

The Algerian Literature (Elite Novel / Folk Poetry) and the Post-Colonial Discourse: Witnessing to an Intellectual Liberation

Hemza BOUDERSA

Higher College for Teacher Training, Constantine, Algeria

Abstract

The shift of African literature from oral performances and traditions to written texts was a result of the colonial discourse. Therefore, African literature can be divided into a pre-colonial literature dominated mainly by folk poetry recited by the masses and post-colonial fiction adopted greatly by the elite. Written literature refreshes its themes with borrowed oral traditions drawn from people's lives and folk songs relevant to a history peppered by a story-telling traits, riddles, and proverbs. Accordingly, the following question is raised: in what ways does the Algerian novel provide a critical approach towards a 'genuine' intellectual decolonization? Using the history of the Algerian literature as a reference, it is noteworthy assuming the following hypothesis: the Algerian novel contributes to a far extent in the liberation of the Algerian mind. Through using a content analysis and research synthesis approaches, this study highlights whether the Algerian novel can contribute fully in the intellectual freedom of the Algerian elite. Initial findings of this paper showed that witnessing to a 'Différend' tackled by Jean-François Lyotard and referred to by Abd el Kader Aoudjit's book the Algerian Novel and the Colonial Discourse provides a new reading towards the matter. This analysis advocated before by Mouloud Feraoun and Kateb Yacine, who claimed for 'name, land and differentiation'. Thus, the pertinent recommendation drawn from this study is that 'being different' from the colonizer means a step forward to 'being intellectually liberated.'

Keywords: Algerian Literature, Elite Novel, Folk Poetry, Intellectual Liberation, Post-Colonial Discourse

Introduction

The post-colonial literature refers to 'indigenous literature after colonization had begun' instead of 'literature [of the post-independence period] after the end of colonization'. Indeed, the literary framework of the post-colonial thought deeply embraced by literate figures in colonial Africa and expressed mainly by French, English or Portuguese (languages of colonizers). This post-colonial thought has also been used further to include other pertinent fields such as sociology and politics. Other critics said that post-colonial literature stands for post-independence literature. In this paper; we consider both definitions with a particular focus on the second vision.

Decades after African countries' independence, the intellectual and literary debate over the positive and negative impacts of colonization is still hotly-controversial. In the case of Algeria, the Algerian novel got many French literary devices through the education imposed upon Algerians. Further, the colonial legacy left new concerns, themes and languages to the post-colonial literary scene. Indeed, post-colonial writing generated two main literary discourses : (A) The colonial discourse that accommodate to the European vision to Africa. This image explicitly portrayed in Alan Paton's (South African author and Anti-apartheid activist) books (accommodationist/assimilationist discourse). (B) The anti-colonial discourse that blends the historical novel and the protest novel including literary works of Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiong'O, Wole Soyinka (for Sub-Saharan Africa) and Kateb Yacine, Mouloud Feraoun and Mohammed Dib, El Tahar Ouattar, Rachid Boudjedra... (for Algeria). These two discourses revolve around three central approaches: the Eurocentric Approach, the Afro-centric Approach and the Afro-European Approach.

These approaches resulted from the French educational system in Algeria that sought to replace the koranic and the Algerian pre-colonial schools and impose their educational system. Consequently, this educational system transferred French values, beliefs and way of life to the Algerian, who faced great challenges in identifying their identities. Seeds of the colonizer's military and political 'force' and its cultural, ideological, literary and religious 'false' started to be transplanted. The colonial legacy left new underlying preoccupations revolved around new themes and languages resulted mainly from the French educational legacy.

The aim of the paper is to shed light on the role of the Algerian novel and folk poetry to decolonize the Algerian elite. The paper particularly explores the portrayal of the Algerian intellectual liberation via literature.

The Algerian Novel

The novel appears to be one of the most ambitious literary genres, mainly in terms of length, form and purpose. The novel is privileged also by its wide audience and its position in the literary scene. It is a long script narrating factious flow of events involving a number of characters in different time/place settings. The novel, through prose fiction, draws the audience's attention to a set of experiences mainly pertinent to a precise context.

The conventional novel comprises a set of eventful plots, including subplots illustrating aspects of human experience pertinent explicitly or implicitly to the author's preoccupation. Themes of the Algerian authors, accordingly, revolve around: the 1954 war of liberation, the colonial legacy, the nexus politics-history-literature-memory-audience and identity. In addition to these themes, the issues of language and audience are among the concerns of the Algerian novel.

