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The Mnemonic Function of Cultural Memory in Yasmina

Khadra's What The Day Owes The Night

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for a
Master's Degree of Arts in Anglo-American Studies

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“What to keep of all these reels of film, what to throw away? If we could only take one memory on our journey, what would we choose? At the expense of what or whom? And most importantly, how to choose among all these shadows, all these spectres, all these titans? Who are we, when all is said and done? Are we the people we once were or the people we wish we had been?” **Yasmina Khadra.**

Dedication

This work is dedicated to those who work hard to achieve their dreams and ambitions no matter how hard it gets.

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Abstract

Fiction displays a pivotal role in revising history and cultural memory. Mainly, postcolonial literature has gained much attention as it provides thought-provoking and eye-opening narratives regarding renarrating colonial legacy. The new historical novel, in particular, offers great case studies for postcolonial literary criticism. This dissertation explores Yasmina Khadra's *What the Day Owes to the Night* in order to examine the interface between fiction and cultural memory. More importantly, it reveals how the new historical novel is considered a critical medium for revising cultural memory and generating new markers of identity transformation and self-reconciliation. Drawing on the theoretical insights of Hawkes, Erll and Assman, the study shows how Khadra recalibrates cultural memory to shed light on the untold stories regarding the impact of the Algerian revolution on "Les Pieds-noirs" and the native Algerians.

Keywords: Cultural memory, Yasmina Khadra, *What the Day Owes to the Night*, Les Pieds-Noirs, Postcolonial Literature, New Historical Novel.

Résumé :

Presque toutes les œuvres de fiction peuvent être interprétées à la lumière de la critique littéraire. Au cours des dernières années, les études postcoloniales ont attiré beaucoup d'attention car elles se sont avérées stimulantes et révélatrices. Les nouveaux romans historiques, en particulier, offrent d'excellentes études de cas pour la critique littéraire postcoloniale. Cette thèse a pris le roman de Yasmina Khadra *Ce Que le Jour Doit à la Nuit* pour l'aborder du point de vue de la mémoire culturelle. C'est une manière très intéressante car elle révèle comment la mémoire culturelle interroge l'identité. C'est le but de cette étude de montrer les façons dont Khadra a révisé la mémoire culturelle pour révéler une vérité rarement dite à propos de la révolution Algérienne. Ce dernier a affecté les pieds-noirs autant que les Algériens.

Mots-clés : Mémoire culturelle, Yasmina Khadra, *Ce que le jour doit à la nuit*, les pieds-noirs, études postcoloniales, nouveau roman historique.

ملخص

يمكن تأويل جميع الأعمال الفنية في ضوء النقد الأدبي. في السنوات الأخيرة ، اكتسبت دراسات ما بعد الاستعمار الكثير من الاهتمام لأنها أثبتت أنها مثيرة للفكر . تقدم الروايات التاريخية الجديدة على وجه الخصوص دراسات نقدية لأدب ما بعد الاستعمار. أخذت هذه الأطروحة رواية ياسمينة خضرة "فضل الليل على النهار " للنظر إليها من منظور الذاكرة الثقافية حيث تكشف كيف تشكل الذاكرة الثقافية هويات جديدة. تهدف هذه الدراسة ايضا إلى إظهار الطرق التي استخدم بها الكاتب الذاكرة الثقافية لإلقاء الضوء على الحقيقة التي نادرًا ما يتم الحديث عنها ، بحيث أن الثورة الجزائرية أثرت على الأقدام السوداء بقدر تأثيرها على الجزائريين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الذاكرة الثقافية ، ياسمينة خضرة ، فضل الليل على النهار ، الأقدام السوداء ، دراسات ما بعد الاستعمار

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General Introduction

Algeria suffered from French colonization for more than a century. It intensified even more after the era of the war of independence. French colonization has left a devastating impact on the Algerian heritage. It even undermined Algerian cultural memory as much as everyday reality was profoundly shaped by colonial legacy.

History has been recorded and narrated through different tools and forms, including literature. More importantly, Algerian writers have reworked history in their works in order to revise its landscapes. The postcolonial novelist Yasmina Khadra has mainly re-imagined the colonial landscapes that shaped the Algerian cultural memory in his novel *What The Day Owes The Night*. The latter recalls fragments of Algerian memory that have not been tackled before because of their controversy and traumatic load.

History is represented as a nightmare that Algerians attempted severely to wake up from. It invokes myriad agony and trauma experiences that make it hard to restore the Algerian authenticity before the colonial era. This gives much importance to the rise of the historical novel during the postcolonial period to make sense of the Algerian experience. Moreover, it transforms this genre into a medium for exploring the past and (re)constructing cultural memory. The study tackles one of the fascinating Algerian novels that attempt to revise history and elucidate how the novel as a narrative interacts with cultural memory.

Many research papers have highlighted the identity issues experienced by the Algerian intellectual and, more precisely, in Yasmina Khadra's *What The Day Owes The Night*. Nonetheless, they have not shed light on the importance of cultural memory in shaping identities in the first place. This dissertation will elucidate how cultural memory shapes new social identities within the novel during the colonial era.

The study aims to examine how the concept of cultural memory is represented in the postcolonial era, precisely in Yasmina Khadra's *What The Day Owes The Night*. The case study sheds light on the interplay between the Algerian past, the state of the present and the colonial legacy, it also sheds the light on the relation between the Algerians and les Pied Noir. This signifies the importance of the interaction between fiction and socio-cultural and historical contexts. It also purports to examine how the historical novel as a genre is presented as a medium of cultural memory nowadays. It has "mnemonic functions" such as: (re)creating the historical imaginary, fictionalizing the past, and negotiating competing memories.

In this research quest, many sources are partitioned between primary and secondary sources. A significant contribution to memory studies and a part of an emergent strand of work on global memory has been tackled in Aleida Assmann's book *Memory in a Global Age: Discourses, Practices and Trajectories*. It also offers important insights on topics that are related to memory, global memories and transnational identities and how the past can be a significant part of the present. Jeannette Marie Mageo's book *Cultural Memory: Reconfiguring History and Identity in the Postcolonial Pacific* also investigates cultural memory in the context of colonial and postcolonial experiences. It offers a fruitful response to the research questions addressed in this enquiry, like how are the cultural self and the cultural other constructed in acts of remembering? What is memory's role in the generation or degeneration of cultural meanings?

In the article "Postcolonial Algerian Writers in French: Language as Representation and Resistance", Kamel Igoudjil draws significant attention to some of the central issues that Algerian writers still have. The article illustrates how postcolonial writers continue to struggle with the legacy of colonization, acculturation, and assimilation,

which provides a better understanding of the consideration of the historical novel as a critical medium of cultural memory.

The present study will answer the following research questions: How is the new historical novel considered as a critical medium of cultural memory? How does the historical novel serve cultural memory in Algerian literature? What are the processes and the problems that cultural memory evokes in the historical novel? How are cultural memories used to remobilize groups and form new identities?

As a postcolonial writer, Yasmina Khadra bids to find answers to nowadays shaped society by going back to the colonial era through a literary lens. The historical novel illustrates the first cross-cultural conflict between the colonizer and the colonized. In this sense, the writer amplifies the role of location and the encounter with the settlers to (re)construct cultural memory, remobilize groups and rethink national identity.

The present study employs several methodology approaches: The analytical approach is the most important since the research is about analyzing the novel under study. The study also relies on a historical approach by borrowing theoretical insights from memory studies in order to explore how the novel is considered a critical medium for charting cultural memory in Algerian fiction.

The dissertation consists of three chapters. The theoretical part is divided into two sections: Section one will provide theoretical insights into the concept of cultural memory. The second section will tackle Algerian literature. The second and the third chapters construe the practical part of the study. Yasmina Khadra's *What The Day Owes The Night* is taken as a case study. It examines the novel by finding the relationship between the present and the past during the colonial period and how that shaped the incoming generations using cultural memories. It also stresses the importance of the role of location and the Pied-noir representation in shaping cultural memory and Algerian identity.

Chapter One: A Historical Overview of Cultural Memory

Introduction

The ability to store and recall experience and knowledge enabled humans to form an image of life in their past among their societies. The image consists of all the aspects of their ideas, beliefs, how they act, dress, social behaviors, and structures among their social groups. All these manifestations form a significant part of the collective memory, which is a cluster of individual memories. This concept became more specific after the 1980s. It takes a broader meaning within the name Cultural Memory. Almost all literary works can create an imaginary world that would reflect the cultural memory of their authors through its manifestations, especially within works of fiction which give more details and more life to that alternative world. It allows the reader to get a clear image of the experienced life among the characters and through the mnemonic function of the components of culture manifested in the literary text.

On the other hand, Algeria is too much like a combination of different cultures, which can be reflected in many literary contexts. Algerian literature has been influenced by the historical background of the country, starting from the ancient Greek, passing through French colonialism to the modern time. Algerian writers found their way to seize these memorable cultures in their works. Each phase has its cultural memories embodied within the details of the plot of the literary works.

In this chapter, the first section will illustrate the historical overview of cultural memory and its aspects. It will also explain how this concept emerged in literature, especially in fiction, whereas the light will be shed in the second section on the Algerian literature and how it got influenced by the historical changes in the country. It will also examine the cultural memory found in Algerian literature.

