Towards an Appraisal of the African Past: A Postcolonial Comparative Study of Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian Literatures from Subalternity to 'Hybrid Affirmation'

by

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Abstract

This thesis develops a comparative framework between postcolonial Francophone Algerian literature and postcolonial Anglophone Nigerian literary production, engaging with a body of twelve novels that reveal people's trajectories resulting from the colonial experience in Algeria and Nigeria from pre-independence until post-independence. It is based upon a corpus of postcolonial Francophone Algerian novels starting in the 1950s until the 2010s, such as *La Grande Maison* (1952), *L'Incendie* (1954), *Le Métier à Tisser* (1957), *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit* (2008), *Puisque mon Coeur Est Mort* (2010), and *Bleu Blanc Vert* (2006) examined in parallel with postcolonial Anglophone Nigerian works, such as *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *Arrow of God* (1964), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), *A Gift from Darkness: How I Escaped with my Daughter from Boko Haram* (2017), and *Americanah* (2013). This project transcends the limits of language to examine the historical and literary aspects of these novels that engage with the correlative questions of colonial domination, independence and cultural and socio-political emancipation. Both countries under study are the product of different communities that share common political and cultural concerns due to their experience of colonial subjugation. This literary contribution which, for the first time, juxtaposes Franco-Algerian with Anglo-Nigerian postcolonial literatures, not only creates a new comparative paradigm, but also highlights major historical moments, such as the period of colonisation, the period of revolution and independence, and the period of post-independence. Through these three trends, the thesis analyses inter-related themes and features between these works and offers an interdisciplinary study that analyses historic events —from the nineteenth century until the twentieth century according to the settings of the novels, with complementary insights from sociology, politics, and literary theories. This thesis draws upon the above-mentioned corpus and will rely mostly on theoretical works,

primary sources —including memoirs, and essays to analyse the novels. However, despite the wide-ranging and comprehensive literature review, the works that were examined bring into focus the quest of identity, the feminist cause or the question of language choice at the centre of their study. As its findings disclose under-represented aspects in the postcolonial text, this thesis analyses the development of the postcolonial subject from a state of subalternity during colonisation to that of 'hybrid affirmation' during the post-independence: the focus of the thesis is on the 'hybrid affirmation' of the postcolonial subject. As an expression, 'hybrid affirmation' re-imagines postcolonial criticism so that new characteristics such as strength and determination become attributed to the postcolonial individual, instead of the more frequent attributes of loss, disillusionment and displacement.

Chapter One establishes literary, theoretical and critical frameworks to analyse the postcolonial fiction in the following chapters. Chapter Two juxtaposes Mohammed Dib's trilogy, *Algérie*, and Chinua Achebe's *African Trilogy* to analyse the conditions of the native populations during the moments of colonisation. Chapter Three examines Yasmina Khadra' s *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* to evaluate the characters' agency and their ability to gain independence. Chapter Four studies the bloody years of terrorism in Algeria and Nigeria and the violence inflicted upon these peoples after independence in the works of Maïssa Bey *Puisque mon Coeur Est Mort* and Andrea C. Hoffmann and Patience Ibrahim *A Gift from Darkness: How I Escaped with my Daughter from Boko Haram*. The fifth and final chapter will, then, analyse the 'hybrid affirmation' of Algerian and Nigerian native peoples in Maïssa Bey's *Bleu Blanc Vert* and Adichie's *Americanah*.

Contents

Introduction

Beyond Manichaean Postcolonial Representations: A Postcolonial Comparative Study of Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian Literatures from Subalternity to 'Hybrid Affirmation'

'Boundaries don't keep other people out.
They fence you in ...
You can waste your lives drawing lines.
Or you can live your life crossing them.'[1]

The world has witnessed many different political organisations, yet empires are amongst those that impacted and modified the world most profoundly. Cultural hybridity is a direct response that evolved over the years to make the colonised and colonising populations learn the 'hard way' how to co-exist. This was the backdrop against which culturally hybrid societies emerged in Algeria and Nigeria, representing a first step towards what could be described –with some adaptation– as multiculturalism.[2] The French and the British practice of colonisation have brought about many changes in the culture of Algeria and the ethnic composition of Nigeria respectively.[3] The French and British practices of colonisation were different; they adopted distinct ideologies to control different aspects —such as political, social, economic, and cultural— of the colonised society —Algeria and Nigeria. For instance, politically speaking, France adopted direct rule in Algeria, where France acted as the central

[1] Rhimes Shonda. *Grey's Anatomy*. New York: American Broadcasting Company, 2005.
[2] Naouel Abdellatif Mami. 'Citizenship Education in Post-conflict Contexts: The Case of Algeria.' *Global Citizenship Education: Critical and International Perspectives, Edited by Abdeljalil Akkari, Kathrine Maleq*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2020, pp. 113-124.
Thibault, Lauwerier. 'Global Citizenship in West Africa: A Promising Concept?' *Global Citizenship Education: Critical and International Perspectives, Edited by Abdeljalil Akkari, Kathrine Maleq*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2020, pp. 99-109.
[3] Mohamed Benrabah. *Language Conflict in Algeria: From Colonialism to Post-Independence*. Salisbury: Channel View Publications, 2013, pp. 21-23.
Brian Larkin. *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008, pp. 17-18.

government to control the legislature, the executive and the civil administration of Algeria.[4] However, Great Britain used indirect rule in Nigeria where the British government appointed indigenous rulers —who under the supervision of the District Officers— apply laws legislated by the British government.[5] As colonialism brought settlers to live in the colonies, intercultural interactions occurred by necessity, if not by choice. For instance, the indigenous people worked in the fields owned by settlers, and to communicate settlers spoke their language and obliged indigenous workers to understand it.[6] The colonial encounter has resulted in intercultural assimilation, whereby some of the Algerian and Nigerian indigenous people have integrated the colonial culture, especially younger generations who were enrolled in the colonial educational systems: in this case, French and British, respectively.[7] The transition from one cultural sphere to the other, and the inevitable negotiations taking place along this trajectory, often proved to be very challenging, compounded by the tensions inherent to an unequal relationship. Reportedly, Jules Ferry claimed that, in French colonies 'on offre à l'enfant indigène une instruction française qui le tire en apparence de son milieu mais qui le laisse ensuite désarmé, incapable de se faire une place entre une civilisation qui l'abandonne et une barbarie qui le reprend'.[8] In spite of this bleak appraisal, this thesis is based upon the hypothesis that the encounter between the colonial cultures and Algerian and Nigerian indigenous societies has resulted in the creation of a third space,[9] where the foreign culture —French or British— intermingles with the local indigenous cultures to form a new

[4] John Gerring et al'An Institutional Theory of Direct and Indirect Rule.' *World Politics*, vol. 63, no. 3, 2011, pp. 377–433.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Andrea Smith. *Colonial Memory and Postcolonial Europe: Maltese Settlers in Algeria and France*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006, p. 99.
[7] Andrew Barnes. *Making Headway: The Introduction of Western Civilization in Colonial Northern Nigeria*. Rochester, USA: Boydell & Brewer, 2009, pp. 46-77.
[8] Nicholas Harrison. *Our Civilizing Mission: The Lessons of Colonial Education*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019, p. 48.
[9] *Third space* is a term coined by Homi Bhabha in his book *The Location of Culture* (published in 2004 by Routledge Classics) to designate the metaphysical space that represents the cultural in betweenness, wherein the contact of two cultures gives birth to a third culture that holds characteristics from both initial cultures to form a new element which is cultural hybridity.

hybrid individual —the Francophone and the Anglophone. Though to some extent indigenous groups such as the *moujahidin*[10] and *ulema*[11] in Algeria, and militants for freedom in Nigeria, such as the writer Chinua Achebe, were against the cultural assimilation and the erasure of the indigenous culture in their respective countries, the colonial process did not give those concerned the choice of either accepting or refusing such a cultural assimilation.[12] That said, the abusive behaviour of the colonial system banned the use of the native languages —such as Arabic in Algeria and Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba in Nigeria, and it imposed the colonial language instead— French and English. The latter were introduced through the ideological state apparatuses namely educational institutions and churches, where cultural assimilation was ensured to a large extent.[13] As a result, neither the French/Arabic correlation in Algeria nor the English/Nigerian multicultural correlation had been in a position to co-exist harmoniously, as was shown by the persisting underlying tension related to cultural conflicts. Here, the word 'correlation' is used to describe the relationship there is supposed to be between the native language and the colonial language, that is, correlation signifies that there is a reciprocal, parallel or complementary relationship between two elements.[14] However, in the colonial situation there is no reciprocal or complementary relationship either between the French/Arabic or the English/Nigerian languages. On the contrary, the colonial languages gain the upper hand.

The opening quotation illustrates the situation and the journey of these postcolonial populations beginning from the early nineteenth century, when the French and British colonial

[10] *The mujahidin* is the plural form of *mujahid*. It is an Arabic word that designates those who fight against the enemy, during the Algerian war mujahid was not necessarily a trained soldier. Anyone who fought against the enemy to liberate the country, men and women, were called *mujahidin.*
[11] *The ulema* is the plural form of *alim*. It is an Arabic word that refers to thinkers, interpreters, and educators of Islamic religious sciences. In colonial Algeria, they used to teach children the Quran and sharia, the Islamic law, secretly.
[12] Saliha Belmessous. *Assimilation and Empire: Uniformity in French and British Colonies, 1541-1954.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 133.
[13] Ibid., 72.
[14] 'Corpus Striatum.' *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, edited by Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, Eleventh Edition, Revised. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 321.

forces entered the territories that would later form the countries of Algeria and Nigeria respectively, to post-independence, where the result of cultural intermingling is still in evidence. The borders evoked in the quotation are obviously metaphorical; they represent in other words the rejection of cultural encounters and coexistence. Though adopting the culture of the coloniser is opposed by influential thinkers from both nations, it has not been stopped. The pressing idea of preventing cultural intermingling can only augment tensions towards the colonial heritage and amongst native societies. As the analysis in this study will demonstrate, 'drawing lines' and proclaiming cultural borders and parting can become a source of tensions rather than a means of forging a clear-cut and solid identity. In postcolonial societies as well as in a more global sense, this attitude of rejection can only accentuate the social gap within members of the same society. Thus, crossing borders has the potential to narrow social divides and promote individual and social advancement.

Postcolonial hybridity in ex-colonised countries is at the heart of controversies, and often gives rise to derogatory attitudes towards postcolonial identity.[15] In her introduction, Anne-Emmanuelle Berger contends that the Algerian identity can be defined as a multicultural identity because of the coexistence of two languages —French and English— in addition to dialectical Arabic and Berber.[16] That said, after 1962 the state imposed Arabic as the sole national language. Besides, the Algerian people already spoke dialectical Arabic, Berber, and French.[17] However, Malek Bennabi denounces the intrusive occidental culture that has according to him disintegrated the Arabo-islamic Algerian society.[18] On the other hand, Martin Carnoy contends that minority groups should adjust and integrate their lives and

[15] Homi Bhabha et al. *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multicultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism*. London: Zed Books, 2015, p. 9.
[16] Berber also known as Amazigh language or Tamazight is a language spoken by a group of people who are North African natives. Algeria recognaised it as an official language besides Arabic only in 2002.
[17] Anne-Emmanuelle Berger (ed). *Algeria in Others' Languages*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002, p. 4.
[18] Malek Bennabi. *Mémoires d'un Témoin du Siècle*. Annaba: Samar, 2006, pp. 3-4.

values towards those of the dominant group[19] while Ngugi Wa Thiong'o focuses on the necessity of decolonising the mind of the indigenous population by getting rid of the culture, norms and language of the coloniser so as to gain back one's African identity.[20] Those controversies and criticism arise from the fact that hybrid cultures are seen as invalid or unaccepted by thinkers such as Ngugi and Bennabi because they 'merge incoherent and heterogeneous effects and elementary forms into a singular hatred of the other'.[21] It is against this complex and fascinating backdrop that this thesis has taken shape. This study examines the interplay between indigenous peoples and the colonial heritage —French in Algeria and English in Nigeria; it proposes the concept of 'hybrid affirmation' to settle the tensions between members of the same society and manage the hostility towards the colonial legacy. 'Hybrid affirmation' is a new concept which has emerged from research for this thesis, and which is offered as an addition to the methodological apparatus of postcolonial criticism, to adjust and rebuild the interpretation of postcolonial characters in fiction, and to help the postcolonial subject emerge out of the portrait of the victim.

'Hybrid affirmation' is a combination of hybridity and affirmation; it is the state of assuming and owning one's cultural hybridity. It applies to the status of peoples whose nations gained independence, yet whose identities still hold characteristics from the culture of the ex-coloniser. Those postcolonial subjects —whether real or fictional— are interpreted as disillusioned because they do not feel at home in their hometowns, nor can they do so in the 'host countries', that is, in the case of the cultures studied here, France and Britain.

'Hybrid affirmation' does not restrict the identity of the postcolonial subject to one single nationality. Identity — in the context of cultural hybridity discussed in this thesis — is

[19] Martin Carnoy. *Education as Cultural Imperialism*. New York: David McKay Co, 1974.
[20] Wa Thiong'o, Ngũgĩ. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: Portsmouth, N.H.: J. Currey; Heinemann, 1986.
[21] Ibid., 11.

established in a fluid, intermediary space which exists between different cultures: the French and Arabo-Islamic cultures, in the case of Franco-Algerian literature, and between the English and the many Nigerian cultural traditions, in the case of Anglo-Nigerian literature. Rather than considering these cultures as separate and pertaining to a specific geographic locale, 'hybrid affirmation' recognises all cultural constituents as integral parts of the postcolonial identity. 'Hybrid affirmation' translates the new reality of postcolonial societies where the French or the English languages are used to express and transmit indigenous habits, customs and thoughts. Thus, it reflects how postcolonial identity results from a mixture of languages, cultures and spaces in which the language of the coloniser is not perceived as a threat to the indigenous identity, but instead coexists creatively with indigenous culture and habits.