The Algerian novel is a piece of literature that is symbolically representative of Algeria and its history, present and future. It helps people share their past, their present and anticipates people's 'unpredictable' future. It also represents a society which reveals a nexus between the

living people, those who are dead and the coming generations. Critics considered the Algerian novel's importance in its progressive search for the Algerian identity.

However, it is needless to refer to the identity of the Algerian/African novel or literature without referring to Chinweizu et al. dissertations tackled in his book, *Towards Decolonization of African Literature*. The latter discusses the issue of literary, national and language identity of the African Literature. Other Algerian writers like Tahar Ouattar, Rachid Boudjedra, Assia Djebar and Ahlem Mostaghanemi raised the same question.

For Chinweizu et al., many central issues should be raised in this respect. By what criteria should critics judge African literature? is one of these issues. Referring to this question, Chinweizu et al. aim initially at clarifying the identity of this literature. In a few words, Chinweizu et al. give the following definition:

It seems to us quite clear that works done for African audiences, by Africans, and in African languages, whether these works are oral or written, constitute the historically indisputable core of oral or written. Works done by Africans but in non-African languages, and works done by non-Africans in African languages, would be among those for which some legitimate doubt might be raised about their inclusion or exclusion from the canon of works of African literature, and it is for them that some decision procedure would have to be established. (Chinweizu et al., 1987, p.12)

Accordingly, three main concerns should be pinpointed regarding the African/ Algerian Novel. These preoccupations are themes, languages and the audience. In this part of this article, a light on the Algerian Folk/Elite Literatures with reference to the Post-colonial Discourse will be shed.

The Algerian novel is a portrayal of the Algerian individual and social experiences that indicate their concern with what their country has witnessed throughout History. Authors like Mouloud Mammeri, Mouloud Feraoun, Kateb Yacine and Mohammed Dib claimed for 'name, land and differentiation.' Abd el Kader Aoudjit's book *The Algerian Novel and the Colonial Discourse* provides a new reading of a new critical approach advocated by Jean-François Lyotard witnessing to a *Différend*. The latter reveals that Algerian realistic novels, attempt to depict the day-to-day lives of Algerian peasants, laborers and emigrants, revealed a different culture. The Algerian novel is a projector that shows explicitly the life of the Algerian individual as a colonized and decolonized person and his country's history. For instance, Kateb Yacine's *Nedjma* implies that the history of the 'colonized Algeria' can be explained more effectively by mythical and fictional snapshots than by reportage.

However, the study of the development of the Algerian novels from its first emergence should be referred to a study of the Algerian society, focusing on the linkage between the Algerian writers and the external events of his society (Aoudjit, 1987, pp.30-31). Therefore; the Algerian novel is among the prominent symbols that represent the Algerian individual's life throughout history.

The Algerian novel, like any other piece of literature, has many characteristics. Since the dominant languages in the Algerian literature are French and Arabic, the well-known Algerian novels were written in these two languages. Moreover, Algerian literature is well known of the big names of novelists who have not only marked the Algerian novel but also the universal literature. Algerian novels are characterized by giving the reader a great insight into the perceptions, cultures and different issues faced by the Algerians.

During the 19th century, the Algerian novel was particularly engaged with the circumstances of Algeria. This novel marked by works pertinent explicitly to the assertion of the

Algerian national identity. Therefore, Algerians learned the colonizer's language; the French and used it in the defense of their legal rights. Kateb Yacine, accordingly, said: "I speak French, I write in French just to tell the French that I am not French". He added: "French is war booty [for Algerians]"

By the 1920's, an Algerian cultural renaissance emerged. At this level, the first Algerian novels written in the French language appeared. The major well-known authors of the French expression in Algeria were Kateb Yacine, Mohammed Dib, Mouloud Feraoun and Mouloud Mammeri. They put Algerians in the center of the stage and showed their daily miserable life (Aoudjit, 2010, p.1). These novelists revealed Algerians' sadness and expressed their 'Audacity of Hope and their Dreams from their Ancestors.'

Moreover, the events and circumstances Algeria went through helped the novelists to produce. They knew about Algerians' customs and traditions so they transferred all this into writing about how the colonialist attempts to conceal the complexity of Algerian history and identity. Thus, it is worth noting the significance of the Algerian novel through shedding light on the events Algeria went through.

