Spectres insistants: Primary and Secondary Hauntings in Kamel Daoud’s *Meursault, contre-enquête*

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Abstract
In a complex return to Albert Camus’s *L’Etranger*, Kamel Daoud’s *Meursault, contre-enquête* (2013) explores the ghosts of Algeria’s colonial past. By making the fate of Meursault’s murdered victim the center of his story, Daoud gives the nameless “Arab” a name, “Moussa”, and a family. Moussa’s younger brother Haroun has the responsibility of recounting the day of his brother’s death as well as his family’s destiny in the wake of the tragedy. This essay concentrates on the haunted presences in the novel and, in a critical hauntological reading, examines the novel’s primary hauntings in the form of the ghosts of Moussa and Camus, and its secondary hauntings through the allusions to the Oran massacre of 1962. These examples of insistent haunting in *Meursault, contre-enquête* compel a critical witnessing of this period of Algeria’s colonial history.

Introduction
In a central scene in Kamel Daoud’s novel *Meursault, contre-enquête* (2013), the narrator comes face to face with the specter of his murdered brother and speculates that “l’un de nous était un spectre insistant”.¹ *Meursault, contre-enquête* is a text filled with ghosts; not only is the novel haunted by its literary predecessor, Camus’s masterpiece *L’Etranger* (1942), but its main characters are also represented as specters, and there is a remarkable number of ghostly figures who, in Colin Davis’s

¹ Kamel Daoud, *Meursault, contre-enquête* (Arles: Actes Sud, 2014), p. 66. Subsequent page references will be incorporated into the text. Born on 17 June 1970, Daoud writes for the third-largest French-language Algerian newspaper, *Le Quotidien d’Oran*. His articles have been published in *Courier International*, *Libération*, and *Le Monde*, among others, and are regularly reprinted around the world. The novel was originally published in 2013 by Editions Barzakh (Algiers) as *Meursault, contre-enquête*. A year later, it was published in France by Actes Sud (Arles). In 2015 John Cullen’s English-language edition was published in the U.S. by Other Press and in England by One World Publications. It has won numerous awards, including the Prix Goncourt du Premier Roman in 2015, as well as the Prix François Mauriac and the Prix des Cinq-Continents de la francophonie. Twenty countries have purchased international rights to the novel, and a dramatic adaptation was performed at the 2015 Festival d’Avignon.
terms, return in part because their work on earth is not yet finished. But *Meursault, contre-enquête*'s hauntings prove to be even more complex, and they ask at least two crucial questions: first, whether the dead return because they have not been duly put to rest, and second, how the living might work toward illegitimate burials, complete these rites of passage and put these spirits to rest. If putting these spirits to rest proves impossible, *Meursault, contre-enquête* gestures toward a parallel effort: to acknowledge, name, and bear witness to them.

*Meursault, contre-enquête* recasts *L’Etranger* in a postcolonial literary retelling such as those that have become popular in the recent past. Daoud’s account is a counter-investigation into the death of a nameless Arab on an Algiers beach—a fictional death that has intrigued, bewildered, distressed, and appalled numerous readers. *Meursault, contre-enquête* has created a literary firestorm that shows no signs of stopping. When it first appeared, French readers were concerned that Daoud was attacking Camus, while Algerian readers thought he had switched sides, and the main character Haroun was assumed to be the direct mouthpiece for Daoud. After the novel’s publication in France by Actes Sud, many readers questioned Daoud’s choice to revisit *L’Etranger*, whereas in Algeria, the critical questions continued to swirl around whether or not Camus was on the right side of history. The novel is unquestionably polemical: there have been both outpourings of support for and condemnations of the novel. Daoud has had death threats, notably from salafist imam Abdelfattah Hamadache.

With an opening sentence that serves as a counterpoint to that of Camus’s

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3 Davis, p. 5. Likewise, Slavoj Žižek finds that the dead return “because they were not properly buried, i.e., because something went wrong with their obsequies. The return of the dead is the sign of a disturbance in the symbolic rite, in the process of symbolization; the dead return as collectors of some unpaid symbolic debt.” See Žižek, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992), p. 23, emphasis in the original.

