

# **Telling the Inexplicable through Memory: Sarah Kofman's *Rue Ordener Rue Labat* and the Relocating of Holocaust Violence in Paris**

**Esra Akkaya**

Erasmus Mundus Masters  
Crossways in Cultural Narratives

This project is an analysis of Sarah Kofman's autobiographical account of her memory and trauma in *Rue Ordener Rue Labat*. Using depictions of Holocaust narratives as they are found in the texts of Primo Levi and Hannah Arendt—primarily their ideas of the 'Grey-Zone' and ethical ambiguity, self-alienation and the notion of collective guilt in the Holocaust crime—an analysis is provided for similar accounts found in Sarah Kofman's autobiographical novel. Beyond simply depicting these narratives in the text, this project also demonstrates how this helps to overcome the impossibility of writing about the Holocaust. Furthermore, this analysis looks at how Kofman relocates the violence of the Holocaust in Paris, resulting in a wider understanding of the Nazi genocide. The theoretical framework used in this work is inspired by Michael Rothberg's *Multidirectional Memory*, in which he suggests understanding memory not as collective, but as multidirectional: as a subject for ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing and borrowing. This analysis is also shows how Kofman's work falls into this category as it not only shows similarities to other texts on the Holocaust, but also demands a broader perspective on the Holocaust in presenting it as part of all humanity's history.