Recovering migrant spaces in Laurent Maffre's graphic novel *Demain, Demain*

Álvaro Luna-Dubois

The substandard living conditions endured by postcolonial labour immigrants in France during the 1960s and 1970s are a reminder of the spatial dimension of migration heritage. Whether they be hostel rooms, shantytowns, or housing estates, precarious and temporary spaces defined immigrant life in France at the turn of the twenty-first century. Yet, consistent with other European societies where migration is treated as a separate issue not affecting the majority group (Römhild 2017: 69), French official and local memory of such dwellings remains relatively rare. Archival footage and fictional and autobiographical accounts by former shantytown inhabitants are some of today's main sources of memory of these sites that deeply inform contemporary French identities and landscapes.

This chapter centres on a recent narrative commemorating migrant housing in France: the two-volume graphic novel *Demain, demain* (Tomorrow, Tomorrow, 2012, 2019) by Laurent Maffre, which follows the journey of the Saïdis, an Algerian family living in a 1960s shantytown at the outskirts of Paris as well as their relocation in the 1970s to a *cité de transit* (transitional housing estate) also at the Parisian periphery. Written and designed in conjunction with archival research and collaborations with scholars and former shanty inhabitants, *Demain, demain* provides a reflection on the broad spatial effects of migration. This is demonstrated through the narrative's examination of socio-material transformations in the Parisian area during the portrayed era. *Demain, demain* also highlights the contribution of the hybrid visual and textual form of the graphic novel to understand France as a dynamic space marked by past migrations, a component that stands at the core of the concept of postmigration.

In order to interrogate the ways in which space is narrated and anchored by Maffre's graphic novels, I first contextualise his work with the existing fictional shantytowns narratives in France as well as provide a historical overview of the memory of the 1960s French shantytowns. This is especially important because Maffre's graphic novels belong to an emerging wave of twenty-first century texts reflecting on these sites nearly fifty years after their removal. My subsequent analyses concentrate on the narration of domestic place both as subjective and

material representations. This, in turn, will provide insights into critical issues that the graphic novel brings to the study of France as a postmigrant society.

An ever-returning story: French shantytown narratives

1960s France was an era marked by rapid industrialisation, major labour migration waves, and a longstanding housing crisis that forced numerous immigrants to find unusual housing arrangements (Blanchard 2018: 99-102). Some of their options included dwellings at shantytown networks, which at the Parisian periphery extended the 400-hectares (Schaefer 2017: 57). In 1966, it was estimated that about 10,000 people lived in the shantytowns at the north-western suburb of Nanterre alone (Cohen 2011: 33). Makeshift dwellings remained an integral part of French urban landscape until the early 1970s when they began to be replaced by marginalised temporary housing units, and by the 1980s most disappeared in the construction of public housing towers without leaving any physical trace (Delon 2014: 342).

As places that belong both to the colonial and postcolonial periods, the shantytowns of the 1950s and 1960s occupied a complex interstitial position between two understandings of French landscape. On the one hand, they resembled the impoverished colonial Maghrebi settlements of "*bidonvilles*" (literally, city of tin cans) from which they acquired their generic name.[1] Neil MacMaster asserts that similarly to their Maghrebi counterparts, French shantytowns were overpopulated migrant communities with a spatial logic and interior that resembled traditional Maghrebi architecture (2009: 75). Their inhabitants were also said to follow Maghrebi linguistic, religious, and social customs (ibid.: 80). On the other hand, the sites also reflected the reality of a French housing crisis dating back to the late 19th century which was exacerbated by the World Wars, the baby boom, massive rural migrations to cities, and the French-Algerian War (1954-1962), leaving them as a housing alternative for the most marginalised classes (Silverstein 2004: 92-94).