4 Recent examples include Tayeb Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North* (1966), which takes its structure from Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899), Aimé Césaire’s adaptation of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* (1611) in *Une Tempête* (1969), and finally, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), Jean Rhys’s unearthing of the tale of the madwoman in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847). In a compelling article, Lia Brozgal takes up the complexities of *Meursault, contre-enquête* as a postcolonial rewriting by arguing that it “subverts its own ostensible goal of critiquing Camus while also using the genre of the ‘postcolonial remake’ to make a broad comment on literature itself”, p. 37. See Brozgal, “The Critical Pulse of the Contre-enquête: Kamel Daoud on the Maghrebi Novel in French”, *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, 20: 1 (2016), 37–46.

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novel, “Aujourd’hui, M’ma est encore vivante”, Daoud begins his return to L’Etranger in which the protagonist Meursault assassinates an unidentified “Arab” on a beach in the blinding noontime sun (p. 11). Daoud casts the events of L’Etranger as “real” in a fictional world, and thus chooses to redress the first novel’s representational lacunae with multidimensional Algerian characters. Meursault, contre-enquête thus fills in the blanks of “the Arab’s” background, giving him a name, Moussa, as well as a brother, a mother, and a life cut tragically short. In Meursault, contre-enquête, Moussa’s brother Haroun Ouldel-Assasse recounts the crime and its fallout. Phantasmic figures seem to possess the now seventy-year-old Haroun, who tells his story in a bar possessing two names, “The Titanic”, and “Djebel Zendel” (a mountain associated with freedom fighters) to an interlocutor, a young unnamed academic who has come to Algiers to conduct research on L’Etranger. On the fateful day Moussa was killed, both Haroun and his mother were figuratively extinguished. Bereft of spirit and forever obsessed by Camus’s novel that incessantly recounts the murder of his beloved older brother, Haroun is stalled in his development, finds it impossible to keep relationships with anyone, kills a Frenchman out of vengeance, and lives in a bitter silence with his bereaved mother, herself a ghostly figure wrapped in impenetrable grief. Haroun’s unnamed mother is a force driving him to avenge his brother’s death, and the two live with the haunting presence of their unfindable loved one.

With this haunted cast of characters, Meursault, contre-enquête lends itself admirably to a hauntological analysis. Inspired by the 1993 work by Derrida, Spectres de Marx: L’Etat de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle Internationale, the theoretical school of hauntology has grown exponentially over the past two decades among diverse disciplines that seek to analyze representations of haunting as a return to sites of traumatic memory. In this analysis of Meursault,

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contre-enquête, I foreground Martha and Bruce Lincoln’s incisive contributions to this approach, in which they claim that a critical typology of haunting is needed to better clarify the types and functions of ghosts and haunting.\(^8\) In their article, “Toward a Critical Hauntology: Bare Afterlife and the Ghosts of Ba Chúc”, Lincoln and Lincoln argue for a more nuanced critical hauntology in which at least two types of spectrality may be elucidated: primary and latent hauntings. They define primary haunting as “ghostly subjects [that] appear as fully extant and active animate beings that confront the living in direct, non-mediated, and even menacing fashion”.\(^9\) For Lincoln and Lincoln, secondary haunting is not ghosts \textit{qua} ghosts but instead recognizes them as:

“entities” in the sedimented textual residues of horrific historic events or, alternatively, as tropes for collective intrapsychic states and experiences, including trauma, grief, regret, repression, guilt, and a sense of responsibility for the wrongs suffered by victims whose memory pains—or ought to pain—their survivors.\(^{10}\)

Using Lincoln and Lincoln’s definitions as a way to approach \textit{Meursault, contre-enquête}, I argue that the novel is rife with primary and secondary hauntings. When primary haunting occurs in the novel, it is through revenant characters (Moussa and the Camusian ghost of the bottle), whereas an example of its secondary haunting comes from a return to an important date in the colonial record in Algeria (5 July 1962). Through the complex interaction of primary and secondary hauntings and the different kinds of memory work in which they engage, Daoud uncovers historic wounds in the twisted French-Algerian dynamic. With lyrical anger toward the violence of colonialism, Daoud uses the novel as a springboard to develop his conception of the Algerian absurd, with its suffocating official religion and closed national history which is reduced to that of the war. Finally, the primary and secondary hauntings within the novel ultimately hold both sides—French and Algerian—accountable for historic wrongs.

