‘Avec Klarsfeld, contre l’oubli’: Patrick Modiano’s Dora Bruder
Alan Morris
Journal of European Studies 2006; 36; 269
DOI: 10.1177/0047244106069046

The online version of this article can be found at:
http://jes.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/36/3/269
Recognizing that the Folio edition of Dora Bruder (1999) is not merely a reproduction of the 1997 Gallimard Blanche original, but a revised and augmented version of its predecessor, this article begins by examining the two texts in tandem and detailing the amendments that Modiano has made in moving from one to the other. The implications of these changes are then assessed, with the author’s apparent wish to make his narrative more complete and more truthful, prompting a discussion of the overall status of the book – is it a work of fact, a fiction or a ‘faction’? Finally, the unacknowledged contribution of Serge Klarsfeld is elucidated, a contribution which emerges as so vital that it provides the key to the Dora Bruder project in its entirety.

**Keywords:** fact/fiction, Holocaust, intertext, Jew, Occupation

Parler de ‘devoir de mémoire’ revient à reconnaître un ‘droit à l’oubli’. Cela dit, le travail de mémoire est inhérent à la condition humaine; il s’agit de vivre, d’intégrer ce passé et de faire en sorte qu’il parvienne à transformer le présent.

(Didier Daeninckx in Collet et al., 2001)

For most, if not all, readers of Patrick Modiano’s *Dora Bruder*, the main interest of the work will understandably be the overwhelming central tragedy. Who could fail to be moved by this search for a young Jewish girl (the eponymous heroine) deported to die in the
death camps in 1942? Who would not be troubled by the possibility (to say the least) that it was her own fugue from the Catholic boarding school in which her parents, Cécile and Ernest, had wisely ‘hidden’ her (not having declared her as a Jew) that brought her to the authorities’ attention and quickly led to her extermination? Very few indeed. And very few either will have seen anything of note in the publication history of the text. Quite the opposite in fact; it would seem, to the casual observer, to be identical to those of so many of the author’s 21 other major works: a first appearance in the prestigious Gallimard Blanche series (1997), then a reprinting a few years later in the cheaper Gallimard Folio collection (1999). On closer inspection, however, this is evidently not the case. As the copyright details of the latter edition reveal, the change of format goes hand in hand with a revision of the original text. Such a development is virtually unique in Modiano’s œuvre, and inevitably pricks the attentive reader’s curiosity. What, exactly, has changed in the second version, and why? This article will suggest answers to these and other such questions, arguing that Modiano’s pursuit of Dora Bruder proceeds beyond its nominal conclusion in 1997, and owes much, as the title of this piece intimates, to the similarly enduring project of Serge Klarsfeld, the milestones of which have been his ever more detailed, and constantly heart-rending, Mémoriaux to the Jews deported from France.

To address the question of what is different about the Folio Dora Bruder, the obvious way to start is by comparing it to its 1997 predecessor, an undertaking that quickly throws up differences of various types and varying significance. At the bottom end of the scale of importance are those alterations which are essentially sub-editorial in nature: corrections of ‘typos’, inconsistencies, lax uses of language, and the like. Representing standard practice in paperback printings, and not normally enough to constitute a new edition of the work in question, this group of amendments can safely be ignored in favour of more meaningful changes.

Under this heading, quite clearly, comes Modiano’s ostensible rectification of faulty transcriptions, false information and unnecessary vagueness. Examples of this (assumed) tendency might be (and in some instances only consultation of the source material will provide confirmation): the reappraisal of the names of thoroughfares, which converts the non-existent rue Liégeard and avenue de Picpus into the mimetic avenue Liégeard and the boulevard de Picpus (Modiano, 1997: 22, 131; 1999: 20, 129); the reviewing of the names of certain people, thanks to which, for example, Claude Bloch and Dr Andrée

Linked to this implicit drive for greater precision, and effectively a subset of it, is Modiano’s reassessment of his use of the two terms at the centre of Dora’s tragedy – *israélite* and *juif*. On the one hand, this reconsideration results in the Jewish community no longer being needlessly distinguished by the author, no longer singled out in much the same manner as the Nazis and their French accomplices singled it out. Hence, ‘le registre d’état civil de Vienne’ (1999: 22) displaces the (fanciful?) ‘registre d’état civil de la communauté israélite de Vienne’ (1997: 24), while the Union générale des israélites de France’s role becomes that of helping a large number of ‘personnes’ rather than ‘juifs’ (1999: 106; 1997: 109). On the other hand, redraftings point up the arbitrariness of designating a class called ‘Jews’, either directly, by insisting that the status of Other is not a natural one, but one imposed from the outside (‘les juifs’ gives way to ‘ceux qui avaient été classés dans la catégorie “juifs”’ (1997: 78; 1999: 76)), or by broaching the question from the inside, and emphasizing that administrative procedures cannot dictate how an adolescent (and French-born) girl like Dora judges herself (the italicized words did not feature in the first edition): ‘Elle était entrée au Saint-Cœur-de-Marie en mai 1940, lorsqu’il n’y avait pas encore de persécutions et que, pour elle, le mot “juif” ne devait pas signifier grand-chose. Elle n’avait pas été recensée en octobre 1940’ (1997: 60; 1999: 58).

Underlying the above alterations is, of course, an acute awareness of the ‘baggage’ that accompanies the word *juif*, and a comparable sensitivity to the *non-dit* is probably behind another batch of corrections to the Folio edition – those which, on the face of it, embody an attempt to clamp down on what can loosely be called ‘negatively subjective’ formulations found in the original. Sometimes, this translates into the eradication of distracting musings, as when, after the statement that Dora’s parents ‘ont jugé qu’elle avait besoin d’une discipline’, the following section is cut completely: ‘Ces juifs ont choisi pour cela une institution chrétienne. Mais étaient-ils eux-mêmes pratiquants? Et avaient-ils le choix?’ (1997: 39; 1999: 38).\(^7\) Elsewhere, the blue pencil
falls on previous (and unjustifiable?) narratorial dogmatism, with the sentence, ‘Je suis même certain qu’il [Ernest Bruder] n’a pas touché de pension d’invalidité’ (1997: 27; 1999: 25), likewise being struck out. Elsewhere still, the target is a third party’s view accepted and portrayed too readily as fact by the narrator, as can be inferred from the description of Dora’s school provided by a former pupil, and amended thus (the sections in italics represent the insertions found in the Folio text):

_Sans doute à cause de l’hiver et du black-out de ce temps-là elle se souvient que tout était noir dans ce pensionnat: les murs, les classes, l’infirmerie – sauf les coiffes blanches des sœurs. Selon elle, cela ressemblait plutôt à un orphelinat._ (1997: 45; 1999: 44)

The final string of emendations, and the most interesting, are those which make the narrative more complete, in some instances revealingly, by substituting information for an earlier ‘Je ne sais pas’ or ‘J’ignore’. This new diegetic bolstering affects the presentation of Dora’s life and background in three main areas. First, the marriage of her parents. Originally, this event had been presented in three short sentences:

