

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF MOHAMED BOUDIAF – M'SILA
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



**Standing at the Crossroads in Colonial
Algeria: Identity De/Formation in Yasmina
Khadra's *What the Day Owes the Night***

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in Literature**

Candidates

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DEDICATION

In memory of Youcef SENOUCI.

DEDICATION

My special thanks go to the greatest man in my life, my dear *father*.

To the one who has been with me in every step of the way, my beloved *mother*.

To the dearest and adorable sisters, brothers, nieces and nephews for their love and support.

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Houria

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to the three charming *HAFSAs* in my life: my dearest mother for whom I show my endless gratitude, this work is as much mine as hers, to my eternal soul-mate, and to my sweetheart little niece. To the soul of my father whose memory is still very much alive and whose place in my heart will never be replaceable; may *The Almighty ALLAH* grant him a place in *Paradise* among His beloved ones.

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Khadija

ABSTRACT

This study aims to highlight and explore the impact of the French colonisation on the Algerian intellectuals in Yasmina Khadra's *What the Day Owes the Night* (2008). The selected novel provides a socio-historical account of a critical period in the Algerian history. Besides, it sheds light on the identity issues experienced by Algerian intellectuals which were a direct result to the assimilation policy adopted by the French administration in colonial Algeria. This research focuses on the traumatic consequences of being in margins and on borders of two clashing cultures: the native one and that of the coloniser, namely as an inevitable outcome of identity hybridisation. This endeavor, thus, investigates how those Algerian intellectuals developed a sense of alienation and confronted a chaotic psychological state of in-betweenness, particularly after the outbreak of the War for Independence. This study brings to the surface the troubled relationship between Algeria and France and seeks to explore the deep effects left by more than a century of exploitation of both the Algerian soul and soil. To this end, this dissertation is divided into two chapters; the first one provides a socio-historical examination of the era before and during which the events of the selected novel take place: the thirties, forties, and fifties of the twentieth century in colonial Algeria. This offers a better understanding of the issues tackled in the second chapter. This latter, in its turn, analyses the fragmented identity and its dimensions during French colonisation through the character of "Younes/Jonas." The protagonist, who is the representative of colonial Algerian elite, engages in an internal existential war for self-identification. Therefore, this chapter probes the depths of the hybrid identity and its deformations as portrayed by Khadra in his novel.

Key words: identity, hybridisation, self-identification.

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INTRODUCTION

“France and Algeria? We did not intertwine for 130 years without being profoundly implicated in our souls and bodies.”

Jacques Berque. Quoted in Daniel, Jean and Marx-Scouras, Danielle. “Dissident Algeria,” *Research in African Literatures*, Vol 30, No. 3 (Autumn, 1999), pp 15-17; p. 15.

Algeria had been suffering from French colonisation for more than a century. Its plight, though, intensified even more in the era before and during the War of Independence. The French government in Algeria had been adopting a policy that aimed at undermining the different aspects of Algerian identity, namely that of the national and cultural dimensions. The result of this policy was the division between Algerians themselves viewing the national cause from different angles. Radicals, reformists, and the educated Algerians or “the elite”, all of whom sought a satisfactory solution for the Algerian case.

However, the major group among the Algerians to be significantly affected by the French educational system was the intellectuals, those who had attended the French schools and, subsequently, whose language was French. They, as a result, found themselves in the midst of a vague identity situation wherein they failed to recognise their real allegiances. The best example of those is Ferhat Abbas, a prominent Algerian leader, who proclaimed “*if I had discovered the Algerian nation, I would be a nationalist ... but I would not die for an Algerian fatherland because such a fatherland does not exist.*”¹

Among the few authors who tackle the theme of Algerian identity is Yasmina Khadra, who stands in the vantage point and transmits a perfect image of the contradictions and internal conflicts faced by the French-Algerian intellectuals in search for identity. Khadra portrays the

¹ Quoted in Mangesh Kulkarni, “The Ambiguous Fate of a Pied-Noir: Albert Camus and Colonialism,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 32, No. 26 (Jun. - Jul. 1997), pp. 1528-1530; p. 1529.

fragmented identity and its dimensions during French colonisation through the character of “Younes/Jonas” in his well-known novel *What the Day Owes the Night* (2008).

Khadra, a former Algerian military officer, was born on January 10th, 1955 in kénadsa, Bechar southwestern Algeria. His 36 years military career began as he joined *l'École Nationale des Cadets de la Révolution* at the age of nine. The novelist, Mohamed Moulessehouli, writes behind a female name in order to avoid military censorship as well as to defend women rights and to pay homage to Algerian women who had long struggled to eradicate French colonialism and terrorism. It was until 2001 with the publication of *L'écrivain (The Writer)* that he revealed his real identity. As a descendant of an Algerian poets' family, Khadra inherited love for literature and tried to write poetry in Arabic when he was still a *Cadet in Kolea Middle School*. Later and thanks to his French teacher's motivation, Khadra succeeded to get higher grades in French language employing it as his composition language;² “because it was in this language that I was encouraged to write,”³ clarifies Khadra.

Therefore, in this dissertation we tackle the issue of identity in Khadra's novel. This topic evokes us due to the sensitivity and hostility of Franco-Algerian history, for this area of study remains unexplored especially in literary works. The significant value of exploring this domain lies in its complexity to fathom such a complicated concept (identity); and in fact as difficult as it is, Khadra succeeds in paving the way towards the world of Younes and offers us a ticket to travel through time in order to experience a critical epoch in the Algerian history.

² Brooke Durham, “An Analysis of the Self-Identification of Algerian Novelists Mouloud Feraoun and Yasmina Khadra and their French Education,” *McNair Summer Research Program* (2013), pp. 213-249; p. 234-235-236.

³ Trans. mine, “Parce que c'est dans cette langue que j'ai été encouragé à écrire.”Annick Duchatel, "Yasmina Khadra: Comprendre l'incompréhensible. " *Entre les Lignes* 23, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Printemps 2006), p. 15.

In his novel, Khadra sheds light on the specificity of Algerian intellectuals with French education. Younes/Jonas, the protagonist, is an excellent example of those who get saved from illiteracy just to fall prey to identity crisis as an inevitable result of their ambivalent feelings towards the French culture. Being an Algerian child raised in a family consisted of mixed Arabic-European adoptive parents, Younes gradually ceases to contact with his biological parents. He finds himself standing at the crossroads torn apart between his Algerian-ness and his newly acquired identity. Khadra displays the young man's dilemma through a number of meetings he has with his European friends as well as his own people. Still, this sense of ambivalence can be mutually exchanged between both sides: the coloniser and the colonised, as the relationship between the *Pieds-Noirs* and the Algerians was not that of the unrequited love. Hence, Khadra alludes to the possibility of successful assimilation by giving examples of some prosperous relationships in the story (Mahi and Germaine).

Thus, in this work, and with reference to the events and the characters' reactions to them in *What the Day Owes the Night*, we shall examine the situation of those native intellectuals living side by side with the *Pieds-Noirs*, who, nevertheless, were prone to the traumatic effects caused by French education. Focusing on the psychological struggle they waded for the sake of self-identification as well as on their inability to choose sides. Not to forget the complexities faced by them in order to reconcile between the binary aspects of their national identity. Furthermore, we shall observe the different relationships between the characters which raise the possibility of harmonising between the two sides and which can be considered as an evidence of a potentially successful assimilation. Last but not least, this paper strives to investigate the present *Pieds-Noirs* society, their anguish departure and the nostalgic sense of their colonial life, referred to as "*Nostalgie*" regarding their continuous desire to come back.

The study of the selected novel is achieved with the help of some literary theories and approaches which are **Psychoanalytical Criticism**, **Post-Colonial** approach, and **Existentialism**. The **Psychoanalytical Criticism** approach is applied as a frame of this study. We shall study the psychological effects of French education and culture on Algerian intellectuals. That is to say, the acquisition of the second identity which caused alienation from the original one, this in its turn led to the creation of identity crisis, that of the divided-self. Furthermore, we shall apply **Freud's** idea of the *Uncanny*, since this latter deals mainly with the strangeness of hybrid identities. Through the notion of the uncanny, this work explores identity split, examining perplexity caused by "*the estrangement of the familiar and the familiarisation of the strange.*"⁴ Besides to this, this paper uses **the Post-Colonial** theoretical framework as its approach to study the novel, for this theory is strongly tied to colonisation and the issues attached to it, namely the terms that were coined by **Homi Bhabha: Hybridity, Ambivalence, and Mimicry**. Bhabha claims that the colonised, and as a result of his relationship with the coloniser, feels a kind of ambivalence which leads him to "mimic" his coloniser, and subsequently, to bring him to the last phase of this process which is hybridisation.

Another aspect of **Bhabha's** notion of hybridity is *Unhomeliness*. The latter states that the hybrid colonised "*does not only have a dual personality but also feels the notion of having different roles in society.*"⁵ Since he grows up between two cultures, he lives on borders and in margins, thus, never feels at ease in either side.⁶ That is to say, the colonised internalises the coloniser's culture as a result of their attachment with one another. Nevertheless, this internalisation creates a kind of "uncanny feeling" to the colonised. This latter strives to

⁴ Nadia Krige, *Hybridity, the Uncanny and the Stranger: The Contemporary Transcultural Novel* (Master Thesis) (University of Stellenbosch, 2009), p. 4.

⁵ Nacer Abulwassie, *Unhomely Lives: Double Consciousness in Jamaica Kincaid's the autobiography of my Mother* (Södertörn University: Södertörns Högskola, 2014), p. 1.

⁶ Ibid.

reconcile between the two aspects of his hybrid identity but fails to find peace or feels at ease neither as a native nor as a European.

This paper uses the work of **Albert Memmi's** *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1974). Memmi suggests that the colonised elite “[was] saved from illiteracy only to fall into linguistic dualism.”⁷ Memmi argues that, unlike the ignorant colonised who is isolated from history, the literate colonised tears himself to get into an equal position with the coloniser to the point that he loses his true identity but ends up realising the impossibility of assimilation which worsens his situation.

One of the most important post-colonial theorists is **Frantz Fanon**, the Martinican author and psychiatrist. Fanon is among those who devoted their lives for helping the oppressed communities. In Fanon’s view, the native intellectual who is tempted to embrace the coloniser’s culture along with that of his own nation, “when he comes up against the need to take on two nationalities, chooses, if he wants to remain true to himself, the negation of one of these determinations.”⁸ Fanon argues that since the existence of colonisation correlates exploitation of the colonised, there is no chance for assimilation to take place.⁹ For him, then, violence is the inevitable choice for the colonised in order to get rid of the exploitation by the coloniser. Fanon observes that the lower class in the colonial countries, namely peasants, is “the first among the exploited to discover that only violence pays.”¹⁰ Therefore, the oppressed finds out that liberation requires “the use of all means, and that of force first and foremost.”¹¹

Amin Maalouf, a Lebanese thinker, is on the top of the list of those who thoroughly scrutinise the problems of identity in his book *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the*

⁷ Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (UK: Earthscan Publications Ltd, 2003), p. 150.

⁸ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), p. 218.

⁹ Brooke Durham, “What Society Refused You, Books Gave You”: *Self-Identification and French Education in the Written Works of Mouloud Feraoun, Yasmina Khadra, Mariama Bâ and Ken Bugul* (Baccalaureate Degrees Thesis) (Pennsylvania State University: Schreyer Honors College, Spring 2015), p. 7.

¹⁰ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 61.

¹¹ Ibid.

Need to Belong (2000). Maalouf defines identity, explaining how people tend to associate themselves through religious, national, or ethnic allegiances and emphasising the idea that these allegiances go hand in hand with identity. In addition to this, he indicates that identity can turn to be “*an instrument of war*”¹² if it is determined on the basis of a single affiliation.

Last but not least, Khadra’s novel yields to an **Existential** reading. The main concerns of existentialism are the search for one’s true self, besides to the freedom of choice and commitment to that choice. How human beings live in, interact with, and respond to the world. In this regard, **Jean-Paul Sartre** says that “*Man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world – and defines himself afterwards.*”¹³ Khadra’s story is full of existentially harsh experiences as the protagonist’s self is divided, fractured, and damaged. The alienated protagonist, who does not know where to belong, confronts identity crisis and finds himself obliged to choose sides between either his people or his adoptive mother “France” but he prefers to be passive. However one can argue that even his hesitation to take sides is indeed a choice.

As mentioned earlier, this paper is an attempt to pinpoint the historical frame that prevailed from 1830 till 1962 shedding light on the French policy of assimilation and Algerian reaction towards it. In addition to a critical study of Yasmina Khadra’s novel *What the Day Owes the Night*. Thus, to achieve the stated objectives, our research is divided into two chapters; the first of which explores the socio-historical background of French colonialism in Algeria, while the second chapter offers a critical study of khadra’s novel.

¹² Amin Maalouf, *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 32.

¹³ Quoted in Charlotte Keys, *Shakespeare’s Existentialism* (PhD Thesis) (University of London: Royal Holloway), p. 13.

CHAPTER ONE: SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Historical realities are always enigmatic and while appearing to be self-evident, are difficult to decipher; and there is perhaps none which presents these characteristics in a higher degree than the Algerian reality. That is why it represents an extraordinary challenge both for knowledge and for action.

Pierre Bourdieu. Quoted in Chauveau, Manon. *Algerian Colonial History in French Textbooks: At the Crossroad of Nationalism and Memory Clashes* (Master Thesis) (Eramus University Rotterdam, 2013), p. 4.

The history of colonisation asserts that culture has been used as an instrument for dominance and subjugation of the wretched people in the colonised countries. The French colonial policy, in this sense, is a lucid example for using some resonant cultural terms as a pretext to justify their existence, exploitation, and dominance over the Algerian people for more than a century of sufferings. To this end, The French successive administrations did their best in order to make their colonial presence permanent in Algeria. From the very beginning, though the surrender's treaty signed by the French invaders ensuring the *Dey* (Algerian ruler) to respect Algerians' property and religion,¹⁴ the French authorities in Algeria had made their minds to stifle all that was breathing the Algerian culture or that was expressing any kind of Algerian-ness. This policy had been an ongoing process that the Algerian people had to undergo throughout the thirteen decades of colonisation. Little by little, and mainly due to the effect of Francisation Policy of Algeria (1870-1896), the sense of Algerian identity started to extinguish among the Algerians themselves just to be replaced by a sense of alienation on the land of the ancestors.

Though this fact, there was no period during which all Algerian people had given up their legitimate right to defend their Algerian-ness or to refute the myth of the so called *mission*

¹⁴ Rabeya Khatun, "Analysis of the Causes of the Independent Movement of Algeria," *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, Volume 19, Issue 6, Ver. V (Jun. 2014), pp. 79-95; p. 80.

*civilisatrice*¹⁵ by all means they had, be it military, political, or educational. To put it clear, there had always stood some genuine men and women in the face of the French acculturation and the French existence as an exotic entity rooted in the Algerian soil.

Thus, in this chapter, the study is going to be focused on the strategies executed and the policies adopted by the French government in Algeria during the last half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. Paying a significant attention to the results of these policies on the Algerian people as well as to their desperate struggle in order not only to get rid of oppression and exploitation, but to stand up for their invincible faith as being nothing other than Algerians as well.

1. French Colonial Policy in Algeria

As aforementioned above, the French government resorted to different procedures by which it fulfilled its political agenda and consolidated its colonial presence in Algeria. These procedures fluctuated between the use of violence and temptations to enforce the French allegiance among Algerians. In this regard, “*the Muslim majority were treated as subjects and were not able to obtain French citizenship unless they gave up their religion and culture,*”¹⁶ while the Jewish minority in Algeria enjoyed the French citizenship by issuing the *Cremieux Decree* in 1870.¹⁷

On the other hand, the mission of the Francisation was carried out by opening the French schools for some Algerians “the elite,” while at the same time prohibiting the traditional Algerian ways of acquiring knowledge. Indeed, the French authorities used brutal methods for the sake of repressing the colonised’s identity, to mention few, they destructed mosques and

¹⁵ Mission Civilisatrice: The principle that it was Europe’s duty to bring civilisation to “backward” people.

¹⁶ Katie, Mario, and Ruth, “The Algerian Story,” *Pre-Revolution Algeria: French Algeria 1830-1962*.
<http://sites.google.com/a/oxy.edu/the-algerian-story/pre-revolution-algeria/french-algeria>, Accessed on: 29.01.2018

¹⁷ Ibid.

replaced them with churches; closed the *zawiyah* where religious matters were taught; and prohibited teaching Arabic language. In fact, all this cruelty shows to what extent the French government had been afraid of the Algerian culture's threat to their colonial presence.

1.1. The Myth of Enlightenment: Colonising the Minds through Education

Colonisation brought to this country three things to extinguish three things: it brought the Latin people to overflow the Arabs, it brought the French language to terminate Arabic and it brought Christianity to abrogate Islam.

Al-Bashir Al-Ibrahimi. Quoted in Abdulrazak, Fawzi. "Arabization in Algeria." *MELA Notes*, No. 26 (spring, 1982), pp. 22-43; p. 25.

Throughout history, Algeria had sheltered successive civilisations and cultures; this explains the cultural and linguistic complexity of the Algerian society that is composed of "Berbers" or "Amazigh" who are considered as the native population, together with Arabs who came as "conquerors" carrying the universal message of Islam. In point of fact, the encounter between *Amazigh* and Arabs led to a religio-cultural fusion which was even reinforced later with the partial linguistic Arabisation. Islam was, then, the major factor in uniting those people and creating social stability and flexibility. This society was declared to be primitive by the French "[who] sought to justify [their] own country's colonisation by wrongly depicting the flexibility of the population as an impotence."¹⁸

As a matter of fact, the success of the French Revolution led to the emergence of a new ideology that celebrated the French "*drapeau civilisateur*" (the civilising flag) and its "*haute mission civilisatrice*,"¹⁹ (High civilising mission). This new colonial discourse was based on the idea that Christian Europe was superior to the rest of the backward, non-Western world

¹⁸ Hassane Sohbi, "Tocqueville and Colonialism in Algeria," *Review of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (Summer 2011), pp. 50-52; p. 51.

¹⁹ John Pike, "The Mission Civilisatrice (1890-1945)," *Global Security.Org* (15-08-2017). <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/fr-colony-52.htm>, Accessed on: 29.01.2018

that is Africa. Algeria was then directly annexed as a French territory; accordingly, the new colony was denied any claim to an independent identity. If truth be told, the French colonial discourse was a rich source from which the French *mission civilisatrice*'s supporters borrowed some terms in order to justify their settlement on the Algerian land. Therefore, “[the] term “indigene” in French colonial discourse refers to inferiority, un-europeanity, un-modernity, savagery, and un-civilization... [It is] used from within Latin American groups, oftentimes by these same groups and their supporters, to claim land, language, and culture.”²⁰ It was particularly on that pretext that France justified its conquest to Algeria, stating that the Arabs and Berbers in that spot of land were uncivilised. In French Algeria, the Berber is often referred to as a primitive and the Arab and Muslim as nomadic and fanatic respectively.²¹ Hence the noble mission of the civilised French people, allegedly, was to enlighten them through offering their civilisation as a substitute to the primitive traditions that caused the native Algerians to remain retard people. As a result, “[much] of [the natives'] traditional and religious education was eliminated and replaced by Christian French education.”²² In this vision, Islam was seen as the major destructive element keeping those people in darkness. The French colonisers' focus was not solely on political or economic domination, but rather, it was an acculturation system that strove for the creation of *l'Algérie Française* (the French Algeria), through the imposition and infusion of the metropolitan language, culture, and history in the minds of the new Franco-Algerian subjects. Simultaneously, the French cultural policies aimed to marginalise and eradicate the popular culture.