I. Cultural Memory as Theoretical Framework

1. Culture and Memory

Throughout history, the evolution of culture went parallel with the development of humankind as humans started living together, forming groups, tribes, and later on, villages, cities and countries. Culture has begun developing due to the fusion of different characters of each member of the society. It was passed down among coming generations thanks to the memory of each individual, which allowed them to restore or recall what has been acquired by learning through one's life then. Culture itself had no fixed meaning, but it can be defined as Hawks describes it in detail:

The social production and transmission of identities, knowledge, beliefs, values and understanding; as well as, the way of life, including customs, codes and manners, dress, cuisine, language, arts, technology, religion and rituals; norms and regulations of behavior, traditions and institutions. Therefore, culture is both the medium and the message – the inherent values, means and the results of social expression. (3)

Cultural memory can be articulated as three interlinked aspects. According to Hawkes, our values and aspirations, which represent our beliefs, manners, and attitudes, are inspired by common religious practices and traditions. They are the links in which society draws its principal regulations of behaviors among individuals. For instance, the celebration of Christmas for the Christians, fasting Ramadhan or Pilgrimage for the Muslims, and the shared aspirations towards earning a place in heaven in the afterlife as a reward for doing good deeds in the actual life. On the other hand, the processes and media through which we develop, receive, and transmit these values and aspirations can usually be produced in many forms. They can be written, like novels, books, poems, stories and legends, watched, like arts and architecture, heard like songs, chants or even practiced in religious gatherings, traditions, prayers, and rituals. They can be passed due to all of these through generations with time. Hawkes adds: "the

tangible and intangible manifestations of these values and aspirations in the real world" (4). The tangible manifestations are the materialistic ones that can be sensed through our senses, which can be noticed in a dress. The Hijab, for example, in Islam, represents the dress code for Muslim women; the same goes for El Mlaya in the Algerian culture. Food takes place also like Pizza and Pasta in the Italian culture. It can even be shown in the tools of daily work or the means of transportation like in the Amish society in which people still use carts and horses as means of transportation and still rely on animal force in their everyday work. The intangible manifestations can't be sensed but instead observed among society members like Language or social behaviours. Gratitude, for example, differs from one place to another. Bending to salute someone in the Asian culture expresses gratitude, while appreciation can be observed elsewhere in traditional or religious practices. For example, the famous Holi festival in India demonstrates how everyone burns their old stuff and covers everything with colors to represent moving on from past experiences.

According to Jan Assman, memory is the faculty that gives us the ability to create an identity on personal and collective levels. It enables the mind to store and remember information collected from past experiences, forming our identity (45). Thus, identity is deeply related to time. The latter, identity, and memory can be located on three levels: inner, social, and cultural. On the internal level, memory is based on our neuro-mental system. We can say that it is our personal memory, which was the only form of memory that had been recognized as such until 1920. On the other hand, memory is related to our communication and socialization when it comes to the social level. The French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs has explained that memory is based on social interactions with other individuals and that memory can be analyzed as a function of our social life (234).

Table1**Memory within Neuro-mental , Social and Cultural Levels**

Level	Time	Identity	Memory
Inner (Neuro-mental)	inner, subjective time	inner self	individual memory
Social	social time	social self, person as carrier of social roles	communicative memory
Cultural	historical, mythical, cultural time	cultural identity	cultural memory

Source: Erll, et al. *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Media and Cultural Memory/ Medien Und Kulturelle Erinnerung). 1st ed., Walter de Gruyter, 2008, p. 109.

It was not until the art historian Aby Warburg framed the term Social Memory in the third level, the cultural level. He seemed to be one of the founders of creating images that are considered carriers of memories. His made was mainly focused on studying the afterlife of classical antiquity in Western culture. He termed this project Mnemosyne, the ancient Greek term for memory, derived directly from Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory and the mother of the nine Muses in Greek mythology. Furthermore, Ernst, by being an art historian, was more specialized in what he called Bildgedächtnis. It means iconic memory, "but the general approach to reception history as a form of (cultural) memory could be applied to every other domain of symbolic forms as well" (Ernst 79).

This is often what Thomas Mann attempted to achieve within his four Joseph books, which came to light around 1933 and 1943. It may be the foremost advanced attempt to rebuild

a specific social memory. As it is perfectly explained: "In this case of people living in Palestine and Egypt in the Late Bronze Age- while attempting to bring to our minds the Jewish foundations in the European cultural memory during the times of anti-Semitism" (Assmann and Mann 134). However, neither Warburg nor Thomas Mann used the term cultural memory. This concept was invented during the 1980s. Therefore, it was only since then that the relationship between time, personality, and memory in their three measurements of the individual, the social, and the cultural levels have gotten to be increasingly apparent.

2. Correlation between Literature and Memory

Human beings have always felt the need to express themselves, their thoughts, and their beliefs. To fulfill that need, humans adopted different approaches in order to record and share their experiences, from primitive drawings on cave walls to writing books and novels and creating all sorts of art, considered media of memory. Although the media is mostly the result of individual attempts to store and reflect individual experiences, it directly impacts the construction of societies' cultural and collective memory.

According to Astrid Erll, the memory media can have many vital roles in forming a collective memory. One of those roles is the use of media to preserve experiences for long periods, making them available for complete access during that period. For instance, *The Emerald Tablet* from the Greek civilization, written in Latin, still exists. However, this will not work if the language in which the media was stored cannot be translated or decoded. It will cause the loss of the content. Another vital role is that media can chiefly contribute to forming a homogeneous cultural imaginary that connects different communities. As mentioned in this quote: "The Arabic works that talk about the Islamic conquest, or Islamic history in general can give a more whole and a unified version of the Arabic culture and create a fuller picture of the Arabic cultural memory which will result in a better connection between the cultural communities" (Erll 65).

A great example of media and its impact on cultural memory is literature. It is connected with memory due to literature's ability to create an alternative or virtual worlds inspired by the reality, which will easily give it the ability to form in the mind of the reader a clear image about how life is in those worlds. According to Astrid Erll, the interrelation between cultural memory and literature becomes clear in three characteristics: "The first element which the two share is the process of aggregation. In both literature and memory culture, events of complex past are represented through particular narratives, icons or topoi, in which the meaning of the past is condensed" (Erll 67). However, to thoroughly understand the aggregated meaning in the literary context, the receiver should be familiar with the habits and the practices of the cultural memory included in the work. For example, in Paulo Coelho's novel *The Fifth Mountain*, one should have some religious background to understand the concept of the messengers of God, their mission against paganism, and their struggle within pagan societies.

In the element of the narrative. It can be said that both literature and memory form meaning through arranging different aspects of the past and forging them into a meaningful story. As stated by Erll and Rigney: "Because literary works typically circulate at later points in time, they provide an important bridge between generations. In other words, recollecting texts composed or written in earlier periods is an integral part of cultural remembrance" (112). The reader will capture unconsciously a memory about an historical period with different cultural backgrounds as if he is part of them. As Assmann says: "It is the way in which literature establishes a memory of its own in the form of intertextual relations that give new cultural life to old texts" (113). Many colonial memories for instance have been seized in colonial novels to serve the real reflection of the colonial period. Post-colonial writers like Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha cannot only be the best examples of reproducing the memory of the period into literary words but they also take the form of pious commemoration and critical contestation that open a new door for having new versions of culture and memory.

2.1. Cultural Memory in Fiction

Cultural memory could be a shape of collective memory in the sense that several people share it. It transmits its core onto these individuals, a collective social character. It is an objective term that refers to collecting the different representations of a culture from documented works that describe life in a certain region during a specific period of time.

Erll has clearly stated that “the effect of literature in memory culture rests on its similarities and differences to processes of remembering and forgetting” (145). Over The history of human civilizations, there has been a continuous transfer of culture from one generation to another through documenting individual experiences and memories. That knowledge was preserved as symbols in written forms within scripts written on scrolls, books, walls of temples, and literary works or within aesthetic manifestations through works of art or architecture. Over time, the complex collection of these cultural manifestations is represented by the memories of their authors or performers, forming pieces of an objective image that gives a much clearer idea of the ways of life depicted in the culture of previous civilizations. One of the best media to demonstrate this process is literature.

Literature is ubiquitous as a medium of cultural memory in many forms: the dime novel, the lyrical poem, the historical novel, fantasy, fiction, romantic comedies, war movies, soap operas, and digital stories. Literature has always served many mnemonic functions, for instance, the creative formation of past life-worlds, the demonstration of images of history, the debate of engaging ideas, and the review of the cultural memory's processes and problems. Being one of the most attractive literary genres, especially for the children, it became instrumental in passing on the cultural heritage by implying it in short stories or fairytales to create a believable image of reality. In that way, the reader can easily relate to the characters and the plot and obtain a clear vision of cultural memory from the story.

3. The Mnemonic Function of Cultural Memory

Mnemonic devices are tools that help us remember specific facts or large amounts of information. These devices can come in the form of a medium to make us able to remember facts and past events. As Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney have pointed out below:

It has become increasingly apparent that the memories that are shared within societies and across different generations are the product of public acts of remembrance using a variety of media. Stories, both oral and written, images, museums, monuments: these all work together in creating and sustaining 'sites of memory'. Thus everyone reading this issue of EJES will have some 'recollection' of the First World War, but since most readers were not alive in 1914, these 'recollections' are vicarious ones, the product of accumulated exposure to a common reservoir of products, including photographs and documentaries, museums, personal accounts, histories and novels. (54)

In that respect, literature can be efficient in this field due to the rich knowledge related to the cultural memory implied in the literary work. To illustrate, after reading Robin Hood's novel, such a clear image could have started to be created about the way of life in that side of England at that time. The reader would get a good idea about how people dressed and behaved, what tools and weapons they used, and what jobs they occupied.