_En 1924, Ernest Bruder se marie avec une jeune fille de dix-sept ans, Cécile Burdej, née le 17 avril 1907 à Budapest. Je ne sais pas où ce mariage a eu lieu, j’ignore les noms de leurs témoins. Par quel hasard se sont-ils rencontrés? _ (1997: 28)

Two years later, the section from ‘née le 17 avril’ has been replaced by a statement of where the ceremony actually did take place plus a full (20-line) transcription of the _acte de mariage_ (1999: 26–7), the facts enshrined therein then generating further updatings: Cécile’s age on the day she became Mme Bruder is amended from 17 to 16 (1997: 28; 1999: 26); the blanks in Ernest Bruder’s life – ‘le prénom, le nom, la profession et le lieu de naissance de son père, le prénom et le nom de jeune fille de sa mère’ (1997: 24) – are reduced to ‘les lieux de naissance de ses parents’ (1999: 22); the questions ‘Au moment de leur mariage, Cécile et Ernest Bruder habitaient-ils déjà rue Liégeard à Sevran? Ou dans une chambre d’hôtel à Paris?’ (1997: 28) are excised in favour of a paragraph on the rue Bachelet and the hotel there where Ernest and Cécile both lived (separately) and in all likelihood met (1999: 27); and the ensuing recasting a page later, to give (in Folio, and with the insert again indicated in italics): ‘Mais elle n’a jamais entendu parler de la rue Bachelet ni de Sevran’ (1997: 29; 1999: 28).

The second area of Dora’s life to be better documented is her boarding school, the Saint-Cœur-de-Marie, with the improvements
here ranging from the slight to the weighty. In the former category can be placed the interpolation of ‘Étude du soir’ into the list of (albeit narratoriually assumed) daily activities (1997: 40; 1999: 39), and the appending of 64 to the existing address of 60 and 62 rue de Picpus (1997: 37, 42; 1999: 36, 41). In the latter group feature two notable rewritings. The vague observation, ‘L’enseignement allait certainement au-delà des arts ménagers et des travaux de couture’ (1997: 39), is cut and replaced by:


Similarly, ‘les bâtiments du collège devaient le séparer d’une cour. Dans cette cour, sous des rochers figurant une grotte, avait été creusé le caveau funéraire des membres de la famille de Madre, bienfaitrice de ce pensionnat’ (1997: 42) is expanded into:

chacun des trois bâtiments principaux, sur la rue de Picpus, était séparé par une cour. Derrière eux s’étendaient leurs dépendances autour d’une chapelle. Près de celle-ci, sous une statue de la Vierge et des rochers figurant une grotte, avait été creusé le caveau funéraire des membres de la famille de Madre, bienfaitrice de ce pensionnat. On appelait ce monument ‘la grotte de Lourdes’. (1999: 41–2)

The third new addition to Dora’s narrative – and the briefest – concerns the proposal that she be referred to the police social work department in Paris. Initially only able to mention the staff of this body and its broad location – ‘les assistantes sociales de la police, quai de Gesvres’ (1997: 111; cf. 117) – by 1999 Modiano is able to give it its full title and exact site: the Service de Protection de l’Enfance at 12 quai de Gesvres (1999: 109, 115).

Looking back over the preceding analysis, the natural deduction would appear to be that the changes made have, for the most part, been motivated by two complementary drives: the need to increase the accuracy, objectivity and reliability of information already given in the Gallimard Blanche edition, and the attempt to bring Dora further out of oblivion through the revelation of new information, that is to say facts which have come to light since the text was first published. These two putative driving forces are well worth noting, and a deeper consideration of them now will reveal the essence of Modiano’s Dora Bruder project.
As has been seen, in moving from one edition of *Dora Bruder* to the next, Modiano indisputably ‘tidies up’ his initial text, which suggests that his aim is to produce a sort of history, an account of the past in which no erroneous detail – or anything else for that matter – can be seen to undermine the truth of the documents he transcribes or the patient research whose fruits he exposes. But is this really the case? The answer here has to be a definite no, and this on a number of scores.

Most disturbingly, the Folio text has not been *totally* purged of incorrect or misleading information. Granted, this would not be too bad if the remaining lapses could always be put down to a simple oversight, as is no doubt the case with the address-changing cited above, where a 64 is *not* tacked on to a later mention of 60 and 62 rue de Picpus and a new inconsistency is therefore introduced (1997: 59; 1999: 57). But human frailty can account for only so much. In other passages, Modiano has seemingly been aware of problems, and chosen not to act. Bertrand de Saint Vincent, for instance, took it upon himself to check some of the claims and descriptions found in the Gallimard Blanche edition, and, spotting a good handful of irregularities, he used them as the raw material for an article (Saint Vincent, 1997). A few of the contested sections have duly been revised in the later rewrite, but others remain untouched, including the reporting of a central investigative visit, the trouble with which, according to Saint Vincent (1997: 122), is that:

Modiano décrit son parcours jusqu’au bureau de l’état civil, qu’il situe au 5e étage, escalier 5, porte, 501 . . . Le bureau 501 est celui des mariages; l’escalier 5 n’existe pas. Au palais de justice, Modiano a donc frappé à la porte du bureau 521 B. Pour y accéder, il a emprunté l’escalier S.12

Compounding this alleged taking of liberties with veracity, Modiano can be said to commit the sin of omission. On numerous occasions in *Dora Bruder*, pistes are opened up but are not subsequently pursued to their logical conclusions, with phrases such as ‘Un jour, j’irai/je retournerai’ (Modiano, 1997: 16, 21, 24; 1999: 14, 19, 22) regularly recurring to alert the reader to this fact. What is more, the author indubitably has more information in his possession than he is prepared to disclose, as will shortly be demonstrated.

Then there are the devices that Modiano employs to present his narrative, devices which suggest that his technique is not simply that of an objective chronicler. Particularly noticeable here is the use of circularity. The book commences with a reference to a real-life newspaper heading, ‘D’hier à aujourd’hui’, and with an *avis de recherche*...
that invites readers to ‘Adresser toutes indications à M. et Mme Bruder, 41 boulevard Ornano, Paris’, and these phrases are repeated at the start of section two and the end of section one respectively, the tone thereby being set for the text as a whole.\textsuperscript{14} Hand in hand with this liking for reiteration go the occasional cinematic ‘cut’ to a new location (1997: 18; 1999: 16), and, especially, the novelistic confusion of temporal levels, this latter concern again manifesting itself from the word go, with the opening pages ranging from 1941 on through 1958, 1965 and 1968, to the late 1930s, via 1942 and 1996, and the whole process being articulated by comments such as: ‘D’hier à aujourd’hui. Avec le recul des années, les perspectives se brouillent pour moi, les hivers se mêlent l’un à l’autre. Celui de 1965 et celui de 1942’ (1997: 12; 1999: 10).\textsuperscript{15} The mention of 1996 in this non-linear chronology is, in turn, deserving of comment in the current context, for this was the time when Modiano both visited certain sites associated with Dora in Paris and – as will again soon be shown – began seriously to put pen to paper, not only recording his subject’s life, but additionally interspersing his biographical information with an account of his research into his topic and metafictional interjections relating to the actual writing of his text – yet more procedures which official historians tend to scorn.