In order to explore these complex issues, this study engages with a range of Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian postcolonial writings covering three major episodes in the trajectory of these peoples from colonialism up to post-independence, namely the early colonial, late colonial and post-colonial periods.[22]

The study begins with the analyses of Mohammed Dib's trilogy: *La Grande Maison* (1952), *L'Incendie* (1954), *Le Métier à Tisser* (1957) combined with Chinua Achebe's trilogy: *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *Arrow of God* (1964), covering the colonial periods of Algeria and Nigeria. The trilogies expose the subalternity of indigenous Algerian and Nigerian peoples during the respective French and British colonisations in these two countries. The trilogies are about how Europeans seized and ruled these African territories, and how native peoples responded to it. They also show how the colonial power shaped and instigated the resistance of indigenous peoples.

[22] Bill Ashcroft. 'On the Hyphen in "Postcolonial".' *New Literatures Review*, no. 32, 1996, pp 23-31.

In the subsequent chapter, I examine Yasmina Khadra's *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit* (2008) in dialogue with Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), situating these novels in the context of revolution and independence. At this point, the chapter focuses on the agency of characters and the process of gaining independence as a turning point, examining ways in which indigenous peoples have challenged cultural and political domination to rise up against subjugation. In doing so, this section analyses the psychological and cultural impact of transition and the way in which these events have contributed to the formulation of the hybrid identity for indigenous peoples within postcolonial societies.

The study then considers the context of violence which characterised the post-independence period. Andrea C. Hoffmann & Patience Ibrahim's *A Gift from Darkness: How I Escaped with my Daughter from Boko Haram* in dialogue with Maïssa Bey's *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort* are vivid accounts which, through a combination of witness statement and the testimony of fictional characters placed into these settings, bear witness to the unsettled state of Algeria and Nigeria after independence. In doing so, this analysis explores the way in which political and cultural turmoil and transition have shaped the formation of identities in post-colonial societies.

The final section of the study brings together Bey' s *Bleu Blanc Vert* and Adichie's *Americanah* to illustrate the theme of 'hybrid affirmation' in post-independence Algeria and Nigeria, after terrorist violence came to a conclusion. Building on the shifts which have taken place over the preceding periods, this concluding part of the analysis will consider the implications of establishing an identity which brings together elements of indigenous and colonising cultures and systems. It will consider the way in which taking ownership of the values of the coloniser, integrating them with elements of indigenous identity can break down boundaries and establish a sense of personal and social empowerment.

These texts span cultural and historical developments from the time of colonisation in Algeria and Nigeria to the post-independence period, thereby not only offering an insight into the history of both nations and the experiences of the peoples who lived through the times of colonial rule, the process of gaining independence and the post-colonial period, but also delving deeper into the selves of indigenous populations to analyse their development from a state of oppression to a situation of 'hybrid affirmation' and empowerment. It draws these themes together in order to exemplify 'hybrid affirmation' as an approach to promoting social and political reconciliation. The chronological organisation of the novels permits to draw connections between both Anglophone and Francophone fictional traditions, and to investigate key themes and concepts related to the three trends which all together cover the transition from colonial to postcolonial. In other words, they chart the trajectory from oppression to 'hybrid affirmation'.

In this introductory chapter, I will first outline the issues that justify the need for this research. Following this, the research examines and challenges the way in which postcolonial criticism has typically portrayed the postcolonial subject. That said, the latter is 'only recognisable from within the matrix of a system of representation that constructs it'.[23] And that system of representation is the colonial and the postcolonial discourse, whereby the postcolonial subject is often defined as 'the other,'[24] 'the subaltern,'[25] and 'the disillusioned'.[26] Thus, the postcolonial subject is bound by binary structures such as power vs. submission, superior vs. inferior, where s/he is necessarily only recognisable from the

[23] Grant Hamilton. *On Representation: Deleuze and Coetzee on the Colonized Subject*. New York: Rodopi, 2011, p. xvi.
[24] Edward W Said. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Knopf, 1994.
[25] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. New York and Columbia: ed. Patrick Williams & Laura Chrisman, 1994, pp. 66-111 (p. 82).
[26] Rebecca Fasselt. 'Versatile Kinship: Trans-African Family Formations and Postcolonial Disillusionment in Niq Mhlongo's *After Tears*.' *Social Dynamics: A Journal of African Studies*, vol. 43, no. 3, 2017, pp. 470-486, (p. 473). https://doi.org/10.1080/02533952.2017.1390880.

negative, disempowered and inferior side of this dualism.[27] Therefore, what would be recovered by such a study is the ability to redefine the postcolonial subject by moving him/her to a position of agency and affirmation. I will then introduce the overall research methodology, showing how the study is going to be undertaken through an interdisciplinary approach. Next, I will situate this study in relation to the existing body of literature which analyses and presents the experience of the postcolonial subject. Finally, I will provide the chapter breakdown of the thesis.

[27] Grant Hamilton. *On Representation: Deleuze and Coetzee on the Colonized Subject*. New York: Rodopi, 2011, p. x.

1. Questions and Objectives of the Research

The condition of in-betweenness between the local culture and the culture of the coloniser continues in the post-independence period, this time involving new conjunctions and ruptures with the colonial past and the disunification of the indigenous peoples. Tensions between members of the same society —those who are influenced by the colonial culture versus those who reject it— turn around the colonial policy and the colonial legacy in general. The events of social unrest in post-independence Algeria and Nigeria can be seen as a turning point in the lives of postcolonial individuals. Against the backdrop of the struggle for cutting all ties with the colonial heritage, many Algerians and Nigerians are forced to make a difficult choice between emigration or facing alienation and rejection in the nascent independent societies. So, will the postcolonial hybrid subjects, either by staying or emigrating, mitigate tensions around the colonial heritage and stop the rejection of cultural hybridity?

During the second half of the twentieth century, a new era arose when many countries gained independence, transitioning from being colonies to independent nations.[28] That is, Algeria gained independence after 132 years of French occupation and a violent war that lasted 8 years[29] whereas Nigeria peacefully transitioned to independence, when the colonial office dictated the replacement of the rigid imperial control by liberalism, and finally it announced the collapse of colonialism after 1945.[30] One of the most significant issues of this period is the construction of, or the quest for, identity: the question of identity raised, and continues to raise questions. For instance, to what extent are cultural borders unstable because of colonialism?[31] Or, what is the impact of postcolonial debates around history and identity on

[28] Chris Weedon. *Culture and Identity*. London: Open University Press, 2004, p. 23.
[29] Arnold Fraleigh. 'The Algerian War of Independence.' *Proceedings of the American Society of International Law at Its Annual Meeting (1921-1969)*, vol. 61, 1967, pp. 6–12.
[30] Olakunle A. Lawal. 'From Colonial Reforms to Decolonization: Britain and the Transfer of Power in Nigeria, 1947-1960.' *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, vol. 19, 2010, pp. 39-62.
[31] Tariq Jazil. 'Postcolonial Spaces and Identities.'*Geography*, vol. 97, no. 2, 2012, pp. 60-67 (p. 61).

the educational curriculum?[32] The problematic debates on identity reside in the fact that it is believed to pertain to only one belonging be it social, ethnic, religious or racial.[33] Those problems may be further accentuated and perpetuated by the fixed traits some postcolonial readings attribute to postcolonial subjects leaving the problem of belonging with no clear answer.[34] Hence, this thesis investigates what impact can the rethinking of postcolonial criticism have on the interpretation of the postcolonial character?

From the previous sections, it can be seen that there is a need to investigate how postcolonial criticism treats the postcolonial character —who is representative of the postcolonial population more broadly, and how the postcolonial character may respond more effectively to postcolonial challenges through the approach of 'hybrid affirmation'. This thesis is therefore articulated around a set of research aims that are outlined below.

To begin with, this analysis aims to develop and introduce the new concept of 'hybrid affirmation' into postcolonial criticism as a tool to open a new horizon for interpretations that celebrate positive assets of the characters in postcolonial literature, emphasising qualities such as strength, resilience, and resistance instead of casting the postcolonial subject as a victim, the ultimate goal being to move from victimisation to agency.

In addition, this study deconstructs postcolonial criticism by proposing a positive interpretation of the postcolonial character. That is, the deconstruction approach seeks not to prove that postcolonial criticism is wrong or right; rather, the aim is to re-evaluate existing interpretations of postcolonial texts, and to show that the typical characteristics ascribed to the postcolonial character —that has been defined as subaltern during colonisation, and disillusioned after independence— offers no room for agency or growth. Therefore, these fixed ideas and thoughts about the postcolonial character are to be overturned by positive

[32] Michael Leach. 'History on the Line: East Timorese History after Independence.'*History Workshop Journal*, vol. 61, issue. 1, 2006, pp. 222-237.
[33] Amine Maalouf. *Les Identités Meurtrières*. Paris: Édition Grasset & Fasquelle, 1998, p. 171.
[34] Lydie Moudileno. *Parades Postcoloniales: La Fabrication des Identités dans le Roman Congolais*. Paris: Karthala, 2006, p. 56.

approaches, in particular the newly-established notion of ‘hybrid affirmation’ which highlights the strong character, the agency, the resistance, and the determination of postcolonial subjects.

Besides, this study aims to provide a new comparative paradigm based upon critical engagement with Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian postcolonial literature. This comparative model brings together two important literary traditions of the African world, and it exposes some of the most important periods of Algeria’s and Nigeria’s recent history, which are colonisation, resistance, independence and what is called here ‘hybrid affirmation’. This comparative model aims to serve as an example that explains the validity of ‘hybrid affirmation’ in different postcolonial societies despite of their linguistic, geographical, political and cultural differences. This study intends to show how the concept of ‘hybrid affirmation’ applies to postcolonial literary texts. This objective of the present study has an active cultural and political interest, calling for social and political acceptance of hybridity nationally and internationally. At the national level, to avoid conflicts because of the colonial heritage, indigenous societies should cope with the fact that cultural intermingling is an inevitable consequence of colonialism. Therefore, allowing social tensions to be perpetuated does not solve the fractured nature of postcolonial identities in society as well as on an individual level, but rather aggravates these tensions and ruptures. As regards international relations, ‘hybrid affirmation’ has the potential to defuse conflicts between the ex-colonies and the ex-metropoles, laying the terrain for more positive and harmonious diplomatic and political interactions.

Also, as part of this study, an insight into the history of Algeria and Nigeria is offered through the dialogue between Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian postcolonial literatures, showing as such the remarkable trajectory of emancipation of Algerian and Nigerian native populations as well as the new developed approach of ‘hybrid affirmation’.

In conclusion, different levels of hybridity arise from the bilingual dialogue on many occasions in this study. The linguistic hybridity is celebrated by the intersection of French and English, and also by French and Arabic –in the Franco-Algerian Literature- and English and native Nigerian dialects–in the Anglo-Nigerian literature. The geographical hybridity seen in the gathering of two geographical spots which are culturally, linguistically, and politically different. The political hybridity which is seen in the combination of two different political orders in one literary study, such as the direct rule in Algeria and the indirect rule in Nigeria, where local and international actors and institutions carry out the governance of the state. Finally, the literary hybridity through which Western African and Northern African literatures intersect to analyse the situation of the postcolonial hybrid subject, and to examine his/her emancipation trajectory from subjugation to 'hybrid affirmation'.

2. Rationale of the Study

2.1. Reason for comparing Algeria and Nigeria

The decision to focus the analysis on literary texts from Algeria and Nigeria, and to establish this literary and historical dialogue is based around the capacity of these two examples to serve as a model for other postcolonial societies. Algeria and Nigeria are both situated in North-Western Africa, and their postcolonial literatures have followed a similar trajectory insofar as they remain —consciously or unconsciously— closely linked to the cultural traditions of their former colonising nations, France and Great Britain respectively. In addition, they are amongst the two best-known countries of Africa, each famous for specific characteristics: one for being the largest on the continent, for the richness of its natural resources, and its cultural diversity; the other for its economic and geo-strategic power and linguistic mega-diversity. Inspite of the unique relationship between Algeria and Nigeria —

the economic and political co-operations,[35] efforts have not been combined to present or study the cultures of both countries in a joint manner. Therefore, this thesis provides an instance of a cultural co-opperation where the literature of Algeria and Nigeria allows us to see and compare both societies.[36]

Furthermore, both Algeria and Nigeria are colonial constructs, that is, Algerian borders were delineated by French colonial authorities,[37] and Nigeria was created as a political entity by Lord Frederick Lugard in 1914.[38] Thus, the populations of both countries experienced colonial subjugation —Algeria by France and Nigeria by Great Britain, and they equally witnessed the rise of nationalism that led to independence, and finally lengthy periods of turmoil during the post-independence period. It is therefore apposite that Algeria and Nigeria, for the first time, are going to be considered in a comparative postcolonial literary study.

[35] Akin Fadahunsi. 'Afro-Arab Economic C-Operation in Anglophone West Africa: The Case of Nigeria.' *Africa Development /Afrique et Développement*, vol. 11, no. 2/3, 1986, pp. 213–60.
[36] Ibid.
[37] James McDougall. *A History of Algeria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, p. 49.
[38] Toyin Falola, and M. Heaton Matthew. *A History of Nigeria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 17.

2.2. The Development of an Approach: The Need to Put forward the Positive Assets of Postcolonial Individuals

In view of the dominant existing analysis of postcolonial criticism around postcolonial fictional characters, there is growing concern about the reflections and representations of postcolonial societies in postcolonial literary texts. The values ascribed to those societies are predominantly exposing the disillusionment of postcolonial Africa.[39] The general picture that emerges from those analyses is decay, wherein African societies still suffer pain after independence.[40] Against the backdrop of the existing criticism, it is important to deconstruct these predominant existing interpretations of postcolonial characters, and by extension postcolonial societies. The notion of 'hybrid affirmation', which I establish in this thesis, helps in providing a positive reading of the actions of postcolonial subjects.

[39] Derek Wright. 'African Literature and Post-Independence Disillusionment.' In *The Cambridge History of African and Caribbean Literature* edited by F. Abiola Irele. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. 797-808.
[40] Toyin Falola, and Hetty Ter Haar. *Narrating War and Peace in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, pp. 79-97.

