

Penetrating the Linguistic Obstacle in the Algerian Novel Written in French: Between the Obsession of Estrangement and the Fervor of Belonging

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Abstract

The Algerian novel written in French emerged as a result of the lifting of the ideological blockade experienced by the Algerian people under the French colonizers, as well as the continuation of socio-cultural and humanitarian pressures and violations during the "Black Decade". The Algerian novel written in French has faced blows and criticisms that almost undermined its identity since its inception within the colonial era. Doubts were raised about its authenticity because it resorted to the French language to achieve its aspirations and hopes of belonging in the homeland of identity, thereby providing avenues for global openness without being constrained by customs regulations. From the beginning, research has sought to refute the biased propaganda that attempted to alienate the Algerian novel written in French as part of a language isolation policy. Therefore, it was necessary for the research to initiate its course with a chronological overview of the origins of the Algerian novel written in French, followed by an examination of the dualities that the Algerian novel written in French posed between belonging and estrangement, without neglecting to define the significance of both terms. Additionally, the research aimed to present practical models of the Algerian novel written in French in order to provide the study with critical comfort within the context of objectivity. Thus, the research relies on a descriptive methodology based on analysis and inference mechanisms that enable an exploration of the direct correlation between the aspirations of the Algerian novel written in French and the concerns of the geographic region that encompasses Algerian sociocultural and anthropological references. The research also addresses several issues, including the following summarized questions: Is the Algerian novel written in French Algerian literature or French literature? Has the Algerian novel written in French been able to keep up with global literature and follow its path? The research has led to various closely related results, including: Despite attempts to alienate the Algerian novel written in French from the homeland of Algerian identity, this type of novel remains a valuable contribution to Algerian literature, regardless of the diversity of references and linguistic differences.

Keywords: *Algerian novel; French language, linguistic mandate; accountability alienation; affiliation Globalism*

1. INTRODUCTION

The French colonization attempted to erase Algerian identity from the moment it set foot in Algeria. It employed cursed plans and deceptive methods that seemingly aimed to civilize Algerian society and make it more open to global culture. The French colonizers isolated Algerians from their official language and speech, which was dear to them. This was achieved through a comprehensive policy of teaching the French language to non-speakers. However, this policy quickly backfired on France, as it attempted to teach Algerians swimming techniques in a dried-up pool. This is evident in the brilliance of Algerian writers who

graduated from the French school, such as Mohammed Dib, Mouloud Feraoun, and Mouloud Mammeri. They rang the bells of the French language and made it adaptable to express their visionary aspirations for a homeland inhabited by Algerian identity. They embodied this authentic belonging in their novels, which were born out of their adherence to Algerian customs and traditions, as well as their depiction of the pains and hopes of the Algerian people who suffered from cultural, racial, and religious violations.

The project of cultural assimilation, which France initiated by imposing the French language as the official language in Algeria, led to negative consequences for France itself. The French intellectuals failed to comprehend the semantic and symbolic content of Algerian novels written in French, especially those by Mohammed Dib. The French literary scene at that time considered them mysterious, condensed, coded, and enigmatic, and acknowledged the difficulty of deciphering them. Algerian intellectuals aimed to strike at the heart of France, as if they were responding with a broadside: Civilize me and let me speak my language in its natural environment, or else leave the matter to us! These loud expressions had a more profound impact on France than Germany's invasion of Paris in just fifteen days. Furthermore, this recent event had its benefits, as warriors often arm themselves with the enemy's weapons, regardless of their nature. The important thing is to triumph over discourse separation. This was praised by the writer Mouloud Feraoun in a statement: "During World War II, many things happened in which we Algerians participated. We felt both fear and joy. We realized that escaping from the dilemma was possible, and we emerged from that predicament through writing before we could do so in reality" (Jabour, 2013, p. 41)

Thus, Algerian novelists succeeded in refuting the hostile claims regarding linguistic belonging, emphasizing that language is free from ideological affiliation. It belongs to those who wield it, regardless of their identity or references. This is what Dr. Abdullah Rakibi triumphed in when he responded to those who claimed that the Algerian novel written in French is purely French literature. The Algerian literature written in French emerged due to specific circumstances and reasons during a certain period. Even if it is written in a foreign language, it expresses Algerian content and the national reality, making it a local and national literature. Moreover, the pioneers of Algerian novels written in French have stated in various instances that they were compelled to express themselves in the French language as a means to address the Algerian cause. Additionally, they responded to calls for global literature based on the interaction and exchange of artistic influence, albeit without genuine affection. Therefore, the research aims to establish the foundation that defines the characteristics of the Algerian novel written in French. This is done by following a flexible plan that begins with the Algerian novel written in French during the colonization and independence phases, then delving into the Algerian novel written in French between reality and aspiration, and ultimately reaching the research's focal point, where the duality of the Algerian novel written in French between authenticity and estrangement is examined. The research adopts a descriptive methodology based on analytical and inferential mechanisms that enable an exploration of the direct correlation between the aspirations of the Algerian novel written in French and the concerns of the geographic region characterized by Algerian sociocultural and anthropological references. The research also addresses several issues, including:

If the Algerian novel written in French was a seismic reaction that aimed to counter the colonial policy in its own language, why did the writing of the Algerian novel in French continue after independence?