**Primary hauntings: ghosts \textit{qua} ghosts**

In explaining his theory of the “unfinished business” model of haunting, Davis recalls the ghost story of the Roman senator Pliny the Younger about an abandoned house in which clinks and rattles of iron chains could be heard in the night. Fascinated, the senator stands watch for the ghost, then has the place exhumed, after which the bones of a dead man are discovered. Pliny the Younger’s account ends with the legitimate burial of the body and later, the definitive ending of the
haunting: “The bones were collected and given a public burial, and after the shades had been duly laid to rest the house saw them no more.”

In *Meursault, contre-enquête*, Haroun is similarly haunted by restless spirits. Abandoned by his father and robbed of his older brother when he was young, he lives an isolated childhood alone with his mother, who relentlessly searches for the murderer of her first born. Haroun is in an eternal bereavement and is compelled to bear the weight of his brother’s murder until some kind of restitution happens. In this novel marked by orality, Haroun tells a kind of a ghost story of his older brother, and readers are made aware of the specters filling Haroun’s every waking and sleeping moment. In *Meursault, contre-enquête*, a first case of primary haunting is that of Haroun’s brother Moussa, who, according to Haroun, was depicted in *L’Etranger* as “un anonyme qui n’a même pas eu le temps d’avoir un prénom” (p. 11). In Camus’s novel, Moussa is only referred to as “the Arab”, and as Haroun deliberately points out, there are twenty-five references to “the Arab” in *L’Etranger*, in a cumulative removal of subjectivity and nullification of a human being to a single ethnic category: “[L]a seule ombre est celle des ‘Arabes’, objets flous et incongrus […] comme des phantômes” (pp. 140, 12–13). The violence of Moussa’s anonymity is an obsession of the narrator, who assumes the role of investigator in the “contre-enquête”. Haroun becomes Moussa’s mouthpiece, stating that he speaks “à la place d’un mort, continuer un peu ses phrases” (p. 12). In the narrative, Haroun has a double mission: to rebalance the scales of justice and to escape being “poursuivi par un fantôme” (p. 16). In contrast to what Haroun calls the “étranges souvenirs déformés” (p. 141) of Algerians in *L’Etranger*, he names his brother early and often in *Meursault, contre-enquête*:

C’est mon frère qui a reçu la balle, pas lui. C’est Moussa, pas Meursault, non? Il y a quelque chose qui me sidère. Personne, même après l’Indépendence n’a cherché à connaître le nom de la victime […] Qui peut, aujourd’hui, me donner le vrai nom de Moussa? […] Qui est Moussa? C’est mon frère. (p. 14)

Haroun insists on filling in the blanks left in Camus’s novel: “[I]mpossible de prouver que l’Arabe était un fils—et un frère” (p. 21). In the opening pages, Haroun ruminates on Moussa’s name, asserting that he could well have been named Friday,

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12 Haroun’s telling the tale is reminiscent of the story of the prophet Moussa or Moses. The Coran tells the tale of Moses who liberated his people from slavery by guiding them to salvation. The prophet could not speak clearly because of a language disorder and was helped by his brother Haroun who began to communicate with people to transmit the message of God.