Despite their historical and spatial significance, sociologist Margot Delon notes that the memory of 1960s shantytowns and the subsequent *cités de transit* in suburbs like Nanterre, remains absent from most city records, leaving film and pictures of the era as well as oral histories of former inhabitants as the major historical accounts (2014: 342). This may not be surprising in view of nationalist

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1   Christian Topalov notes that the term 'bidonville' was first used to describe a Casablanca settlement and it appeared in the French language during the 1920s (2017: 41). The semantics of the word soon widened to represent all shantytowns in the Maghreb as a 1932 postcard of the same neighbourhood confirms when it refers to it simply as 'un bidonville' (Cattedra 2006: 103). By the 1950s, the term entered continental France when it began to designate the country's own shantytowns, replacing previous terms of 'la zone', 'colonies de bicoques' (dump colonies) or 'village nègre' (Topalov 2017: 41).

myths and the official government's reluctance to address France's long migration history (Noiriel 1988: 18-19) that contribute to inaccurately present migration as a recent phenomenon in France.[2] In the absence of significant sites of memory, numerous French writers and visual artists have developed for the last five decades new forms to commemorate migrant life during the 1960s. Their creative works can be considered a productive "anarchive" that reinscribes an absent memory and brings past migrations to the forefront. Suggested by Lia Brozgal in the context of the Paris massacre of 1961[3] which faces major archival lacunae, the concept of the anarchive encourages the use of unofficial accounts such as literary works to evince archival functions and produce an epistemological system in oppositional relationship to an official archive (2014: 50). Applying such a framework to the study of graphic novels centring of the 1961 massacre, Claire Gorrara also highlights their capabilities to act as "anarchival" interpreters of historical events because they are produced outside of official media and challenge official narratives (2018: 133). Following these models, I will contend that Maffre's literary and visual representation of 1960s shantytowns and housing projects can serve as a tool to recover lost historical episodes of French housing history and further recognise the diverse past of French society.

It must be noted that the vast majority of French shantytown narratives focuses on Maghrebi inhabitants who were, after all, disproportionately overrepresented in such settings (McDonnell 2013: 61). Literary representations of shantytown life in France appeared as early as in 1955 in Driss Chraïbi's novel *Les Boucs*, which follows a Maghrebi labour immigrant – then colonial subject – living in a misery-driven Nanterre shantytown. The breakthrough of French shantytown narratives did not come, however, until the *Beur* cultural movement of the 1980s when young Franco-Maghrebi writers and activists published their fiction, which at the time consisted mostly of *Bildungsromane* (Hargreaves 1989: 93) and was set at the shantytowns where the authors grew up.[4] Many of the first shantytown narratives also documented historical events such as the 1961 massacre, the Algerian inde-

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2   Noiriel notes, for example, that in 1930, following the American immigration quotas of the 1920s, France was the most important immigration country in the industrialised world (1988: 21).

3   The Paris massacre of 1961 was a police-led violent repression of a peaceful demonstration against the colonial rule in Algeria mostly by people of Algerian descent living in the Parisian metropolitan area during the French-Algerian War. The event led to multiple casualties, mostly of Algerian origin, estimated between 30 and 300, and mass imprisonments (Lewis 2012: 308).

4   Ficitonal depictions of shantytowns appear in Mehdi Charef's *Le Thé au harem d'Archi Ahmed* (1983), *À Bras le cœur* (2006), and *Rue des Pâquerettes* (2019), Mohammed Kenzi's *La menthe sauvage* (1984), Azouz Begag's *Le Gone du Chaâba* (1986), Brahim Benaïcha's *Vivre au paradis* (1992), Eléonore Faucher's *Un petit quelque chose de différent* (2008), Kamel Khélif's *Premier hiver* (2012), Hamid Aït-Taleb's *De grâce* (2008). Documentaries include *L'Amour existe* (1961) by Maurice Pialat, Monique Hervo's *Chroniques du bidonville: Nanterre en guerre d'Algérie* (2001), and Cheikh Djemaï's *Nanterre, une*

pendence movement, and the social movements of May 1968 from the perspective of the descendants of Maghrebi immigrants.

Most shantytown narratives from the 1980s traditionally end with their protagonists moving into public housing projects, an aspect that signals the end of the shantytown era and the beginning of literature about urban life at the outer cities – a setting that currently dominates contemporary French fiction depicting ethnic minorities. Shantytown narratives published after the 1980s shifted their focus by placing shanties mainly as historical background. For example, Leïla Sebbar's *La Seine était rouge* (1999), set in 1990s Nanterre, includes flashbacks of shantytowns within the context of the 1961 massacre. Rachid Bouchareb's film *Hors-la-loi* (2010) also features Nanterre shantytowns within the frame of the Algerian independence movement, thereby signalling a change in the authors' concern beyond the spatial dimension.

