

Fact, Fable, and the Fantastic
Approaches to the Novel of War in the Francophone
Literature of Algeria

A careful survey of the literature of this conflict-torn century would, one suspects, reveal that the art of novel writing and the fact of war are often incompatible. Poetry is the genre most usually seen as best lending itself, in its intimacy and its immediacy, to the portrayal of the anguish, anger, and questioning with which war confronts the individual. As Christiane Achour has it in *Anthologie de la littérature algérienne de langue française*: “When conflict breaks out, novel-writing gives way to forms of writing that are more incisive, more alert, more immediate, more easily transmissible” (79).¹

This is not, of course, to suggest that novels about war are never written, or indeed that they do not abound. But it is rather the case that, while other forms of *écriture de combat* such as memoirs, chronicles, and other testimonies seem particularly suited to the task of conveying the impact of conflict, the novel too often becomes bogged down in patriotic didacticism or partisan stereotyping. Tolstoy, Stephen Crane, Joseph Heller: a few minutes of thought will cast up the truly great exceptions. But considerably less effort is required to call to mind writers such as Wilfred Owen, Paul Éluard, Siegfried Sassoon, Guillaume Apollinaire, Benjamin Péret, Ungaretti, Stephen Spender, Jacques Prévert, Henri Barbusse, or R. C. Sheriff.

The Algerian War of Independence (1954-62) is one example among many of a conflict giving rise to many mediocre, but some memorable, novels. And despite the mediocrity of the majority of these novels, the conflict did create a few quite memorable ones. Of the latter, the critic Charles Bonn has concluded that “Only Mohammed Dib’s *Qui se souvient de la*

mer [*Who remembers the sea*] (1962) seems to me to give the conflict its true stature."² It is certainly difficult to think of a more vivid portrayal of the fear, bewilderment, and misery experienced by a people at war. The present essay hopes to provide by means of a comparison of Dib's novel with two other contemporaneous classics of the Algerian novel in French and an examination of one major American war novel possible justification for this verdict.

French-speaking Algerian novelists treating the War of Independence were naturally concerned with both the particular circumstances of this anti-colonial war in their own country, as well as the more universal aspects of armed conflict. Thus, for example, the guilt that certain writers experienced at having to write in what, after all, was the language of the oppressor is a phenomenon particular to this type of anti-colonial war. But the broader considerations to which this circumstance gives rise, and which lead to an examination of the role and the value of the intellectual in national revolution, naturally extend its relevance beyond circumstances specific to Algeria.

The major issue, whose significance and repercussions transcended the particular to become universal, is best formulated as a question: How could one say the unspeakable, articulate atrocity and convey the horrors of war to a world for which WWII was still fresh? Unlike the issue of the role of artists and intellectuals in their country's struggle, however, this is a question that could and did have a direct bearing on the style and structure of those novels taking this issue as their theme.

In common with many writers less talented than himself, Mouloud Mammeri, in *L'Opium et le bâton* [*Opium and the Rod*] (1965), plumps for what Joan Monego has called "great realism" (40). A novelist, playwright, ethnographer, and anthropological scholar, Mammeri belongs to the "Generation of 1952," the name given collectively to the first "clutch" of writers who brought the Algerian novel of French expression into its own. He had participated in his country's revolution, something to which the authority and authenticity of his writing bear witness. In this novel, he gives us Bachir Lazrak, an Algiers doctor with a French mistress, a comfortable lifestyle and a penchant for sticking his head in the sand. Circumstances force Bachir to abandon his role of onlooker and participate in the armed

struggle from which he will emerge both strengthened and embittered.

Veracity and accuracy would seem to be Mammeri's watchwords. He has indeed stated that "The novelist's first duty is that of being truthful" (Achour 68).³ In *L'Opium et le bâton*, headlines from *l'Echo d'Alger*, and broadcasts on Radio Algiers and Radio Monaco plunge us from the outset into the thick of battle. Bachir's activist friend Ramdane immediately situates the action for the reader by referring to "what has been happening in this country over the past three years" (Mammeri 9) and citing real events: "General Massu has been given full powers over the whole of the greater Algiers region," he reads from *l'Echo* (Mammeri 10).