In fact, the Algerian novel shows 'relatively' a 'strong divide' between French and Arabic. As a literary device, the Algerian novel gives a great insight [despite division in terms of languages use] into the 'genuine' perspectives, perceptions, culture and challenges faced by Algerians.

The appearance of the Algerian novel in French is one of the explicit results of the deliberate colonizer policy of 'authoritarianism.' During the colonial period, the influence of the French language was great on the Algerian society since the colonizer's purpose was to proscribe the Arabic language in all government institutions. Therefore, the Algerian novel "... has been pre-eminent in Algerian francophone literature from the beginning" (Sellin, 1974, p.39). The Algerian novel in French currently holds a prominent position in the Algerian literary scene.

The Algerian novel in French was a unique and incongruous writings. It was considered so because it was "the marriage of those modalities characteristics of the French mind, on the one hand, and those of the Arab-Berber mind, on the other hand..." (Sellin, 1974, p.40). As a result, many authors use the French language to put across their opinions and their literary talent about the Algerian conflict and show clearly that. "The Algerian novel, the unique meld of the French language and 'l'âme Arabe' has expressed itself in dimensions of genius" (Aoudjit, 2010, p.4). Accordingly, many critics considered this marriage of binaries such as French style/body and Arab-Islamic soul/mind (sometimes the opposite) as a richness to the Algerian literature.

The major novelists and recognized novelists of this type are Kateb Yacine, Mohammed Dib, Mouloud Feraoun and Mouloud Mammeri. Their works are a mixture of the French education and the Algerian misery outcomes. They strongly believed that to be a bilingual "is an asset, rather than a handicap" (qtd.in Bensemmane, 2013, p. 1). Since their purpose of using the French language as 'war booty,' is to show their sense of accepting it.

Concerning the literature written in Arabic, it witnessed many circumstances. Since independence, the various Algerian governments have conducted an expressive 'Arabization.' This strong movement supposedly claimed to reject any remaining features of the French colonizer in Algeria (language, culture, religion) and foremost "to restore Algeria her full Arab personality."

Furthermore, 'Arabization' was enhanced. "Their policy-makers goal was to...reverse the impact of over one hundred and thirty years of enforced French language by reviving Arab-Islamic cultural values and establishing Arabic as the national language" (Rabai-Maamri, 2009,

para 6). As a result of this massive movement of ‘Arabization,’ many Algerian writers appeared making a great leap using Arabic language in their novels.

Many critics considered *Winds from the South* of Abdelhamid Benhadouga (published in 1970) as the first Algerian novel written in Arabic. It is “...considered to be the first maturely conceived and strikingly well composed an Algerian novel in Arabic” (Sakkut, 2000, p. 122). This novel was an initial step towards an Algerian novel written in Arabic with pertinent themes to the Algerian context (some other critics considered Réda Houhou and *l’ane d’el Hakim* (the Wise man’s Donkey) (1953) as the first Algerian novel written in Arabic). These critics considered Abdelhamid Benhadouga’s novel as a late literary work written in Arabic compared with other works in some other neighboring countries. According to Hamid Sakkut, “The reasons for this delayed start may be attributed to the status of the Arabic language and the Arabic heritage in Algeria even before the French occupation in 1830”(p.123). Reasons of this delay are explicitly revealed accordingly, mainly because of decadence the Arabs and their literature witnessed in the pre-1830 period. Arabic then as a language and its literature should be revived and glorified.

Tahar Ouattar joined Benhadouga in claiming the effectiveness of Arabic as a ‘literary device’ for the restoration of the Algerian ‘genuine’ heritage. Thus, “Their achievements have already won the position of distinction, and their contributions have significantly added to the stock of outstanding Arabic novels” (Sakkut, 2000, p.134). Indeed, it is worth noting that the Algerian novel written in Arabic contributed tremendously to the quality and the quantity of the collection of the Arabic novel in general. Later, many other writers joined the Arabophone block like Rachid Boudjedra and Amin el Zaoui [both used both languages Arabic and French in their writings].

Concerning the social role of the Algerian novel, it is safe to consider the Algerian novel as an active social player with a pivotal role in the Algerian’s lives and the Algerian society because they serve as a realistic mirror of reality. Its reflection on Algerians' life is clear. Algerian novels shed light on social, economic, cultural and political issues in Algeria before the revolution, during and after the independence as we mentioned above. Algerian novels inevitably emerged as a ‘therapeutic’ device to the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial miserable life of Algerians.