With a renewed interest on the material question of shantytowns and *cités de transit*, *Demain*, *demain* proposes a distinct approach to shantytown narratives that deserves critical attention. Compared to previous shantytown narratives, the graphic series narrates a story of an Algerian family living in a shack without offering any specific *Bildung* conclusion. Although the work makes direct allusions to the Paris massacre of 1961, the French-Algerian War, and the housing crisis, its main plot centres on the fictional characters' relation to their living sites. I also suggest that the series' graphic form provides substantial scenes of domestic spaces that have been often eclipsed by former representations often focusing on the external characteristics of the shantytown. By shifting our attention to intimate spaces such as the interior of the Saïfi family's shack, their friend's living room, or public spaces that are often overlooked in critical studies of shantytown narratives, we can discover new practices and insights about the spatial impact of migration. Analysing Maffre's graphic novel as an anarchive of shantytowns and *cités de transit* thus provides a renewed take on France as a space defined by and through migration and migratory narratives.

This is not France: Displacement in *Demain, demain*

The question of mobility and displacement is at the heart of both volumes of Laurent *Maffre's Demain, demain*. With the first part, *Nanterre, bidonville de la folie 1962-1966* (2012), narrating the reunification of the Saïfi family from Algeria to the Nanterre shantytown of *La Folie*, and the second part, *Genevilliers, cité de transit: 51, rue du Port 1973* (2019), tracing their days at a temporary housing project and the

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mémoire en miroir de France (2006). Feature films also include and the film adaptations *Le Gone du Chaâba* (1997) by Christophe Ruggia, and *Vivre au paradis* (1999) by Bourlem Guerdjou.

father's experiences working at a car factory, the graphic author offers a reflection on the theme of spatial displacement that he depicts from multiple perspectives. The focus of the narrative, I stress, is not exclusively on the protagonists' migration from Algeria to France as it is often depicted in previous narratives and their critical studies, but on the articulation of multiple spatial experiences. While the Saïfis indeed move France, they continue to migrate within the territory, first to the Nanterre shantytowns, and later to the *cité de transit*, which are two sites characterised by their spatial uncertainty and transitory nature. Concurrently, the very presence of new inhabitants, housing structures and industrial development exhibit major shifts in the French urban landscape. Conceiving Maffre's series as interwoven narratives of mobility, displacement, and transformation within France can allow the notion of French space to undergo changes in signification.

Following the logic of the narrative, the first migration experience involves the arrival of the characters not to the Nanterre shantytown but to an idealised image of Paris, a place associated with foreignness, beauty, and dreams. A brief flashback nearing the end of the first volume illustrates this migration. In their first drive to Nanterre, the Saïdis' eldest son, Ali, contemplates the city for the first time. Contrary to the images of mud-filled shantytowns dominating the novel, Ali stares with awe at the iconic landmarks of Place Denfert-Rochereau and the Champs-Élysés, and eagerly takes out a postcard of the Paris Opera that his father sent him in Algeria: "Do you think daddy is waiting for us in his golden building?" (Maffre 2012: 113).[5] The passage, which appears after many scenes of their life at the shacks, serves as a reminder of the spatial lapses that prefigure and shape the Saïdis' narrative.

While the Saïfi children and mother's first encounter with France is animated by excitement and curiosity, it is soon cut short when they arrive to *La Folie*. In this new destination, the protagonists endure a second displacement to a site that also surprises them by its materiality and foreignness as shown when the mother, Soraya, shocked by the shack's poor conditions scolds her husband: "Kader! We're not living in there!" (ibid.: 4) "Shacks, they're nothing but shacks!", "But how do you expect us live in there?" (ibid.: 5).[6] Soraya's initial reaction also highlights the disconnection of the shack with her former conceptions of a dignified domestic place. Consistent with existing footage of 1960s shacks, Maffre's visual depiction of the family dwelling is made out of bricks with a wooden door and metal sheet roofs. Inside the one-bedroom shack, there is a coal kitchen stove with a stemming pipe, a trolley with buckets to bring water from the communal water source,

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5   Unless otherwise indicated, translations are my own. Original: "Tu crois que papa nous attend dans son immeuble en or?"