3. Historiography and Theories of Postcolonial Identity

3.1 Perceptions on Cultural Hybridity in the Postcolonial Context

As I will argue throughout this study, the issue of identity crisis does not cease to be raised in the postcolonial context. Weedon explains that this crisis emerges from the desire to have roots, and the desire to belong to somewhere and to a community.[41] In line with this, I see that this constant search for belonging or identification to a particular group of people and a particular geographical spot is rather harmful to the postcolonial identity. That said, advocating belonging to a single group implies the rejection of cultural mixing, and that condition is impossible in the postcolonial situation. Hence, the postcolonial individual finds it difficult to move forward or develop. Such a conflictual climate is what maintains the crisis of postcolonial identity. The latter should be thought of as a production that is 'always in process'.[42] It is in constant evolution and change, which leads to the point that hybridity is predestined. If we relate this explanation to postcolonial criticism, the latter tends to interpret the behaviour of the postcolonial fictional characters as lost. This interpretation results from the fact that the postcolonial character has to return to his/her indigenous culture and to reject the culture s/he inherited from the coloniser. As this condition tends to be impossible because of the intermingling of cultures and races, the postcolonial character is doomed to be displaced and torn between two spaces forever.

The tendency to problematise hybridity can also be perceived in a study conducted by Paul Mukundi, who claims that hybridity is a threat for the indigenous culture because it erases some of its elements.[43] That is, colonial domination had worked on replacing the religion and the language of the colonised people. As a result, the indigenous culture is

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[41] Chris Weedon. *Culture and Identity*. London: Open University Press, 2004, p. 93.
[42] Stuart Hall. 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora'. In *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference,* ed. By Jonathan Rutherford. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990, p. 222.
[43] Paul Mukundi. *Preventing Things from Falling Further Apart: The Preservation of Cultural Identities in Postcolonial African, Indian, and Caribbean Literatures*. London: Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd, 2010, p. 147.

modified because of the adoption of western concepts and patterns of behaviour. Mukundi provides the example of Kenyan, Indian and the Caribbean indigenous peoples, who challenge the imperial legacy and continue to identify themselves by values peculiar to their respective indigenous cultures. The important point is that cultural hybridity as evoked in Mukundi's work connotes challenge to imperialism and resistance between the imperialist culture and the local cultures. I contend that approaching cultural hybridity by means of resistance accentuates the crisis of identity. Hence, it is important to transcend the conflictual mentality that engages in stressing the relation between imperial legacy and indigenous culture. If tensions resulting from hybridity and negative interpretations of the postcolonial individual predominate, postcolonial people would survive, but not as a 'whole' and balanced individuals.[44] They would live as individuals who miss stability, and the latter cannot be achieved unless conflicts are transcended.

The fact of singularising, homogenising, and unifying identities is the core of all violence. This being said, the attempt to confine people to a single identity in a globalised world creates intolerance and conflicts.[45] This is not to say that in the modern world, people should all merge in a melting pot where difference is the only constant. Indeed, we live in a world where different cultures are interwoven. Hence, it is important to deploy reason in prioritising the affiliations and the choices that exist in one's life in order to determine identity. For example, to be Algerian means to have some roots from the Arabs, or Berbers, or Turks, or French, or Spanish, or Jews. Although there are some people who have blood relationships with one group or the other, others may have blood relationships with more than one group. The stated nationalities have at some point in history come into contact with the

[44] Bart Moore-Gilbert. *Postcolonial Life-Writing: Culture, Politics, and Self-Representation.* New York: Routledge, 2009, p. 3.
[45] Susan Abraham. *Identity, Ethics, and Nonviolence in Postcolonial Theory: A Rahnerian Theological Assessment.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 201.

indigenous Algerian people because of colonialism in the first place and because of trade as well.[46]

Discussion about postcolonial identities —in this context the Algerian and the Nigerian identities— tends to be always defined in relation to the ex-coloniser. Manichaean binaries on the basis of coloniser versus colonised, centre versus periphery and self versus other are still present in literary interpretations.[47] For instance, Kevin Frank sees that the critical responses to postcolonial novels tend to depict the native culture as alienated because of imperialism; he declares that the native tongues and cultures were alienated because of the superiority of the coloniser's language and culture.[48] Moreover, Ruth S. Wenske contends that several examples of dualism can be seen in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, wherein assets such as collectivism, supernatural, traditional and African customs are attributed to indigenous Nigerians while terms such as 'individualism', 'natural', 'change' and 'Western' are ascribed to the coloniser.[49] Besides that, for Lakhdar Kharchi the quest for Algerian identity does not come to an end; that is, despite his conducting his research in 2020, he still sees that the Algerian identity is not yet defined as an entity that encompasses its own memories, experiences and values.[50] He rather defines it in relation to the coloniser, wherein Algeria is undefined whereas France is defined. Therefore, without colonialism the Algerian identity could not come to existence. Thus, in the postcolonial context elements —such as identities, persons and countries— are defined by binary oppositions to a large extent. Although the stated dichotomies are not necessarily told verbatim, they are inherent in each issue raised about

[46] J. N. C. Hill. *Identity in Algerian Politics: The Legacy of Colonial Rule*. Boulder, Co: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009, p. 174.
[47] Karin Barber. 'African-Language Literature and Postcolonial Criticism.' *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 26, no. 4, 1995, pp. 3–30.
[48] Kevin Frank. 'Censuring the Praise of Alienation: Interstices of Ante-Alienation in *Things Fall Apart, No Longer at Ease*, and *Arrow of God*.' *Callaloo*, vol. 34, no. 4, 2011, pp. 1088–100.
[49] Ruth S. Wenske. 'Adichie in Dialogue with Achebe: Balancing Dualities in *Half of a Yellow Sun*.' *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 47, no. 3, 2016, pp. 70–87.
[50] Lakhdar Kharchi. 'La Quête de l'Identité dans la Littérature Algérienne d'Expression Française.' *Identité et Altérité dans la Littérature de l'Espace Euro-Méditerranéen*, edited by Nicolas Balutet**,** Jacques-Emmanuel Bernard and Youssef Ferdjani, vol. 41, 2020, pp. 45-54. Toulon: Babel Littératures Plurielles.

whatever concerns postcolonial communities. That said, the discussions about the choice of language in postcolonial literature, the grievances upon the political system in postcolonial countries, the discontent about economic, or social systems are based on those dichotomies. The impact of binary relations is seen at all levels of society, and more explicitly at the level of literary criticism.[51] In this, what is important to us is the perseverance of the conflictual attitudes and perceptions that have been caused by colonialism. The spirit of this conflictual dualism does not cease to exist, and it can be perceived at all levels of the postcolonial society, ranging from everyday social interactions to the structure of institutions.[52]

3.2 Identity in Postcolonial Theories

The colonial experience and its consequences for people triggered the interrogations by some of the world's most famous thinkers regarding the definition and the plight of the postcolonial subject's identity. Frantz Fanon has dealt at length with the impact of colonialism on the colonised people. Through his analysis, Fanon revealed the problem of 'colonial alienation of the person' as a mental health concern.[53] He explains that the massacres of the Algerian war had tremendous effects on the identity of the indigenous people: Fanon contends that the psyche of the colonised subject is fractured by the lack of mental and material homogeneity as a result of the colonial power's Western culture being forced onto the colonised population despite the existing material differences between them.[54] In line with Fanon's opposition to the colonial hegemony that heavily impacted the identity of the postcolonial subject, Gayatri Spivak challenges the heritage of colonialism by foregrounding the experience of the subaltern —in this context, the colonised— to voice their needs and

[51] Eric Anchimbe, and Mforteh Stephen. *Postcolonial Linguistic Voices: Identity Choices and Representations*. Göttingen: Hubert & Co, 2011, p. 347.
[52] Dougal Kimemia. *Africa's Social Cleavages and Democratization: Colonial, Postcolonial, and Multiparty Era*. Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2016, p. 14
[53] Frantz Fanon. *Black Skin, White Masks.* London: Pluto Press, 2008, p. xxiii.
[54] Frantz Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 1961, p. 194.

override the colonial and political supremacy.[55] Edward Said's idea of identity focuses on the imperative to assert oneself, and the need to develop an individual personality that is against the aims of colonialism and imperialism. Said argues that the fate of a person must not be dictated by his/her governing authority or oppressive rulers; rather, it is in the hands of the person him/herself to shape his own destiny.[56]

In an attempt to overcome the dead-end that some early scholars met in their attempt to accompany the emergence of postcolonial identities, Homi Bhabha has put forward the concept of hybridity to describe the cultural intermingling inherent to the colonial encounter and its legacy. He goes on to attribute the concept of 'third space'—that is an unseen space, where two different cultures encounter one another.[57] Bhabha's view of this cultural phenomenon is smooth in the sense that it does not create tensions by focusing on the cultural differences; he rather describes it as somewhere where cultural characteristics of a colonial power and its colony intermingle, creating as such a third/new identity that has its own characteristics.[58] Bhabha goes on to create the concept of a 'third space' that lies somewhere in between two separate cultures. This space permits the intermixing of different cultural traits without any imposition, contempt or prejudice. I deem it necessary to understand that identity is not fixed, and is rather characterised by continuous change because 'almost three quarters of the total world population has been affected by imperialism'.[59]

[55] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Ed.Cary N and Lawrence G. London: Macmillan, 1988, pp. 271 - 313.
[56] Bill Ashcroft, and Pal Ahluwalia. *Edward Said*, 2nd Edition. London and New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 4.
[57] Homi K. Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994, p. 4.
[58] Paul Meredith. 'Hybridity in the Third Space: Rethinking Bi-Cultural Politics in Aotearoa/ New Zealand.' *He Pukenga Korero*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1990, pp. 1-8.
[59] Bill Ashcroft et al. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures.* London: Routledge, 1989, p. 1.

4. Themes in the Postcolonial Novel

Due to the harsh circumstances that confronted the newly independent populations, the question of identity has occupied and still occupies a major place in literary studies.[60] Important also are other issues such as feminism, language, and hybridity. While these elements, which are of great importance in the field of postcolonialism, have been treated individually, this thesis attempts to serve as a wider basis of knowledge for researchers where different subjects of postcolonialism such as oppression, resistance, agency, violence, and 'hybrid affirmation' are studied in a dynamic motion that is historically informative. Those themes will be analysed individually in each chapter, interpreting as such the conditions of the indigenous peoples through different historical periods such as colonisation, independence, and post-independence.

Along these lines, the postcolonial novel is also a place for feminists to voice their preoccupations and depict their conditions, that is, the concerns and conditions of women feature prominently in the postcolonial African literary context. For instance, Louisa Hachani compares and contrasts the feminine condition in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb during colonisation.[61] Yet, her investigation is limited to the feminist approach and to the period of colonisation, whereas this thesis offers a larger insight, as it adopts postcolonial theory and opts for a dynamic temporal analysis which develops over time and which extends from colonisation to post-independence.

Along similar lines, Dahan Bensalem draws links between history and politics to compare Sub-Saharan Anglophone —Nigeria and Somalia— and Maghrebian Francophone —Morocco and Algeria— literary spheres. Their study tackles the issue of authenticity, which

[60] Abdulqadir Saman. 'The Crisis of Identity in Postcolonial Literature.' Conference. Proceedings of INTCESS15- 2 nd International Conference on Education and Social Sciences. Istanbul, Turkey, 2-4 February 2015, p. 1000.
[61] Louisa Hachani. 'Etude Comparative de la Condition Féminine dans la Littérature Maghrébine et la Littérature Négro-Africaine.' Diss. Université Kasdi Merbah Ouargla, 2007.

is defined as a need to use the national language to create a national literature because it is believed that the lack of national literature is a direct result of neglecting the national language. Cultural hybridity is a direct consequence of the process of writing in the colonisers' language which is why it is condemned.[62] By way of contrast, my comparison of Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian postcolonial literatures avoids problematising the use of the coloniser's language, and does not condemn cultural hybridity which is an inescapable result of the colonial encounter. On the contrary, it analyses thematic, historical, political, and theoretical affinities between these culturally and linguistically distinct geographical spots, and interprets authors' borrowing of the colonisers' language as a necessity. This is a necessity in the sense that writers could neither write in Arabic nor in Igbo, or any other indigenous languages: first, because they were educated in French —in the case of Algerian writers— and English —in the case of Nigerian writers. Second, indigenous peoples' illiteracy during colonialism, war and revolution was a major reason too —the illiteracy prevents people from reading; 'on the eve of independence … only 10 percent of the total native Algerian population was literate'[63] while 'Nigeria achieved 5% literacy under British rule'.[64] Therefore, writers were obliged to use the language of the coloniser to voice their thoughts and their people's concerns to the world —some educated Africans, but mostly the western audience who perceived the indigenous Africans as backward and primitive.[65] Jaouad Serghini's view differs from Bensalem's regarding the use of the colonisers' language, as he contends that Maghrebian and Sub-Saharan post-colonial writers' use of the French language

[62] Dahhan Bensalem. 'Crossing the Borders: Comparing Postcolonial Fiction across Languages and Cultures.' *Arab World English Journal*, no. 2. Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 2014, pp. 36-47.
[63] Ouarda Merrouche. 'The Long Term Impact of French Settlement on Education in Algeria.' Diss. Uppsala University, 2007, p. 2.
[64] Paul Okafor. 'Post-World War II Era of the National Mass Literacy Campaign in Nigeria, 1940-1952: An Examination of the Roles of the Colonial Administration and Selected Non-Governmental Agencies in the Fight Against Illiteracy.' Diss. The Faculty of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1998, p. 5.
[65] Phanuel Egejuru. 'Who is the Audience of Modern African Literature?' *Obsidian (1975-1982)*, vol. 5, no. 1/2, 1979, pp. 51–58.

is out of pride.[66] Thus far, my view is that the writers used the language out of necessity, resulting from the illiteracy of the indigenous people. Hence, they created texts that mirror the difficulties they faced, and carried the weight of their African experience through an alien language that holds the imprints of their indigenous cultures.