Violence and torture are meticulously described constants: we witness French soldiers attacking the youngster who has come to solicit Bachir's help for a wounded FLN militant; the murder of a tortured *felouze* thrown from a helicopter; the silent anguish of villagers forced at gunpoint to chop down the olive trees upon which their livelihood depends. When one wounded FLN militant, who has had to cut off his own nearly severed arm, finally obtains medical treatment, the detailed account is both vivid and clinical:

The nurse took a hacksaw and began to cut the long bone. Akli didn't cry out. The pain was atrocious. Large tears rolled down his cheeks; he swallowed some of them. Then the nurse tied a tourniquet just under his armpit, sewed up the skin below the wound and lay Akli down on his back. . . . In the morning the nurse came to see him. He was with a doctor—a real doctor. The doctor whistled when he saw Akli's stump. Akli looked down. Something long and white was hanging from his wound. It was round and stiff. "That's the marrow," said the doctor. He made a sharp cut with his scalpel. The marrow dropped to the floor. (Mammeri 104)⁴

We follow daily life in Tala, Bachir's home village, where one of his brothers is an informer (the other is a rebel leader), where firearms are concealed, where children go hungry because the army has rationed basic foodstuffs and entrusted their distribution to corrupt informers, where the inhabitants

play a deadly cat-and-mouse game with the French that ends only with the shelling of the village.

The verisimilitude and deftness of Mammeri's account have never been questioned by critics, although most are luke-warm towards the overall quality of the novel—and it is precisely its preoccupation with realism that seems to be the major sticking point. Charles Bonn finds it “definitely disappointing” (11); Joan Monego feels that “the realistic concrete depictions of the evils wrought by war are somewhat repetitive” (40); and Hédi Abdeljaouad is even more dismissive, writing that the novel “rarely transcends the documentation of reality, and when it does, it often falls into stereotypical characterization” (16). He concludes that essentially “the novel has suffered from the sheer magnitude of its proposed topic” (17).

So the *reproduction of reality*, however stylish and compelling and dramatic that rendering may be, does not necessarily, as this and many less accomplished “war novels” serve to illustrate, suffice to produce a memorable and moving novel of conflict. The closing lines of the novel would appear to indicate that this is something of which the author himself was (consciously or unconsciously) aware. Here Bachir Lazrak takes up a newspaper to reassure himself that

far from the hell we're all living in here, men take walks in woods, go dancing, go to work or to the local store. What a waste of effort! On each page of my newspaper, somewhere under the sun, tragedy was breeding tragedy. No need to dramatize, even; *reality far outstripped mere words* [my italics.] (279)⁵

The very different narrative technique that the poet-novelist Malek Haddad adopts to convey the impotent anguish of the exiled in *Je t'offrirai une gazelle* [*I'll give you a gazelle*] (1959) perfectly illustrates the influence of the linguistic and cultural division that was his deplored heritage. Shot through with *vers libres* and alexandrines, his prose disconcerts, sometimes exasperates; Jacqueline Arnaud disparages his “lyrical juggling, [as being] more pretentious than it seems” (110).⁶ However, on occasion, as Len Ortzen writes, Haddad's prose “sparkles like desert sand” (12). In “the blue prison” that is Paris, Haddad's anonymous author-protagonist is rudderless and usually

inebriated in a nervous city of police round-ups and identity checks (18):

The police officers are armed. "Hey you—I.D."

You don't say "Hey you." You don't ever say "Hey you." Because afterwards things can go too far, much too far. Torture begins with "Hey you."

In a corner of the bar a drunk announces: "I fought in the First World War."

He's drunk. But it is true that he fought in the First World War. "I don't give a shit—I.D."

A police officer asks the author: "What do you do?"

The author explains: "I get drunk."

"That's not a job. Don't get smart with me."

The author wonders if the officer would recognize "smart" if it hit him in the face.

"I'm a writer."

So that's what writers look like. The police officer doesn't push it. The guy who'd fought in the First World War got carted off. Fighting in a war isn't enough to give you an identity. (18-19)⁷