6   "Kader! On ne va pas vivre là-dedans!"; "Des baraques, ce ne sont que de baraques!"; "Mais comment veux-tu que l'on vive ici?"

a pot for washing, and the couple's bed facing the children's bunk bed. While the shack is distinguished from other properties by the number "1957" written on the front door and designating the year when it was built, Maffre's text notes that the Saïfis' shack as well as those of about 1500 male workers and 300 families living there possessed the same legal address (ibid.: 5-6). Later in the novel, it is also revealed that police-enforced safety regulations prohibited inhabitants to construct new shacks or improve them, an order that increases the precarious nature of the dwellings.

The first material descriptions of the Saïfis' shack by family members and other dwellers also emphasise its oddity as a domestic place. In fact, at the beginning of the novel, the shack is not described in relation to its domestic or affective properties. By calling it using the adverbial phrase "là-dedans" (in there) or simply "ici" (here) instead of domestic terms like "house", Soraya distinguishes the shack from a living space. Similarly, a neighbour opts to call it a "gourbi", a Maghrebi Arabic term that designates a traditional precarious dwelling that is also used in colloquial French to refer to a shack or a house in very poor condition. A family friend also points to the Saïfis that people in Paris seem to ignore the presence of the shantytowns (ibid.: 35) and that many of them call shantytown dwellers "gypsies" and "vagabonds", pejorative and ostracizing terms used namely to designate nomads, itinerants, marked by interstitial belonging.

If these repeated descriptions of the shanties in addition to their lack of a legal address (a legitimate attestation of their existence) are taken into account in their own right, they lead us to question the status of the family's shack as an actual place. In this regard, a very applicable approach to Maffre's spatial reflections is to analyse the shack directly as a "non-place". Conceptualised by Marc Augé, the non-place is situated in what he calls the supermodernity, the contemporary era that is marked by excesses of temporal references and material spaces (1995 [1992]: 29). Augé contends that these characteristics combined with the accelerated development of means of transport, significantly alter urban areas and populations, and multiply the so-called non-places (ibid.: 35) that he defines as follows: "If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place" (ibid.: 77-78). It is relevant that later in his discussion, Augé explicitly lists shantytowns and refugee camps as examples of non-places given their status of a transit point, their inhuman conditions, and their everlasting threat of demolition (ibid.: 78).

Following Augé's considerations, it can be suggested that Maffre's narrative presents a literary and visual example of a migration movement from an idealised spatial image of France to the non-place of a Nanterre shack. The nature of this displacement therefore disrupts Michel de Certeau's spatial theory that defines space as a socially practiced "place" (de Certeau/Giard/Mayol 1990: 117). Follow-

ing this framework, the Saïfis' shack seems to not offer the option for a place to be practiced, thus denying the possibility of a social space. In such an impasse, one way to find a domestic space and place within the Saïfis' shack could involve tracing habitation acts that defy the shack's material reality. Proposed by post-colonial theorist, Bill Ashcroft, habitation acts consist of creative individual and collective actions that generate actual living spaces. According to Ashcroft, there is a perceived universality toward Western representations of place that disregards other systems of order and practices of place. In particular, he believes that within colonial, postcolonial, and migrant settings where place is often disputed or disrupted, space may actually acquire its material and ideological identity not by "practices of place" as de Certeau suggests, but through the actual practice of inhabiting a place (Ashcroft 2001: 158). Such habitation acts, he explains, function as "a dense fabric of interwoven acts in which the issues of inheritance, ethnic identity, belonging, history, race, land are all intertwined" (ibid.). Hence, Ashcroft claims that for subjects living in marginalised locations, habitation reflects the adaptations that its inhabitants must make in order to make sense of their living place, often determined or changed by outsiders:

> Habitation is critical to the ability of a colonized or dislocated people to transform that external cultural pressure which constricts them because it extends through the widening horizons of the experience of place, from the intensely personal (often regarded as the province of poetics) to the global. As soon as we begin to see the construction of place as a factor of a *way of inhabiting* we see how dense and how *intense* is the rhizomic pattern of relationships in which place is located. The phenomenon of place extends from the most personal and intimate of relationships [...] to the most attenuated. (Ibid.: 159)

With the concept of habitation, Ashcroft offers an additional spatial notion beyond the space-place dichotomy that consists of a series of acts (interpersonal, symbolic, and physical) that are deployed to create places and spaces. Such reconfiguration captures the richness and complexity involved in the narration of shantytown dwellings and can deepen the analysis of the effects of displacement and mobility in the way place is described, experienced, and narrated.

