theories and methodologies

Introduction: Inheriting Assia Djebar

ANJULI I. GUNARATNE AND JILL M. JARVIS

Je ne demande rien: seulement qu'ils nous hantent encore. . . . Mais dans quelle langue?

I ask for nothing: only that they haunt us still. . . . But in what language?
—Assia Djebar, *Le blanc de l'Algérie* (56; our trans.)

[I]

THIS COLLECTION OF ESSAYS BEGAN AS A PUBLIC TRIBUTE TO ASSIA DJEBAR THAT WAS HELD AT PRINCETON UNIVERSITY EXACTLY ONE month after her death in a Paris hospital on 6 February 2015. A writer, filmmaker, feminist, and activist born on Algeria's Mediterranean shore in 1936,[1] Djebar is one of the great intellectuals of our past century—yet her work is not widely known in the English-speaking academy beyond translations of the texts that first drew critical attention to her during the early 1990s.[2] This collection is therefore at once an act of mourning and an invitation to read.

Mourning Djebar demands that we reckon with the questions that animate her work, which are questions that haunt our time. Working since the mid-1950s, she produced novels, short fiction, récits, theater, poetry, film, an opera, and numerous critical texts and prefaces, many of which have not been translated into English and all of which resist translation. The resistance is to be respected: there can be no domesticating Djebar's oeuvre. On the level of form, style, and poetics, her texts pose questions to think with—concerning feminist solidarities; the unfinished project of decolonization; the dangers of nationalism and identitarianism; the afterlives of revolutionary, religious, and state violences; the politics and poetics of linguistic difference. Above all, these texts demand that we not sacrifice the aesthetic to grapple with the political.

Djebar's entire oeuvre might be read as a subversive act of inheriting, an experiment in how to play one's part in the handoff linking those who came before with those who will come after—even those

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PMLA 131.1 (2016), published by the Modern Language Association of America

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2016.131.1.116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

who do not know your name, or whose name to you, as Derrida put it, is "interdicted" (31).[3] This recurring obsession with acts of inheritance, legible in Djebar's earliest work, became newly urgent after she witnessed the violent repression of mass demonstrations in Algiers that has since become known as Black October. "I was derailed by the street riots of October 1988 in Algiers," Djebar recalls. "I saw blood flowing in the streets" (Zimra, "'When the Past'" 122). She reports that the shock of witnessing that violence prompted her to suspend writing the third novel of her Algerian Quartet (published in 1995 as *Vaste est la prison* [*So Vast the Prison*]) in order to write a novel that contested fundamentalist readings of Islamic tradition particular to Algeria in the late 1980s. Of this unexpected text, published in 1991 as *Loin de Médine* (*Far from Medina*), Djebar has said, "[C]'est une irruption, je dirais presqu'une cassure dans mon œuvre—qui a été écrite d'un coup, pour participer à un débat précis: c'est une œuvre de circonstance" ("[I]t is an interruption, I'd almost say, a cleaving/fracture within my corpus—that was written all at once [literally, 'in one blow/sitting'], in order to participate in a specific debate: it is a piece grounded in time and place" [Zimra, "Not So Far" 823; Zimra, "Not So Far" 832n2; last interpolation in orig.]).

Djebar's insistence that her literary intervention be "grounded in time and place" ("une œuvre de circonstance") revives and transfigures a notion of political commitment. Algeria's centrality to the concept of committed literature cannot be forgotten; Sartre's *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* (1948; *What Is Literature?*), while making a case for the political role of literature, also bears the trace of the "problem" of Algeria in and to France and how that forced a reconsideration of literature's role in political struggles. To be "committed," for Sartre, was to write literature that would engage with current political events. When Djebar insists on calling *Loin de Médine* "une œuvre de circonstance" (literally, "a work of circumstance") and a "cassure" ("cleaving/fracture," or wound), she transforms the idea of committed literature. Djebar reads the present through the past, altering the conception of a current political event. *Loin de Médine* addresses the violence of 1990s Algeria by delving into the work of Ibn Hicham, Ibn Saad, and al-Tabari, all authoritative historians of and commentators on Islam. Tracing in their accounts the stifled voices of women, Djebar uncovers the hidden history of the women who challenged the male-dominated interpretations of the Prophet's word. Bringing together the voices of the "[d]aughters of Agar and sons of Ishmael" (306), the literary work becomes an event, "une circonstance," a doing that cannot do away with the past that is forever present and recurring. With *Loin de Médine*, Djebar performs literary work as event and act, "une circonstance," a reading of wounds and absences in the future anterior, an act of imagination that escapes the crushing frame of the present. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak traces such a reading in *Loin de Médine* when she calls the text Djebar's "prayer to be haunted" by her female ancestors.[4]