²⁰ Abdelmajid Hannoum, “Writing Algeria: On the History and Culture of Colonialism,” *the Maghreb Center Journal*, Issue 1 (Spring/Summer 2010), pp. 1-19; p. 4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²² Katie, Mario, and Ruth, “The Algerian Story,” *Pre-Revolution Algeria: French Algeria 1830-1962*. <http://sites.google.com/a/oxy.edu/the-algerian-story/pre-revolution-algeria/french-algeria>, Accessed on: 29.01.2018

In order to see the impact brought by the new colonial system, one shall review the pre-colonial education at first. Prior to 1830's, the local educational system was fully free and funded by donations of *Awqaf*²³ and was mainly based on *Qur'anic Schools 'al-Kuttab'*, *Zawiyah*, and *Madrasah* which served not only to teach Arabic language basics and Qur'anic teachings to children, but at times adapted to the scientific developments by offering instruction in Islamic law (*fiqh*), mathematics, medicine, and astronomy.²⁴ Immediately after the French occupation, these schools emerged as a reaction to the policy of obscurantism and Christianisation practiced by the French.²⁵ Despite the fact that only primary and secondary levels were available, literacy rates in Ottoman Algeria were even higher than that in France. Metropolitan reports showed that in 1830 the literacy rate in Algeria reached 40 percent,²⁶ and Constantine alone had 35 mosques, seven secondary schools, and about 1,350 pupils in primary school.²⁷ Yet, The Algerian educational system and culture were regarded as deficient and inadequate to the modern standards, education was thus used by the French government as an instrument of mastery by dint of the set of policies imposed on the native subjects. Malika Rahal declares,

The number of indigenous schools was cut by half. In 1914, only one indigenous child out of 20 had access to French education, and by the end of the colonial period, French universities were producing only a few dozen graduates from the colonized population annually, most of whom were illiterate in Arabic. Classical Arabic language was in fact one of the first victims of colonization: under colonial rule, there was no equivalent to the universities of the Qarawiyyin in Fes (Morocco) or the Zaytuna in Tunis. The establishment of schools with Arabic as a language of instruction was subject to various

²³ Fawzi Abdulrazak, "Arabization in Algeria," *MELA Notes*, No. 26 (Spring 1982), pp. 22-43; p. 23.

²⁴ Durham, "An Analysis of the Self-Identification of Algerian Novelists," p. 219.

²⁵ Tarek Ladjal and Benaouda Bensaid, "A Cultural Analysis of Ottoman Algeria (1516-1830): The North-South Mediterranean Progress Gap," *ResearchGate* (November 2017), pp. 567-585; p. 572.

²⁶ Helen Chapan Metz, "Algeria a Country Study," *U.S. Library of Congress* (1994).

<http://countrystudies.us/algeria/>, Accessed on: 06.02.2018

²⁷ Abdulrazak, "Arabization in Algeria," p. 24.

types of bureaucratic hurdles and permissions that, de facto, made it impossible.²⁸

Furthermore, the French practiced a cultural policy of assimilation and francisation, destroyed the traditional educational system of *Awqaf*, and replaced it by an acculturation programme that aimed to obliterate Arabic and Berber languages through the bicultural schools known as “*Écoles Arabes-Françaises*,” (French-Arabic Schools). These schools worked to create cultural bridges and mediators to spread the French culture, foster Algerian’s loyalty, and facilitate contact between the French administration and their subjects.²⁹

The French hostility towards Islam and Algerian culture as a whole is seen in the financial and administrative restrictions as well as the destruction and closing of cultural and educational centers. As far as language is concerned, France held a belief in maintaining linguistic-nationalism in France as in its colony; ergo, Arabic was officially declared a foreign language and replaced by French which was set as the official language.³⁰ This act meant not only switch in national language but rather it was the starting point of a total eradication of the national identity; as for this matter, the prominent Algerian writer Kateb Yacine states,

The colonialists wanted to destroy our nationalism by attempting to destroy our language. They closed schools which taught Arabic, persecuted teachers of Arabic and burnt down Arabic libraries. Thus, whoever wanted an education had to attend French schools, so much so that intellectuals cannot express themselves in Arabic.³¹

Additionally, by 1883, the French colonial government imposed the same educational system that existed in metropolitan France in Algeria.³² This policy of suffocation was supported by the different decrees that were passed by the French government; all targeted at

²⁸ Malika Rahal, “Algeria: Nonviolent Resistance against French Colonialism, 1830s-1850s,” *Maciej J. Bartkowski. Rienner*, <hal-01316088> (2013), pp. 107-223; p. 6.

²⁹ Durham, “An Analysis of the Self-Identification of Algerian Novelists,” p. 220.

³⁰ Abdulrazak, “Arabization in Algeria,” p. 25.

³¹ Carina Lynn Briggs, *Language, Identity, and Literary Expression in Algeria* (Master Thesis) (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2010), p. 15.

³² Durham, “An Analysis of the Self-Identification of Algerian Novelists,” p. 219.

demolishing the Algerian educational system and thus create an ignorant generation of Algerians to facilitate the domination. In other words, “*the French adopted a policy of depriving the Algerian children of schooling in both systems of education, – traditional and modern – in order to leave them in an unreflective situation and not to revolt against the French presence in Algeria.*”³³ Furthermore, assimilation was supported by the Ferry educational reforms of 1880’s that aimed to maintain a primary school open to all children in both European and mixed towns; yet, these reforms were faced by settlers’ disapproval,³⁴ which have decelerated assimilation and it was not until 1917, when French policymakers passed a decree by which primary education was made compulsory for boys, this initiative aimed solely to gain Algerians’ support and avoid any attempts of violent reactions against French existence. Again, this decree failed to meet its target due to the lack of schools and trained teachers.³⁵

In addition, the French educational system though claimed to be secular but it was based on religion as an agent of education, French authorities saw the new colony as the best chance for their Christian missionaries. In this respect, General Comte De Bourmont commented, “*you have brought back with you the opening gate for Christianity in Africa.*”³⁶ In 1867 Lavigerie, the archbishop of Algiers, sent 1.753 Muslim orphans to charitable institutions so that he could convert them;³⁷ yet, his act was destined to failure as the majority of Algerians resisted any attempts of christianisation. Moreover, French administrators persuaded Algerian

³³ Ahmed Djabri, *Language in Algeria: The Continuing Problem* (M. Ed. Dissertation) (University of Wales: August, 1981), p. 42.

³⁴ E. P. Fitzgerald, “Native Schoolteachers as a Mediating Elite in Colonial Algeria: the “Association des Instituteur d’origine Indigène” and “La Voix des Humbles” During the 1920’s,” *Proceedings of the Meeting of the French Colonial Society*, Vol. 2 (1977), pp. 155-168; p. 157.

³⁵ Durham, “An Analysis of the Self-Identification of Algerian Novelists,” p. 219.

³⁶ Tarek Ladjal and Benaouda Bensaid, “The French Colonial Occupation and the Algerian National Identity: Alienation or Assimilation?” *ResearchGate, International Journal of Arab Culture Management and Sustainable Development* (July 2014), pp. 1-11; p. 3.

³⁷ Sanderson Beck, “Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco 1700-1950,” *Mideast & Africa 1700-1950* (2010). www.san.beck.org/16-8-algeria,tunisia,Morocco.html, Accessed on: 13.03.2018

religious men, profiting from their passive religious understanding to disseminate French policies and ideas to their subjects.³⁸ In this matter, a French official declared,

Though we cannot immediately destroy the mosques or abolish the Muslims' personal legal status, nor use violence to force those 4 million subjects to speak French, and though we are obliged to let them have their priests, judges and scientists, we can act upon those *spiritual leaders* so as to modify Moslem society little by little, and in time, lead it to adopt our language, our laws, our customs and also our religious and philosophical eclecticism.³⁹

Most Algerians resisted any kind of assimilation and even French education and preferred to send their children to the remaining mosques, discouraging their children to attend French schools since "*[these] families considered unacceptable to entrust their children's education to non-Muslim and non-Arabic speaking schools. In other words, the colonialists' attempts to seize and transform the minds and bodies of the colonized population were faced with a persistent form of mute resistance that the French found extremely difficult to overcome.*"⁴⁰

Despite the fact that the Algerian mind was not a tabula rasa on which the French pen could write whatsoever it likes, education was used by the French administration as a tool to shape the character of the future citizen who would be able to implement the fundamental values absorbed in French schools so as to take action in society. As mentioned earlier, most Algerians resisted any kind of a French acculturation or assimilation which resulted in increasing illiteracy among the great bulk of the population. Apart from the slow progress of such schools, these schools managed to introduce Western civilisation to some of its young subjects and, in the wake of the First World War, French schools came into demand by Algerians themselves; mainly by those who have been to France either as soldiers or workers, who now strove for equality of citizenship with the settlers at least in terms of education

³⁸ Ladjal and Bensaid, "The French Colonial Occupation and the Algerian National Identity," p. 7.

³⁹ Quoted in Fanny Colonna, "Training the National Elites in Colonial Algeria 1920-1954," *Historical Social Research*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (2008), pp. 285-295; p. 289.

⁴⁰ Rahal, "Algeria: Nonviolent Resistance against French Colonialism, 1830s-1850s," p. 117.

opportunities.⁴¹ Consequently, the number of Algerians attending French schools reached 18% of students' total number.⁴² Reports show that “[during] 1920’s almost one out of every three primary schools was specifically designated for native education (27.4% in 1920-21; 30.5% in 1929-30) if the ‘cours- annexes’ are added we can say that no less than 53.5% of all primary schools were open to Muslim children in 1920-21.”⁴³ In this view, the policy of Francisation is one of the most serious policies as it de-structured the Algerian national identity through the mixed schools that were initially created to pave the way for a peaceful fusion of the two sides. Eventually, these imperial colleges generated the first Francophone Algerian, bilingual elite known as the *évolués*, most of whom were illiterate in classical Arabic and were formed between 1880 and 1940.⁴⁴

Being aware of the fact that schools were more effective way to control and calm the natives than using military regiment, French administrators instilled their political ideas and slogans to this generation through the educational system; which is clearly evident in the intimacy between French authorities and those *évolués*. Indeed some members of the elite held high positions in the metropolitan administration and some were even officers in the French army;⁴⁵ while others were administrators, translators, clerks in health, bilingual teachers and they were trained chiefly in French to act as cross-cultural bridges between indigenous population and French administration. In actual fact, bilingual teachers’ task was to teach Muslim masses the rudiments of French culture and thereby bring about a loyal native subject and a true *Algerie-Française* (French Algeria). Consequently, after more than a century of colonisation, there were 81.626 Muslim children enrolled in colonial schools.⁴⁶ By

⁴¹ Alf Andrew Heggoy, “Education in French Algeria: an Essay on Cultural Conflict,” *Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (January, 1973), pp. 180-197; p. 184.

⁴² Colonna, “Training the National Elites in Colonial Algeria 1920-1954,” p. 286.

⁴³ Fitzgerald, “Native Schoolteachers as a Mediating Elite in Colonial Algeria,” p. 4.

⁴⁴ Colonna, “Training the National Elites in Colonial Algeria 1920-1954,” p. 286-287.

⁴⁵ Thomas Willing Balch, “French Colonisation in North Africa,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (November, 1909), pp. 539-551; p. 546.

⁴⁶ Fitzgerald, “Native Schoolteachers as a Mediating Elite in Colonial Algeria,” p. 4.

time of liberation only few dozens of Algerian educated were enrolled in French universities. French attempts to assimilate the Algerian population were even more accelerated by 1930's after the rise of some Algerian national movements; mainly the organisation of *Jam'iat al-Ulema al-Muslimin* (Islamic Religious Scholars Association) under the leadership of Abdul-Hamid Ben Badis and Al-Bashir Al-Ibrahimi in 1931. The organisation's motto was: "*Islam is my religion, Arabic is my language, and Algeria is my fatherland.*" The foundation was established to revive the real Algerian culture.⁴⁷ The growing influence of this organisation was a real threat to the French who imposed many restrictions concerning the teaching of religious topics besides to the closing of some *Ulema's* schools leaving about ninety percent of illiterate population by 1962.⁴⁸

By and large, one can argue that educational programmes proved to be a successful means of dominating the minds of the colonised subjects. This was due to the fact that it created a sense of hostility not only between the natives and colons, but even between the alienated elite and the illiterate Algerians who were deprived of the true soul of their national identity. Both of them, nonetheless, suffered from a distorted sense of cultural belonging that resulted in an inferiority complex among the great bulk of Algerians; especially the elite who were refused by both sides. To add salt to their injury, the elite were identified as Frenchmen by their own people and as Algerians by their colonisers leaving them to the tussle for reconciling their true identity within those clashing allegiances. Moreover, France till its last days in the colony made sure to leave its scars in the depths of Algerian society by the Evian Accords that assured the continuation of French legacy, which explains why French is the dominant language in all sectors. Therefore, it continues to haunt the Algerian presence up till

⁴⁷ Heggoy, "Education in French Algeria: an Essay on Cultural Conflict," p. 187.

⁴⁸ Heather J. Sharkey, *Language Conflict in Algeria: From Colonialism to Post-Independence*, University of Pennsylvania Scholarly Commons (2014), p. 4.

now leaving Arabic in an inferior position added to the ongoing struggle of National identity between Arabs and Berbers.

Metropolitan administrators were thus determined for leaving no room for any trace of Algerian identity through means of violence and education. However, this imperial education that had been injecting Algerians by metropolitan culture ever since 1832, proved to be a double-edged weapon since it was the major element in uniting the whole native population, including the nationalist elite who were deeply affected by French ideas of liberty, and who developed a sense of self-consciousness of their real cultural identity and, eventually, revolted politically and militarily against the French colonialism.

To conclude, the *mission civilisatrice* was nothing more than an excuse by which France elusively justified its prolonged presence in Algeria. Such a policy adopted on the Algerian society aimed at destructing it along with the strongly tied relationships between its members so as to re-mould them in the western social pattern. The cultural outcomes were sweeping and, in the end, this policy resulted in the creation of a hybrid pattern which was neither a western nor an original one; the thing discloses the fallacy of civilisation that the tragic consequences of the French policies refuted. Rather its real and unrevealed goal was, no doubt, the creation of a controllable and exploitable society which is unable of rising and resistance.

1.2. Caught in the Crossfire: Repression, Assimilation, and Integration

Generally speaking, "*colonial rule at its best was paternalistic and discriminatory, and at its worst cruel and oppressive.*"⁴⁹ At first, France resorted to the use of force in order to maintain its control over Algeria, its grab was fastened and the ultimate goal was erasing any trace of the Algerian culture and, consequently, the Algerian identity. The use of force,

⁴⁹ Jean Battaro, *The Algerian War: Additional Case Study for Causes, Practices and Effects of Wars* (IB Diploma) (Cambridge University: White-Thomson Publishing, 2011), p. 2.

though, was only faced by force, for after all, Algerians never spared a chance to express their refusal to the colonial existence by all means and first and foremost by means of violence notably the battles in 1849, 1851, 1852, 1853, 1857, 1864, 1870, and 1871 and again in 1881.⁵⁰ Moreover, the French government committed hideous genocide against the Algerians who refused denying their customs and traditions and who, despite all the temptations and threats, remained loyal to their cultural and educational values.

In addition to the military resistance led by notable Algerian figures such as Emir Abdelkader, Bachagha El-Moqrani the leader of 1871 uprising, and Sheikh Bouamama the leader of 1881-1908 rebellion,⁵¹ the Algerians maintained a nonviolent resistance in order to protect what was left from their cultural identity (religion and traditions in particular) and to express their refusal of the colonial policies. In this instance, emigration was a good alternative for some families who hoped it *“would preserve their cultural and social identities endangered by the French conquest ... The last mass emigration was the departure for Syria of 508 families of the city of Tlemcen in 1910-11 in reaction to the threat of conscription to the French army.”*⁵²

Furthermore, repressive measures taken by the French colonial authorities varied widely depending on the time and governors holding office in Algeria. Some salient procedures were: the Policy of the Scorched Earth (a military strategy of destroying buildings, farmland, infrastructure, and all resources so that your enemy cannot use them);⁵³ Warnier Act that issued devastation of entire villages; renaming streets, cities by names of French governors, generals and French torturers or what is known as Francisation Policy of Algeria (1870-1896);

⁵⁰ Khatun, "Analysis of the Causes of the Independent Movement of Algeria," p. 80.

⁵¹ Rahal, "Algeria: Nonviolent Resistance against French Colonialism, 1830s-1850s," p. 5.

⁵² Ibid., p. 8.

⁵³ Battaro, *The Algerian War*, p. 4.

confiscation of the Algerians' cultivatable lands;⁵⁴ and Compulsory military service and so on and so forth.

In a letter to a friend dated March 15, 1843, French Lieutenant-Colonel Lucien de Montagnac, an officer in the French expeditionary force in Algeria, gave another vision of “French civilisation.” This is an excerpt from the letter:

This is how, my dear friend, we must make war against Arabs: kill all men over the age of 15, take all their women and children, load them onto naval vessels, send them to the Marquesas Islands or elsewhere. In one word, annihilate all who will not crawl beneath our feet like dogs.⁵⁵

This is only what the French themselves mentioned in their writings, let alone the atrocities committed against the Algerian population during the War of Independence and throughout the colonial period as a whole.

During the first forty years following the French occupation, the native population of Algeria fell by nearly one third due to starvation, disease, and as a direct result of warfare.⁵⁶ After 1848, Algeria legally became an extension of the French Republic. The local population, though, was firstly excluded from French citizenship and was never granted full citizenship rights. The *Code de l'indigénat* (indigenous law) _ which was established in 1874 _ brought plenty of offences applicable only to Algerians, restricting their constitutional freedoms.⁵⁷ It bestowed the French officials in Algeria the authority to punish _ fine or imprison _ Muslim Algerians without trial had they been accused of subverting law and order. The French repressive policies proved to be disastrous on the Algerian people, for neither they were left to their traditions and culture, nor they were fully integrated into the new exotic

⁵⁴ Khatun, "Analysis of the Causes of the Independent Movement of Algeria," p. 81.

⁵⁵ Quoted in John Catalinotto, "French Imperialism's Brutal Colonial Rule," *Workers World* 2015. <https://www.workers.org/2015/01/13/french-imperialisms-brutal-colonial-rule/>, Accessed on: 25.02.2018

⁵⁶ Adel Kader Chanderli, Salah Zaimache and Others, "Algeria," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Algeria/Cultural-life>, Accessed on: 26.02.2018

⁵⁷ Rahal, "Algeria: Nonviolent Resistance against French Colonialism, 1830s-1850s," p. 7.

society in which different social norms were set by the new comers. The drastic consequence of this was the birth of a brand new identity which is the result of the fusion of the two colliding cultures (the native culture and the western one). The local population, verily, found themselves in a critical situation. This was, at least, the testimony of the French painter-writer Eugène Fromentin, and these were his words:

Unable to exterminate us, they [the local population] suffer our presence; unable to flee, they avoid us. Their principle, their motto, their method is to remain quiet, to disappear as much as possible and to be forgotten. They demand little: they demand integrity and peace in their last refuge.⁵⁸

One notable date in the Algerian history was the eighth May 1945. This latter witnessed the culmination of the violence practiced against Algerians embodied in the outrageous massacres of that gruesome day when *"45.000 Algerians were killed by French troops in Constantine province."*⁵⁹ It was the date which marked the peak of the French repressive measures and policies, and it was the last straw that put an end to the Algerian people's hope of any peaceful or diplomatic solutions or any potential successful integration or assimilation.

Therefore, it becomes obvious that the French government in Algeria, from the very beginning of the French invasion, did not want nor intend to make the indigenous Muslim Algerians French citizens. Rather, it oftentimes discriminated them preferring Jews and the other *colons* (European emigrants) over them. Yet, since repressing Algerians had not begotten but fierce resistance, the French authorities resorted to another alternative policy which was assimilating the Algerians into the French society. In this regard, assimilation is defined as *"a gradual process by which a person or group belonging to one culture adopts the practices of another, thereby becoming a member of that culture ... Sociologists use the concept of assimilation to describe one way a person or group of a particular culture ...*

⁵⁸ Quoted in Rahal, "Algeria: Nonviolent Resistance against French Colonialism, 1830s-1850s," p. 11.

