

LATE-COLONIAL FRENCH CINEMA

Filming the Algerian War of Independence

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most famous examples of what I will be calling late-colonial French cinema is Alain Resnais's 1963 *Muriel ou le temps d'un retour*/*Muriel or the Time of a Return*. An ostensibly mundane tale of middle-class routines, set in Boulogne-sur-Mer, a port-town made of jutting concrete and faded majesty, Resnais's film derives its dark power neither from the pleasures of spectacle nor suspense that subtend the archetypal classical realist narrative, but rather from the jarring interplay that exists between its two central, and highly unconventional, protagonists. One of these is a neurotic ex-soldier named Bernard (Jean-Baptiste Thierée), who has recently returned from Algeria, the geographical site of the war that forms the focus of this book. The other is 'Muriel', a woman whom Bernard initially designates as a friend or potential partner, yet whose body and voice remain entirely un-visualised and un-vocalised within the diegesis. Not only that, but as the plot progresses, the spectator gradually learns – with trepidation, then horror – that 'Muriel' is likely to be little more than a pseudonym, grafted onto the dissolved identity of a female Algerian civilian, tortured and murdered by a group of French soldiers in Algeria, possibly including Bernard.

Considering its subtext of militarised torture, *Muriel ou le temps d'un retour* has frequently been interpreted as a pacifist film, an anti-state film, and an anti-colonial film: pacifist as it focuses on an act of military atrocity rather than an act of military victory; anti-state as it obliquely alludes to the insidious regime of official censorship in place in France at the time (see below); and anti-colonial insofar as it indirectly undermines the ideology of colonialism fuelling the war in which Bernard has fought (Greene 1999: 31–50; O'Brien 2000;

Silverman 2013: 54–60; Flood 2017: 35–56). Focusing on Bernard’s antagonistic relationship with former soldier Robert (Philippe Laudenbach), other scholars, however, have proposed a subtly different interpretation of Resnais’s modernist conundrum, further complicating our understanding of it. Central to these alternative readings are the ways in which the film seems to gently exonerate Bernard from the military atrocities in which he is initially implicated. In the first instance, this dialectic of implication and exoneration can be glimpsed in a crucial scene¹ that lies at the core of *Muriel ou le temps d’un retour*, and during which Bernard not only provides a verbal account of Muriel’s torture, but also ‘displaces, delimits, and projects his guilt outwards’, onto the body of Robert, who is designated as the ringleader of the operation (Croombs 2013: 17; Gauch 2001: 50; also see Boudjedra 1971: 27). In the second instance, it can be discerned in the vertiginous denouement of the narrative, during which Bernard neither takes full responsibility for the brutal event in which he may or may not have been complicit, nor brings the story of ‘Muriel’ into the public realm, but instead covertly assassinates Robert, a self-serving gesture that Emma Wilson has diagnosed as a ‘redemptive deferral of culpability’ (2006: 95). Thus, just as Muriel’s death has plunged Bernard into an ethical abyss, permeated with guilt, so too does Robert’s death ultimately enable Bernard to ascend out of this abyss, into a realm of absolution. And just as *Muriel ou le temps d’un retour* unfolds as a pacifist plea for peace in Algeria, so too does it end by blurring the specificity of France’s collective complicity² in the military atrocities to which film obliquely alludes.

As I demonstrate later in this introduction, Alain Resnais was by no means the only French director to chronicle the Algerian War of Independence as it unfolded in colonial Algeria during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Yann Le Masson, Jean Herman, Philippe Durand and Jacques Dupont: these were just some of the other, lesser-known, cineastes who endeavoured to imagine and re-imagine this seismic event, leading to what I will call a ‘late-colonial’ body of films; one whose significance has – as we will see – largely been overshadowed by a myopic scholarly interest in the ‘canonical’ works of modern(ist) French cinema. Nor was Resnais the only cultural practitioner to represent the war in such ambivalently pacifist terms: as a locus of military atrocity, a source of ethical ambiguity (given that nobody in the film is ever depicted as incontestably culpable of perpetrating torture), and, perhaps most obliquely, as a political crisis subjected to a process of sublimation, as Bernard acquires salvation from damnation in the death of another, and the film ends with a lingering question: who is ultimately guilty for ‘Muriel’s’ murder? Close examination of the fifteen or so case studies included in the following chapters reveals that the ‘redemptive deferral of culpability’ that Wilson associates with *Muriel ou le temps d’un retour* actually forms part of a more general trend in late-colonial culture: to represent French society as innocent or absolved of the injustices

and atrocities committed in colonial Algeria. Later in this introduction, I will coin the expression ‘redemptive pacifism’ to designate this phenomenon, but for now, let us first establish the socio-political context of the war around which this book revolves.

THE ALGERIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE: A BRIEF HISTORY

Fought largely in the north-eastern hinterlands of rural Algeria, but also in urban zones – including the capital, Algiers – and dictated by bouts of guerrilla warfare and counter-insurgency operations, exchanged between armed Algerian nationalists and members of the French army, the Algerian War of Independence (1954–1962),³ has long been recognised as one of – if not *the* – most contentious conflict in modern French history. The roots of the war can be traced back to 1830, when Algeria was originally colonised by France. Not that this seizing occurred without exertion: even if the coastline regions of Oran and Annaba were swiftly colonised, it took thirty years and hundreds of thousands of colonial officials before the territory of Algeria was ‘pacified’ by French forces (Sessions 2011). Nor did it lead to a democratic Algerian society, but one instead riven with colonial injustices, injustices that disempowered indigenous Algerians⁴ whilst empowering the thousands of European settlers – later marked as *pièdes-noirs* – accumulating in the country from Italy, Spain and France. These injustices were territorial, insofar as between the 1830s and the 1930s, approximately 40 per cent of Algerian territory was appropriated by European officials in order to shore up mining and agricultural industries. They were financial, insofar as this sweep towards dispossession stripped many indigenous Algerians of their principal source of income, plunging them into unemployment or destitution. They were social, insofar as colonial racism was a sedimented element of Algerian life; and they were cultural, insofar as colonialism exerted a vampiric force over traditional Algerian art, music and literature, sapping it of its idiosyncrasies, its idioms and its autonomy (Blanchard et al. 2014). Even after Algeria was constitutionally transformed into an integral part of metropolitan France in 1848 – that is to say, into a series of three French provinces, known as *départements* – did an indelible sense of injustice remain, primarily given that this act gradually revealed itself to be little more than a judicial feint, an administrative masquerade, a political patina, choreographed to exalt an equality that was more often than not starkly lacking from the lived reality of indigenous Algerians. As Ferhat Abbas, a pro-independence Algerian politician put it: ‘when an Algerian says that he is Arab, French lawyers tell him that he is French. When he demands French rights, the same lawyers tell him that he is Arab’ (cited in Stora 2001: 12). Bracketed by a political structure that refused rights and representation to the Algerian majority, a majority that James McDougall has diagnosed as false members of an assimilationist French

Republic (2017: 88), throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s, relations between European settlers and indigenous Algerians thus slowly degraded, as Algerian nationalism slowly grew.

In the history of the Algerian War of Independence, two pivotal events stand out. One of these occurred on 8 May 1945, when the easterly town of Sétif in Algeria was consumed by a cycle of fatalities, perpetrated by: the police, who fired shots at a pro-nationalist rally; indigenous Algerians and European settlers, both of whom caused bloodshed in the days that followed; and the French army, who executed a sequence of reprisals against the Algerian populace, culminating in approximately 6,000 deaths, although this figure is heavily contested (Planche 2006). The other event took place on 1 November 1954, when a series of thirty coordinated assassinations and detonations ripped across rural Algeria, assailing a swathe of police outposts, military bases and industrial facilities. Nine people were killed. Often referred to as *Toussaint Rouge* (Red All-Saints Day), these attacks were accompanied by the publication of a political proclamation thrust into the purview of the public by the recently formed Algerian National Liberation Front (*Front de libération nationale*, henceforth referred to as the FLN), who claimed responsibility for them, thus effectively putting into motion eight years of civil war, between French soldiers and Algerian nationalists ('civil' in the sense that Algeria was constitutionally considered French). Depending on the location, this war took different forms. In rural regions such as the Aurès and Kabylia, paratroopers performing artillery-fuelled manoeuvres clashed against members of the National Liberation Army (*Armée de libération nationale*, ALN), the armed wing of the FLN, who used hit-and-run tactics to target military encampments and colonial infrastructure. In urban regions such as Algiers and Oran, members of the FLN-ALN launched a campaign of bombings and shootings against soldiers and civilian settlers, whilst the French army indulged in indiscriminate roundups, internment and violent interrogations. The war would eventually reach its antagonistic denouement in the year 1962: first with a ceasefire agreement, signed on 18 March as part of the so-called 'Evian Accords', and second, when the President of France, Charles de Gaulle, ceded national sovereignty to Algeria on 5 July, relinquishing power to the FLN.

Nonetheless, to identify 1 November 1954 as the 'start' of the Algerian War of Independence demands a degree of qualification. After all, throughout its duration, the war was officially denied as such by the French Republic, with government officials, including the Socialist Prime Minister Guy Mollet, downplaying the ascendancy of armed Algerian nationalism through a myriad of euphemisms: 'operations to maintain order', 'pacification', 'the events'. At the time, this euphemistic vocabulary enabled French colonial officials to circumnavigate laws enshrined in the Geneva Conventions, which did not apply to colonial conflicts or civil ones; later, it would lead historians to diagnose the

conflict as ‘a war without a name’ (Talbot 1981), ‘an undeclared war’ (Evans 2012) and ‘a phoney war’ (Stora 2001: 33–41). Yet even as metropolitan politicians were in the process of understating the acceleration of nationalist violence, were they covertly preparing to crush it, in the first instance by legislating the use of conscription in Algeria, and in the second instance, by controversially recalling tens of thousands of ‘reservists’ who had already completed their military obligations (see Chapter 1 for a fictional depiction of a reservist named Frédéric). These decisions notably cleaved open an immediate difference between the Algerian War of Independence and the Indochina War (1946–54), which did not involve conscript-civilians-in-uniform, but career soldiers, including paratroopers and legionnaires. In March 1956, laws concerning conscription were then bolstered by the Special Powers Act, an equally controversial law which conferred on the French army in Algeria ‘extensive and exceptional powers to re-establish order’, including supplementing the manpower of conscripts and reservists with security police, gendarmes, legionnaires, paratroopers and Harkis, a group of Algerian auxiliary units who worked with the French army to combat nationalism (Thénault 2012: 68). But re-establish order they did not, and by the end of 1956, the 900,000 troops stationed in Algeria found themselves floundering to halt what looked less like an isolated spate of attacks, and more like a national revolution, spearheaded by the FLN.