“comme l’autre a appelé son nègre ‘Vendredi’” (p. 13). Just as Defoe’s Friday is a haunting absence in Robinson Crusoe, so is the nameless Arab in L’Étranger.\footnote{This reference to Daniel Defoe’s 1719 work is telling. In Robinson Crusoe, the protagonist meets an escaped prisoner, names him “Friday” after the day of the week he finds him. Crusoe teaches him English and converts him to Christianity. Adam Lifshey argues that Crusoe cannot understand a world without indigenous servants and is challenged by the haunting trace of a footprint in the sand that troubles him in his struggle to understand a space populated by uncolonized bodies. See Specters of Conquest: Indigenous Absence in Transatlantic Literatures (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), Chapter 3, pp. 62–89.}

Even before Moussa’s death, he has the appearance of a specter. Haroun remarks: “…je crois qu’il nous aimait déjà comme le font les morts, c’est-à-dire avec un regard venant de l’au-delà et sans paroles inutiles” (p. 18). Insistently, Haroun continues: “Moussa, Moussa, Moussa… j’aime parfois répéter ce prénom pour qu’il ne disparaisse pas dans les alphabets. J’insiste sur ça et je veux que tu l’écrives en gros. Un homme vient d’avoir un prénom un demi-siècle après sa mort et sa naissance. J’insiste” (p. 23). Moussa’s name is written nowhere, he does not have a tombstone upon which his name is engraved. After the murder, his restlessness becomes even more pronounced as his roving spirit haunts Haroun: “Chaque soir, mon frère Moussa, alias Zoudj, surgit du Royaume des morts et me tire la barbe en criant: ‘Ô mon frère Haroun, pourquoi as-tu laissé faire ça? Je ne suis pas une génisse, bon sang, je suis ton frère!’” (pp. 19–20). Not an animal to be banally butchered and sent into oblivion, Moussa’s ghost compels Haroun to tell his tale.

Even though Haroun goes looking several times for Moussa’s murdered body, its location remains a mystery (p. 141). He reminds his interlocutor that Moussa does not have a burial site: “Tout cela pour te dire que ce n’est pas la peine d’aller au cimetière, ni à Bab-el-Oued, ni à la plage. Tu n’y trouveras rien” (p. 67). But one day, on the beach where Moussa disappeared, Haroun finds a reclining figure “en bleu de chauffe, allongé ave nonchalance. Je l’ai regardé avec peur et fascination, lui sembla à peine me voir. L’un de nous deux était un spectre insistant…” (p. 66). He continues, “Je savais avec certitude que c’était un reflet mais j’ignorais de qui!” (p. 66). With his survivor’s guilt and crushing “enfance de revenant” (p. 56), Haroun begins to speak, to rid himself of the unbearable weight of an incomplete grieving process: “Mon frère, lui, n’a eu droit à aucun mot dans cette histoire” (p. 16) Haroun continues, “Je voudrais que justice soit faite […] j’entends par là non la justice des tribunaux, mais celle des équilibres” (16, emphasis in the original). Haroun may be liberated from this unbearable burden through the telling. Daoud’s framing of Meursault, contre-enquête begins to redress L’Étranger’s colonial wrongs in this way.

A second case of primary haunting occurs in Haroun’s local watering-hole, in which lurks the “fantôme de la bouteille”, the “double” of Haroun (p. 67). It cannot go without noting that there is a vertiginous confusion in Meursault, contre-
enquête between narrator and author—and between Meursault and Camus. It is also important to underscore that in Daoud’s first Algerian version of Meursault, contre-enquête, the author of L’Étranger is called Albert Meursault, whereas in the French edition, he becomes simply “Meursault”.

The ghost at the bar wears “toujours la même vieille veste usée aux coudes”, has “un front de philosophe”, an “éternelle cigarette”, is “tuberculose”, and “n’a d’autres plaisirs que de découper les journaux et de fumer des cigarettes” (pp. 68, 127, 68, 146, 153). Daoud seems to be encouraging readers to connect the dots: the “fantôme de la bouteille” represents a stand-in for the amalgam Camus-Meursault who then becomes a kind of alter-ego of Haroun’s during the second part of the novel. Lurking at the bar at the conclusion of various chapters, the ghost of the bottle represents the philosopher, with his tubercular appearance, philosopher’s brow, a jacket with worn elbows, and a cigarette between his lips. With his newspaper clippings, Camus-Meursault evokes Meursault, who kills time in his prison cell by rereading a newspaper snippet relating the story of a double murder-suicide. Near the end of the novel, Haroun ends up accepting the Camusian ghost’s presence: “Allez…appelle-le, dis au fantôme de nous rejoindre, je n’ai plus rien à cacher” (p. 123). Haroun’s equanimity highlights their mirroring: “Je suis son Arabe. Ou alors, il est le mien” (p. 68).