⁵⁹ M'hammed Yazid and Hussein Lahouel, "Recent Developments in Algeria," *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (March, 1956), pp. 16-24; p. 17.

might respond to or blend with another culture."⁶⁰ In many French colonies, however, assimilation infers that *"once Africans or Asians adopted the French language, culture, customs and traditions, they would be assimilated as French citizens with all the rights and privileges that this involved."*⁶¹ In reality, though, there had been a plethora of hindrances. Thereby, *"by 1936, only 2500 Muslim Algerians had qualified for French citizenship."*⁶² Hence, assimilation, as a French ideological hallmark, required a lot more than the mere embracement of the French culture; rather, it demanded the renouncement of one's own culture and religion. Besides, the aim behind this new policy is the one set by the French authorities previously: *"[erasing] regional and linguistic differences in France through free schooling and compulsory military service."*⁶³ Thus, *"assimilation was seen initially as a way to treat domestic "others" ... and more broadly, to forge a collective identity out of the mosaic of French regions."*⁶⁴

The question that was raised at the time was: should the indigenous "Muslim" population be included in the policy of assimilation? Because the French believed that Muslim Algerians were too inferior to be French citizens, and *"[those] who opposed extending rights to colonised people came up with the concept of "assimilability" to prevent this. They held that some indigenous populations had cultural and racial characteristics that made them unable to accept the universal social pact."*⁶⁵ It is worth noting that Muslim Algerians were

⁶⁰ "Assimilation," *Chegg Study*. www.chegg.com/homework-help/definitions/assimilation-49#main-content-start, Accessed on: 10.02.2018

⁶¹ Battaro, *The Algerian War*, p. 8.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Thomas Lacroix, "The Long, Troubled History of Assimilation in France," *The Conversation* 2015.

<http://theconversation.com/the-long-troubled-history-of-assimilation-in-france-51530>, Accessed on: 22.02.2018

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Thomas Lacroix, "The Long, Troubled History of Assimilation in France," *The Conversation* 2015.

<http://theconversation.com/the-long-troubled-history-of-assimilation-in-france-51530>, Accessed on: 22.02.2018

characterised by being deeply religious as well as nomadic and yet, unwilling to work; thus they were *“the farthest from the national standard, and hence the least ‘assimilable’.*”⁶⁶

For a long time, the resonant expression “equality, liberty, and fraternity” seemed to be inapplicable to the indigenous people in French Algeria. What is more, colonial authorities turned a blind eye to the Algerian right of citizenship while at the same time imposed conscription on them (compulsory military service). Besides, it is astonishing *“how a country that called herself secular could call some of her citizens “French Muslims,” and deprive them of some of their rights merely because they belonged to a religion other than her own.*”⁶⁷ Such contradictions made it clear that Algerians were seen to be less worthy of being French citizens. Moreover, Muslim Algerians were forced to relinquish their religion in order to be granted full French citizenship; such a condition was only applicable to Muslims. Those who refused renouncing their religion were given a partial citizenship or, to put it more precise, they were French subjects. This was officially allowed under what was called “the religious status” law which stated that Muslims in Algeria were allowed to practice aspects of their religion but they were *“deprived the right to vote and of eligibility for citizenship.”*⁶⁸

The policy of assimilation was, as a lot of other policies adopted by the colonial regime in Algeria, a mere pretext on which the French government justified conquering Algeria alleging that the French occupation’s aim was to civilise the native population. A small portion of the educated Muslim elite, however, was assimilated. During the colonial period, the assimilation policy was a selective one, racist and unequal, which based its ideas on assimilability on the criteria of race and religion.

⁶⁶ Thomas Lacroix, “The Long, Troubled History of Assimilation in France,” *The Conversation* 2015. <http://theconversation.com/the-long-troubled-history-of-assimilation-in-france-51530>, Accessed on: 22.02.2018

⁶⁷ Maalouf, *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*, p. 133.

⁶⁸ Thomas Lacroix, “The Long, Troubled History of Assimilation in France,” *The conversation* 2015. <http://theconversation.com/the-long-troubled-history-of-assimilation-in-france-51530>, Accessed on: 22.02.2018

Here comes to the surface the concept of integration, which is different from the aforesaid assimilation; this sounds confusing, and it is. To put it simple, integration can be defined as *“the act or process of mixing people who have previously been separated, usually because of colour, race, religion, etc.”*⁶⁹ The term integration is different from assimilation in that integration does not require the renouncement of one's religion, culture, or traditions. In this sense, the chief endeavour of an effective portion of the Algerian population, namely those who were labeled assimilationists, was the integration into the French society, to be treated as French citizens in spite of their personal status. Again, this demand was refused by French authorities and *colons* alike. The core problem lied in the duplicity of the French administration that it dissociated citizenship from nationality, while it saw the Algerians as French Muslims _ for Algeria was a French province or "integral part of France" since 1848⁷⁰ _ it deprived them from significant rights as vital as voting. Even the statute that was voted on by the French National Assembly in 1947 was poorly implemented. This statute created an Algerian assembly divided into two colleges of sixty members each, the first of which representing Algeria's nine million Muslims whereas the other representing some one million and a half *pieds-noires*.⁷¹ The statute was hardly passed by a small majority after lengthy debates. Accordingly, *“Muslims were finally considered full French citizens with the right to keep their personal Qur’ānic status and were granted the right to work in France without further formalities. Military territories in the south would be abolished, and Arabic would become the language of educational instruction at all levels.”*⁷² One more time, most of the reforms issued by this statute were never put to practice,⁷³ and once more, Algerians were

⁶⁹ Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 7th Edition

⁷⁰ "Algerian Revolution, 1954," *Teachwar*. <https://teachwar.wordpress.com/resources/war-justifications-archive/algerian-revolution-1954/>, Accessed on: 04.03.2018

⁷¹ Adel Kader Chandlerli, Salah Zaimache and Others, "Algeria," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Algeria/Cultural-life>, Accessed on: 26.02.2018

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

treated as second class citizens. In the meantime, though the new generations of the twentieth century came to life just to find themselves French subjects on the soil of their forefathers, they resumed the war had been waged against France by their predecessors. Yet this time they came up with another arsenal: politics was their alternative weapon. The next section focuses on some political issues which ultimately led to the dramatic change in the map of the French colonial empire once and for all.

2. Political Issues of the Era before and During the War of Independence

Time and again, wars prove to be no more than the outcome of a long term struggles, and military conflicts can never be understood away from political issues; it is as Karl von Clausewitz puts it, "*war as politics by other means*,"⁷⁴ in other words, "*violent political conflicts could be described as politics by other means*."⁷⁵ In this context, the Algerian War of Independence is an outstanding case to be succinctly observed and analysed. The inordinately violence of the war and the heavy toll of it at the expense of the Algerians both civilians and militants, in addition to their commitment and determination, can only be explained by their ardent crave for freedom. Throughout the one hundred years of colonialism, Algerians never ceased to fight the colonial presence along with its policies. Indeed, the new century brought about new perspectives towards colonialism especially after the First World War. Therefore, in Algeria, as in any other colonised nation at the time, the waves of nationalism spread widely to give birth to brand new political movements as an unavoidable result of the changes taking place worldwide. Established by Algerian intellectuals, the political parties devoted themselves to the Algerian cause, making it their utmost aim. Thus, in the next section, the

⁷⁴ Quoted in Mohammed Senoussi, *Terrorism in Yasmina Khadra's Novels: The Sirens of Baghdad and Wolf Dreams* (Magister Dissertation) (Constantine: ENSC, 2015), p. 19.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

different and most notable movements and political parties are going to be the focal point of analysis.

2.1. Political Parties and Affiliations

The Algerian nationalist movement dated back to the First World War when 173.000 Algerians joined the French army and thousands more indirectly participated in the war by working in the French factories. There, they saw how the working conditions differed from those applied on Muslim majority in Algeria.⁷⁶ Still, during the twenties and thirties of the nineteenth century, three major parties came to existence in the political arena. Their agendas differed variably according to their parties' orientations: moderate (assimilationist), conservative (reformist) or radical. Yet, In spite of the ideological diversity in their viewpoints, they showed an astonishing readiness to get along one another for the sake of the Algerian cause and the Algerian independence.

To begin with, the first group was formed by Algerians who had had access to French education and who earned their living in the French sector. This group had its origins in the era before the First World War and it appeared firstly under the name: 'Young Algerians' which consisted of, in the 1920s, Khaled Ben Hachemi who is known as Emir Khaled _ the grandson of Emir Abdelkader _ and, in the 1930s, Ferhat Abbas, who later became the first prime minister of the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic. *"Often called assimilationists, they pursued gradualist, reformist tactics, shunned illegal actions, and were prepared to consider permanent union with France if the rights of Frenchmen could be extended to native Algerians."*⁷⁷ Being rather moderate, Abbas sought equality for Muslim Algerians as French citizens; an aim matched the policy of assimilation.

⁷⁶ Battaro, *The Algerian War*, p. 7.

⁷⁷ Adel Kader Chanderli, Salah Zaimache and Others, "Algeria," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Algeria/Cultural-life>, Accessed on: 26.02.2018

Abbas "called for agricultural reforms and the abolition of special privileges for the *peu* noirs."⁷⁸

On the other hand, the year 1926 marked the birth of the *Étoile Nord-Africaine* (North African Star) in Paris by Algerian workers and in 1933, a young Algerian strongly nationalist Messali Hadj became its leader.⁷⁹ This group's primary aim was to protect these migrant workers' rights. In addition to that, it also set a political end for Algeria: demanding "*freedom of the press, establishment of Arabic schools, confiscation of large estates, a parliament elected by universal suffrage, and independence for Algeria.*"⁸⁰ To this end, just after his returning to Algeria in 1937, Messali Hadj formed *Parti du Peuple Algérien*, or PPA (the Party of the Algerian People) in an effort to mobilise the peasant farmers and the urban workers. To Messali's disappointment, the French authorities immediately banned it.⁸¹

The third group in the Algerian nationalism movement was the one founded in 1931 by Abdul-Hamid Ben Badis called *Association des Ulema* (Islamic Religious Scholars Association).⁸² Ben Badis trusted that "*Algerian nationalism could only succeed with a return to the principles of Islam,*"⁸³ because, as anthropologist Jacques Berque deemed, "*religion have become a "bastion of withdrawal" for the colonized population of Algeria to preserve their identity.*"⁸⁴ In its essence, the *Ulema* movement fostered a "*culture of nationalism that relied on a historical discourse of what it meant to be Algerian.*"⁸⁵ In fact, the *Ulema's* leader Ben Badis was the first Algerian Muslim to talk about an Algerian nation.⁸⁶ In spite of the fact that the association bore within its motto plain political dimensions and a strong sense of

⁷⁸ Battaro, *The Algerian War*, p. 8.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Rahal, "Algeria: Nonviolent Resistance against French Colonialism, 1830s-1850s," p. 11.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁸⁶ Saeed Ali Alghailani, "Ibn Badis and Modernity," *2nd International Conference on Humanities, Historical and Social Sciences*, Vol. 17 (2011), pp. 55-70; p. 58.

Algerian identity as opposing to that of the French – Islam is my religion, Algeria my fatherland and Arabic my language – it had not *"a practical political role in the growth of resistance."*⁸⁷ But, nonetheless, it *"was significant in stirring up a sense of religious and national consciousness among Algerians."*⁸⁸ During the Algerian War of Independence, the association aligned with the liberation movement led by *National Liberation Front (FLN)*.⁸⁹

During the thirties, the *colons* fiercely opposed any kind of reforms including those suggested by the different political parties, for example in 1939 the *colons* rejected the *Violette Plan* reforms which were proposed by Popular Front government in France in 1936, because these reforms gave more rights to Muslim Algerians.⁹⁰ It would have given a very small number of Algerians (the educated, veterans of French military service, and other narrowly defined groups) full French citizenship.⁹¹ As for the nationalists reactions differed variably: while *"Abbas and other moderates welcomed the plan as a step towards achieving their aims,"*⁹² Messali Hadj opposed it considering it to be a *"new 'instrument of colonialism' designed 'to split the Algerian people by separating the élite from the masses'."*⁹³ Disappointed by its failure, *"Abbas moved his support from the concept of assimilation to the goal of a Muslim Algeria, associated with France but sustaining its own culture, language and traditions."*⁹⁴

Before the outbreak of the Algerian War of Independence, namely in 1942, the Anglo-American troops landed in Algeria paving the way towards the emancipation of the colonies in North Africa. The Allied leaders Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill had drawn

⁸⁷ Battaro, *The Algerian War*, p. 8.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ "Association of Algerian Muslim Ulama: Muslim religious organization," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Association-of-Algerian-Muslim-Ulama>, Accessed on: 08.03.2018

⁹⁰ Battaro, *The Algerian War*, p. 3.

⁹¹ Adel Kader Chanderli, Salah Zaimache and Others, "Algeria," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Algeria/Cultural-life>, Accessed on: 26.02.2018

⁹² Battaro, *The Algerian War*, p. 8.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

up the *Atlantic Charter*, a document in which they promised to stand up for self-determination (The right of all people to choose their own form of government).⁹⁵ Ferhat Abbas took advantage of the chance to draft the *Manifesto of the Algerian People (Manifeste du Peuple Algérien)* in December 1942 and presented it for both the Allied and the French authorities.⁹⁶ The Manifesto called for "a constitution that would guarantee equality for all Algerians, land reform, the recognition of Arabic as an official language, the participation of Muslims in government and the liberation of political prisoners."⁹⁷ In their turns, the French leader at the time Charles de Gaulle and the governor of Algeria, Georges Catroux, realised that some sort of reform was needed, yet they did not answered such demands.⁹⁸ Thereby, in 1944,⁹⁹ Ferhat Abbas, Messali Hadj and other leaders united together to form the Friends of the Manifesto and Liberty (*Amis du Manifeste et de la Liberté*, or *AML*) in order to carry out the task for equality and political rights. The *AML* formation received appreciation among the nationalists, and great numbers of supporters from the formerly banned *PPA* had joined it.¹⁰⁰ Some years later, *AML* was transformed into *the Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto (Union Démocratique du Manifeste Algérien—UDMA)*.¹⁰¹

On 04 and 11 April 1848, elections for an Assembly were held in Algeria in which two colleges were to elect a new 120-seat Assembly. One college represented 1.5 million European and Algerian Jews in addition to few thousands 'évolués' Muslims, while the second one represented around 8 million "indigenous" Muslims. Each college should vote for 60

⁹⁵ Battaro, *The Algerian War*, p.9.

⁹⁶ Adel Kader Chandlerli, Salah Zaimache and Others, "Algeria," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Algeria/Cultural-life>, Accessed on: 26.02.2018

⁹⁷ Battaro, *The Algerian War*, p. 9.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ "Algeria - Political parties," *Nations Encyclopedia* 2018. <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Algeria-POLITICAL-PARTIES.html>, Accessed on: 04.03.2018

¹⁰⁰ Battaro, *The Algerian War*, p. 9.

¹⁰¹ "Algeria - Political parties," *Nations Encyclopedia* 2018. <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Algeria-POLITICAL-PARTIES.html>, Accessed on: 04.03.2018

seats.¹⁰² This meant that 85% of the population had the same representation as 15% based on their religion and race. The authorities manipulated the Assembly elections and those of 1951 in order to guarantee favorable result to the extent that the term "*élection Algérienne*" became identical to rigged elections.¹⁰³

In the meanwhile, the French authorities suspected any movement from these parties and at each time they dissolved a certain party. Thereby, the leaders found themselves obliged to re-found their parties under new names. This was the case with Messali Hadj too. In the mid-1940s, Messali replaced his banned party (the Party of the Algerian People) by *Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques*, *MTLD* (Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties).¹⁰⁴ In the National Assembly elections of 1946, the *MTLD* won 5 of the 15 elected seats. Two years later, nevertheless, the *MTLD* lost all its seats and in 1950 it was suppressed by the police.¹⁰⁵ About the same time, the Special Organisation (*Organisation Spéciale; OS*), a more radical paramilitary group, was formed just to be discovered in 1950 by the French police who imprisoned many of its leaders.¹⁰⁶ In 1954, however, a group of *OS* split from the *MTLD* formed *the Revolutionary Committee of Unity and Action* (*Comité Révolutionnaire d'Unité et d'Action; CRUA*). Shortly thereafter, this organisation became to be known as the *Front of National Liberation* (*Front de Libération Nationale*) which prepared for military action.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² "Algerian Assembly Election, 1948," *World Library* 2018.

<http://worldlibrary.net/articles/algerian%20assembly%20election.%201948?&words=andr%C3%A9%20mandouze>, Accessed on: 05.03.2018

¹⁰³ Battaro, *The Algerian War*, p. 13.

¹⁰⁴ Adel Kader Chanderli, Salah Zaimache and Others, "Algeria," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2018.

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Algeria/Cultural-life>, Accessed on: 26.02.2018

¹⁰⁵ "Algeria - Political parties," *Nations Encyclopedia* 2018.

<http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Algeria-POLITICAL-PARTIES.html>, Accessed on: 04.03.2018

¹⁰⁶ Adel Kader Chanderli, Salah Zaimache and Others, "Algeria," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2018.

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Algeria/Cultural-life>, Accessed on: 26.02.2018

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

2.2. The Turning-Point of May 8th, 1945 Massacres

It was at Sétif that my sense of humanity was affronted for the first time by the most atrocious sights. I was sixteen years old. The shock which I felt at the pitiless butchery that caused the deaths of thousands of Muslims, I have never forgotten. From that moment my nationalism took definite form.

Kateb Yacine. Quoted in Battaro, Jean. *The Algerian War: Additional Case Study for Causes, Practices and Effects of Wars* (IB Diploma) (Cambridge University: White-Thomson Publishing, 2011), p. 9.

During the Second World War, the Algerian soldiers were recruited in the French army for French liberation from the Nazi occupation in Northern France and the *Vichy regime* (pro-Nazi government ruled France after the German occupation) in the south of it.¹⁰⁸ In 1943, General Charles de Gaulle declared that "*France was under an obligation to the Muslims of North Africa because of the loyalty they had shown.*"¹⁰⁹ The returning Algerian soldiers _ who had been fighting alongside the Allied to "*make the world safe for democracy*"¹¹⁰ _ started questioning why the principles for which they had been combating were not extended to the colonies; the war opened their eyes to the reality of colonisation and they were no longer able to be ruled by colonial regime.¹¹¹

In Algeria, as in France and other Allied countries, people and the returning soldiers celebrated the victory of the Allied and the end of the Second World War. But *Sétif* and *Constantine* provinces were to witness unforgettable events for ever. As a symbol of freedom, some of the demonstrators were waving white and green flags and banners;¹¹² the two colours seemed to be allergic to the French police who reacted so violently against them shooting the peaceful demonstrators dead. In the meanwhile, violence spread and "*French war ships of the*

¹⁰⁸ Battaro, *The Algerian War*, p. 9.

¹⁰⁹ Adel Kader Chanderli, Salah Zaimache and Others, "Algeria," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Algeria/Cultural-life>, Accessed on: 26.02.2018

¹¹⁰ Battaro, *The Algerian War*, p. 9.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 12.

coast shelled the mountains where the rebels were based, the air force bombarded whole villages, and the army arrested and shot all civilians who were suspected of being a rebel or of sympathizing with them. Without any show of evidence or trial, villagers were executed in the streets to serve as a warning to others."¹¹³ The nasty events were described by the Algerian historian Mahfoud Kaddache as a "war of reprisals,"¹¹⁴ while the French historian Benjamin Stora referred to them as a "massacre."¹¹⁵ But British historian Alistair Horne went even further to consider that "the shots fired at Sétif represented the first volley of the Algerian War."¹¹⁶ The results of the events were disastrous and the death toll of the massacre was heavy as "[thousands] were killed and most nationalist leaders were detained for several months."¹¹⁷ Some nationalists said that "45,000 Algerians were killed by French troops in Constantine province,"¹¹⁸ and "over 100 Europeans were killed in attacks."¹¹⁹

Politically speaking, *The Friends of the Manifesto and Liberty (AML)* "was outlawed and over 5000 Muslims, including moderate leaders like Abbas, were arrested. Many moderate Algerians were outraged by the French reaction."¹²⁰ Subsequently, "demonstrations were the last peaceful attempts by Algerians to seek their independence,"¹²¹ and a lot of Algerians started to realise that organised military resistance was the sole option, for the peaceful measures for settling the issues of the colonial rule had been denied.¹²² The aftermath of the events of May 8th, though, alerted the French authorities who realised the sensitivity of the critical situation in Algeria. They recognised that measures should be taken in order to avoid

¹¹³ Håkon Tranvåg, "The Massacre in Sétif: How Peace Celebrations Ended in Bloodbath in French Algeria," *Popular Social Science* 2013. <http://www.popularsocialscience.com/2013/03/06/the-massacre-in-setif-how-peace-celebrations-ended-in-bloodbath-in-french-algeria/>, Accessed on: 02.03.2018

¹¹⁴ Battaro, *The Algerian War*, p. 12.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Rahal, "Algeria: Nonviolent Resistance against French Colonialism, 1830s-1850s," p. 24.