Before the Algerian revolution of 1954, Algerian novels got an explicit discourse mainly by discussing social issues such as homelessness, misery and poverty and described immigration, unemployment, injustice and oppression against Algerians. It also focused on the themes of resistance and struggle and reflected Algerians' lives.

During the revolution, some authors had an important role to play in the Algerian scene throughout their writings. They reordered and provided an intimate portrait of the living conditions of Algerians during colonialism. In addition to that, novels made it clearly apparent to the whole world, and especially to Algerians, that the only way to liberate Algeria is through armed revolution. They also depicted the horrors of the war and discussed their psychological and social consequences on people.

To my mind, Algerian novels had even a key role after the independence of the country. After one hundred and thirty years of colonial rule, novels expressed the problems of the post-colonial era. The novels served as a means to understand the difficulty of defining an independent Algerian. Therefore, the Algerian novel had ‘revealing’ and ‘therapeutic’ roles; the former sought ‘revealing’ atrocities of the colonizer and the other ‘curing’ the ills of the colonizer's legacy.

During the French colonialism in Algeria, many intellectuals started to write about the Algerian citizen's life as a survivor in his own homeland. Algerian authors tried to give a vivid evocation for their readers about the conflict between Algerian and French people and its nature "Algerian novels make clear that the conflict between the Algerians and the colonialism is the kind of deeper conflict..." not just a simple dissent among people of the same country (Aoudjit, 2010, p.4). Therefore, the Algerian novel was marked by the assertion of the Algerian national entity. Furthermore, the description of the Algerian culture was highlighted so as to convince the whole world that Algerians resisted vividly the French attempts to 'assimilate' them. Algerians, accordingly, were actively resisting the French plan by "showing" and "being" different from the colonizer. The phrase 'Witnessing to a Différend' used by Jean-François Lyotard to reveal the resistance of the Algerian to attempts of the colonizer to strip away the colonized voice. The author considered this violation as an explicit offence to the Algerian freedom. The injustice applied by the victimizer implicitly calls for Ibn Kheldoun's well-known expression that the 'vanquished is fond of the vanquisher.' Indeed, being "différend" refuted this position.

Algerian authors like Kateb Yacine, Mohammed Dib and Mouloud Feraoun were explicitly presenting the 'agony' of the Algerian individual under the French autocratic control through their writings. They also argued for "being different stands for being liberated." Aoudjit in the same book *Witnessing to a Différend* argued for the prominent role played by these writers to show the Algerian 'miserable' existence which was different from the French privileged life. Therefore, he refuted any critics that considered Mouloud Feraoun's novels as just 'tool of entertainment.'

According to Mohammed Saad, Jean Déjeux, French author, claimed that the Algerian writers had used the French language to state "who they are and where they would like to go," rather than "reporting the lessons learnt in French schools." (Saad, p.3). Tahar Djaout, an Algerian author, considered this literature as a device to claim for 'name, land and the right to difference.' The call for 'name, land and a differentiation' pushed Mostefa Lacheraf, Algerian ex-minister of education, to write in his book *L'avenir de la culture algérienne* (1963) the following: "Cette littérature, va refléter pour la première fois dans les Lettres françaises, une réalité algérienne qu'aucun écrivain, même Camus, n'avait eu le courage de traduire" (Saad, p.4)

After one hundred and thirty years of colonial rule and with literacy rates rising after independence, a new Algerian literature was born: the post-colonial literature. It expressed Algerians' euphoria of gaining independence, and at the same time, their attempts to restore their identity and existential entity entirely autonomous from that of the colonizer. Much of Algerian post-colonial literature seeks to assert the richness and validity of Algerian cultures in an effort to restore pride and traditions that were systematically degraded under colonialism.

Moreover, Post-colonial studies examine the ways in which education, language, and literature were used during the colonial period. Algerians, at that time, were learning the language, history, culture and literature of France. This enabled the colonizer to 'rule by consent' rather than 'force' or 'violence' even after its departure (Harrison, 2003, p. 1). Hence, post-colonial Algeria should work to draw the main features of its faded culture. Post-colonial novels started to raise consciousness among Algerians to 'purify' the 'Algerian education and its philosophies' from ideologies and beliefs of the ex-colonizer. These acquired beliefs should be stripped away from the Algerian mind towards an 'intellectual liberation' after 'land decolonization.'