However, if we had to identify one pivotal year in the history of the war, then that year would be 1957. It was, after all, the year in which a small number of testimonials published by military personnel returning from service starkly exposed the official policy of ‘pacification’ as an elaborate facade, cultivated to obscure the excessive military violence that was in reality often indiscriminately directed against the Algerian community. James D. Le Sueur has written eloquently about the significance of 1957 in the continuum of the war, demarcating it as an elemental moment in what he terms ‘the turn against silence’, in sum, the point at which the unspeakable atrocities being committed in French Algeria were spoken, or rather written, about, notably in a range of pacifist testimonials (2001: 179). These testimonials were threaded through the pages of diverse publications, including the weekly magazine *L'Express*, which printed a section of Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber’s autobiographical novel *Lieutenant en Algérie/Lieutenant in Algeria* (1957); the liberal Catholic journal, *Esprit*, which circulated an article by a reservist named Robert Bonnaud, entitled ‘La Paix des Nementchas/The Peace of the Nementchas’ (1957); *Des rappelés témoignent/Mobilised Reservists Bear Witness* (Comité de Résistance Spirituelle 1957), a pamphlet of twenty-four texts, including diary entries, scraps of written testimony and letters, published by the Spiritual Resistance Committee, to which Pierre-Henri Simon’s *Contre la torture/Against Torture* (1957) can also be added. Many of these interventions revolved around a metaphorical imaginary of colonial sickness, with allusions to colonial ‘cancer’ and ‘gangrene’ proving

particularly popular amongst late-colonial commentators. This imaginary can be found in Jean Planchais's 1958 publication *Le Malaise de l'armée/The Sickness of the Army*; Pierre Vidal-Naquet's monograph *La Torture dans la République*, which was translated as *Torture: Cancer of Democracy* (1963); and Agnès Varda's film *Cléo de 5 à 7/Cléo from 5 to 7* (1962), in which the central protagonist's cancer-stricken body operates allegorically for the figurative colonial 'cancer' consuming the nation (Guibbert 1992: 248; Betz 2009: 140; see below). Likewise, in 1959, publishers Les Éditions de Minuit released a collection of testimonies written by Algerian students and professionals tortured in Paris during the war, entitled *La Gangrène/The Gangrene* (Anon. 1959), a collection which apparently inspired the title of a much more recent monograph by Benjamin Stora, subtitled 'Gangrene and Forgetting' (1998). Detainment, summary executions, pillaging and rape: by the time the French army had begun to engage in the Battle of Algiers, a particularly acrimonious period of counterinsurgency that reverberated throughout the capital between September 1956 and October 1957, any chance that European settlers and indigenous Algerians could coexist harmoniously in the 'cancerous' and 'gangrenous' body politic of French Algeria seemed like a fanciful dream.

But amidst this 'sickness', this 'cancer', this 'turn against silence', one question loomed large: torture. Administered in clandestine detention centres such as the infamous Villa Susini, or El Biar, where Henri Alleg, author of *La Question/The Question* (1958),⁵ was held, and choreographed by paratroopers and legionnaires, torture sessions usually consisted of two stages. In the first of these, the individual in question would be subjected to a robust bout of verbal questioning, often accompanied by insults and blows, as well as ostensibly arbitrary – yet actually carefully orchestrated – glimpses of other detainees suffering from the aftereffects of torture (Branche 2001: 127–8). If this stage failed to yield the information desired, officials would progress to the second one: torture itself, frequently conducted unexpectedly at night, and which could involve several precise methods. One of these was torture by water, with the victim's mouth being either submerged in a bathtub, or filled with water using a tap, pipe or jerrican. 'Waterboarding is a particularly striking example of clean violence', states Alex Adams, 'it does not leave physical scars, but it causes suffocation, extreme physical pain, and psychological terror' (2016: 23). Another method was conducted through ropes, with the victim being hung from the ceiling, usually by their arms, for a prolonged period of time. A final, more common, method was electro-torture, with a small electric device known as the *gégène*, or *magneto*, being particularly popular amongst soldiers from 1957 onwards. Composed of a generator capable of producing a high-voltage spark, alongside serrated alligator clips that could be attached to sensitive parts of the body (the penis, breasts, ears, mouth), the *gégène* was a notably less 'clean' form of 'interrogation' than water torture, with skin burns being

a recurring complaint amongst victims, alongside rarer cases of heart attacks. Darius Rejali has also pointed out that two types of *gégène* were in fact used by officers – known as *gégèneurs* – during this period: one, a standard model, adapted from machinery used for field telephones, and capable of inducing rapid spasms in the victim; the other, a larger model, nicknamed ‘the Wolf’, capable of inflicting an all-consuming ‘pain that seemed to tear the body in two’ (2007: 162). Use of the *gégène* also split opinion. For some, like the paratrooper, Jacques Massu, who famously ordered his officers to bring a *gégène* to his office so that he could experience the effects for himself, the *gégène* was a modern, even civilised piece of equipment, an exemplar of rationality and sense-making, certainly compared to the ostensibly barbaric death-rituals used by Algerian nationalists: disfigurement, throat-slitting, castration (Ross 1995: 108–16). Others framed it as an anomaly utilised exclusively by the Foreign Legion, and hence by non-French men, even if this claim has been robustly contested by historians such as Raphaëlle Branche, who has written what is undoubtedly the most comprehensive work on the subject of torture (2001). Others, for example Henri Alleg, lambasted the *gégène*, and torture more generally, as a practice evoking techniques deployed against French men by the Nazis during the Occupation (1958; Bourdet 1951; Sartre [1957] 2001; see Chapter 4). As the title of Alleg’s aforementioned treatise, *The Question*, suggests, many military officers adopted euphemistic terms such as ‘questioning’, ‘aggressive interrogation’ (*interrogatoires musclés*) or ‘tight interrogation’ (*interrogatoires serrés*) to talk about torture, with a clear judicial advantage of these expressions being that none of them denoted violence explicitly (Branche 2001: 60–1). Still others, like the leftist militant Georges-Mathieu Mattéi, brought ‘the question’ of torture closer to home. In a 1958 article, published in *Esprit*, the author conjured up a disquieting image of an officer who would ‘caress the breasts of his wife or girlfriend’ in France with the very same hands he had used to objectify bodies tortured in Algeria (818–24). As ‘the turn against silence’ came to a close in 1958, French Algeria had all but been transformed in the metropolitan imaginary, from a colonial paradise to a cesspit of ‘sickness’ and atrocity.

REDEMPTIVE PACIFISM

How were these injustices and atrocities represented culturally – in text, speech and images – as the war was unfolding, and by whom? In order to address this question, a question to which I will return throughout this book, we may productively begin to divide the French colonial population into a series of communities, each of which fostered a different relationship to the war, and all of which will be probed, to varying degrees, in the following chapters. One community that was very much implicated in the decolonisation of Algeria were soldiers, some of whom might have been instrumental in exposing

these atrocities to the metropolitan public during the turn against silence, yet many of whom ‘did not consider themselves responsible for the situation’ as perpetrators, but rather embroiled in it, as victims (Stora 2002). This is an argument pursued by a number of critical thinkers, including Marnia Lazreg, who has coined the expression ‘management of consciousness’ (2008: 179) to voice reservations about how many conscripts ‘refused to assume responsibility for torture’ during and after the war. This refusal could be found, for example, in the trial⁶ of FLN nationalist Djamila Boupacha (1960–1), during which French military officials consistently endeavoured to absolve Boupacha’s torturers from blame – assailing her, assuaging them – or, likewise, in the conscript diaries and confessions that proliferated unbidden into the purview of the public, ‘revealing a plasticity of conscience in their authors’ (Lazreg 2008: 173). It is an argument proposed by Hugh McDonnell, according to whom the authors of conscript testimonies, published in leftist journals such as *Esprit* or *Les Temps modernes*, ‘considered themselves to have arrived pure’ in Algeria, that is to say, ‘fundamentally innocent’, before being ‘perverted by the military culture and career officers’ (2020: 9). And it is an argument extended to the ambivalent imaginary of late-colonial literature by Emma Kuby (2013) and Philip Dine (1994a). Weighing up the ethics of Gilles Perrault’s quasi-autobiographical *Les Parachutistes/Parachutists* (1961), Kuby, for example, concedes that the ‘torture and rape of indigenous Algerians might be discussed in excruciating detail in the novel’, again displaying an ethos of pacifism ingrained in the turn against silence, yet the ultimate message insinuated therein is that ‘young French soldiers are themselves the primary victims of the War’ (2013: 143). Dine, meanwhile, shifts his attention to ‘Les Étangs de Fontargente/The Fontargente Pools’ (1959), a short story of a psychologically distressed veteran by Vladimir Pozner, in which ‘rather than the recognition of guilt that is an essential prerequisite for true forgiveness, it is the French nation’s collective will to forgetfulness which is evoked’ (1994a: 114).