Has the Algerian novel written in French been able to express the troubled Algerian reality in a foreign language?

Why did the Algerian novel resort to the French language? Does this imply that the Arabic language is inadequate in representing the requirements of the narrative art?

Is language a component of identity? What is gained from expressing Algerian issues in the French language?

Is the Algerian novel written in French Algerian or French literature?

Has the Algerian novel written in French been able to keep pace with global literature and follow its path?

Has the Algerian novel written in French found its place within the realm of global literature?

2. THE ALGERIAN NOVEL WRITTEN IN FRENCH: DURING THE PERIODS OF COLONIZATION AND INDEPENDENCE

When examining the problematic nature of the Algerian novel written in French, it is necessary to consider it within two distinct temporal stages: the colonial period and the independence period.

2.1. The Algerian novel written in French during the colonial era:

The Algerian novel written in French, like other literary genres, went through stages that revealed its transitional trajectory from weakness, disturbance, and instability to crystallization and maturity. Beginnings are often weak, and hence the study observes the course of the Algerian novel written in French focusing on the repercussions of the literary scene that opposed the dangerous path promoted by the French colonial authority. It aimed to refute the grim reality on the barren land. Therefore, initially, the Algerian novel written in French did not possess a coherent and harmonious artistic architecture. It primarily focused, as we mentioned, on seizing what was needed, namely, belonging in its allegorical sense.

Among the initial attempts that aimed to depict the treacherous hands that gnawed at Algerian elements, we can mention the efforts of Abd al-Qadir Hajj Hamou in his novel "Zahrat al-Mar'a" (The Flower of a Woman) published in 1925, as well as the novels "Ma'mun" (1925) and "Al-'AlajAsirBarbarusa" (The Prisoner of Barbarossa) (1929) by ChakibKhodja. Despite the simplicity of their artistic structure, they followed the path of naturalistic novels inspired by Emile Zola. These attempts were followed by others over relatively distant time periods, indicating that the literary output in French was not abundant due to the difficult conditions experienced by Algerian writers under colonization. Consequently, the artistic architecture of the Algerian novel, in general, became fragmented, intertwining with other literary genres such as short stories. A notable example is the novel "Idris" by Ali Hammami, written in 1942, which leans more towards the genre of short stories than novels. After the calamities of World War II, which resulted in the spread of revolutionary/liberation movements, the Algerian novel written in French assumed a different significance, especially with the beginning of the 1950s. It appeared more vibrant and mature both artistically and thematically. From an artistic perspective, it became more aware of the requirements of narrative art as understood in the West. Thematically, it can be affirmed that it maintained a clear connection to Algerian identity, which represented an inviolable red line and an immutable element that could not be compromised. Notable figures from this period include the writer MouloudFeraoun, author of

the novel "Le Fils du pauvre" (The Son of the Poor), published in 1952. The novel depicts various aspects related to the customs and traditions of the tribal society, as well as scenes filled with struggles for survival and liberation from colonial oppression.

In his novel "Al-Ardwa al-Dam" (The Earth and the Blood), Mouloud Feraoun takes us to a world that deeply affects the Algerians who have not yet healed from the wounds inflicted upon their barren land. They face another tragedy, namely, emigration to Europe in search of work to alleviate hunger. Amidst the bitterness of this estrangement, the migrants contemplate returning to their homeland. It is a different kind of return, not to reunite with loved ones, but to root themselves and reclaim their identity in their homeland. Aamer, who was destined to return to his homeland, feels estranged from his small village. The narrator states, "Thus, Aamer returns to his homeland with his young French wife after working for several years in France and experiencing various forms of deprivation common to expatriates in Europe. However, he cannot adapt to the life of his small village for long, as it appears different and wild to him. It takes him two years to become tribal once again" (Far'oun, 2014, p. 69).

It seems that the characters in Mouloud Feraoun's works are more open to the other, symbolized by Aamer's young French wife. She signifies intellectual fusion and harmony between Algerians and the French. Furthermore, the ability of the Algerian novel written in French to incorporate the other becomes evident in its local and global inclusivity. In addition to the literary accomplishments of the writer Malek Haddad, who despised writing in the language of the enemy but did so out of frustration for his own projects, we can mention his novels "Rasif al-Azhar la yujib" (The Flower Quay No Longer Responds) (1961), "Saahbuk Ghazala" (I Give You a Gazelle), and "Al-Shaqaa fi Khatr" (Misery in Danger).