If these presentational matters suggest that \textit{Dora Bruder} needs to be read with caution, so too do Modiano’s avowed failure to unearth many of the key details he requires in his role of (informal) biographer,\textsuperscript{16} and, above all, his dependence on a makeshift \textit{système D} to avoid having even more holes left unfilled in his book. One of the palliatives he uses here is alternative, ‘parallel’ information, such as Tartakovsky’s letter (for an indication of what life was like in a camp prior to deportation), or his own ‘expertise’ at running away from home as a child.\textsuperscript{17} But the trouble with this procedure is glaring – the vicarious experience could very well be similar to Dora’s, but it cannot be guaranteed to be identical, so it remains far from unquestionable. Hardly any more reliable is the other obvious way in which Modiano compensates for the lacunae in his discoveries – the recourse to hypothesis and ‘educated guesses’. His text is punctuated with the markers ‘sûrement’, ‘sans doute’, ‘je suppose’, ‘il/elle a dû’ and the like, and whilst Cima may be willing to maintain a distinction between the two (2003: 44), this technique is not a million miles away from the ploy that Modiano adopts in his fiction, and which he outlined in \textit{Livret de famille}:

\begin{quote}Mon dossier était bien mince, mais je comptais laisser aller mon imagination... Il suffisait de rêver sur les deux ou trois éléments\end{quote}
Indeed, Modiano has himself acknowledged the (at least partial) role played by invention in *Dora Bruder*, both in the actual book itself, through phrases of the type ‘j’essaye d’imaginer’ or ‘j’ai peine à imaginer’ (Modiano, 1997: 46, 111; 1999: 45, 109–10) and – less overtly – when talking about it later in interview, as he did in 1999:

Dépays des années, j’essaie … [d’]écrire une biographie, un reportage, enquêter sur un fait réel … [Dans *Dora Bruder*], j’ai senti que j’approchais au plus près de ce quelque chose qui ne serait pas un roman. Mais, faute d’éléments, j’ai été obligé de broder, de délayer le vrai dans une sorte de potage. J’aimerais avoir un dossier comme en ont les avocats, rempli de toutes sortes de pièces, de rapports de police, de dépositions des témoins, de conclusions d’experts. Là, je n’aurais plus besoin d’avoir recours à la fiction. (Lamberterie and Palmiéri, 1999: 71)

Hence *Dora Bruder* is not as objective and unfictional a work as it has often been taken to be.

Does this ‘[obligation] de broder, de délayer le vrai … d’avoir recours à la fiction’ ultimately mean that the author has produced yet another novel, rather than, say, a history, or a biography? As the book itself intimates – there is no generic indication at all on its title page – attempting to classify it is probably the wrong approach.¹⁸ The two contender notions (*roman*/*document*) are not mutually exclusive here, nor are they completely distinct in general terms. Novelists cannot create from nothing, so they seek inspiration (if not models) in real life, whereas historians and biographers often act like *romanciers*, imaginatively reconstructing the past and narrativizing it in what is effectively, as Denise Cima has convincingly demonstrated (2003: 97), an unavoidable process of ‘réécriture’, the result of which is that ‘le biographe n’est jamais neutre, sa subjectivité intervient à tout moment’.¹⁹

This established cross-fertilization of genres perhaps helps to explain the literary references and allusions in *Dora Bruder*, which exist on two basic levels. Sometimes, they are quite explicit, as with the mention of Modiano’s earlier novels, *La Place de l’Étoile* and *Voyage de noces*, or the comparisons to abbé Prévost, Victor Hugo, Edgar Allen Poe and Jean Genet. On other occasions, the hypertextuality is implicit and barely perceptible, but none the less important. Witness
the echoing – via the seasonal photographer – of the text the author himself contributed to *Paris tendresse*. Better still, note the unarticulated link to another of France’s great postwar *écritains*: Georges Perec.

To even the most casual of readers, the complete œuvres of Modiano and Perec present striking similarities. The two novelists share an interest in memory, identity, family history and the past; they each explore the enduring traumas of the Occupation (the position of Jews, deportation to the death camps and the Holocaust); they both include autobiographical elements and recurrent characters in their works; they favour self-referentiality and ludism; and this is merely to scratch the surface of their overlapping concerns and practices. Appearing at a time when this mutual resonance had long been visible for all to see – as illustrated by *Rue des boutiques obscures*’s blatant *clign d’œil* to the recently published *La Boutique obscure* – *Dora Bruder* can be seen deliberately to add to it, for can Modiano really not have known that the Bruders’ story regularly reflects that of Perec’s parents? Can he have been totally unaware that Mme Cyrla Perec was normally called Cécile and happened to be deported in the same convoy (number 47, 11 February 1943) as Mme Cécile Bruder? It is very unlikely, to say the least.

The range of external connections in *Dora Bruder* is thus quite broad, and this intertextuality has a number of functions. At its most basic, when Modiano talks about and/or reprises his own earlier fiction, he is effectively assimilating his current book into his existing body of work, as well as consolidating the theme of self-referentiality discernible in other aspects of the narrative. At the same time, and more interestingly, he is also formally pointing up the central ‘message’ of his *enquête*, namely that it is impossible to totalize Dora’s story within the confines of a single set of front and back covers; just as the eponymous heroine will forever retain her ‘secret’ (1997: 147; 1999: 144–5), so too will *Dora Bruder* forever open out into alternative stories, and thereby ultimately foreground the possible rather than the known. Last but not least, Modiano seems to be conceding that novels written by others can help to elucidate the past and contribute to a project that is largely biographical in inspiration, and this is significant, for it implies that a recourse to fiction *at first hand* must likewise have a role to play, which both brings the discussion back to where it started and takes it further forward. For does it now actually matter that fact and non-fact sit side by side if the end result is what film-maker James Cameron might call ‘true lies’?

Much more might be said about this, and indeed much already has been said. The topic is vast, with firmly held convictions on both
sides. So the safest thing is to conclude with a typically *modianesque* non-conclusion, and say that the book contains the same fundamental mixture of the real and the novelistic that characterizes all of Modiano’s writing. It may have a greater factual content than other works by the author and be closer than ever to the pole marked ‘real’, but the mixture is there all the same, which is, of course, precisely why it integrates so smoothly into a famously cohesive *œuvre*.