Loin de Médine thus performs a subversive act of inheriting: it not only reworks the narrative codes of Islamic jurisprudence and hadith scholarship by including witnesses and speakers previously excluded but also positions its narrator-writer as an intercessor who participates in a discursive tradition that is open only to a few (male) readers. Djebar cites the Arabic term *ijtihād* for this act of literary imagination: "La richesse diaprée du texte d'origine, son rythme, ses nuances et ses ambiguïtés, sa patine elle-même, en un mot sa poésie, seul vrai reflet d'une époque, a éperonné ma volonté d'Ijtihad" ("The many-hued richness of the original text, its rhythm, its nuances, its ambiguities, its very patina—in a word, its poetry . . . spurred on my passion for *ijtihād*" [8; our trans.]). The Arabic word's root, *j-h-d*, denotes most simply "to endeavor, strive, labor, take pains," as well as "overtax,

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2016.131.1.116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

fatigue, exhaust" (*Hans Wehr Dictionary* 168). Its noun form, *jahd*, might therefore be translated as "strain, exertion, endeavor, attempt, effort, trouble, pains." In Islamic jurisprudence, *ijtihād* is a rigorous exercise of independent judgment in a legal or theological question, based on the interpretation and application of the *usūl* (the critical study of the sources of sharia) as opposed to *taqlīd* (following a lineage of Islamic scholars and their legal decisions). The practice of *taqlīd* therefore restrains that of *ijtihād*, making *usūl* a right reserved for a *mujtahid*, a learned scholar who had earned his literacy in sharia. Such a scholar could not be a woman; it was interdicted. Yet this narrator speaks of her own "volonté d'Ijtihād," capturing the sounding of *jihād* within the word. For the daughter of Ishmael, *ijtihād* is also a battle within oneself and a declaration of war—how can it not be, when a woman, writing in French, picks up the *qalam* ("pen") to do the work of a *mujtahid*?

For Djebar the act of inheriting did not give closure to the past but rather opened it up anew, demanding that we continue to respond and bear witness to what no longer remains. By struggling with the *circonstance* of her work, the essays in this collection seek to learn the lessons that are Djebar's texts by inheriting them as acts of mourning. In this way they demonstrate that registering the political, philosophical, and aesthetic force of Djebar's writing will demand that we improvise and cocreate a language in which and through which to mourn her.

[II]

Djebar was buried in Cherchell, Algeria—where she was born—in the presence of her mother and other family members, friends, and state and religious officials. Her grave stands on a hillside near Mont Chenoua with a full view of the Mediterranean; the surrounding city and fields are strewn with Roman ruins, visible remnants of Algeria's long history of colonization. "I *am* Cherchell's daughter," Djebar insisted, "the city that is, for me, Algeria's true capital, before the time of the Turkish deys, before Algiers, Juba's own Caesarea" (Afterword 186). "I cannot let go of the question of who we were before. Somewhere in me something must account for the métissage, this wild mixture sown in me by my own father" (185).

Djebar's grave is a testament to this "métissage." It is marked by three stones: two at the head of the grave and one at its foot (fig. 1). The topmost is inscribed with the *shahada*, in Arabic, beneath a red star and crescent; just beneath it, a second stone bears both her names. Assia Djebar is a pen name that she chose just before the publication of her first novel, *La soif* (1957; *The Mischief*), in an attempt to shield her family from discovering her public exposure. It is an inadvertent misspelling of one of the ninety-nine ritual names of Allah—*djebbar*—that has since stood in place of Imalhayene Fatma Zohra. "I have been asked often why I did not keep my father's name, 'Imalayen,' which is gloriously Berber," Djebar has said. She considered assuming her mother's surname, Sarahoui, yet kept Djebar along with its orthographic glitch: "Every time I finish something and have to sign my name, I am tempted to use the correct spelling, *djebbar*, and then I decide



FIG. 1 Views of Assia Djebar's grave, in Cherchell, Algeria, in June 2015. Photos by Jill Jarvis.