He submits to publisher Gisele Duroc a novel recounting a love affair taking place against the background of the Sahara. This story recounts hero Moulay's doomed trip into the desert to catch the live gazelle his beloved Yaminata has requested: "I'd like you to bring me a gazelle, a live gazelle. A gazelle is only a gazelle if it's alive" (Haddad 25).⁸ This novel-within-a-novel functions as a form of refuge for Haddad's protagonist, himself aware that he is an unexceptional character in a novel (65). It either dominates or figures in ten of *Je t'offrirai une gazelle's* twenty-five chapters. Cutting from one plot to the other, and on occasion intermingling the two, Haddad, himself writing in exile in France, brings Algeria to Paris; he, like his protagonist, is aware that "between Paris and Algiers there aren't 2000 kilometres—there are four years of war" (98). He contrasts the freshness and passion of the two young lovers with his protagonist's guilty morosity and masochistic compulsion to withdraw from his own relationship with the young German Gerda. In the Saharan narrative, Moulay, irrevocably lost and slowly dying of thirst in the desert, is approached by what is

“maybe” a real gazelle and is told by this image/mirage of—what? Liberty? free Algeria?—“It’s crazy to want to catch me, Moulay. You’ve got to believe in me, but not pursue me” (279).⁹ Back in Paris, the nearest the anonymous author has found to this symbol of freedom is a dead, stuffed gazelle he leaves in the care of Monsieur Maurice, owner of his local café. When Gisele Duroc, who has fallen in love with him, stops by, the drunken novelist holds out the animal to her:

—Let me give you a gazelle.
It wasn’t alive. It was stuffed. (89)¹⁰

Paris, then, can offer only a dead gazelle; Yaminata’s gazelle, and those figuring in Haddad’s poetry, which ask “difficult questions” but wait in hope, can be found only in Algeria.¹¹ Towards the close of the book, the protagonist dreams that a friend criticizes his novel for being trifling, superficial, and inappropriate for the times in which they are living: “Our people, who are at war, don’t give a damn about your gazelle and your tales of harmonicas” (Haddad 120).¹² The next day he withdraws it from publication.

Two distinct narratives, one hopeless, one tragic; poetic symbolism conveying above all a sense of lack of direction or purpose; a novel that challenges the value of the novel and finds it wanting: such is Haddad’s solution to the question of how to articulate fear, guilt, impotence, and frustration in a novel permeated with the menace of the contemporaneous hostilities.

Essentially, his are novels of waiting; in three of the total of four, exiled and alienated Algerian intellectuals living in France watch, wait, and despair. These novels are of, but not about, the Algerian war. That war won, Haddad would renounce the effort to reconcile writing in the language of the colonizer with his country’s newfound identity and choose silence instead.

I would now like to look at the solution to the question of articulating horror proposed by two very different writers from different cultures writing in different languages about different events, but arriving independently at comparable conclusions. Mohammed Dib’s *Qui se souvient de la mer* deliberately eschews realism in favor of an apocalyptic nightmare vision of life in an unnamed North African town during what is an unnamed and

protracted conflict. The novel is hallucinatory, surreal, allegorical. The town (which, although it is apparently by the sea, resembles Dib's native Tlemcen) is characterized by division. The original city is under siege and "the other town" (Dib 13), that of the enemy, is ever-encroaching.¹³ Below ground, clandestine building operations are taking place, which have become the only hope the original inhabitants have left:

In the town the new buildings keep on erupting, breathing over us day and night. They advance, arrogant and lethal, crushing everything in their path. How many bodies have been absorbed in their foundations, digested by the air of their walls! A horrifying number. Not to mention those displayed on their roofs everyday at dawn. (Dib 176)¹⁴

Against this framework, Dib does essentially three things, the combination of which means that, for Louis Tremain, no one else has "captured the Algerian revolution with as much intensity or immediacy" ("Psychic deformity" 283). Dib develops a double-stranded narrative in which his anonymous narrator, dreaming more and more often of his mother, periodically recounts episodes from his childhood spent in the family's ruined chateau. Emotionally kept at a distance by his father, he lived "in the unconfessed fear that the world would turn over, back to front" (Dib 72). He complicates this dual chronology by jumping between present and past tenses within those narratives and by having his narrator's wife assume vis à vis her husband a maternal role portrayed much more positively than that played by his true mother. He also establishes a network of archetypal symbols (underworld, labyrinth, sea—much of it suggesting Jungian symbolism) and elemental/natural imagery, at the same time elaborately mixing his metaphors to dissolve abstract/concrete, living/dead dichotomies, so that words turn into stones, walls pursue trapped inhabitants, the sea disappears and reappears and stars disintegrate. Here, we encounter images of song become visible, and of floating choral airs, equating to lamentation and rumour, but also perhaps to resistance, to invisible cultural ties—and, in the second extract, to torture:

First, a group of men had been taken away. The wives and children knocked at every door begging to be told the truth about what had happened to them. At the same time, a little babbling song could be heard on the lips of the wind. Crying, they went to see the Hospodar, while the song ingenuously wrapped itself around their legs, and the women, entreating, fell to their knees in front of the minotaurs posted there as sentinels, kissing their hands and holding out the kiddies they were carrying. A faint melody on a flute butted stubbornly against their legs and stomachs.