With the first of the two putative driving forces of *Dora Bruder* having been discussed, the spotlight can henceforth be trained on the second: the presumed need to include *new* information in the 1999 Folio edition. What this hypothesis suggests is that the search for Dora by no means ended with the original publication in 1997; this was just, in retrospect, a stage (albeit a key one) of a work unfinished and very much in progress. It is this notion of an *ongoing* project that, once again, helps open up the way to the book’s core.

As might easily be predicted, the first thing to study to see if Modiano’s quest is a continual one is the genesis and evolution of *Dora Bruder*, the chronology of which, like so much else where the author is concerned, can be largely reconstructed using a wealth of source documents. The starting point of the venture, disclosed in the text itself (1997: 43, 54; 1999: 43, 53), was an *avis de recherche*, discovered in 1988 in a copy of *Paris-Soir* dating from 31 December 1941:


The effect of this request for information on Modiano was instantaneous: ‘Je n’ai cessé d’y penser durant des mois et des mois. L’extrême précision de quelques détails me hantait’ (1997: 54; 1999: 53), and the further corollary, not unexpectedly perhaps, was literary in nature:

> Il me semblait que je ne parviendrais jamais à retrouver la moindre trace de Dora Bruder. Alors le manque que j’éprouvais m’a poussé à l’écriture d’un roman, *Voyage de noces*, un moyen comme un autre pour continuer à concentrer mon attention sur Dora Bruder, et peut-être, me disais-je, pour élucider ou deviner quelque chose d’elle. (1997: 54–5; 1999: 53)

This novel was duly published (1990), with the character Ingrid Teyrsen ‘standing in’ for Dora. From today’s perspective, Modiano’s
lack of knowledge about his real-life subject – he would later avow that he wrote *Voyage de noces* ‘sans presque rien savoir de Dora Bruder’ (1997: 76; 1999: 74) – is evident, with only a few areas of correspondence between fiction and reality, most notably the *avis de recherche*, duly altered,28 the setting of Ingrid’s wartime experience in late 1941/early 1942, and the Ornano 43 cinema.29 What is more, imagination was patently not all that successful in filling the gaps, as the author himself, looking back as he penned *Dora Bruder*, was the first to accept – just a few sentences out of roughly 200 pages of prose, he estimated, managed to capture ‘un vague reflet de la réalité’ (1997: 55; 1999: 54).

But Modiano was undaunted by this relative failure, and he had already done something that would facilitate his own research enormously. The clue is in a reference to Dora prior to the composition of *Voyage de noces*:


The place where Modiano found this entry, as he would later agree (1994), was Serge Klarsfeld’s *Mémorial de la déportation des Juifs de France*.

Identification of this (supplementary) intertext is a momentous development, for although the role played by Klarsfeld in Modiano’s quest is never directly recorded in *Dora Bruder*, it is much more extensive than even the few critics who have recognized it suspect.31 This being the case, it will be revealing now to consider the link between the two men in greater detail.

The effective start of their relationship can be situated in 1978, when Modiano obtained a copy of the aforementioned *Mémorial de la déportation des Juifs de France*.32 As he read it, the book had a profound impact on him, giving him, he would recall (1994), ‘un des plus grands chocs de [sa] vie’, the consequence of which was that:

> je me suis senti quelqu’un d’autre . . . Et d’abord, j’ai douté de la littérature. Puisque le principal moteur de celle-ci est souvent la mémoire, il me semblait que le seul livre qu’il fallait écrire, c’était ce mémorial, comme Serge Klarsfeld l’avait fait.

Ultimately, however, this *Mémorial* was to prove more of a stimulus
to action than a reason for depression and lethargy. As Modiano himself again remembers (1994):

J’ai voulu suivre l’exemple que m’avait donné Serge Klarsfeld. En consultant pendant des jours et des jours son mémorial, cette liste de noms et de prénoms, j’ai essayé de trouver un détail supplémentaire, une adresse, la moindre indication sur la vie de telle ou telle personne. Certaines avaient laissé une trace et pouvaient facilement être identifiées.

This statement is highly portentous, for it contains the seeds of the venture that will eventually turn into Dora Bruder. The drive to follow in Klarsfeld’s footsteps is clearly there; what is missing is the exact focus. That will come, of course, with the discovery of the avis de recherche in 1988.

As the 1990s progressed, then, Modiano’s desire to ‘suivre l’exemple’ of Serge Klarsfeld was well established, as was the precise subject of his investigation, but he was still hindered in his endeavours by a lack of information. Luckily for him, help was at hand, and from a familiar source. In October 1994, Klarsfeld published Le Mémorial des enfants juifs déportés de France. Once again, the author of Voyage de noces read the work almost as soon as it came off the presses. He would have been disappointed to find no entry at all – an evocative void! – for Dora Bruder (her date of birth had not at that time been discovered, so she did not meet the strict age criterion for inclusion among the children of the Holocaust), but despite this, significantly, he made his admiration and support for the author public, in an article for Libération entitled ‘Avec Klarsfeld, contre l’oubli’ (1994). This piece contains a veritable plethora of revelations. Firstly, it confirms Modiano’s abiding obsession with Dora and her parents, who, he reiterates, ‘ne cessent de me hanter’. Secondly, and linked to this, it acts not just as an elucidation of the genesis of Dora Bruder (as has been demonstrated), but as a heralding intertext for the coming book, flagging up the avis de recherche, the Bruders, and numerous other deportees who will eventually find their way into the 1997 work. Finally, and most tellingly, it provides evidence that, by this stage, Modiano’s relationship with Klarsfeld has evolved since he confessed to wanting to follow his example. Now he seems to be admitting to a certain dependence: ‘Grâce à Serge Klarsfeld, je saurai peut-être quelque chose de Dora Bruder.’

There was to be no ‘perhaps’ about it. In March 1995, Klarsfeld published an updated second edition of Le Mémorial des enfants juifs déportés de France, and the progress made since October 1994 is
striking. Dora features in its revised convoy listings, and all the relevant information is provided: her date and place of birth, her centre de rassemblement and her last known address. Furthermore, a recently discovered (damaged) photo of the three Bruders together is reproduced, with the following accompanying text:

Dora BRUDER et ses parents, qui ne cessent de hanter Patrick Modiano, avaient un visage retrouvé au cimetière de Bagneux. Ernest était bien le père; Cécile était bien la mère, née Burdej, ex-autrichienne, ouvrière fourreuse. Quant à Dora, elle était née le 25 février 1925. Elle a été déportée avec son père le 18 septembre 1942 par le convoi n° 34. La mère les a suivis le 11 février 1943 par le convoi n° 47. Patrick Modiano sait désormais quel était le visage de Dora Bruder. (Klarsfeld, 1995b: 1535)

Modiano had apparently been sent this new information independently of its general release, and for the next two years (at least) Klarsfeld would maintain a correspondence with him, revealing each new discovery relating to Dora, and passing on any relevant documentation. The letters of thanks that Modiano sent back show just how great the help he received was (as well as how deeply the Bruders’ fate continued to move him). On 27 March 1995, he writes: ‘J’ai été bouleversé par votre lettre et les photos de Dora Bruder et de ses parents. Vous étiez le seul à pouvoir les sortir du néant.’ On 25 April 1995, the sentiment is the same: ‘Tout ce que vous avez reconstitué sur ce qui s’est passé pour Dora Bruder et ses parents m’a de nouveau bouleversé.’ On 20 June 1995, the novelist is in a more eloquent (but no less emotional) mood:

Merci de m’avoir fait parvenir la nouvelle édition du Mémorial des Enfants où j’ai retrouvé Dora Bruder . . . Pour moi, ce livre où vous avez rassemblé tous ces destins brisés et où vous avez témoigné pour toute cette innocence que l’on a saccagée, est le plus important de ma vie.