While statistical measures fall short when counting Algerian novels written in French, we cannot overlook the novelist Mohammed Dib, who laid the groundwork for a progressive literary project that embodied the emerging and liberated Algerian identity." His well-known trilogy "La grandemaison" (The Big House) (1952-1954), "L'Incendie" (The Fire) (1954), and "Le métier à tisser" (The Weaving Trade) (1957) represents a technique of perspective that presents various images of people with different orientations. These images reveal the true nature of those who represent the exploited classes, while also featuring positive protagonists who struggle" (Mohamed Khadir, 1976, p. 146).

2.2. The Algerian novel written in French: Challenges of continuity after decolonization:

After the era of colonization, Algeria entered a new phase that was expected to be more fertile and dynamic, given the availability of raw material for reprocessing. However, what was observed in the literary scene after achieving independence can be described as a silence that seeks refuge, especially in the field of literature written in the French language. Our writers' relationship with the French language is still somewhat strange and mysterious, and what exacerbated the situation of the rejected and despised French language by the readership, who did not exceed a percentage of 8% of Algerians. Moreover, only half of this percentage are proficient in the French language.

The literary stagnation after gaining independence led to the withdrawal of a group of Algerian writers of novels written in French, including Malik Haddad, who urged "Algerian writers belonging to his generation (...) to relinquish their positions to Algerian writers who write in the Arabic language, and no creative work was published during the period of independence until his death in 1978" (Menour, 2015, p. 166/167). Similarly, writer Yasmina also felt the same sentiment, leading her to step aside from writing in the French language. As

for the writer Assia Djebar, she was also affected by the rejection towards the French language, stating: "It was my first exile linguistically, and that was since my childhood" (Menour, 2015, p. 170).

In the face of this pessimistic outlook, Mohammed Dib stands as a symbol of will and determination, drawing inspiration from artistic issues that have become a global obsession for readers. This is manifested in his inclination towards abstract and symbolic writing, "which gradually distances him from Algeria in terms of time, place, and characters. He reached the utmost level of estrangement in his recent works, such as the "Northern Trilogy," where the events unfold in the far north of Europe, specifically Finland. Thus, Mohammed Dib's literature has acquired a universal character that is not specific to a particular country and is not directed towards a specific reader but rather to an assumed general reader" (Menour, 2015, p. 164).

Mohammed Dib is considered a unique phenomenon or a turning point in the trajectory of the Algerian novel written in French. His achievements have ignited the fire of silence that loomed over the Algerian novel written in French after independence, allowing it to breathe with joy. This is evident in literary examples, including the novel "La répudiation" (The Divorce) -1969- by RachidBoudjedra, which denounces the unethical behavior of officials and reveals the dark footprints left by the revolution on the souls of the freedom fighters. The novel "Le Fleuve détourné" (The Diverted River), published in 1982 by the writer RachidMimouni, narrates events closely related to the Algerian revolution, as it seeks to retrieve the lost national memory entangled in the complexities of French colonialism, which led to the protagonist of the novel, M'siliha, losing his memory due to a bomb explosion. After fifteen years, fate allows the protagonist to regain his memory, and he begins to search for his past, his pregnant wife, and his son, Walid al-Istiqlal (Walid of Independence).

It is worth mentioning in this context that the Algerian novel written in French remained a haunted and hostile spirit, obsessed with conflict, resistance, rejection, and the consequences of French colonization. It is as if the woes of colonization acted as an alarm, ceaselessly charging Algerian writers with the spirit of revolution. Evidence of this can be seen in the Algerian novel written in French's engagement with the political events that Algeria witnessed from October 1988 until the crisis was resolved. Among these novels that accompanied the "black decade," stained with the blood of Algeria, is the novel "Tombéza" (Fallen) by the late writer RachidMimouni, published in 1989. The novel portrays a genuine image of the terrifying trinity that dug its claws into the hearts of the Algerian people in the midst of independence. This is evident through the suffering experienced by the protagonist after the death of his mother following her rape. The novel "Tombéza" overflows with symbolic intensity, personifying Algeria as a violated mother.