Another community implicated in the war were European settlers. Unlike soldiers, this community was not tied together by a sense of military duty, but by a legacy of territorial occupation, of colonial customs fostered and preserved. Nor were they generally accused of directly perpetrating acts of atrocity, but rather abetting them: first, by supporting the French army, even as it became abundantly clear that the latter had begun to abuse their aforementioned special powers from 1956 onwards; and second, by championing the plight of the Secret Armed Organisation (*Organisation armée secrète*, henceforth referred to as the OAS), a proto-terrorist military organisation formed in 1961 in an ultimately futile attempt at preventing Algeria from achieving independence.⁷ Nonetheless, the more we examine the complex cultural history of the settlers, the more we uncover a similar propensity towards self-exculpation as that ingrained within the cultural history of the soldiers. It is for this reason that historian Anne Roche

has spoken of the ‘strategies of [colonial] denial’ adopted by many settlers to ‘repress’ the ‘taboo’ elements of the colonial system, that is to say, the legacy of financial, cultural and social injustices elaborated above (1990: 530–1), whilst Naomi Greene suggests that ‘the fear and guilt’ experienced by this community towards what was essentially ‘stolen land’, gave rise to a pervasive logic of sublation (negation) and sublimation (idealisation) (1999: 144). With the ‘most troubling and “guilty” aspects of French colonialism’ fading from the purview of settler narratives (Greene 1999: 135), what emerged instead was a much more serene imaginary of peace and love, reconciliation and innocence, alongside an over-determined obsession with amplifying ‘the victimisation of a people who in no way deserved their fate’ (Dine 1994a: 151). As Claire Eldridge has perceptively opined (2016), this process of self-victimisation arguably attained its ideological apotheosis in 1962, after 99 per cent of the settlers – approximately 800,000 people – had fled from the nationalist violence consuming French Algeria, seeking refuge in France and beyond, and thus tainting their collective identity with a high degree of pain and pathos (see Chapter 6). Amidst this monumental exodus, many settlers felt, moreover, profoundly abandoned and betrayed by Charles de Gaulle, who they believed to have been in favour of preserving colonialism. This sense of betrayal stemmed partly from a famous speech, delivered by de Gaulle in Algiers in June 1958, and during which he informed a huge crowd of settlers that he had not just understood them (‘je vous ai compris’), but that he considered Algeria to ‘be composed of only one type of people: the French’. Shortly after this speech, however, de Gaulle performed a political U-turn, putting into motion a series of measures orientated towards Algerian independence.

Still another faction caught up in the late-colonial imbroglio was the French Communist Party, the largest party of the French Left. Like the settlers, members of the Left found themselves seduced into supporting the Special Powers Act in 1956, an act, moreover, decreed by a Socialist Prime Minister, Guy Mollet. Yet, as I demonstrate in Chapter 7, this decision, which effectively rendered the established Left indirectly complicit in the acts of violence perpetrated by the army thereafter, engendered a much more radical yearning for absolution than that expressed by the settlers, prompting some leftists to join the Jeanson Network, a clandestine faction mainly composed of pro-independence French militants, known as *porteurs de valises* – suitcase carriers – who shuttled documentation and funds for the FLN around metropolitan France and beyond (Evans 1997: 4–5). Neither love nor nostalgia but rejuvenation and regeneration thus emerged as the prevailing ideologemes of the radical Left, propelled, as it was, by a yen to achieve political redemption through concrete direct action.

A final community keen to absolve themselves of misdeeds committed in colonial Algeria was metropolitan French society itself. Certainly, this was the opinion of Jean-Paul Sartre, whose majestic essay, ‘*Vous êtes formidables/You’re*

Wonderful', published in the radically leftist *Les Temps modernes* in May 1957, caused a furore amongst intellectuals and the public alike. Toying with the semantic polyvalence of the term 'guilt', which can be used to refer to a judicial status, comparable to criminal responsibility, and a moral feeling, comparable to shame,⁸ Sartre begins his essay by suggesting – insisting – that, because the French army was fighting in the name of France, each and every French citizen was personally responsible for, or at least implicated in, the crimes perpetrated against Algerian civilians. 'The fact is that we are ill, very ill, struggling in the midst of a vague nightmare which we can neither flee nor decipher', he laments ([1957] 2001: 64), in turn, iterating the metaphorical imaginary of colonial sickness elaborated above, and gesturing towards the argumentative thrust of a later essay, equally concerned with colonial atrocities, entitled 'Nous sommes tous des assassins/We Are All Murderers' ([1958] 2001). But Sartre does not stop there: he also identifies popular culture as having played a decisive role in enabling the French public to extricate itself from the atrocities being committed in colonial Algeria. Hence the title of the radio programme he examines – entitled 'You're Wonderful' – which offered its listeners 'salvation' from the de-colonial conflict tearing Algeria asunder, 'absolving them' of culpability with tales of everyday generosity (Sartre [1957] 2001: 69, 70). Or *France-Soir*, a daily newspaper which lulled the public into a state of 'false ignorance'; one that, moreover, 'the public had contributed to maintaining' ([1957] 2001: 67, 69, 70). Both drawing from and developing earlier works on phenomenological ontology, for instance *L'Être et le néant/Being and Nothingness* (1943), Sartre calls this collective need for self-evasion and self-expiation 'bad faith' ([1957] 2001: 69, 70). As Storm Heter opines, following Sartre, 'agents in bad faith have a distorted portrait of their moral responsibilities; they have a systematic tendency to place blame in the wrong place' (2006: 70). For Gary Cox, 'a person in bad faith avoids responsibility for his [sic] embodied situation by denying that it is his situation' (2006: 99).

As the war hurtled towards its inexorable climax, neither the soldiers, nor the settlers, nor the established Left, nor metropolitan French society, considered themselves morally guilty of the atrocities being perpetrated in French Algeria. And as Charles de Gaulle signed the aforementioned Evian Accords in March 1962, this moral innocence was complemented by a judicial one, as the president issued the first in a string of amnesties, meaning 'that French administrators and members of the military could not be subject to legal proceedings related to torture, rape, extrajudicial killings and "disappearances"' (Vince 2020: 167). Benjamin Stora, one of the few scholars to conduct a detailed examination of this phenomenon, a phenomenon at once social, cultural, ethical and legal, calls it '*déculpabilisation*', roughly translated as absolution, exculpation or redemption (2004: 108; see also Stora 2002), and which bears certain parallels with Stanley Cohen's concept of 'implicatory denial' as

‘a form of self-righteousness that exonerates atrocities and obsessively blames others’ (2011: 34, 8–9), or Michael Rothberg’s claim that ‘forms of implication are difficult to grasp not only because they are complex and shifting, but because they are frequently rendered obscure by forms of psychic and social denial’ (2009: 8). ‘In France, it was important that any guilt generated in the great divorce’, that is to say, the de-linking of France from Algeria, ‘was mitigated’ (Stora 1998: 20), giving rise to what I would like to call a discourse of ‘redemptive pacifism’, according to which the war was framed in ontologically negative terms, as a source of pain and atrocity (the ‘pacifist’ element), whilst France was framed in ethically positive terms, as a country composed of absolved victims and (anti)heroes (the ‘redemptive’ element). As Françoise Vergès observes, ‘the reinvention of France as innocent of colonial crimes was the price society was ready to pay in order to embrace the benefits of modernisation’ (2010: 143–4), generating what Maya Boutaghou has termed a cultural trope of ‘therapeutic resolution’ (2019b: 8), and forecasting what Paul Gilroy has called ‘postcolonial melancholia’ (2005).⁹

Before we begin to envisage how this discourse of ‘redemptive pacifism’ translated specifically into the imaginary of French films released during, and immediately after the war, including, as we have seen, Resnais’s *Muriel ou le temps d’un retour*, let me clarify that the argument proposed in this book has been implied by certain film scholars before, yet not apropos the same cinematic corpus. In *German Cinema: Terror and Trauma* (2014), Thomas Elsaesser, for one, has spoken eloquently about the strategies of ‘guilt management’, adopted by German directors in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War (2014: 26–7, 285–305). Examining a range of comedies, melodramas and thrillers produced from the 1940s to the 1960s, for example, *Banditen der Autobahn/Bandits of the Autobahn* (Geza von Cziffra, 1955), and *Der schlaf der gerechten/The Sleep of the Righteous* (Hädrich, 1962), Elsaesser suggests that ‘redemption through substitution seems to be the narrative element that works towards cancelling out whatever moral unease or guilt the stories generate’, with the result being a range of innocent characters blessed with ‘soothed consciences’ (2014: 287–8). In the world of French film studies, meanwhile, a similar lexicon has been cultivated to capture the complexity of the films produced in France as the country lurched into liberation. These included: Claude Autant-Lara’s *Le Diable au corps/The Devil in the Flesh* (1946), and Julian Duvivier’s *Panique/Panic* (1946), both of which not only glossed over, or ‘cancelled out’, one of the most troubling aspects of the Occupation – collaboration – but ‘attested to a need to project the immediate past onto a different set of narratives, removed from the immediate arena of guilt’ (Hayward 1993: 129–30). Lynn Higgins concurs, indicating how later films such as *Le Dernier métro/The Last Metro* (Truffaut, 1981) and *Au revoir les enfants/Goodbye, Children* (Malle, 1987), encapsulate ‘a ritual of

self-accusation and self-forgiveness for [the] national crime [of collaboration]’, leading, in turn, to ‘a peculiar dynamic of confession, invention and guilt, alongside a desire for absolution and evasion’ (1996: 145, 146). Higgins calls this ‘a collective gesture of revisionary historiography’ (1996: 145).