On 10 January 1996, it is back to: ‘Les détails supplémentaires que vous m’avez donnés au sujet de Dora Bruder, et les photos, m’ont bouleversé.’ Then, on 28 July 1996, after the statement, ‘J’ai bien reçu la photo de Dora avec sa mère et sa grand-mère’, there is the most meaningful comment of all: ‘J’espère vous voir pour vous parler d’un projet que j’aimerais mener à bien, grâce aux renseignements que vous m’avez donnés et aux pistes que vous m’avez ouvertes.’ This project can be none other than the eventual Dora Bruder.

The meeting between the two men no doubt took place and went well, for by the final months of 1996 Modiano was busily writing, and
leaving (as previously indicated) self-referential markers in his text to reflect this. Thus, roughly a third of the way through the book the narrator notes: ‘J’ai écrit ces pages en novembre 1996’ (1997: 51; 1999: 50), and 20 or so pages from the end: ‘Je recopie sa lettre, ce mercredi 29 janvier 1997’ (1997: 123; 1999: 121). Less transparently (as again already stated, there is no announcement of this fact in the text itself), Modiano was also exploiting the ‘renseignements’ and the ‘pistes’ presented to him by Serge Klarsfeld.

Above all, he was using the photographs provided, namely snapshots of the Bruders, from different times and in differing permutations, two of which in particular brook little argument as to their origins: the one featuring Dora, her mother and her maternal grandmother (1997: 92–3; 1999: 90–1), which, in all probability, is ‘la photo de Dora avec sa mère et sa grand-mère’ for which Modiano thanked Klarsfeld in his letter of 28 July 1996, and the


This photo is by far and away the more important of the two, for it appears to be the selfsame photo that Klarsfeld had reproduced, in its damaged form, in the second edition of his _Mémorial des enfants juifs déportés de France_ (March 1995), and of which he would soon publish a better-quality print in the American translation of his work, explaining: ‘We found a tombstone photograph in the Bagneux cemetery near Paris . . . We subsequently found a member of Dora’s family, who gave us the original photograph used on the tombstone’ (Klarsfeld, 1996: 1599). The most recent edition is even more explicit:

Nous avons retrouvé endommagée la photo de Dora et de ses parents sur une tombe du cimetière de Bagneux; puis, grâce à l’une de ses cousins, la photo originale et Patrick Modiano a pu découvrir enfin le visage de Dora. (Klarsfeld, 2001b: 534)

The mention of Dora’s cousin here is a resonant disclosure – this is patently one of the ‘pistes ouvertes’ by Klarsfeld that Modiano has followed up. A close reading of _Dora Bruder_ reveals other traces of the debt to Serge Klarsfeld, other clues as to the true source of the information imparted. One such is the question, ‘Cécile Bruder travaillait-elle déjà comme “ouvrière fourreuse”, ou bien “ouvrière en confection salariée”,'
ainsi qu’il est écrit sur les fiches?’ (1997: 32; 1999: 31), where the first profession given (significantly in quotation marks) is a reprise of the very term used in the 1995 edition of Le Mémorial des enfants juifs déportés de France (in the caption to the Bruders’ photo, cited above), and the second is an extract from ‘fiches’ that are unspecified, but which are presumably those of the wartime transit camp at Drancy, and which Klarsfeld is known to have passed on to Modiano. Another clue of this type comes during a visit to Paris’s fourth arrondissement, when the evocation of ‘ceux et celles de l’âge de Dora que les policiers étaient venus chercher un jour de juillet 1942’ is immediately glossed by: ‘La liste de leurs noms s’accompagne toujours des mêmes noms de rues’ (1997: 138–9; 1999: 136–7). Yet again, only Klarsfeld could have provided this list of names.

In the early part of this essay, it was argued that Dora Bruder, even in its revised Folio form, had not been stripped of its misleading comments and did not include all the relevant information it could. This failure to acknowledge Klarsfeld is surely the greatest omission of them all. The famous militant de la mémoire has been airbrushed out of the narrative completely, his work and that of his team regularly being appropriated by the author-figure himself – ‘J’ai retrouvé une nièce d’Ernest et de Cécile Bruder’ (1997: 29; 1999: 28) – or attributed to one of his own personal contacts: ‘Un ami a trouvé … dans les archives du Yivo Institute, à New York’ (1997: 103; 1999: 101). What, then, does this conspicuous neglect imply?

To say that Modiano is simply engaging in an act of plagiarism would be manifestly unfair. Leaving Klarsfeld’s contribution (like the intertextuality with Perec) as a non-dit helps to bolster the thematics of Dora Bruder, where silence, absence, voids, secrets, hidden or lost information, and the untold are paramount while, more generally, having a protagonist who conducts his own investigation, and who is not always entirely reliable, or even able to reveal information known to exist, is one of the aforementioned – and perfectly understandable – ways in which Dora Bruder is integrated into a coherent œuvre. What is more, the relationship in question here is demonstrably not parasitic in nature. Quite apart from the fact that, as has been seen, the quest for Dora was completed with Klarsfeld’s advance blessing, Modiano has obviously built on the commitment to which he confessed in ‘Avec Klarsfeld, contre l’oubli’, and actively contributed to the project. It was he who discovered the avis de recherche in 1988, he who therefore had details unknown at that time to others, and he who unearthed at least some of the ‘clues’ his narrator claims to have done. Finally, there can be no denying that Klarsfeld in turn benefited from having
Modiano linked to his cause, partly because, as he admits (1996: 1599), the novelist’s questions ‘spurred further research on our side’, but mainly because the support of someone so famous served as a ringing endorsement of his enterprise, and helped to extend his work (albeit indirectly and partially) to a far wider public than he himself could reach. As Denise Cima (2003: 47) has put it:

Qui a lu le Mémorial de Klarsfeld? Une minorité de personnes tout au plus l’ont consulté, concernées parce qu’un proche y était mentionné. Par contre Dora Bruder a fait sortir de l’oubli une quarantaine de personnes, Dora comprise. Désormais, ils ne sont plus des ‘anonymes’.