Yasmina Khadra represents a progressive step in the field of Algerian novels written in French, thanks to the abundance of her work, which represents a qualitative leap. Among her notable novels are "Double blanc" (Double White) published in 1998, "L'automne des chimères" (Autumn of Chimeras), "Agneaux Seigneur" (Lambs, Lord) -1998-, "A quoi rêvent les loups" (What Wolves Dream Of) -1999-, "L'écrivain" (The Writer) -2002-, and "Les hirondelles de Kaboul" (The Swallows of Kabul) -2002-. These novels have been translated into several languages, which has allowed the novelist Yasmina Khadra to enter the realm of international recognition without the need for customs formalities." The renowned novelist, Coetzee, a Nobel laureate, considered her one of the distinctive voices of our time. It can be said that YasminaKhadra achieved remarkable fame in the West before the East, and Europe recognized her before the Arab world" (Samehi, 2018, p. 24).

3. THE ALGERIAN NOVEL WRITTEN IN FRENCH: BETWEEN REALITY AND ASPIRATION

The researcher is well aware of the clear features of the Algerian novel written in French during the colonial era. It pulsated with the spirit of Algerian reality, evident from its titles such as "Ibn al-Faqir," "AyyamQabā'ilīyah" by MouloudFeraoun, "Dar Kabīrah" by Mohammed Dib, and "Najmah" by KatebYacine. It aimed to undermine the assimilationist projects that sought to erase Algerian identity. Therefore, its reliance on the French language was beyond the control of Algerian writers, as the French colonizers imposed their language as the official language and enforced French education policies. In such difficult circumstances, Algerian writers found themselves compelled to express themselves in French as they lacked alternatives. This is expressed by the writer Malek Haddad: "The difference between the native writers and the settlers is not political positions but rather nostalgia for the mother tongue... from which we were weaned and became its orphans without dispute" (Samehi, 2018, p. 160).

Hence, there is a significant difference between a writer who genuinely belongs to the French language in terms of spirit and vocabulary, and another writer who uses the French language or, more accurately, is deprived of it to embody their identity. However, they still feel estranged from it. This is clear evidence that Algerian writers did not pursue the French language itself for its own sake, but rather because they had no other choice. This distinction creates a gap that reflects the difference and uniqueness of their identities compared to their counterparts among sympathetic settler writers with the Algerian cause, even though they share the same language and goal. It would not be incorrect to say that "there is a vast difference between Gabriel Audisio and Jean Amrouche, between Roblès and Dib, between Jules Roy and KatebYacine, and Roger Quilliot and AitJafar, despite the fact that they all write in French" (Samehi, 2018, p. 159). Undoubtedly, the Algerian novel written in French bears the imprint of Algeria—a spirit that resides within Algeria. It emerged from difficult circumstances that almost annihilated the Algerian identity in terms of heritage, religion, ethnicity, and language. In an advanced stage, it defied the conventions of the French language and rewove its fabric according to the patterns of the Arabic language, such as the use of passive voice and delaying the subject, deviating from the norms of the French language. This created a sense of ambiguity for French readers when engaging with the Algerian novel written in French, as mentioned earlier. This once again confirms that the Algerian novel written in French is a distinct literary genre, extending beyond local geographic boundaries to engage in intellectual cross-pollination with global literature. This was facilitated by the intellectual and artistic references acquired by Algerian writers through their engagement with Western writers such as Victor Hugo and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. With this achievement, the Algerian novel written in French has undergone a qualitative leap by embodying its belonging to the Algerian environment and breaking free from the entanglements of identity. It has also managed to join the ranks of global literature, creating its own virtual audience that transcends language issues and ideological paths.

4. THE ALGERIAN NOVEL WRITTEN IN FRENCH: BETWEEN ROOTEDNESS AND ESTRANGEMENT

Before delving into the problematic of identity experienced by the Algerian novel written in French, it is necessary to define the terms of belonging and estrangement within the scope of this research:

4.1. Concept of Belonging:

Defining a comprehensive and universally accepted concept of belonging is challenging, as it is subject to ideological conflicts and diverse intellectual references. Political belonging differs from religious or linguistic belonging, and thus, belonging can be seen as an individual and cultural specificity that is open-ended. While it may signify mere membership in a specific community for one person, it represents interaction, cohesion, strength, and tranquility for another.

