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Germaine Tillion's Colonial Writing: Complicity and Resistance

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Chapter 3: Complicity and Resistance: Germaine Tillion and the Algerian War

During the Algerian War, the position of Germaine Tillion could best be described as between a rock and a hard place. She expressed this sentiment in this phrase, “Our “conditioned reflexes” are- and I know I speak for the majority of us- a passionate love of Justice, a virtually instinctive solidarity with the oppressed, imprisoned, fugitives, but also loyalty to our country and to our compatriots when one is attacked and the other is in danger.”¹ The conflict she articulates in *L’Afrique bascule vers l’avenir* demonstrates the difficulty that her position as a patriot of France who lead a unit of the Resistance in World War Two, and twelve years later she discovered that the French government committing similar acts of violence against the Algerian population. This investigation explores the nature of her intervention into the Algerian conflict as an intellectual commissioned by the state to analyze the viability of colonial Algeria. Her intervention consisted firstly of *L’Algerie en 1957*, edited and republished in 1961 as *L’Afrique bascule vers l’avenir*.² This work was republished in 1999, which included a supplementary section written from Tillion’s notes, followed by the texts published in 1961. Her second work is titled *France and Algeria: Complimentary Enemies*.³ Tillion’s biography and career trajectory contrast with the previous case studies on Grace Corneau and Clotilde Chivas-Baron. Through an analysis of the major themes, motifs, narrative voice, and structure, drawing on Said’s concept of strategic location, coupled with the unique circumstances of Tillion’s biography and career, this study will elucidate more nuanced conclusions regarding the strategies of complicity and

¹ « nos « reflexes conditionés » sont- et je sais que je parle pour la majorité entre nous- u amour passionné de la Justice, une solidarité quasi-instinctive avec les opprimés, les prisonniers, les fugitifs, mais aussi la fidélité à notre pays et à nos compatriotes lorsque l’un est attaqué et que les autres sont en danger, » Germaine Tillion, *L’Afrique bascule vers l’avenir*, (Paris: Tirésias, 1999), 65.

² Published in English as *Algeria: the realities*, (New York: A.A. Knopf), 1958. This paper uses this edition: *L’Afrique bascule vers l’avenir*, (Paris: Tirésias, 1999), concentrating on the second part which was published in 1961.

³ Germaine Tillion, *France and Algeria: complimentary enemies*. New York: A.A. Knopf. 1961. Originally published as : *Les ennemis-complémentaires*, (Paris : Éditions de minuit, 1960).

resistance that women directly implicated in the colonial enterprise employ in their nonfiction writing.

Germaine Tillion provides a fruitful additional case study for an inquiry into the fluctuations between complicity and resistance in nonfiction writing for a number of reasons. Tillion trained as an ethnologist in Paris during the interwar period. In the course of her studies, she undertook four missions to the Aurès region of Algeria between the years of 1934 and 1940, in which she resided in the community and conducted fieldwork on the Berber people who lived isolated, virtually untouched by French colonial rule. Shortly after returning to France in 1940, her country was defeated by the Nazis. Tillion and her colleagues quickly formed a Resistance group which they called *Musée de l'Homme*. Six of Tillion's group were tried and executed in February 1942, while she was arrested and sentenced to death by the Germans six months later on four counts of espionage.⁴ She was subsequently imprisoned for one year and then transported to Ravensbrück concentration camp, where she discovered her mother interned at the same camp. Her mother became a victim of the gas chamber, but Tillion was liberated by the Swedish Red Cross in 1945.⁵

After her liberation, Tillion directed her studies toward the history of Nazi concentration camps and wrote an ethnographic work about Ravensbrück. However, at the beginning of the Algeria conflict in 1954, she was called to serve as an expert on Algeria because of her extensive fieldwork experience. In November, 1954, François Mitterand, then Minister of the Interior, asked her to undertake a two-month study of Algeria's situation. After the completion of this assignment, she met with the Governor General of the French Government in Algeria, Jacques

⁴ Tillion, *L'Afrique bascule*, 1-12.