Shifting time and place, it is a critical interpretation that has been brought to bear upon the ways in which American directors filtered the country’s experience of the Vietnam War (1955–75) through a similarly expiatory frame, transforming extra-filmic guilt into filmic innocence, and extra-filmic perpetration into filmic victimhood (it is also worth mentioning here that the Vietnam War shares many parallels with the Algerian War of Independence¹⁰). Parsing the politics of *The Deer Hunter* (Cimino, 1978), *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (Cosmatos, 1985) and *Full Metal Jacket* (Kubrick, 1987), Linda Dittmar and Gene Michaud have, for instance, concluded that post-Vietnam films frequently ‘find something redeeming to say about this war even as they echo the public’s myriad and often contradictory misgivings about it’ (1991: 7). This is corroborated by Keith Beattie’s assertion that ‘the pattern of denying guilt, as opposed to widespread confessions of guilt, formed the dominant cultural response to the war in Vietnam’ (1998: 41), whilst John Orr has conjectured that many of the American films enumerated above ‘tell us that the world can be redeemed from evil’ (1993: 30). By the same token, Joseph Sartelle has talked about how American films made during the 1970s and 1980s responded to the Vietnam War – amongst other socio-historical phenomena, including the rise of multiculturalism and feminism – by representing ‘the white man as victim’ (1996: 522). As Sartelle states: ‘white male paranoia movies expressed the white male’s sense of resentment and anger in reaction to a perceived loss of privilege; they told us that the normative American white male *felt* like a victim even if the rest of society told him he was the oppressor’ (1996: 522–3 [emphasis in original]). Widening the scope of the debate still further, Raya Morag has analysed a trend in contemporary Israeli narrative cinema, glossing how works such as *Beaufort* (Cedar, 2007) and *Lebanon* (Maoz, 2009), transform Israeli soldiers, that is to say, the perpetrators of a spate of atrocities committed against Palestinians during the Second Intifada, into guiltless, anti-heroic victims. Opines Morag: ‘[films from this era have a tendency to] re-mythologise the Israeli combat soldier through a process of sacrificial victimization that overshadows the subject position of the perpetrator, and inevitably of the Palestinian victim as well’ (2012: 94–5).

Whether studying films about the Second World War, the Vietnam War, or the Second Intifada, what remains implicit in all of these critical interventions – alongside my own – is a symptomatic understanding of cinema as akin to an immense cultural lens, capable of channelling a collective yearning to re-write and re-envisage history, rendering the latter, in turn, less distressing and more palpable, less implicating and more ethically reassuring, for France, at least.

Naomi Greene puts it well: ‘if films are sensitive to half-hidden moods, or to unacknowledged desires, they also capture and reflect the ways in which such moods and desires may work to “screen”, to soften and repress, the most troubling zones of the national past’ (1999: 6). For Frank Wetta, ‘the social trauma of a badly conducted war cries out for the comforting fantasy of [cinematic] mythmaking’ (1992: 4).

LATE-COLONIAL FRENCH CINEMA

After this brief foray into questions of atrocity and absolution, pacifism and redemption, let us now begin to edge towards what I understand as ‘late-colonial French cinema’, and why I have chosen this term. In the first instance, I should point out that this book is not about colonial French filmmaking, that is to say, the type of cinematic representation spawned out of the apotheosis of colonial culture in the 1930s, with films such as *Le Grand jeu* (Feyder, 1934), *La Bandera* (Duvivier, 1935), and *Pépé le Moko* (Duvivier, 1937), propagating Orientalist racial-ethnic stereotypes even as they exalted France as a civilizing power in Africa (see Stam and Spence 1983; Sherzer 1996; Ezra 2000). Nor is it about post-colonial French filmmaking, in other words, narratives released definitively after the end of colonialism, such as *Le Crabe-tambour/The Drummer Crab* (Schoendoerffer, 1977), *Outremer/Overseas* (Roüan, 1990), and *Chocolat/Chocolate* (Denis, 1988), infused, as they were, with a much more retrospective, and tangibly nostalgic, re-imagining of France’s colonies (see Portuges 1996; Greene 1999; Eades 2006; Scharold 2016a; Boutaghou 2019a; Donadey 2020). Nor still is this book about post-colonial Algerian cinema, a topic that has most comprehensively been studied by Guy Austin (2007a; 2009; 2011; 2012; see also Sharpe 2013; 2015; Flood 2017; Wallenbrock 2020). Rather, I have used the term ‘late-colonial’ to describe a spate of cinematic narratives that represented the decolonisation of Algeria as it occurred from 1954 to 1962: either from the ideological perspective of French soldiers returning to metropolitan France, or the ideological perspective of French settlers based in French Algeria, or the ideological perspective of the French Left, whose militants – as I show in Chapter 7 – often occupied a liminal space, between territories and communities. Many of the films discussed in this book admittedly appropriate the iconographies of colonial French cinema whilst forecasting the iconographies of post-colonial French cinema, with the Eurocentrism of the former and the nostalgia of the latter being particularly prominent within several of my case studies. But these case studies are also imbued with a constellation of themes – loss, pacifism, emasculation, reconciliation, victimisation and expiation, to name a few – that are very much symptomatic of the de-colonial epoch, leading me, anecdotally, to consider calling my corpus ‘de-colonial French cinema’, before ultimately abandoning the idea. This decision was taken to avoid any confusion between

my case studies and the recent de-colonial turn¹¹ in the humanities, with the former remaining obliquely tethered to a colonial ideology that the latter unequivocally repudiates.

In its emphasis on temporality, the term 'late-colonial' includes several advantages. First, in terms of my own research, it proved inclusive enough to capture the multiple political perspectives adopted by the films in my corpus, some of which could be described as obliquely pro-colonial, conveying values aligned with the Right, others obliquely anti-colonial, conveying values aligned with the Left, still others which display values more associated with political ambivalence, disengagement, or a complete rejection of politics altogether (it is also worth pointing out here that the terms 'political', 'politically engaged' and 'politicised' are often confusingly used by scholars to implicitly allude to leftist narratives, even if the terms themselves do not designate any political stance per se). In this respect, the lexicon that I deploy in this book is comparable to that used by Mark Betz, Alan O'Leary and Philip Dine, all of whom have commendably defined their corpora with a similar degree of intellectual caution, as consisting of 'films on the Algerian question' (Betz 2009: 103, 107), 'European cinema in its age of modernisation and decolonisation' (Betz 2009: 39), 'end of empire films that deal with the exhaustion of the French and European project' (O'Leary 2019: 27, 73), and 'French cinema of the final stage of the decolonisation of the Maghreb' (Dine 1994b: 24), rather than falling into the trap of categorising the cinematic narratives of this era as either perforce 'political' or perforce 'anti-colonial'. Second, in terms of future research, the term 'late-colonial' is inclusive enough to be used in other contexts, for example, to study cultural narratives produced to imagine and re-imagine the realities of different French territories as they strove for sovereignty (Tunisia, Morocco, Ivory Coast, sub-Saharan Africa, to name a few). Or to analyse narratives that are not cinematic, but literary, photographic or poetic. Or even to interrogate narratives produced by colonial countries other than France, for instance, *Black Narcissus* (Powell and Pressburger, 1947), a British psychological drama film set in the Himalayas and released mere months before India achieved independence from Britain. Finally, as Linda Badley and R. Barton Palmer remind us, if some trends in world cinema are 'self-defining', and others 'self-promoting', then I should stress that designating the films explored in this book as 'late-colonial' is the result of my own critical decision to treat them as a body of work (2006: 2).

Developing these thoughts further, one of the arguments that I make in the following chapters is that late-colonial French cinema should be perceived as a trans-generic body of films, bound up with various formal strategies, narrative conventions, cinematic traditions and tendencies. A distinct tendency with which many of the films discussed in this book could persuasively be allied, for instance, is the French New Wave, or *Nouvelle Vague*. In the most taxonomic

readings of this tendency, the French New Wave is taken to encompass five ‘Young Turk’ directors: François Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, Claude Chabrol, Eric Rohmer and Jacques Rivette. Each of these individuals contributed to *Cahiers du cinéma*, an influential cinema journal founded by Doniol-Valcroze, Lo Duca and André Bazin in 1951, before turning their skills towards directing. Each of them was yoked with what was known as the ‘Right Bank’, insofar as they came from affluent neighbourhoods situated to the right of the River Seine in Paris. And each of them professed their belief in *la politique des auteurs*, an aesthetic credo predicated upon elevating the status of the director to an ideally sovereign artist, or *auteur*, able to wield their camera with the same degree of autonomy as that wielded by the writer over their pen (see Chapter 4). In the late 1960s, Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino famously deployed the term ‘second cinema’ to categorise the New Wave, interpreting it simultaneously as an attempt at cleansing or ‘decolonising’ cinema from the corrupting influence of Hollywoodian ‘first cinema’, and as a mode of production that was nonetheless vulnerable to being ‘institutionalised by neo-colonised or capitalist society’ (1970–1: 4).

More supple readings of the New Wave generally maintain the historical scope of this taxonomy – seeing the French New Wave as a tendency that ascended as colonialism receded – even as they reconfigure its criteria.¹² Sometimes, this process of reconfiguration involves populating the New Wave with individuals previously marginalised from it. In lieu of an enshrined pantheon of (male) directors from the Right Bank of the Seine, the history of the New Wave is thus enlarged to include a cluster of slightly older and politically engaged directors from the Left Bank of the Seine, notably Alain Resnais, Agnès Varda and Chris Marker (Temple and Witt 2004: 183). Each of these directors produced at least one film that can hypothetically be considered late-colonial, including the aforementioned *Muriel ou le temps d’un retour*, *La Jetée/The Jetty* (Marker, 1962; mentioned in Chapter 4), and Varda’s *Cléo de 5 à 7* (mentioned above and in Chapter 5), although, for reasons elaborated below, none of these films form sustained case studies in this book. Other times, the category of the New Wave is reconfigured towards more general technologies and techniques wielded by directors, including: the Nagra tape recorder, the Caméflex 35mm camera, off-studio filming and modernist formal experimentation, expressed most evidently in camera movement (tracking and panning shots), non-synchronous sound and disjunctive iterations in editing, devised specifically to fracture and fissure the spatio-temporal continuity of classical Hollywood realism. These technologies and techniques can be found in various late-colonial tales explored in this book, including Jacques Rozier’s *Adieu Philippine*, Robert Enrico’s *La Belle vie*, Doniol-Valcroze’s *La Dénonciation*, and Jacques Rivette’s *Paris nous appartient*. Louis Malle, director of *Le Feu follet*, meanwhile, has been named as falling ‘within and without the New

Wave', 'within' insofar as like New Wave *auteurs*, Malle preferred filming outside of the studio, 'without' as his aesthetic grammar often liberally drew from the mainstream classical tradition (Frey 2004b: 2–11). A similar observation could be made about Jacques Dupont, with the director both indiscriminately drawing and diverging from the iconographic idioms of Jean-Luc Godard's New Wave exemplar, *À bout de souffle/Breathless* (1960), in his curious albeit impetuous psychodrama, *Les Distractions*.