Restructuring the non-place

Through the depiction of the Saïfis' life at a non-place, *Demain, demain* portrays a manifold of symbolic and material habitation acts that the family members must perform to resist their territorial realities and establish a safe domestic space. For example, from the perspective of the father, Kader, who came to work in France

years in advance, the family reunification represents in itself a first act of habitation and place-making. As historian Emmanuel Blanchard notes, Algerian immigration to France was originally conceived as colonial labour migration of single men without women or children in France (2018: 91).[7] Yamina Benguigui adds that the life of immigrant Algerian men from the 1950s and 1960s was characterised by six days of arduous work a week, loneliness, nostalgia, frugality, so that they could send most of their money to their families, and plan a yearly trip to see them (1997: 19). Hence, with the arrival of his children and wife to Nanterre, Kader changes both his mobile life routine and the former spatial logic of his single man's shack.[8] Such alterations to the non-place are also found in Kader's descriptions of the shack that often employ domestic terms such as "notre maison" (our house, Maffre 2012: 3) or refer to makeshift objects as furniture, strategies that function as speech acts to grant the shack with symbolic properties of belonging and material stability.

Once settled in the shacks, Soraya also invests in adapting the family dwelling into a lived space primarily through everyday household acts. This can already be seen in her daily household actions and is particularly well illustrated in a passage narrating a visit by neighbouring women. In an attempt to console Soraya from her disappointment at her new dwelling, a neighbour shares several habitation strategies to overcome her feelings of shame and dismay: "To fix up the walls I pasted flowery wallpapers and pictures [...] and then on the court they left a bit land to plant sweet potatoes. They're gonna grow and with the green, it'll be nice" (Maffre 2012: 11).[9] Here, as Ashcroft theorises in his notion of habitation, house decoration operates as a form of protection against the external pressures that limit shantytown dwellers and widens their experience of place. Similarly, the cultivation of sweet potatoes—a plant common in Algerian cuisine – on the "court" shows another speech act that grants the shantytown with a social and wider material identity. The allusion to local agriculture also fosters feelings of appropriation of the land among the inhabitants. Indeed, sociological studies have proven immigrant agriculture to be an effective way to promote immigrant integration as well having numerous benefits such as access to fresh produce, reduced food costs, physical exercise, therapy, and urban greening (Beckie/Bogdan 2010: 78).

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7   Emmanuel Blanchard specifically notes that in the 1950s the Algerian immigrant sex ratio was about one woman for fourteen men while in the 1970s one woman for five men. This ratio was significantly unbalanced compared to other immigrant groups such as Italians and Spaniards (2018: 91).

8   It is important to note that it was only in 1974 when the Jacques Chirac government led an official policy of family reunification.

9   "Moi, pour habiller les murs j'ai collé du papier peint à fleurs et des photos [...] et puis dans la cour ils ont laissé un peu de terre pour planter des patates douces. Elles vont grimper et avec le vert, ça fera beau."

Hence, by cultivating sweet potatoes, the women characters engage in the process of transforming non-places into domestic spaces where Algerian practices are performed.

Considering all of these scenarios, it can be suggested that after the several sequences narrating the Saïfis' arrival, their shack ceases to be the initial non-place. Indeed, with the different activities that the women and men perform to inhabit their shack, they are able to establish the sense of identity, relation, and history that Augé considers essential in his theorisation of place. Like the cultivation of sweet potatoes from Algeria in the harsh muddy ground of the shantytowns, the characters thus develop alternative ways to reproduce former domestic places and spaces within their environment, which in turn, help them endure their subpar migration to Nanterre.

This is not Algeria: Nuancing the image of the shack

As previously noted, most research on fictional and non-fictional shantytowns tends to conceive them as re-territorialised Algerian localities that were eventually replaced with housing projects that followed French practices and architecture. While it is undeniable that in *Demain, demain* numerous Algerian material and social practices inform the inhabitants' experience, they are not their only sources of habitation. It can also be argued that the contact of the Saïfi family with French public settings and their social interactions with French dominant culture also play a significant role in their conceptualisation of domestic space. In so doing, I will challenge former longstanding assumptions in literature and social sciences about Franco-Maghrebi shacks and assess more thoroughly the material and social reality revealed in Maffre's graphic novel.