⁵ Rochelle G. Saidel, *The Jewish women of Ravensbrück Concentration Camp*. (Madison, Wisc: University of Wisconsin Press. 2004), 31.

Soustelle, who asked her to join his cabinet as an advisor, and she effectively became the liberal voice on his cabinet.⁶

Thus Tillion was a uniquely positioned intellectual in the phenomenon known as decolonization for several reasons. Her extensive experience and knowledge of Algeria from the interwar years, her training in ethnography which gave her special skills in interviewing different populations, and her anthropological background allowed her to skillfully analyze “the Algerian Question.” Moreover, she was a well-regarded, decorated French resister and concentration camp survivor, which positioned her as a national figurehead.⁷ Her authority was demonstrated in the actions of Mitterrand and Soustelle, government officials who called upon her expertise almost immediately after the outbreak of the war. Finally, her position in the French Algerian government and her connections with the network of concentration camp deportees in the form of the group ADIR (National Association of Deportees and Internees of the Resistance) added to her credentials. For these reasons, she was called upon by the government to research and write about the situation in Algeria, positioning her as an expert in the field.

Resistant Narratologies

As a result of her experience as a concentration camp survivor and her humanist training in ethnography, demonstrated in her views on the field of ethnology, which in her words, “As far as I am concerned, I considered the obligations of my profession as an ethnologist comparable to those of lawyers, with the difference in that it requires me to defend a population instead of a

⁶ Alistair Horne, *A savage war of peace: Algeria 1954-1962*, (New York, NY: Sifton Books), 1987, 110.

⁷ Nancy Wood, *Germaine Tillion, une femme mémoire: D'une Algérie à l'autre*. Trans. Marie-Pierre Corrin. (Paris: Autrement, 2003), 6.

person.”⁸ Throughout her works on Algeria, Germaine Tillion displays a number of strategies which display resistance to colonial ideology. She focuses the attention of the reader onto these strategies through the use of what Genette terms narratology.⁹ Narrative functions and focalization, as articulated by Genette, bring to light on some of her resistant ideologies. One instance which highlights Tillion’s deployment of these narrative strategies, in this case in regards to racial ideology, is when she articulates, “no human lineage possesses a monopoly on intelligence or equality...if I mention these details to you, it is because sometimes racist arguments appear in the Algerian imbroglio. Elsewhere, they seem troublesome to me, but here they are equally stupid.” From the point of view of narratology, this passage presents several significant points. In this case, she promotes a racial ideology that all races are created equal, particularly related to human intelligence; no race has the advantage over another. Furthermore, she boosts the effectiveness of her message through narratological devices that are brought to light through Genette’s theories. Moreover, her use of internal focalization in the form of first person narration underlines the importance of her ideology in this statement. Taking into account the fact that she was an established authority on the subject of Algeria, acknowledged as detailed above by the French government as well as the general public, further underlines the effectiveness of a first person ideological statement, which would merge her authority and point of view with the reader. Additionally, she underlines her ideological stance through the use of the directing function, which draws the reader’s attention to the act of narration, when she states, “I mention these details to you,” demonstrating her argumentation to the reader. Finally, she employs the communication function to reach out and draw the reader into her point of view,

⁸ Tillion, *L’Afrique bascule*, 18.

⁹ Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1980), Gérard Genette, *Figures of Literary Discourse*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

when she directly addresses the reader as “you.” All of these narratological devices work to give her viewpoint credibility, while reinforcing a connection between her and the reader.

