a woman's body down to her knees.

their education.[120] Now in exile, they still exploit Iran by participating in an anti-Iran sentiment through the description Moaveni makes of them. Even though the current regime is not the most democratic, Moaveni considers it unfair to doubly silence the Iranians.

Consequently, Moaveni refuses to play the role of the native informant she has denounced all along her memoir. For instance, she relates how a blind date, back in America, overwhelmed her with Orientalist clichés:

> We met for drinks. Like so many Americans, Matt's perception of Iran was skewed. You can drive there? he asked. Wait, hold up, that means you can go outside? I didn't blame him for not knowing, but also I didn't have the patience for these conversations anymore. I was too angry to slow down and explain—angry that to be a Middle Eastern person in this era meant you were maligned and condemned, occupied and threatened, all ambiguity discarded. (232)

Matt's questions emblematize his lack of genuine interest in Iranian culture. If he had asked about the way people celebrate holidays, or what is the favorite poet of Iranians, it would have showed a cultural awareness on his part. Instead, his questions reflect stereotypes not only on Iranians but on Middle Easterners in general. Believing that the Middle East equals the Middle Ages, and that Middle Easterners refuse modernity because it is thought incompatible with their ontological nature, constitute a pre-

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[120] See Mohsen M. Milani's *The Making of the Iran's Islamic Revolution: From Monarchy to Islamic Republic* (1988).

assumption, inherited from Orientalism. I would refer to how Said sees American Orientalism in this instance: looking at the Middle East through the prism of social sciences and paradigms that ignore the specificities present in Middle Eastern societies. The lack of curiosity concerning literature, and in particular poetry for which Persian literature is extremely famous, reflects how the "Matts" Moaveni has met in her life, are totally oblivious to what is Iran beyond the aggressive rhetoric used to represent it in the media. Moaveni identifies this ignorance right away, since she writes “to be a Middle Eastern person in this era,” and not “to be Iranian.” She denounces the negative generalization made about the whole Middle East, and uses the passive to show the systematic imposition of stereotypes without a chance to contest them.

Her blind date happens after Iran was branded part of the “Axis of Evil,” which makes Moaveni realize that curiosity about Iran is even more stamped in Orientalism, since “before, the curiosity wasn’t tinged with such confident suspicion, this mix of pity and mistrust” (233). "Confident suspicion" underlines how Iran does not even have the benefit of the doubt in post 9/11 America. It can only be guilty because it has been misrepresented as such.

Conclusion: The Impossibility of Shredding History

Moaveni ends her memoir with the consequences for her of seeing her filiation once again slaughtered by the media. Living then in New York after 9/11, she describes how she and her male cousins, corporate lawyer Alidad and banker Pouria, must be, like their parents during the hostage crisis, alert to publicly admitting their filiation:

> My best friend from junior high school, an American, asked me if living

> in the U.S. felt different after September 11. Not really, I said, except that my cousins and I are turning into our parents. But the truth was that we cocooned in the shelter of each other's company, as an ever-yawning gap developed between our inner sense of reality and the world around us. Now we felt-again- as though as our lives were touched by a historical event we had no part in, but were somehow tainted by. Like the hostage crisis, which forced every Iranian in the United States to walk around with a scarlet letter of association, September 11 and the "axis of evil" revitalized suspicion and hatred for the religion, however secularly, we belonged to, and the part of the world we did not live in, but were shaped by and whose citizens we looked like. (234)

Moaveni emphasizes how even as a second-generation Iranian, she and her cousins are not trusted as true Americans but prone to racial profiling. If the hostage crisis involved Iranians, however different than the ones Moaveni grew up with, September 11 did not have a single Iranian involved. Nevertheless, differences among Middle Easterners are erased once more to provoke an amalgam. With "scarlet letter," "suspicion," and "hatred," Moaveni shows that filiation dominates how she feels to be represented in America after September 11.[121] By comparing the effect of the hostage crisis on her parents' generation with what she and her cousins are experiencing, Moaveni points out the dramatic effect history has on Do-rageh:

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[121] "Scarlet letter," here a reference to Hawthorne's eponymous novel, offers an interesting deployment of the novel to use an American idiom to signify non-belonging.

> This was supposed to be the inheritance of our generation, the privilege of shredding history. We were supposed to be citizens of the world, comfortable everywhere, released from the concerns of political conflict. Our lives were supposed to make up for our parents' lives... I felt it creeping up again, the shadow of history, dogging the next year, the next decade, each decision. (236)

"People, our own friends, confessed the strangest, most insulting things, without any intention of offending… You had to wonder what they were thinking, and why it was suddenly okay to think and act like this. What other people, what other religion, could you so openly slander?" (235) This question addressed to her American audience confronts how affiliation can be fragile for any Do-rageh, no matter how secular or anti-Islamic Republic they may be.