One inference to be drawn from all of this might be that Dora Bruder is a covert joint venture, in which Klarsfeld’s vital input remains unrecognized, but this would be to diminish Modiano’s personal artistic achievement. It would therefore be better to say that the two authors are engaged on separate but compatible projects, approaching the central issue of the Final Solution from diametrically opposite directions, yet coming together part-way down their respective paths. Klarsfeld tends to employ an objective, ‘zero degree’ style of writing, devoting much of his considerable effort to the deciphering and subsequent transcribing of convoy lists. As regards his outlook, he is, broadly speaking, interested in the collective, ‘la déportation des Juifs de France’ or the ‘Enfants juifs déportés de France’, a composite from which individual fates – like those of the three Bruders – can ultimately be extracted. Modiano on the other hand, as has been illustrated, opts for a more literary, novelistic evocation of ‘the truth’, focusing on a specific case – Dora’s – which then opens out more and more, as the book progresses, into the communal.

In this context of intersecting trajectories, it comes as no surprise to discover that, if one mentally substitutes the particular (Dora) for the general (the Jewish victims of the Holocaust), Klarsfeld’s confessed aim could be that of Modiano:

restituer aux victimes ce qui était leur première et immédiate dignité: leur identité. 36 ans après la mise en œuvre de la Solution finale, cette volonté allait contrecarrer la volonté d’occultation des bourreaux nazis et de leurs complices de Vichy.

La Gestapo, en effet, voulait détruire toutes traces du passage sur terre de ses victimes juives. (Klarsfeld, 2001b: 13)

Nor is it a surprise that, despite some flagrant differences – for example, Klarsfeld seeks to be as comprehensive as possible, whereas Modiano deliberately leaves out information he has at his disposal – the two
authors’ works have certain similarities of form, shared themes/concerns and, as Cima implied earlier, overlapping cast lists. Thus, both reproduce documents (such as letters, fiches and newspaper clippings) as part of a broader attempt to make an intelligible mosaic out of the surviving fragments of the past; both foreground the notions of the quest, detection, commemoration, time, history, memory and oubli; both highlight the anti-Semitic measures enacted in wartime France, whilst not forgetting the (admittedly small band of) ‘amis des Juifs’; and both regularly name the same names, whether it be the names of the main French persecutors – Schweblin, Hennequin, Français and their colleagues – or those of their unfortunate victims: the Bruders (of course), Paulette Gothelf, EstherSterman, Marthe Nachmanowicz, Yvonne Pitoun, Zélie Strohlitz, Claudine Winerbett . . . Without a doubt, then, what is going on here is the promotion of two types of memorial, complementary ventures in which the same brief lives are commemorated, and where Klarsfeld provides the tragic end to the stories left untold by Modiano.

Such is the situation to date. Modiano’s quest for Dora, as detailed above, has been pursued over an extensive period of time, and has borne three literary fruits (Voyage de noces and the two editions of Dora Bruder itself). Above all, it has relied heavily on the ongoing research of Serge Klarsfeld and his team.

But if this is the state of affairs at the moment, what is likely to happen in the future? For Klarsfeld, there is no uncertainty – his personal crusade will go on. It is a safe assumption that there are still a multitude of details and documents hidden in archives somewhere, just waiting for him and his helpers to discover, so the commitment he gave in 2001 will unarguably be honoured:

Notre œuvre n’est pas terminée; elle va se poursuivre: d’autres additifs verront le jour. Il revient à notre génération d’orphelins des déportés juifs de France de dresser le bilan le plus précis possible de la catastrophe qui a frappé les Juifs de France et de léguer cette mémoire aux nouvelles générations. Une mémoire indiscutable, incontestable, indispensable. (Klarsfeld, 2001b: 5)

What effect will this have on Modiano? Here, the answer is less straightforward. The author of Dora Bruder could decide that there is no need for a further revision of his work since, as has been shown, some omissions and inaccuracies are apparently integral to its conception. Alternatively, he could carry on taking his cue from Klarsfeld and amend his text at every feasible opportunity, as much of the evidence currently available suggests. Only the print runs to come, however, will confirm this for sure.
Whatever the case ultimately turns out to be, one thing, in conclusion, actually does now seem to be quite certain: to get to the real heart of *Dora Bruder*, the inquisitive reader should not so much focus on the issue of whether it is a biography or a novel, a work of fact or a work of fiction, but rather on its relationship – over time and through various editions – to the *Mémorial de la déportation des Juifs de France* and *Le Mémorial des enfants juifs déportés de France*. When seen in this context, Modiano’s future outlook can, in general terms, confidently be predicted. The sentiment he expressed in 1994 – contrarily perhaps, considering the normally ephemeral nature of a newspaper article – will surely continue to endure and to stay strong. He was, he is and he forever will remain ‘avec Klarsfeld, contre l’oubli’.

**Notes**

1. The text was also quickly brought out, again not untypically, by book clubs such as Le Grand Livre du Mois and France Loisirs. Modiano’s *Remise de peine*, *Fleurs de ruine* and *Chien de printemps* follow a slightly different, though basically similar, trajectory. Published by Le Seuil, they naturally move on to Le Seuil Points.

2. The only comparators are *La Place de l’Étoile* (1968) and *Les Boulevards de ceinture* (1972), both of which underwent slight – and unannounced – modifications for their releases in Folio (in 1975 and 1978 respectively), before re-emerging as fully-fledged new editions in 1985. The time scale involved here is far longer than for *Dora Bruder* though.

3. Serge Klarsfeld (along with his wife Beate) has for a number of decades now been a *militant de la mémoire*, endeavouring, among other things, to record and to preserve as many details as possible of those victims of the ‘Final Solution’ who, like Dora Bruder, were deported from France. The *Mémoriaux* for which he is rightly famous are *Le Mémorial de la déportation des Juifs de France* (Klarsfeld, 1978) and *Le Mémorial des enfants juifs déportés de France* (Klarsfeld, 1994), this latter subsequently leading on to two revised French editions (Klarsfeld, 1995b, 2001b), a translated American edition (Klarsfeld, 1996) and (to date) five *Additifs* (Klarsfeld, 1995a, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2003). When Modiano read the first *Mémorial des enfants juifs déportés de France* in 1994, he was moved to write a supportive article for *Libération*, ‘Avec Klarsfeld, contre l’oubli’ (1994). It is this statement of solidarity that provides the title of the present article.

4. This replacement of the rue Liégeard also removes an inconsistency, there having previously been a reference to the *avenue Liégeard* (1997: 21).