It also appraises of the architecture and the social and judicial structure and even the geographical nature of the region at a given time. Although the plot is inspired by a legend from the English folklore, the reader would gain a taste of the way of life in Nottinghamshire even if he did not live anywhere near there during the 14th or the 15th century. In the end, we can deeply experience the impact of the knowledge obtained from the literary work through the recollections of cultural memory preserved within it. Thus, we conclude how well the cultural memory in literary works can serve as a robust mnemonic tool for the people who want to share

or receive experiences with and from each other regardless of where they live or what period they belong.

II. The Historical Novel in Algerian Literature

1. Historical Overview of Algerian Literature

Algerian Literature has its own echo of beauty that reflects Algerian culture, history and heritage. After the war of independence, Algerian writers took a different trajectory where they claimed to overcome the abstract feelings, memories, and all that had left and lived during colonialism and even before it. This section will draw attention to Algerian Literature and its aspects before, during, and after colonialism. In addition to that, it will illustrate how cultural memory has a part in Algerian literature.

Many cultures, including the ancient Romans, Arabs, French, Spanish, and Berbers, have influenced Algerian Literature. Digging back to history, Algerian Literature derives from the writers' life experiences and their environments. It reflects the emerged image of the nation within the literary contexts all over the way. Hence, it can be divided into main phases related to the country's historical background, which significantly shapes its progress. It is either written in the Algerian mother tongue Arabic, Tamazight language, or the second language French.

1.1 Before the War of Independence

In this period, The Algerian Literature reflected perfectly the life of Algerians by focusing on themes of resistance and struggle. They were known for their clear discourse on social themes such as homelessness, suffering, and poverty. They also promote deep descriptions of immigration, unemployment, injustice, and oppression of Algerians and further the political horizons in the country back then. Novels in this period also show the Algerian position toward the coming war of independence. A prominent novelist might be Mouloud Feraoun. He wrote *Poor Man's Son* (1952), where Fouroulou was the reflection of how the

whole following generation was born to fight for life beside the perfect description of the Algerian war preparations. “We no longer had our safe refuge, our precious nest, no one to love us besides our parents, no one to the interest in us. We could only wrap out timorous arms around Father and Mother from here on” (78). As it was mentioned above, Mouloud describes himself as being in the middle of a massacre where there were a lot of deaths around him including his grandmother.

1.1.1 Algerian Writers, French Novels

During this period, the language used in literature had sort of a division between the colonizer and the colonized's mother tongues. The ones writing in French were used either to support colonial policies or fight them. Algerianism, for instance, was a political, literary genre used by French Algerian writers who wished for a shared Algerian future culture that would unite French settlers and native Algerians. It was used for the first time in a novel by Robert Randau, called *Les Algérianistes*: “when you are in the position of the colonized, you are obliged to use his language that borrowed to you, and the use of this language has one goal which is to commend the colonial... you are making a big mistake... they teach you French, not to use it against them...” (Amrouch 5). However, Other novels in the other hand were used to fight the idea that Algerian is French La *Grande Maison* by Mohammed Dib for example was published just before the war of independence to describes the awakensness of the Algerian people and their position between struggling and resisting. One may refer to his confirmation: “The words did not come out of me. Inevitably, my throat was no longer able to form sounds but exclusively stones. They all harassed me, however, as they harassed other men, not knowing what they were exposing themselves to: I was ready to throw up a torrent of stones” (Dib 120).

The French language was used by many writers, including Yacine Maamri, Mouloud Feroune, and Mohammed Dib. They used the colonial language to express themselves and make a way of resistance. In this context, Lgoudjl has asserted: “The literary production of Algerian

writers such as Mouloud Feraoun, Kateb Yacine, Mouloud Mammeri, Rachid Boudjedra, Tahar Djaout, Assia Djebar, and Malika Mokeddem—just to name a few—use language as resistance toward the oppressor and simultaneously as representation of national identity and culture” (168). This literature found itself between two different civilizations with two different cultures, although the writers themselves were aware of the obligation of using the colonizer language to express the tragedy of the Algerian people in different ways. The French language was the only weapon to attack the intellectuals and make them understand the struggle of the Algerians. Katib Yacine points out in his novel *Nedjma* that it is important to be “silent or telling what is not told” (86).

1.2 During the Revolution

The Algerian war was the turning point of the Algerian novel. The Algerian authors attempted to give a vivid evocation for their readers of the conflict between Algerians and French people.

During French colonialism, literature was one of the weapons used to defeat the colonizer. Authors played an essential role in reflecting the Algerian scenes throughout their writings. They reordered and provided an intimate portrait of the living conditions of Algerians during colonialism. In addition, literary contexts made it clear to the whole world, mainly Algerians, that the only way to liberate Algeria was through armed revolution. They also depicted the horrors of the war and discussed their psychological and social consequences on people.

Novels written in this period are called Literature of Resistance or The Algerian Revolution. Maamri, in his novel *Le Baton* written in 1955, gave a profound image of the resistance in the Kabyle region, which provided a picture of Algerians in general. It attacked directly the political states in Algeria and how people were dealing with the revolution all over the country. In *The Student and the Lesson*, Malek Haddad shapes the events of the Algerian

revolution with a lot of strong feelings and emotions. The main character, an Algerian doctor who lived in France after the death of his wife, reflects the suffering of the majority of the Algerian intellectuals. *Nedjma* written by Kateb Yacine, on the other hand, was considered a witness to the birth of new Algeria. As it is stated: “*Nedjma* represented also the political and economical side” (103). In his writing, he adopts a particular situation where the novel's heroine represents the whole country. The event that affected Yacine's literary writings was the massacres of Setif, Guelma, and Kharrata at that time.

1.3 Post-independence Algerian Novels

After one hundred and thirty years of colonial rule, novels came to express the main problems of the postcolonial era. They served as means to understand the difficulties faced to define an independent Algeria. After the end of the Algerian war of independence, a new category of writers tackled many subjects in diverse domains, such as Algerians suffering during the war, illiteracy, unemployment and the agricultural revolution. The literary works went side by side with politics and transmitted the different changes in society and the conditions that helped these changes.

Various Algerian governments have conducted Arabization. This intense movement supposedly claimed to reject any remaining features of the French colonizer in Algeria (language, culture, religion) and, foremost, to restore Algeria her whole Arab personality. Literature played a significant part in this movement which was the emergence of new artistic literature. Boucoucha has revealed the pivotal role of literature as follows: “Algerian writers acquired from the new politics unlike during colonization before this period taking in consideration that writing is an art” (23). The postcolonial era pushed the Algerian novelists to use the Arabic language instead of French to express the reality of Algeria after the war with its details and to go deeper into politics, economics and social life. Mohammed Araar, in his novel *Ma La Tatharoho Arriyah*, discusses the main issue that faced the whole society, being

wholly lost between your identity and hybridity. In his novel *Al Laz*, Taher Wattar also describes the revolution's destiny after independence. In contrast, Abd El Hamid Ben Haddouga adopted a new novelistic approach using new Arabic techniques and methods. His novel *El Jaziyah wa Eddarawich* is a qualitative addition to his career in particular and Algerian literature in general. It was where he tried to reverberate the country's reality after independence

1.4 Contemporary Algerian Novels

Algerian literature reflects the tragedies and the crises with consequences that touched the country, including all categories and domains. Subjects of violence and terrorism were the center of all works. For example, Yasmina Khadera's novel *Wolf Dreams* illustrates what happens when disillusion intersects with the persuasive voice of fundamentalism and the chaos of civil war, which represents perfectly the details of the black decades. However, it was not all about terrorism as much as it was also about the period of new choices in politics and economics. For instance, Chenfoufa has declared that "Merzak Baktach was dealing with the struggle with the salafists and government trying to give the solution to build a democratic country that except only the idea of Algeria is above anyone" (74). Taher Wattar, in *Adahalis Wa Chamaa*, and Wassini El Aaraj, in *Makam Asayida*, for example have explored the roots of the crisis as other novelists did. To give more details, El Aaraj, in his novel, described the pain of Meriem, who was a symbol of the Algerian immovable woman. He also gave the reason for this pain: the system and the dark stream against any kind of development and civilization.

In brief, Algerian literature walked side by side with all the political transformations and the historical reflections that happened in the Algerian society back then. It matches the appearance of a new kind of writing called Historicism, a new literary theory developed by Stephen Greenblatt. It is based on the idea that literature should be studied and interpreted within the context of both the author's history and the history of the critic. As mentioned above, the Algerian literature was full of creative works related to the historical events happening in

this period. The main written subjects were influenced by the author's environment, circumstances and beliefs during the production of the literary work. It was all about how the writer's times affected the work and how it reflects the writer's times.

2. The New Historical Novel and Cultural Memory

Memory poses an obvious challenge in social science as well as literature. Memories are formed by political, social, religious and historical events to reflect, reveal and restore the past in the lives of literary characters. When it comes to cultural memory and Algerian literature, an alternative fictional reality replaces the authentic blender of imagination and reality in literary contexts. Algerian writers use memory to reflect their experiences and feelings during colonialism and even after.