Furthermore, what comes to light in the postcolonial novel is the question of trauma. Sophie Croisy contends that trauma revealed in postcolonial history is based upon selectiveness, that is, it is mainly the trauma told from a Western perspective.[67] As a result, as long as certain traumatic events are ignored, suffering will continue. Croisy's argument is in line with Stef Craps' conjecture which consists in reshaping and redirecting trauma theory to include unheared suffering. According to Craps, trauma theory which is Eurocentric and culturally biased has to include minority oppressed groups' traumatic experiences in their own terms.[68] Therefore, Croisy proposes an alternative approach which hinges upon telling the previously unspoken trauma from a non-Western perspective, in order to promote healing. Her approach of 'positive melancholia' allows the memory to cope with trauma, by framing it as a historic event which assembles two people who share memories, history and cultural rapprochement. Croisy's approach to trauma displays key similarities to the attitude towards cultural hybridity in this study: it is a positive approach that promotes pacification with the colonial legacy. In this sense, Croisy believes that accepting the past and talking about trauma facilitates the healing of memory. Likewise, I argue that accepting one's self as a culturally-hybrid individual may contribute to the well-being of peoples in question in post-independence. Whilst it is impossible to erase trauma from memory and history, it is possible to cope with it. In line with this, I contend that it is impossible to erase cultural hybridity

[66] Jaouad Serghini. 'Nouvelles Génération d'Ecrivains Maghrébins et Subsahariens de Langue Française: Nouveaux Rapports à la Langue Française?' *Synergies Chili*, no. 6, Santiago, Chile: Gerflint, 2010, pp. 121-13.
[67] Sophie Croisy. 'Algerian History, Algerian Literature, and Critical Theories: An Interdisciplinary Perspective on Linguistic Trauma and Identity Reformation in Postcolonial Algeria.' *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies*, vol. 10, no. 1. University Park, Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2008, pp. 84-106.
[68] Stef Craps. *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds*. England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

because it is the result of encounters that form today's history. Thus, in my view coping with cultural hybridity is the most appropriate solution for relieving tensions and presenting post-independence culturally hybrid people as balanced.

As the impetus of this study is to introduce positive criticism towards postcolonial identity —and by positive I mean highlighting the resistance, the courage, and the agency of characters instead of their disillusionment and alienation, it is important to see how the pressing issue of identity is addressed in the existing studies. Habiba Jemali's study on Ahmadou Kourouma, Patrick Chamoiseau and Hélé Béji concentrates on the identity of the indigenous people, and call for the reunification of orality and prose to identify the indigenous self, and to win back and preserve the indigenous culture.[69] The use of ideas such as winning back, preservation and reunification implies the presence of a threat of loss in face of the adverse culture. Hence, the idea of cultural conflict and cultural dichotomy still shapes the analysis of postcolonial texts. Sofia Bendjehiche concentrates on the identity of Younes, the protagonist of *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit*, who witnessed Algerian life before and during the war.[70] The radical changes Younes witnesses affect his personality deeply, which reflects the fact that he is immersed in a quest for his identity. In her study of African postcolonial identities, Sophie Tanniou attempts to challenge 'Western universalist viewpoints', and seeks to redefine a postcolonial identity conceived by local sub-Saharan Francophone and Anglophone writers.[71] In her view, a redefinition of the African identity must be done by the African people united all together, be they Francophone or Anglophone, be they 'Africans born or based outside'.[72] Those researchers' analysis of the postcolonial novels demonstrate the long-term legacy with which postcolonial communities have to engage. The above-

[69] Habiba Jemmali. 'La Littérature Francophone Postcoloniale: Entre Désaveu Social et Reconstruction Identitaire.' Diss. Université de Tunis I, May 2013.
[70] Sofia Bendjehiche. 'Pour une Étude Postcoloniale dans *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit*.' Diss. Université Mohamed khider, 2018.
[71] Sophie Nicole Isabelle Taniou. 'Decoding Identities in "Francophone" African Postcolonial Spaces: Local Novels, Global Narratives.' Diss. University of Birmingham Research Archive, 2015, p. 199.
[72] Ibid.

mentioned studies show the negative impact of colonisation, which is interpreted in the constant quest for identity. The most striking observation to emerge from these findings is that loss of identity or disillusionment are the most highlighted aspects in postcolonial studies.

The disillusionment is indeed present in the postcolonial texts and characterises the postcolonial character. However, with the new proposed approach which is 'hybrid affirmation', disillusionment is minimised because my reading of the selected novels show that more important aspects such as inner strength, determination and agency are exhibited by the characters. Thus, the proposed approach has the potential to adjust postcolonial criticism, and render it more positively disposed towards the postcolonial character. That is, instead of shedding light on the loss of identity, researchers can start to glorify the inner force, agency, and the resilience of the postcolonial character despite difficulties.

5. The Postcolonial Text and History

In this study, the relationship between the postcolonial novel and history is conceived as one of complementarity. Achebe, Dib, Khadra, Bey, Hoffmann & Ibrahim and Adichie relate their texts to the issues of the world. Not only do they depict the reality of their experiences in their texts, but they also tell the history of a population. As historical documentation can reach limits, the novel can serve to supply the lacking information. Thus, the postcolonial novel has a dual role; its function is not limited to informing about history. As the postcolonial text 'concerns real people and real events',[73] it evokes emotions in readers that enable them to experience facts in an alluring way. Therefore, the postcolonial text is not only didactic, but also entertaining. On that account, I consider that the reading of the selected novels is a useful means to grasp the history of Algerian and Nigerian postcolonial peoples through a combined historico-literary approach.

[73] David M, Kennedy. 'The Art of the Tale: Story-Telling and History Teaching.' *Reviews in American History*, vol. 26, no. 2, 1998, pp. 462–73.

It has been observed that 'Historic time like all time must be divided in order to be told'.[74] In this study, the same approach is adopted in delineating and labelling the historic periods that mark the development of indigenous Algerians and Nigerians from colonisation to independence, to episodes of violence, before finally reaching post-independence. Nonetheless, this gives us cause to reflect upon the relationship between history and historically-inspired fiction, which is a salient aspect of the present thesis. Indeed, the relation of history with fiction has constituted the subject of many studies. The idea that 'fiction can be as accurate as history' has been defended by Richard Slotkin because for him 'novels arise from the shortcomings of history'.[75] That is, Slotkin's assertion suggests that as a discipline, history is limited by its methodological reliance on archives and sources. In other words, 'to record large and complex human events is not fully adequate or reliable'.[76] Hereby, the novel can intervene to fulfil the gap historical writing can present.

With respect to the reliability of historical fiction, Samantha Young examines the extent to which truth can be displayed in historic fiction, and deems that it can offer easy 'access to a past unavailable to traditional or 'proper' modes of historical research'.[77] Unlike Young, whose main purpose is to investigate the extent of truth in fictional texts, I will explore the possibility of complementing history with fiction. I agree with Young in the sense that fiction is effective in conveying the past because instead of scrolling through 'a list of dates and isolated historical events, readers of historical texts find themselves walking in the shoes of particular characters and experiencing historical events through their perspective', so

[74] Robert F. Berkhofer Jr. *Fashioning History: Current Practices and Principles*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 129.
[75] Richard Slotkin. 'Fiction for Purposes of History.' *Rethinking History*, vol. 9, no. 2/3, Abingdon: Routledge, 2005, pp. 221-236.
[76] Ibid., 225.
[77] Samantha Young. 'Based on a True Story: Contemporary Historical Fiction and Historiographical Theory.' *Otherness: Essays and Studies*, no. 2/1, 2011, pp. 1-17.

to approach history through fiction is more attractive.[78] The complementarity of history and fiction is treated effectively by Hayden White, an American historian, who encourages his students to manifest their crafts of communication within the field of history. White does not mind mingling both disciplines because for him just like fiction writers, historians need to organise a chronicle of events that will constitute the plot of the historical document.[79] When fiction treats 'a time-and-place-specific event … through the emplotment —plot— of the imaginary characters' actions', its historically informative action can be successfully achieved.[80] That is, a novel such as Mohammed Dib's *La Grande Maison* or Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* which tell the life-changing conditions of Algerian and Nigerian indigenous peoples with the coming of French and British colonialism, serves as an example of the potential fiction has in teaching history. Whereas history encompasses 'des événements vrais qui ont l'homme pour acteur', literature can populate real events with imaginary characters.[81] White as well as Slotkin support the view that postcolonial literature has a major contribution to make to colonial and post-colonial history because it can shed light on aspects neglected in traditional historical research.

6. Methodology

Through this research, I will explore the inter-relatedness of three areas: historic developments, Franco-Algerian postcolonial literature, and Anglo-Nigerian postcolonial literature, and I will answer the questions raised earlier. In this study, I adopt a qualitative approach because the study material I use is composed of a set of novels, history and sociology research, recorded interviews, journal articles, and conferences. Also, I examine studies conducted in the past years such as PhD theses so as to see the different perspectives

[78] Grant Rodwell. 'Pedagogical Dimensions of Historical Novels and Historical Literacy.' *Whose History?: Engaging History Students through Historical Fiction*, University of Adelaide Press, 2013, pp. 29–44.
[79] Hayden White. *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014, p. 427.
[80] Hayden White. 'Introduction: Historical Fiction, Fictional History, and Historical Reality.' *The Journal of Theory and Practice*, vol. 9, issue. 2-3, 2005, pp. 147-157 (p. 148).
[81] Paul Veyne. *Comment on Ecrit l'Histoire.* Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1971, p. 13.

regarding the conditions, and the interpretations of Algerian and Nigerian peoples during the colonial and the postcolonial periods.

The present study adopts a comparative approach to analyse the development of Algerian and Nigerian peoples through Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian literatures to investigate the ways in which the two discourses of postcolonialism and history can fruitfully intersect to illuminate the corpus of postcolonial literature. As a matter of fact, bringing together culturally, linguistically and politically different literatures present some challenges. To begin with, the European colonial powers —France and Great Britain— reshaped most of the African continent economically, socially, politically and created a remarkable divide between French-speaking and English-speaking African countries —Algeria and Nigeria in this context.[82] There has not been much cooperation between Anglophone and Francophone African countries, namely Algeria and Nigeria, because of linguistic barriers; this dichotomy clearly appears when decisions need to be taken in the African Union.[83] Even after twenty years of the establishment of the African Union —that deployed efforts to fostering harmony and unity between Francophones and Anglophones of the African continent, Africa remains divided.[84] As a result, the language barrier constituted an obstacle for my research in the sense that I have not found any cross-linguistic literature about Francophone Algeria and Anglophone Nigeria to use as a source of investigation —much of the literature treated these subjects separately. Unfortunately, the bond between these two nations is elusive. The cross-linguistic literary cooperation between Algeria and Nigeria is a field that needs to be developed; there is much left to be done in this area. Thus, I contend that this research is an opportunity to bridge this gap and provide a source of investigation for future researchers. Besides, the other important obstacle in this comparison is the distinct political ideologies —

[82] Erete, Offiong Ebong. 'Overcoming the Francophone and Anglophone Dichotomy in the 21st Century to Promote African Unity.' Pinisi Journal of Art, Humanity & Social Studies, vol. 2, n. 2, 2022, pp. 107-114.
[83] Ibid., 108.
[84] Ibid., 111.

direct and indirect rule. France integrated direct rule in Algeria to eradicate the culture and the identity of the indigenous population and to completely control the people.[85] However, Great Britain adopted indirect rule wherein local elites and native institutions were integrated into the government.[86] Despite the difference of the colonial political systems, I noticed that the consequences for the indigenous Algerian and Nigerian peoples are the same —acculturation, dispossession, oppression, and violence. As the core principle of this project is the analysis of the postcolonial character, the difference in the political system does not distort the outcome of the research. Finally, the other striking difference between both of these societies is the culture: Nigeria is a multicultural country where more than four hundred languages are spoken besides the official English language while Algeria counts only two local languages —Arabic and Berber— besides French.[87] Nevertheless, the linguistic difference does not represent an obstacle for this project. On the contrary, the difference of language is an important question in this research because it joins the principle of 'hybrid affirmation' that celebrates cultural difference.

By adopting a transnational lens, this thesis pioneers a progressive approach to postcolonial literature. At the same time, it productively explores a new terrain for literary and historic study: the relationship between literature and history is perceived as one in which history is accessible and exploitable by fiction.[88] The texts analysed in this thesis show key events in the history of Algeria and Nigeria. Besides, they demonstrate the characteristics of key historical periods such as colonisation, independence, and post-independence in a way that is attractive to the reader because s/he interacts with characters that make history alive.

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[85] George, Kennan. 'The Direct Rule of the People.' *The North American Review*, vol. 198, no. 693, 1913, pp. 145–60.

[86] John Gerring, et al. 'An Institutional Theory of Direct and Indirect Rule.' *World Politics*, vol. 63, no. 3, 2011, pp. 377–433.

[87] Oka Obono. 'Cultural Diversity and Population Policy in Nigeria.' *Population and Development Review*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2003, pp. 103–11.

Patrick Crowley, editor. *Algeria: Nation, Culture and Transnationalism: 1988-2015*. Liverpool University Press, 2017, p. 56.

[88] Carol Sliwka. 'Connecting to History through Historical Fiction.' *Language Arts Journal of Michigan*, vol. 23, issue. 2, 2008, pp. 60-68.

In this thesis, the organisation of the texts is based upon a line of argument that demonstrates the varying degrees of the effects of colonisation on indigenous populations leading us towards 'hybrid affirmation'. The parallel analysis and similar trajectories of texts from disparate postcolonial backgrounds —Algeria and Nigeria— will show that the notion of 'hybrid affirmation' is applicable on a wider scale. That is, 'hybrid affirmation' applies to Algeria and Nigeria as it applies to any postcolonial society. This study argues that in relation to postcolonial criticism, the reading of the novels' characters often goes hand in hand with the cultural, political and social problems caused by colonialism wherein the postcolonial individual is subjugated and finds it difficult to live in post-independence societies that still struggle with the impact of European colonial rule. I will make the case that postcolonial theory needs to be adapted to convey a more positive appraisal of the condition of the hybrid postcolonial subject. The central concept of this thesis, 'hybrid affirmation', proposes therefore to foreground postcolonial criticism in ways which counter traditional evaluation where the postcolonial character is described as lost.[89] That is, 'hybrid affirmation' acknowledges the colonial dominance inherited from the colonial period, and the traces of colonialism in the ex-colonies,[90] while also acknowledging the disillusionment of the postcolonial characters.[91] In doing so it sheds light on the strength and the affirmation of the hybrid identity despite the presence of the aforementioned aspects. As the novels engage with different historical periods, the process of emancipation of the indigenous Algerian and Nigerian peoples evolves according to the timeline of the novels' organisation in this dissertation.