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2016.131.1.116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

against it. I like the idea of this letter, silently hiding between two languages and cultures" (Afterword 186). At the foot of her grave is a third stone, which reads, "J'écris, comme tant d'autres femmes écrivains algériennes avec un sentiment d'urgence, contre la régression et la misogynie" ("I write, like so many other Algerian women writers with a sense of urgency, against regression and misogyny").

These inscriptions on her grave at once reflect Djebar's ambivalent status as exile and lay multiple claims to her as Algerian—"à la fois au-dehors et au-dedans" ("at once outside and inside"), as she put it, quoting Diderot ("Discours" 2; our trans.)." Yet this ambiguity did not result in an endless wandering—a cosmopolitanism that celebrated leaving the homeland for a precarious globalized world. Djebar, like the ghosts in her texts, returned and haunted Algeria. As Madeleine Dobie points out in her contribution to this collection of essays, if Djebar's "life exemplified the exilic and hybrid bent of postcolonial culture, her works bear surprisingly little trace of this cosmopolitan wandering. . . . [T]hey speak not of third spaces, diasporic identities, the transnational, or the global but of Algeria, whose history and geography they survey in comprehensive fashion." Djebar has been "worlded," as it were, inducted into the institutions of "world literary" taste making, yet her work is not deterritorialized. Her refusal to leave counters the blind celebration of the nation-state and the exclusions that form it. As Nick Nesbitt discusses in his contribution, the Algeria that Djebar imagined—and that her gravestone performs—is experimental, a "working through of the consequences of a break." Working through such consequences required that Djebar develop a writing that taught us how to read wounds. Reading wounds enables the rethinking of political praxes in the postcolony; it interferes with and breaks up frozen forms that are continuously recycled. Djebar's style also indicates that such an experimental method of reading merits—perhaps even requires—repetition. As Mildred Mortimer stresses in her essay, repetition is both a formal hallmark of Djebar's work and an ethical choice. It is therefore imperative that when reading wounds we register the process as one of healing; in the archeological practice of the return, the rereading, something always arrives.

To make the past arrive in this way, Djebar draws from a network of writers and





https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2016.131.1.116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

thinkers who enable her to imagine "elsewheres" *within* an Algeria bled white. As Spivak writes, Djebar's "cosmopolitanism . . . is the choice of an 'elsewhere'" ("Assia Djebar"). Djebar's gesture of return counterpoints the movement of escape that enables her to connect with a global sisterhood. On receiving the Neustadt Prize for World Literature in 1996, for example, she presented herself as accompanied by a ghostly multitude of absent women: "I inscribe my name on the celebrated list of Neustadt laureates," she said, "surrounded by my African sisters and those of Muslim origin. . . . I feel them at my side, now as I stand before you: though they are invisible, they are very much present." When she was inducted into the Académie Française in 2006, Djebar reminded her audience that the French in which she addressed them is a language scarred by violent loss yet also seeded with the force of collective revolt and catharsis:

> Mon français s'est ainsi illuminé depuis vingt ans déjà, de la nuit des *femmes du Mont Chenoua*. Il me semble que celles-ci dansent encore pour moi dans des grottes secrètes, tandis que la Méditerranée étincelle à leurs pieds. Elles me saluent, me protègent. J'emporte outre Atlantique leurs sourires, images de « shefa' », c'est-à-dire de guérison. Car mon français, doublé par le velours, mais aussi les épines des langues autrefois occultées, cicatrisera peut-être mes blessures mémorielles. ("Discours")

> My French has thus been illumined for twenty years already by the night of those *women of Mount Chenoua*. It seems to me that they still dance for me in secret caves as the Mediterranean sparkles at their feet. They greet me, they protect me. Across the Atlantic, I transport their smiles, images of "shefa'," that is, of healing. For my French, lined with the velvet and the thorns of languages long ago obscured, might heal (by forming a scar over) my memorial wounds. (our trans.)

By insisting on a return interrupted, enriched, and healed by "elsewheres," Djebar writes a French that holds open a space to hear—at least to imagine—the ancestral singing of women in the secret caves of Mont Chenoua, among so many other voices and tongues. She exposes French itself as open archive, a bearer of Arabic, Turkish, Amazigh, Latin, Greek, Punic, Libyco-Berber echoes and traces.