Through the employment of narratological devices, Tillion connects the beginning of Algerian resistance to the history of colonialism in Algeria, a strategy which connects responsibility in the present conflict with colonialism. In a section of *France and Algeria* titled “1945: the Sétif riot, a consequence of the “pacification” of 1853,” the title alone foreshadows her view of the Sétif riot, named for the region where the manifestation took place on V-E day, May 8 1945, celebrating the end of World War Two.¹⁰ She considers this incident the beginning of Algerian resistance to French rule, and directly connects it to the pacification of the region of Sétif in 1853, when the best lands were given to the *Compagnie geneoise*, a Swiss company by the French colonists; the Algerian residents of the land were never compensated for the loss of their land. Tillion emphasizes the connection between colonialism and the current conflict in a few ways. First, she opens the section with a question, communicating directly to the reader: “Why was the demonstration organized by the U.D.M.A. (Union Démocratique du Manifeste Algérien) on V.E. Day (May 8, 1945) peaceful everywhere in Algeria save in the region of Sétif?”¹¹ Next, she responds to this question in the first person, or internal focalization, to transfer her ideology onto the reader. She asserts, “I have spoken of those horrible days with many and varied witnesses.” Not only does she use internal focalization to reinforce her point in this case, but the content of her message also builds her authority; she spoke to witnesses about the events, thus her information is credible. In this passage, Tillion uses the communication function, addressing the reader directly through a question. Subsequently, she uses internal focalization to answer the question through the assertion of her own opinion. Since her

¹⁰ Tillion, *France and Algeria*, 131.

¹¹ *ibid*

contention is that the riot in Sétif resulted from colonial land confiscation, in this instance she displays resistance to the colonial ideology which made the pacification of Algeria possible in the first place.

Examining the focalization of the narrator in further detail leads to another resistant element of Tillion's writing in which she uses internal focalization to enter the mind of Algerian Muslims. At first glance, this could be viewed as a biased means of speaking *for* the Other, however, the way in which she employs internal focalization goes further than speaking on behalf of a group. For example, she enters the mind of the Algerian Muslim when she explains, "this new source of frustration for the Moslems alternated with the less obvious, often unformulated pain of cultural dispossession and the open exasperation provoked, among the peasants, by the confiscation of land- an inexhaustible exasperation each generation transmits intact to the next."¹² Tillion also broaches the subject of French repression of Algerian Muslims when she asserts, "confronted with an apparently total indifference on the part of French public opinion and French justice, the Moslems were stunned; thereafter they felt they had been delivered- without defense, without arms, without legal recourse of any kind- to murder pure and simple."¹³ In passages such as these, Tillion employs internal focalization in order to transmit the Algerian Muslim point of view to a French audience. As an expert in the field, someone who had spent years living amongst the group of people in question, Tillion established expertise allowed her to translate their viewpoint to an audience, the French public, whose opinions were sharply divided. Thus she was not speaking on behalf of a group for her own interests, but for *their* interests in making their perspective available to a wider audience by a recognized authority on

¹² Tillion, *France and Algeria*, 130.

¹³ *Ibid*, 148.

the subject, all the while breaking stereotypes and prejudices the readers may have had from other less-informed sources, depicting the Muslim Algerians as violent, extremist terrorists.

The Memory of Deportation and Algeria

One of the more resistance aspects of Tillion's writing are the connections she makes between her experience as a deportee, as survivors of Nazi concentration camps were known in France, and the oppression of Muslim Algerians by the French during the Algerian War. Tillion forges this connection when she describes hearing about executions soon to take place in Algeria, and she expresses that "this news came as a great shock to me...because I am particularly sensitive in this area."¹⁴ She then describes the execution of her comrades in the Resistance, evoking national sentiment by her mention of the French Resistance to the Nazi regime in France, and connecting it to the Muslim Algerian nationalism. Another example of the link between Nazi oppression and French oppression of Algeria she describes is the "shock" she experienced when she returned to Algeria in 1954 and saw the blatant discrimination of Muslims when passing through checkpoints on the road; Europeans easily passed, while a peasant had to raise his hands "like a suspect. A scene which I had seen many times in Paris between 1940 and 1942."¹⁵ In connecting the experience of the Nazi occupation in France with the French occupation of Algeria, she appeals to the French public on a personal level. Since World War Two had ended not even a decade before, the memory of this horror was still fresh in peoples' minds, which she points out when she writes, "the accidents of history would have it that among these witnesses of the sufferings of the alien people are certain Frenchmen who, less than twenty

¹⁴ Tillion, *France and Algeria*, 42-43.