In the distance can be heard a chorus of men's voices, whose singing, in turn, ends up drowning out the percussion, itself only silenced in so far as the cymbals become more strident, more quivering. But suddenly a terrifying silence descends, and the ranting starts up again, this time dominated by the exercises of the extinguished star, which from this moment goes on endlessly singing its scales. It is all that is left, crying out, pouring out a dead song in a red fog.

Right next to my head, an old man shouts out quickly: "They're putting a spell on someone." (Dibs 41)¹⁵

Thirdly, the novelist, who explains in his famous postface that he had never read any science-fiction novels (191), now plunges into that genre by means of neologism and the invention of such marvels as a machine which consumes the narrator only to later regurgitate him in his original form although "from a different, unknown type of matter" (27). As Hassan El Nouty has observed,

In the end the science-fiction aspect dominates. It would doubtless have been possible to obtain the same amazing effect by replacing the machine that kills time with a magic wand, Aladdin's lamp or some other accessory from ye olde magic shoppe. But that would have been to turn to out-of-date fantasy. The marvellous, as formulated in the modern vernacular, is science-fiction. (150)¹⁶

Dib writes that

The Boulevard National. A road block. Cordoned off. It had been planned.

I wasn't alone. I was surrounded by a crowd of statues. I positioned myself a good distance from the barbed wire because I was still covered in scraps of flesh. Minotaurs were watching us. We didn't wait long; several spyovirs started howling like sirens from all sides. We were made to turn and face the wall. (26)¹⁷

In his best-selling *Slaughterhouse Five*, Kurt Vonnegut proffers a comparable solution to Dib's problem of conveying atrocity. A battalion scout during WWII, Vonnegut was captured on the German border during the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944. He was a prisoner of war in Dresden, working in a factory by day and sleeping in a guarded slaughterhouse meat locker by night, when on February 13, 1945, the town was destroyed by Allied firebombing. Coming to terms with being one of the few to survive—to survive an attack carried out by “his side”—took the 22-year-old man into his mid-forties.¹⁸ What finally emerged was a startlingly original work that Jerome Klinkowitz has praised for its “great structural innovation” (*Disruptions* 201) and that Vonnegut himself describes in the novel's first chapter as “short and jumbled and jangled . . . because there is nothing to say about a massacre” (quoted in *Disruptions* 21). And it is on one level a sort of coming to terms, as there is a close correspondence between Vonnegut's own experience and that of his fictional 22-year-old regimental chaplain's assistant, attached to an infantry regiment in Luxembourg, taken prisoner in December 1944, and put to work in a Dresden factory.

Against this framework Vonnegut adopts two of those three procedures identified in Dib's *Qui se souvient de la mer*. He does not create an elaborate network of symbols (perhaps the equivalent in his work is the small group of recurring characters, some fictional, some not, who pop up complete with ever-developing case histories). But he *does* develop what is not so much a double as it is a multi-stranded narrative whereby his protagonist, when not fixed as the 22-year-old WWII prisoner of war, travels forwards and backwards in both time and space. And naturally enough, to allow him to effect his complex travel

feats, Vonnegut makes use of a genre in which he is more than comfortable—science-fiction—several times transporting his protagonist to Tralfamadore, a planet first appearing in an earlier novel.

Time and space dislocations, common to both Dib's and Vonnegut's novels, while naturally lending themselves to science-fiction, draw also, as Klinkowitz has indicated, "on the activities of daydreaming, fantasizing and the methods of self-distraction we use to face horror with" (*Kurt Vonnegut* 66). Within Dib's nightmare, his nameless (therefore Everyman) hero constantly seeks to distract himself from the horrors surrounding him by taking endless walks or undertaking, in minute detail, the study of enemy behavior:

I'm trying to lay the foundations for a new sort of scientific study I could call the Theory of Iriace Behavior. I keep a record of the direction, frequency and times of their outings and homecomings. . . . I've noticed that the iriaces themselves appreciate the company of the *others* (those in the new buildings) more than ours. They stay close to them, spending the day playing and laughing with them, hurling olive stones and sarcastic remarks in our direction. (133-134)¹⁹