[III]

While much has been made of Djebar's relation to French, much less has been said of her equally complex relation to Arabic. As Dobie explains, Djebar's choice to write in French has elicited criticism in Algeria. For Djebar the dichotomy between Arabic and French was false, and she figured the linguistic fissure as a "tangage-langage" or "tangage entre deux langues" ("La langue" 51)—that is, a vertiginous reeling or pitching between two languages whose movement was interrupted by Algeria's profound but disavowed heteroglossia: "par phobie de la deuxième langue, de la troisième, par déni d'un multilinguisme inscrit dans notre culture depuis l'Antiquité" ("by phobia of the second language, the third, by the refusal of a multilingualism inscribed in our culture since Antiquity"). Djebar reminds us that to cast Arabic against French reinforces the theoretical monolingualism imposed on Algeria by the postcolonial state, itself an act of violence: "un monolinguisme pseudo-identitaire: une seule langue revendiquée comme une armure, une carapace, un mur!" ("a pseudo-identitarian monolingualism: a single language claimed like armor, shell, wall!" ["L'entre-deux-langues" 32–33; our trans.]).

Djebar's engagement with the politics of language gives us a theoretical framework for thinking decolonization otherwise. Her contribution to the genealogy of anticolonial thought that includes the voices of, to name a few, Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, and Mongo Beti has been under-

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2016.131.1.116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

studied; in mourning her, therefore, we must enter into the particularity of her politics. Decolonization helped the French to forget that for 130 years Algeria had been French; *Algérie, c'est la France* was the French battle cry of the 1950s, which soon died down when France decided to grant Algeria independence. Djebar registers the contradictory movements that structure projects of liberation: on the one hand, anticolonial liberation works toward a new future, embodied by the postcolonial nation-state; on the other, it is a cutting, an act of forgetting that fuels the continuation of colonial violence. When, in *L'amour, la fantasia*, Djebar stages the first encounter between future colonizer and colonized, she emphasizes the complexities and complicities that the official historical record has silenced. Returning to the first encounter between France and Algeria, Djebar writes that it is "[c]omme si les envahisseurs allaient être les amants" ("as if the invaders were going to be lovers"); both invader and invaded face each other, "dans l'aveuglement d'un coup de foudre mutuel" ("blinded by the same bolt of lightning" [17; our trans.]).

Such a blinding is forgotten in the legal process of decolonization. As Spivak writes, Djebar's "most important stance is against identitarianism. If you cannot say yes to the enemy, you cannot practice freedom. This is imaginative activism" ("Assia Djebar"). The inability to utter such a *yes* shapes Algerian independence: France registers the self-determination of Algeria as an opportunity to forget its colonial history. Djebar practices imaginative activism against the forced disappearance of this history—hence Spivak's proposition that we read Fanon's *Les damnés de la terre* (1961; *The Wretched of the Earth*) with *Les enfants du nouveau monde* (1962; *Children of the New World*) to "gender the scene." Djebar's publications after 1962—*Les enfants*, *Les alouettes naïves* (1965; "The Innocent Larks"), *Poèmes pour une Algérie heureuse* (1969; "Poems for a Happy Algeria"), *Rouge l'aube* (1969; "Red Dawn")—centered on questions of gender and sexual difference that her male compatriots had not addressed.

As Aimé Césaire has argued, there is a difference between *décolonisation* and *bonne décolonisation*—decolonization and good decolonization; Djebar's insistence on gendering the anticolonial struggle interrupts the logic of forgetfulness that shapes both the official process of decolonization and anticolonial activism. Forgetfulness is diplomatic: it takes no prisoners but releases no one—so vast the prison indeed. Diving into the depths of this forgetfulness, Djebar dares to imagine an Algeria that would not be divided between—mutilated by—what Nabile Farès calls "French decolonization" and "Islamic decolonization" (35). Djebar's careful undoing, unweaving insists on—at the risk of being called un- or apolitical—the unimaginable importance of gendering all political projects. This gendering takes place through Djebar's commitment to cocreating unofficial forms of mourning. These mournings punctuate the text, transposing the written word into a fantasia, the musical form that questioned form. This is an example of Djebar's particular rendition of historiography through literature that makes "imaginative activism" possible.