Yet the novel’s phantasmic presences hardly end with the two unsettling figures of Haroun’s brother and the bottle ghost. A key example of this doubling is when Daoud advocates for consistent nuanced reading and analysis. When Haroun accuses the anonymous academic in the bar of having accepted Meursault’s tale “tel que l’a racontée l’homme qu’il l’a écrite”, readers may assume Daoud only wants us to reject L’Étranger’s colonial reductionism through depriving “the Arab” of a name and a history (p. 12). But Haroun reveals there is more than one analysis of Camus’s L’Étranger, which he has learned to read “d’une certaine manière, en le faisant pencher de côté comme pour en faire tomber les détails invisibles” (p. 142). I suggest that Daoud encourages his readers, as Haroun does with L’Étranger, to tip Meursault, contre-enquête on its side to make certain “détails invisibles” fall out. These details shed light on the “seething presence” of injustices the novel explores through secondary haunting.

Secondary hauntings, like primary hauntings, oblige a reckoning with violence, distress and injustice. They may require a disarticulation of ghosts from haunting. It is the author, and not the ghost, who provokes, disconcerts, and strikes

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16 Camus contracted tuberculosis in 1930 at the age of 17.

17 As sociologist Avery Gordon writes: “Haunting describes how that which appears to be not there is often a seething presence, acting on and often meddling with taken-for-granted realities.” See Ghostly Matters, p. 8.
fear into those upon whom they call to be more than mere bystanders.\textsuperscript{18} Instead of occupying the space of the bystander, Daoud calls for a kind of witnessing involving not just first-hand knowledge but also “\textit{bearing witness} to something beyond recognition that can’t be seen”.\textsuperscript{19} Beyond the revenants Moussa and the ghost of the bottle, there are secondary presences, those of populations who have suffered the pain of injustice, killed in terrible ways and expedited into oblivion. Like Moussa the “\textit{spectre insistant}”, they linger in memory, scandal, rumor, shadow, and are ambiguous elements or sites of lingering density that come to light through the retelling of this story (p. 66). The reader must face these losses and unveil their memory in a gesture of rendering justice.

\textbf{Secondary haunting: the Oran massacre of 5 July 1962}

In the middle of the book, there is a troubling detour. In the novel’s second half, Haroun describes the twilight of French colonialism in Algeria as follows: “À l’époque, on tuait beaucoup, je te l’ai déjà dit, c’était les premiers jours de l’Indépendance. Durant cette période étrange, on pouvait tuer sans inquiétude; la guerre était finie mais la mort se travestissait en accidents et en histoires de vengeance” (p. 89). Just as names matter in the novel’s hauntings, so too do dates.

In his late twenties and still battling the fallout of his brother’s death, Haroun lives in Hadjout (formerly known as Marengo, the resting place of Meursault’s mother) with his mother, who works there as a housekeeper. They live in a ramshackle house on the French owners’ property. It is 1962, the week of Algeria’s liberation, and when independence is declared, the owner and his family vacate the premises, and Haroun and his mother move into their empty home. But quickly afterward, Haroun kills one of the French colonizers, a man by the name of Joseph Larquais, who has come to hide in his extended family’s abandoned property. Haroun does not take vengeance for Moussa in a predictable way, but instead kills a Frenchman as if by accident. This murderous act renders Haroun a more complex character who is no longer only on the side of the victim. The “\textit{restitution}” that puts an end to his mother’s “\textit{monstreuse exigeance}” takes place not on the beach in the sun but instead at night under moonlight (pp. 86, 88). Thus, Haroun stands in for Meursault yet again when he becomes guilty of committing a second assassination in a mirror image of Meursault’s bewildering action. Haroun states that in \textit{L’Etranger}, he found his “\textit{reflet, [se] découvrant presque sosie du meurtrier}” (p. 141). In Daoud’s reimagining, Meursault kills Moussa in 1942, and, twenty years later, Haroun and Meursault become doubles through their fratricidal violence.