In *Slaughterhouse Five*, protagonist Billy Pilgrim's erratic progress sees him careening from decade to decade, blanking out at moments of stress or exhaustion to find himself a little boy, a father, or a zoo exhibit on a different planet. Vonnegut peoples Billy's space-journeys/hallucinations with a highly sophisticated life-form physically resembling plumbing implements—Tralfamadoreans—who keep him as a main attraction in a zoo. Dib uses mythology or neologism for the unnamed enemy forces, which are thus made up of *spyroviros*, *minotaures*, *momies*, and *iriaces*, to the joy of critics interested in decoding such exoticisms into French soldiers, *pieds-noirs*, helicopters, spies, etc. Vonnegut's protagonist is an awkward, gangling, and ridiculous figure who retains the childhood diminutive "Billy" all his life and is treated as a child by his peers, his daughter, and his alien kidnappers. Language and people regularly turn to stone in *Qui se souvient de la mer* as terror restricts conversation, discourages action, and weighs

unbearably upon the civilian population; what Tony Tanner has termed “the force which rigidifies life” is a constant in *Slaughterhouse Five*, foreshadowing “the uncountable rigidified corpses after the Dresden air-raid” (285). Dib, finally, permits his protagonist to leave the labyrinth of the town exploding about him, obeying an injunction not to turn around. Remaining with Greek mythology, Bonn points out that in so doing, “the narrator succeeds where Orpheus failed” (79).²⁰ But in fact given that the destruction of towns is here at issue, the parallel is better drawn with Lot’s wife who could not resist turning to see the fall of Sodom and Gomorrah and was thus turned into a pillar of salt. This last is a parallel which, interestingly enough, Vonnegut uses about himself and his novel *within* that novel:

People aren’t supposed to look back. I’m certainly not going to do it any more.

I’ve finished my war book now. The next one I write is going to be fun.

This one is a failure, and had to be, since it was written by a pillar of salt. (22)

Essentially, what Mohammed Dib and Kurt Vonnegut were writing about was less their respective experiences of the Algerian war and the Dresden bombing and more the effect of horror and cataclysm on what we could choose to term the soul. The conventions of the novel, in these two instances, become in fact difficult to distinguish from those of poetry. Dib’s concern, writes Tremaine, is “to explore the deformation that the human psyche undergoes by way of adaptation to uncontrollable social violence and chaos” (287); Vonnegut, observes Robert W. Uphaus, is preoccupied with “an individual’s psychic responses to human destructiveness” (168). The American’s is the blacker vision. His novel ends with the silence that follows a massacre ringing in the reader’s ears as rotting corpses are buried or liquidated.²¹ The Algerian seems to offer hope; his protagonist has successfully reached the underworld and has heard that the enemy town has been destroyed and that the sea has finally returned. The stage is set for him and his fellows to re-emerge into the world—to be born again from the womb of the earth.

There is perhaps no satisfactory answer to the question Dib poses in his postface: "How do you talk about Algeria after Auschwitz, the Warsaw ghetto, and Hiroshima?" (190).²² This remarkable afterword reveals his ambition to "set these years of great unhappiness within a framework of legend and terror" (192)—and his awareness of the tendency of the horrific very speedily to become the banal. He finds an answer of sorts in the example of Picasso's *Guernica*: "there is not one single realistic element in this painting—neither blood nor bodies—and yet nothing explains horror so completely" (192).²³ By converting his own inability to reply to his question into so vivid and haunting an exposé of man's universally recognizable fear and greed, he offers the most striking and memorable of the Algerian novels of French expression to evoke the War of Independence. ■