Many Algerian works of literature had a restricted claim to factuality and objectivity. On the other hand, cultural memory constructs the integration of both. Ahlam Mostaghanemi's novel *Memory in the Flesh* embraces more than four decades in Algerian history. It illustrates the struggle of Algeria against foreign dominations, not only colonialism or post-colonialism but also hybridity, fate, love, etc. Khaled, the narrator, lives as an artist in Paris after losing his hand in the independence war. His memories were perfectly embodied within his artistic paintings and writing. This makes him realize his visions of the country's landscape, its past promises, and its betrayal in the present. Mostaghanemi's novel is about a social syndrome of memory and trauma, individual dignity and political corruption. The reflection of the cultural memory in the novel can be read as a parable of contemporary Algeria and its relation to its past. *Dhakirat al-jasad* [*Memory in the Flesh*] possesses such powerful resonance, less because of the individual artistic achievement it undoubtedly is than because of its social situatedness, its quality as a meditation on how memory is constructed and inhabited in the indivisibly personal and societal crises of the present (McDougall, 37).

Without invoking truism about the imprisoning force of traditions as well as culture, mentioning the singer Rachid Taha for example, in some novels is a reflection of the feelings of young Algerians and their interests during the 1980s. On the other hand, talking about Kabyle region in Mouloud Mammri's novel *La Colline Oubliée* reflects perfectly the culture of Kabyle people in the mountain where the main character grows up in the middle of traditions and values. In addition, the description of clothes and what women used to wear in Assia Djébar's novel *Children of the New World* draws the image of the traditional wives in the Algerian society before the resistance movement from a variety of perspectives.

Conclusion

Although the whole historical changes that Algeria has had, culture has challenged the change. For that, this chapter illustrates cultural memory as a theory that captures the memory of the society that is neither transmitted by genes nor historically told. It explains how it cannot be inherited biologically but transmitted via symbols highlighting literature. The chapter as well gives a historical background of Algerian literature since the aim of this research is about one of them. It shows the different changes in the Algerian novel and how each period can affect the style and the content.

Chapter Two: The Novel as a Cultural Memory Medium

Introduction

What the Day Owes the Night is a thought-provoking novel. It is filled with symbols, hidden messages and meanings, and most importantly, it is an excellent example of a novel that portrays cultural memory. Set in the 1930-1960s, the novel depicts life as it was at the time. Khadra did a great job representing the relationship between Algerians and Les Pieds-noirs. This relationship is portrayed through various quite different characters. Each one gives the example of a particular relationship that existed between the two at the time.

This chapter aims to shed light on the representation of colonial Algeria in the novel, which was made possible by the way Khadra attempted to revise history in this novel. It also tackles the way the novel talks about sensitive issues related to the representation of “Pieds-noirs” and their relationship with Algerians.

The novel was published in 2008. It tells the story of Younes, the protagonist and the narrator, who embodies the individual divided between two cultures and two facets of his identity. The novel explores the identities of French and Algerians during the years leading up to and following the Algerian War of Independence. The novel tells the story of Younes, a poor boy living in the countryside with his family. He gets adopted by his uncle and his French wife. They are both educated and working as pharmacists. Thus, they can provide him with a better life. Renamed "Jonas" and educated in a French school, the boy's identity evolves throughout the novel as he experiences pre-independence, wartime, and post-war Algeria. He is torn between his self-understanding as an Arab and a European as he is forced constantly to be on either side: Europe or Algeria, a choice that is not mainly his.

As mentioned before, the novel was published in 2008, almost forty years after the independence war. It is categorized as a new-historical novel, meaning it is written in contemporary times, but it deals with historical themes. Everything about the novel is historical,

from the setting to the characters, to the events and the representation of life. The latter is the most important element that this study is focusing on. Cultural memory is about how the author portrays a particular culture in his writing to make the reader develop a mental image of what he is describing and talking about. This mental image becomes a memory. It is not a memory that the mind persevered from actually seeing and experiencing, but one that was created and acquired. What is crucially important to know is that, scientifically speaking, the brain as an organ cannot differentiate between what is factual and what is not. Thus, the mental images the reader develops after reading a highly historical work become embedded in its memory as though he has seen it before. This is what gives the reader a sense of reality. It is what makes this type of novel important in that they help the reader develop a cultural memory on his own.

Khadra attempts to transmit the cultural memory by showing the way people lived at the time, how they dressed, family structure, social structure, and the difference between the countryside and the city. He also does that by showing the different types of relationships that existed between the Algerians and Les pieds-noirs. Also, he shows us a hidden side of history. The side no one talks about is that some Europeans—not all—were also victims of the war of independence, just like the Algerians were victims of colonialism.

1. The Shades of Colonial Algeria in the Cultural Imaginary

Since the novel is set in the years from the 1930s leading up to the 1960s, it depicts how life was under French control. Early in the novel, our protagonist Younes lived in the countryside with his family before they lost everything and moved to the city. From the way Younes, the narrator, talks about his childhood, we see a clear difference between life in the countryside or 'bled' and life in the city.

The lifestyle that the author describes to be Younes' life early in the novel is not just the case of Younes and his family; rather, it depicts how most Algerians lived at the time. At the very beginning of the novel, Younes talks about his life, saying:

We lived in isolation like ghosts on our patch of land, in the sidereal silence of those who have little to say to one another: my mother in the shadow of our shack, bent over her cooking pot[...]; Zahra, my sister, three years my junior, crouched forgotten in some dark corner, so self-effacing that at times we did not even notice her; and me, a sickly, solitary boy, who had barely blossomed before I wilted, carrying my ten years like a burden. This was not life; we merely existed. (07)

This is such a pessimistic view of life, especially from a ten-year-old who barely knows anything. Life was empty for people in the countryside. They 'existed' day by day, wondering when it would all end. As Younes says: "the days were desolate in their sameness; not a single one brought with it anything new" (07). We understand that life was slow and tedious for it did not bring anything new into their life.

Khadra, then, gives a statement that is straight to the point in describing life then. He says: "in the 1930s, poverty and disease swept the country, wiping out families and livestock with astonishing perversity, forcing those who survived into exile or vagrancy" (08). The colonial time was not a happy time. People suffered not only from poverty and diseases but from ignorance too. They made little to no effort to change their situation, thinking it was 'mektoub' to live life as it was.

In one instance, mainly when Younes goes to the village, he describes it as being "depressing, godforsaken place, its cob walled huts cracking beneath the weight of misery, its narrow streets desperately twisting and turning, not knowing where to hide their squalor. A few skeletal trees, gnawed away by goats, stood withered and dying like gibbets. Crouched beneath the trees, the unemployed sat like ruined scarecrows waiting for a storm to come to carry them off" (09). The village is no better than the countryside. Misery was the real disease that spread throughout the country.

After Younes' family lost everything and decided to move to Oran to start a new life, his father met someone on the road who warned him about going there. He said: "Be careful, Issa. The city is no place for people like us. Oran is teeming with villains more deadly than cobras, more cunning than the Devil, who fear neither God nor man" (14). Younes had never been to the city, unlike his father, so he knew nothing about what it was hiding for them except what they had heard from people before.

In the first pages, when Younes talked about his father, the adjectives that were associated with him were 'sweat' 'old' 'dirty' 'frowning'. However, when they were on the road to Oran, he changed. Younes recalls seeing his father as "a different man. He had shaved and washed his face in a nearby stream and put on clean clothes: a waistcoat over a faded shirt and a neatly pressed *saroual*—a pair of loose-fitting trousers—I had never seen him wear before, and leather shoes, which, though shabby, had been freshly buffed" (17). A change in life needed a change in appearance. Younes' father knew that it was appropriate going to the city looking dirty. Khadra used such an image to show that people of the countryside indeed thought highly about the city. They knew it was a place that demanded a certain level of cleanness, unlike the 'Bled' where they did not make an effort to change.

The moment they reached the city, Younes knew that life was more than he knew, more than he imagined in the tiny space he had once lived in. he describes his first time in Oran, saying:

I had never imagined that such a sprawling place could exist. It was extraordinary. For a moment I wondered if the heat and fumes were playing tricks on me. On the far side of the square, rows and rows of houses stretched as far as the eye could see, with tall windows and balconies filled with flowers. The streets were paved out and there were footpaths on either side. I couldn't believe my eyes; I did not even have names for many

of the things that flashed before them. Beautiful houses rose up on every side, elegant and impressive, set back behind high black railings. This was a different planet. (18)

This passage does not need interpretation because Younes said it all in the last sentence: it was a different planet. Khadra describes how the city with its architecture. For a young boy who had never had the opportunity to come out of the bubble of his tiny countryside house, it was a moment of revelation that there is more to the world.

Everything was new to Younes, even the people there. When he saw the French settlers and their friends exhibiting an unfamiliar way of living in his eyes, he was astonished. He said: "these privileged residents exuded a sense of tranquility and wealth that I could hardly believe possible, so different were they from life out in the bled, where crops withered to dust, where stables and barns were less pathetic than the shack we had called home" (19). The way Khadra portrays life through the eyes of Younes is remarkable. The thoughts and comments of Younes are unfiltered, true and real. He was indeed surprised by all that sudden change in his life. He is now in a place he did not even think existed, populated by people he had never seen alike, and living a lifestyle he had never dreamt of. Everything was beyond his imagination.