[89] Francis Akindés. 'Contre Les Fausses Évidences de L'Identité: Eloge de la Singularité chez Amin Maalouf.' *Les Lignes de Bouaké-La Neuve*. Diss. Abidjan: Université de Bouaké – Décanat, 2010, p. 192.
[90] Ioana Marcu. 'Être ou ne pas Être post (-) Coloniale: le Cas de la Littérature des Intrangers.' *Caligrama: Revista de Estudos Romanicos*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2018, pp. 99-121 (p. 101).
[91] Awa Coumba. 'Spécialité et Critique de la Laideur: l'Engagement Postcolonial dans la Littérature en Français de la Nouvelle Génération d'Écrivains Africains.' Diss. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2010, p.10.

Central to this interdisciplinary, comparative study is the investigation of the overlapping postcolonial history and literature. For too long, these two areas of intellectual production have been treated as separate academic disciplines, though they are deeply related to one another. The thesis follows a clear historical categorisation in the structuring of its argument: colonisation, resistance and independence, and post-independence. In this context, I will argue that combining this chronological, historically-oriented approach with a comparative analysis of Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian postcolonial literatures highlights the extent to which theoretical concepts and thematic concerns have emerged in parallel between these two cultural traditions during the recent past. The discussion of concepts will be based on a dynamic approach: from subalternity, to agency, resistance and then to 'hybrid affirmation'. The sequencing of the literary concepts corresponds to the motion of these two peoples' states of being from the nineteenth century to the 2000s; the analysis is thus chronologically organised and historically informed whilst being fed by literary production.

This thesis will draw upon theoretical contributions of triad of postcolonialism's major thinkers: Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha. In addition, indispensable to our analysis are Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Molefi Kete Asante. In this thesis, whilst I do not focus on the relation between the post-colony and the metropolis, I nonetheless need to refer to this binary opposition for theoretical purposes. That is, usually it is the West that criticises and analyses postcolonial novels from a Eurocentric perspective, but in this case, the roles are reversed.[92] Edward Said's work is usefully applied to this thesis in terms of analysing the selected fiction from a non-Western perspective. Accordingly, I do not focus on the relationship between the centre —the colonial authorities— and the periphery —the colonised, but rather I decentre the 'centre' by focusing on the people who are located in the

[92] Edward W Said. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Knopf, 1994.

periphery and by analysing the reasons for this condemnation and the possibilities for getting out of the 'periphery', which is why I also engage with Gayatri Spivak's rhetorical question 'Can the subaltern speak?'[93] Spivak alludes to Western attitudes and perspective towards post-colonial studies as she draws attention to their willingness to silence the Orient. Therefore, Spivak's work lays the groundwork for my theoretical endeavour. In line with the essence of Fanon, Said, and Spivak's theories, Asante has also expressed his concern around the issue of the African identity, which he contends is moved off-centre from myths, religions, sciences, and cultures. Thus, Asante seeks to relocate Africans in the centre of their own narratives and to reclaim the definition of the African identity and the African concerns by Africans rather than Europeans.[94] I chose to include Asante in this study because I intend to adopt a similar approach in relocating and redefining the postcolonial subject in relation to postcolonial criticism. That said, Asante coined the term 'afrocentricity' to decentre the Eurocentric discourse which excludes Africans. Likewise, I coin 'hybrid affirmation' to reinterpret the postcolonial subject in postcolonial criticism. As a solution to redefine the African identity away from Eurocentric perspective, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o proposes to cut all ties with the imperially imposed language by reconnecting with African languages.[95] While Ngugi's subversive intent is reasonable, I consider that his suggestion cannot be adopted by all writers, and that the use of the imperial language in literature will still exist. As I have argued earlier, the use of the imperial language was out of necessity and not choice. Furthermore, I suggest that the more the imperial language is rejected, the more social and cultural tensions augment; rejecting the literature written in the language of the enemy means rejecting some indigenous people who speak that language. Consequently, social and political

[93] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. London: Macmillan, 1988, pp. 271-313.
[94] Molefi Kete Asante. *Facing South to Africa: Toward an Afrocentric Critical Orientation*. Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2014, p. 9.
[95] Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: Portsmouth, N.H.: J. Currey; Heinemann, 1986.

problems about belonging, displacement and alienation appear in society. Therefore, I contend that 'hybrid affirmation' has the potential to absorb differences and establish a positive image of cultural mixing in post-imperialist societies.

The postcolonial situation creates an unbearable climate for its subjects or its people: they are disillusioned and they do not have a sense of belonging —neither to their own society nor to that of the former coloniser.[96] Under the colonial influence, the indigenous culture loses its purity and becomes contaminated. To better define this phenomenon, Homi K. Bhabha explores the interstitial space between cultures; it is a space that is home to hybrid people who display the traces of two cultures. This situation may be traumatising to some extent. However, Bhabha's work suggests that culture is not static and peoples' characteristics are not limited: they cannot be restricted to only one place or another and they are subject to change. Cultural hybridity tends to hold a pejorative connotation in some postcolonial texts, but Bhabha presents it from a renewed perspective by showing that it can be seen as cultural richness. Accordingly, Bhabha proposed that mimicry, interstice, hybridity or liminality emerge out of the intersection of two cultures: that of the coloniser and the colonised and where the new-born generation lives in a cultural 'entre-deux' – or an 'in between'.[97] In postcolonial texts, cultural hybridity connotes disillusionment and loss of identity, and the characters seem to sink into depression because of the 'entre-deux' feeling. Therefore, the current research centres upon the study of a new methodology which builds upon the existing criticism, and proposes 'hybrid affirmation' to appease social and cultural relations.

[96] Homi K. Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
[97] Valérie K. Orlando. 'Conversations with Camus as Foil, Foe and Fantasy in Contemporary Writing by Algerian Authors of French Expression.' *The Journal of NorthAfrican Studies*, vol. 20, issue. 5. Routledge, 2015, pp. 865-883. *Taylor & Francis online.*

7. Outline of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters, the first of which deals with the history of Algeria and Nigeria in relation to their ex-colonial metropolises, France and Great Britain respectively. In tracing the origins of Modern Algeria and Nigeria, chapter one examines the past of these countries to understand the implications of colonisation and its aftermath on the development of Algerian and Nigerian native populations. In 1827, a dispute occurred between Hussein Dey, the ruler of the Ottoman Regency of Algiers, and the French consul Pierre Deval about a twenty-eight-year-old debt. For this reason, France initiated a blockade against the port of Algiers, landed an army in Sidi Fredj in the summer of 1830 and in subsequent years took control of other coastal cities.[98] Further south and a few years later, in 1851, British forces invaded Lagos, which would become the capital of the amalgamation of territories that would be turned into the colony and protectorate of Nigeria in 1914.[99] It is significant to examine the encounter of the coloniser and the native populations because it shows how cultural hybridity started to exist in the Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian contexts. It is thanks to this intercultural encounter that it will be possible to discuss the development of native Algerians and Nigerians towards 'hybrid affirmation'. The fiction to be analysed in this study enables us to learn further about Algeria and Nigeria's recent past and the twists and turns that the colonial encounter has generated.

To start the investigation of the development of the self, chapter two analyses the conditions of the subaltern during colonial conditions. By focusing on the period of colonisation through Mohammed Dib's trilogy: *La Grande Maison* (1952), *L'Incendie* (1954), *Le Métier à Tisser* (1957) and Chinua Achebe's trilogy: *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *Arrow of*

[98] Mokhtar Atallah. *Études Littéraires Algériennes*. Paris: Harmattan, 2012, p. 20.
[99] Emmanuel Osewe Akubor. 'One Hundred Years of Nigerian Nationhood: Drifting from Amalgamation to Armageddon.' *International Journal of History and Cultural Studies*, vol. 1, issue. 1. Diss. Obafemi Awolowo University, 2014, pp. 53-64.

God (1964) and *No Longer at Ease* (1960), these trilogies embody the colonial atmosphere in Algeria and Nigeria, and show the power relations between the colonial authorities and the indigenous peoples. In this chapter, they are selected to analyse the peoples' conditions in the years leading up to independence so as to assess peoples' strength and ability to overcome war and life challenges.

Chapter Three puts forward the concept of 'resistance', and investigates thematic commonalities dealing with the revolutionary phase and the preparation for independence in Algeria and Nigeria. Themes relevant to that period will be collective consciousness, anti-colonial stance, agency, failure of assimilation, and indigenous unity. In this chapter, Yasmina Khadra's *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit* (2008) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) show the emergence of the anti-colonial stance that lay dormant within the subaltern peoples in the previous chapter.

Chapter Four studies the post-independence era from the vantage point of the early twenty-first century. Two landmark novels will be examined in this chapter: Maïssa Bey's *Bleu Blanc Vert* (2006) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013). The close links between these two postcolonial novels reside in the state of being of the characters. The characters stand for a microcosm of the indigenous Algerian and Nigerian peoples, who after independence are characterised by ambivalence and disillusionment. So, to escape the tormenting situation of post-independence, the characters opt for immigration, but in so doing they feel displaced again.

Chapters Two, Three, and Four trace the historical evolution of Algerian and Nigerian peoples from subalternity to agency to 'hybrid affirmation'. In this research, subalternity corresponds to the state of people under the yoke of colonisation, where they had no right to claim for their needs. Agency demonstrates the maturation of these peoples from a state of

submission to a condition of capability. For instance, the novels show that indigenous people despite being poor, hungry and miserable, still exhibit a force of character and determination to change their life for the best. Hence, 'Hybrid affirmation', a new concept I coin, serves the purpose of this research: it is combined of hybridity and affirmation. Hybridity resumes the state of peoples whose nations gained independence, yet whose souls were still haunted by the coloniser's culture. The fiction through which I choose to illustrate this period presents hybrid characters, who suffer from disillusionment because they can neither live in their hometowns nor can they do so in the 'host countries'. Most postcolonial novels depict tormented hybrid characters. Some thinkers like Mahatma K. Gandhi condemn cultural hybridity due to the suffering it causes to people and due to the so-called contamination it engenders to the purity of indigenous cultures.[100] On the contrary, Homi K. Bhabha sees in it a light promoting an approach which takes positive elements from both cultures. My thesis adds to these findings by coining the term 'hybrid affirmation', which suggests that we should now cease to lament the state of hybridity and, instead of seeking to erase it, celebrate the interpenetration of cultures which hybridity enables. By assuming one's hybridity, it will start to be accepted, on a social and cultural level, as a natural state. I argue that embracing and celebrating hybridity, on a methodological level, is a necessary step both in life and in history. I consider that concepts such as colonisation, resistance, independence are qualifiers that capture the history of people at a given time in history for recording purposes. Hence, 'Hybrid Affirmation' is bound to become a stage in human history that refers to the settlement and the appeasement of tensions regarding cultural hybridity in the late post-independence era. Hybridity as opposed to 'hybrid affirmation' already exists, and it applies to any sort of intermingling, that is, cultural, ethnic, or racial; it is limited neither by time nor by space. However, 'hybrid affirmation' is conceived to describe the post-independence era in the postcolonial context.

[100] Sayan Chattopadhyay. 'Homi Bhabha and the Concept of Cultural Hybridity.' *Youtube*, Lecture 14, 31 January 2017.

So, it is limited by time—after independence, and by space—in postcolonial countries. Therefore, hybridity exists because there are traces of other cultures in every culture,[101] and tensions rise in some nations because of cultural hybridity, namely postcolonial nations where the culture of the coloniser is rejected. Thereafter, 'hybrid affirmation' is developed to reconcile these tensions, which is why 'hybrid affirmation' is peculiar to the post-independence era, and it can become a stage in human history that refers to the aftermath of independence particularly.

Therefore, in the fifth and final chapter, I will apply 'hybrid affirmation' to Maissa Bey's *Bleu Blanc Vert* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* to bring to the fore characteristics which are neglected so far such as reflection, experience, maturity, strength, determination and affirmation of the postcolonial character. All these virtues are shown through the reflections and attitudes of characters who indeed suffer because of social rejection and the difficult conditions of life in post-independence nations, yet they have the capacity to affirm themselves. Reaching this final stage in the thesis, the reader grasps the major events that mark the history of Algerian and Nigerian postcolonial peoples.

The corpus has been selected to serve the idea of the development and the emancipation of the postcolonial individual. That is to say, although the characters are different from one text to another, they all incarnate the postcolonial individual either in the Franco-Algerian narratives or in the Anglo-Nigerian narratives. So, the key element in this project is the postcolonial character, who is representative of people in postcolonial societies. In fact, the selected postcolonial texts have been written on after the settings they present; this is due to the circumstances the writers faced. That said, Dib, Khadra, Bey, and Achebe lived personally the situations they wrote about —colonisation, despotism, and terrorism, yet

[101] Marwan M. Kraidy. *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005.

because of censorship —the case of Dib, Khadra, and Bey— and jail —the case of Achebe, they were not able to write earlier.[102] The case is different for Adichie and Hoffmann and Ibrahim, there is no evidence that shows that Adichie faced obstacles in publishing her works. This case also applies for Hoffmann, who is a German journalist and author who writes about subjugated women around the world. The settings presented in the works of these authors are crucial to the analysis of the project, as each narrative is about a particular historical period. Thus, the narratives are organised in a way that corresponds to the sequencing of historical events in real life from colonisation to post-independence. According to this linearity, the analysis of the postcolonial individual from subalternity to 'hybrid-affirmation' is possible. Moreover, the reason behind choosing literary texts from different socio-cultural backgrounds is purposeful, that is, the analysis switches between Francophone and Anglophone characters to prove that the postcolonial condition concerns all postcolonial communities despite their linguistic, cultural, and political differences. As a result, 'hybrid affirmation' is a state achievable by all postcolonial societies.