5. Although ‘ZONE MILITAIRE / DÉFENSE DE FILMER / OU DE PHOTOGRAPHIER’ now better relates to reality, the actual sign reads: ‘ZONE MILITAIRE / Défense de filmer / et de photographier.’ Modiano uses this
more precise formulation in his later evocation of the panneau (1997: 138; 1999: 136). For a helpful background photograph here – and indeed photos illustrating other key sites of Dora Bruder – see John Oswald’s web-based ‘Dora Bruder: personnage fictif ou personne réelle...?’ (2001). (On top of its intrinsic usefulness, Oswald’s package exemplifies the way in which Modiano’s writing often inspires its readers to set off ‘sur les traces’ of his characters, or to follow in his own footsteps.)

6. This change further serves to bolster an existing leitmotif of Dora Bruder. Cf., for example, ‘On vous classe dans des catégories bizarres dont vous n’avez jamais entendu parler et qui ne correspondent pas à ce que vous êtes réellement’ (1997: 38; 1999: 37–8).

7. There is a tangible overlap here with the examples given in the previous paragraph, since the excision removes a provocative focus on ‘Ces juifs’. In both this respect and that of the cutting of unwanted musings, cf. the way in which ‘Sans doute était-elle la seule élève d’origine juive du pensionnat. Le savait-on?’ (1997: 60) evolves into ‘Sans doute était-elle la seule élève d’origine juive du pensionnat et l’ignorait-on’ (1999: 58–9). (This latter version also consolidates the notion that Dora was – and is still – surrounded by an element of mystery, linking in, as it does, with the leitmotival thread of the narratorial ‘J’ignore’.)

8. Note also here that ‘coiffes’ has replaced (the incorrect?) ‘cornettes’.


10. Again note how Modiano’s work encourages others to follow in his footsteps.

11. Saint Vincent pointed out (1997: 122, 123) that the name Pierrefeu should be Richefeu, and that snow fell in Paris on the fourth of November 1941, rather than on the sixth. Both of these comments were taken on board (see Modiano, 1997: 14, 91 and contrast 1999: 12, 89).

12. The section to which Saint Vincent is alluding here can be found in Modiano (1997: 17–20; 1999: 15–18). Although I have not been able to check this contention for myself, there is no pressing reason to doubt what Saint Vincent says – his comments on Richefeu and the fourth of November 1941 were clearly accepted as well founded by Modiano and, more generally, he would be silly to make the criticisms he does if he were not sure of his own alternatives.

13. For more on Modiano’s deliberate omissions, see Cima (2003: 42–3).


15. The polysemic nature of the quoted phrase ‘D’hier à aujourd’hui’, as evidenced by this paragraph, is, of course, also novelistic in essence.
16. See, for example, Modiano (1997: 32, 90–1, 147; 1999: 31, 88–9, 144–5).
17. See, respectively, Modiano (1997: 123–9; 1999: 121–7) and (1997: 59, 61, 79–81, 131–2; 1999: 57, 59, 77–9, 129–30). Cf. Cima (2003: 42, 95). As Cima rightly points out, the narrator’s background is often a *mise en abyme* of Dora’s (2003: 84) and part of a more complex ‘jeu de miroirs’ in which, for him, ‘Dora = mon père = moi’ (2003: 59). Needless to say, perhaps, this associative technique is once more that of a novelist, rather than that of an objective historian.
18. In the narrative as well, as has been seen, categorization is not viewed as something to be desired.
21. Modiano (1978b) and Père (1973) respectively.
22. This is not the place to delve more deeply into the numerous mirror images here, but anyone who is interested in this resemblance could usefully compare the Bruders’ experience to the details of the Père’s lives given in Père’s *W ou le souvenir d’enfance* (1975) or, more objectively, in David Bellos’s authoritative biography (1993). (As the French version of Bellos’s work was published in 1994, it too, like *W ou le souvenir d’enfance*, could have been read by Modiano before he completed *Dora Bruder.*)
24. This perpetual *fuite* is all the more inevitable when the *renvoi* is to Père, an author whose writing is itself famously intertextual and non-totalizing.
25. Note again the link to Père here. As David Bellos has shown (see, for example, 1999: 548–51), Père’s childhood autobiography *W ou le souvenir d’enfance* contains many falsifications and omissions, but ‘although there is probably something “wrong” in every apparently factual statement … the work’s artistic intention is nonetheless to embody truth’ (Bellos, 1999: 597).
26. See, for example, Cooke (2004). Note also that, at the Modiano conference held on 12–13 March 2004 at the University of Kent, the question of whether *Dora Bruder* is ultimately a history/biography or a *roman* produced the longest discussion of the whole colloquium.
27. This *entrefilet* does indeed exist – see, for example, Oswald (2001) or Saint Vincent (1997: 122).
28. It reads: ‘On recherche une jeune fille, Ingrid Teyrsen, seize ans, 1,60 m, visage ovale, yeux gris, manteau sport brun, pull-over bleu clair, jupe et chapeau beiges, chaussures sport noires. Adresser toutes indications à M. Teyrsen, 39 bis, boulevard Ornano. Paris’ (Modiano, 1990: 153). The change from 41 to 39 *bis* here is a typically *modianesque* touch, the *bis* reflecting the characters’ indeterminate status.
29. Both under its real name (Modiano, 1990: 157) and as the inspiration for ‘l’Altitude 43, de Saint-Tropez, cet hôtel blanc qui ressemble à un paquebot’ (Modiano, 1990: 57).
30. This statement would no doubt explain why Ingrid’s father, in *Voyage de noces*, is designated as ‘un Autrichien, qui était recensé comme juif’ (Modiano, 1990: 125). The confessed ignorance about Mme Bruder might in turn (at least partly) account for the total lack of a Mme Teyrsen in the same novel. (See, for example, the adapted *avis de recherche* recently quoted. Modiano would later admit (1994) that he had found a Cécile Bruder in the list of those deported in the convoy of 11 February 1943, but did not know, at that stage, whether or not she was Dora’s mother.)

31. The number of commentators who mention Klarsfeld’s influence is actually very small. Two who do, however (albeit partially), are Cima (2003) and Saint Vincent (1997).


33. In addition, of course, to the fact that it throws light on Modiano’s reaction to Klarsfeld’s 1978 *Mémorial*, a quality implicitly highlighted in the preceding paragraph.

34. This intertextual status is also enshrined in Modiano’s choice of title for his article, as he himself explains therein: ‘*Contre l’oubli*. C’est le titre d’un livre d’Henri Calet où celui-ci essaie de retrouver … ceux dont les noms et les adresses étaient inscrits sur les murs de [la prison de] Fresnes’ (1994).

35. He simultaneously brought out a separate *Additif*, as an update for those who possessed the first edition.

36. Note also that, as is sometimes (and unavoidably) the case with Klarsfeld’s work, the details given in this extract do not seem to be completely accurate. Dora’s birthday is recorded as 25 February 1925, the same date figuring both in the associated convoy listing and in the 1995 *Additif*. Yet in *French Children of the Holocaust* it is 01.01.27 (i.e. day and month unknown) in the convoy listing and 25 February 1925 in the photo caption, whereas the 2001 edition of *Le Mémorial des Enfants juifs déportés de France*, gives 25/02/1926 in the list and 25 February 1925 under the photo. This revised date of 25 February 1926 is the one used by Modiano in *Dora Bruder*, and is likely to be correct.