¹⁵ Tillion, *L'Afrique bascule*, 21.

years before, had directly experience these same crushing ordeals.”¹⁶ The parallel that she draws between Nazi and French occupation could not be more explicit. This effect is amplified by the change in the narrator’s focalization, that is, the use of the first person, which generates a stronger connection between the reader and the narrator. The parallels she draws between the two regimes, Nazi on one hand and French on the other, emphasizes the injustice of the Algerian War, and resists colonial ideology that the Algerian war she be won “by every means.”¹⁷

Donald Reid develops the influence of Tillion’s deportation experience on her work in his work, *Germaine Tillion, Lucie Aubrac, and the Politics of Memories of the French Resistance*.¹⁸ He observes that, “what has made Tillion such an appealing figure to Lacouture, Todorov, and many French men and women is not solely her moral qualities, but her dialogues with the lived experience of deportation as a means to confront and master new situations.”¹⁹ In addition, he points out that she drew parallels between the treatment of Algerian Muslims and the Nazi treatment of deportees to the camps, leading her to conclude that the German people as a whole should not be condemned for the Second World War, because that type of brutality was possible in any society, including her own. According to Reid’s analysis, she held up the qualities of the resisters in the camps and the standard bearers for French morality, which was disintegrating. Thus, Tillion engaged in a process of Othering French nationals residing in Algeria, an aspect of her work which should be explored in further detail.

Complicity and the Other

¹⁶ Ibid, 125.

¹⁷ Tillion, *France and Algeria*, 11.

¹⁸ Donald Reid, *Germaine Tillion, Lucie Aubrac, and the Politics of Memories of the French Resistance*. (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007).

¹⁹ Reid, *Germaine Tillion*, 41.

Even though Tillion's nonfictional writings on Algeria convey numerous qualities of resistance, elements of complicity are present as well. One significant feature of her writing was the process of Othering the actual perpetrators of the violence in Algeria, namely the French army and the French Algerians. In the former's case, Tillion explains that political parties and Parliament in France had been weakened through various divisions, while bitterness grew within the army during the defeat in the War in Indochina, and through the lack of support in France for the soldiers who fought in this conflict. First, she states, again alluding to World War Two and the divisions of the French people between collaborator and resister, "the cruel division that mutilated France from 1940 to 1945 subsist in our army more than anything else."²⁰ All of these factors lead to a situation in which, "politicians of the Left entrusted these same soldiers with exorbitant powers. Of course, one must judge severely the excesses of which certain military elements then became guilty, but even more severely those men who encouraged these elements to commit such excesses and who had every opportunity to know that these cruelties were *avoidable* and that they should have been avoided at any cost."²¹ Notably, the focalization throughout this entire passage is zero, an omniscient narrator, much more impersonal of a description than those of the Muslim Algerian's viewpoints, which further contributes to the separation between the French and the French army. In this instance, she fails to establish a connection between the reader and the view of the French army through internal focalization. Furthermore, her description of the military raises the question of authority over the armed forces. Isabel Hull attributes military culture, which developed in Germany following the Franco-Prussian war and the writing of the constitution, to the genocide committed by Germans,

²⁰ Tillion, *France and Algeria*, 79.