¹¹⁸ Yazid and Lahouel, "Recent Developments in Algeria," p. 17.

¹¹⁹ Battaro, *The Algerian War*, p. 12.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Adel Kader Chanderli, Salah Zaimache and Others, "Algeria," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Algeria/Cultural-life>, Accessed on: 26.02.2018

¹²² Ibid.

the escalated violence that would only result in more bloodshed, and within a year after the massacre, several reforms were passed including those aiming to give the locals better education, added to it the opening of political life to Algerians.¹²³ But "*it would be too little, too late. The massacre in Sétif would be a decisive turning point in the relationship between France and Algeria, which would only deteriorate in the following years.*"¹²⁴ Therefore, the events of May 1945, even brutal as never had been before, they helped in bringing together the Algerian population in general, and the prominent political parties' leaders in particular, to stand for the Algerian cause at the expense of their lives if necessary. Indeed, these events heralded the imminent revolution which was but a matter of time, putting the French colonial presence at stake. Truthfully, Algerians came to realise that "*colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence.*"¹²⁵ Hence, what was taken by force could only be retrieved by equal force. Thereby, the next section is dedicated to explore the transitional step in Algeria's resistance.

3. Algeria and The Shift from Political to Military Resistance

[To] shoot down a European is to kill two birds with one stone, to destroy an oppressor and the man he oppresses at the same time: there remain a dead man, and a free man; the survivor, for the first time, feels a national soil under his foot.

Jean-Paul Sartre. Quoted in Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), p. 22.

The rising tide of nationalism accompanied with the failure of the political projects of assimilation together with the abject poverty and miserable conditions led to the outbreak of

¹²³ Håkon Tranvåg, "The Massacre in Sétif: How Peace Celebrations Ended in Bloodbath in French Algeria," *Popular Social Science* 2013. <http://www.popularsocialscience.com/2013/03/06/the-massacre-in-setif-how-peace-celebrations-ended-in-bloodbath-in-french-algeria/>, Accessed on: 02.03.2018

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 61.

the War of Independence in colonial Algeria. Both the political parties and the population fed up with the policies of the French colonialism and the privileged *pieds-noires* though they were a minority (1 million compared to 8 million Muslims after 1945).¹²⁶ The manipulation of the elections in 1951 added fuel to the fire of May 8th, 1945 massacre. The situation at that time is best described in the words of M'hammed Yazid and Hussein Lahouel,

From 1925 to 1954 repression was especially severe. Tens of thousands of Algerians were imprisoned particularly in the years 1937, 1939, 1945, 1948, and 1952. By the end of 1954 police and military repression throughout all French-dominated North Africa had made conditions in Algeria intolerable. All the efforts made by the Algerians to make their voice heard in Paris had proved vain; the European settlers in Algeria had imposed their intransigent views on the French Government and Parliament. There was but one way left to the Algerian freedom movement: that was direct action. On the night of October 31 and November 1 1954, between 1 and 2 a.m. a widespread armed rebellion broke out in Algeria. This led to the creation of a "Front of National Liberation" and an "Army of National Liberation", which are the leading political and armed resistance against French rule and the military operations of an uncontrolled colonialism.¹²⁷

Thus, the shift from the diplomatic, peaceful resistance to the militarily, violent one became inescapable due to the stagnant political situation at the time in addition to the irreversible damage the French policies had left on the Algerian soul and soil. Jacques Chevallier, the former mayor of Algiers and an ardent supporter of reform, asserted that, "*Algerians*" are "*conscious of the evolution of people and ideas*".¹²⁸ He argued that "*[to] be "Algerian" was to be special, it was to speak "not only in French, but in Algerian"; the Algerian community was "unique in the world" and must be defined "by the Algerians*

¹²⁶ Battaro, *The Algerian War*, p. 11.

¹²⁷ Yazid and Lahouel, "Recent Developments in Algeria," p. 17.

¹²⁸ Lizabeth Zack, "Who Fought the Algerian War? Political Identity and Conflict in French-Ruled Algeria," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Fall 2002), pp. 55-97; p. 83.

themselves".¹²⁹ In due course, the so long repressed people had to speak their minds, their voices, though, bore a different tone: it was that of bullets and bombs!

3.1. The War of Independence, War for Identity

"Real independence remains incomplete if it does not liberate both the land and the soul of the people. Algeria recovered by the Algerians does not suffice. The Algerians must re-become and remain themselves."

Front de Libération Nationale. Quoted in Naylor, Phillip C. *France and Algeria: A History of Decolonization and Transformation* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2000), p. 1.

During the French colonisation of Algeria, it was so difficult to identify the population whether as "French" or "Algerians". These labels were elusive and they overlapped with one another. The native people, however, insisted on identifying themselves as "Muslim" Algerians, overlooking the different racial identity (Arabs or Berbers, etc ...). This came to be particularly evident in the wake of the Blum-Violette bill and the issues emerged subsequently by which the many native elites with their followers rallied together in the Muslim Congress to identify themselves as Muslims, *"as representatives of a special Islamic-Arabic cultural heritage,"*¹³⁰ that is to say, *"out of the range of possible labels such as "North African," "Algerian," "worker," "Arab" or "Berber," [they] elected to rally as "Muslims." It was ... the most popular and effective rallying point in Algeria at the time.*"¹³¹ Moreover, *"Muslim" was becoming a popular political identity, adopted by elites and followers. Political identities overlapped with class, regional, professional, and cultural identities and were therefore infused with new meaning.*"¹³²

¹²⁹ Zack, "Who Fought the Algerian War?" p. 84.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 80.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid., p. 78-79.

Therefore, the core problem was not that of the political nor the economic effects alone, but the real nagging issue was that of identity. Throughout more than a century of colonialism, the French policymakers in Algeria had been showing a rabid determination to maintain Algeria as a French colony. To this end, destroying the sense of belonging to such an Algerian nation among Algerians and replacing it with their allegiance to the metropolitan France seemed to be the perfect plan. The Algerian intellectuals, though, proved it wrong. Added to the repressive nature of the French colonialism along with the subversive methods it followed up in order to tame the Algerian insurrections, the Arabic language and the common cultural and Islamic heritage were very crucial in uniting Arabs and Berbers to work together for Algerian national independence.¹³³ Hence, the eruption of November 1st, 1954 set the French dream apart and the war was nothing other than the resurrection of the Algerian identity.

Identities, it must be said, are potent *"mechanisms for constructing action."*¹³⁴ They become *"instrument[s] of war"*¹³⁵ as Amin Maalouf suggests. According to him, all massacres and most of the bloody wars that have recently taken place have been correlated with *"complex and long-standing "cases" of identity."*¹³⁶ Apparently, the Algerian Revolutionary War had proved it true.

Again, as Amin Maalouf asserts, *"identity is one of [the] false friends. We all think we know what the word means and go on trusting it, even when it [is] slyly starting to say the opposite."*¹³⁷ Until the fifties of the twentieth century, the terms "French" and "Algerian" were stretchy and not yet well defined, in this perspective Lizabeth Zack argues,

¹³³ Zack, "Who Fought the Algerian War?" p. 56.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 90.

¹³⁵ Maalouf, *In the Name of Identity*, p. 32.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 33.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

On the eve of and during the war, evidence shows that settlers, natives, government officials, and others fiercely debated and fought over the criteria for belonging to "the true Algerians" and "the true French." These terms were at one moment defined by citizenship status, place of residence, or familial descent, and at another by language, religion and political commitment. At times, settlers competed with each other over who was "French"; at other times, both settlers and natives claimed to be "Algerian." ... the notion of "Algerians" varied from Arab-Islamic elites to anyone committed to an independent nation. Clearly, "French" and "Algerian" were important bases of political identification and solidarity, representing very different visions of a future Algeria. However, it was not clear yet which criteria would define those terms or which groups belonged in which category. Far from acting as already entrenched camps of "French" and "Algerians," parties to the Algerian War struggled to define those very terms.¹³⁸

In the early years of the war, these very terms, i.e. "French" and "Algerian" stirred up much of the discourse, for "[settlers,] natives, state officials, and outsiders, for the most part, referred to themselves and each other as "the Algerian people," "nous Algériens," "the French.""¹³⁹ It was only with the end of the war in 1962 that it became clear who was "French" and who was "Algerian."¹⁴⁰ Likewise, parties involved in the war had organised and therefore mobilised themselves within this political identity framework.¹⁴¹ Equally important were the groups, unions, and cultural associations that moved towards the umbrella of *FLN* which intensely, and at times violently, debated the heart of that budding nationality.¹⁴²

Yet, to see to what extent was the War of Independence a war for identity, one ought to go back to examine the traces of identity in the political parties' claims. In its essence, the *FLN* and, subsequently, the *ALN* emerged as political and military representatives of the Algerian people for they were basically a mixture of the members came from different political

¹³⁸ Zack, "Who Fought the Algerian War?" p. 56-57.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 84.

backgrounds (reformists, radicals, and assimilationists). In so doing, lots of parties engaged in the debate and action during the first years of the war did so within the political identity framework that had been shaped in the early decades of the twentieth century and had been transformed in the late 1930s.¹⁴³ In point of fact, the roots of Algerian national identity were traced in the groups and institutions of that period (intellectual and religious elites, Qur'anic schools, immigrant workers in France, peasants, or leftist working-class organisations), all taking action to reform otherwise eliminate the French ruling system.¹⁴⁴

In this regard, the Association of *Ulema's* leader Abdul-Hamid Ben Badis was the first Algerian Muslim to talk of an Algerian nation.¹⁴⁵ The very term "Algerian nation" was introduced into Arabic by the *Ulema*.¹⁴⁶ Ben Badis asserted that,

Algerian nation was formed and exists in the same way as all other nations were formed and exist. It has its religious and linguistic unity, its culture, its traditions, and its good and bad traits like all other nations on earth ... This Muslim Algerian nation is not France, cannot be France, and does not wish to be France.¹⁴⁷

The *Ulema's* famous motto summed up their beliefs stating that, "*Islam is our religion, Algeria is our country, Arabic is our language.*"¹⁴⁸ Such words helped instilling the pillars of nationalism and patriotism in the hearts of the Algerians who, later on, fought their existential revolutionary war.

Besides, the November 1st, 1954 proclamation of the National Liberation Front was addressed to the "**Algerian**" people; in other words, the war was fought on behalf of them

¹⁴³ Zack, "Who Fought the Algerian War?" p. 82.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁴⁵ Alghailani, "Ibn Badis and Modernity," p. 58.

¹⁴⁶ Zack, "Who Fought the Algerian War?" p. 78.

¹⁴⁷ Quoted in "Abd al-Hamid Ben Badis Facts," *Your Dictionary*. <http://biography.yourdictionary.com/abd-al-hamid-ben-badis>, Accessed on: 10.03.2018

¹⁴⁸ Zack, "Who Fought the Algerian War?" p. 78.

and in their name.¹⁴⁹ It is no surprise, then, that though it was written in French in its original version particularly due to the fact that its editors were more fluent in French than in Arabic, the proclamation, however, proposed certain demands among which were: "*[the] recognition of [Algerian nationality] by an official declaration abrogating the edicts, decrees and laws making Algeria a "French land," which is a denial of the History, the geography, the [language], the [religion], and the [mores] of the Algerian people.*"¹⁵⁰ More than this, the proclamation's first goal was "*the restoration of the sovereign, democratic and social [Algerian] state, within the framework of [Islamic] principles.*"¹⁵¹ With an external objective set up to work for establishing a "*North African unity within its natural [Arabo-Islamic] framework.*"¹⁵² Thereby, the first volley of November 1st and the proclamation of *FLN* bore the imprints of Arabo-Islamic identity conveying an eloquent message to the French government and the entire world that "*[the] people of Algeria are Muslim, [and] they lay claim to the Arab nation.*"¹⁵³ In 1957, violence reached its peak in the Battle of Algiers, and the aftermath of the Battle pushed more and more Arabs, Berbers, and Muslims to line up behind the *FLN* as Algerians.¹⁵⁴

By far and large, the Algerian War of Independence was a war for identity *par excellence*. The proclamation of November 1st had enforced the specificity of the Algerian nation as opposed to that of metropolitan France. Throughout the 132-year period of cruel French colonialism, the Algerian people had been extremely suppressed; a period wherein they had not the strength enough to defend their real allegiance. Therefore, it remained "*buried deep*

¹⁴⁹ "Proclamation November 1, 1954." <https://www.marxists.org/history/algeria/1954/proclamation.htm>, Accessed on: 04.03.2018

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Alghailani, "Ibn Badis and Modernity," p. 61.

¹⁵⁴ Zack, "Who Fought the Algerian War?" p. 85.

down in the dark, awaiting its revenge."¹⁵⁵ Such an opportunity came with the overwhelming sense of nationalism and the sweeping revolutionary war it brought about. The Evian Accords of 1962 ended not only the eight-year war, but the 132-year relationship between France and Algeria, giving birth to two separate French and Algerian nations.¹⁵⁶

3.2. Intellectuals, With or Against the War?

During the last decade of the nineteenth century, a small yet an increasing number of Algerians were convinced that the most efficient means of penetrating the French system was by acquiring French education, learning how to fit into the French system, and knowing how to play by the new rules.¹⁵⁷ This group came to be known as 'the Young Algerian movement' which was mainly the product of that French educational system.¹⁵⁸ Out of that movement, a group had emerged to be the first generation of Muslim Algerian to attempt using the republican political process in order to improve the natives' status.¹⁵⁹ Most of the group members were openly assimilationists, looking for rights and reform in the name of the values they had absorbed in the French schools.¹⁶⁰

As their name suggests, the assimilationists' first endeavor was to be integrated into the French society in Algeria. In order to understand the evolution of this movement one should go back to the circumstances surrounding its emergence. In its turn, this can mainly be achieved through studying the life and career of one of its prominent leaders from 1930s onward, namely Ferhat Abbas. This politician can be described as a pragmatic man who adapts to the current situation, makes use of the potential measures, and implements them accordingly. At

¹⁵⁵ Maalouf, *In the Name of Identity*, p. 33.

¹⁵⁶ Zack, "Who Fought the Algerian War?" p. 56.

¹⁵⁷ John Ruedy, "Chérif Benhabylès and Ferhat Abbas: Case Studies in the Contradictions of the "Mission civilisatrice", " *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Summer 2002), pp. 185-201; p. 187.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

one moment, he openly questioned the existence of an Algerian nation;¹⁶¹ this can be understood once we look back to the early years of his life. Abbas had not only received an entire French education in French schools, but he was a descendent from a family that was strongly linked to the French administration as well, for his father was *qu'id* in the native administrative system. Abbas had performed his obligatory military service in the French army. While student at the University of Algiers, Abbas came to head the Muslim student organisation, became passionate political activist, and had written many articles to opposition newspapers attacking the historical legacy of colonialism under a pseudonym to avoid jeopardising his academic career.¹⁶² However, after graduation from University in 1931, Abbas republished them collected under his own name.¹⁶³ On the eve of the centennial he wrote that,

The century that is dying was a century of tears and blood.
And it was specifically we the natives who wept and who
bled. We will bury it, therefore, without regret and without
joy with a final prayer to God and men that these dark
days will not return and with the timid hope that they will
have served to ready us for better days.¹⁶⁴

In his writings, Abbas distinguishes, with a mixture of anger and sadness, between "*the ideal France of the Enlightenment and 1789 and the actual France of the 1920s.*"¹⁶⁵ Even when yet at University, he "*warns that if the ideal France does not soon make an appearance, the chance of fusion of the two cultures will end forever.*"¹⁶⁶ In the course of his early political life, Abbas often questions the issues of his time such as the use of extreme force by the French authorities against the armless natives in Algeria, he interrogates, "*why twentieth-century Christians, in spite of their incontestable superiority and the abject weakness of the*

¹⁶¹ Kulkarni, "The Ambiguous Fate of a Pied-Noir: Albert Camus and Colonialism," p. 1529.

¹⁶² Ruedy, "Chérif Benhabylès and Ferhat Abbas," p. 189-197.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 197.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 198.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 201.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

*Muslim world, refuse to lay down their arms but, instead, "persist in their centuries old fight against an enemy who is long since prostrated."*¹⁶⁷ Last but not least, finding himself rejected by his own people and the French society alike as he was seen as traitor by the former and an inferior by the latter, Abbas came to the conclusion that France had either to help them to restore their dignity or to take back its schools.¹⁶⁸

In 1930, Abbas founded the *Federation of the Elected Muslims* with an assimilationist programme that called for representation in the French parliament, abolition of the discriminatory legislation against Muslims, and equal rights for Muslims without renunciation of their Muslim status.¹⁶⁹ As far as Algeria was a part of France as a French province, Abbas claimed, all the people living there were French. Therefore it was needless that Algerians had to renounce Islamic culture which was at the heart of their identity.¹⁷⁰ Thereby, via collaborating with the French, according to Abbas, assimilation of the natives in the French society along with the abolishment of colonialism would bring about the emancipation of Muslim Algerians as French citizens.¹⁷¹

However, Abbas' political career witnessed a dramatic shift evolving from an assimilationist to a revolutionary. Once the Blum-violette bill failed, Abbas changed his political programme as a result. Disillusioned by the French in 1938, Abbas organised the *Algerian Popular Union*, a party that laid claim to full citizenship for all Muslims, asserting that "*Algeria had a separate identity from that of France.*"¹⁷² This latter phrase marked a significant twist in Abbas' political career as it redefined his notion concerning the Algerian

¹⁶⁷ Ruedy, "Chérif Benhabylès and Ferhat Abbas," p. 192.

¹⁶⁸ Trans. mine, "Aide-nous à reconquérir notre dignité ou reprends tes écoles." Ibid., p. 199.

¹⁶⁹ "Rise of Algerian Nationalism," *The Algerian Story*. <https://sites.google.com/a/oxy.edu/the-algerian-story/algerian-revolution/1954-planning-november-1st/front-de-liberation-nationale>, Accessed on: 11.03.2018

¹⁷⁰ Ruedy, "Chérif Benhabylès and Ferhat Abbas," p. 201.

¹⁷¹ "Ferhat Abbas: President of Algeria," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ferhat-Abbas>, Accessed on: 11.03.2018

¹⁷² Alghailani, "Ibn Badis and Modernity," p. 68.

nation that he once failed to recognise. In the same fashion, Abbas' Manifesto of 1943 not only denounced the French colonial system but it called for the application of the self-determination as well.¹⁷³ the rejection of this Manifesto and his imprisonment that followed the suppression of his party: Friends of the Manifesto and Liberty,¹⁷⁴ in addition to the 1948 elections manipulation all of which had left great impact on Abbas to the extent that he had told Maréchal Juin that, "*[there] is no other solution left than the submachine guns.*"¹⁷⁵ In this few words, the tendency to adopt violence as an inescapable measure is clearly noticed. In the same context, Abbas interrogates, "*[why] are you killing me? ... Do not you live on the other side of the water? My friend, if you were living on this side, I would be a murderer and it would be unfair to kill you that way; but since you live on the other side, I am a brave man and that is fair.*"¹⁷⁶ It is no surprise, then, to know that Abbas, having lost all hope of peaceful political change through legal reforms and diplomatic negotiations, he joined the *Front de Libération Nationale (FLN)* in 1956 after escaping to Cairo.

In sum, the demands of the various political parties were those digging deep to restore the identity fading away. At one moment, even the assimilationists found themselves pushed by the sweeping torrent of nationalism and patriotism towards an Algerian mother. The gradual yet effective shift from pursuing integrity to asserting separation based on identity-foundations led, eventually, to the adoption of violence as the last option.

Finally, this chapter provided a basis for the analysis of the novel selected in the corpus; therefore, the second chapter seeks to investigate the Algerian identity crisis through

¹⁷³ "Ferhat Abbas: President of Algeria," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ferhat-Abbas>, Accessed on: 11.03.2018

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ "Algerian Assembly Election, 1948," *World Library* 2018.
<http://worldlibrary.net/articles/algerian%20assembly%20election,%201948?&words=andr%C3%A9%20mandouze>, Accessed on: 05.03.2018

¹⁷⁶ Trans. mine, "Pourquoi me tuez-vous? ... Ne demeurez-vous pas de l'autre côté de l'eau? Mon ami, si vous demeurez de ce côté, je serais un assassin et cela serait injuste de vous tuer de la sorte; mais puisque vous demeurez de l'autre côté, je suis un brave et cela est juste." Ruedy, "Chérif Benhabylès and Ferhat Abbas," p. 198.