My examination of the existing scholarship on the subject —be it in French or in English— has reinforced the fact that researchers across the disciplines of history, and the various disciplinary perspectives encompassed by post-colonial studies, are concerned with the issue of identity. This stands to reason, given that postcolonial nations are still young, and 'still recovering from past colonial experiences and are working constantly to recover their own culture.[103] Though feminism and other critical intellectual movements have also contributed to the debate, I have identified an important space which remains ripe for investigation, notably within the Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian postcolonial literary

[102] Eric Sellin. 'Literary Expression and the State: The Case of Algeria.' *World Literature Today*, vol. 60, no. 3, 1986, pp. 428–32.
Charles. R Larson. 'The Precarious State of the African Writer.' *World Literature Today*, vol. 60, no. 3, 1986, pp. 409–13.
[103] Kamal Salhi. *Francophone Post-colonial Cultures: Critical Essays*. Lanham, Md: Lexington books, 2003, p. xiii.

spheres. Finally and most importantly, this body of postcolonial fiction subtly teaches history because it presents to us familiar events which are simultaneously distant from our lives simply because they are fictional.[104] It builds upon this mysterious feeling of familiarity, combined with new actors and settings, which makes it more attractive to readers and anchors complex facts and information in a way history is not always able to achieve. While historical texts lists dates, events, and biographies of historical personalities,[105] fiction is vivid in the sense that it makes readers live the historical moment through characters. That said, to learn the past through the eyes of characters makes readers feel the consequences of actions and decisions that have taken place. Therefore, fiction has the ability to shape readers' empathy towards cultures, nations, peoples and events that are foreign to theirs.[106]

[104] Andrew Bennett, and Nicholas Royle. *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*. New York: Routledge, 2016, p. 55.
[105] Michael C Alexander. 'History and Text: Two Kinds of Ancient History.' *Arethusa*, vol. 46, no. 3, 2013, pp. 499–535.
[106] Danny Wade et al. 'The Power of Fiction: A Novel Approach to Presenting Research Findings.' *Journal of Thought*, vol. 44, no. 1–2, 2009, pp. 37–58.

Chapter One

Finding a New Paradigm: Algeria and Nigeria in Comparative Perspective since the 1800s

This chapter establishes the geo-historical framework for the thesis and its central concept, that of 'hybrid affirmation'. As will be discussed in this chapter, the creation of Algeria and Nigeria, colonial history, society, identity and cultural representation are the aspects which, through a scrutiny of different literary productions, including narratives are essential to the building of knowledge on the Algerian and the Nigerian nations. The nations' historical processes, cultures and people are key to the unfolding of the present socio-cultural discussions and literary outputs. Therefore, this chapter develops two major avenues for this research. To begin with, it sets the scene for the 'hybrid affirmation' of Algerian and Nigerian peoples after independence through the analysis of both peoples' cultural, social, and historical background. That is to say, I analyse the way nations coming from a colonial past —which involves war, struggles of decolonisation, and terrorism— can adequately locate themselves in the unsettled post-independence period. Secondly, it explores the complementarity of the two disciplines of history and literature because the postcolonial texts selected for analysis provide a travel back into the recent history of Algeria and Nigeria. The steps implied to reach these conclusions are as follows: to begin with, to look at the reasons for selecting the Algerian and the Nigerian populations for a comparative study, where geographical, historical, and political facts are taken into account. Secondly, as the primary objective of this thesis is the analysis of the emancipation of native Algerian and Nigerian populations from subalternity during colonisation, on their way to reaching 'hybrid affirmation' during post-independence, it is therefore important to examine the selected

literature in relation to sociology because the life and history of these peoples can be analysed only by assessing their respective social contexts.[107] Therefore, as a third task we need to investigate the environment of the postcolonial character in order to frame an accurate assessment of the development of the self from a state of submission to one of independence and affirmation. That sets the stage for the concept of 'hybrid affirmation' and shows how intends to reframe postcolonial criticism so as to serve the postcolonial character by highlighting his/her positive assets. Finally, as the three prior steps tackle questions that pertain to fields beyond literature, then the last part will deal with the relatedness of postcolonial fiction to the history of the people it represents in order to discuss the complementarity of history and literature, and to see the extent to which the history of indigenous Algerian and Nigerian populations is grounded in postcolonial texts.

1. The Emergence from the Yoke of Coloniality: Algerian and Nigerian Trajectories towards 'Hybrid Affirmation'

There is a history to reveal behind the toponyms of Algeria and Nigeria. These countries' 'names constitute a […] witness of the past'.[108] That said, the country names of Algeria and Nigeria are loaded with the history of these countries because thanks to these names we learn about the person that coined them, the place they refer to, the conditions those names were coined in, and the reasons behind the coining of them. These last points will be discussed in the following passages. It is argued that toponymy may inform a historical approach thanks to which different facets of a given community within a given territory can be disclosed. First of all, we can understand the type of the relationship between the person who attributes the name and the named place. In addition, we can understand the character of the place, and finally the character of the one who attributes the name to the place. For example, in the letter —

[107] Tom Bottomore. *Sociology (Routledge Revivals): A Guide to Problems and Literature*. USA and Canada: Routledge, 2010, p. 51.
[108] Brahim Atoui. 'Toponymie et Espace en Algérie.' Diss. Aix Marseille University, 1996, p. 32.

introduced in the following page— which is written by General Schneider wherein he orders the French administration to change the name of the regency of Algiers into *Algérie*, we understand that the process of naming the country happens in a colonial context, and we understand that the person who attributes the name has power over the named object which is colonial Algeria. Also, Algiers —a city transformed into a military and administrative headquarters by the French for their colonial empire in North and West Africa— owes its toponym, El-Djezair, to a very close grouping of islets which over time and due to geographical transformations gathered into one entity.[109] The history of this entity can be traced back to 8000 BC, where it used to be called Icosium also spelt as Ikosium. J. Cantineau, a specialist in Semitic languages, explains that Ikosium or Icosium encompasses two words: the prefix 'I' which means islet. Thus, 'I' refers to the 4 islets of 'Amirauté'[110] that attracted the interest of Punics,[111] and later on that of Arabs who changed its name into El-Djezair which means the isles.[112] According to J. Cantineau 'Kosim' may refer to two meanings: first it may refer to thorns. Second, it may refer to birds. J. Cantineau says that these birds are owls whereas Victor Bérard contends that they are seagulls. In this sense, Icosium is either the isle of thorns or the isle of birds.[113] Over time, North Africa endured many invasions, and it has witnessed different toponyms each time new settlers occupied it.[114] Yet, what is primarily of interest to us is Algeria during the French colonial period, which formed the basis of the modern nation as we know it today. As noted by Benjamin Stora, many books such as *A History of Algeria* (2017) by McDougall, *Algeria, 1830-2000* (2001)

[109] Marcel Le Glay. 'A la Recherche d'Icosium.' *Antiquités Africaines*, 1968, pp. 7-54.
[110] 'L'Amirauté' is the most ancient part of the old port in Algiers.
[111] The Punics, Punu or Púne (from Latin punicus, pl. punici), also known as Carthaginians, were a people from Ancient Carthage (modern Tunisia and Northeastern part of Algeria) who traced their origins to the Phoenicians. Punic is the English adjective, derived from the Latin adjective punicus to describe anything Carthaginian. Their language, Punic, was a dialect of Phoenician.
[112] Marcel Le Glay. 'A la Recherche d'Icosium', pp. 7-54.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ahmed Chikhi, and Neila Chikhi. 'La Toponymie en Algérie.' Conference: TS03H - Francophone Session II, 6123. FIG Working Week 2012 Knowing to manage the territory, protect the environment, evaluate the cultural heritage. Rome, 6-10 May, 2012, pp. 1-6.

by Benjamin Stora, *Les Damnés de la Terre* (1961) and *Pour la Révolution Africaine: Ecrits Politiques* (2001) by Frantz Fanon have examined the subject of colonial Algeria, some of which are concerned with denouncing the atrocities of colonialism upon the colonised, such as those written by Fanon. Between toponyms and political thinkers, this section frames a path to analyse the birth of a nation from the yoke of coloniality. In that regard, the following letter which, was written by General Schneider, in October 14, 1839 shows the way the toponym 'Algeria' came into being:

> Monsieur le Maréchal, jusqu'à ce jour, le territoire que nous occupons dans le Nord de l'Afrique a été désigné, dans la communication officielle, soit sous le nom de Possession française dans le Nord de l'Afrique, soit sous celui d'Ancienne Régence d'Alger, soit enfin sous celui d'Algérie. Cette dernière dénomination plus courte, plus simple et en même temps plus précise que toutes les autres, m'a semblé devoir dorénavant prévaloir. Elle se trouve d'ailleurs déjà consacrée par une application constante dans les documents distribuées aux chambres législatives et dans plusieurs discours du trône. Je vous invite en conséquence à prescrire les mesures nécessaires pour que les diverses autorités, et généralement tous les agents qui, à un titre quelconque se rattachant aux services civils ou militaires de notre colonie, aussi dans leur correspondance officielle, et dans leurs actes ou certificats quelconques qu'ils peuvent être amenés à délivrer, à substituer le mot Algérie aux dénominations précédemment en usage.
>
> Recevez, Monsieur le Maréchal, l'assurance de ma très haute considération.[115]

This archival evidence shows how just a few years after the conquest of 'the former Regency of Algiers',[116] General Schneider, Minister and Secretary of State during the war, wrote this letter to Marshal Valée[117] to give officially the name of 'Algeria' to the French colony. The letter cited above demonstrates the birth of 'Algeria' in its modern acception and marks a new era in the history of this geographical spot: when the French army took control over the regency of Algiers,[118] the colonial authorities no longer intended to refer to the colony as North Africa or the Regency of Algiers. It was officially labelled *Algérie* after General

[115] Antoine Virgile Schneider. 'C'est la France qui "Inventa" l'Algérie ... .' Archives Service Historique de l'Armée, 1839.
[116] McDougall. *A History of Algeria*, p. 58.
[117] The marshal: Sylvain-Charles Valée was born on 17 December 1773 in 'Brienne-le-Château', and died in August 15, 1846 in Paris. Appointed by Napoleon as the general governor of Algeria from 1837 to 1840.
[118] McDougall. *A History of Algeria*, p. 49.

Schneider spread the note to all the agents all over the colony and asked them to substitute all the ancient labels by *Algérie*, a toponym which according to General Schneider was the simplest and most appropriate denomination.

Prior to 1830, Algeria as known today still did not exist. Back in that period, the creation of the Ottoman Turkish Empire had come to encompass the territory that would become modern-day Algeria. The Ottomans had expanded their conquests to North Africa in 1517, and in 1534 Khayr ad-Din, known as Kapudan Pasha, was appointed Admiral of the Sultan's fleet. Despite the fact that the Ottoman Turkish Empire was the major political power in North Africa, it never controlled Morocco.[119] Ottoman control was largely confined to the coastal region, where some of the cities were the centre of administration and commercial activity. [120] 'Oran was under Spanish control, and its return to Ottoman hands in 1791 led to it replacing Mascara as the Western capital of the regency of Algiers in 1792.[121] Mentioning the Ottoman period in North Africa is important to show the origins of the delineation of the Algerian borders by the French. The western borders with Morocco and the eastern borders with Tunisia delineated by the Ottomans were the starting points for the ones we know today. However, the southern regions and the Sahara were never fully under their control because the Beylik's commercial orientation was in the coastal cities.[122] It was only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that the French extended Algeria to include the Sahara.[123]

As regards the emergence of the state of Nigeria from the yoke of coloniality, 'the boundaries of present-day Nigeria were created by the British colonial administration in the

[119] Kay Adamson. *Algeria: A Study in Competing Ideologies*. London: Cassell, 1998, p. 17.
[120] Ibid., 18.
[121] Ibid., 20.
[122] Ibid., 22.
[123] John Ruedy. *Modern Algeria the Origins and Development of a Nation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992, p. 1.

late nineteenth and early twentieth century'.[124] 'The name 'Nigeria' is credited to the colonial editor of the Times of London, Flora Shaw, who later married the new entity's first governor, Lord Frederick Lugard'.[125]

Traditionally, the borders of a nation are established by a mutual agreement between societies over generations'.[126] However, 'the boundaries adopted to create the modern state of Nigeria never had any geophysical or social significance to the indigenous peoples of the region'.[127] Rather, the 'western, northern and eastern borders have been … negotiated at drafting tables in Europe rather than through local processes of societal development'.[128] Nigerian borders have been designated by the British to serve political and economic purposes because 'political boundaries often coincide with physical boundaries, such as bodies of water, or mountain ranges'.[129]

The frontiers of today's Nigeria were established on January 1st, 1914,[130] where the northern and southern protectorates of Nigeria were amalgamated into a unified colonial state.[131] A. H. M. Keerk-Green writes that:

> His Majesty the King has decided that from today all the country from the sea to near the desert in the North, and from the French country in the West to the German Kameruns in the East, shall be one single country under one Governor-General, so that there may be no jealousy or rivalry between the North and the South, and all may cooperate together for the advancement of peace and prosperity; His Majesty has been pleased to appoint me, Sir F. Lugard, as Governor-General … to promote Peace and Justice for all men, to protect every man in the observance of his own religious faith and to administer equal Justice alike for great and small I trust that as one United country Nigeria will increase in prosperity and wealth, and its people in happiness. F. D. Lugard[132]

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[124] Toyin Falola, and Matthew M. Heaton. *A History of Nigeria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 17.
[125] John Campbell. *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink*. Maryland: Rowman& Littlefield, 2011, p. 2.
[126] Falola and Heaton. *A History of Nigeria,* p. 17.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.
[130] A. H. M. Kirk-Greene. *Lugard and the Amalgamation of Nigeria: A Documentary Record*. London: Frank Cass & Co. LTD, 1968, p. 60.
[131] Falola and Heaton. *A History of Nigeria,* p 1.
[132] Kirk-Greene. *Lugard and the Amalgamation of Nigeria,* p. 28.

This passage shows the creation of a unified Nigeria through the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern parts. Modern Nigeria which emerged in 1914[133] was to bring together manifold and incompatible groups of people, languages, cultures, and religions.