²¹ Tillion, *France and Algeria*, 81.

first in German South Africa and then in Europe.²² In both cases, an unstable political climate, coupled with a rise in power of the military, led to extreme violence- the Nazi concentration system on one hand, and torture, executions, and concentration camps in Algeria. There is no question as to Tillion's stance against torture, which was one of her motivations in writing her works on Algeria, however, in othering the army, creating and reinforcing a division between the views of the French nation and the actions of the French army in Algeria, is she not then shirking some of the responsibility of the French nation in the atrocities and placing the blame military excess?²³

In addition to othering the French army, Tillion also creates a division between the French citizens of France and the French nationals of European descent in Algeria. Although they held French citizenship as residents of Algeria, many of the French Algerians found their origins in Malta, Spain, and Italy; therefore there was already a cultural disconnect from mainland France.²⁴ Tillion describes, for example, the fact that the colonial administrators in Algeria are recruited from Algeria itself rather than transferring French administrators from France because "the initial privilege of education permitted the descendants of the first *colons* to eliminate, in almost every administrative post in Algeria, the officials sent from metropolitan France and trained there."²⁵ Her choice of words in this phrase suggests that this was a deliberate plot of the French Algerians to separate themselves from the mainland and create their own society without the influence of the metropolis.

²² Isabel V Hull, *Absolute destruction: military culture and the practices of war in imperial Germany*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

²³ Both Nancy Wood and Donald Reid describe her activism against torture, see *Germaine Tillion: une femme-mémoire* and "De Ravensbrück à Alger," in Todorov, Tzvetan, *Le siècle de Germaine Tillion*, (Paris: Seuil, 2007), 149-170.

²⁴ Jeanne M. Boyland, "Civilizing Gender Relations in Algeria, The Paradoxical Case of Marie Bugéja, 1919-39," in *Domesticating the empire: race, gender, and family life in French and Dutch colonialism*. Ed. Julia Ann Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda, (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 179.

²⁵ Tillion, *France and Algeria*, 95.

Not only are the French Algerians protected from imported administrators, but the distance between the two countries leads to an inevitable dilution in the culture, which is another means to separate this group from the French of mainland France that Tillion employs. The structure of her work also supports this point, as it includes an entire chapter devoted to the subject of the “Men of the Marches,” who are, she explains, the people furthest away from the cultural center of the French nation, Paris. She uses the image of Paris as the “beating heart of our community” to demonstrate her point that the farther one moves from the center, the less contact one has with the mainstream culture.²⁶ Next, she describes the process by which the culture of Paris gets diluted the farther from the city travelled, until “their country fades all the same. It disappears first, and without anyone’s noticing, from institutions- then from ways of behaving, and thinking.”²⁷ In another sub-section, entitled, “A distant France,” Tillon once again reinforces her point through the use of imagery, depicting Algeria as “this distant France whose edges fray and are frayed,” thereby illustrating the negative effects and demoralizing effects of distance from the metropolis. According to her, it is these culturally separated French Algerians who enforce the second-class status of Muslim Algerians, by refusing them positions in the administration “under the pretext that in the “indigenous” milieu, the candidates do not possess the required credentials for the posts,” while the French government, under direction of Charles de Gaulle, passed a law in March 1944 that Muslim Algerians should enjoy full privileges of French citizenship.²⁸ In this chapter, she therefore engages in a similar process of othering the French Algerians from the French of France as she did with the French army; once again shifting the responsibility of the current situation from the French in France to the French Algerians; their distance from the metropolis has caused them to become morally corrupt.

²⁶ Tillion, *France and Algeria*, 88.

²⁷ Tillion, *France and Algeria*, 89.

²⁸ Tillion, *L’Afrique bascule*, 25.