Khadra's novel that provides a laboratory in which the national, cultural, and political dimensions of identity can be readily perceived and thought about. The novel portrays the period in colonial Algeria from 1930's till 1964. Khadra chronicles the life of Younes/Jonas, one of those shattered souls who is torn between two worlds but never succeed to fit in, as he refuses to accept the fact that he belongs to both European and Algerian communities.

CHAPTER TWO: TORN BETWEEN TWO WORLDS: HYBRIDISATION AND IDENTITY DE/FORMATION

Recent studies have devoted much of interest to issues related to identity, especially in literary works. Despite the numerous attempts of recent scholars to surf the depths of this evasive and ambiguous term, the concept of identity remains an enigma. Among those who best explores its dimensions stands Amin Maalouf who defines it as “*what prevents [one] from being identical to anybody else.*”¹⁷⁷ In a matter of fact, identity and the sense of belongingness are supposed to promote one’s psychological health. However, due to the increase of cross-cultural occurrences, identity becomes a source of anguish mainly for those hybrid-selves; for they have to struggle to fit within clashing worlds. As a result, they often end up living in a frontier zone. In this respect, Algerian assimilated intellectuals are the best example of dislocated identities; the multiplicity of their identity and the fact that they were marked as “others” led to traumatic experiences as they were disavowed by both fronts and were thrown into exile.

The coming chapter presents a new perspective to issues related to identity and belongings. We shall use Khadra’s *What the Day Owes the Night* as a point of departure to study dislocated identities who are neither oppressors nor one of the oppressed. Additionally, this paper provides a thematic and stylistic readings of the story to scrutinise the effects of ‘otherness’ on one’s sense of belonging as well as psychological complexities of those fringes-dwellers. Furthermore, we shall see how Khadra tries to give a voice to those voiceless people who know not how to fit. Last but not least, we shall review the symptoms of the war and the contemporary situation of its victims and their memories.

¹⁷⁷ Maalouf, *In the Name of identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*, p. 10.

1. What is a Name? Younes Vs. Jonas

Preferably you should have the right to be nameless until you find your own name. Names are not something that should be given out light-handedly. A name can be too light, but also too heavy for a person to carry. And it will always be a shackle. It can be dangerous temptation or it can create self-contempt. Your own name can turn into a myth which you fall victim of. It can split your character and determine your fate.

Maria Gripe. Quoted in Wind-Val, Bendicta. "Personal Names and Identity in Literary Contexts," *Oslo Studies in Language*, Vol. 4(2) (2012), pp. 273-284; p. 280.

The quotation above suggests that names can be a heavy burden for people; this is due to the fact that a name is a vital part of one's identity; because it conveys enormous information about one's gender and culture, and even it gives a sense of uniqueness to one's personal identity. Elsdon Smith defines a name as "*one of the most permanent of possessions ... [which] remain when everything else is lost; it is owned by those who possess nothing else.*"¹⁷⁸ In a matter of fact, names are a core segment of our identity since they carry a conceptual, cultural, and identical weight. Post colonial critics highlight the importance of labels as indicators of identity. In this matter, Albert Memmi declares that "*another sign of the colonized's depersonalization is what one might call the mark of the plural. The colonized is never characterized in an individual manner; he is entitled only to drown in an anonymous collectivity ("They are this." "They are all the same.")*"¹⁷⁹ In fact, Camus' *L'Etranger* (*Stranger or Outsider*) was strongly criticised because of the unnamed Arab characters. Critics suggest that Camus denies the existence of an Algerian identity through the denial of names to his Arab characters, unlike the European ones who are granted the dignity of names. Indeed, even when the protagonist Meursault kills the Arab, readers do not feel that Meursault has murdered a man; he has done nothing wrong, for it was just an Arab. This sense of

¹⁷⁸ Laura Heynmann, "Naming, Identity, and Trademark Law," *Indiana Law Journal*, Vol. 86, No. 09 (2011), pp. 382-444; p. 385.

¹⁷⁹ Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, p. 129.

inhumanity is reinforced with voicelessness of Arabs who are painted as blocks of stones.¹⁸⁰ Thus, it is crucial to investigate the importance of names and labels in literary works and how Khadra uses them to create and intensify the identity trauma of his protagonist.

Gordon Allport, an American psychologist and theorist, emphasises the importance of names and proposes that our names are the focal point around which we build a personal identity.¹⁸¹ In *What the Day Owes the Night*, the protagonist Younes has lost one of the main pillars of his identity; that is his name. As a first step towards assimilation, Younes was renamed as “Jonas” by Germaine. Younes refused it at the very beginning and reminded her that his name was Younes, “[she] gave [him] a tender smile, stroke [his] cheek and whispered: ‘not any more my darling ...’”¹⁸² At this transitional moment, the protagonist was thrown into a new culture. In other words, naming is a bestowal of a soul; for Younes, this bestowal of the new label suggests the beginning of metamorphosis and depersonalisation. For as he was given a new “more French” name, he was bestowed a new identity; accordingly, he was denied his true self. Eventually, Younes accepts “Jonas” as part of his self which causes an identical spilt. Considering names as main indicators of identity, then, the act of changing them will certainly have some psychological effects on the characters. In this matter, Younes states that he started feeling like he was “*a bird plucked of its feathers ... [he] was a different person.*”¹⁸³ Younes’ mother on the other hand, was indifferent to this change. When he informed her that Germaine calls him Jonas, she thought it was a matter of mispronunciation of Arab names, “[they] do not do it to be hurtful,”¹⁸⁴ she contends.

¹⁸⁰ Kulkarni, “The Ambiguous Fate of a Pied-Noir: Albert Camus and Colonialism,” p. 1528.

¹⁸¹ Bendicta Wind-Val, “Personal Names and Identity in Literary Contexts,” *Oslo Studies in Language*, Vol. 4(2) (2012), pp. 273-284; p. 275.

¹⁸² Yasmina Khadra, *What the Day Owes the Night*, (London: William Heinemann, 2010), p. 41.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 51.

Despite the fact that the act of renaming Younes offers him a kind of protection _ since it is this French name that helps him to succeed in disappearing and melting into the European community without even being distinguished as an Arab _ yet, the new name leads to identity dualism. In fact, one dramatic moment in his life is when he realises that Jonas is different to Younes. Indeed, it is Isabelle who opens his eyes to the bitter truth that “[in] order to be assimilated, it is not enough to leave one’s group, but one must enter another.”¹⁸⁵ Isabelle makes it clear for Younes that he is not one of them, even after changing his looks and name. Furthermore, as Memmi states, “the colonized in the throes of assimilation hides his past, his traditions, in fact all his origins which have become ignominious.”¹⁸⁶ Isabelle describes him as a liar because he has never spoken about his origins as an Arab. Younes in his turn, states that it was the first time for Isabelle to address someone without using Monsieur or Madame, because she was now addressing Younes the Arab rather than Jonas whom she thought was French like her.

'Your name is Younes, isn't it? You-nes? So why do you go round calling yourself Jonas?'

'Everyone calls me Jonas ... what difference does it make?'

'It makes all the difference!' ... 'It changes everything.' 'We are from different worlds ... 'And the fact that you have blue eyes is not enough.' ... 'You surely don't think I could marry an Arab? I'd rather die.'¹⁸⁷

Following this conversation, Younes says that Isabelle ripped him from his safe world; her words left deep scars opening his eyes to notice the differences between his own people and the French. Unlike Isabelle, Émilie accepts the Arab-ness of Younes; mostly along the whole story, Émilie uses the name ‘Younes’ rather than Jonas. She tells him that she still remembers their first day and that she knows his true name, “‘Younes ...’ she said. ‘That’s your name,

¹⁸⁵ Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, p. 168.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

¹⁸⁷ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 75.

*isn't it? I remember everything.' ... 'Can you feel my heart beating, Jonas ... Younes?'"*¹⁸⁸

Indeed even at their first encounter, the protagonist introduces himself using Younes.¹⁸⁹ This might suggest that Younes was determined to adhere to his origins. In this respect, one can claim that Khadra, unquestionably, succeeds in creating a strong sense of attachment between his protagonist's name and his personal identity. Younes is stuck in an "entre-deux" situation; he no longer knows whether he is Younes the Arab or Jonas the French. This naming issue worsens his feeling of non-belonging to both worlds. In other words, the loss of his true name leads to an existential and identical anguish.

As already stated, names are essential part for one's personality, and they are basic bearers of cultural identity. This might explain the deep psychological effects of renaming on Younes, the change and erasure of his Arab name turns to bring about a change or, more precisely, a split in Younes' identity. The fact that he owns these two names makes Younes a bit of both an Arab and a European character. Jelloul in his part, though he knows that Younes is an Arab like him, but he has problems in accepting Younes' Algerian-ness; Jelloul mocks him, "*by the way, why is it that I still can't bring myself to call you Younes?"*¹⁹⁰ This, if one might claim, is due to the fact that, for Jelloul, being an Algerian means being the enemy of the French; it is quite clear that one's name holds a significant connotation, that is why Jelloul addresses Younes by his adoptive/assimilative name. For him, Younes has renounced his Arabness, he is rather a French who turns his back to his people, their cause, and their sufferings. This might further explain why Jelloul considers Younes as one of the Europeans preferring to call him "Jonas." Furthermore, in one of their encounters, Jelloul humiliates Younes for not choosing to side with his people, "*that's right, Younes. Turn your back on the truth, on your*

¹⁸⁸ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 156-157.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

people, run back to your friends ... Younes ... you do still remember your name?"¹⁹¹ Jelloul keeps persuading Younes to join the liberation war by reminding him of his Algerian origins and his true name. Such words are too harsh that they deepen Younes' wounds; but time and again he refuses to side. As Fanon puts it, Younes is stuck in "*a zone of nonbeing, an extraordinarily sterile and arid region.*"¹⁹² Younes has best expressed this frustration saying, "*I sat on the fence, torn between loyalty to my friends and solidarity with my own people.*"¹⁹³ Because if he chose to side with his European friends he would be a traitor to the national cause; on the other hand, if he chose his people he would be viewed as ungrateful who turned his back against his benefactors.¹⁹⁴ After the outbreak of the war and after losing many of his friends, Younes starts to feel foreign to his French name and to his whole life as a European; therefore, he tries to reconnect to his roots through some visits to the Algerian quarters of Oran declaring that, "*the fact was that I was the one who had changed. Jonas was fading and Younes was coming to the fore.*"¹⁹⁵

By and large, we might argue that names and labels are firmly core parts of one's identity and are essential for one's psychological well being. Khadra, in his part, has succeeded in painting and intensifying the existential dilemma of his protagonist through the issue of naming. Yet, Younes' problem is not only the erasure of his Arab name; for, as Shakespeare suggests, "*a rose by any other word would smell as sweet,*"¹⁹⁶ that is to say, in spite of changing his name, Younes was not fully detached of his origins. Indeed, it is his attachment to the French and his French-like lifestyle that aggravates his identity metamorphosis. In this respect, we shall examine, in the following section, the effects of assimilation on the Algerian educated character as well as his psychological and identical disintegration.

¹⁹¹ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 114.

¹⁹² Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, (London: Pluto Press, 2008), p. 2.

¹⁹³ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p.114.

¹⁹⁴ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 62.

¹⁹⁵ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 166.

¹⁹⁶ William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* (New York: Spark Publishing, 2003), p. 80.

2. Alienated or Assimilated

When I say that I am French, I give myself a label that each French person refuses me. I speak French, and I got my education in a French school. I have learned as much French as the average Frenchman. What am I then, dear God? Is it possible that as long as there are labels, there is not one for me? Which one is mine? Can somebody tell me what I am! Of course, they may want me to pretend that I am wearing a label because they pretend to believe in it. I am very sorry, but this is not enough.

Mouloud Feraoun. Quoted in Durham, Brooke. "An Analysis of the Self-Identification of Algerian Novelists Mouloud Feraoun and Yasmina Khadra and their French Education." *McNair Summer Research Program* (2013), pp. 213-249; p. 230.

In his *Journal (1955-1962): Reflections on the French-Algerian War*, Mouloud Feraoun chronicles his experiences of the liberation war, and his frustration and helplessness to situate himself within hostile affiliations. Like Younes, Feraoun was an *évolué* who was desperately consumed by the idea of locating his own identity. Khadra's *What the Day Owes the Night*, throughout the first-person narrative, represents a new perspective on cultural heterogeneity in relation to self-identification, and the psychological chaos caused by living between, across, and in the margins of cultures. The problematic shift and major cause of Younes' disintegration is what Bhabha terms, 'the enforced social accommodation or cultural relocation.'¹⁹⁷ Out of poverty, and after many trials, Mahi succeeds in convincing Younes' father that the boy has no future with him, for the majority of Algerians were not supposed to attend schools at that time. Accordingly, Younes was sent to live with his uncle Mahi, a Franco-Algerian educated man, and his French wife Germaine. As mentioned earlier, Younes was deprived of his true name by his adoptive mother, who did her best to absorb Younes' culture and to turn him into a French boy; as Younes expresses, "*Germaine was determined to*

¹⁹⁷ Homi Bhabha, "The World and the Home," *Social Text: Third World and Post-Colonial Issues*, No. 31/32 (1992), pp. 141-153; p. 141.

spoil me,”¹⁹⁸ ergo, the act of renaming was the first move towards a whole life of psychological and identical distress.

In point of fact, as he is relocated into the French society, Younes succeeds to a great extent in melting into the new community. From his first days, Germaine and Mahi do their best to teach him the French language; because the mastery of language, as the main carrier of culture, means the adoption and acceptance of this culture. As Fanon states, *“to speak a language is to take on a world, a culture;”*¹⁹⁹ that is to say, language is the sole key to open the gate of success and integration for the oppressed. In school, the protagonist faces some obstacles at the beginning mainly in accepting the humiliation that any Arab would face for the slightest mistake; but eventually he makes a life-friendship with French boys who consider him as French. What one should note is that Mahi, as an *évolué*, was at peace with his different allegiances and tried to remind Younes of his roots in many instances to help him avoid identical anguish, *“I’m sure you’re wondering why am telling you all this, boy ... I’m doing it so that you know who your family are ... Where your father failed, you can succeed, and climb back to the lofty place from where you came.”*²⁰⁰ Mahi seems to be aware that the native intellectual, who adopts his coloniser’s history, denounces his own one and loses his nation’s memory; as Memmi asserts, *“[the colonised] who has the wonderful good luck to be accepted in a school will not be saved nationally. The memory which is assigned him is certainly not that of his people. The history which is taught him is not his own.”*²⁰¹ Furthermore, Mahi introduces his nephew to Messali Hadj and other Algerian nationalists in order to instill a sense of nationalism into the soul of Younes. Mahi is thus, among the few native intellectuals who overwhelms his indigenous culture, embraces the European one, and creates a new exceptional identity that bears all its different components. In this point,

¹⁹⁸ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 42.

¹⁹⁹ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 25.

²⁰⁰ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 46-47.

²⁰¹ Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, p. 148-149.

Maalouf points out that, “those who can accept their diversity fully will hand on the torch between communities and cultures, will be a kind of mortar joining together and strengthening the societies in which they live.”²⁰² However, this frantic acquisition of the new culture is not fully positive, because “[while] the colonial [bilinguist] is saved from being walled in, he suffers a cultural catastrophe which is never completely overcome.”²⁰³ Unfortunately, this is the case of Younes who fails to make peace between his incompatible allegiances. Younes is poised between his national allegiance and his friends.

In this respect, Durham suggests that the native intellectual, who contends to achieve something through colonial education, falls prey to identity catastrophe. As he appraises the new culture, his native culture is crushed mainly as he strains to harmonise between the two.²⁰⁴ This concept brings us to Fanon's theory of the native intellectual who, according to him, passes through three levels and stages; the first of which is called “the period of unqualified assimilation,”²⁰⁵ during which “the native intellectual gives proof that he has assimilated the culture of the occupying power.”²⁰⁶ In the second phase, though, the native is disturbed, being overwhelmed by the western culture, he tries to remember what he really is;²⁰⁷ yet since he “is not a part of his people, since he only has exterior relations with his people, he is content to recall their life only. Past happenings of the [bygone] days of his [childhood] will be brought up out of the depths of his memory.”²⁰⁸ This, eventually, leads him to the last level, namely, the ‘fighting phase’ where “after having tried to lose himself in the people and with the people, will on the contrary shake the people.”²⁰⁹ In the novel, Younes has passes unconsciously through Fanon's three stages; though he has not actually

²⁰² Maalouf, *In the Name of identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*, p. 36.

²⁰³ Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, p. 151.

²⁰⁴ Durham, “An Analysis of the Self-Identification of Algerian Novelists,” p. 2.

²⁰⁵ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 222.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

reached the point in which he himself shakes the people; instead, he is the one psychologically shaken. In Younes's case, the first stage starts from school until his adulthood, where he becomes 'unqualified assimilated' which is why he seeks psychological refuge in his childish fantasies.²¹⁰ After losing Émilie, Younes tends to stay alone striving to turn back time rewind in order to repair his mistakes of adulthood; this is the second stage Fanon suggests. The final stage, nevertheless, starts with the stirring events and the tragic twist the liberation war brings about. Here, Jelloul plays the role of the external driving force that arouses the internal conflict within Younes.

Having each foot in one of the two opposing communities, Younes strives to cope with his clashing selves. The psychologically homeless protagonist is in search for his true identity as he has not been able to reconcile between the complexities of his hybrid identity. Because under colonisation, argues the Nigerian author Chinua Achebe, the colonised lives at the crossroads of cultures.²¹¹ In this regard, it is undeniable that, for Bhabha, this crossroad is hybridity;²¹² in Bhabha's words, hybridity is "*what is "new, neither the one nor the other."*"²¹³ To put it simple, "*[hybridity] expresses a state of 'in betweenness,' as in a person who stands between two cultures.*"²¹⁴ Furthermore, Younes is disintegrated and alienated of his true identity but he has never felt that he is one of the French; as a result, he lacks a sense of relatedness and attachment to others. Younes's identity deformation leads to psychological trauma, mainly due to his cultural displacement; thus, he never feels fully at home. The absence of the sense of belongingness and the idea of exile is highly present in the novel. Younes clarifies,

²¹⁰ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 61.

²¹¹ Alireza Farahbakhsh and Rezvaneh Ranjbar, "Bhabha's Notion of Unhomeliness in J. M. Coetzee's *Foe*: A Postcolonial Reading," *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)*, Vol. 4 (July 2016), pp. 105-112; p. 106.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

I thought about moving back to Oran. I was miserable in Río Salado. I no longer seemed to recognise the place. I was living in a parallel world. I recognised familiar faces, but I was afraid that if I should reach out to touch them, there would be nothing but the wind. It was the end of an era; a page had been turned, and the new page before me was blank, frustrating, unpleasant to the touch ... I needed a change of scenery, a new horizon. And – why not? – to sever the ties that no longer bound me to anything. I felt rootless.²¹⁵

What one may notice here is that Younes felt a sort of strangeness and displacement in the city in which he has grown up; this psychological issue is better explained by Bhabha who argues, "[in] that displacement the border between home and the world becomes confused; and, uncannily, the private and public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting."²¹⁶ In Younes' case, the feeling of unfitting in is what Bhabha calls 'unhomely', he suggests, "[to] be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the "unhomely" be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and the public spheres. The unhomely moment creeps up on you stealthily as your own shadow."²¹⁷ To put it in other words, one might develop a sense of unhomeliness unconsciously. Hence, Younes has not discovered his disintegration until late in his youth after losing Émilie and the intimacy of his European friends, says Younes, "I was a shadow, indecisive, easily led ... I was looking for a place to hide."²¹⁸

The effects of displacement are too deep on Younes that he has not only struggled to fit in, but he also forgets his life as a poor Arab boy. In Memmi's words, Younes, like any other native *évolué*, is "condemned to lose his memory,"²¹⁹ that is to say, he has no history. He seeks refuge in the old Algerian quarters of Oran, "I preferred to lose myself in the old

²¹⁵ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 164.