Kateb Yacine, in this respect, was among those Algerian writers who argued for "being different" stands for "being liberated." In his novel, *le Polygone étoilé* (1966), he referred to the

misery of Algerian emigrants in France as 'being different,' implicitly he argued for "being liberated" resulted from "being different."

Assia Djebar's famous novel entitled *L'Amour;La Fantasia* (1985) demonstrates clearly the oppression that the Algerian women experienced during the colonial and post-colonial era and their insistence on their identification as Algerian, Muslim women. Therefore, the Algerian post-colonial novels had an important role in expressing Algerian women's dreams after the independence of their land.

Despite the impact measured by critics on the Algerian novel, it is also considered by some other critics as an autonomous literary entity separate from all other literatures. Its cultural, historical, ideological, philosophical frame is explicitly different from the European one. Indeed, these facts carry many true statements even for African literature written in European languages. Literary works of Mouloud Feraoun such as *Le Fils du Pauvre* (The Poor Man's Son) (1950) illustrates literally the Algerian/Kabyle village and the Algerian different identity from the French colonizer. Showing difference and being different according to Feraoun is a kind of resistance against the colonizer's culture.

The emergence of the Algerian novel and its role were the main discussed and hotly-debatable issues in this part of this study. The latter will shed light on the most eminent aspects which characterized it. Moreover, the Algerian novel's different types will also be explored: the Arabic and the French novel and their importance in the Algerian society. The following part will show accordingly the status of the Algerian folk poetry during the colonial and the post-colonial era.

The Algerian Folk Poetry

Concerning the historical background of folk poetry, as in Africa, there exists in the Arab world explicit oral traditions in folk and even classical poetry. Indeed, both forms have lost their prominence in people's eyes. Popular recitations turn scarce, and reciters known as 'rawi' or 'maddah' make rare performances and frequently considered unfashionable. Accordingly, new generations in Algeria show little concerns in the folk culture of the Arab-Islamic heritage. Anthropologists and ethnographers like Aida Bamia (Egyptian researcher), referring to Muhammed bin al-Tayyib Alili (Algerian oral poet and folklorist) (1894-1954), conducted researches in the second half of the twentieth century and revealed the existence of a few strongholds for such performances in the Arab world. Ties were established between folk poetry and Bedouin/nomadic societies. Thus, the closer a community is Bedouin and nomadic, the greater that society is attached to poetry recitation and orality (Bamia,2001).In turn, the urbanization of Arab societies in general and the Algerian society in particular has pushed the detachment of these societies from oral performances and reading traditions.

During their heyday, Arab professional reciters acted as 'morale boosters' in moments of national despair; they also played the role of captivators, evoking the glorious achievements and deeds of their heroes and historical icons. Furthermore, some other scholars thought folk poetry as a register of events and "an inexhaustible mine of events, studies of customs, teachings" (As qtd.in Bamia, 2001). Therefore, folk poetry was considered socially and culturally prominent mainly by considering it as a source of history and nostalgia, as a messenger and booster to revolutionary and ethical codes.

Historically speaking, traditional figures were celebrated with music in melodies. Historical icons such as Antar ibn Shaddad, Abu Zayd al-Hilali and Al-Zahir Baybars were celebrated with songs using musical instruments such as the 'nay' (flute) and the 'rabab' (spike-

fiddle). In turn, these melodies and oralities have lost much of their popularity. Modern media and new entertaining tools overwhelmed the traditional oral traditions.

Though the interest in folk poetry is about to be faded out, Arab and Islamic cultures remain relatively correlated to their folk culture. Indeed, poetry whether classical or folk are still used [more than prose] as a tool of seduction, subversion and entertainment. Folk poetry, therefore, considered “a means to persuade, to mediate, to praise” (Bamia, 2001, p. 15). Accordingly, these ties between Arab traditional societies, mainly Algeria and folk heritage afforded that heritage a central position as mediator, messenger, entertainer, ethics booster, and a means towards expressing national and cultural identity.

Moreover, folk poetry was considered as a reflection to people's psychology and revealed tight links to the Algerian human psyche. According to Carl Gustave Jung, Swiss essayist and psychologist, in his book entitled *Modern Man in Search of Soul*: The psychological mode deals with materials drawn from the realm of human consciousness –for instance, with lessons of life, with emotional shocks, the experience of passion and the crises of human destiny in general –all of which go to make up the conscious life of man and his feeling life in particular (p.179).