Laurent Maffre makes use of visual documentation to reframe the understanding of 1960s migrant shacks, which were deeply influenced by the Nanterre environment and direct local needs. A pertinent example of domestic practices emerging from their direct reality can be found in a sequence that shows how a neighbour developed a viable system to prevent shoe damage and maintain her shack clean from the muddy shantytown grounds. Such practice consists in covering her children's shoes with plastic bags that are also used for storage (Maffre 2012: 42). Responding to the mud issue, which was unseen in their native Algeria, this practice is soon shared as local knowledge among shantytown women. Similarly, in the absence of storage space and furniture in the Saïfis' shack, another sequence shows how Soraya gives the family's suitcases the added role of dresser drawers (ibid.: 118; Figure 1). This depiction contrasts with Anne Schneider's work on the figures of suitcases and unopened cardboard boxes in Franco-Maghrebi literature, which she associates with the traumatic experience of exile (2013: 71) or

the myth of the return to the homeland (ibid.: 137). Thus, by displaying the added strategic and sustainable use, *Demain, demain* promotes a narrative of domestic space that challenges totalizing views of the shacks.

Fig. 13.1: The Saïfis' suitcase. Laurent Maffre, 2012, p. 118.

Another domestic act found within the Saïfis' shack that contrasts with their former Algerian reality pertains to their new relationships established with Franco-French guests.[10] It must be stressed that the Algeria that the Saïfis left for Nanterre was that of the colonial rule amidst the French-Algerian War, which appears in numerous flashbacks featuring a strong military presence that often included abuses and intimidation as well as an overall absence of Algerian men due to the war and the labour emigration. Although their shantytown follows similar social patterns from the colonial period such as frequent police surveillance, poverty, and marked ethnic segregation, the Saïfis also encounter Franco-French characters who disregard these codes. Two of such characters are Raymond Jobert, the owner of the car repair shop where Kader works, and his wife Josiane, who build close ties with the Saïfis. Their intercultural relations are well illustrated in a sequence where Kader invites them to eat lunch with his family and close friends (Figure 2). The sequence is marked by numerous material and social exchanges and an atmosphere detached from colonial mores from both parties. Josiane, for example, brings an apple pie to the Saïfis and helps women cook and serve lunch, while Raymond gifts a card game to the children. Moreover, in one of their conversations, Kader admits to Raymond that for a long time he wanted to invite them

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10   To avoid colonial terminology that would position whiteness and Christianity as a property of French identity, I opt to employ the term "Franco-French" to refer to individuals of European descent living in France.

over but did not do so out of shame, to which Raymond replies: "But you shouldn't be ashamed, I know people who live in *châteaux* that I swear I'd never want to go inside" (ibid.: 21).[11] While brief, the passage serves a reminder that the Saïfis' dwelling also hosts significantly different practices that invite them to alter their conception of French space and their inhabitants. Such a change is also articulated through Maffre's juxtaposition of this scene with a flashback sequence of the last Eid that Soraya and her children celebrated in Algeria and which was violently interrupted by French soldiers. Hence, when Raymond and Josiane, call the Saïfis "people", treat them with respect, and eat and dance with them, it reveals changes brought about from continental France into the Saïfis and the Joberts notions of domestic space.

Fig. 13.2: *The Saïfis' lunch with the Joberts. Laurent Maffre, 2012, p. 22.*

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11 "Mais il ne faut pas [avoir honte], j'en connais qui habitent des châteaux et je vous jure que ça ne donne pas envie d'y aller".