Belonging encompasses multiple intertwined meanings, which are shaped by different philosophical, religious, and social contexts. However, most meanings derived from belonging are interconnected. They converge into a general narrative that revolves around affiliation. For example, when we say someone is Arab, "it means they belong to the Arab community, they are part of it, and they affiliate with it. This implies that they possess a cultural and intellectual background derived from the history, culture, and distinctive characteristics of Arabs, shaped in a specific manner. One of the prerequisites for belonging is that the individual has an ethnic connection to the community and represents its members culturally and intellectually" (Mansour, 2014, p. 17/18). This concept reveals several frameworks that must be considered to accurately understand and pursue the essence of belonging. Firstly, belonging involves involuntary affiliation, as it can be an imposed identification with a particular community. Secondly, belonging is determined within the context of cultural and intellectual aspects, without necessarily referring to linguistic affiliations. For example, in Algeria, there is a linguistic duality (Arabic-Amazigh), but regardless of the language used, the literary output produced by Algerian writers belongs to the Algerian environment

And thus, belonging is practiced and manifested as "being a part of a community that can defend it against the unknown, whether this unknown is an opposing force, oppressive circumstances, or anything else. Belonging provides psychological stability and tranquility that eliminates anxiety or fear and gives the individual a sense of contentment. All of this helps direct their thinking forward and enables them to work harmoniously, committed to the principles of their community and its convictions. This, in turn, helps them become productive individuals" (Mansour, 2014, p. 19).

This concept guarantees the authentic belonging that defies anything that promotes the negative equation of belonging. The Algerian novel written in French faced a severe crisis amid difficulties in acknowledging its affiliation to a specific literature, Algerian/French, especially in the aftermath of writing in the French language after achieving independence. This further complicated the issues associated with this type of literature, which was previously bound by the dialectic of spirit and language under challenging colonial conditions. However, today, the issue has shifted from geographic disputes among independent states. Therefore, the research aims to trace this problem from its inception during the colonial era through the exploration of Algerian novels written in French to gain a clearer understanding.

It is well-known that the Algerian novel written in French did not emerge out of nothing and was not the product of a blank slate. Thus, it can be said that the Algerian novel written in French emerged as a response to several factors, including the encouragement of the national political movement to write in the French language. Ferhat Abbas was the first to initiate this discussion, and he emphasized the use of the term "the Algerian boy" in the literature of the national movement in the 1920s and 1930s as a symbol of the new generation of Algerian intellectuals who graduated from the French school. Abbas defended the principle of equality

in rights and duties between Algerians and Europeans in his various writings published in newspapers between 1922 and 1930. These writings were later collected and published in 1931 in a book titled "The Algerian Boy"... The book "The Algerian Boy" "embodied the foundation of the debate that preoccupied the novelists of this period and the main intellectual ideas they sought to embody through the art of the novel. Abbas began his book by defending the principle of equality in rights and duties between Algerians and Europeans" (Menour, 2015, p. 95).

The influence of Ferhat Abbas's writings had a significant impact on Algerian novelists, evident in Mohamed Dib's novel "Ibn al-Faqir," which focuses on justice and equality between Algerians and Europeans. If the novel "Ibn al-Faqir" generally falls within the demands of Ferhat Abbas's national political movement, Mohamed Dib's trilogy was more closely linked to the aspirations of the lower classes of Algerian society, which were threatened by the terrible trinity. Mohamed Dib managed to make the French language responsible for defending oppressed Algerians on their own land. The Mohamed Dib trilogy was also known for raising specific and "explicit questions about national identity, the concept of the nation, and the true identity of Algerians" (Menour, 2015, p. 102/103).

Therefore, the Algerian novel written in French stands as a resilient defender against the forces that attempted to uproot Algerian identity, whether in terms of race, language, or religion. It also focused on describing the suffering of the Algerian people based on a realistic view derived from the bitter Algerian reality. Some French critics even acknowledged that the Algerian novel written in French is an "Arabic novel translated into French" because it sincerely conveyed the pain of the Algerian people. It would be a mistake to undermine these literary achievements that brought the Algerian cause beyond local borders". (Baali, 2012, p. 26)

The Algerian novel written in French has provided novelists with a means to express their deep feelings towards issues that affect Algerian identity. It has become a distinctive Algerian national literature. Mohamed Dib declared, "Say that our literature is a national one that now appears in Morocco in general and in Algeria in particular" (AL - Araj, 1986, p. 71).

The national dimension is evident as a project that defends the homeland regardless of geographical or linguistic affiliation. Often, combatants benefit from the enemy's weapons, plans, and policies, after twisting them and turning them against themselves. This is what happened with the French language, which became the mouthpiece of Algerian writers. As the militant Mouloud Mammeri said, "We can fire bullets through the pen. This is the condition of the Algerian writer" (Adib Bamia, 1982, p. 137)

If the desired goal of the Algerian novel written in French during the colonial era was to cling to everything related to the nation (identity, religion, ethnicity, customs, traditions), its situation after independence is closely linked to its past. It continued to draw inspiration from themes related to the struggle of the Algerian people against the French colonizer. The spirit of the revolution still flows in the veins of the independence generation. This is also reflected in the Algerian novel written in French during the independence era, as it moved from writing with consciousness to consciousness of writing, which resulted in sophisticated language tests and the development of the architectural structure of the novel. Despite this evident artistic development, the Algerian novel written in French remained confined to a narrow vision since it emerged wherever human deprivation existed. Thus, critics did not hesitate to label it as a contingent novel born out of ideological conflict. This is evident in the Algerian novel written in French, which followed the course of the colonial era and accompanied the events of the