The architecture was different, the way people dressed was different, and people themselves were different in Oran. It was all too much to grasp for him. His eyes saw the high building, men in suits, "women in the city did not wear the veil, they walked around with their faces bare" (18). Everything was changing and new to him. The way both men and women dressed is not familiar to him. We can say it was a cultural shock because he was expecting a specific type or pattern of behavior: the one he was used to before. However, he found nothing that resembles his old life; not in the way people dressed, not in the way people behaved. Even the jobs they occupied were new to him, like his uncle being a pharmacist.

There is a difference between the bled and the city as Younes shows us, but also, there is a difference within the city. It is best described by Younes when he says:

He [his uncle] took us to the far side of the city. There is nothing cruder than the inequalities of a city. Walk around a block and the day become night, life becomes death. The 'suburb' where we ended up broke the spell the city had cast only few hours earlier. This was still Oran, but now we were behind the scenes, where the beautiful houses and the leafy avenues gave away to a sprawling chaos peppered with squalid shacks, disgusting shops, the tents nomads call kheimas, which are open to the four winds, and pens filled with livestock. (21)

Younes and his family came to live in 'Jenane Jato', the only place they could afford. It was a place for the poor, the unemployed, and those who came from the countryside to the city. At a young age, Younes is discovering how life is not fair. Even in the beautiful Oran he so much admired upon arriving, there is a gloomy side. Hence, Algeria in the colonial period did not only witness a drastic difference between those who lived in Bled and those who lived in the city; even the ones in the city are not all the same. They are not all equal. The city had its dark side, a place for the uneducated, and unemployed. Khadra says: "Jenane Jato: a slum of scrubland and shacks teeming with squeaking carts, beggars, hawkers, donkey-drivers struggling with their beasts, water-carriers, charlatans and ragged children. The abject poverty was unbelievable, and the people—piteous wretches—dissolved into the shadows" (21).

From the bright, fairy-like feeling Younes had upon coming to Oran for the first time to the bleak overwhelming realization that even in the city, life would not be all pink and roses. The narrator describes this perplexity as follows:

Things change again when he is adopted by his uncle and his wife. When he moves in with the, he gets to know a whole new way of life. he is surprise to find that his "room was twice as big as the room my family shared in Jenane Jato [...] the lavishness of my surroundings frightened me. Everything seemed to be perfectly, precariously balanced; I was terrified that with one false move I would bring it all crashing down. (61)

They say you do not realize how bad a situation is until you are out of it. Younes realized how bad Jenane Jeto is when he visited it after living with his uncle for some time. He saw that: "Jenane Jeto was crumbling beneath the weight of broken dreams. Abandoned children stumbled in their parents' shadows, weak from starvation and sunstroke, fledging tragedies set loose upon the world" (109). This was another negative description of the part of city that his family and other poor Algerians lived in. The conditions they lived in were inhumane.

Fast forward to when Younes is a young man, on one occasion when he had to take Jelloul, Andrés's servant, home; he discovers a new type of horror. The place where he lived is worse than Jenane Jeto. He recalls that it was: "the shanty town where Jelloul and his family lived was beyond anything I had ever imagined. The douar was made up of a dozen squalid hovels on the banks of dried-up riverbed. A few scrawny goats ambled around. The place smelled so foul I found it difficult to imagine how anyone could spend two days here" (151). Younes is constantly surprised by the way different people have different lifestyles and a certain level of life. He thought he was at the bottom before being adopted by his uncle, but here he discovers that there is always a worse hat to every bad thing.

During the colonial period, Algeria was known to have a severe gap between the social classes. There were the upper class: the rich, and the lower class: the poor. The middle class was almost non-existent.

2. The Algerians and “Les Pieds-noirs” Relations

People in the bled did not have any relationship with Les Pieds-noirs, unlike the ones living in the city. The city was populated by a decent percentage of Europeans, primarily French, but Spanish and Italians existed as well. In the case of Rio Salado, where Younes spent the rest of his boyhood up to his adulthood, it was inhabited mainly by Europeans. The small percentage of Arabs were either illiterate, and by that they worked as servants or other domestic

jobs, being subordinates to the Europeans, or they were educated, occupying by that descent jobs, like Younes and his uncle who were pharmacists.

Interaction is inevitable in a city like Oran or Rio Salado. Europeans and Algerians communicated. We have two different types of relationships: almost-equal and oppressed. The first one is like the relationship between Younes and his friends. The second one is like the relationship Jelloul had with Dede.

Before discussing these two types, it is essential to refer to Younes' uncle, the pharmacist. When Younes' family moved to the city, the uncle already lived there. He established a lifestyle there, being a well-educated man who married a French woman. He was integrated into society. When Younes is adopted by his uncle and wife, he remarks that his "uncle lives in the European part of the city" (57). He owned a pretty big house. Younes then met his uncle's wife, Germaine, who was happy to see him. she immediately started calling him 'Jonas' and when he reminded her that it is 'Younes' she replied: "not anymore, my darling..." (59). Germaine, being French, is considered to be one of Les Pieds-noirs. Indeed, she never regarded Younes with a superior eye, she loved him like her son, and the fact that she loved an Algerian and married him is enough to show us that she is not someone who would see herself as superior to Algerians. Younes himself said that "she was determined to spoil me" (60). It shows how much she loved him already. However, she calls him 'Jonas' and not 'Younes', suggesting that she wants to raise him in French. She wants him to be as French as possible, which is understandable given the fact that she is French.

In Rio Salado, Younes started going to school and met a girl named Isabelle. She was the sweetest girl to him until she discovered he was not European. She angrily looked down at him, saying: "you surely don't think I could marry an Arab? I'd rather die!". It was a moment that forever changed him because he knew that Arabs and Europeans would never be the same. Even though Isabelle was young, she behaved in a way that mirrors her parents' and family's

behavior toward Arabs. The way she viewed Younes in that moment equals how all Europeans viewed Arabs the whole time they were in Algeria.

After Isabelle knew his real name was Younes and not Jonas, she changed how she behaved around him. As Younes recalls: "she would stalk past, head high as a butcher's hook, as though I had never existed. Nor did it stop there: she invariably imposed her prejudices on others. If she had decided to hate someone, she insisted all her friends do so too. I watched as a yawning gap opened up around me in the school playground, my classmates deliberately sunned me" (105). Isabelle's behavior is a perfect example of the way other Europeans behaved during the colonial period. They saw the Arabs as inferior. They hated them and wanted everyone else to hate them. Khadra uses Isabelle to convey a message: she represents the typical European view of the Arabs.

Younes became friends with three Europeans at once: Jean-Christophe, the one who loved Isabelle, Fabrice, and Simon. The three befriended him after Jean-Christophe beat him in school and Younes refused to tell on him. They saw it as an act of bravery and decided to be friends with him. Their friendship lasted until adulthood, and Younes befriended another European: André, also known as Dede.

His four friends had never made him feel unwanted or alienated. On one occasion when they were young adults, the Rucillio family passed by them and did not bother to greet them, to which André said: "they could at least have said hello. We're hardly the dregs of society: you [Younes] 're a chemist, Fabrice is a poet and a journalist, and I'm a civil servant" (164) Dede included Younes when saying they are not nobodies, they are well-respected people. Yet he always had this feeling that he did not belong there. He wonders: "why did I always feel like I had to carve out a space for myself among my friends." (248).

Another kind of relationship between the "Pieds-noirs" and Algerians is shown through the character of Madame Cazenave. He met by coincidence and then the wealthy lady seduced

the young man. As Younes describes his time with her: "I hardly recognized myself. Since my encounter with Madame Cazenove, my mind was elsewhere; it was sounding the depths of euphoria of being a man, my first taste of sexual discovery [...]" (142). And then, after two weeks, Younes went to her house again, hoping to experience that feeling of euphoria again.

However, she does not treat him the way he expected. She was cold and formal to the point where he started questioning himself: "why was she treating me like this? How could she behave as though nothing had happened? Surely she knew why I had come to see her" (143). Then, she nicely asked him not to come back unless she called for him. Being the European, she used Younes, the Algerian, for her own needs and then ditched him. What is worse is the way she reacts: "you were dreaming, Jonas, It was just a young man's dream" (145). This is manipulation; wanting and doing something then convincing the other party that they were the one to want that thing, to fantasize about it.

Madame Cazenove left him with a deep feeling of shame, for she belittled him with her acts. He "felt as though I was a product of her imagination, a plaything in her hands, a puppy she might order to roll over so she could tickle its tummy" (144). She exemplifies the type of colonial force which takes advantage of a situation or a person, and once it is done with it, it is time to throw it.

Khadra has also portrayed the relationship between the Algerians and Les pieds –noirs through the character of Jelloul. He is the manservant of Dede. Dede treats Jelloul the same way the colonizer treats the colonized. Jelloul is always oppressed because of his origin, paying for mistakes he did not do.

In one instance, Jelloul came to Younes asking for help looking horribly deformed from being beaten up so badly. Younes is horrified when he sees him and immediately asks who did that to him and what did he do wrong? Jelloul replies: "André. I don't need to do anything wrong. André finds some excuse. This time it was the Muslim unrest in the *Aurès*. André doesn't

trust Arabs" (149). He then continues: "He told me it was a warning, that he didn't want me getting any ideas. Said I needed to get it into my head that he was the boss, and he wasn't going to tolerate insubordination from the hired help" (150). In other words, Dede wanted to establish his dominance and control over his servants, mainly Jelloul. Ha wanted him to know his position, that he is merely a servant and Dede is the master. This is ironic because this act of violence is taking place in Algeria, Jelloul's land, whereas the outsider in this case is Dede.