To understand the formation of Djebar's distinctive take on the relation between politics and literature, we need to know the history of her education. As a young university student, she imagined studying Arabic philosophy—Ibn Rushd in particular—yet colonial education policy classified Arabic as a foreign language, so she hadn't mastered Arabic at her French boarding school in Blida and could not pursue advanced study. Instead she became a historian of the Maghreb, studying in France, Tunisia, and Morocco. After Algeria gained independence in 1962, Djebar returned there but was pushed out of her post at the University of Algiers when the history department Arabized, since she could or would not teach in Arabic. In an interview published

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2016.131.1.116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

in Sartre's *Les temps modernes* (1963), the Algerian nationalist intellectual Mostefa Lacheraf singled out Djebar as a culturally alienated French-speaking bourgeois with no grasp of "our" Algerian realities, more concerned with poetry than with proper politics. He misread the depth and nuances of Djebar's political vision. Lacheraf's implicitly sexist condemnation had enduring consequences for Djebar's reception and future work in Algeria, as she has noted: "My life as a woman tripped me up" (Afterword 169). In 1996, when Djebar won the Neustadt Prize, her fellow novelist Mohammad Dib publicly apologized to her on behalf of Algerian men in general for this dismissal.[5] This collection of essays calls attention to the political work that Djebar's texts do when they bring to light the unofficial history of decolonization. In that history, the decolonized nation cannot be a finished product; there are countless returnings that demand that we continuously engage with the nation that was lost in its very moment of becoming. Teaching us how to work within the space of this loss is one of Djebar's most precious gifts to us in these times of emergency.

[IV]

Several of the writers in this collection help to highlight the way in which Djebar's imaginative work shuttled between cinema and fiction; we read her feminism in the intertextual moves and repetitions that characterize her oeuvre over time. Mortimer argues for reading Djebar's fiction not as a recuperation but as a political act and a performance that reanimates the lost testimonies of female revolutionary martyrs: as Spivak puts it, "an instrument for imaginative training" ("Assia Djebar"). Anne Donadey addresses the "complex multilingualism" of Djebar's texts, which involve not only French, Arabic, and Berber but also the movement between aural and scriptural. Djebar's feminism cannot be separated from the matters of language—rather, of languages. "For me," Djebar has claimed, "feminism has always been tied up with the question of language, and not just French" (Afterword 176). A number of posthumous homages demonstrate this point, including the one organized by the Cercle des Amis d'Assia Djebar in Paris, described in Odile Cazenave's reflection here. Djebar's feminist project cannot be instrumentalized for French republican universalism, a point sharpened in an homage published by the Algerian literary magazine *L'ivrEscQ*, where the literary scholar Afifa Bererhi reminds us that Djebar was not only informed by her knowledge of French discourses but also nourished by her thinking and working in solidarity with feminists in Algeria and across the Arabic-speaking world for decades.

Yet such solidarity should not be mistaken for an alliance with Arab nationalist ideologies. In the mid-1970s Djebar persuaded the Algerian Cultural Ministry to permit her to make a film by telling them that her project focused on revolutionary war heroes (an emphatically state-sanctioned, masculinist genre)—yet then she produced *La nouba des femmes du Mont Chenoua* (1977; "The Nouba of the Women of Mount Chenoua"), which explores rural women's memories of the anticolonial revolt in a heteroglossic weave of French, dialectical Arabic (*darija*), and Kabyle. Her next work, *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement* (1979; *Women of Algiers in Their Apartment*), further exposes this effaced heteroglossia of the postcolonial nation. The text is feminist not because it is about female characters but because it stages relationships between languages—not merely between French and Arabic but also between the written and the spoken registers of these languages, which are of course not the only languages at play in the Maghrebi context. And, above all, Djebar compels us to recognize these relationships as gendered—an important lesson she had learned while producing the film *La nouba*.

During and after the 1990s—a decade of deeply uncivil war Djebar has called "une

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2016.131.1.116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

nuit algérienne qui n'est plus coloniale" ("an Algerian night that is no longer colonial" [*Le blanc* 235])—these questions regarding the politics of language and the legal status of women became even more urgent. This was, and remains, a time of unmarked graves, massacres, disappearances, and unmournable deaths. Djebar's texts restlessly open imaginative space beyond the borders of national languages and state discourse. Djebar experiments with finding form for modes of speaking and writing excluded by monolingual nationalisms: "nous croyons parler de langues, de bilinguisme, de multilinguisme. Or, dès que nous scrutons « l'entre-deux-langues » ou « l'entre-des-langues », nous rouvrons les fosses, nous découvrons les fondrières, nous bousculons les tombes, nous éparpillons les cendres" ("We believe we are speaking of languages, of bilingualism, of multilingualism. But as soon as we examine the 'between-two-languages,' the 'between-languages'—we reopen the graves, we uncover the ruts, we topple the gravestones, we scatter the ashes" ["L'entre-deux-langues" 32; our trans.]). This is precisely what we see Djebar struggling to do after the fracture marked by *Loin de Médine*: the books *Vaste est la prison* (1995), *Le blanc de l'Algérie* (1995; *Algerian White*), *Oran, langue morte* (1997; *The Tongue's Blood Does Not Run Dry*), *Les nuits de Strasbourg* (1997; *Strasbourg Nights*), *La femme sans sépulture* (2002; "Woman without a Tomb"), *La disparition de la langue française* (2003; "The Disappearance of the French Language"), and *Nulle part dans la maison de mon père* (2007; "Nowhere in My Father's House") are all acts of mourning that defy the state's amnesiac demand for reconciliation.