"black decade" from the October 1988 demonstrations until the end of the crisis, with a period of silence in between, except for a few examples. Novels in general reflect the events of the era resulting from the conflict of existence. Conflict and ideology, if we can use that expression, are the most important pillars of the novel due to the absence of an innocent novel. However, what distinguishes the Algerian novel written in French is its exaggeration in addressing the deteriorating reality and giving it a prominent position to the extent that its titles resonate with conflict. It is worth noting that this focus on reality is justified, and this is evident in the following novels:

- "L'honneur de la tribu" (The Honor of the Tribe) 1989, by Rachid Mimouni.
- "Ceinture de l'ogresse" (The Ogre's Belt) 1990, by Rachid Mimouni.
- "Ras Elmahna" (The Crisis) 1991, by Abdelrahmane Djellal.
- "Timimoun" 1991, by Rachid Boudjedra.
- "Malédiction" (Curse) 1993, by Rachid Mimouni.
- "A quoi rêvent les loups" (What Wolves Dream Of) 1999, by Yasmina Khadra.

The statistical analysis resulted in the Algerian novel written in French embracing local expressions starting from the titles, which are deliberate literal translations. This makes it more closely associated with Algerian elements and enhances Algerian identity.

Returning to the beginning, the Algerian novel written in French during the colonial era was not devoid of pure Algerian expressions. For example, Mohammed Dib in his novel "La Grande Maison" (The Big House) used purely Algerian expressions, such as "Deir El-Kheir Talqaha" (Deir El-Kheir found her naked). Malik Haddad followed the same approach in his novel "El-Taleb Wad-Daras" (The Student and the Lesson) by celebrating expressions from Algerian society that resonate with Algerian folklore, such as "Ad-Dameer El-Haani Makhda Mriha" (Haddad, 2009, p. 59), (The guilty conscience is a comfortable pillow), "Raqsat El-Valse" (Haddad, 2009, p. 67), (The Waltz Dance), "El-Li Fett Mat" (Haddad, 2009, p. 139) (What's gone is gone), and "Labasse" (No problem).

In addition to local expressions, the names of characters in the Algerian novel written in French are carefully selected, especially the protagonist and main characters, which are derived from Algerian and Islamic society. For example, Mohammed Dib in his trilogy "La Grande Maison," "Le Feu," and "Le Métier à tisser" used names that reflect the Algerian context, such as Mohammed Am El-Kheir, Hamid Serradj, Aïni, and so on. The same approach was followed by Mouloud Feraoun in his major characters, making them more closely connected to the Algerian civil registry, such as Amer, Rahma, Zahabiya, etc.

The Algerian novel written in French has received serious critical studies that considered breaking the linguistic barrier as a signal of the battle of the pen. Algerian novelists realized at an advanced stage that what distinguishes the writing instrument from written paper is the weight of writing and its spirit. As Yacine Kateb said, "He fights and does not ask himself whether the rifle he uses is French, German, or Czech; it is a rifle, his weapon, and it serves only his battle. The French language is only a tool to convey our ideas to intellectuals in science to attract free thinkers to support our cause, our Arab Algeria" (Sharaf, 1991, p. 157).

Yacine Kateb explicitly expressed his influence and influence between world literature filled with a sense of freedom and liberation, especially since the French colonizer did not

prevent the reading of such literary works written or translated into French, such as Mallarmé, Valérie, Virginia Woolf, Faulkner, Dos Passos, Steinbeck, and Hemingway.

Mouloud Feraoun reinforced what Malik Haddad called for regarding the use of the French language as a weapon to fight against the cultural and ideological invasion promoted by the French colonizer in various ways. In his speech, Mouloud Feraoun emphasized his use of the French language to escape from the dilemma of identity, saying, "I write in French and speak in French to tell the French that I am not French" (Menour, 2015, p. 162).

Mouloud Feraoun denied concerns about Algerian identity in a strikingly similar way to Jacques Derrida when he played with his identity: "I am Jewish, not Jewish, of course" (Waghlessi, 2008, p. 128), Jacques Derrida denied his affiliation in terms of his confirmation, knowing well that he writes in several languages, which will put his texts in the context of national accusations.

And in general, our writers were not passionate about French expression, whether during the colonial era or afterwards. What drove them to do so was the escalation of the Algerian issue beyond its borders. Defining the concerns of the Algerian reality to Algerians themselves is not fruitful, as they are more aware of their own situation. The French colonizer was not in need of highlighting the Algerian issue because it did not serve their ambitions in the region.