Beyond the New Wave, this book deals with a variety of other cinematic idioms and traditions. In Chapter 2, for instance, I consider the star-studded imaginary of Mark Robson's *Les Centurions*, which projects the war through a deluge of bombastic tropes, pilfered from the Second World War combat film. In Chapters 5 and 7, I filter my ideas through a number of cinematic narratives that have been linked to what is known alternately as 'marginal' (Borde 1962a: 15–17; Guibbert 1992: 247–8) or, more frequently, 'parallel' cinema,¹³ with scholars summoning the term 'parallel' as an indication, first, of the perceived anti-colonial or anti-war radicalism of the often short films associated with this trend (frequently shot on 16mm); and second, as an indication of the unofficial ways in which they were funded (privately), distributed (covertly) and screened (clandestinely). These screenings often took place, for example, at union meetings and ciné-clubs, including the Paris-based 'Action', prompting both Jean-Pierre Jeancolas (1979: 160) and Michel Cadé (1997: 49–50) to speak less of a 'parallel cinema' and more of a 'parallel circuit', whilst many scholars have identified René Vautier and Pierre Clément as the most (in)famous proponents of 'parallel' filmmaking.¹⁴ Two 'parallel' films will thus be weighed up in Chapter 5: *Le Retour*, and *Secteur postal 89098*, with both being at least co-directed by ex-soldiers (Yann Le Masson in the former, Philippe Durand in the latter), and both hinging upon a shared thematic of psychic disarray, experienced by military protagonists who drift across the cinematic spaces in question. In Chapter 7, I turn my attention to two 'parallel' documentaries: *Octobre à Paris* and *J'ai 8 ans*, linking them to various trends in documentary practice, including 'the interactive mode' and the voice-of-God tradition. Both of these documentaries could also be linked to a certain category of political cinema, 'consisting of films made by First or Second World people in support of Third World peoples and adhering to the principles of Third Cinema' (Shohat and Stam 1994: 28), or, alternatively as examples of 'the militant image': a term used by Kodwo Eshun and Ros Gray to designate 'any form of image or sound produced in and through film making practices dedicated to the liberation struggles and revolutions of the late twentieth century' (2011: 1). In Chapter 6, I study the politics of what Rebecca Weaver-Hightower and Janne Lahti have termed 'settler cinema' (2020), that is to say, two moving pictures – *Les Oliviers de la justice* and *Au biseau des baisers* – that were not only made by European settlers subsisting in a war-stricken French Algeria, but also thematise the fantasies and anxieties

of this very community. As with ‘parallel cinema’, this is a sub-category of late-colonial filmmaking that has not been extensively treated by scholars working in the domain. Astute readers may notice that this book skirts around what are generally assumed to be the canonical late-colonial films that surfaced during and immediately following the war: Varda’s *Cléo de 5 à 7*, Resnais’s *Muriel ou le temps d’un retour*, Jean-Luc Godard’s *Le Petit soldat/The Little Soldier* (1960/1963), mentioned in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, and Gillo Pontecorvo’s *La Bataille d’Alger/The Battle of Algiers* (1966), mentioned in Chapter 7. Given that each of these films has been subjected to sustained academic interpretation by a range of scholars,¹⁵ I have decided to refrain from analysing them as case studies here. Instead, this book is fuelled by a desire to go beyond this canon – to peer behind it, to excavate underneath it – opening up, in turn, an abundant yet unappreciated seam of late-colonial films. These include works by Yann Le Masson, whose sprawling influence on no less than six late-colonial films, listed in Chapter 7, cannot be overestimated. They include works by Jean Herman, director of the remarkable *Actua-tilt* (1961),¹⁶ *Le Chemin de la mauvaise route/The Wrong Path* (1962),¹⁷ and *La Quille/On-Leave* (1963).¹⁸ And they include the oeuvre of Paul Carpita, whose considerable artistry can be seen in late-colonial films such as *La Récréation/Break Time* (1958),¹⁹ *Marseille sans soleil/Marseille Without Sun* (1961),²⁰ alongside the significantly more complex *Demain L’amour/Love, Tomorrow* (1962).²¹ To the omission of canonical films in my corpus can finally be added a string of further omissions, dictated by the unfortunate enduring unavailability of many of the seventy²² films that could persuasively be defined as ‘late-colonial’. I also address this question – the question of accessibility – in the conclusion to the book.

BEYOND CENSORSHIP

No study of late-colonial French cinema would be complete without a discussion of the censorship commission, which reigned over the French film industry before, during, and after decolonisation, and was informally known as ‘Anastasia’s Scissors’. As various cultural historians have shown,²³ from 1947 to 1959, censorship was carried out by a team of officials from the National Centre for Cinema and the Moving Image (*Le Centre national du cinéma et de l’image animée*, CNC) and the Ministries of Defence and Information, spearheaded by Louis Terrenoire. It was this team that decided if a film was worthy of a commercial or non-commercial visa, depending on whether it accorded with the generally apolitical, morally conservative,²⁴ yet also frequently incoherent, criteria of the censors. ‘From its inception, the commission did not follow an over-arching template, but evaluated films on a case-by-case basis’ (Croombs 2013: 12). For Terrenoire, any film displaying elements of ‘ideological propaganda could not be authorised, if only because of the risks involved

for public order' (cited in Carta 1962: 172). What actually constituted 'ideological propaganda', was, of course, open to debate, especially as neither the species of explicitly pro-military newsreels parenthetically discussed in Chapter 1 (see Denis 2009), nor the species of explicitly pro-military films discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 (*Les Centurions*, *Les Distractions*), attracted the roving eye of the commission. For films deemed unacceptable, meanwhile, this commission had three methods of restriction at its disposal: prohibition to those under the age of sixteen (from 1959 onwards); cuts and modifications; and, in the most serious cases, temporary or permanent prohibition. In 1959, control of censorship then passed to the Ministry for Cultural Affairs, managed by the intellectual-icon-turned-politician André Malraux, before restrictions placed on directors became even tighter in 1961 with the reformulation of laws associated with pre-censorship, a precautionary system that allowed officials to veto the gestation of a film before shooting had even started (Jeancolas 1979: 26). Arguably the most important change that took place during the 1950s was the introduction of *l'avance sur recettes* (an interest-free advance against box office revenue), granted, or not, after the director had submitted a synopsis to an ad hoc committee (Marie 2003: 53–5). Whilst this incentive has often been credited with catalysing a flurry of *auteur* initiatives, as a form of pre-censorship, it also privileged apolitical projects over political ones.

Different directors responded to, and were affected by, censorship in different ways. Some cineastes, for instance, quickly caved into the whims and the wishes of the state, removing any kind of allusion to the war from their works, and therefore, gently fostering an insidious culture of self-censorship that was effectively self-policing (Stora 2004: 124). Other, more radical filmmakers adopted an entirely different *modus operandi*, forsaking the official cinema industry for the parallel cinema circuit, and thus, in turn, expanding the aperture of their artistic expression even as they traded in the potential for public exposure (after all, 'parallel' films were never shown in commercial venues). Many directors attempted to 'outsmart the censors' by alluding to the war elliptically, rendering, in turn, 'censorship inoperative for lack of explicit images or lines' (de Baecque 2012: 143). Others were not so savvy, or not so lucky, and were forced to retrospectively 'mutilate' their projects at the behest of the censors. Due to their perceived political subject matter, several of the films examined in the following chapters were prevented from being publicly released until at least the aforementioned Evian Accords of 1962, after which censorship became laxer (see Raymond Lefèvre's 1966 film *Les désaccords d'Évian/The Evian Disagreements* for an anti-state take on this agreement). Such was the case, for instance, with *Adieu Philippine*, filmed in 1960 yet released in 1963 (Chapter 1); *La Belle vie*, filmed in 1962 yet released in 1964 (Chapter 1); Claude Autant-Lara's *Tu ne tueras point*, filmed in 1960 yet released in 1963 (Chapter 4); and *Le Retour*, filmed in 1959 yet released in

1962 (Chapter 5). Others were subjected to acts of prohibition, including *J'ai 8 ans*, filmed in 1961 yet banned until 1971 (Chapter 7); *Octobre à Paris*, filmed in 1962 yet banned until 1973 (Chapter 7); and *Secteur postal 89098*, subjected to a total ban in October 1961, on the pretence that the film 'provocatively and intolerably encouraged military insubordination' (cited in Lefèvre 1997: 43; Chapter 5). In an open discussion with Jean-Luc Godard, René Vautier meanwhile, attested to having been censored not by officials working in France, but rather by the FLN. 'When I showed [*Algérie en flammes*²⁵ to the FLN] in Cairo, they told me to cut out a sequence in which nationalists are seen crying. I asked them why and they said: "because an Algerian nationalist dies but doesn't cry"'. Vautier refused to mutilate his film and was subsequently imprisoned by the FLN (N'Guyen 2006: 400).