La disparition de la langue française splices memory of the war of independence into the present time of civil war in order to interrupt the traumatic repetition of state violence, which Djebar figures as a kind of infected hand-to-hand inheritance: "Comment, dans Alger, ville noire, s'est opérée la passation entre les bourreaux d'hier et ceux d'aujourd'hui?" ("How, in Algiers, dark city, does the handoff happen between yesterday's butchers and today's?" [220–21]). Djebar's spectral poetics of history is an effort to short-circuit this malignant form of inheritance. By displacing such a traumatic repetition with heteroglossic hauntings, Djebar performs a healing, a *shefa'*; she invites future readers to take up the work of *ijtihād*. Djebar's fiction teaches us that the revenant's desire is for justice that allows it the freedom to move on and never return again.

[v]

As several of the writers here point out, until recently Djebar's work had been translated into twenty languages (including Japanese, Turkish, German, and Italian) but not into Arabic. A striking omission—a world-literary writer with no place in her father's house? The open question of who will now read Djebar must be asked in the same breath as the question of translation: in what languages will she be read? As Dobie points out—citing Kamel Daoud—the difficult question "is whether she will be read in Algeria." It is a question being asked and answered. In 2014, just before Djebar's death, the Algiers-based Éditions Sedia published Mohamed Yahiatène's Arabic translation of *Nulle part dans la maison de mon père*.[6] This was Djebar's last novel, an interesting place to begin the project of translating her work into Arabic. We might notice that the title of the Arabic translation—*Bawabat eddhikrayat*—can be read as a response to the novel's French title: it transforms impasse ("Nowhere in My Father's House") into opening ("Doors of Memory"). Sedia next plans to publish Arabic translations of two more works by Djebar: *Loin de Médine* and *L'amour, la fantasia*. Djebar's subversive intercessionary acts of imagination may soon find their way into Arabic. Time will tell. Future readers will answer this question; it is not in our hands.

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2016.131.1.116 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The intercessory claim runs throughout Djebar's oeuvre like a thread, visible in the translational play of her French, a French that is never only one language and that does not stay silent on the page. For instance, pronounce the title of her collection *Ces voix qui m'assiègent* (1999) aloud and it sounds like "Ces voix qui m'Assia Dje-." The unfinished homophone of the author's literary Arabic pen name invites us to hear in this title at once "these voices that besiege me" and "these voices that make me Assia Dje-." A slip, a mishearing, and a silent space open between French and Arabic when the words are pronounced aloud. Her given name hides unvoiced and protected here—a sign of loss, a memory door:

Fatma Zohra Imalhayene.

What voices haunt a proper name, speaking in what languages?

Notes

1. While Djebar's official birthdate is 30 June 1936 (Djebar, Afterword 159), her grave marker in Cherchell reads "30 Juin 1935."

2. Namely, *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement* (1980) and *L'amour, la fantasia* (1985).

3. Derrida uses the term to characterize his lack of access to Arabic and Berber, which he never learned as a student in French-colonized Algeria.

4. "Ghostwriting" 78–79. Spivak cautions, "Of course this is only a rereading of a past for a future—a future anterior; this is not a formula for a future present. The ghost dance cannot succeed as a blueprint. Its uses, if there are any, are elsewhere" (79).

5. Dib concludes, "If, by this distinguished Neustadt Prize, Assia Djebar finally sees herself vindicated as an Algerian woman, if she receives as well the prize of such well-merited recognition, we can only regret that this gracious gesture was not made by her own country. But then, how could such a gesture be possible in a land governed by homunculi?"

6. Sedia also published the first Algerian edition of the collection *Lire Assia Djebar!* (2015; "Read Assia Djebar!"), edited by Amel Chaouati under the auspices of the Cercle des Amis d'Assia Djebar (originally published by Cheminante in 2012).

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https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2016.131.1.116 Published online by Cambridge University Press