Despite the characters' effort and relative success at modifying their shacks into a social homeplace, Maffre's graphic novel gives a strong hint at the end of the first volume that the shantytown remains a non-place that cannot be inhabited long term. Ultimately, the novel shows how Kader constantly tries to resettle his family at a *cité de transit*, which is attained in the last pages of the narrative. Differently from their previous displacement stories, on this occasion, the Saïfis are able to bring some of their own furniture to their new location, a material aspect that allows them to construct a sense of belonging, history, and spatial identity in their new dwelling. Yet, this final destination also leaves them with many indicators of precariousness: Kader, for his part, still evokes his wish to return to Algeria after some years, restating the myth of the return to homeland that positions his French household as a provisional site. Moreover, the spatial representation of their new dwelling, surrounded by an overwhelming dimension of vertical buildings and metallic electricity poles crushing a smaller building in the forefront, suggest even more anonymity, control, and seclusion. This image of temporary housing units as forms of precarious housing relates to Yamina Benguigui's analogy that the *cités de transit* were "sturdy shantytowns" made to last only the necessary time for families to get social housing units" (1997: 73). While the ending remains inconclusive, the first volume suggests that the characters have the capacities to establish through habitation practices a space and place to which they can feel attached. After all, in this shantytown narrative, place and space can be simultaneously contested, re-conceptualised, and remade.

This is France: Documenting a territory and society in transition

In *Demain, demain*, it is not only characters of Maghrebi descent who experience transformations in their spatial perceptions and practices, but also those born and raised in France. All the individuals and settings in the novel are directly or indirectly affected by the changes brought about by the represented migration wave, thereby providing a nuanced view of migration and its legacy in French society. In this regard, Regina Römhild's (2017) discussion on the contributions of the concept of postmigration is particularly helpful to thinking about the often-overlooked role of the social majority in migration studies. In fact, Römhild recommends critical migration scholars to extend their focus on society's negotiations over migration, instead of making migration itself the sole object of study (ibid.: 70). Following her suggestion, I now turn to analyse Franco-French milieux informed by the migration movements in Paris and question whether they also manifest adaptations in their dwellings and habitation practices. By looking beyond migrant characters, I will thus broaden and deepen our understanding of Maffre's work as an anarchive that dismantles established narratives of France.

Landscape changes are everywhere in the two novels, including spaces out-side the shantytowns where Maghrebi dwellers interact daily with the majority group. Indeed, the omnipresence of construction sites of housing projects aimed at resolving the national housing crisis serves as a reminder of the fast-changing demographics and spatial reconfiguration of the French territory during the 1960s and 1970s. Like many Maghrebi immigrants who eventually must leave the shan-tytown due to accelerated urban projects, some characters such as the Joberts will also receive orders to relocate for the building of a new France. The fact that most of the construction and factory workers in such developments are immigrants also brings into light their active role in France's rapid postwar economic growth and reconstruction. Other alterations in the urban landscape such as graffiti tags with xenophobic messages (Figure 3) reveal adverse reactions to the social and cultural changes taking place, but even so, their presence acknowledges the emer-gence of a French territory where Maghrebi and Franco-French individuals coex-ist. These new sites and resulting conflicts thus signal renewed urban experiences and social dynamics among the social majority.

Fig. 13.3: "Beware of Arabs". Laurent Maffre, 2019, p. 17.

As a story of habitation, *Demain, demain* features several Franco-French characters engaging in negotiations and new daily practices as a result of their interactions with Maghrebi immigrants. One of such characters is Françoise, an inhabitant of *La Folie* who frequently visits the Saïfis' shack, offers them advice, helps them with administrative paperwork and school homework, and takes their children on holidays. It is worth noting that her relationship with the Saïfis is not character-ised by paternalism or social hierarchies but rather by mutual trust and friendli-

ness. As the first volume notes in the appendix, the character is based on Monique Hervo, an activist and former shantytown inhabitant who in 2018 requested and was granted Algerian citizenship, a symbolic action that highlights the extent of the cultural and social exchanges that can occur in societies marked by migration.[12] Similarly to Françoise, the Joberts' relation to the Saïfis also shows a continuous disregard of boundaries of exclusion. For example, throughout the novels, Raymond and Kader always address to each other using the French pronoun "tu" which signals familiarity and is used among equals. In the second volume, Kader goes as far as calling him "his fourth brother" (Maffre 2019: 4). Finally, in a flashback recounting the Paris 1961 massacre, Raymond promptly joins Françoise to help the men brutally injured by the French police, a gesture that emphasises their close ties with a group that was repressed by their official leaders.

Fig. 13.4: Josiane folding the Maghrebi handkerchief.
Laurent Maffre, 2012, p. 31.