It is important to recognise that the regime of French state censorship elaborated above was not the only reason that late-colonial French films often represented the war using elliptical, muted, or sublimated imagery. Close examination of the cultural landscape reveals that other aesthetic and ideological factors were at work too, even before the censors had decided to release a project to the masses, modify it, defer it, or void it altogether. In two illuminating monographs, both Geneviève Sellier (2008: 137–44) and Antoine de Baecque (2012: 104–28) have, for instance, identified political disengagement as one of the prevailing aesthetic idioms of late-colonial culture, as embedded in the cinematic output of the Right Bank 'Young Turks' as it was in the literary output of the Hussars, a group of disengaged writers whose counterculture I explore in Chapter 3. According to Sellier and de Baecque,²⁶ this apolitical idiom was particularly apparent in Godard's aforementioned *Le Petit soldat*, arguably banned, as it was, until 1963 by an overzealous censorial team erroneously convinced that the film had taken an unequivocally political stance against the conflict. 'When you see the film', mused Jean de Baroncelli in *Le Monde*, 'you are surprised by the severity of the commission's ruling. The allusions to the Algerian War are in fact discreet, confused, and rarely aggressive' (cited in Sellier 2008: 135). This reading of *Le Petit soldat* is echoed in the work of a variety of scholars, with Matthew Croombs, for example, arguing that 'Godard iterates in anarchic fashion, the political confusion and self-doubt that the war triggered for many French intellectuals' (2013: 18). Benjamin Stora concurs, describing it as 'a *first-person narrative* composed of engagement and dis-engagement, right-wing anarchism and leftist politics, the ebb and flow of emotions, and – above all – [a protagonist] that wavers between camps, swaying from the OAS to the FLN' (1998: 249 [emphasis in original]). Godard himself has shed even more light on the matter, describing how the film was based on his own experience of leaving for Switzerland after deserting from the French army, before leaving for France after deserting from the Swiss army. 'My behaviour was anarchic and individualist', he concedes (N'Guyen 2006: 400).

Other late-colonial films were characterised by a similar degree of political ambiguity but for different reasons. Writing for the journal *Combat*, Henry Chapier (1963), for instance, responded to the staggered release of Autant-Lara's *Tu ne tueras point* by chastising it as a film that 'neither deserved the scandal nor the importance that had been thrust upon it by the censors', whilst Lia Brozgal has argued more generally that 'by abolishing an archive', through censorship, for example, the state inadvertently 'creates the conditions for [the archive in question] to become a fetish' (2014: 37). Ivone Margulies (2004) has meanwhile drawn attention to the convoluted politics at play in Edgar Morin and Jean Rouch's leftist experiment in *cinéma vérité*, *Chronique d'un été/Chronicle of a Summer* (1961), with Margulies perceptively commenting that 'the film's turns from inane generality to incomprehensible specificity, from saying everything and then nothing, are due in part to the *self-censored* speech of politicized personages' (2004: 183 [emphasis added by author]). A similar point could also be made about the two leftist parallel documentaries examined in Chapter 7, both of which are pervaded by myriad ideological silences and blind spots, *even after* their directors had managed to bypass the pitfalls of pre-censorship, the lure of self-censorship, and the violent carving up of the filmic image by 'Anastasia's Scissors'.

But perhaps the most telling indication of the 'self-censorship' of which theorists such as Margulies have written can be found not within the diegetic complexities of late-colonial narratives, but beyond them: specifically, in the content of two extra-filmic, or epitextual, interview-surveys, conducted by journalists with industry experts. One of these was published in the weekly news magazine, *L'Express* on 29 September 1960, and was driven by the following questions: 'if censorship didn't exist, would you like to make a film about the Algerian War; and if so, how do you think you would approach this subject?' The responses – proffered by ten renowned directors, including Claude Chabrol, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, and Pierre Kast – are revealing. Two directors replied 'no' to the question (François Truffaut, René Clair). The rest responded 'yes', yet with screenplay-ideas that essentially reiterated the thematics of the films being produced under censorship. These included: 'the drama of a conscript' (Doniol-Valcroze); 'a narrative illustrating the influence of the War on metropolitan France' (Kast); and 'a tale of deserters destroyed by an unnamed camp' (Chabrol). François Truffaut, ever the iconoclast, justified his negative response by insisting that he 'wouldn't want to add to the current confusion [concerning the war] with a confusing film' (see Daniel 1972: 336–7 and Scharold 2016b: 20). The second, and much more damning, interview-survey in question was published in the weekly film magazine *Film français*, in 1961. This time, the respondents were not only directors, but professionals from different strata of the industry. But the opinions of those interviewed were nonetheless familiar, with Alain Poiré, a producer at Gaumont, insisting

that ‘censorship wasn’t that bad’, whilst budding director Edouard Molinaro thought that ‘too many people were doing stupid stuff’, before calling on the censors to ‘slow them down’. Others, like André Cayatte, demanded ‘a professional form of censorship’ (see Frodon 1995: 145–6). All of which indicated, once again, that the machinations of the censors may have been one catalyst for the depoliticised, politically equivocal, or ideologically soft-focused iconographies of late-colonial cinema, but they were not the only one. As I strive to illustrate throughout this book, there were many other, equally important, reasons for which certain aspects of the war – colonial guilt, in particular – remained both unseen and unspoken.

METHODOLOGY, ARGUMENT AND STRUCTURE

Scholarship on late-colonial cinema has passed through various cycles. The earliest attempts at investigating the relationship between French cinema and the war can be found in the leftist and Marxist-inflected film journal *Positif*, which published a plethora of articles on how decolonisation was, or wasn’t, being documented by French cineastes at the time (see Borde 1962a; Benayoun 1962; Gozlan 1962). Often these articles pivoted around a polemical attempt at discerning two diametrically opposed camps in the New Wave: one containing the Right Bank Young Turks, affiliated with *Cahiers du cinéma*, who were disparaged for their perceived apolitical formalism (an obsessive concern with film form); the other containing the cineastes of the Left Bank, who were applauded for their perceived political formalism (Higgins 1996: 1–16). As Jim Hillier intimates, ‘*Cahiers* (as opposed to *Positif*) was very much part of broader political-cultural currents moving steadily to the Right, and which varied between being overtly anti-Left, and simply being silent on political issues such as the Algerian struggle for independence’ (1985: 6). It is therefore unsurprising that one of the most political tracts of the era – Yann Le Masson and Olga Baïdar-Poliakoff’s ‘Manifeste pour un cinéma parallèle/Manifesto for a Parallel Cinema’ – would not be written into the pages of *Cahiers*, but those of *Positif* (1962: 18).

During the 1970s, two French authors widened the scope of these early journalistic endeavours into longer scholarly works. The first of these was by Joseph Daniel, whose illuminating yet unappreciated monograph, *Guerre et cinéma: grandes illusions et petits soldats (1895–1971)/War and Cinema: Big Illusions and Small Soldiers (1895–1971)* traced a vastly comprehensive history of how popular, parallel and *auteur* directors had engaged with the war as it was unfolding (1972: 295–395). The second was by Jean-Pierre Jeancolas, whose monograph *Le Cinéma des Français: La Vème République/French Cinema: The Fifth Republic* included two informative chapters on censorship (1979: 27–65) and the politics of late-colonial representation (1979: 103–65),

with Jeancolas defining 1956 to 1958 as a historical excursion during which French citizens decided ‘to live with a guilty conscience or retreat’, and late-colonial French cinema as ‘cut off from life, cut off from the present, and cut off from history’ (1979: 97). Neither Daniel nor Jeancolas’s works were couched in the type of semiotic, psychoanalytic or ideological (neo-Marxist) concepts wielded by many other film scholars during the 1970s, especially those writing in film journals such as *New Left Review*, *Camera Obscura* or *Screen*; nor did they display an engagement with the contemporaneous rise of cultural studies or post-colonial studies; yet both belied a breadth and depth of knowledge and expertise that was clearly the result of extensive and extended archival research. It was only in the 1990s that scholars began to subject the imaginary of late-colonial culture to sustained analysis through the conceptual vocabulary of critical theory. In an important contribution to the field, Philip Dine (1994a), for instance, adopted a quasi-semiotic, neo-Marxist, theoretical paradigm to conceptualise the literature and cinema of Algerian decolonisation, homing in on the ideological workings of ‘myth’ (3–12), and thus echoing the symptomatic reading of late-colonial domestic culture conducted by Kristin Ross in her seminal work *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies* (1995). Complementing Dine’s intervention, Benjamin Stora meanwhile, projected the same culture through a different critical lens (1998; 2004), less aligned with myth and more aligned with what has become one of the most dominant critical paradigms in the humanities, and indeed, in scholarship on late-colonial culture: memory studies. Stora was also instrumental in co-editing an important 1997 collection of essays on the subject,²⁷ before Naomi Greene released an authoritative monograph, devoted to teasing out the complexities of late-colonial and post-colonial cinema, and which effectively bolted together the two critical concepts held separate by Dine and Stora: ‘myth and memory’ (1999: 3–13).

More recent scholarship on the subject has tended to fork in divergent directions, depending on whether the scholar in question is affiliated with film studies or French studies. Two theorists who have done much to enrich the debate on late-colonial cinema in the domain of film studies are Matthew Croombs (2010; 2013; 2014; 2017) and Geneviève Sellier (2000; 2008). Both thinkers, like myself, limit the scope of their inquiries to a synchronic snapshot of the epoch: the late 1950s and the early 1960s. Both, likewise, base many of their arguments on theories of political representation initially proposed by the aforementioned critics of *Positif*. But where Croombs follows the ‘positive’ strand of this journal, critically praising the Left Bank as an inherently political cinema, in much the same way as journalists such as Borde, Benayoun and Gozlan, working in the early 1960s, had done, Sellier trades Croombs’s ‘positive’ interrogation for a ‘negative’ one, often weaponising the same articles from *Positif* to articulate critical opprobrium for the depoliticising ethos at the core of the Right Bank, and, by extension, *Cahiers du cinéma*.