²¹⁶ Bhabha, "The World and the Home," p. 141.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 172.

²¹⁹ Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, p. 147.

quarters of Oran, in La Calère, around the Pasha Mosque and especially the Bey's Palace, watching the boys squabbling at Raz-el-Ain."²²⁰ In the same sense writes Fanon,

It is symptomatic of the intellectual's realization of the danger that he is running in cutting his last moorings and of breaking adrift from his people. This stated belief in a national culture is in fact an ardent, despairing turning toward anything that will afford him secure anchorage. In order to ensure his salvation and to escape from the supremacy of the [coloniser's] culture the native feels the need to turn backward toward his unknown roots and to lose himself at whatever cost in his own barbarous people.²²¹

It is no surprise that the native intellectual, having lost the sense of belongingness, has to "seek his culture elsewhere, anywhere at all; and if he fails to find the substance of culture of the same grandeur and scope as displayed by the ruling power, the native intellectual will very often fall back upon emotional attitudes and will develop a psychology which is dominated by exceptional sensitivity and susceptibility."²²² That is what leads Fanon to avow that, "the Arab, permanently an alien in his own country, lives in a state of absolute depersonalization ... The social structure existing in Algeria was hostile to any attempt to put the individual back where he belonged."²²³ Therefore, Younes' identical puzzling is worsened by his encounters of racism and social inequality. As a young child, he depicts the large disparities between their desolate, miserable life in a godforsaken village in contrast to the city of Oran where the French colons live. Later, as he had grown up, the protagonist was enrolled into a French school where he managed to melt with some French friends. However, in the way Memmi puts it, "far from preparing the adolescent to find himself completely, school creates a permanent duality in him. The colonised was saved from illiteracy only to

²²⁰ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 192.

²²¹ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 217-218.

²²² *Ibid.*, p. 220.

²²³ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, xxiii.

fall into linguistic [and identical] dualism."²²⁴ In a matter of fact, it was the social prejudices that aggravate identity trauma and hinder his connection to any of the societies. Younes recalls the *roumis*' hostility, as well as the embarrassment of an Arab classmate; having forgotten to do his homework, the Arab boy was humiliated by another French student who yelled, "*Arabs are lazy and shiftless.*"²²⁵ In the same way, Memmi points that the colonisers believe that the trait of laziness is intrinsic at the very nature of the colonised; in other words, "*nothing could better justify the colonized's destitution than his indolence. The mythical portrait of the colonized therefore includes an unbelievable laziness.*"²²⁶

In many occasions, Younes seems psychologically 'homeless' and perplexed of whether he really belongs to the French or not, as Maalouf states, he suffers of living in "*a sort of frontier zone crisscrossed by ethnic, religious and other fault lines.*"²²⁷ Moreover, the "*unheimlich,*" as Freud coins it; refers to the state of feeling "*not at home even in your own home because you are not at home in yourself: your cultural identity crisis has made you a psychological refugee.*"²²⁸ Consequently, unhomeliness forces psychological refugees to merge their two cultures.²²⁹ The result of this is "*none of the cultures is pure and genuine.*"²³⁰ Bhabha applies the notion of uncanny which is taken from Freud's "*sense of a foreignness or the uncanny and believes that we are even foreign to us. There is a sense of foreignness within the self.*"²³¹ In other words, the recurrence of what was once familiar but which is now haunting, horrific, and strange. As a little child, Younes has lived with his family in a filthy shack; during his first visit to the town, he expresses his astonishment of the city, where he feels dizzy of the disparities between Arabs and French lifestyle, "*I had never imagined that such a sprawling*

²²⁴ Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, p. 150.

²²⁵ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 54.

²²⁶ Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, p. 123.

²²⁷ Maalouf, *In the Name of identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*, p. 4.

²²⁸ Farahbakhsh and Ranjbar, "Bhabha's Notion of Unhomeliness in J. M. Coetzee's *Foe*," p. 107.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ *Ibid.*

place could exist ... I couldn't believe my eyes; I did not even have names for many of the things that flashed before them ... This was a different planet."²³² Being used to poverty as any of his compatriots, Younes describes his discomfort and fear of the opulence in his uncle's house, At night, he feels frightened of the new room, though he was used to sleeping in darkness, but Younes feels strange at this new house,

In this opulent room, I felt strangely uneasy. I missed my parents. But this was not the reason I felt fearful. There was something ominous about the room ... I was convinced that I was not alone, that there was something crouched in the shadows watching me. The hair on the back of my neck stood up ... my heart felt as though it would explode.²³³

Time passes, and Younes starts to be accustomed to his new life. Still, he never feels at home, "*[somewhere] it was written that I was born to leave my home, to constantly leave, each time leaving a part of me behind.*"²³⁴ Yet, when Younes takes Jelloul back to his *douar* and sees the abject poverty of the Algerian inhabitants, his ambivalent feelings awaken the moment he encounters the reality of colonialism and its effects on his own people, "*[suddenly] the simple fact that I was on the far side of the hill terrified me ... I felt a mortal dread at being in this douar of ramshackle huts pervaded by the stench of rotting flesh.*"²³⁵ Jelloul's replies to Younes further intensify the situation, "*[this] is how our people live, Jonas; my people and your people too. Here, nothing ever changes, while you go on living like a prince ... What's the matter? Why don't you say something? You're shocked; you can't believe it, can you?*"²³⁶ Feeling terribly horrified by the scene, Younes was about to vomit, which indicates the extent to which his ambivalent feelings reached. Turning his back to Jelloul and hurrying up to the city, Jelloul yells at him, "*[that's] right, Younes. Turn your*

²³² *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 10.

²³³ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

back on the truth, on your people, run back to your friends ... Younes ... You do still remember your name? Hey, Younes ..."²³⁷ Khadra uses Jelloul to challenge Younes' ambivalence towards the two worlds of the coloniser and the colonised; for instance, Jelloul points to the critical location Younes occupies, says Jelloul, "*[you] wouldn't understand ... You're one of us, but you live like one of them.*"²³⁸

The fact is that Younes is caught in state of indecisiveness. Prior to this incident, when André has humiliated Jelloul referring to Arabs as 'dogs',²³⁹ Younes remains silent while his French friend Fabrice asks him to put André in his place, Younes replies, "*[this] is his place, Fabrice ... I'm the one who doesn't know my place.*"²⁴⁰ This existential puzzle is best captured by Jean-Paul Sartre who questions his location, "*I want to leave, to go somewhere where I should be really in my place, where I would fit in ... but my place is nowhere; I am unwanted.*"²⁴¹ In spite of his silence, Younes' inner conflict was getting the best out of him, "*I felt sick at heart and the beach now seemed as bleak as a desert island.*"²⁴² Concerning his reply to Fabrice, writes Durham,

Younes' last reply demonstrated the young man's uncertainty about his place in the colonial dynamic of dominance and his ambiguous place among his friends—should he have said something to André to defend his people? What kept him silent? This is evidence of Younes' internal division between "Jonas"—his assimilated European self—and "Younes," his Arab self.²⁴³

²³⁷ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 114.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ Alison Nastasi, "30 Jean-Paul Sartre Quotes For Your Next Existential Crisis," *Flavorwire* 2014.

<http://flavorwire.com/463783/30-jean-paul-sartre-quotes-for-your-next-existential-crisis>, Accessed on: 22.04.2018

²⁴² *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 86.

²⁴³ Durham, "An Analysis of the Self-Identification of Algerian Novelists," p. 241.

These ambivalent feelings are the main reason behind Younes' mimicry of the French life style as Bhabha argues, "*the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence.*"²⁴⁴ Younes is like a shadow of his friends, following them wherever they go: to the beach, caffés, restaurants, bars, and brothels. Yet, while his friends drink beer, he drinks a soft drink;²⁴⁵ even when he once tries to bring himself to drink, his arm refuses to bring the cup to his lips.²⁴⁶ Indeed, Younes finds himself stuck in a purgatory-like place where his hybrid identity cannot afford him a seat in either side: neither he stays Younes the Muslim nor he fully becomes Jonas the French; because "*mimicry,*" asserts Bhabha, "*conceals no presence or identity behind its mask ... The menace of mimicry is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority. And it is a double-vision that is a result of ... the partial representation/recognition of the colonial object.*"²⁴⁷ Later in his life, Younes starts to question his identity,

How had I managed to live without this part of my birthright? I should have come here regularly to fill the gaps in my identity. Río Salado and I no longer spoke the same language; how should I speak now? When I lived in Río Salado, had I been Jonas or Younes? Why, when my friends laughed, did I hesitate a moment before laughing with them? Why had I always felt that I had to carve out a place for myself among my friends? Why did I feel guilty whenever I met Jelloul's eyes? Had I simply been tolerated, integrated, biddable? What had stopped me from being myself, forced me to identify with the society I was growing up in and turn my back on my own people? I was a shadow, indecisive, easily led. I was constantly listening for some slight, some insult, the way an adopted child is more aware of his parents' momentary indifference than he is of their love.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁴ Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *Discipleship: A Special Issue on Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 28 (1984), pp. 125-133; p. 126.

²⁴⁵ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 123.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

²⁴⁷ Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," p. 129.

²⁴⁸ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 172.

For Maalouf, those who belong to opposed communities are supposed to act as bridges or mediators between these communities; yet, as a result of the dogmatic and narrow attitude that restricts identity into a single affiliation, identity turns to a tragic mechanism.²⁴⁹ On top of this, “*a person’s identity is not an assemblage of separate affiliations, nor a kind of loose patchwork; it is like a pattern drawn on a tightly stretched parchment.*”²⁵⁰ In the light of Maalouf’s idea, we can suggest that one of the reasons of Younes’ anguish is his inability to accept the complexities of his self, seeking to build his identity upon one overriding allegiance. Maalouf believes that “*[whenever] there is a divided society, there are men and women bearing within them contradictory allegiances, people who live on the frontier between opposed communities, and whose very being might be said to be traversed by ethnic or religious or other fault lines ... they are frontier dwellers.*”²⁵¹

Throughout the life of Younes, Khadra sheds light on the traumatic consequences endured by the Algerian population during the French colonialism. The results of assimilation policies were destructive to the native intellectuals whose distorted hybrid identities drove them to a state of psychological chaos. Just like the protagonist of Khadra's novel, it was only after the departure of the French colonisation from Algeria that the Algerians could restore their Algerian-ness, as stated by Younes, “*Algeria was to be Algerian.*”²⁵² Nonetheless, Younes' alienation causes him crucial existential dilemma wherein he fails to cope with the surrounding events and, ultimately, prevents him from taking action. The next section is devoted to Younes' existential issues.

²⁴⁹ Maalouf, *In the Name of identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*, p. 5.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

²⁵² *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 221.

3. To Be *Mujahid* or *Harki*: That Was the Question!

"There is no reality except in action ... Man is nothing else than his plan; he exists only to the extent that he fulfills himself; he is therefore nothing else than the ensemble of his acts, nothing else than his life."

Jean-Paul Sartre. Hussein, Alia. "Breaking the First Rule of Fight Club; An Existential Examination," *Roughneck Review* (2013), p. 3.

In this quotation, Jean-Paul Sartre negates any sort of being except in action. Descartes' cogito "I think therefore I am" is seemingly no longer valid or, at least, inadequate for Sartre who assures that Man's existence is restricted to his plans and acts rather than his thoughts and contemplation. In short, there is no existence beyond the ensemble of one's acts. In *What the Day Owes the Night*, Younes reaches to the same inference,

Are we the people we once were or the people we wish we had been? Are we the pain we caused others or the pain we suffered at the hands of others? The encounters we missed or those fortuitous meetings that changed the course of our destiny? Our time behind the scenes that saved us from our vanity or the moment in the limelight that warmed us? We are all of these things, we are the whole life that we have lived, its highs and lows, its fortunes and its hardships; we are the sum of the ghosts that haunt us ... we are a host of characters in one, so convincing in every role we played that it is impossible for us to tell who we really were, who we have become, who we will be.²⁵³

Regarding the two philosophers and their beliefs, William Shakespeare's famous question "to be or not to be" synthesises both of them as far as the entire human existence revolves around this challenging question. Hamlet, as a thinking man, finds himself stuck in a state of meditation mingled with that of inaction, *"he realises that he is compelled to choose; that he cannot not choose. There is no escaping freedom - even the decision not to act is a self-defining choice. By acknowledging the importance of action, he ups the existential stakes and*

²⁵³ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 249-250.

shows the audience that the freedom to act or not act is an inescapable part of being human."²⁵⁴ Hamlet's state of mind resembles, to a far extent, that of Younes. In the novel, Younes' inaction is like that of prince Hamlet, both of them have to take the one big move. This fact is extremely highlighted with the approach of the revolution, as in times of war, sides must be chosen; there remains nowhere for in-betweenness wherein one can hide. For Younes, things become complicated and he has to decide his destiny for himself whether to be *Mujahid* or *Harki*; in other words, he has either to join his own people in their war of independence or to side with his French friends with whom he has spent his childhood and youth. Indeed, the choice was a difficult one for Younes who was aware of the change taking place yet to him *"it was as though these changes were happening in some parallel world. [he] sat on the fence, torn between loyalty to [his] friends and solidarity with [his] people."*²⁵⁵

Throughout his life, Younes has passed through different stages and states, moving from the Socratic statement "know thyself" to the Shakespearean famous question "to be or not to be," passing through a state of psychological disorder and deep meditation. These stages are concerned with one main philosophical field, say, existentialism. At first, Younes struggles to find a place in the world and to define himself within it: is he Younes the Arab or Jonas the assimilated? In order to come up with the authentic answer, Younes seeks attachment to something, some place, or someone he has known earlier in his life while a child. For him, childhood is the solid base on which identity is built, *"I am the child I once was. We do not have a second childhood – we never truly emerge from the first. Am I old? What is an old man but a child who has amassed time and flab?"*²⁵⁶

Younes's desperate need for self-identification is aroused because of certain vivid characters in the novel, particularly his compatriot Jelloul. This latter is significantly

²⁵⁴ Quoted in Keys, *Shakespeare's Existentialism*, p. 134.

²⁵⁵ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 114.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

influential because through him, "*Khadra emphasized the evolution of Younes' understanding of what it meant to be European or Arab in Algeria. Younes experienced this internal conflict in terms of various oppositions.*"²⁵⁷ More than this, back to his childhood era, Younes had witnessed a conversation between a Moroccan ex-soldier named 'Peg-Leg' who fought with French army against his people and an Algerian man named 'El Moro'. The latter humiliated the former describing him as a 'mercenary traitor' whose officers, after years of loyal service, "*threw [him] to the dogs when [he] had one paw missing.*"²⁵⁸ Indeed, Peg-Leg's story foreshadows the fate awaiting those *harkis* who joined the French army in the war against their own people. Later on, Krimo would represent this group committing terrible crimes against the Algerian rebels. All these facts help Younes to stay immune in the face of temptation to side with the French.

From an early age, Younes was told heroic stories about his great grandmother *Lalla Fatna N'Soumer*²⁵⁹ who is a famous Algerian nationalist figure. His uncle and adoptive father makes sure to bring him up in a nationalistic atmosphere through introducing him to such prominent Algerian authors like Malek Bennabi²⁶⁰ as if preparing him for the future war. Later in his life, Younes would recall some memories of the meetings held on their house especially the one in which he joined the guests in the living room that welcomed some major politicians of the time, namely "*Messali Hadj, the guiding light of the movement for Algerian independence.*"²⁶¹ Younes retrieves back those memories with noticeable pleasure, he says,

Sometimes my uncle entertained guests from out of town, Arabs and Berbers, some in European suits, others in traditional dress. They were distinguished, eminent people who talked about some country called Algeria. This was

²⁵⁷ Durham, "An Analysis of the Self-Identification of Algerian Novelists," p. 245.

²⁵⁸ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 26.

²⁵⁹ It is mentioned in the novel as "Lalla Fatna" without referring to her full name, but it is understood from the context that she is the famous heroine Lalla Fatma N'Soumer. *Ibid.*, p. 45-47.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

not the same country they taught us about at school, nor the one people talked about in the posh neighbourhoods, but a country that had been ravaged, conquered, silenced; a country that gnawed on its anger like rotting meat. These men talked about the Algeria of Jenane Jato, about the yawning gulf between rich and poor, about whipping boys and scapegoats ... they talked about a country that was yet to be redefined, a country in which every paradox seemed to live a life of ease.²⁶²

All the way through the novel, a number of characters align with one side or the other as soon as war broke out and even before it. To begin with, and as the quotation above suggests, Mahi is the first one to help in the political struggle for an Algerian nation. Mahi's one dream which he has cherished is that of an enlightened nation.²⁶³ Younes describes his uncle as a *"cultured, well-read man, aware of the upheavals in the Arab world, my uncle had been a supporter on an intellectual level of the nationalist cause spreading through educated Muslim circles ... My uncle was a pacifist, a hypothetical democrat, an intellectual who put his faith in words, in demonstrations, in slogans, with a visceral hatred of violence."*²⁶⁴ It is noteworthy that Mahi is a man of principle and a strong believer in Qur'an which says, *"Whosoever killeth a man, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind."*²⁶⁵ Mahi's choice of action brings about his self-destruction, as he experiences a psychological breakdown after being tortured in prison. For the rest of his life, he will never be the same person again. Eventually, he passes away as a result to this agony.

While everyone picks up a side, the protagonist remains motionless in an understandable way. Jelloul, who knows pretty well with whom he should side and does what exactly is required from him; that is to say, fighting alongside with *FLN*, plays a crucial role in pushing Younes to give his Algerian-ness the right to defend itself by means of revolution. To Younes' astonishment, Jelloul shows exceptional strength from an early age, says Younes, *"Jelloul's*

²⁶² *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 53.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

words unsettled me, and I realised that though he was not yet twenty, he had an inner strength, a maturity."²⁶⁶ In one of their meetings, Jelloul emphasises, "some day you're going to have to pick a side, you know ... Our people have had enough of suffering in silence; they've revolted. Of course, being caught between two stools, you can do what you like, you can side with whoever suits you."²⁶⁷ This fact has been emphasised by Jelloul at every chance he encounters Younes urging him to join him in the sacred war. For Jelloul, it was easy to choose his path fulfilling his destiny as a *mujahid* because from the early beginning he knew quite well the real owner of the land. As Jean-Paul Sartre notes, "Life begins on the other side of despair,"²⁶⁸ it was poverty, misery, and oppression that filled Jelloul with the wild desire to revolt in the first place. In this instance, Memmi assures that "the more freely [the coloniser] breathes, the more the colonized are choked."²⁶⁹ After the outbreak of the war, though, the coloniser starts to feel the threat of losing the privileges of colonialism. Hence, Jaime Jiménez Sosa, who is the very representative of the colons in the novel, tries to convince Younes of the colons' right of the Algerian land and the need to defend it by means of military force; "this is no time to sit on the fence,"²⁷⁰ says Sosa to Younes. Yet, Younes' obstinacy to choose a side is explained in the words of Sartre, "[we] only become what we are by the radical and deep-seated refusal of that which others have made of us."²⁷¹ Thus, in his journey to find meaning to his existence, Younes refuses to choose either side, because his very *Self* refuses to be easily led by others: both Jelloul and Sosa.

²⁶⁶ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 113.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

²⁶⁸ Alison Nastasi, "30 Jean-Paul Sartre Quotes For Your Next Existential Crisis," *Flavorwire* 2014. <http://flavorwire.com/463783/30-jean-paul-sartre-quotes-for-your-next-existential-crisis/4>, Accessed on: 22.04.2018

²⁶⁹ Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, p. 52.

²⁷⁰ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 182.

²⁷¹ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 17.