Why was the Nigerian amalgamation necessary? Sir Frederick. D. Lugard summarises the 'necessity for amalgamation' under the two headings of finance and railway —for the carriage of goods.[134] Lugard contended that the retention of an amalgamated Nigerian territory presented the following advantages. On the one hand, the questions of policy, with legislation, regulations, general orders, and the control of all Central Departments would be reduced and transferred to the control of one entity that is Governor-General. On the other hand, this avoids the multiplication of works and the duplication of administrations.[135] The amalgamation was meant to serve financial deficiencies of the North: 'the South was wealthy enough to commit resources to even unimportant programmes while the other portion —the North, could not balance its budget necessitating the British taxpayer being called upon to bear the larger share of even the cost of its administration'.[136]

Accordingly, the declaration letter of General Shneider about naming Algeria, and the decision to amalgamate North and South Nigeria by Lord Frederick Lugard mark the emergence of culturally hybrid colonial constructs. As a result of the cultural intermixing imposed by the French and British colonial presence in Algeria and Nigeria respectively, tensions around the question of the indigenous identity are expressed by thinkers such as Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Malek Bennabi, and novelists such as Mohammed Dib and Chinua Achebe. Edward Said argues that the problem of identity definition is more accentuated in postcolonial nations because they define their identities in relation to the ex-mother countries, which means that even after independence the dichotomy

[133] Ibid., 58-59.
[134] Ibid., 28-29.
[135] Ibid., 64.
[136] Falola and Heaton. *A History of Nigeria*, p. 43.

of centre/periphery or superior/inferior, that has been intentionally implemented by the coloniser, still has an influence on the formation of the identity of native populations. He has argued that:

> All post-colonial societies realize their identity in difference rather than in essence. They are constituted by their difference from the metropolitan and it is in this relationship that identity both as distancing from the center and as a means of self-assertion comes into being.[137]

I have understood from Said that in a postcolonial context the identity is composed of two characteristics: first, it contains the traces of inferiority because it emerges from the periphery. The second feature which may be assumed as the consequence of the first is that the identity is self-assertive, which implies the presence of social pathologies wherein postcolonial people feel the need to impose themselves as a people. In line with Said's opinion, I agree that postcolonial identity is defined by opposition to the other. In the case of this study, this is exemplified by the specific novels that are intended to be discussed in the coming chapters. That is to say, in Dib's trilogy *Algérie* and Achebe's *The African Trilogy*, Khadra's *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit* and Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Bey's *Puisque mon Coeur est mort* and Patience Ibrahim and Andrea C. Hoffmann's *A Gift from Darkness: How I Escaped with my Daughter from Boko Haram*, Bey's *Bleu Blanc Vert* and Adichie's *Americanah*, there is a clear sense of the dichotomous relationships between the coloniser/colonised, superior/inferior, or centre/periphery where the underdog position is linked to the indigenous people. Therefore, I propose the concept of 'hybrid affirmation' to decenter the center and free the postcolonial individual from the underdog position. The continued employment of these dual structures such as 'us/them' or 'superior/inferior' widens the social gap further, and accentuates social tensions. Therefore, this thesis problemtises the question of postcolonial identity, and it endeavours to critically analyse the postcolonial narratives in the subsequent chapters in order to deconstruct what postcolonial criticism offers in its discussion of

[137] Bill Ashcroft et al. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, eds. London: Routledge, 1989, p. 167.

postcolonial subjects. As such, the prevailing criticism of characters —who are a microcosm of the whole postcolonial society— can be deconstructed in order to give way to less dualist and binary constructs.

Drawing on the work of Homi. K. Bhabha's — *The Location of Culture* which is estimated to 'go far beyond previous attempts in analysing the questions of identity, social agency and national affiliation',[138] I would like to state an example of postcolonial binarism coming from another area of the world to show that the tensions raised by cultural intermingling concern all postcolonial nations around the world, and to show later on the applicability of the approach of 'hybrid affirmation' to all postcolonial nations. Located at the antipodes of Algeria and Nigeria, New Zealand was also subjected to settler colonialism —it became a British colony in 1840. Paul Meredith is concerned with the question of 'over-simplification and essentialisation' of binary oppositions in Aotearoa/New Zealand, so he rethinks the established Manichean dualism —the tendency of looking at things as having two sides that are opposed— of 'us/them' to a 'mutual sense of 'both/and'.[139] His analysis thus attempts to draw the attention of New Zealand politicians to the social gap that is dividing Maori and Pakeha —Western— cultures, and to invite public opinion to 'negotiate not only difference but also affinity'.[140] The initiative of negotiating the affinities existing between Maori—indigenous New Zealandian people— and Pakeha— New Zealand of Anglo-Saxon or European descent— cultures instead of dramatising the differences is in line with the principle I defend in this thesis, where I argue that the interpretations of culturally hybrid characters in Algerian and Nigerian postcolonial novels ought to be reconsidered because the interpretational practice continues even now to be unidirectional representing the postcolonial character's identity as disillusioned and traumatised. My account does not seek to privilege

[138] Bhabha Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
[139] Paul Meredith. 'Hybridity in the Third Space: Rethinking Bi-cultural Politics in Aotearoa/New Zealand.' Conference. Te Oru Rangahau Maori Research and Development Conference. Massey University, 1998.
[140] Ibid.

the positive interpretation of 'hybrid affirmed' characters over the existing analyses; rather, I seek to foreground what has been neglected by researchers which is the qualities of 'hybrid affirmed' identity. Bhabha draws our attention to an important point when he explains that postcolonial subjects have become victims of stereotypes:

> The stereotype is not a simplification because it is a false representation of reality. It is not a simplification because it is an arrested, fixated form of representation that, in denying the play of difference (which the negation through the Other permits), constitutes a problem for the representation of the subject in significations of psychic and social relations[141]

We can observe in that passage the limitations imposed on the postcolonial subject by the stereotypes, which cause the portrait of the colonised to be fixed in time and space. As a consequence, s/he is represented either as colonised people who are inferior to the coloniser or as ex-colonised people who suffer from psychological and social pathologies because of war trauma. In both cases, we are faced with negative representations of the colonised; that said the characteristic of inferior is given to the colonised by the coloniser whereas the image of the disillusioned and tormented people is attributed to the postcolonial subject by postcolonial criticism. As will be seen in the subsequent chapters, the postcolonial characters face angst, acculturations, and frustration:

> Le conflit culturel et la dépossession de soi, l'identification à l'autre dans la non-authenticité, le malaise parmi les siens, etc. peuvent entraîner des attitudes et des conduites suicidaires qui jalonnent effectivement ces littératures depuis le début. Le romancier tue son héros d'une manière ou d'une autre: suicide, démance, alcoolisme. Romans de l'échec où la schizophrénie guette le héros mal dans sa peau, l'ancien militant déçu, le héros psychotique ne sachant à qui s'identifier et en quête d'une réintégration à soi même. De dépit, il part pour l'étranger, refusant les siens. Ailleurs ce sera mieux, pense-t-il.[142]

Indeed, according to this passage, the postcolonial subjects in francophone postcolonial novels —Franco-Algerian in this context— live in a state of constant acculturation,

[141] Homi Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994, p. 75.
[142] Jean Déjeux. 'Recherche d'un Imaginaire.' *Maghreb: Littératures de Langue Française*. Paris: Arcantère, 1993. Géopolitique Africaine 7 (1988), pp. 99-109.

frustration, and angst. In these postcolonial novels, the hero —who is a native hybrid subject— is depicted as follows 'mal accepté par la société et rejeté par les siens, le héros est victime d'un déchirement qui le conduit à un échec après moult désillusions —alcoolisme, oisiveté, débauche, etc. Parfois même, le héros va se suicider ou commettre un homicide et se retrouver en prison'.[143] Marina Calas argues that 'ces romans décrivent un univers manichéen dont les histoires d'amour sont quasiment proscrites et l'héroïsme omniprésent'.[144] The same case applies for postcolonial Anglo-Nigerian literature: in her study, Shahla Khatar analyses the identity of characters in Chinua Achebe's trilogy explaining the drawbacks of colonialism to the native populations' identity, which according to her assessment are 'uprooted and alienated', and hold a 'plethora of instabilities'.[145] The observations of Fanon, Calas and Khatar come to emphasise the idea that the postcolonial fictional character is likely to be defined negatively, a fact that further compels literary criticism to become more sympathetic towards the postcolonial hybrid character.

In relation to what has been stated previously, and in response to the commonly attributed negative portrait of the postcolonial subject in literary criticism, recent research attempts to explain hybridity from two different perspectives. To begin with, from a postcolonial perspective wherein Mohammed Al Areqi draws upon the theories of Homi Bhabha, and Neil Lazarus to argue that indeed theoretically speaking, hybridity is as simple as theorists explain it. That said, thinkers such as Deborah A. Kapchan and Pauline Turner Strong[146] often offer perspectives into how to live one's hybridity positively, and how to lead a life based upon 'equality and mutual respect' despite multiculturalism in one's society. However, in reality the life of native postcolonial people is quite the opposite; cultural hybridity proves to be a

[143] Marina Calas. 'Lieux d'Etre: l'Identité en Chantier dans les Romans Algériens d'Expression Française.' Diss. The University of Minnesota, 2012.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Shahla Khatar, and Bahman Zarrinjooee. 'Hybridity in Culture and Identity: Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*.' *Journal of Novel Applied Sciences*, 2016, pp 224-232.
[146] Deborah A. Kapchan, and Pauline Turner Strong. 'Theorizing the Hybrid.' *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 112, no. 445, 1999, pp. 239–53.

source of social pathologies more than anything else. Also, Al Areqi analyses hybridity from a religious perspective, where -to the great despair of some theorists and thinkers- he attests that the appropriation of the others' way of thinking and living makes what theorists call 'hybrid person' to fall under the category of hypocrisy.[147] Al Areqi's view and that of theorists are antithetical because, on the one hand, according to theorists such as Bhabha cultural hybridity is a socio-cultural phenomenon where different cultures meet and create a space, which is characterised by the coalescence of elements of different cultures. On the other hand, Al Areqi defines cultural hybridity as hypocrisy, which in my view is a judgemental description because culturally hybrid people are not responsible for their plight and their ability to engage equally effectively with several cultures at the same time can be a source of strength rather than weakness.

As a result of these analyses, I contribute into the adjustment of postcolonial criticism, and I highlight the positive attributes shaping the culturally hybrid identity in the postcolonial fiction because what has become apparent is the essentialisation of negative interpretations of the postcolonial identities contested around inferiority complex, defeat, or loss. These negative representations have, alarmingly, found an increased currency resulting in the quasi exclusion of positive interpretations of the hybrid postcolonial subject. Therefore, what is required is a far more balanced critical perspective on bicultural subjects in Algerian and Nigerian postcolonial fiction that rethinks our assumptions about culture and identity, and shifts them from negativity to positivity. Thus, my use of the term 'hybrid affirmation' is an approach to highlight the meliorative representations of hybrid characters in postcolonial novels.

[147] Rashad Al Areqi. 'Hybridity/Hybridization from Postcolonial and Islamic Perspectives.' *Research Journal of English Language and Literature (RJELAL)*, 2017, pp. 53-61.

2. The Quest for an Emancipated Hybrid Self within a Post-Independence Hybrid Society

The transition from colony to national-statehood is the purpose Algerian and Nigerian native populations fought for.[148] After independence, the myth of national identity —the belief that national identity must be uncontaminated by any other culture—[149] was expressed by the newly independent indigenous populations who mobilised against the remaining traces of imperial governance.[150] While the post-independence era in Algeria and Nigeria was supposed to be a period of political, social and economic reconstruction, the native populations were rather preoccupied by their differences —ethnic, social, economic and religious—.[151] As a result, the newly-independent African nations experienced dilemmas such as local violence because of 'social antagonism' where two social groups adhering to different ideologies do not manage to cohabit peacefully within the same society: in this context we identify the struggles and tensions between religious fanatics in Algeria and Nigeria versus liberal leftists in their respective countries.[152]

Clearly, the coloniser is not the only obstacle to independence and a prosperous and peaceful national-statehood. The years following independence are agitated: 'a more dangerous factor beg[ins] to threaten Algeria and Nigeria's chances of finding peaceful solutions to their problems' as fratricidal struggle become very common.[153] Independence brings nothing but tensions because of inter-communal differentiations; people live in constant angst and find it difficult to build up their selves within a broken society especially one that freshly came out of colonisation. It is within these convoluted facts of social relations

[148] Abdulqadir Saman. 'The Crisis of Identity in Postcolonial Literature.' Conference. Proceedings of INTCESS15-2 nd International Conference on Education and Social Sciences. Istanbul, Turkey, 2-4 February 2015, pp. 999-1009.
[149] Martin Evans, and John Phillips. *Algeria Anger of the Dispossessed*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007, p. 10.
[150] Shaobo Xie. 'Rethinking the Problem of Postcolonialism.' *New Literary History*, vol. 28, no. 1, 1997, pp. 7–19.
[151] Falola and Heaton. *A History of Nigeria*, p. 98.
[152] Vigdis Broch-Due. *Violence and Belonging: The Quest for Identity in Post-Colonial Africa*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004, p. 3.
[153] Luis Martinez. *The State in North Africa: After the Arab Uprisings*. Oxford: Oxford Scholarship online, 2020, p. 137.

that we will examine the development of 'hybridly affirmed' identities of native people in post-independence Algeria and Nigeria.[154]

After independence, while it was supposed that longing for peace was the purpose of all postcolonial peoples, Luis Martinez, John Hatch and Toyin Falola et al argue that the opposite took place: social dislocations appeared within Algerian and Nigerian societies, and it can be argued that such dislocations were certainly not without consequences for the native people. In Algeria, the bloody years from 1991 to 2002 were the result of a civil war between the FIS[155] and the military regime, who struggled to gain control over the country, whereby the overwhelming majority of victims belonged to the civilian population.[156] A similar situation predominated in Nigeria from 1967 to 1970, wherein the Igbo fought against 'the federal state supported by the Yoruba, the Hausa-Fulani, and many minority communities' in order to gain control over the country. The fact that the north and the south of Nigeria were never truly united culminated in sharp cultural divergences between them: the south was characterised by 'cash crops, the rapidly expanding mission schools, the growing-wage earning and the clerical class'.[157] Given the fact that economic and political disparities characterised the Nigerian North and South in addition to the intensified 'conflicting interests and aspirations of the country's diverse ethnic groups', it becomes clear to us why tensions culminated in a civil war.[158] This brief historical glimpse of the Algerian and Nigerian civil wars provides more breadth and depth to our understanding of the development of the self in the selected fiction of both of these postcolonial societies.

[154] John Hatch. *Nigeria: A History*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1917, p. 15.
[155] The Islamic Salvation Front (Arabic: الجبهة الإسلامية للإنقاذ, pronounced: *al-Jabhah al-Islāmiyah lil-Inqādh*; French: *Front Islamique du Salut*, FIS) was an Islamist political party in Algeria during 1980s.
[156] Evans and Phillips. *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed*, 11.
[157] Hatch. *Nigeria: A History*, p. 20.
[158] Phillips. *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed*, p 9.