It was not the first time Jelloul was severely beaten or the last. This scene keeps repeating itself throughout the novel as if it is a scene from a movie being played on loop. Of course, it was not done randomly. Khadra purposefully repeats the acts of violence against Jelloul alluding to how the colonizer, Les Pieds-noirs, regarded and treated the Algerians.

Like father-like son, Dede's treatment is no better than his father's. His father was an important rich man back then. He "ruled his estate like a feudal lord, keeping the countless Muslim families who worked for him packed in like cattle. Wearing a pith helmet and slapping at his boots with a riding crop, Jaime Jiménez Sosa IV was always up at first light and always last to bed. He worked his 'gallery slaves' until they dropped, and God helps the malingerers" (107). The things Khadra wanted us to grasp are, first and foremost, related to Dede's father. He was wealthy, but worked hard, even harder than his employees since he woke up before them and slept after them. Second, he mistreated his employees, as the word enslaved person indicates. They were overworked and underpaid, and the living conditions were catastrophic. They were living like animals, making barely enough to feed their families. Again, Khadra shows us how the colonizer takes advantage of the colonized. He executes his dominance by controlling them and making them work for him until they are no longer capable of doing so.

Another equally important instance that describes a type of relationship between the Algerians and the Europeans is exemplified in the character of Pépé Rucillio, Isabelle's father, and Younes. When Younes grew up, he maintained a superficial friendly relationship with

Rucillio, the father of Isabelle Jean-Christophe's partner, and they often saw each other. When Younes starts to help with his country's war by supplying their infirmary from his pharmacy, he gets caught one day. Rucillio intervenes to get him out of prison because Isabelle asks him to do so. He knows that Younes does not call himself caught up in such conflicts as he says to the officer: "this has been a terrible misunderstanding. The boy was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. Your colonel agrees with me on this. You hardly think I'd try to protect a criminal?" (280). After this conversation, Younes gets out because Rucillio is a vital man there and his word alone can end conversations and make decisions. He trusts Younes even though he does not like Arabs and thinks they are lazy and unworthy of their land. He strongly believes that his ancestors, father and grandfather and great-father who came to Algeria long ago are the ones who constructed Algeria and they are the ones who deserve it.

3.The Exodus of “Les Pieds-noirs”

Later on, Dede comes to visit him, and he says: "who would have thought *our* country would be brought so low?" and Younes replies, "It was obvious Dede. A whole nation lay down while *we* walked all over them. Sooner or later they were bound to get up. That's when *we* lost our footing" (286). Dede talks about Algeria, referring to it as his country, and Younes discusses the European in a way that shows he counted himself as one, as belonging to them, and not to Algeria.

Dede then is confused about the state of war. He says: "I'm lost... I honestly don't understand what's happening to Algeria. And the French obviously don't either. They're talking about self-determination. What exactly do they mean by that? Does it mean we wipe the slate clean and start again with everyone equal or..." (286). Dede is not able to finish his sentence. What we come to understand, however, is that he and the other Europeans are fully aware that they are not equal.

Then, Khadra shows us that even the Europeans are not on the side of De Gaulle. Dede angrily says: “ ‘De Gaulle doesn’t understand a thing about *our* suffering’, he said, referring to the General’s famous statement to the *Algerians* on 4 June 1958—‘I have understood you’” (286). Two critical things can be grasped through this statement. The first is that Dede believes himself belongs to Algeria because he said ‘our suffering’ when De Gaulle talked about the *Algerians*’ suffering. The second is that he is not a support of his.

Europeans born and raised in Algeria loved it because it is their country. The only place they know. They could not even think about living in another area. 1962 was dark for them. They were deported and removed from the country they were born and raised in, their parents’ country. Rio Salado was known to be inhabited mainly by Europeans. When the war started, Younes describes Rio Salado as:

... the houses stood empty, shutters banging, windows dark, and great piles of clothes and chattels lay piled up in the street. Most of the villagers had left; those who stayed did not know which way to turn. An old man crippled by arthritis, keeled over on the porch of his house. A young man helped him to his feet and tried to get him to walk. ‘They could have waited until I died,’ the old man whimpered. ‘Where am I going to die now?’ on the main street, trucks and cars, carts stood lined up waiting to take people into exile. People ran about, confused, their eyes glazed, forsaken by their saints, their guardian angels. Madness, fear, grief, ruin, tragedy had but one face: it was theirs. (291)

The Europeans were experiencing the loss of their country too. The image of the old man that Khadra presented is full of meaning. That old man felt like he had nowhere to go, nowhere to die because he was displaced from his country. The use of the word ‘exile’ is not random either. Khadra could have said they were being returned to their country, but that was not the truth. They were going to exile because they were forced to leave the country they had lived in their

whole life and the only place they belonged to. The anguish faces Khadra when describing the emotional turmoil they underwent is felt in the novel.

This is further exemplified through the character of Madame Lambert. She runs into Younes and asks him where she should go. She says: “where am I supposed to go? I have no children, no family anywhere” (291). Madame Lambert, like many others, only knows Algeria and Rio Salado to be her home. The truth is that they were Europeans, but they were Europeans by Blood, Algerians by birth. Algeria was their home, and they deeply felt the unfairness of the exodus.

Another example is given by Dede, who refused to leave when there were two options on the table for Europeans: go and never come back, or stay and get shot immediately. Younes urged him to leave, but he refused saying: “this is my home. I am not leaving. I’m not going anywhere” (292). Younes says, “Rio Salado looked like the end of an era, drained of its essence, delivered up to some new destiny” (293). It was the end, the point of no turning back. Algeria became independent and Europeans were not welcomed because they were a living reminder of everything terrible that had happened to the Algerians for decades.

After being sent to France, Dede sends a letter to Younes. He says: “the war swept away so many of the country’s points of reference that I sometimes wonder if what we went through was not just some group hallucinations. But let’s leave time to do its mourning. The wounds are still too fresh to insist that those who survived show restraints”. He then gives him Emilie’s address and comments, “it’s where all the pied-noirs go now. Can you imagine, that’s what they call us these days—‘pied-noir’—as though we’ve spent our whole lives trudging through mud” (301).

Khader's narrative constructed a memorial reservoir that blames history for alienating the innocent Algerian born Europeans. Based on the narrative of the novel, the reader may question oneself. They could expel the army or send to exile those Europeans who attempted to

hurt Algeria and the Algerians in any way. They could damage those who were against the *Felleguas* and those who fought them. But what did the other citizens do to be skinned off their country? Was it their fault they had European blood and were born in Algeria? Was it their fault their parents and grandparents and great-parents thought Algeria was an excellent place to invest and live? Was it their fault that the French treated the Algerians horribly, in every inhumane way possible? Of course not. They had nothing to do with that. They were a collateral damage of the war. But the same goes for the Algerians. What did they do wrong to have their country controlled by Europeans? Why did they become servants to people who were citizens of their ancestors' country? For what right did they lose their lands from under their feet? The colonizer became the master and the colonized became the servant.

Conclusion

To sum up, Khadra wants the reader to experience the whole French-Algerian war from a different perspective. We had always believed that the European settlers in Algeria had all come intending to take our land away from us, of benefiting from it at the expense of other Algerians. Sadly, this was true. Europeans came and forcibly took lands and properties from their owners, but this is not the whole picture. There is more to the story. The Algerians were not the only victims in this story. Europeans born and raised in Algeria and had only known Algeria to be their home, country were also victims. They lived in one place their whole life, minding their business and co-existing with other Arabs, until the day of independence when they were sent to exile, out of their homes, their country, to a place they had never been to before. The novel, then, revises Algerian history by incorporating the dramatic experience of Algerian born migrants of European descent so that their story would be enshrined in the Algerian cultural memory.

Chapter Three: Divergent Locations and Blurred Identities

Introduction

Postcolonial identity is a central theme in postcolonial literature since it is the result of the process of colonialism. The latter justifies all the debates and controversies that underlie this notion. This identity is forged as a reaction to the colonial predicaments, which are wholly debunked by the postcolonial discourse. This led to the emergence of cultural and spatial considerations that continued to shape relations, practices and narratives that demarcate the ambivalence of postcolonial identity and the way it is articulated by postcolonial writers.

The colonized people were pushed to rebel against colonial powers because they began to feel the resistant components of their specific identity. What is essential here is to know that postcolonialism is a notion that came to stress the role of postcolonial people in the world and to bring to life their voices as distinct from their colonizers' voice. It came to highlight the postcolonial identity as different from the colonial one.

Yasmina Khadra puts a particular emphasis on the concept of colonial and postcolonial identity through the character of Younes. His whole story is a struggle to find his identity and where he belongs. Thus, this chapter aims to shed light on the way Khadra explores Younes' identity, making it go from an identity crisis to an independent identity.

1. Jonas or Younes? The Ambivalent Frontiers of Colonial Identity

Postcolonial writers attempt to depict the quest for identity in their literature through concepts such as place, displacement, home and otherness. All these elements are crucial in forming the identity of people. So, their writings portray these notions and their effect on the postcolonial subjects.

The author successfully captures the temporality of the past by attempting to describe life as it was at the time. He depicts the struggle of some Algerians to find their way of belonging because they are torn between being born Arab and raised European. The identity

crisis that some characters go through, including the protagonist, Younes, is a great example because many people at the time were the product of inter-racial marriages, usually to an Arab father and a European mother. The hybrid character is what puts them in this identity.