After the murder, the police and anti-French combatants arrest and interrogate Haroun. Like Meursault, Haroun is jailed and prosecuted. But instead of a police

\textsuperscript{18} Lincoln and Lincoln, “Toward a Critical Hauntology”, p. 201.
\textsuperscript{19} Kelly Oliver, \textit{Witnessing: Beyond Recognition} (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minneapolis Press, 2001) p. 16 (emphasis in the original).
prosecutor, Haroun faces a colonel in the Algerian Army of Liberation, and is questioned not on the existence of God, as Meursault is in *L’Etranger*. Instead, Haroun has to acknowledge that he did not fight to liberate his country and to give a valid explanation why. Dates, not actions, dictate innocence or guilt, as the following dialogue between him and the colonel reveals:

“Le Français, il fallait le tuer avec nous, pendant la guerre, pas cette semaine!”

J’ai répondu que cela ne changeait pas grand-chose. Interloqué sans doute, il se tut avant de rugir: “Cela change tout!” Il se mit à bégayer qu’il y avait une différence entre tuer et faire la guerre, qu’on n’était pas des assassins mais des libérateurs, que personne ne m’avait donné l’ordre de tuer ce Français et qu’il aurait fallu le faire avant. “Avant quoi?”, ai-je demandé. “Avant le 5 juillet! Oui, avant, pas après, bon sang!” (p. 119)

The absurdity is striking: if Haroun had killed Larquais two days earlier on 3 July 1962, still during the official period of the Algerian War, he would have been considered a national hero. However, three months after the Evian Accords and two days after de Gaulle announced official recognition of Algeria’s independence, Haroun became an assassin instead of a freedom fighter. Daoud thus caricatures the suffocating ideologies that controlled—and still control—Algeria.

The date of 5 July 1962 reveals another kind of haunting in the novel. Echoing Camus’s strange premonition in 1939, “La côte entière est prête au départ, un frémissement d’aventure la parcourt. Demain, peut-être, nous partirons ensemble”, Haroun states, “C’était les premiers jours de l’Indépendance et les Français courraient dans tous les sens, bloqués entre la mer et l’échec” (p. 87). Indeed, the date Daoud chooses for Haroun to kill Larquais marks the day of a mostly forgotten tragic episode in the history of the official end of the Algerian War of Independence, the Oran massacre, which historian Alistair Horne describes as follows:

As seven *katibas* moved triumphantly into the city, some Europeans opened a suicidal fusillade. Out of all control, a wave of Muslims swept into the half-empty European quarters, indiscriminately cutting the throats of men, women, and children; some of them within sight of French troops strictly obeying the edict of non-intervention now imposed on them by the Evian Agreements.

As Horne describes the episode, several groups of terrified French fled as they could to escape the gunfire that would increase in intensity between the hours of

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eleven o’clock a.m. and three o’clock p.m.\textsuperscript{22} The death toll of the massacre would result in over two thousand dead or disappeared, and reports of abduction, torture, and pillaging would follow.\textsuperscript{23} Although Algeria’s independence was inevitable, extremists continued in their path of destruction, carrying out indiscriminate attacks and assassinations.

In the years that followed the Oran massacre, media and political collusion in France and Algeria reduced reports of its atrocities to silence, with its victims forgotten for decades. France was reticent in admitting its responsibility and the Front de Libération Nationale-controlled Algerian government after independence continued the silence.\textsuperscript{24} This final tragedy in the city of Oran would sow ineffaceable bitterness in the surviving \textit{pied-noir} population for years to come. Bitingly, Haroun states, “Joseph était un Français et des Français il en mourait un peu partout dans le pays à l’époque, autant que les Arabes d’ailleurs. Sept ans de guerre de Libération avaient transformé la plage de ton Meursault en un champ de bataille” (p.107). The official end of the Algerian War did not see the end of bloodshed. When Haroun kills Larquais, Algeria was more of a battlefield than ever as the curtain fell on that period of its colonization.