Complicitous Maternalism

Germaine Tillion's relationship to the Other is further complicated by the maternalism that she demonstrates throughout her works on Algeria. In her attempt to protect Muslim Algerians from French oppression, her intervention depicts her as a maternal imperialist. The concept of imperial maternalism is articulated in detail in *Western Women and Imperialism*.²⁹ As the term suggests, it connotes the feminine version of paternalism. In regards to imperialism, and as articulated by Barbara Ramusack, maternalism is a "fictive kinship," used to justify the presence of colonists in the colonies through the necessity of their protection and education of the indigenous peoples that they can offer in order to elevate native society.³⁰ Imperial maternalists believed in the superiority of their own culture and political system, and the need to improve colonial subject's own systems, envisioning a relationship like that between Mother and daughter. However, as Ramusack points out, "the mother-daughter relationship involves elements of inequality and suspicions about the motivations of the mothers."³¹ Since an ideology of maternalism underwrote the system of colonialism, Germaine Tillion's subscription to this creed demonstrates a complicitous quality in her work.

Tillion displays maternalist tendencies in her view that Algeria needs to remain connected to France in order to remedy the demographic problems in the country. At the time she wrote during the Algerian War, this was a controversial stance. Intellectual's opinions in general were dispersed over many different solutions to the Algerian Question, as Sorum notes in

²⁹ Chaudhuri, Nupur, and Margaret Strobel. *Western women and imperialism complicity and resistance*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).

³⁰ "Cultural Missionaries, Maternal Imperialists, Feminist Allies", in *Western women and imperialism*, 119-157, 133.

³¹ *Ibid*, 133.

his work *Intellectuals and Decolonization in France*.³² When she first wrote *Algeria: The Realities* in 1956, Tillion did not support decolonization in Algeria because, in her view, it would cripple the country. Her views changed by the time she wrote *France and Algeria* in 1961 because of the brutality of the Algerian War; she knew at that time that independence for Algeria was inevitable. However, she still advocated a protective role for France in Algeria's future for the good of Algerians. This role involved social assistance in large part, as she enumerates in *L'Afrique bascule vers l'avenir*, "free education of both girls and boys, democracy, and social peace" will lead to a better future for Algeria, "over the market".³³ She therefore presents her viewpoint as nobler than merely economics, represented by the market, and more social and political in nature. It is no coincidence that these social qualities are those of the metropole, whose system is better suited for the modern world.

Tillion's further expresses her maternalism through a recurrent motif of the need of protection for the Algerian population. Using the communication function in the form of a question posed to the reader, for example, she writes, "What have they to lose in losing our friendship? Virtually everything."³⁴ The communication function serves to highlight everything Algeria stands to lose, in her eyes, from the termination of their relationship, which she euphemistically describes as a "friendship." She transmits a concern for the protection of "children and family" in particular.³⁵ The structure of her work reinforces this point, as she titled the fifth chapter of *L'Afrique bascule vers l'avenir* to "The Child," and the seventh chapter "Women, Treated like Domestic Animals."³⁶ Mervat Hatem coined the term "cultural

³² Paul Clay Sorum, *Intellectuals and decolonization in France*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977).

³³ Tillion, *L'Afrique bascule vers l'avenir*, 120.

³⁴ Tillion, *France and Algeria*, 5.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 87.

³⁶ Page 86 and 100 respectively.

nationalism,” which she describes as a facet of colonial ideology, which “gave women role as protectors and conveyors of cultural definitions of gender.”³⁷ Through this lens, Tillion displays cultural nationalism in her promotion of Western gender norms in regards to women’s place in Algerian society, a subject she later takes on in her text *The Republic of Cousins*.³⁸ The motif of French protection over the Algerian population translates Tillion’s maternalism and implies her complicity in colonial ideology.

Imagery of a “ford” is another theme in Tillion’s work which allows her to transmit her maternalist predilection. Throughout her works, she describes the Algerian population as in the middle of a ford. She positions Algeria in a transitory state, between the archaic and the modern, in the middle of a ford. This technique “in the transition of two worlds” implies the notion of progress, from the ancient to the modern. In describing migrant Algerian workers who travel to France seasonally to work, she articulates, that they “have progressively lost the material assets and the spiritual stability of ancient society, without having, due to [a lack of] instruction and technical support, become modern men.”³⁹ Rita Felski, a scholar of modernity acknowledges that modernity possesses “a normative as well as descriptive dimension.”⁴⁰ Tillion’s juxtaposition of the ancient with the modern in the above quote, expressed as a difference in education, presents a normative qualification (the norm being modern France), further illuminating the maternalism of Tillion’s work.