The anguish Younes feels constantly all the way in his search for an essence to his existence is what makes him look for someone else to blame.²⁷² The concept of seeking a scapegoat to blame is recurrent in the novel; eventually, Younes realises that blaming others cannot remedy his pain; Younes admits, "*[the] fault, I knew, was mine; I had not had the courage of my convictions. I could find excuses for myself, but the blame would still be mine.*"²⁷³ Thus, Younes comes face to face with what Sartre believes in that "*in the bright realm of values, we have no excuse behind us, nor justification before us. We are alone, with no excuses.*"²⁷⁴ It is worth noting here that Younes does not know what he wants and yet he knows he is responsible for what he is, this is the fact he finally realises; and that is the very notion existentialists suggest.²⁷⁵

Still, by not taking action, Younes "*enters an in-between state, which is neither being nor nothing.*"²⁷⁶ Apart from the avoiding involvement in violence, Younes' identity split is the main reason behind his indecisiveness as he is no longer interested in the world. When Jelloul accuses him of cowardice he replies, "*I'm not a coward, Jelloul, I'm not deaf, I'm not blind and I'm not made of stone. If you really want to know, I don't much care about anything in this world now.*"²⁷⁷ Younes comes across an existential dilemma: how to act and fit in? In the course of his life, he has been becoming more and more contemplative; he thinks much, talks little, but hardly acts. In the meantime, Younes was fighting his own war that was consuming

²⁷² *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 166-167.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

²⁷⁴ Alia Hussein, "Breaking the First Rule of Fight Club; An Existential Examination," *Roughneck Review* (2013), p. 5

²⁷⁵ Alison Nastasi, "30 Jean-Paul Sartre Quotes For Your Next Existential Crisis," *Flavorwire* 2014. <http://flavorwire.com/463783/30-jean-paul-sartre-quotes-for-your-next-existential-crisis>, Accessed on: 22.04.2018

²⁷⁶ Keys, *Shakespeare's Existentialism*, p. 113.

²⁷⁷ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 211.

him inside, "[like] a moth to a candle flame I was drawn to violence and to crowds. There could be no doubt: I was at war with myself,"²⁷⁸ clarifies Younes.

Back to the analogy between Younes and Hamlet, Younes chooses not to choose; "[in] the end," he states, "events would make my decision for me."²⁷⁹ In fact, "identity," argues John Lee, "whether produced in the Renaissance or in the present, is always and everywhere expressive of the external factors which created it, and into which it always threatens to bring it down."²⁸⁰ Younes's struggle within himself has taken quite a long time before he can come at peace with his two-faceted identity. He often goes outside, wanders in some godforsaken place, and then comes back to lock himself in his room and does not come for a while.²⁸¹ Shunning the ugly truth of the war does not look like a perfect shelter to Younes' disconcerted soul. Eventually, Younes comes "face to face with war ... with the terrible reality of war, the succubus of Death, the fertile concubine of Disaster, this truth [he] had not wanted to face."²⁸²

Being aware of the real situation of his own people and the colons, Younes finally comes to realise that the colons have not only made a place for themselves, but at the same time they have taken that of the natives, in the words of Memmi, "[a] foreigner, having come to a land by the accidents of history, he has succeeded not merely in creating a place for himself but also in taking away that of the inhabitant."²⁸³ To the readers' relief, Younes ultimately expresses his real feelings telling Sosa to take their trees and leave the native people free in

²⁷⁸ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 192.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

²⁸⁰ Quoted in Keys, *Shakespeare's Existentialism*, p. 114-115.

²⁸¹ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 193.

²⁸² *Ibid.*

²⁸³ Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, p. 53.

their lands. Younes ends up siding with his own people because *"they are his own people, he is and has never ceased to be one of them at heart!"*²⁸⁴

Throughout the Algerian war of Independence, not all the population, including the intellectuals, had taken up arms and joined the rebels in the mountains, but does this make them *'harkis'*? In his novel, Khadra exposes the reader to various characters who, in one way or another, provoke the internal strife within the protagonist. By way of contrast to Jelloul, Younes participates in the war without having to hold a gun. That is to say that Jelloul represents the violent colonised Fanon and Memmi talk about in their prolific writings, while the assimilated, intellectual Younes chooses the same path of his uncle, and the one the Algerian famous writer Mouloud Feraoun had followed looking for reconciliation of his dualistic nature of identity. Accordingly, *"Khadra demonstrates the difficulty of the choice between the two cultures and suggests that choosing not to fight can be an act of defining oneself just as meaningful as choosing to fight."*²⁸⁵ Still, by providing the rebels with the medicaments necessary, helping in saving their lives, and preferring to protect the rebels by not telling of them to Krimo the *harki* at the expense of his life, Younes has proved that *"the Arab, the good Arab, the noble, generous Arab was not a mythical figure, nor was he what the colonist had made him."*²⁸⁶ In the end of the story, Jelloul appreciates Younes' great effort in becoming *mujahid*. As a new lieutenant in independent Algeria, Jelloul offers Younes a chance to help in building the nascent nation, he says to Younes, *"[you're] an educated man, you responded when your country called, and I wondered whether you might like to put your education and your diplomas at the service of the new republic."*²⁸⁷ In fact, Younes's character is a good model of existentialism as he creates his essence and finds a purpose behind his

²⁸⁴ Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, p. 167.

²⁸⁵ Durham, "An Analysis of the Self-Identification of Algerian Novelists," p. 239.

²⁸⁶ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 227.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 226-227.

existence amid the stormy circumstances. This process has never been an easy one, for it entails misery, desolation, and agony which are the very traits of existentialism, *"it is certain that we cannot escape anguish, for we are anguish,"*²⁸⁸ Sartre proposes.

With the closure of the novel, Younes reveals a self-reconciliation coming at peace with his different facets of his identity. *"Called over the intercom in the airport to report to his gate to catch his plane back to Oran as "Monsieur Mahieddine Younes," the protagonist was at peace with his Algerian-ess as well as his ties to the European community."*²⁸⁹ He preferred to live in Río Salado, *Al Malah* nowadays, while maintaining intimate ties with his French friends. In their turn, they still embraced Younes as he is. This everlasting, unshakable friendship alludes to the possibility of coming into terms of reconciliation between Algeria and France as two independent countries. Additionally, by inviting Jean-Christophe, a former soldier in the Secret Army Organisation, Khadra conveys a humanist message that *"cooperation between differing cultures ... French and Arab ... was and is possible through the universal emotion of love. Love for family ... love for country—Algeria, and love of friends ... provided relief for the discomfort of the divided self in Khadra's view."*²⁹⁰ Khadra's message is that humanity can overcome savagery, love is capable of healing the wounds of war no matter their depths are, and that only forgiveness has that invincible power to make the enemies of yesterday the friends of today.

²⁸⁸ Alison Nastasi, "30 Jean-Paul Sartre Quotes For Your Next Existential Crisis," *Flavorwire* 2014. <http://flavorwire.com/463783/30-jean-paul-sartre-quotes-for-your-next-existential-crisis/4>, Accessed on: 22.04.2018

²⁸⁹ Durham, "An Analysis of the Self-Identification of Algerian Novelists," p. 245

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

4. Symbolism of Characters:

One of the astonishing but confusing characteristics of Khadra's *What the Day Owes the Night* is the use of symbolism. Khadra opens the gate of imagination to his readers not only through the abundant use of detailed description but through the symbolic dimensions of the novel's characters as well. In this regard, vivid characters such as Émilie, Madame Cazenave, Younes, Germaine, and Mahi reflect, to a high extent, some concepts that cross the readers' minds, especially those who know about the turbulent relationship between Algeria and France.

In the course of the novel, Younes's loss of Émilie as a result of his involvement in a forbidden relationship with Émilie's mother: Madame Cazenave is a reflexion to his loss of identity as a result of assimilation. At one moment, Younes confesses that "[for] one searing instant, [he] mistook [Madame Cazenave] for [his] destiny."²⁹¹ But when he comes across the reality of his situation he recognises that "Émilie was the destiny [he] had chosen and [he] cared nothing about anything else."²⁹² Thus, Madame Cazenave is a symbol of assimilation while Émilie can be seen as the shadow of Younes' lost identity. The promise he gives to Madame Cazenave is what detaches him from his beloved Émilie, a promise has been haunting him to the last days of his life and the one which destines him to eternal misery. He could regain his love once he frees himself from that promise in the same way he can restore his lost identity when he frees himself from his attachment to his European friends and the western life he led; a life that links him to theirs. Unlike Mahi, who feels free to accept the complexities of his identity though he was married to a catholic European woman, Younes resists all the attempts of Émilie to bring their relation into success. During the marriage party

²⁹¹ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 104.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 222.

of Émilie and Simon, Younes regrets his affair with Cazenave, as if her loss added salt to the injury of his lost identity,

I walked past the Jewish cemetery, and coming to the marabout road, I stopped and stood at the crossroads, looking up at the festive lights at Madame Cazenave's house ... Only after something is done do we truly realise it cannot be undone ... How? How could I have come so close to happiness and not had the courage to seize it with both hands? What terrible sin had I committed that I was forced to watch love seep [through] my fingers like blood from a wound? ... I hated myself, this useless burden abandoned by the roadside.²⁹³

Younes' helplessness to be with Émilie might represent Franco-Algerians' helplessness to side with their adoptive mother 'France' in spite of temptations of assimilation. Madame Cazenave is the mirror of French assimilation policies in Algeria, "*hadn't she seduced me and abandoned me? Wasn't it because of that fleeting mistake that she had made me swear to give up Émilie?*"²⁹⁴ France seduced the Algerians of enlightening them then it abandoned them and adopted its harsh policies to damage their identity. Younes was abandoned, destroyed, and most of all chiefly because of his affair with Cazenave he lost his chance to be with Émilie. Indeed, the connection between Émilie and Younes' lost identity is accentuated by the frequent visits Younes has to *Jenane Jato* and *Oran* where he spent his childhood as Arab while attending French school. It was not without immense anguish that Younes wanted to go back in time "*so that, older, wiser, [he] might return to the present, a virgin in mind and body, with a thousand opportunities open to [him] and the wisdom not to waste them.*"²⁹⁵ The fact is that Younes, by returning to the place where he first met Émilie, seeks not only to win her love, but to find his old self for which he is yearning all the same. In order to live without that anguish, Younes has to "*reconstruct the odors and sounds of [his] childhood.*"²⁹⁶ He

²⁹³ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 170.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

²⁹⁶ Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, p. 70.

oftentimes finds himself *"spending the empty days wandering through the Muslim neighbourhoods of Oran,"*²⁹⁷ where, to his disappointment, he finds no echo of his childhood.²⁹⁸ For the same purpose, Younes *"needed a friend, a confidant, someone [he] had known long ago, anyone who could offer [him] a feeling of closeness."*²⁹⁹ Indeed, his loss of Émilie is what reminds him of his loss of identity, as it was only after her marriage to his friend Simon that Younes woke up from the hypnotised situation that assimilation had caused. It is at this point in the story that Younes realises that his identity is at stake. He feels that Jonas has disappeared leaving space to the violent, bitter Younes to reappear.³⁰⁰ Therefore, he ponders his place in the society within which he is living; closing himself into his internal world where he experiences a split in his personality as the two clashing affiliations have got the best out of him, and yet he cannot run away from himself;³⁰¹ Younes felt himself *"slipping towards something [he] could not quite define that was pulling [him] in all directions, distorting [his] perceptions, [his] thoughts, the very fibres of [his] being, like a werewolf transforming in all his monstrosity under cover of darkness."*³⁰² After all, perhaps it was this monstrosity that taught him to hate, *"I hated Madame Cazenave, hated her with every fibre of my being,"*³⁰³ Younes affirms.

On the other hand, the stunning yet doomed love between Émilie and Younes parallels the strong affection France and Algeria had been sharing, a relationship that proved impossible to be maintained due to several obstacles. In the same way France had clung to Algeria, Émilie never lets go any opportunity to express her overwhelming emotions in quest of mutual love. The turbulent love story is, nonetheless, destined to failure just like the link between France

²⁹⁷ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 191.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 191.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

and Algeria was to be set apart in spite of the strong bond that had been connecting them for more than a century.

Still, there is a hint of a potential successful assimilation between the two countries through the thriving marriage of Germaine and Mahi, though this assimilation might be a futile one in the same way is the relationship between Mahi and Germaine that they adopt Younes as their own son. Younes examines their venerable attachment with great love, he says, "*I loved to see [my uncle] walking arm in arm with Germaine,*"³⁰⁴ because in spite of their different religions their "*love demanded no compromise, it was perfect.*"³⁰⁵ Yet, the abovementioned futility is quite logic because there is no such a complete assimilation. The question concerning the possibility of a successful assimilation is already answered by Memmi who contemplates,

Could assimilation have succeeded? Perhaps it could have at other periods of history. Under the conditions of contemporary colonization, apparently not. It may be a historical misfortune, and perhaps we should all deplore it together. Not only did it fail, but it appeared impossible to all parties concerned.³⁰⁶

Khadra's characters and their interrelated ties echo over and over again the connection between Algeria and France. This latter that came to its end in the same fashion the blooming relationship between Younes and his adoptive mother withers to the extent that they stop talking to one another. By refusing to tell Krimeo about the rebels, Younes utterly engages in the war alongside his own people, in doing so he retrieves back his Algerian-ness. In addition to that, the coldness he shows to Germaine further estranges him from her; says Younes, "*I realised that the ties that had bound me to her had finally sundered. This woman, who had been everything to me – mother, fairy godmother, sister, confidante, friend – now saw me*

³⁰⁴ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 149.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁶ Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, p. 169.

simply as a stranger."³⁰⁷ Through these tangled relationships, Khadra reflects the collapse of the connections between Algeria and France as 'bittersweet'. In so doing, Khadra transmits the ambivalent feeling shared by several Algerian intellectuals, particularly Mouloud Feraoun who was one of Khadra's inspirations in writing.³⁰⁸ In this regard, Feraoun "*welcomed the right of the Algerians to reclaim their soil and their identity from the French occupiers; additionally, he realized that French and Algerian cultures and intellectuals were deeply intertwined and that it would take generations to untangle the knots of more than a century of colonization.*"³⁰⁹ Once again, when war was over, choices were limited for there remained only two options with the coming of "*the season of 'the suitcase or the coffin'*".³¹⁰

Throughout the pages of *What the Day Owes the Night*, the readers find themselves coming upon infinite potential interpretations to the characters' choice of action on the one hand, and on the other hand they cannot escape symbolic facets of the characters per se. Khadra creates a fantastic story which one may mistake to be a real history that took place in colonial Algeria. Though he defends, via his protagonist, Algerians' right to determine their fate and to make their destiny themselves through regaining their Muslim identity; Kahdra, offers the *pieds-noirs* the chance to quench their everlasting thirst for Algeria. The novel is, indeed, a fictional map where they can spot places they crave to visit, places that ceased to exist in the present Algeria, namely those of the colonial period. In an artistic piece of literature, Khadra collects the *pieds-noirs'* shattered memories of the nostalgic era in one amazing gallery.

³⁰⁷ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 217.

³⁰⁸ Durham, "An Analysis of the Self-Identification of Algerian Novelists," p. 236.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

³¹⁰ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 223.

5. Nostalgeria: The Wound that Will Never Heal!

During the chaotic weeks of Algerian independence, hundreds of thousands of *pieds-noirs* were forced to flee from Algeria due to the traumatic spread of violence against them. The brutal deprivation of Algeria had a profound impact on the *pieds-noirs'* community who were unable to adapt to their new lives in France, Khadra depicts their leaving through the eyes of Younes,

I went down the port to watch the exodus. The quays were crowded with passengers, luggage and waving handkerchiefs. Steamers waiting to lift anchor groaned beneath the weight of the sorrow of those leaving. Families searched for each other in the crowds, children wept, old man slept on their suitcases, praying in their sleep that they might never wake.³¹¹

In a matter of fact, those expatriates accused metropolitan authorities for the loss of the great colony, highlighting the missed opportunities to set reforms of rights and privileges; thereby, leaving Algerians with no alternative solution but war.³¹² As Albert Memmi puts it,

Now that colonization is reaching its end, tardy expressions of good will are heard asking whether assimilation was not the great opportunity missed by colonizers and mother countries. "Ah, if we had only agreed to it! Can't you imagine!" they daydream. "A France with one hundred million Frenchmen?" It is not forbidden to re-imagine history.³¹³

The *pied-noir* historian Benjamin Stora asserts that, upon their arrival to France and especially between 1963 and 1981, at times when France labored to suppress any traces of the Algerian past, the *pieds-noirs* strove to sustain their identity and the memories of their "lost homeland" through arts, food, and annual reunions; making the souvenirs of their lost home

³¹¹ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 228.

³¹² Zack, "Who Fought the Algerian War?" p. 57.

³¹³ Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, p. 169.

known to their French fellows who were struggling to bury their colonial past.³¹⁴ The *pieds-noirs'* literature, generally referred to as “*Nostalgie*,” appeared as early as 1962, describing the grief-stricken departure through the nostalgic recreation of bitter memories during and after repatriation that preserves images of their “*pays perdu*”³¹⁵ (lost country). In matter of fact, nostalgic writings are the result of the alienation caused by the traumatic separation, coupled with an unwelcoming France where the new-comers were relegated to an inferior status.³¹⁶ Those *pieds-noirs* 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 it.*”³¹⁷ Indeed, only few expatriates have accepted their exile, while many other still reveal their emotional attachment to Algeria, their birthplace, presenting themselves as victims of the war. Taking the example of Marie Cardinal; the famous *pied-noir* writer who declares, “*Algeria is my true mother. I hold her in my heart as a child holding in his veins the blood of his parents.*”³¹⁸ Cardinal describes France as an exile where she could never feel at ease, and admits that her love for Algeria has not changed by time. She adds, “*[to] tear off Algeria from me, is to tear off my head, my guts, my heart and my soul.*”³¹⁹ Still, many *pieds-noirs* refuse the idea of returning to Algeria, suggesting that their physical return to Algeria might cause another trauma, as they confront with Algeria’s present without them, and as their idealised vision collides with the real image of Algeria. In this matter, Benjamin Stora says, “*but what is the dream of the pieds-noirs? To*

³¹⁴ Aoife Connolly, “Women as Keepers of Algerian Pied-Noir Identity,” *Limerick Students Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 4, No.1 (2012), pp. 22-36; p. 24.

³¹⁵ Amy L. Hubbell, “The Wounds of Algeria in Pied-Noir Autobiography,” *Dalhousie French Studies*, Vol. 81 (2007), pp. 59-68; p. 60.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

³¹⁷ Amy L. Hubbell, *Remembring French-Algeria*, (University of Nebraska Press-Sample books and Chapters, (2015), p. 19.

³¹⁸ Trans. mine, “L’Algerie, c’était ma vrais mère. Je la portais en moi comme un enfant porte dans ses veines le sang de ses parents.” Marie-Paule Ha, “Outre-Mer/ Autre Mère: Cardinal and Algeria,” *Romance Notes*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (1996), pp. 315-323; p. 320.

³¹⁹ Trans. mine, “m’arracher l’Algerie c’est arracher ma tête, mes tripes, mon Coeur et mes ames.” *Ibid.*, p. 320.

return to Algeria? No ... French Algeria, white Algeria, C'est fini ... That's why they find refuge in museums."³²⁰ On the other hand, the former *pieds-noirs* Helen Cixous reveals,

For me, Oran is the town of memory: I guard a strange treasure. I feel like I have no desire to return to Oran. I wish to keep Oran in the virginity of memory. Because if I go back, this will provoke great joy, but this will also provoke all the returns, scratch out all souvenirs, and swap old memories by new ones.³²¹

Additionally, this community is highly consumed with the idea of preserving their cultural roots and rejection of their present through annual reunions and the anniversary of their exodus. The *pieds-noirs* reconnect to the celebrated days reviving and sharing memories of their life at the ex-colony, mainly through photographs; they enjoy authentic Algerian and *pieds-noirs* dishes that serve as a compensation to their inability to physically travel, and reunify them with Algerian people.³²² In recent times, nostalgic *pieds-noirs* and their organisations established colonial and *pieds-noirs*' museums and memorials in Montpellier and Marseille.³²³ Forty four years after their departure, a group of 130 former colonialists returned to the city of Bijaya where one of *pieds-noirs* made a speech stating that, "*[this] is where we come from, this land belongs to us all, it's all of ours! No-one can take that away from us.*"³²⁴ In *What the Day Owes the Night*, one of the *pieds-noirs*' (Gustave) rhetorically raises this question, "*[why] were we made to feel like outsiders in a country where our fathers and our grandfathers and our great-grandfathers were born? Why were we made to feel like*

³²⁰ Michael Kimmelman, "Footprints of Pieds-Noirs Reach Deep into France," *The New York Times* March 5, 2009. <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/05/world/europe/05iht-kimmel.4.20622745.html>, Accessed on: 15.03.2018

³²¹ Trans. mine, "Oran est pour moi la ville de la mémoire: je garde un trésor étrange. Je sens que J'ai envie de ne pas retourner à Oran. J'ai envie de garder Oran dans une virginité de mémoire. Parce que si j'y retourne, cela provoquera une grande joie, mais cela provoquera aussi ce provoquent tous les retours, l'effacement du souvenir, et le remplacement d'un souvenir ancien par un souvenir récent." Hubbell, "The Wounds of Algeria in Pied-Noir Autobiography," p. 66.