Although it is not the same thing for Younes, still, he is the one character who is deeply affected by this crisis. Jelloul best summarizes this when talking to him on one occasion and saying: "You are one of *us*, but you live *their* lifestyle..." (emphasis original, 186). In the eyes of Jelloul and all the Arabs Younes encounters, Younes is an Arab, born and bred. Still, He was dislocated from the Algerian experience as frequently lived by most Arabs. This makes it difficult for him to assume this identity.

At the same time, however, he is regarded by non-Arabs as an Arab and nothing more. He is constantly reminded throughout the novel by Europeans that he is but an Arab. An example is given when he was young, Isabelle discovered that he is an Arab just because Jean-Christophe told her so by revealing the true way of the pronunciation of his name. She reacts: "We are from different worlds, Monsieur Younes [...] I am a Rucillio, or had you forgotten? You surely don't think I could marry an Arab! I'd rather die!" (104). Before discovering that he was not a European, she was the nicest person to him. She never felt any difference between them until that day. That was a turning point in Younes' life. He realizes that even though he is educated by the French, in a French school and raised by a French woman and a well-educated man, he is still perceived as Arab. Not to mention his handsome face and blue eyes that make him physically look like a European. Being racially constructed as Arab has defied the other attributes.

What Younes has felt is best described in his own words when he states:

As a child, such a glimpse into the adult world can scar you for life. I was shell-shocked; I felt as though I had woken from a nightmare. I would never again look at things the same way. There are things that, though to a child's eye they seem so trivial as to be

inconsequential, come back to haunt you; even when you close your eyes, you feel them drag you down; tenacious and cruel as the pangs of remorse. Isabelle had ripped me from my safe little world and tossed me into the gutter. (104)

As the passage shows, it is the moment Younes realizes that Arabs and Europeans are not the same. They are not equal; Arabs will always be inferior as long as Europeans continue to exist in that way.

Another encounter with Jelloul as an adult reminds Younes that he is still an Arab despite having no Arab friends. People in his circle are all Europeans. Jelloul works for Dede and is constantly treated in an inhumane manner. When Younes accompanies Jelloul to his house after being brutally beaten by Dede, Jelloul talks to him about the Arabs' place in their homeland. He says: "take a look at this hellhole. This is our place in this country, the country of our ancestors". When Younes is no longer capable of processing the miserable conditions they live in, he decides to leave. Subsequently, Jelloul shouts at him: "that's right *Younes*. Turn your back on the truth about your people and run back to your friends... *Younes*... I hope that you will still remember your name [...]" (emphasis original 189). The encounter with Jelloul shows Younes the degrading price attached to his Algerian identity.

On another occasion, it is Younes' European friends who talk. In the summertime, specifically during one hot afternoon that felt more like a heat wave, Younes and his non-Arab friends were at the beach. Dede kept sending Jelloul back to Rio Salado where they lived and the beach where they were to do minor chores. He sent him a total of four times, on foot, in that heatwave and kept insulting him. Here, José and Fabrice decide to step up for the poor Jelloul, saying that he does not have to treat him that way, to which he responds: "it's the only way to keep him awake, if you let him alone one second, you'll hear him snoring". José then argues how in such hot weather Jelloul will get sunstroke. Dede replies: "The Arabs are like octopi

[Poulpes]; you have to beat them into submission”. Then, he paid attention that his friend Jonas is Arab. So, he added, “Well... some Arabs” (145-6).

When Dede leaves, Fabrice approaches Younes to talk about what just happened telling him that he should have not let him talk about Arab that way: “what he said was unacceptable and I was waiting for you to put him in his place”, to which Younes replied: “He already is in his place, Fabrice. I don’t know mine” (146). This is a clear statement that he acknowledges the fact that he does not know where he belongs. His reply suggests that he is uncertain of his place in the colonial dynamic of European dominance and his unclear place among his peers. He admits that Dede knows his place very well; knowing that Dede is the European living in Algeria, and Younes is the Arab, Algerian living in Algeria. However, not having the feeling of belonging there, not knowing what he identifies as creates an in-between state. The identity crisis he is going through is clear. We can also interpret the act in which Fabrice expected his friend ‘Jonas’ to defend Jelloul as a sign of confusion for the Europeans too. His friends—Fabrice in this case—call him ‘Jones’ European name, being fully aware that he is not European. They treat him as one of them because of their friendship, yet then Fabrice was waiting for him to defend Jelloul because he is one of the Arabs Dede is talking about, and the one servant Dede keeps mal-treating is just as Younes in that sense. Hence, by the Europeans, Younes can be as close to them as he can but there will always be this knowledge deep inside them that, at the end of the day, he is not one of them.

The identity crisis that Younes experiences seems existential. Once alone, he questioned himself and attempted to find answers for unspoken, untold inner things. His state of grief is expressed as He says:

Who was I, in Rio? Jonas or Younes? Why, when my friends laughed heartily, my laugh lagged behind theirs? Why did I always feel like I had to carve out a space for myself among my friends, and feel like I was guilty of something whenever Jelloul’s eyes met

mine? Was I tolerated, integrated, subdued? What was stopping me from fully being *me*, to personify the world in which I evolved, to identify myself with that world while I turned my back on *my people*? A shadow. I was a shadow, indecisive and sensitive. (emphasis original 284)

We understand that Younes is in need of a title. He is assigned a label to know where he belongs: European or Algerian? If the latter is the case, is he a true Algerian because of his passive views regarding the war of independence? Does his loyalty to his friends make him a bad Algerian? Or does his state of being neutral and not picking sides affect his relationship with his European friends? These are all questions that constantly captivate Younes' consciousness.

When Younes' friend José is murdered, fingers point to Jelloul. In an attempt by Younes to try and speak on his behalf, José's father gives him a piece of advice: "[...] I have employed Arabs for generations, and I know what they are. They are all snakes... that viper [Jelloul] confessed. He was condemned [...] this is not a punch to the face, but real war. This country is shaking, this is no time to play both sides of fence [...]" (302). The most important part of what he said and the one that we are stressing here is 'this is no time to play both sides of fence', Younes needs to choose a side from the conflict. He cannot be both for the cause of his own country and at the same time with the Europeans' side. This marks the ambivalent time in which Younes has to reflect on his colonial identity.

Younes takes on his friend's father's advice and abstains from contributing to the war on either side. This means disengaging from the turmoil entirely and avoiding discomfort. However, throughout the novel and up until the end, Jelloul serves as the constant reminder of Younes' origins. He, again, appears in Younes' life, challenging him to face the reality of what the war means for his future and the Algerian people when he comes armed to his house, forcing him to aid their injured leader. He says: "everything is fine and dandy for you huh? The war doesn't concern you. You're still taking it easy while we're hitting a brick wall in the maquis

[resistance] when will you pick a side? You'll have to decide eventually..." (334). Younes tells him that he dislikes the war, to which Jelloul replies: "it's not about liking or disliking war. Our people are rising up. We are tired of suffering in silence. Of course, you with your butt between two chairs, you can maneuver at will. You can pick the side that benefits you". He continues, "The war claims hundreds of lives every day and doesn't affect you. I would shoot you like a dog if I wasn't indebted to you" (337). We can see that Jelloul feels uneasy about Younes refusing to participate in the war. He cannot respect Younes' 'Algerian-ness' and 'Arab-ness'.

In another instance, Jelloul again tries to convince Younes to join the war. He attempts to make him see what is happening in the country, to make him understand how his fate is linked to that of the rest of the Arabs, whether he acknowledges it or not, and that he must do something to help their cause:

You're nothing but a coward. What's happening in the villages bombarded with napalm, in the prisons where our heroes are guillotined, in the maquis where we scrape up our dead, in the camps where our militants are languishing, you don't see any of it. What kind of maniac are you, Jonas? Don't you understand that a whole population is fighting for your own redemption?... you're nothing but a coward, nothing but a coward. Whether you frown or gird your loins nothing changes. I wonder what's stopping me from slitting your throat... (343)

After what Jelloul said, Younes decides to answer: "I am not a coward, Jelloul. I am not deaf or blind, and I am not made of concrete. If you must know, nothing on this earth matters to me. Not even the gun that allows you to treat others with contempt. Was it not humiliation that compelled you to carry a weapon in the first place? Why then are you also demeaning others?" (343). This strong statement allows the author, through Younes, to criticize the resistance fighters. In other words, he means that not carrying a weapon is also an act of bravery. Younes

reserves the right not to fight because of his uncertainty of where he stands in this politically dangerous mess.

Fortunately, all the talk with Jelloul moves Younes. He decides to start assisting the resistance infirmary by providing them with medical supplies from his pharmacy. This was his peaceful and non-violent effort to help and participate in the war, siding with his country, Algeria.

At the end of the novel, the narrative foreshadows life after the war of independence. Younes is portrayed as a character that finally makes peace with his identity. He chooses to go with the name 'Younes' which suggests that he made peace with his 'Algerian-ness', and continued to live in Rio Salado despite the fact that all his friends were deported to France in 1962. He decides to stay in Algeria and go by his real name, and at the same, he keeps in contact with his European friends and constantly updates each other about what they are up to. He is finally comfortable with his own skin.