Materialist Analysis: The Vaccine as Complicity

³⁷ “Through Each Other’s Eyes,” in *Western women and imperialism complicity and resistance*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992, 35-58).

³⁸ Germaine Tillion and Quintin Hoare, *The Republic of Cousins: women's oppression in Mediterranean society*, (London: Al Saqi Books, 1983).

³⁹ Tillion, *L’Afrique bascule*, 73.

⁴⁰ Rita Felski, *The gender of modernity*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press 1995), 14.

Germaine Tillion's works on Algeria reinforce an economic rather than colonial cause for the problem of *clochardisation* which necessitates the continued connection between Algeria and France. Tillion emphasizes the economic elements of the situation through a number of themes that circulate in her texts, the first of which is the motif of misery. Using vivid imagery, she describes "the great bleeding ulcer Alger has become,"⁴¹ creating a visual in the mind of the reader of an urgent need that should be addressed. Furthermore, she describes "primary hunger," hunger for basic caloric intake, followed by a "secondary hunger," for luxury products such as dairy and fruits.⁴² The types of hungers that she enumerates emphasizes the misery of the population and serves as a justification for her view, and that of the colonists, that Algeria should remain tied to France.

Although in *France and Algeria*, Tillion retreats from her economic analysis which was present in *Algeria: The Realities*, when she states, "My 1956 Analysis of the Algerian tragedy may have suggested I considered purely economic measures sufficient...I regard the Algerian complex as a total phenomenon," her ambiguous stance in regards to colonialism underlines her complicity in colonial ideology.⁴³ She clearly expresses an opinion about colonialism in *L'Afrique bascule* in this excerpt:

"the biggest crime of the 18th century seems to me to have been slavery. And colonialism represents in my eyes the one of the 19th century...Anti-slavery was often one of the excuses for colonialism, and I ask myself if anti-colonialism does not serve as an excuse, in certain cases, for pauperization. Presently, for example, the dietary situation where there were never colonists appears a little more alarming than in those regions where the colonists developed the land and created businesses."⁴⁴

⁴¹ Tillion, *France and Algeria*, 3

⁴² Tillion, *L'Afrique bascule* 103

⁴³ Tillion, *France and Algeria*, 3.

⁴⁴ Le plus grand forfait du XVIIIe siècle me semble avoir été la traite des Noirs. Et le colonialisme représente à mes yeux celui du XIXe siècle. Mais le crime du XXe siècle sera la « clochardisation »...L'anti-esclavage a été souvent

While she acknowledges colonialism as a crime in this passage, Tillion also stresses the good works that the colonists did in the example she cites, as she implies that colonial infrastructure has reduced hunger in those areas it touched. She also distances colonialism temporally from the current situation, creating ambiguity in regards to colonialism's responsibility for the present conflict; colonization was a problem in the 19th century, but the 20th century has new difficulties. She mirrors this ambiguity when she writes, "the position of "colonial power" was necessarily that of scapegoat and if we had begun our reconversion earlier, we would have saved a lot of blood, a lot of gold, and also a lot of something which is at the same time bloody and costly, that is, hate."⁴⁵ In these lines, she once again undermines colonialism's responsibility, calling it a scapegoat, for necessary economic reforms which would have "converted" Algeria to a modern nation. Tillion's ambiguous attitude towards colonialism positions her as more complicitous in this situation than resistant.