Glossing this culture, Sellier, for instance, insists that ‘Young Turk’ directors were often ‘more favourable towards “formalist” artistic projects than towards screenplays inscribed in contemporary social and political issues’ (2008: 216–17). An at once wider and narrower study of the cinematic landscape of the era has been conducted by Mark Betz in his essential monograph, *Beyond the Subtitle* (2009), in which the author discusses allusions to the political legacy of decolonisation in both Right Bank *and* Left Bank films, before curiously concluding his inquiry by conjecturing that ‘a film on the Algerian question’ is one that harnesses the mobile female body as an allegory for decolonisation (for example Varda’s *Cléo de 5 à 7*, or Jean-Luc Godard’s *Vivre sa vie/To Live Her Life* [1962]), even if Betz can only come to this conclusion by ignoring the persistent masculine-centrism of the New Wave, as identified and analysed by Sellier. Ultimately, although I draw from the pioneering collective work of Croombs, Sellier and Betz throughout this book, I also strive to go beyond it: first, by enlarging the scale of my corpus away from the New Wave specifically and towards the trans-generic category of late-colonial filmmaking more generally; and second, by edging the focal point of my analysis away from the politics of cinematic representation and towards more ethically inflected questions regarding guilt and innocence, complicity and absolution, and perpetration and victimhood. As the reader will see, this dual shift – from the New Wave to the late-colonial, and from the political to the ethical – forms the defining feature of my own intervention on the subject.

This book is also in dialogue with two even more recent and equally excellent monographs: Maria Flood’s *France, Algeria and the Moving Image* (2017), and Nicole Beth Wallenbrock’s *The Franco-Algerian War through a Twenty-First Century Lens* (2020), both of which are rooted more firmly in the domain of French studies, and both of which share various methodological parallels. Unlike my own book, both of these monographs, for instance, interrogate a range of late-colonial and post-colonial films from a diachronic perspective, with Wallenbrock’s corpus stretching from 1965 to 2013, and Flood’s from 1963 to 2010. Again, unlike this book, both monographs are trans-national studies, with a range of narratives from French directors – for instance *Of Gods and Men/Des hommes et des dieux* (Beauvois, 2010), and *L’Ennemi intime/The Intimate Enemy* (Siri, 2007) – being weighed up against those made by their Algerian counterparts, including *La Nouba des femmes du Mont Chenoua/The Nouba of the Women of Mount Chenoua* (Djebar, 1979), as read by Flood, or, *Cartouches Gauloises/Summer of ’62* (Charef, 2007), as read by Wallenbrock. Where both works clearly *do* intersect with my own, however, is in their conceptual scope, with neither scholar deploying one theoretical paradigm to facilitate their analysis, but many. In Wallenbrock’s book, we thus find nothing less than a dazzling condensation of critical concepts, such as Jacques Derrida’s scission and circumcision, David Harvey’s utopian

dialectics, Félix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze's de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation, and Thomas Elsaesser's aforementioned 'guilt management'. Flood, meanwhile, looks elsewhere for theoretical inspiration, predicating many of her arguments on Jacques Rancière's notion of dis-identification and Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia.

Inspired by the work of these thinkers, alongside other important interventions on the subject by Irmgard Scharold (2016a),²⁸ Maya Boutaghou (2019a),²⁹ and Anne Donadey (2020),³⁰ the argumentative compass of this book will thus revolve around one chief question – what is late-colonial French cinema? – with this question, in turn, generating two attendant answers. In the first instance, I will argue that late-colonial cinema represents a formally and thematically important yet unappreciated trend in the continuum of modern French cinema; one that has largely been overshadowed by the insidious effects of state censorship, alongside a narrow scholarly interest in the French New Wave. 'Histories of French cinema', contends Geneviève Sellier, 'all give a privileged place to the New Wave', leading to what the author terms 'a critical doxa' on the subject, more focused on text than context, and on the apoliticism of auteurism than the politics – or, for that matter, ethics – of decolonisation (2008: 2). In the second instance, I will argue that whilst late-colonial French cinema cannot be seen as a coherent cinematic movement, school, or genre of filmmaking – like the Western or musical – it can be seen as a coherent ethical trend, with many of the case studies explored in this book filtering the war through the discourse of 'redemptive pacifism' identified above. In each chapter, I thus use the term 'redemptive pacifism' very specifically: as a means of describing how many late-colonial French films at once seem to emphasise the futility of the conflict through pacifist motifs, whilst representing French communities – notably soldiers, settlers and the Left – as either innocent or absolved of the atrocities committed therein. More details on these arguments and the ethics of 'redemptive pacifism' can be found in the introduction to each chapter, alongside the conclusion.

In terms of trajectory, meanwhile, the seven case-study chapters of this book are organised both thematically and theoretically, with a range of critical approaches and concepts being deployed in each to answer – or at least probe – the central question posed above. In Chapter 1, for example, I read Jacques Rozier's *Adieu Philippine/Goodbye Philippine* (1963) and Robert Enrico's *La Belle vie/The Good Life* (1964), through the theoretical lens of space studies, exploring how both narratives depict military officials returning from Algeria as redeemed or recuperated by the privatised home-as-haven that awaits them. In Chapter 2, I extend these discussions of pacifism and redemption to Alain Cavalier's *L'Insoumis/The Unvanquished* (1964) and Mark Robson's *Les Centurions/Lost Command* (1966), turning my attention to the expiatory power of star bodies and star faces through reference to thinkers working in star studies, and concluding with an interrogation

of the intense physicality of the paratroopers that feature in Robson's film. Echoing the concluding thoughts of Chapter 2, Chapter 3, meanwhile, begins with a discussion of paratrooper identity, yet within a different thematic and theoretical context: masculinity and gender studies. Castration, impotence and queerness: such are just some of the themes glossed thereafter, specifically vis-à-vis the alternately virile and victimised military protagonists that people Jacques Dupont's *Les Distractions/Trapped by Fear* (1960) and Louis Malle's *Le Feu follet/The Fire Within* (1963). Both Dupont and Malle's films also draw from the literary counterculture of the aforementioned Hussars, giving rise to a fictional archetype: the quasi-military, politically disengaged, Hussar dandy.

As the subtitle suggests, Part II of this book is less concerned with depictions of French soldiers, and more concerned with how 'other' groups are depicted in late-colonial cinema. Shifting my attention to cinematic codings of memory, and drawing from memory studies, in Chapter 4, I thus examine how Doniol-Valcroze twists his narrative, *La Dénonciation/The Denunciation* (1962), around the curious tale of an ex-Resistant-turned-film producer, before concluding with a reading of Claude Autant-Lara's wildly singular tale of conscientious objection, motivated forgetting and ethical renewal, *Tu ne tueras point/L'Objecteur/Thou Shalt Not Kill* (1963). In Chapter 5, I provisionally invert the terms of my argument, showing how Daniel Goldenberg's *Le Retour/The Return* (1959), Philippe Durand's *Secteur postal 89098/Postal Sector 89098* (1961), and Jacques Rivette's *Paris nous appartient/Paris Belongs to Us* (1961) not only turn around female French civilians – with women waiting for their soldier partners to return from service being a recurring trope therein – but also represent the same women as guilty of a cycle of 'crimes' linked obliquely to the war, a process that I term 'guilt displacement'. Chapter 6, meanwhile, lurches away from films made in metropolitan France by metropolitan directors, and towards two narratives made in French Algeria by European settlers: Jean Pélégri and James Blue's *Les Oliviers de la justice/The Olive Trees of Justice* (1962), and *Au biseau des baisers/Slanted Kisses* (1962), by Guy Gilles and Marc Sator. Deploying the critical paradigm of the gaze, in Chapter 6 I argue that both films re-imagine war-torn Algeria as a hazy idyll, infused with love, reconciliation and innocence. Anchored in documentary studies, Chapter 7 finally attempts to show how both *Octobre à Paris/October in Paris*, by Jacques Panijel (1962) and *J'ai 8 ans/I Am 8 Years Old* (Le Masson, Baïdar-Poliakoff, Vautier, 1961) aspire to grant a voice to Algerians victimised by the colonial French state, even as they function to redeem the reputation of the Left, after the latter had been accused of complicity in colonial atrocities. I should note that each chapter begins with an introduction to the central concepts associated with each critical approach, alongside a summary of how they relate to the discourse of 'redemptive pacifism', elaborated above.

NOTES

1. This account is famously conjoined with ostensibly archival footage of soldiers performing a series of menial tasks whilst on duty in Algeria, footage that Bernard watches using a projector whilst speaking. For more information see Flood (2017: 47–54).
2. For more details on the question of complicity in relation to the history of decolonisation in Algeria see Debarati Sanyal's illuminating monograph *Memory and Complicity: Migrations of Holocaust Remembrance* (2015; especially pages 9–18). In the introduction, Sanyal, for example, asks: 'how does complicity, rather than affect-based discourses of trauma, shame and melancholy, open a critical engagement with the violence of history?' (2015: 9). I draw liberally from Sanyal's theories in Chapter 4, especially in relation to questions of memory and allegory.
3. It is worth noting that there is a lack of consensus about what to call the war. In 1999, the French National Assembly passed a law officially recognising the events as 'the Algerian War', although this terminology has been criticised for foregrounding the perspective of the French. In Algeria, the war is often called 'the Algerian Revolution', or 'the War of National Liberation'. Drawing from the work of Sylvie Thénault (2012: 14), my own choice of terminology – 'the Algerian War of Independence' – represents an attempt to strike neutral ground between the respective Franco-centrism and Algero-centrism of these different definitions. See Vince (2020: 2) for more details on this debate.
4. A further note on terminology: in this book, I have opted to deploy the term 'indigenous Algerians' to refer to individuals who might have been constitutionally defined as 'French' by the French state, yet, as I show below, were systematically denied privileges accorded to their settler counterparts. Benjamin Stora has addressed the challenges inherent in such linguistic decisions, challenges that stem from the ambiguity of the laws governing French Algeria (1998: 21).
5. *La Question* was – and remains – one of the most important texts to emerge out of the late-colonial crisis. Written in a lucid literary style, *La Question* notably chronicles Alleg's arrest by paratroopers in 1957, after which he was subjected to different forms of torture, including water torture and electrotorture. The book's notoriety also derives from the fact that it was vigorously censored upon publication, before achieving clandestine success in France. By the end of 1958, there were over 162,000 copies in circulation.
6. Boupacha was initially brought to court by the colonial legal system for suspected Algerian militancy, a 'crime' of which she was found guilty. Yet by far the most famous aspect of Boupacha's trial was not the perspective of her prosecutors, but that of her defence, as orchestrated by the French lawyer Gisèle Halimi. As Ryan Kunkle claims, 'Halimi sought to break the usual cycle of trial and execution, which was common for many Algerian nationalists', notably by working with renowned intellectual, Simone de Beauvoir, to bring Boupacha's case to the public sphere (2013: 10). See Surkis (2010) for more details.
7. This campaign was composed of bombings known as *la strounga*, shootings with sub-machine guns, arson with Molotov cocktails and kidnappings. It is also worth pointing out that the OAS was mostly made up of European settlers.