The poet, then, acts as a bridge via assimilating experiences of life through verbal translation towards revealing their significance leading the audience (the listener) to identify those words to better conduct behaviors through better managing feared or avoided emotions. This process was often met with nostalgia that emotional experience that springs from the present to the past and from action to memory. The yearning for the anti-colonial days and sentiments in post-independence Algeria is an instance of this kind of nostalgia. From a historical perspective, nostalgia is a search for identity, a way to identify and define the self when doubts arises, mainly in the face of the colonial efforts to erase people's past through alienating the genuine memory with a fake one. Moreover, the contribution of nostalgia to building the self is so efficient especially by promoting action-memory nexus and boosting the domain of personal dignity.

The antagonism between folklore and colonialism can explicitly be explained by the ability of the traditional culture to shed light on the difference between the dominating and the dominated, the colonizer and the colonized. Revealing this difference might greatly destruct the myth of ‘assimilation’ and obstructing efforts to meet it. For instance, during the Ottoman Empire, the revival of folk arts such as music and dance mainly in non-Muslim countries was banned as they were considered as a form of political opposition towards anti-Ottoman hegemony.

In colonial Algeria, France wanted to confirm the success of its policy of integration relying on its strategies to enhance ‘assimilation’ by showing manifestation endorsing integration of the masses. In fact, superficial integration might be apparent in some intellectuals' way of life, language or even dress, but anti-colonial sentiments were everywhere in Algeria. On another perspective, if one looks long and hard enough, he can find that the colonizer wanted to prevent the colonized from ways to portray their daring anti-colonial messages, including folk literature. ‘Witnessing to a Différend’ might even be revealed through folk poetry.

On the eve of the post-independence period, Algerians revived their folk heritage in an effort to consolidate their national identity. Glorifying the Algerian memory marked an inauguration of a new phase in post-colonial Algeria. “Moving from oral history to the written word” was the next step. Containing the “false” [falsification of history and culture] was the next step just after overcoming the “force” [imposed by the colonizer]. Some European scholars

showed how far the African oral traditions amended the fuzziness image about Africa and Africans provided by the white man.

Among the variety of subjects tackled by the Algerian folk heritage, a 'game' called 'buqala,' played mainly during the month of Ramadan and contributed greatly in preserving the Algerian 'difference' from the colonizer. This 'game' is exclusively limited to women. Buqala consists in the recitation of short poems in colloquial Arabic. Its significance can be illustrated in combining divination with entertainment, linking the closed world of women and the outside world. Some other subject matters are pertinent to love relationships at the 'Algerian mode.' In addition to that, the historical prominence of the 'buqala' should also be highlighted. Accordingly, post-colonial theories of history would be better served mainly because folk poetry is an authentic document that narrates the story of colonial rule from the perspective of the dominated. Therefore, due to folk poetry, the history of the hunt (Africa) will glorify lions (Africans) rather than the hunter (colonizer) of those lions as mentioned by Chinua Achebe, Nigerian writer.

Oral traditions, indeed, provide an inner knowledge and emotional motivation for a national movement. A historian might find in folk literature a genuine historical source and deeply-based roots of political, social or moral stand towards official historical documents and towards intellectual and historical freedom from the colonizer.

With the current inclination forward to writing a history based on a diverse bibliography and without merely on written documents (sometimes portraying the colonizer's vision to historical events), folk literature, considered as the voice of people, becomes a reliable source of information to most of the post-colonial historians.

In this respect, Eugène Daumas (1853), a French officer who became greatly interested in Algerian folk poetry and fascinated with the genre, explained that every event had occurred in the Algerian historical flow of events was portrayed in folk poems recited by the Algerian 'ordinary people.'

Furthermore, as cited in Bamia's book *The Graying of the Raven...*, ethnographic studies benefited a lot from folk poetry. For instance, Alili Muhammed bin al-Tayyib Alili was an Algerian folk poet who lived in the first half of the twentieth century under the French rule. Mohammed Hadj-Sadok, an Algerian researcher, preserved most of Alili's poems (Bamia, 2001, p.1).