Throughout *France and Algeria* and *L'Afrique bascule vers l'avenir*, Germaine Tillion's economic analysis of the Algerian conflict implicitly denies the responsibility of colonialism for the situation which she describes as the clash of an archaic civilization with a modern one. Her analysis is materialist in nature; as a result of advances in health care in Algeria, the population had increased to a point in which the population could not, in Tillion's view, sustain itself economically without the help of France, specifically in the form of massive funds to provide for the education and employment of the entire population. Roland Barthes's concept of "the vaccine" can illuminate the significance of Tillion's analysis in regards to resistance and complicity with colonialism. Barthes's elaborates on the definition of "the vaccine" as "a

un des alibis du colonialism, et je me demande si l'anticolonialisme ne sert pas d'alibi dans certains cas à la « clochardisation », Tillion, *L'Afrique bascule*, 85.

⁴⁵ Tillion, *L'Afrique bascule*, 114.

rhetorical device whose role is to confess the accidental damage due to class in order to better mask the principal damage.⁴⁶ Tillion's materialist, economic analysis does just that. She fails to indict colonialism as the reason for the *clochardisation* of the Algerian population and reduces it to a conflict of class, or, in her words, of an archaic and a modern, industrialized society.

Conclusion

At first glance, Germaine Tillion is predisposed to be more resistant to colonial ideology because of her history as a deportee in a Nazi concentration camp, a situation in which she experienced the loss of her humanity in every respect. Her background as an anthropologist, trained to value cultural relativity instead of privileging one culture over another, is important to take into account. In fact, she wrote one of her main works on Algeria, *L'Afrique bascule vers l'avenir* for ADIR's journal *Voix et Visages*, thus specifically for an audience of readers who had experienced the loss of their humanity in the Nazi concentration camps.⁴⁷ However, Tillion was criticized by other intellectuals upon the publication of her works because, in her critics' eyes, she had failed to indict colonialism for causing the poverty of Muslim Algerians, promoting a demographic explanation instead.⁴⁸ Tillion's position between complicity and resistance in her writings on Algeria therefore merits a closer examination. After a thorough inquiry into her primary works on The Algerian War, *L'Afrique bascule vers l'avenir* and *France and Algeria*, it is clear that she displays elements of both resistance and complicity in colonial ideology which encouraged the continuation of the union of France and Algeria.

⁴⁶ «une figure de rhétorique dont le rôle consiste à «confesser le mal accidentel d'une institution de classe pour mieux en masquer le mal principal», Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, (Paris: Seuil, 1957).

⁴⁷ ADIR- Association des déportées et internées de la Résistance (National Association of Deported and Interned of the Resistance), Tillion, *L'Afrique bascule*, 60.

⁴⁸ Nancy Wood, *Germaine Tillion, une femme mémoire*, 197, 227.

The Algerian War was unquestionably a violent episode in both France's and Algeria's past. Many actors on both sides perpetrated atrocities against the others' military and civilians. The blurred lines between combatant and civilian, Algerian and French, and the nature of wars of decolonization also contribute to the difficulty to characterize this conflict. Through the use of textual analysis and narratology, this case study of Germaine Tillion's writings on the Algerian War served to illuminate the fluctuations of one intellectual between complicity and resistance in decolonization. One on hand, she showed resistant qualities through the connection she draws between the Nazi occupation of France and the French occupation of Algeria. Her use of internal focalization also helped break down stereotypes by depicting the Muslim Algerian's perspective which was not as readily available to the French public. However, her process of constructing the French army and French Algerians as Other in contrast to the French from the mainland shifts responsibility for the violence of colonialism from the French to these Others, an effect which is amplified by her use of the omniscient narrator in these descriptions, minimizing personal connections between the reader and these groups. Thus the analysis of the major themes, structure, and narrative strategies in Germain Tillion's primary works on the Algerian War, *L'Afrique bascule vers l'avenir* and *France and Algeria: Complimentary Enemies* shows that an intellectual, who is a proclaimed defender of the oppressed, also demonstrates qualities of complicity in this conflict by erecting a wall between the French nation and the perpetrators of the violence, masking the responsibility of colonialism in economic terms, and contributing to a hierarchy of cultures in the form of imperial maternalism.

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