Despite the fact that the Algerian novel written in French revealed the forbidden practices endured by the Algerian people for nearly a century, and succeeded in conveying the deteriorated reality to a healthier space, it faced blows and criticisms that almost undermined its identity. This will be addressed in the remaining part of the research.

4.2. The Concept of Exile:

The term "exile" appears in both Arab and Western contexts with overlapping meanings that point to the same notion, which is distancing oneself from the homeland. Ibn Fares sees exile as "being far from home, which is called estrangement from the home. And from this perspective, the sunset is considered far from the face of the earth." (Ibn, 1971, p. 421) Exile is thus defined as displacement from the homeland, like estrangement and exile.

If we temporarily move away from the linguistic dictionaries and focus on rhetorical dictionaries, we find that exile has a slightly different connotation from what is commonly understood. This becomes evident from the fundamental dictionary of rhetoric, where exile is parallel to a distant exit. Al-Zamakhshari says, "And the blue color has an 'exile' eye, meaning it is far from the exit" (AL - Zamakhshari, 1998, p. 667)

Every study that delves into the concept of exile relies on various inputs and outputs. In addition to the connotation of distancing oneself from the homeland, the haven of identity, and the nostalgia attached to a past and present that repeats within the same temporal moment, we find the term "exile" (Aliénare) in the Western context weaving a meaning that implies "transferring ownership of something to another." (Hammad, 2005, p. 61), More dangerous than that is "seizure or removal," (Abdullah, 2004, p. 04) and this action is derived from another word, Alienus, which means belonging to or being attached to another person.

Such a perception requires serious questioning. How can exile, which contradicts assimilation and goes against ideal humanity, lead to belonging to another person? Shouldn't exile involve clinging to principles and identity instead of attaching oneself to another person and immersing oneself in their embrace?

Exile assumes a flexible and fluid connotation that allowed it to penetrate different semantic fields, despite its inherent unity. There is political exile, social exile, religious exile, linguistic exile, and so on. Exile is thus defined by its aftermath as an objective alternative to belonging. When a part is exiled from the whole, the self from the subject, and the individual from the community, a sense of being exiled from the dominance and loss remains, "which makes one feel the need for revolution and stepping out of the ordinary to regain that entity and personality" (Ahmed Mokhtar Abdul Hamid, 2008, p. 160).

Within this context, fraught with ideological pitfalls, we discern two opposing aspects of exile. The first is related to alienating the effective achievement and intentionally stripping it of its potentials, while the opposing aspect is associated with the spark and resilience that arises whenever attempts at alienation are made.

Therefore, we should understand exile as a subsequent separation burdened with interconnectedness and excessive belonging, while acknowledging the existence of a fierce struggle inherent to both poles of the dichotomy, the self and the other, whether within the model or outside the realm of belonging.

Returning to the beginning, Thomas Hobbes is considered one of the early philosophers who explored the field of exile but with a narrow perspective. He regarded it as a "malfunction that may affect human beings (...) due to a malfunction in the establishment of the social contract by humans, causing them to transition from the state of nature to the state of civil society" (Nabil bdul Hamid, 213, p. 111).

Beginnings are often weak because they directly rely on references and particularities that may be highly relative or somewhat incorrect. This is evident in Thomas's perception of exile. Is the transition from the state of nature to the state of civil society not a smooth and sound transition? Where is the flaw in that? Doesn't the state of nature necessitate the existence of a civil society?

Jean-Jacques Rousseau attempts to overcome the stumbling block encountered by Thomas, who overlooked the connection between exile and significant sacrifices "in the pursuit of noble and great objectives, such as establishing society or defending the homeland" (Zaki Najib, 1981, p. 173).

Hegel, on the other hand, formulated an ideal concept of exile, making it parallel to the other (the opposite) in order to seek its opposition and then contain it. According to Hegel, exile is "a necessary matter through which the spirit realizes itself by resolving in its other opposite. Although this departure causes pain and suffering, it allows the spirit to express its freedom by returning to itself" (Ibrahim AL- Fayoumi, 1988, p. 62).

Exile is therefore defined by the self's awareness of the motivating other, which leads to exile, and thus the response becomes reactions of the same kind as the stimulus.

In light of the above, the Algerian novel written in French has faced attempts at alienation, raising doubts about its authenticity. This is evident in the sense of linguistic estrangement felt by many Algerian writers while writing in the French language, which prompted them to state, "I felt first and foremost a linguistic exile" (Menour, 2015, p. 170).