The adaptations that the Joberts make as a result of their interactions with the Saïfis can also be seen at their own dwelling. In a rare sequence displaying the Joberts' house after eating with the Saïfis, we are able to see a casual yet relevant pro-

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12 Hervo's naturalisation was featured in the Algerian government newsletter, *Le Journal Officiel de la République Algérienne Démocratique et Populaire*, no. 73. https://www.joradp.dz/FTP/JO-FRAN-CAIS/2018/F2018073.pdf?znjo=73 (accessed December 28, 2018).

cess of hybridisation. Amidst their living room which is surrounded by objects associated with French folk cultures such as a Comtoise clock, a painting of French peasants, a Virgin Mary figurine, and a television screening the logo of ORTF (the national television agency), Josiane appears folding as a souvenir the Maghrebi handkerchief that Soraya gave her to dance with the shantytown women (Figure 4). While seemingly mundane, its incorporation into such a house may symbolize the imagining of a more heterogeneous community and social practices. After all, from Augé's conceptualisation of space, the Maghrebi handkerchief may function as a relational and historical marker. At the beginning of the second volume, the last scene featuring the Joberts' house shows Josiane inviting the Saïfis' home after Raymond's funeral suggesting a continued friendship that originated from migration.

In a country struggling to recognise its migration past, *Demain, demain* operates as a documentary fiction that reflects on postcolonial labour migration, French urbanism, and standards of living during the 1960s and 1970s from multiple perspectives. It dismantles the idea of France as a homogeneous society in which only Algerians exiles had to integrate, redefining it as a plural society and territory transformed by these migration movements. The novel's title which stems from an interview by Monique Hervo with a shantytown dweller complaining about the conflicting information, slowness, and hassles of housing administrations reinforces the graphic novel's intention to make visible unacknowledged experiences for all readers[13]. More broadly, the uncertainty evoked in this title may also point to an implicit objective of changing established discourses in the twenty-first century. Hence, Maffre's narrative published five decades after the first major Algerian migration wave to France transgresses its historical boundaries and creates a graphic space that joins Erol Yildiz (2013) understanding of postmigration as "the re-narration and re-interpretation of the phenomenon 'migration' and its consequences" (Petersen/Schramm/Wiegand 2019: 13).

Conclusion

This chapter proposed to study the graphic novel *Demain, demain* as an anarchive of 1960s shantytown dwellings, which have been largely omitted from French official and popular memory. My analyses highlight that Laurent Maffre's work not only reinscribes stories of marginalised sites and subjects, its visual form and wide perspective also offer detailed descriptions of domestic space and practices

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13 The interview of Mr. Chibane which uses the repeated phrase "I wait, today, tomorrow, today, tomorrow" was recorded by Monique Hervo in the 1960s can be found in the web documentary "127 rue de la Garenne" accompanying Maffre's series. (Cf. Maffre/Gabison 2012)

that have been overlooked in literary narratives or overshadowed by its large-scale settings or historical events surrounding them. The graphic novel's detailed depiction of changing landscapes and habitation practices in all sectors of society exemplify how they can change throughout time, an aspect that allows us to see France as a heterogenous society and space.

Turning to a major question of the concept of postmigration, "how can art, culture, and theory contribute to a better understanding of changes brought about by migration?" (Petersen/Schramm 2017: 2), the studied passages of *Demain, demain* suggest that it is through processes of spatial negotiation and appropriation of place that past and new literary worlds can be produced. Indeed, Naika Foroutan defines postmigrant societies as "negotiation societies" (2015: unpaged) that can potentially advance structural changes and the removal of structural barriers, such as positions, access, resources, and social standards of established cultural, ethnic, religious and national elites. However, the role of space in shaping such societies was not explicitly dealt with, leaving us to wonder how the reconfiguration of social positions are achieved. For this graphic novel anchored in space, some of the established notions of France as well as its political, economic, and symbolic borders are overcome through daily routines, interior decorations, and social mobility and inclusion. Intimate spaces along with its objects and social practices contribute to a better understanding of the postmigrant condition that is characterised by constant changes, practical knowledge, resistance, and cultural mixing. As the *Demain, demain* series unfolds into potential new volumes, it will continue to demonstrate the transformative power that the graphic genre can exert to the recovery of French social and spatial history.

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