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8. This is a distinction that has been discussed by Thomas Elsaesser (2014: 20–2) and, in particular, Paul Ricoeur, in his work, *La Mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli/Memory, History, Forgetting* (2004: 470–8). In addition to criminal guilt and moral guilt, Ricoeur also explores the phenomenon of what he calls, ‘political guilt’, a collective form of guilt which recalls the thrust of Sartre’s thesis. As Ricoeur states, ‘political guilt’ ‘results from the fact that citizens belong to a political body in the name of which crimes [are often] committed’ (2004: 474).
 9. Gilroy frames this melancholia as an evasion; it is about avoiding ‘the painful obligations to work through the grim details of imperial and colonial history and to transform paralyzing guilt into a more productive shame’ (2005: 99).
 10. Benjamin Stora has identified at least five similarities between the two wars: neither war was officially declared as such; both involved heavy civilian casualties; both included the perpetration of atrocities, through the use of napalm, for instance; both ended in defeat for a colonial/imperial country (France and America); and both caused profound wounds to be carved in the collective psyche of these countries (2004: 9).
 11. ‘The decolonial turn’ relates to the rise of what some theorists have called decoloniality. As Claire Gallien explains, ‘decoloniality is best described as a gesture that denormalizes the normative, problematizes default positions, debunks the a-perspectival, destabilizes the structure, [and] rehabilitates epistemic formations that continue to be repressed under coloniality’ (2020: 28). It has also been accompanied with calls to decolonise university curricula. For more information on decoloniality, see Mignolo (2007) and Mignolo and Walsh (2018).
 12. For more information on the relationship between the French New Wave and decolonisation see Greene (2007), Sellier (2008), de Baecque (2012: 103–57), and Wallenbrock (2020: 21–4).
 13. For more information on ‘parallel cinema’ see Boudjedra (1971: 37–41), Daniel (1972: 342–7), Jeancolas (1979: 155–62), Dine (1994a: 215–32), Gaston-Mathé (1997), Lefèvre (1997), Cadé (1997), Scharold (2016b: 15–18) and Wallenbrock (2020: 19–21). It should also be noted that, whilst the ‘parallel’ documentaries explored in Chapter 7 were funded, distributed and screened by leftist organisations during the early 1960s, the parallel soldier films discussed in Chapter 5 were not. As such, the former are much more documented by cultural historians than the latter.
 14. René Vautier was incarcerated for a year for his anti-colonial documentary *Afrique 50/Africa 50* (1950), whilst Pierre Clément was condemned to 10 years in prison in 1958 after filming colonial atrocities committed in Algeria and Tunisia, before eventually being freed after amnesties signed in 1962. Some ‘parallel’ films made by Clément include *Réfugiés algériens/Algerian Refugees*, *Sakiet sidi youssef* (both 1958), whilst Vautier’s *Algérie en flammes/Algeria is Burning* (1958) is often cited as a seminal intervention in the politics of late-colonial culture. Scholars that have written about Vautier include: Brenez (2004), Croombs (2013: 215–20), Bédjaoui (2014: 62–9), and Wallenbrock (2020: 15–19). For a short yet informative summary of Clément’s cinematic oeuvre see Bedjaoui (2014: 69–72).
 15. For more information on *Le Petit soldat*, see Dixon (1997), Adams (2016: 108–24), Stora (2004: 135–45), Sellier (2008: 134–9) and Scharold (2016c). For
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- more information on *Cléo de 5 à 7*, see Flitterman-Lewis (1990), Orpen (2007), Ezra (2010) and Betz (2009: 131–44). For more information on *La Bataille d'Alger* see Tomlinson (2004), Harrison (2007), Flood (2019), alongside Alan O'Leary's monograph on the film (2019). This list is far from exhaustive.
16. By far one of the most complex yet unappreciated late-colonial films discussed in this book, *Actua-tilt* derives its fragmented 'narrative' from the thematics of arcade games, although the term 'narrative' is somewhat misleading, seeing as the film is not based on any kind of causal logic, plot development, or characterisation, but rather on a very loose focus on topics such as stellar exploration, apocalyptic disaster, the commodification of the human body, the shock of modernisation and military warfare. In the first half of the film, the viewer is thus presented with various images of sport- and space-orientated arcade games (with boxing and rockets being two recurring themes), whilst two disembodied narrators – one male, one female – elliptically discuss 'a trip to the moon'. 'None of this will happen', intones the woman, before the man ominously responds, 'it is happening now'. It is not clear what they are referring to. The second part of the film, meanwhile, is even more military-focused, revolving around images of soldiers in the arcade playing light gun games. Wielding a range of plastic weapons, it is at this point in the film that the allusions to the war are at their most evident. It is finally worth noting that the entire film is pervaded by highly rapid and jagged patterns of editing, comparable to the most anxiety-inducing parts of Resnais's *Muriel ou le temps d'un retour*.
 17. Focused largely on the existential musings of an eighteen-year-old violent-rocker-outcast, Jean-Claude, and his equally rebellious partner Colette, Herman's documentary notably includes an entire 'chapter' dedicated to 'The Algerian War', in which the couple muse about their predicament, and Jean-Claude confesses to indiscriminately beating Algerians in the street. The project was banned by the censors, yet curiously not for its allusions to military conflict, but for its perceived amorality. For more information, see Herman (1963: 47–9).
 18. The film recounts the story of two former soldiers who lose touch with each other after returning from Algeria to Paris. One of them suffers from 'post-service vertigo', recalling Laurent in Jacques Dupont's *Les Distractions/Trapped by Fear* (1960), analysed in Chapter 3.
 19. *La Récréation* is a fictional short film in which a teacher recalls his youth whilst thinking about his best friend, killed in action. See Martin (1963a: 63) for more details.
 20. In *Marseille sans soleil*, a fictional screenwriter and cinematographer join forces to complete a documentary on Marseilles, after the director of the project is killed during service in Algeria.
 21. *Demain L'amour* is the story of a former soldier named Gérard (Jean-Claude Merac) and his partner Madeleine (Corinne Coppier). The film begins with images of Gérard hurtling down a Marseilles country road in a convertible, before violently crashing. As he is transported to hospital, Gérard experiences an extraordinarily complex, and hallucinatory, series of flashbacks, composed of various images. Some of these frame Gérard and Madeleine on a beach. Others are set in a train station when Gérard is called up for service ('when I let go of your hand, I knew that absence would

kill love'). Others depict Gérard scarpering panicked, gun in hand, through rocky terrain, presumably in Algeria. Still others linger on Madeleine as she articulates her intention to end their relationship. Gérard's psychological distress, represented formally through the spatio-temporal fragmentation of the narrative, is thus framed as at once a symptom of the war and the disloyalty of women.

22. For a comprehensive list of these seventy films see Martin (1963a: 60–4, 143–6).
23. For more details on cinematic censorship during the war, see Daniel (1972: 335–9), Jeancolas (1979: 38–40; 2005), Evans (1989), Frodon (1995: 142–9), Lefèvre (1997), Gaston-Mathé (1997), Stora (1998: 38–42; 2004: 111–25), and Denis (2006).
24. Apart from politics, censorship often impinged upon issues of religion and sex, with Jacques Rivette's *La Religieuse/The Nun*, being famously banned in 1966 for its stark anti-Catholicism. For more information see Jeancolas (1979: 27–48).
25. Vautier doesn't explicitly state which of his films was censored, although it is safe to assume that he is talking about *Algérie en flammes*.
26. It is also worth noting that, unlike Sellier, de Baecque goes on to define the work of the 'Young Turks' as 'intrinsically political' (2012: 132), cleaving open what seems like a theoretical contradiction in his otherwise compelling chapter. This contradiction can be seen, for instance, in the author's contention that 'politics was at the core of the New Wave project, that is, the concrete implementation of principles forged in the 1950s through a theory of apolitical cinema' (2012: 132). Or: 'none of the [Young Turks] were directly engaged in making political films, but all conceived of filmmaking politically, that is, as a way to reveal the truth of a present that was, at long last, truly contemporary' (2012: 138). A similar yet more successful attempt at reading the New Wave politically, despite the pervasive political disengagement of its affiliates, can be found in Nancy Virtue's article 'Jacques Demy's *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg*: a national allegory of the French-Algerian war' (2013). Like de Baecque, Virtue begins her argument by stressing the apoliticism of Demy (2013: 129–30), but then goes on to define his film as a political allegory nonetheless. As Virtue insists, 'in order to engage in allegorical interpretation, one need not claim intentionality on the part of the author' (2013: 130).
27. Aligned with the journal *CinémAction*, this edited collection includes a range of essays on the politics of cinematic censorship, European settlers, representations of torture, and images of absence. For more details see Hennebelle et al. (1997).
28. Written in French, Scharold's invaluable edited collection treats a range of filmic representations of the war, including chapters on *Le Petit soldat* and *Muriel ou le temps d'un retour*. It also includes an illuminating section on parallel filmmaking.
29. Examining a range of novels, plays, poetry, documentary films and web-documentaries, Boutaghou's edited collection – composed of a range of chapters written in French – is indispensable reading for scholars interested in cultural representations of the war.
30. Drawing from the work of Henri Rousso (1987) and Benjamin Stora (1998; 2004), Donadey's illuminating book (written in English) is based upon tracing a diachronic history of cinematic representations of the war: from a period of mourning (1962–4), to repression (1964–89), the return of the repressed (1990–8), and difficult anamnesis (1999–present).