Notes

1. "A l'heure de la lutte, l'écriture romanesque cède la place aux écritures plus incisives, plus alertes, plus immédiates, plus aisément transmissibles." All translations are my own.
2. "Seul *Qui se souvient de la mer* de Mohammed Dib (1962) me semble donner à l'événement une dimension véritable."
3. "Le premier devoir d'un romancier est le devoir de vérité."
4. "L'infirmier prit une scie à métaux et se mit à couper l'os long. Akli ne criait pas. La douleur était atroce. De grosses larmes lui coulaient sur les joues et il en avalait quelques-unes. Puis l'infirmier garrotta juste au-dessous de l'aisselle, cousit la peau sous la blessure et coucha Akli sur le dos. . . . Au matin l'infirmier vint le voir. Il était avec un docteur, un vrai. Le docteur siffla en voyant le moignon d'Akli. Akli regarda: une grosse mèche blanchâtre pendait de sa blessure, elle était raide et ronde. 'C'est la moëlle', dit le docteur. Il donna un coup sec de son scalpel. La mèche tomba par terre."
5. "Loin de cet enfer où nous vivons tous ici, des hommes vont au bois, au bal, à l'usine ou chez l'épicier du coin. Peine perdue! A chaque page de mon journal, sous chaque ciel du monde, la tragédie éclosait d'elle-même. Il n'y avait même pas besoin de forcer avec des mots: la réalité dépassait les phrases de si loin."

6. "Jongleries lyriques, plus prétentieuses qu'elles n'en ont l'air."
7. "Les agents de police sont armés."
-Tes papiers . . .
Il ne faut pas tutoyer un homme. Il ne faut jamais tutoyer un homme. Parce que ensuite—ça va très loin, très loin. La torture commence par le tutoiement.
Dans un coin du bistrot un poivrot proclame:
-J'ai fait la guerre de 14.
Il est saoul. Mais c'est vrai qu'il a fait la guerre de quatorze.
-Je m'en fous, tes papiers . . .
Un agent de police demande à l'auteur:
-Qu'est-ce que tu fais?
L'auteur explique:
Je me saoule.
-Ce n'est pas un métier ça! Faudrait pas se payer de ma tête ...
L'auteur se demande: "Combien peut bien coûter une tête pareille?"
-Je suis écrivain.
C'est donc fait ainsi un écrivain? Le policier n'insiste pas. On a embarqué celui qui avait fait la guerre de 14. Il n'est pas suffisant d'avoir fait une guerre pour établir une identité."
8. "Je voudrais que tu me rapportes une gazelle, une gazelle vivante. Les gazelles ne sont des gazelles que lorsqu'elles sont vivantes."
9. "Il faut être fou, Moulay, pour vouloir m'attraper. Il faut croire en moi, mais il ne faut pas me poursuivre."
10. "Je vous offre une gazelle. Elle n'était pas vivante. Elle était empaillée."
11. "Mes copains ma longue litanie."
12. "Ô Notre peuple qui se bat se fiche pas mal de ta gazelle et de tes histoires d'harmonica."
13. One is put in mind of the opening pages of Frantz Fanon's *Les damnés de la terre* (1962): "La ville du colon est une ville en dur, toute de pierre et de fer. . . . La ville du colon est une ville de Blancs, d'étrangers. La ville du colonisé est une ville accroupie, une ville à genoux, une ville vautreée. C'est une ville de nègres, une ville de bicoques."
14. "Dans la ville, les nouvelles constructions n'en finissent pas d'éclater et de nous envoyer, de jour comme de nuit, leur souffle. Arrogantes, meurtrières, elles avancent en broyant tout devant elles. Que de cadavres sont passés sous leurs fondations, ont été

digérés par l'air de leurs murs! Un nombre effroyable. Sans compter ceux exposés sur leurs toits à chaque lever du soleil.”

15. “Un lot d’hommes avait d’abord été enlevé. Les épouses, les enfants allèrent demander la vérité sur le sort des leurs à toutes les portes. En même temps, une petite chamson, un babil errait sur les lèvres du vent. Ils s’en furent voir l’Hospodr, ils pleurèrent tandis que la chason s’enroulait ingénument autour de leurs jambes, supplièrent, et les femmes tombèrent genoux devant les minotaures placés en sentinelles. Leur baisèrent la main. Leur tendirent les mioches qu’elles avaient au bras. Un air de flûte donnait des cornes contre les jambes, contre les ventres, frêle mais têtue. Lointain, monte un choeur d’hommes, dont le chant finit par couvrir à son tour la percussion, qui ne se tait que pour autant que les cymbales gagnent en stridences, en frémissements. Cependant, d’un coup, un silence affolé s’abat, et les aboiements reprennent, dominés cette fois par les vocalises de l’étoile éteinte, qui croissent sans fin à partir de ce moment. Il n’y a plus qu’elle dans un brouillard rouge, qui crie, répand un chant mort. Tout pres de ma tête, un vieillard profère rapidement: Ils encorcèlent quelqu’un.”