³²² Amy L. Hubbell, "(In) Edible Algeria: Transmitting Pieds-Noirs Nostalgia through food," *Portal*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (July, 2013), p. 1.

³²³ Michael Kimmelman, "Footprints of Pieds-Noirs Reach Deep into France," *The New York Times* March 5, 2009. <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/05/world/europe/05iht-kimmel.4.20622745.html>, Accessed on: 15.03.2018

³²⁴ John Laurenson, "Former Settlers Return to Algeria," *BBC News* July 29, 2006. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/5224244.stm, Accessed on: 15.03.2018

*usurpers in a country we built with our own hands and watered with our sweat, our blood?
For as long as we don't know the answer, the wound will never heal ...*"³²⁵

Despite the fact that foreigners in general and *pieds-noirs* in particular avoided visiting the country during the Black Decade of 1990's, but recently about 500 former colons are returning to Algeria each year and are welcomed by the local population, as Abdelaziz Saidoud portrays, "*we were very close to them (pieds-noirs). They were Algerians in a way ... They loved our food, our traditions, our culture but they were against our independence.*"³²⁶ This picture is also portrayed by Moulessehouli in his novel *What the Day Owes the Night*; Younes befriends a group of French boys, he describes the gang as "the pitchfork" for they were "*as inseparable as the tines of a fork.*"³²⁷ In point of fact, Younes sorrowfully expresses his grief as Jean-Christophe refuses to meet him in France, "*I loved him [Jean-Christophe] like a brother, and like a brother I wept for him when he left, trailing the dust of a generation on his heels.*"³²⁸ Even at the close of the Liberation war and the withdrawal of the French colons, Younes chooses to stay in Algeria without abandoning his French friends whom, in their part, accept and respect Younes' choice. However, Algerian legacy remains an open wound that continues to plague the French in general and the *pieds-noirs* in particular, for it was all they had, it was the only thing they kept thinking about, though it is all over now but they cannot help forget. Commenting on their last meeting in France, Younes says, "*[though] the conversations ranged across the planet, they invariably circled back to Algeria. It was all they could talk about.*"³²⁹ In the same instance, two *pieds-noirs* was conversing when one of them argued, "*[you're] always banging on about all the things you had to leave back in the*

³²⁵ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 246.

³²⁶ Lamin Chikhi, "French Who Fled Algeria Return to Their Roots," *Reuters* September 10, 2009. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-algeria-france-piedsnoirs/french-who-fled-algeria-return-to-their-roots-idUSTRE5892OI20090910>, Accessed on: 15.03.2018

³²⁷ *What the day Owes the Night*, p. 83.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

bled. You never talk about anything else.’ ‘What do you want me to talk about? Algeria is my whole life.’³³⁰ But the nostalgic emotion is best captured by André who confesses “[it] eats me up inside just thinking about [Algeria]. If you [Younes] want proof, round here we don’t talk about nostalgia, we say *nost-algeria*.”³³¹ André’s anguish was escalated and with overwhelming bitterness he adds,

‘Algeria still clings to me,’ ... ‘Sometimes it burns like the Tunic of Nessus, sometimes it envelops me like a delicate perfume. I’ve tried to shake it off, but I can’t. How can I forget it? I’ve tried to stop thinking about my youth, to move on, to start with a clean slate. I can’t ... The memories of the sun, the beaches, the streets, the food we ate, the glorious drunken nights we spent together, the happy times always overshadow the rage, and though I start out snarling I find myself smiling. I’ve never forgotten Río Salado ... Not for a day, not for a second. I remember every tuft of grass on our hill, every witty remark on the café terraces ... I swear, I’ve tried to forget them. More than anything ... I’ve been all over the world, to Latin America, to Asia, to try to get some distance, to reinvent myself somewhere else. I needed to prove to myself that there were other countries, that a homeland can be rebuilt like a new family; but it’s not true. I only have to stop for a second and the *bled* seeps back into me; I only have to turn around to see it, there where my shadow should be.’³³²

Algeria becomes a phantom or lost limb that evokes real pain; thus, this lost limb is sustained through nostalgic writings that recreates images of their lost past in an idealised and glorified form.³³³ The Algerian War caused a profound impact on whole generations and continues, till this day, to disturb collective memories and psyches in both France and Algeria. In fact, the population of *Harkis* or “François Musulmans Rapatriés” (Repatriated French Muslims) constitutes one of the deepest unhealed wounds of this war. The *harkis* were Algerians who sided with the French army during the Algerian war; in the wake of

³³⁰ *What the day Owes the Night*, p. 232.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

³³² *Ibid.*, p. 245-246.

³³³ Hubbell, “The Wounds of Algeria in Pied-Noir Autobiography,” p. 63.

independence, their fate was depicted as one of the most traumatic and shameful episodes in both countries as they were subject to the widespread of aggression by the supporters of *FLN* who considered them as “traitors” to the national cause. Violence against them was even waged through verses of “anti-harkis songs” such as:

Gather the Harkis, gather them together.
What remedy is there for them? The sharpened knife.
And: harkis will be cursed!
France will not help you.
The civilians’ children will truck you down.³³⁴

Furthermore, the *harkis* undermined a policy of silence were geographically and administratively excluded in both Algeria and metropolitan France. They were met by hostility and were denied any kind of either protection or asylum by their French masters.³³⁵ Their living conditions were disastrous, and it was until the presidency of Jacques Chirac that some amendments were introduced to integrate the *harkis* into the French society. Chirac declared, “*France has not given the harkis their rightful due. It is time; indeed it is high time, that the nation does its moral duty and acknowledges their sacrifice and their dignity.*”³³⁶ Subsequently, there have been some developments concerning the situation of those repatriates through the establishment of “Journée d’Hommage National aux *Harkis*,” (National Day of *Harkis*’ Homage) and they were officially recognised as part of the French history in 2001.³³⁷ This is not the case in Algeria, as the burden of past memories troubles the Algerian national conscience. If truth be told, the few *harkis* who remained in Algeria still

³³⁴ Michael Lejman, “Unrequited Loyalty: the Harkis in Post-Colonial France,” *Studia Historika Gedanensia*, (2014), pp. 250-267; p. 260.

³³⁵ Lucie Knight, “Writing Wrongs the Representation of ‘Harkis’ in Yasmina Khadra’s “La part du mort”,” *French Forum*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (2011), pp. 163-179; p. 164.

³³⁶ Géraldine Enjelvine and Nada Korak-Kakabadse, “France and the Memories of the ‘Others’: The Case of the Harkis,” *History and Memory*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (2012), pp. 152-177; p. 56.

³³⁷ Susan Ireland, “Representations of the Harkis in Lakhdar Belaid’s *Serial Killers* and Yasmina Khadra’s *La Part du Mort*,” *The French Review*, Vol. 83, No. 6 (2010), pp. 1231-1245; p. 1232.

face social and political segregation. Younes himself excludes Krimo saying that his visit to France was meant for meeting his old friends, and Krimo was certainly not of them, "*I didn't come to see you,*"³³⁸ says Younes. Krimo on the other hand, expresses that he has not forgotten nor forgiven those who overthrown him from his country³³⁹ only to be answered by Younes, "*you betrayed your ancestors, only to be betrayed in turn.*"³⁴⁰ Time and again, Younes demeans Krimo for trying to take the hero's role by dragging the war's uniform and medals out of a rotting cardboard.³⁴¹ It is a fact that Younes did not fight for his country, but he did not betray his people. On top of this, in an official visit to France in 2000, the Algerian president Bouteflika refused to meet the *harkis*' representatives on the ground that they are still viewed as traitors and thus they are strongly unwelcomed in Algeria; in this regard, Bouteflika said, "*harkis are still unwelcomed in Algeria, for the circumstances are not yet appropriate.*"³⁴²

Recently, some *harkis* and their descendants expressed their willingness to return to Algeria, urging the French authorities to lobby Algerian politicians to allow their return; in this regard, the head of National *Harkis* Community, and the daughter of a *harki*, Fatima Besnasi asserted, "*Some 90,000 harkis managed to reach France after the war and are still waiting for an official apology from Paris.*"³⁴³ Ergo, and in a recent visit to Algeria, French president Emmanuel Macron alluded to the return of the *harkis*, he stated, "*coming to terms with our past means finding a way for those who were born in Algeria to be able to return,*

³³⁸ *What the Day Owes the Night*, p. 240.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

³⁴² Trans. mine, "Les conditions ne sont pas encore venues pour des visites de Harkis." Ireland, "Representations of the Harkis in Lakhdar Belaid's *Serial Killers* and Yasmina Khadra's *La Part du Mort*," p. 1232.

³⁴³ Gerry Hadden, "50 Years After the Algerian War, Harkis Still Wait for French Apology," *PRI's The World* July 19, 2012. <https://www.pri.org/stories/2012-07-19/50-years-after-algerian-war-harkis-still-wait-french-apology>, Accessed on: 15.03.2018

whatever their background."³⁴⁴ In truth, Macron's demands for granting pardon to the *harkis* to return to Algeria was raised as a swap for another demand raised by Algerians who asked for the retrieval of Algerian martyrs' skulls from French museums.³⁴⁵ This demand of *harkis'* return angered the Algerians and was described as "schizophrenic" by the Algerian writer Abdelkadder Dehbi.³⁴⁶

In 2003, four autobiographies of *harkis'* daughters have been published carrying the collective cultural memory of their community who were never able to find reconciliation with their past. Through literature, the descendants of *harkis* seek sympathy, and call for an end to the legacy of shame that has been attributed to them since independence.³⁴⁷ The autobiography of Dalila Kerchouche, a daughter of a *harki*, questions the fact of her father's enlistment in the French army. Kerchouche comments,

I am a harkis daughter. I write this word with a lower 'h', as in *honte* (shame). During the Algerian war, my father, an Algerian, fought with the French army against the FLN, the National Liberation Front of the country. How could he support colonisation against independence, preferring submission to freedom? I don't understand. He has never spoken to me about it.³⁴⁸

Now half a century after the end of armed conflict, collective memories and psyches are still torn between the need to forget and the necessity to preserve their experiences of the war. Despite conflicts between Younes, his French friends, and Krimo, but at the close of the novel they all overcome their disagreement, accept their loss, and stop recalling past memories alluding to the fact that memory and identity are strongly interrelated. We might argue that

³⁴⁴ Ahmed Rouaba, "Algerians Angry at France over 'Traitors'," *BBC News* December 11, 2017. www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-42280196, Accessed on: 15.03.2018

³⁴⁵ Mohamed Moslem, "France Negotiates With Algeria: Skulls Of Martyrs In Return For Allowing Harkis To Return Homeland," *Echorouk-Online* December 8, 2017. <https://www.echoroukonline.com/france-negotiates-with-algeria-skulls-of-martyrs-in-return-for-allowing-harkis-to-return-homeland/>, Accessed on: 18.03.2018

³⁴⁶ Ahmed Rouaba, "Algerians Angry at France over 'Traitors'," *BBC News* December 11, 2017. www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-42280196, Accessed on: 15.03.2018.

³⁴⁷ Enjelvine and Korak-Kakabadse, "France and the Memories of the 'Others': The Case of the Harkis," p. 57.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

Khadra wants to suggest that Algeria and France must confront with their painful past in order to be able to surpass its traumas and heal the scars that were left.

CONCLUSION

All things considered, we may say that identity is one of the most emblematic notions of post-colonial era; especially that this slippery concept might turn into a Pandora's box once it is threatened; mainly in countries which were or are still colonised. Identity dimensions such as political, national, and cultural are highly interconnected so as affecting one will affect all. This was the case of many colonised intellectuals who, as a consequence of their indulgence in the European civilisation, they were alienated from their own culture and fell prey to identical puzzling. This identical genocide, which is the ultimate result of colonialism, is largely reflected in the literary works of post-colonial era. These works depict the native intellectuals who weighed the burden of building a national identity which was almost completely pulverised by the colonial regimes.

Yasmina Khadra, as one of the most celebrated authors of our times, and who was described as "*a writer who can understand man wherever he is,*"³⁴⁹ succeeds in accessing the minds of the Franco-Algerian intellectuals who were crisscrossed by opposing worlds which led to identical as well as psychological alienation and exile. Through the protagonist Younes, Khadra pictures the existential and psychological issues faced by such shattered souls whose identical affiliations were the source of their anguish.

The first chapter of this study provided a socio-historical base for the analysis of the selected novel. It offered a synopsis of the socio-political as well as intellectual situation of French-Algeria along with some main events that were to change the destiny of the Algerian nation and its people. Likewise, we shed light on the destruction and obliteration of the Algerian educational system, with simultaneous instilment of the French language and culture

³⁴⁹ Hala Khalaf, "Emirates Lit Fest 2017: Yasmina Khadra Tackles Issues of Identity and Conflict," *The National* February 28, 2017. <https://www.thenational.ae/arts-culture/books/emirates-lit-fest-2017-yasmina-khadra-tackles-issues-of-identity-and-conflict-1.41567>, Accessed on: 29.04.2018

into the native mind. The French regime adopted a plethora of policies to erase the Algerian or, more precisely, the Islamic heritage in order to facilitate its domination. Indeed, the imposition of the new educational and cultural systems, in particular, and the whole colonial system, in general, were justified by the “French civilising mission.” On top of this, the French administrations labored to keep the great bulk of Algerians in the darkness of illiteracy on the one hand, and on the other hand they seduced the few Algerian *évolués* by 'partial' assimilation in order to gain their support so as to prolong their presence in the colony. Eventually, these protocols resulted in a cultural and identical annihilation which continues to weigh on the Algerian mind up till nowadays.

Additionally, colonial authorities used a variety of strategies and policies to keep a strong hold of the Algerian population and to erase any attempts of resistance. The French army committed one of the most violent and harshest holocausts of the world's history. French repression escalated with the continuous resistance of the Algerian people either by means of force or through the different political parties which adopted French concepts of liberties and human rights to retrieve their freedom. Despite the Fact that Algeria was an extension of France, most of the Algerians were never considered as French citizens; that is to say, they were deprived of their rights and completely excluded from political life.

Equally important was the policy of assimilation which was another strategy to maintain dominance over the Algerian subjects. However, due to the many restrictions, chiefly the abandonment of the Islamic status, only few Algerians applied for the French citizenship. The failure of assimilation led to the rise of integration policy on the basis of considering Algeria a French colony. The rising Algerian national awareness along with the continuous French repression worsened by the genocides of May 8th, 1945 led, in the end, to the rise of political and military fronts of resistance. Thus, the *ALN* and *FLN* had been fighting Guerilla warfare

against the French forces for about eight years; ultimately, their struggle was culminated by the restoration of the free Algerian nation.

The second chapter attempted to investigate the issue of identity and its importance for one's psychological stability, and how it can turn into a momentous menace once it is damaged or distorted. By analysing the selected novel, this research provided a different perspective for the tribulations faced by hybrid characters, primarily the Algerian intellectuals during French colonisation who are considered an outstanding illustration of deformed identities. In his novel, Moulessehoul portrays those mostly affected by the war through recounting the interconnected lives of different characters who, in one way or another, are all victims of this terrible era. Khadra depicts their humanist dilemmas from different angles so as to transmit their feelings unalterably. Their shattered dreams and nightmares can be plainly seen floating on the blood pools shed during the ferocious war. Khadra's novel tackles this critical issue in relation to both the Algerian history and present, leaving the future of an entire nation in the hands of the ambiguous fate. The fact is that the Algerian intellectuals' identity crisis had not only affected them during and immediately after the war of independence, but it is still troubling Algerians in both countries.

Unlike Memmi and Fanon who deny the possibility of being part of two opposing communities, Khadra proves the likelihood of holding clashing affiliations within one's self by creating a special seat for his protagonist who has been stuck in a zone of non-being and who refuses to abandon any of his identical components or social ties. Accordingly, Khadra succeeds, to a far extent, in conveying lots of political, national, and humanist messages through the amicable relationship between Younes and his French friends. Younes' constant anguish and internal struggle reflect the chaotic state lived by Algerians with two clashing selves, identities, and languages.

Khadra juxtaposes his protagonist with many vivid characters: Jelloul, Krimo, Jean-Christophe, and Mahi. Jelloul represents the real *Mujahid* who devotes his life for his country as soon as it called upon him. Contrarily to him, Khadra uses the antithesis character of *Mujahid* as krimo the *harki*. The latter, blindly offers his services to the country that is actually his forefathers' enemy. Jean Christophe embodies the French colons who were determined to keep the colony as part of the French empire. His intense fanaticism reflects that of the Secret Organisation's militiamen who committed hideous crimes against Algerians in the last year of the war. Mahi, and later on Younes, adopts the choice of those who followed a non-violent resistance to the French presence on the Algerian lands. In so doing, Khadra, through the character of Younes, refutes the belief that those who were not directly involved in the war are considered as traitors.

What the Day Owes the Night investigates the traces of identity in the war fought by the Algerian people for their independence principally the *évolués* who were baffled and stuck between rock and hard place fighting an existential and psychological war in search for their lost identity. Still, the aftermath of the war and the French legacy are a heavy burden that inflicts France and Algeria alike. Khadra visualises the nostalgic memories of the *Pieds-Noirs* who are still longing for their *pays perdu*. Yet, the author alludes to, or even anticipates, the possible political reconciliation and a thriving Franco-Algerian coexistence between the two countries after more than half a century after the war.

In sum, we can say that post-colonial period can be as disastrous as the colonial one, for these countries found themselves in a bleak situation as they were deprived of both national and cultural identity and the means to build one. Post-colonial native intellectuals are, then, obliged to rebuild their native identities and settle down several issues inherited from the rotten colonial regime. Khadra's novel is one of the greatest literary works that allows the

readers to explore the minds of Fringes-dwellers and how such stirring ethnic and cultural conflicts can be vicious, traumatic, and disturbing to one's psyche.

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الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف وتسليط الضوء على أثر الاستعمار الفرنسي على المثقفين الجزائريين في رواية ياسمينة خضرا فضل الليل على النهار (2008). توفر الرواية وصفا اجتماعياً وتاريخياً لفترة حاسمة من تاريخ الجزائر، كما تلقي الضوء على قضايا الهوية التي يواجهها المثقفون الجزائريون والتي هي نتيجة مباشرة لسياسة الإدماج التي اعتمدها الإدارة الفرنسية في الجزائر المستعمرة. يركز هذا البحث على العواقب الوخيمة المترتبة على التواجد على هوامش وحدود ثقافتين متعارضتين: الثقافة الأصلية وثقافة المستعمر، أي كنتيجة حتمية لتهمجين الهوية. وهكذا، فإن هذا المسعى يتحرى كيف طوّر هؤلاء المثقفون الجزائريون شعوراً بالاغتراب، وكيف واجهوا حالة نفسية فوضوية من التشتت خاصة بعد اندلاع حرب الاستقلال. تعيد هذه الدراسة إلى الواجهة العلاقة المضطربة بين الجزائر وفرنسا وتسعى لاستكشاف التأثيرات العميقة التي خلفها أكثر من قرن من الاستغلال لكل من الأرض والشعب الجزائري. تحقيقاً لهذه الغاية، تنقسم هذه الأطروحة إلى فصلين؛ يقدم الفصل الأول إطاراً اجتماعياً وتاريخياً لما قبل وأثناء الفترة التي تجري فيها أحداث الرواية: ثلاثينيات، أربعينيات، وخمسينيات القرن العشرين في الجزائر المستعمرة؛ مما يوفر فهماً أفضل للقضايا المتناولة في الفصل الثاني. يحل هذا الأخير بدوره مشكلة الهوية الممزقة وأبعادها خلال الاستعمار الفرنسي من خلال شخصية "يونس/جوناس". بطل الرواية، والذي يمثل النخبة الجزائرية إبان الاستعمار، يدخل في حرب وجودية داخلية لتحديد هويته. وبناء على ذلك، فإن هذا الفصل يسبر أغوار الهوية الهجينة وتشوهات كما يصورها خضرا في روايته.