Tired of negotiating antagonistic filiation and affiliation, Moaveni leaves New York to live in Beirut, Lebanon, where she can geographically be closer to Iran, and experience a combination of Eastern and Western culture in the boiling atmosphere of the "Paris of the Middle East." However, she returns to Iran eventually, which leads her to write her second memoir, *Honeymoon in Tehran*, where we learn how she met her future husband and how she finally decided to leave Iran for good in order to raise her son. Interestingly, just like at the end of *Lipstick Jihad*, Moaveni decides to choose a third space to live: neither Iran nor America, she opts for London.

The history linking Iran to America overshadows Moaveni and other Do-rageh in *Lipstick Jihad*. By presenting herself as a member of a secular family who fled religious

fanaticism, Moaveni reminds the reader of the political diversity at stake during the Iranian Revolution. Through the contemporary Iranian heteroglossia she incorporates, Moaveni enlightens her readers on the diversity of Iranian society, whether abroad or living in Iran and how they are all subject to a history linking them to America even though they seem to be victims of it and not actors.

Moreover, Moaveni's harsh words toward some tendencies found in the diaspora to orientalize and medievalize Iran for a Western audience are found throughout the memoir. She indirectly denounces the everyday comprador intellectuals and not only those who receive wide media coverage. The memoir presents a diaspora that, by perpetuating the distortions of nostalgia and by refusing to examine Iran beyond the year of their exile, distances itself both from Iran and from its own children. However by offering herself as the only success story of an Iranian American who needs to go to Iran to feel less Iranian and more American, Moaveni risks alienating herself from a large portion of her readership, that is, members of the diaspora. This alienation, I would argue, accounts for reactions such as Dabashi's and Behdad's.

Conclusion

White Teeth offers various scenes commenting on the impact postcolonial immigration has on England. If the novel mostly follows three families settling in an England becoming more and more multicultural, it also provides moments when its narrator pauses to show that these families are not unique in their relationship to England. One passage in particular presents a framework to understand the effect of this immigration:

> This has been the century of strangers, brown, yellow, and white. This has been the century of the great immigrant experiment. It is only this late in the day that you can walk into a playground and find Isaac Leung by the fish pond, Danny Rahman in the football cage, Quang O'Rourke bouncing in a basketball, and Irie Jones humming a tune. Children with first and last names on a direct collision course. Names that secrete with them mass exodus, cramped boats and places, cold arrivals, medical checkups. It is still hard to admit that there is no one more English than the Indian, no one more Indian than the English. There are still young white men who are *angry* about that; who will roll out at closing time into the poorly lit streets with a kitchen knife wrapped in a tight fist. (271-72)

One can interpret the phrase "The century of strangers" as an epithet for the postcolonial immigration arriving in England. Smith takes into account the fact that immigration from former parts of the Empire constitutes an ongoing process since it covers a "century."

Smith also points out that this immigration is an "experiment" since instead of England going to imperial territories, the Empire comes knocking at England's door. With the Empire immigrating to England, the metropolis henceforth cannot escape the consequences of its Empire. I see Smith's narrator commenting on the Empire because the names of the "strangers," and of their children growing up in England, have connotations of belonging to the former Empire. The influx of immigrants coming from the former Empire can challenge the West in many ways. In my dissertation I wanted to examine how these immigrants' presence question the West's imperial memory.

"Strangers" do not only immigrate to England and I see the arrival of "strangers" in France and in the United States as well. By their arrival, the first generation of "strangers" provides their own memory concerning the impact of the Empire overseas. They carry with them remembrance of colonial trauma, either forgotten, dismissed or considered trivial by the West. If this might be the case for first generation immigrants, how do their children react to this cultural memorial heritage? How does one claim a citizenship to a country that once colonized one's ancestors? These questions provoked my research. At first, I had imagined that through their parents' collective memory, the children have had access to a history radically different than the one they learn from the society where they grow up. Someone's hero can easily be someone else's invader or destroyer. How to combine and acknowledge these histories? Which strategies can one use to present the other side of the enterprises of Empire? Does one choose further isolation or does one run the risk of alienating a Western audience—itself stratified and diverse—by choosing to reveal unknown and perhaps unwelcome facts to them?

In theory, children of the "strangers" occupy a more privileged position than their parents: they are raised in the West, which is their childhood land. By experiencing the West's institutions, these children know how to negotiate their lives there. They might look like strangers, have "stranger" names and complexions, but they refuse to be strangers. Furthermore, these children can understand their parents' memory better than the West ever tried to. Therefore, they act as intermediary agents between the West and their parents' colonial memory.