Bringing up the rear, Younes is but an example of how many Algerians have badly experienced the shades of ambivalence during the colonial era before achieving self-reconciliation. The denigrating process of colonialism has impacted Algerian people negatively. The quest for self-definition and to go beyond the captive fences of colonial identity has been a constant struggle for some Algerians who lived in contact zones with the *pieds-noirs*.

2. Reconciliation with the Past

The postcolonial novel is already established as one of the most important genres of literature. The novel under study provides a socio-historical account of a critical period in Algerian history. In addition, it explores the identity issue of the Algerian intellectuals in particular, which was a direct result of the assimilation policy adopted by the French in colonial Algeria.

Khadra shows us how myriad members of the so-called “Pieds-noirs” were forced to leave Algeria during the war of Independence. It was because of the sudden spread of violence against them. Les pieds-noirs’ community was unable to adapt easily to their new life in France. The brutal deprivation of Algeria severely affected them.

The blame fell upon authorities for the loss of Algeria as a colony. Expatriates stressed the fact that the Algerians had no other solution but war because they were oppressed unimaginably. They claimed if the authorities had just set the proper reform to give them rights and privileges, all this loss and war would not have happened (“Who Fought the Algerian War?” 57).

In the same token, Albert Memmi states: “now that colonization is reaching its end, tardy expressions of goof will be heard asking whether assimilation was not the great opportunity missed by colonizers and mother countries. ‘Ah, if we had only agreed on it! Can’t you imagine!’ they daydream. ‘A France with one hundred million Frenchmen?’ it is not forbidden to re-imagine history” (*The Colonizer and the Colonized* 169).

Les pieds-noirs were, as mentioned before, deeply affected by the war. When they had to move to France, they tried to preserve what they could from their “lost homeland”. One of these people was historian Benjamin Stora, who said that in the two decades that followed the war of independence, the “Pieds-noirs” in France attempted to hold a diasporic consciousness that had a nostalgic tone about the “lost homeland”. They used food and arts and made annual reunions with their friends who lived with them back in Algeria in order to preserve their souvenirs and identity. They struggled to bury their colonial past (“Women as Keepers of Algerian Pied-noirs Identity” 24).

This was even clear through the literature they produced called “*Nostalgie*”. This type of literature described the grief of their forced departure. They tried to recreate their memories during and after repatriation to preserve the images of their “pays perdu” (“The Wounds of

Algeria in Pied-noir Autobiography” 60). This traumatic separation from their homeland led them to create nostalgic literature. They were “caught in a circle of perpetual return to their lost homeland, they labor to bring the past into the present and to sustain their vision of their childhood home. They cannot let Algeria die, for their identity depends on it; yet Algeria no longer exists in the way they wish to remember” (61). Only a few could move on and start a new life with a renewable identity. The majority, however, found it elusive. They have not accepted their exile and kept on expressing their emotional attachment to Algeria, where they grew up, represented as victims of the war.

The well-known pied-noir writer Marie Cardinal best illustrates this through her writings. She points out: “Algeria is my true mother. I hold her in my heart as a child holding in his veins the blood of his parents” (“Outre-Mer\ Autre Mère: Cardinal and Algeria” 320). She expresses how time did not change her love for Algeria.

It is clearly demonstrated how the “Pieds-noirs” suffered from the forced exile. They suffered because of the war of independence. They even highlighted an ambivalent state of identification with Europe. Caught between nostalgia and attempting to move on and get used to the new life inflicted upon them has created a problematic sense of identity.

Khadra is not the first to show how the contact zone between colonize and the colonized has created sites of loss, suffering and agony for both. What is special about his novel is that he portrays this from an Algerian point of view. “Les Pieds-noirs” were mostly represented in their literature by as the “Nostalgie” suggests as much as the colonized were represented on their own, through their literature. *What the Day Owes the Night* is an attempt by Yasmina Khadra to reconcile with the past. That means generating new ways of approaching the past to revise Algerian cultural memory from a marginal perspective.

We have seen multiple times that the “Pieds-noirs” in the novel love Algeria for real. An example is how Dede refused to leave Algeria in 1962 when all Europeans were forced to

leave. He told Younes how it was his country and could not bear the thought of leaving. Another example is the old European man who grieved the loss of the country he was born in and lived his whole life, thinking he has nowhere to die because Algeria is his place. It is all he ever knows.

The two examples capture the state of mind that “Les Pieds-noirs” had when they had to leave. Khadra reveals this not to sympathize with the colonizer but to show us the pieces of the story that were not told. It is crucial for us to know the whole truth and not only a part of it. The part known to all Algerians is the one we have been taught about in school: the unjust occupation of Algeria by France. Perhaps it was also time to teach the younger generation about the unfair exodus of “Les pieds-noirs” from their homeland.

He wants us to get the message that we, as postcolonial readers, must accept all the truth and not just the part that works for us. Literature has always portrayed Algerians as being the only victims of colonialism. The new historical novel of Khadra acts as a reminder that it is time for us to accept the whole truth, that we, the Algerians, and “Pieds-noirs” are all victims of colonialism and the violence that was generated. The sooner we accept it, the faster we can reconcile with our past as readers. Acceptance is important because we can never move forward without it.

Conclusion

Algerian identity has experienced a crisis, ambivalence and (trans)formation. The colonial period and its aftermath have created sites of uncertainty and fear for postcolonial people scared, both Algerian and “Les pieds-noirs”. They were on a quest to define who they are and where they belonged. It is important to note that Khadra uses this novel to send a message that is not often addressed. It is that we, the postcolonial reader, have to make peace with the past in order to be able to make sense of the present. We have to accept everything that happened to Algeria, the Algerians and “Les pieds-noirs”. This demonstrates how fiction can

generate therapeutic energy via regenerating cultural memory. Accepting the past as it is at a collective as well as a personal level is beneficial for Algerian readers. It helps us to understand our history. Our past and history impact who we are today as persons. If we want to change from the person we were yesterday, we might as well begin with accepting this past that we cannot change.

General conclusion

It is universally acknowledged that the main objective of the colonizers was to expand and govern other lands in order to take resources and maintain domination over the colonized. The colonized, however, were denigrated and treated as enslaved people, even those who attempted to be on the colonizer's side and helped them rule. Hence, the colonized perceived the colonizer as destroyers of societies and opportunists.

In addition, we can see how the colonizer represented the colonized in the textuality of the colonial period. The binary representation depicted the colonized based on negative connotations and stereotypic construction, which denigrated colonial subjectivity. Thus, a state of inferiority was informed by these narratives.

Khadra has also stressed how the colonial Algeria map is divided based on a binary representation that associated the Pieds-noirs with power and civilization, whereas the Indigenous Algerians as lazy, inferior and immoral. In other words, the French colonizer thought that the Algerians were unworthy of their land because Algeria flourished due to the massive contribution of Europe, more precisely France. On the other hand, the Algerian Arabs were associated with stereotypes that ensured their pre-modern and hence civilizing character. The author portrays how the Europeans thought that time was money. They worked hard and made locals work even harder like slaves. They truly believed that they and the generations before worthed Algeria as their own property because it would have remained a desert without them. This captures the complex of superiority that the Pieds-noirs had over the local natives and their country. The civilizing mission gave them the right to own the land and exclude the Algerian natives from the state of privilege.

He also shows us how the Algerians disliked the presence of the Europeans in their country. They lived to see how they took control over their lands, pushing them to start a life from scratch after losing their lands. They never liked them—for the most part. He also reveals

how Algerians who were assimilated and integrated into French Algeria lived more at ease. They were usually the educated ones. Yet, they experienced a state of ambivalence regarding their identity once it was contested by the revolution.

Most importantly, Khadra pictures how the war of independence affected both the colonized and the colonizer. The colonial presence in Algeria lasted for decades. French settlers established houses and they felt they were at home with their families. Some of them grew to know only Algeria as their mother country. All their life, they thought Algeria was French because it was subordinated to France. This was how things were for an extended period. It had not occurred to them the possibility that Algeria would be Algerian until 1960.

It was frustrating and overwhelming for the Pieds-noires to realize that the place they were born and raised in was no longer theirs. Independence day was horrifying when they had to choose between exile and death. The exodus generated traumatic feelings of displacement. This traumatic memory has closely been tackled without any mode of escapism or avoidance. It highlights how important to redefine the cultural memory of Independent Algeria by rethinking the colonial past. The latter evokes sties of loss, displacement, trauma and regeneration.

History is not often portrayed from this perspective. Usually, postcolonial writers focus on the destructive impact of colonial rule upon their country as they create a narrative of victimhood. The other is the one to blame. Khadra, however, demonstrates another equally important aspect that we, as postcolonial readers, should see to form a whole image of what really happened at the time. Thus, Yasmina Khadra profoundly wants us to reconcile with our past by accepting the fact that war affected everybody, including “Les Pieds-noirs”.

To answer the research questions, the new historical novel—*What the Day owes the Night*—is considered a critical medium of cultural memory. One of its main objectives is to revise history, offering a fresh minor perspective on cultural memory. Also, it construes a

non-binary memory (us vs. them) in Algerian literature by connecting postcolonial reality and colonial memory. By doing so, it gives an authentic, realistic and unfiltered depiction of life as lived in Algeria, which was torn between the past and the present. So, cultural memory is revised to go beyond the narrative of victimhood that engenders pain, hatred and violence. In contrast, it offers compassion, harmony and understanding. This creates a positive sense of Algerian identity.

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