My analysis of \textit{Meursault, contre-enquête} reveals a main purpose of this kind of secondary haunting in literary works. Secondary haunting calls for a deeper kind of restitution: the awakening of collective memory. This enjoining may be the call to outrage, and the mobilization of a significant group—even an entire community—to anamnesis of violence they might like to forget, while accepting accountability for them and for prohibiting their replication.\textsuperscript{25} Secondary hauntings do not seek the closing of memory in relation to certain violent periods; instead, they keep the remembrance of those episodes in play to influence present and future ethical and social outcomes. Assuming at first an unease in the form of rejection toward past horrors suffered by the dead, secondary haunting does not worry about what unsettled ghosts mean or might undertake in the present. In this kind of haunting, confusion, forgetting, and rejection concede to witnessing, forbearance, and watchfulness. If it meets its objectives, this kind of secondary haunting could represent an uncovering of unawareness or neglect of suppressed traumas and injustice and the engagement of an otherwise unconcerned public. Secondary haunting breaks down complacency within communities or cultures who previously wanted to dispatch with the past, move on, and wipe the slate clean.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} Stora, \textit{Algeria}, p. 105.
\item \textsuperscript{24} See Jean Monnaret, \textit{La tragédie dissimulée: Oran, 5 juillet 1962} (Paris: Michalon, 2006).
\item \textsuperscript{25} Lincoln and Lincoln, “Toward a Critical Hauntology”, p. 201.
\end{itemize}
The messenger, the witness

In this novel full of ghostly doubles—narrator/interlocutor, murderer/victim, author/icon—haunting gives a voice to the speechless, whether in the form of Haroun’s brother Moussa, the amalgam of Camus-Meursault, or the victims of the Oran massacre. Haroun considers himself the only one left to give voice to these tragedies: “J’ai vécu comme une sorte de fantôme observant les vivants s’agiter dans un bocal. J’ai connu les vertiges de l’homme qui possède un secret bouleversant…” (p. 186). Haroun philosophizes, “Cette histoire—je me permets d’être grandiloquent—est celle de tous les gens de cette époque” (p. 71). He describes the country’s colonized, and former colonizers, as phantoms:

Nous, nous étions les fantômes de ce pays quand les colons en abusaient et y promenaient cloches, cyprès et cigognes. Aujourd’hui? Et bien c’est le contraire. Ils y reviennent parfois […] dans des voyages organisés pour pieds-noirs ou enfants de nostalgiques […] Tels des spectres discrets et muets, ils nous regardaient, nous les Arabes, en silence, ni plus ni moins que si nous étions des pierres ou des arbres morts. (p. 21, emphasis in the original)

Meursault, contre-enquête reveals how the violence of colonialism on both sides and its continuing cycles reduces individuals to ghosts. In this intertextual and auto-referential novel, images of repressed injustices begin to take shape through its primary and secondary hauntings which result in a demand for justice for the people on both sides of the era’s conflicts. As the porte-parole for his murdered brother and the other forgotten victims, Haroun becomes a messenger of the remembrance of colonial violence committed by both sides. Through the story of Moussa, Haroun is the spokesperson of his generation. Again, names are important. Spoken aloud, the name “Moussa” sounds like an Arabized version of “Meursault”; this echo binds the two characters together while dismantling the power of the name as a unique signifier. At the end of Meursault, contre-enquête, Haroun asks, “Tu sais comment on prononce Meursault en arabe? Non? El-Merssoul. ‘L’envoyé’ ou ‘le messager’” (153). If Meursault is the messenger, Haroun is the one who bears witness to and guards the realm of memory. Son of the night watchman, Haroun is “l’héritier de [s] on père: gardien de nuit, ould el-assasse” (39).