37. See the snippets of letters sent by Modiano to Klarsfeld, and reproduced by the latter (Klarsfeld, 2001b: 536, 538). The quotations which follow are taken from this source.

38. It is interesting to note that Modiano is by now signing off ‘Votre ami’.

39. The early mention of 1965 and ‘aujourd’hui, trente ans après’ (1997: 12; 1999: 10) is probably a case of Modiano rounding down to 30 for convenience’s sake. Although the writing appears to have begun in late 1996, the preparatory work had, of course, already been largely undertaken, as the text itself again indicates – see, for example, Modiano (1997: 13, 17, 130) or (1999: 11, 15, 128).
40. This better-quality original was used to help publicize Dora Bruder when it came out in 1997, with copies of it adorning certain review articles. See, for example, Saint Vincent (1997: 123) or Gaudemar (1997: iv). Note also that the same print was reproduced, along with other relevant photos, in the Japanese edition of the text, these fascinating documents being readily consultable, as Cooke has observed (2004: 144 n. 4), on the website http://home.inter.net/berlol/graalmfj.htm#modian (accessed September 2004).


43. In Le Mémorial des enfants juifs déportés de France, for instance, the convoy lists of those arrested in July 1942 – and there are many, as the massive rafle du Vel’ d’Hiv’ took place on the sixteenth and seventeenth of that month – do indeed feature street names from the quartier that come back time after time. It is also interesting to note that this debt to Klarsfeld represents an extra bond between Modiano and Perec. The present article is still not the place to explore this latter association, but as before, curious readers have only to consult Perec’s W ou le souvenir d’enfance or Bellos’s biography to find illustrations of the Perec–Klarsfeld interchange, an interchange that can then usefully be compared to the Modiano–Klarsfeld relationship. (Like so much else, this three-way jeu de miroirs was presaged in ‘Avec Klarsfeld, contre l’oubli’, where Modiano himself spoke of ‘l’écrivain dont l’œuvre est souvent une illustration de ce mémorial [des juifs déportés de France]: Georges Perec’.)

44. Particularly the Bruders’ address at 41, boulevard Ornano, Paris, which does not feature in any Klarsfeld Mémorial published before March 1995, by which time the two men were in touch and Modiano had presumably passed it on personally (if not, he had revealed it to all and sundry in the full transcription of the avis de recherche that he included in ‘Avec Klarsfeld, contre l’oubli’, published in November 1994).

45. Note that Modiano’s ‘Avec Klarsfeld, contre l’oubli’ was reproduced by its subject in his Additif to Le Mémorial des enfants juifs déportés de France (Klarsfeld, 1995a: 1534) and in the second and third editions of this latter work (Klarsfeld, 1995b: 1534 and 2001b: 535). Note also Klarsfeld’s use of a letter from the novelist (the one dated 20 June 1995) as the éditorial for the July 1995 issue of the Bulletin de liaison des Fils et Filles des déportés juifs de France, and specifically his accompanying comment: “Y a-t-il une plus belle récompense de tant d’efforts dans la lutte contre l’oubli que cette lettre d’un tel auteur?” (for a full facsimile of the relevant page, see Klarsfeld, 2001b: 538).


47. Although Klarsfeld deals with the victimization of the Jews in his Mémoriaux, he concentrates on the issue in Le Calendrier de la persécution des Juifs de
France, 1940–1944 (Klarsfeld, 1993; republished in Klarsfeld, 2001a, vols 2 and 3).

48. As the points de suspension imply, this roll-call is far from complete; it gives only some of those whom Modiano logs and who can easily be cross-checked in Klarsfeld’s lists (apart from Dora and her parents, all of those named were deported in Convoy 35 on 21 September 1942). It will be recalled that Denise Cima, in the quotation given above, speaks of ‘une quarantaine’ of ‘anonymes’ who are brought out of obscurity, though this is not necessarily to say that they were all deported. Pour mémoire, some of the other victims named in Dora Bruder, and who can be found in Klarsfeld’s various Mémoriaux (often with names misspelt and/or other details inaccurately given in the early editions) are: Claude[tte] Bloch, Syma Berger, Fredel Traister, Josette Delimal, Tamara Isserlis, Ida Levine, Robert Tartakovsky and Annette Zelman (all Convoy 3, 22 June 1942); Racia Israelowicz and Zelik Pergricht (both Convoy 7, 19 July 1942); Albert Graudens (Convoy 23, 24 August 1942); Ruth Kronenberg (Convoy 31, 11 September 1942); Violette Lévy, her son Jean, and Benjamin Rotszein (all Convoy 36, 23 September 1942); Louise Jacobson (Convoy 48, 13 February 1943); and Jules Barmann (Convoy 75, 30 May 1944). Moreover, Michaël Rubin is probably the Michel Rubin deported in Convoy 34 (18 September 1942). The broad implication of this common naming – the realization of which increases the poignancy of Modiano’s already overwhelming work – is that there are countless other ‘Dora Bruders’ who disappeared without trace, and whose stories are waiting to be reconstructed.

49. It almost goes without saying that part of Modiano’s commemoration involves stimulating in at least some of his readers (and especially in those who have spotted the intertextuality with the Mémoriaux) a typical desire to follow in his footsteps and to consult Klarsfeld’s lists. He thereby helps to keep the memory of all the individual Jewish deportees alive.


51. Since these words were uttered, Klarsfeld has duly brought out Le Mémorial des enfants juifs déportés de France: Additif n° 5 (2003). A new edition of Le Mémorial de la déportation des Juifs de France is also promised.

52. Hence not even Klarsfeld’s existing information is used as fully as it could be – Modiano chooses not to talk of the Bruders’ grave in Bagneux cemetery and opts to introduce one of his characters merely as Hena (1997: 119–20, 123; 1999: 117–18, 121), when her surname, Glanc, unmistakably features in Le Mémorial de la déportation des Juifs de France (Convoy 3, 22 June 1942) and must have been spotted at the same time as the other details exploited. (This omission of the patronymic does, however, have a number of positive effects: Hena is endowed with a textual secret that reflects Dora’s; curious readers are encouraged to try to solve the mystery and accordingly again prompted to consult Klarsfeld’s listings; and ensuring that his text is incomplete – as well as sometimes inaccurate – helps Modiano to increase the qualities that it shares with the Mémoriaux.)

53. For example, even in the augmented Folio edition, Modiano has not stopped


**Alan Morris** is a Senior Lecturer in French Studies at the University of Strathclyde. **Address for correspondence:** Department of Modern Languages, Livingstone Tower, 26 Richmond Street, Glasgow G1 1XH, Scotland [email: a.i.morris@strath.ac.uk]