16. “L’aspect science-fiction finit par prévaloir. Il eût été sans doute possible d’obtenir le même effet prodigeux en remplaçant la machine à tuer le temps par une baguette magique, la lampe d’Aladin ou tel autre accessoire puisé dans le vieux magasin du merveilleux. C’eût été recourir à un imaginaire périmé. . . . Le merveilleux formulé en termes modernes, c’est la science-fiction.”

17. “Au boulevard national: barrage. Bouclé. C’était prévu. Je n’étais pas seul, une foule de statues m’entourait. Je me rangeai loin des barbelés parce que j’étais encore couvert de lambeaux de chair. Des minotaures nous tenaient l’oeil. Nous n’attendous mes pas longtemps: plusieurs spyrovirs se mirent à hurler de tous les côtés comme des sirènes. On nous fit tourner face au mur.”

18. “I would head myself into my memory of it, the circuit breakers would kick out; I’d head in again, I’d back off. This book is a process of twenty years of this sort of living with Dresden and the aftermath” (Vonnegut Interview 203).

19. “J’essaye de jeter les bases d’une nouvelle sorte de science que j’appellerais la théorie du comportement des iriacs. Je note la direction, le nombre, les heures de leurs sorties et de

leur retraites; j'évalue l'ampleur et la durée de leurs vols Les iriaces eux-mêmes, ai-je remarqué, apprécient davantage la compagnie des autres (ceux des nouveaux édifices) que la nôtre, ils se tiennent plus volontiers près d'eux que de nous. Passant leurs journées à jouer, à rire avec eux, et à nous lancer des noyaux d'olives et des sarcasmes" (133-134).

20. "Le narrateur réussit là où Orphée avait échoué."

21. As Vonnegut has pitilessly indicated, the firebombing that was of no military importance was of obvious benefit to only one person—the author himself—who made about five dollars . . . for every corpse created by the firestorm" (*Fates* 100-101).

22. "Comment parler de l'Algérie après Auschwitz, le ghetto de Varsovie et Hiroshima?"

23. "Pas un élément réaliste dans ce tableau—ni sang, ni cadavres—et cependant il n'y a rien qui exprime autant l'horreur."

Works Cited

- Abdeljaouad, Hédi. "Reflecture: *L'Opium et le bâton*." Revue CELFAN, vol III, no. 2 (1984): 15-17.
- Achour, Christiane. *Anthologie de la littérature algérienne de langue française*. Paris: ENAP-Bordas, 1990.
- Arnaud, Jacqueline. *Recherches sur la littérature maghrébine de langue française*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1982.
- Bonn, Charles. *Le Roman algérien de langue française*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1985. *Lecture présente de Mohammed Dib*. Alger ENAL, 1988. 79.
- Dib, Mohammed. *Qui se souvient de la mer*. Paris: Seuil, 1962.
- El Noty, Hassan. "Roman et révolution dans *Qui se souvient de la mer* de Mohammed Dib." *Présence Francophone* 2 (1971) 142-152.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Les damnés de la terre*. Alger: Edns ENAG, 1987.
- Haddad, Malek. "*J'écoute et je tàappelle*." Paris: Maspero, 1961.
- Klinkowitz, Jerome. *Literary Disruptions*. Urbana: U Illinois P, 1980.
- . *Kurt Vonnegut*. London: Methuen, 1972.
- Mammeri, Mouloud. *L'Opium et le bâton*. Paris: La Découverte, 1965.
- Monego, Joan. *Maghrebian Literature in French*. Boston: Twayne, 1984.

- Ortzen, Len. *North American Writing*. London: Heineman, 1970.
- “Psychic deformity in Mohammed Dib’s *Qui se souvient de a mer*.” *Literature in African Research*, no. 19: 3 (1988): 283-300.
- Tanner, Tony. “The Uncertain Messenger.” *Critical Quarterly*, vol XI, no. 4 (Winter 1969): 297-315.
- Uphaus, Robert W. “Expected Meaning in Vonnegut’s Dead End Fiction.” *Novel*, vol. IIX (1975): 167-174.
- Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse Five*. New York: Dell, 1968.
- . *Fates Worse Than Death*. New York: Vintage Press, 1991.
- . *The New Fiction*. Urbana: U Illinois P, 1974. 194-207.