Primary, secondary, and intertextual haunting

In addition to the primary ghosts and the secondary hauntings gripping this novel, perhaps Meurseult, contre-enquête’s greatest ghost story is that of intertextual haunting; this kind of haunting implies that certain texts will not die, for as Julian Wolfrey has argued, all texts may be haunted.

Textuality brings us back to a supplement that has no origin, in the form of haunting figures—textual figures—which we really misrecognize as the images of “real” people, their actions, the contexts in which the events and lives to which we are witnessed take place. We “believe” the characters,
assume their reality, without taking into account the extent to which those figures for characters are, themselves, textual projections, apparitions if you will, images or phantasms belonging to the phantasmic dimension of fabulation.\textsuperscript{26}

Daoud weaves a deep intertextual web of Camus’s writing in \textit{Meurseult, contre-enquête}, which comes in part from the revivification of Camus’s writing in \textit{L’Etranger} (\textit{La Peste} and \textit{La Chute} are also referenced in Daoud’s novel). Echoes of \textit{L’Etranger} occur at regular intervals and weave a web that traps Daoud’s protagonist’s narration. As we have seen, haunting intertextuality echoes within the first sentence, “Aujourd’hui, M’mâ est encore vivante” and is a remarkable return to Camus’s opening line “Aujourd’hui, maman est morte” (p. 11).\textsuperscript{27} The narrative haunting of Daoud’s prose rewrites Camus, in a gesture toward unsettling story and history and pushing at the limits of definition, memory, and reconciliation. It might be impossible to intelligently understand \textit{Meurseult, contre-enquête} without reading \textit{L’Etranger} before, after, or alongside it.

Not only does Camusian textuality haunt \textit{Meurseult, contre-enquête}, Daoud purposefully plays upon the seeming “realness” of \textit{L’Etranger} through the slippage from character (Meursault) to author (Camus) and back again. As Kaplan observes: “En Algérie, dans le discours autour de Camus, texte et auteur sont fatalement confondus.”\textsuperscript{28} With irony, doubt, rage, and despair, Daoud uses Camus’s iconic text to dig into the layers of the undeniably repressive 130 years of French occupation, yet he does so without categorically dismissing the experience of the pied-noir. Through the haunting imbrication of Haroun-Meursault and \textit{Meurseult, contre-enquête/L’Etranger}, Daoud shows the commonalities between them.

\textbf{Conclusion}

\textit{Meurseult, contre-enquête} is a magisterial literary example of how ghosts return to take care of unfinished business, to make us remember unfinished burials, to advocate for anamnesis of occulted violence such as the robbing of an individual of an identity, or the fallout of a massacre. In Daoud’s novel, the figures of primary haunting include the Camusian ghost at the bar and the roaming ghost of Haroun’s older brother Moussa, whereas its secondary haunting comes from the density of troubled memory of the internal violence that has wracked Algeria since its independence in 1962. Pointed out by the key date of 5 July 1962, the day Haroun kills Larquais, and the day of the fatal Oran massacre, the “détails

\textsuperscript{26} Julian Wolfreys, \textit{Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature} (London: Palgrave, 2002), pp. xii–xiii.


invisibles” of this novel turn readers’ critical attention toward past atrocities in an act of critical witnessing. Finally, the novel’s intertextual haunting blurs the real and the imaginary. The nature of the spectral puts characters and texts “between the real and the fictional, between that which is neither real nor fictional”.  

In a powerful 2013 essay on Camus, Daoud calls upon his readers to accept all the complexities of Algeria’s past: “Et nous serons grands et fiers lorsque nous nous approprierons tout notre passé, nous accepterons les blessures qui nous ont été faites et ce qu’il en naquit parfois comme terribles fleurs de sel ou de pierre.”

With the many kinds of haunting at play in the novel’s powerful trajectory, it has a strategic power to uncover past injustices and to compel activities of anamnesis, in a careful consideration of history, especially among the socially powerful who may have been complicit. These kinds of haunting form a powerful nexus that compels the reader to engage in an ethical reexamination of the violence of the past. *Meursault, contre-enquête*’s Franco-Algerian hauntings endeavor to complete unfinished memory work on both sides of the Mediterranean.

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