Poems shed light on various aspects of the Algerian social stratification during the colonial era. The role of some religious groups mainly those individuals seeking knowledge on the path of Sufism (called marabouts), was also spotted. Some social and ethnic rivalries between ethnic groups in Algeria were also pinpointed.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, it is worth noting that the Algerian novel and its literary figures have played a pivotal role in 'witnessing to be different' as a step towards 'intellectual decolonization.' Despite the ideological and political splits which occurred between the Arabophones and the Francophones in literature, both are still considered active players towards 'witnessing to be different' after witnessing to show 'difference.' More studies in the arena of 'intellectual, literary and cultural liberation' in Algeria are still in need to be prolifically enhanced to 'cure' the 'deep wound' left by the colonizer.

About the Author:

BOUDERSA Hemza is a researcher Full-Time University Teacher of American, British and Afro-American/African studies at the Higher College for Teacher Training in Constantine since 2011. He is currently preparing for a Sc. Doctorate in African and Afro-American Studies at the University of Constantine. He participated and attended many national and international conferences (Algeria, Tunisia, France and the United States of America).

Endnotes

¹ Adopted from a book written by Abd el Kader Aoudjit entitled *The Algerian Novel and the Colonial Discourse* with reference to Jean François Lyotard.

¹ Différend means different in English

¹ In French «Le français c'est un butin de guerre »

¹ In French « Je parle le Français, j'ai écrit en Français pour dire au Français que je ne suis pas un Français ». Personal Translation.

¹ Adopted from titles of Barack Obama's bestselling books: *The Audacity of Hope* and *Dreams from my Father*

¹ In English: *the Future of the Algerian Culture* (1963): Personal Translation.

¹ In English: « This [Algerian] literature will show, for the first time, with French letters an Algerian reality that had not been revealed before; even [Albert]Camus could not have the courage to reveal it: Personal Translation.

References

- Amouzou, Akoete. (2007). "African Literature and Cultural Imperialism". *Revue de Cames-Nouvelle Série B*. vol008N°1-:1.
- Aoudjit, Abdelkader. (2010). *The Algerian Novel and Colonial Discourse. Witnessing to a Différend*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Bamia, Aida Adib. (2001). *The Graying of the Raven. Cultural and Sociopolitical Significance of the Algerian Folk Poetry*. Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press.
- Bensemmane, Mohamed. *The Individual and the Public in Algerian Literature*. University of Algiers2, Bouzareah.. 9/12/2013.
www.usthb.dz/IMG/pdf/bensemmane.pdf
- Bobo, Michael D. "Missional Implications of the Differend by J.F. Lyotard". October 11, 2012. October 25th, 2013
<<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/emergentvillage/2012/10/missional-implications-of-the-differend-by-j-f-lyotard-pt-1/>>
- Chinweizu et al. (1980). *Towards the Decolonization of African Literature*. Enugu, Fourth Dimension.
- Chinweizu et al (1987). *Towards the Decolonization of African Literature*. Lagos: Pero Publishers.
- Déjeux, Jean. (1975). *La Littérature Algérienne Contemporaine*. Paris: Presse Universitaire de France.

- Gustave Jung, Carl. (1955). *Modern Man in Search of Soul*. Harcourt Harvest fifth edition.
- Harrison, Nicolas. (2003). *Post-Colonial Criticism. History, Theory and Work of Fiction*. Cambridge: polity.
- Maamri, Rebai.M. (2009). "The syndrome of the French Language in Algeria". *International Journal of Arts and Sciences* 3.3: n.page. Web. 25 Oct. 2012.
- Memmi, Albert. (2004). *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Nebbou, Abdelkader. "The Colonial Discourse versus the Anti-Colonial Discourse in West African Postcolonial Literature." *Scholars World-IRMJCR*. Online: ISSN 2320-3145.I , (III), November 2013.
- Roscoe, Adrian. (1977). *Mother is Gold: A Study in West African Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Saad, Muhammed. *In Search of Identity: Algerian Literature during and after Occupation*. Westminister, England. January 2, 2014..
<http://www.westminster.ac.k/-data/assets/text-file/0003/247242/26saad.txt>
- Sakkut, Hamid. (2000). *Arabic Novel: Bibliography and critical introduction*. Qism al-nasir bi-l-jamia' Amrikiyya, 2000.
- Sellin, Eric. (1974). "The Algerian Novel of French Expression" .*The International Fiction Review*. Temple University.