Through each of my chapters, I analyzed how, by using history linking the West to their parents' country, second-generation immigrant writers reconcile their filiation with their affiliation. In my first chapter, I showed that Lallaoui's *La colline aux oliviers* proposes a process of reconciliation between France and Algeria through the acknowledgement of *lieux de mémoire* in France. The interest in the *lieux de mémoire* was triggered by a collective memory kept in Algeria but rediscovered in France by French and Kabyle characters alike. The appreciation of the *lieux de mémoire* led to a new recognition of the collective memory and of the importance of roots tourism.

My second chapter on Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* demonstrated that if *lieux de mémoire* helped second-generation characters to claim a Black presence in London, they also had to contest and question their parents' take on the colonial history linking Great Britain to its former colonies. By claiming their own interpretation of the past, the characters presented a questioning of the imaginary homelands their parents constructed.

My last chapter showed that Moaveni revises the past and imaginary homeland imposed on her by her diaspora in her memoir *Lipstick Jihad*. Even though the collective

memory of the parents' exile generation is crucial for Do-rageh literature, it is actually through filiation and affiliation that children are agents to achieve reconciliation. By questioning the representation of Iran by some members of the Iranian diaspora to the West, Moaveni does not directly attack her readers' sensitivities. Like other Do-rageh journalists who wrote memoirs before her—such as Tara Bahrampour—Moaveni includes diverse voices from Iran in *Lipstick Jihad*. Therefore, criticism of the West's Orientalism and American foreign policies in the Middle East, comes from Iranians still living the consequences of these policies. Including these diverse voices gives an opportunity to a Western reader to listen to Iranians, even if it is through the prism of Moaveni's sharp style.

By paying tribute to their parents' memories, Lallaoui, Moaveni and Smith deconstruct misunderstanding and enlighten their readers. They integrate a heteroglossia that acknowledges and makes use of the complexities of postcolonial immigration. For Smith and Lallaoui, the strategies of including *lieux de mémoire* in their fiction placed their characters in the position of historians or museum guides enlightening an audience of temporal tourists. But, alongside Moaveni, they do show the importance of roots tourism for second-generation immigrants: knowing where one comes from and accepting the pitfalls of independence and revolution instead of idealizing their parents homeland, constitutes a condition *sine qua non* in these narratives.

Thus, second-generation immigrant literatures occupy a position at the crossroads of postcolonial studies and diaspora studies. These literatures focus on issues that might not be considered important by either their host countries or their parents' homeland. For

instance, given the turmoil that Algerians experienced after independence in 1962—for instance, the internal rivalries to claim power or the population growth that did not find a correlation in opportunities in the civil society—the fate of the 1871 Kabyles might not be a priority to discover. But, writers such as Lallaoui contribute to the recovery of the lost Kabyles and enlighten not only their French audience but also their "Beur" audience to learn about past heroes. By creating the character of Si Larbi, Lallaoui manages to teach about the Mokrani brothers who bravely fought against oppression. Since Kabyles have been forgotten after independence in Algeria, Lallaoui can remind an Algerian audience of how Kabyles fought with Arabs to protect Algeria.[122]

Despite exile, Iranians living in the West still pay tribute to their land. Their children continue this legacy such as Persis M. Karim who, for instance, first co-edited a book on Iranian Americans (*A World Between: Poems, Short Stories and Essays by Iranian Americans* (1999)), to then edit a book on Iranian women voices entitled *Let Me You Tell Where I've Been: New Writing by Women of the Iranian Diaspora* (2006). This book reaches beyond America to include different experiences of Iranian women. It underlines how instead of only looking at Iran, Karim invites voices from other Iranian diasporas living in Europe or in Canada, for instance. Likewise, in her second memoir *Honeymoon in Tehran: Two Years of Love and Danger in Iran* (2009), Azadeh Moaveni shows that her husband Arash had a radically different experience than hers by growing up Iranian in Germany. For Arash, the hostage crisis did not as much tarnish Iran's

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[122] Despite their fight against French colonialism during the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962), Kabyles felt betrayed after independence since of the first measures the new Algerian power did was to impose Arabic as the only official language of Algeria. See Benjamin Stora's *Algeria, 1830-2000: A Short History* (2001).

reputation as the fatwa declared by Ayatollah Khomeini against writer Salman Rushdie in 1990. Moaveni emphasizes how the Iranian diaspora's experience can be more diverse than she thought.

I therefore envision second-generation immigrant writers as being the next step in postcolonial literature. I see these writers complicating the relation between postcolonial studies and diaspora studies since they claim a voice, from their diasporic space, to discuss postcolonial issues. They testify to the consequences of independence and revolution, of how pushing out the colonizer does not resolve internal problems. Indeed, on the one hand second-generation immigrant writers talk about the "wretched" side of independence and revolution, and the complexities of living in the West once independence has been reached. On the other hand, they display appreciation for what the West has brought them; and thus acknowledge that conflict and oppression persist in every society, including their parents' idealized culture of origin.

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Vita

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