This gloomy feeling also affected the writer Yasine, who always viewed the French language with disdain, considering it the cause of the rupture between him and his mother. He felt as if "the umbilical cord was severed again, choosing to end his novel *Le polyèdre étoilé*

with the statement: 'So, I lost my mother and her words at the same time, the two treasures that cannot be relinquished, yet they were taken from me' (Menour, 2015, p. 169).

Writer Malek Haddad was haunted by the feeling of estrangement, which led him to stop writing in French after the achievement of independence. Haddad's stance towards literature written in French was clear: he no longer considered it an authentic national literature, as is the case with literature written in the Arabic language. He goes even further by denying "the designation of this literature as Algerian literature written in French" and expressed this rejection in an interview with the Tunisian newspaper "La Presse" on January 6, 1927, giving it another name, turning it upside down to become "French literature with Algerian expression" (Menour, 2015, p. 163).

The writer Malik Haddad also admits that the one who pushed him to write in French was the colonizer himself, where he says: "Colonialism wanted that, colonialism wanted me to have this deficiency, I cannot express myself in my language." (Mohamed Khadir, 1976, p. 205).

Since the French colonialist stands behind writing in the French language, this means that the Algerian novel written in French is one of the manifestations of the colonial tide and an embodiment of its will, albeit in a relative way.

Moreover, some writers like Mawloud Pharaoh belittled Algerian traditions and customs in favor of being impressed by Western traditions. They acknowledged the policy of assimilation that affected Algerians' identity. "In this context, the novel "L'enfant de la rue" by Mawloud Pharaoh falls, where its author aligns with the writers of this period in their intellectual foundations, namely the belief in the principle of assimilation and coexistence with Europeans and locals. In the few references to Islam in the novel, Mawloud Pharaoh does not indicate any importance given to it as a fundamental element of Algerian identity" (Menour, 2015, p. 100).

There is another crucial factor we cannot overlook, which is the inability of the Algerian novel written in French to create its own audience during its long journey in the colonial and post-independence era, in comparison to the Algerian novel written in Arabic. This leads us to raise the following question: should we consider the novel written by Algerians in the French language as French literature until the French language becomes a national language in Algeria? To be more objective, we present the opinions of some Western critics regarding the identity dilemma that haunts the Algerian novel written in French. They view it as Algerian at one moment and French at another, or they present it within a dualistic vision. The critic Jean Dejeux believes that Moroccan literature written in a foreign language is still Moroccan literature without a doubt. "The Moroccan writer in the French language continues to represent Morocco today in its culture, transformations, and questions, despite the fact that his writings bear a foreign imprint" (Dejeux, 2001, p. 184).

Similarly, the critic Arnaud "expresses her viewpoint on this literature, considering that Maghrebi literature written in a foreign language, as they work in the same field we do, is closer to contemporary Arab writers like Taha Hussein, Tawfiq al-Hakim, and Tayeb Salih" (Arnaud, 1982, p. 606), Based on this, the researcher Arnaud aims to integrate Maghrebi literature within Arab literature to enhance its identity in harmony.

Away from the standard judgments of objective literary criticism, the Algerian novel written in French is a link in the history of Algerian literature, thanks to its raw material drawn from the Algerian environment. It also authentically portrayed the Algerian identity.

Researcher Mohamed Tammar praised it by emphasizing, "French literature is a sincere national literature that depicts the struggle of the colonized human" (Attamar, 2007, p. 383), It was able to convey its sufferings and concerns outside its homeland.

5. CONCLUSION

After the discussions and analysis, the research reached several closely related conclusions:

It can be unequivocally stated that the Algerian novel written in French, as much as it revolved around the troubled Algerian reality and healed the wounds of identity, also aspired to enter the global literary arena. This is evidenced by the following points:

- Since the Algerian novel written in French emerged as a reaction to the colonial policy aimed at erasing identity, beliefs, and religion, this is evidence of its belonging to the Algerian identity, regardless of its reliance on the French language, which made it more accessible internationally.
- Thus, the Algerian novel written in French becomes abundant with advantages as it excelled in expressing itself in the French language and aspired to a global cultural vision. Additionally, it drew attention to the Algerian people's experiences of siege and pressures in both pre-colonial and post-colonial stages.
- It is worth mentioning that the Algerian novel written in French has played a significant role in laying a fertile foundation for its counterpart written in Arabic, in terms of artistic, thematic, and promotional aspects.
- In terms of terminology, the Algerian novel written in French has managed to impose its terminological synthesis, which gained popularity compared to other terms such as French literature written in Arabic. Since terminology is the key that enables access to the literary genre it is based on, this confirms, on the other hand, the belonging of the Algerian novel written in French to Algerian literature as the starting point within the circle.

In conclusion, the Algerian novel written in French remains a valuable contribution to Algerian literature, despite varying opinions and different reference points.

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