3. The History of a People: The Relatedness between Literary Production and the Algerian and the Nigerian People

Now that it has been demonstrated that postcolonial theory would benefit from being adapted to convey a more positive appraisal of the condition of the hybrid postcolonial subject, this section shows that this task is undertaken through an interdisciplinary dialogue between the history of Algerian and Nigerian people and the postcolonial fiction of their respective countries.

That literature reflects the norms and the values of culture and the processes of class struggle is a quite common perception that has been widely acknowledged.[159] There is, also, a certain stream of literary studies that argues that literature has a didactic purpose, which aims to educate society.[160] According to the findings of these studies that contend that literature is didactic, I analyse the content and function of the postcolonial novel to assess the relatedness between postcolonial narratives and the Algerian and Nigerian peoples' reality to discover their history. That said, I analyse to which extent the postcolonial novel can be historically informative.

My reading shows that postcolonial literature in Algeria and Nigeria recounts real historical events, such as colonial rule, political struggles, arrested militants, terrorism and social unrest, and post-independence disillusionment. Accordingly, I deduce that postcolonial writers use history as a tool to reflect past or present experiences. For instance, Mohammed Dib, Chinua Achebe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Yasmina Khadra, Patience Ibrahim and Andrea Hoffman, and Maissa Bey portray their peoples' past in their literary works. Their

[159] Albrecht Milton. 'The Relationship of Literature and Society'. *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 59, no. 5, Chicago: the University of Chicago, 1957, pp. 425-436.
[160] Ibid.

reflections upon the themes of colonisation, submission, deprivation, war, struggle for freedom and disillusionment serve to consolidate the experiences of the past so as to understand the history of these peoples. It can be said that these writers fictionalise history to represent society; history as viewed by Larry Langford 'tries to give explanations of the real world which are just as accurate and coherent as those of science'.[161] Therefore, depictions given by literature of reality may be more interesting when conveyed by the artistic touch of the postcolonial writer wherein s/he merges together the power of real experiences and the attractiveness of a literary plot.

The literary novels to be analysed are located in a literary and historical context, wherein a set of literary elements and historic facts are used. Jerome De Groot has argued that:

> Historical novels present something that looks like a past the readers think they know. They are often read within a nexus of entertainment, imaginative journeying, and pedagogy, as audiences turn to them to find out about eras and understand particular periods. This means that they contribute powerfully to the historical imaginary, and, hence, it is important to understand their own historiographic positions and aesthetic strategies.[162]

De Groot's definition of historical novels sheds light on the dual function of the historical novel, which has a didactic function thanks to its historical aspect, and a fictitious characteristic that attracts and entertains readers. Therefore, the literary and historical aspects reunite in the historical novel to produce an imaginary plot that is inspired by a real event. Hence, the imaginary is a gateway to history.

The Franco-Algerian and the Anglo-Nigerian postcolonial novel emerged in the twentieth century. Issues around identity such as indigenousness, struggle, and identity construction were the core subjects of the narratives. The trilogies *Algérie* by Mohammed Dib and *The African Trilogy* by Chinua Achebe as well as the other narratives selected for analysis

[161] Larry Langford. *Fiction and the Social Contract*. New York, Bern, Berlin, Frankfurt/M., Paris, Wien: Peter Lang, 1998, p. 2.
[162] Jerome De Groot. *Remaking History: The Past in Contemporary Historical Fictions*. New York: Routledge, 2016, p. 100.

tackle the problems of assimilation, oppression and rejection, all of which are subjects treated by historians such as James Le Sueur who writes about the history of Algeria and highlights the different experiences lived by the indigenous people.[163]

It is also important to point out the choice of language by these postcolonial writers because it hints at a very important point in the history of these nations. In Algeria, for instance, the Chautemps law of March 8, 1938 had forbidden the use of the Arab language; it had 'Frenchified' aspects of life of Algerian indigenous people.[164] Even after independence, the goal of achieving complete 'Arabization' was impossible because the influence of 'Frenchification' for over a hundred years.[165] Therefore, Dib, Khadra, or Bey did not have the choice to write in Arabic because their education was in French. Besides this historical fact, the use of the French language was a form of writing back to the coloniser because it was 'necessary to confront this Western *other* and even to adopt its language in order to tell Westerners that non-Westerners exist and to prove that they, like Westerners, have the right to exist on their own terms'.[166] The case of language imposition also applies to Nigeria; where English had been introduced by English merchants and missionaries to become later on the official language imposed by colonialism in the country:

> English is the language of commerce and the law, of politics and the administration, of education and of culture at all levels above the local. An adequate knowledge of English is an indispensable requirement for anyone to rise above or to live in any wider context than the village.[167]

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[163] James Le Sueur. *Algeria since 1989: Between Terror and Democracy*. London: Zen Books, 2010, p. 13. Toyin Falola, and Saheed Aderinto. *Nigeria, Nationalism, and Writing History*. New York: University of Rochester Press, 2011, pp. 39-52.
[164]Agnès Goudail. 'Ministère d'État Chargé des Affaires Algériennes 81 F 1-2449.' *Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer*, 2002-2015, p. 10.
[165] Hafid Gafaïti, 'The Monotheism of the Other: Language and De/Construction of National Identity in Postcolonial Algeria'. In *Algeria in Others' Languages*, ed. by Anne-Emmanuel Berger. Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 2002, pp. 19–43.
[166] Wadi Bouzar, and Andrea Page. 'The French-Language Algerian Novel.' *North African Literature*. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1992, pp. 51-59.
[167] L. F. Brosnahan. 'Some Historical Cases of Language Imposition.' In J. Spencer (ed.), *Language in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963, pp. 7–24.

As proven in this passage, the English language is key to communication and success at all levels in Nigeria: local languages are spoken but only at the level of villages. Therefore, the fact of writing in French for Algerians and English for Nigerians is not a choice, but it is a situation that was imposed on those writers as well as their communities. Dib, Achebe, Khadra, Ngozi Adichie, Bey and Ibrahim and Hoffmann use the language of the coloniser to reflect their imaginary in a historical context, where themes such as war, resistance, independence and identity are tackled. The colonial period in Algeria and Nigeria as well as the struggle for independence are subjects that continue to be the concern of postcolonial writers.[168] In *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit,* for example, Yasmina Khadra lets the reader discover the conspiracy of Algerian indigenous groups against the colonial enemy in order to gain back independence. With regards to the Anglophone example, in *Things Fall Apart,* Chinua Achebe enables the reader discover the customs of indigenous Nigerians, and how those customs were destroyed by the missionaries. Although the events told in the novels are fictitious, they accurately represent the reality of Algerian and Nigerian peoples respectively.

By the same token, the novels to be analysed reveal a lot about colonial ideology. Lois Tyson has demonstrated that:

> Colonialist ideology, often referred to as colonialist discourse to mark its relationship to the language in which colonialist thinking was expressed, was based on the colonizers' assumption of their own superiority, which they contrasted with the alleged inferiority of native (indigenous) peoples, the original inhabitants of the land they invaded. (…) The colonizers saw themselves as the embodiment of what a human being should be, the proper 'self'; native people were considered 'other,' different, and therefore inferior to the point of being less than fully human.[169]

Accordingly, the ideology of the coloniser is based on binary oppositions, where the coloniser is the idol and the colonised should merely imitate; this supports the principle of the white

[168] Olivia Harrison. 'For a Transcolonial Reading of the Contemporary Algerian Novel.' *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, vol. 20, issue. 1, 2016, pp. 102-110.
[169] Lois Tyson. *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*. New York: Routledge, 2014, p. 141.

man's burden that involves the coming of the coloniser in order to civilise the native populations.[170] However, through the characters to be analysed, postcolonial writers deconstruct the ideology of colonisation: here again is another historical indicator which hints at the conflictual relationship between the coloniser and the colonised and shows the pretexts used by colonial authorities in order to justify their colonisation.

Also, in history we learn that the colonial era impoverished the native peoples whose life and revenues relied heavily on agricultural lands and cattle.[171] According to Martin Evans and John Phillips, the situation in Algeria was dire for the indigenous population:

> By 1930 only 1 percent of Algerians had a farm of more than 100 hectares meaning that hunger became part of everyday life for the native population. When the country was hit very hard by the Great Depression in the 1930s the French ruthlessly protected settlers' interests, further intensifying the pauperization process which triggered a huge exodus of landless peasants from the interior to the major coastal cities. This great displacement of the population climaxed tragically with the 1937 famine, widely remembered amongst North Africans as the terrible year of hunger, when people literally dropped dead of starvation on the roadside.[172]

Indeed, amongst the documented increase in violence, subjugation, and human rights violations, impoverishment during colonisation is also a fact that has marked history. Indigenous land owners lost their lands as the latters were granted to the settlers. As a result, the indigenous land owners were displaced and forced to leave their lands to live in remote and vulnerable places in their own country. The literary narratives selected for analysis shed the light on the theme of poverty and lands' dispossession as this was a striking period in the history of colonised peoples. For example, Mohammed Dib and Yasmina Khadra successfully manage to depict the horrible scene when the fellahs —in *Algérie*— and Issa —in *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit*— lose their lands because of a fire started by the enemy: their lives after

[170] Nicholas Harrison. *Our Civilising Mission: The Lessons of Colonial Education*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019, p. 3.
[171] Judith Scheele. *Smugglers and Saints of the Sahara.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 1-24. O. T. Faulkner, and J. R. Mackie. 'The Native Farm.' *West African Agriculture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1890, pp. 36-42.
[172] Evans and Phillips. *Algeria*, p. 38.

the fire incident become harsh because of poverty. Similarly, in Nigeria, the 'Indigenous peoples are known for their careful stewardship of land ... hence when the Global North seeks more ... landscape ... that it cannot produce in its own territories due to property rights protections ... undue pressure arises on the Global South to compensate with their land resources'.[173] Chinua Achebe evokes this historical truth in his trilogy when he narrates how the missionaries came to the village of Umuofia and asked for a piece of land before they took control over all the villages and displaced their native inhabitants.

Besides, the impact of the opposition between the western and the African communities is widely reflected in the characters of both Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian narratives, who are located in the middle of two cultures not knowing whether they belong to the west or to their respective communities. These protagonists experience inner and interpersonal conflicts because of the cultural confrontation they are exposed to. For instance, Obi Okonkwo feels torn between Nigeria —his mother country— and America — where he studied.[174] Likewise, Jonas/Younes is trapped in a third space; he has been forced to leave his family in Jenan Jato —the poor Algerian part in l'*Algérie française*— to live with his uncle Mahi and his wife Germaine amongst the French settlers in Algeria.[175] The case of protagonists offers by and large an insight into the situation of the indigenous people.

By way of analysis, we understand that reading about the past enables readers to discover history. The writer sometimes plays the role of the historian because they enable readers travel back to the past through stories and novels. This genre of literature is called historical fiction. The historian finds facts already organised by life, so his function is to choose the subject, to find the structure and to set out the facts by showing 'the causes, the ends, the

[173] Laltaika Elifuraha, and Kelly Askew. 'Modes of Dispossession of Indigenous Lands and Territories in Africa.' Copenhagen: IWGIA Document, 2010, pp. 1-24.
[174] Chinua Achebe. *No Longer at Ease*. London: Heinemann, 1960, p. 101.
[175] Yasmina Khadra. *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit*. Paris: Julliard, 2008, p. 58.

occasions, hazards, pretexts, etc … history is made in the same substance of the life of each one of us'.[176] Therefore, when the writer creates historical fiction, the locales are likely to be familiar to readers: sometimes the novel presents events and people as they appear in real life, and in other instances the writer uses real settings with fictional characters. Historical fiction incorporates the stories of past people into fiction; hence it is important for the writer to know true and exact facts such as what the people used to eat and wear, and how they used to talk. As a result of the writer's credibility and knowledgeability, readers believe the story and discover the history of nations via fiction. This is the process I refer to as complementarity between both fiction and history.

Kristian Hvidt believes that historians such as him can 'miss a dimension of the past'.[177] He contends that some aspects of life such as human and historical relations cannot be described by means of history only: he describes this failure as 'a black hole' or 'blind point' because unlike writers, historians lack subtle words and expressions that penetrate those unseen spaces.[178]

This observation becomes clear when considering Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian literatures, which partly consist of historical descriptions of the colonial presence and partly of fictive literature dealing with the same object but in an imaginative way free of ties to the historical source material. The relation between the historian and the author is similar in many respects to that of the photographer in relation to the representational painter. They can describe the same scene but in two different ways. The good photographer will present a precise picture of the real scene with all its details, while the artist will simplify the same motif and emphasize some main features in order to show what is seen as essential. I believe

[176] Paul Veyne. *Comment on Ecrit l'Histoire*. Paris: Seuil, 1971, p. 5.
[177] Hvidt Kritian. 'Fact and Fiction: A Case for the Complementary Study of History and Literature.' Copenhagen: *Nordic Association for American Studies*, vol. 16, no. 2, 1984, pp. 67-70.
[178] Ibid.

that the situation is applicable in the case of historians in relation to the authors of literature.[179]

Hvidt's representation of the relationship of history and literature is so pertinent and convincing that their complementarity becomes obvious. She says that Humanities stands for the 'big warm mother' who has quite a number of children: the oldest is History, and the next brother was studies in literature. Both brothers were brought up away from each other and in different ways. As they grew older, both brothers realised that they had common characteristics from their mother —the Humanities— although they had different methods. The conclusion we can draw from this correlation is that since History and studies of literature are regarded as brothers on the basis of this example, they must complement each other. African postcolonial literature is a well-defined area. It consists of novels, volumes of prose fiction and poetry and many stories and poems revolving around history. These works describe the situation of the populations prior, during and after colonisation.[180]

Through the combination and comparison of Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian postcolonial fiction, this chapter has contextualised theoretically and chronologically the analysis of the literary texts that will be undertaken in the subsequent chapters. This historical and literary-critical background will prove pivotal for the coming study of texts until we reach the end of the thesis and uncover the possibility of learning previously ignored aspects of history through fiction.

[179] Ibid., 68.
[180] Ibid., 69.

Chapter Two

An Analysis of Late Colonial Moments in Mohammed Dib's Trilogy *Algérie* and Chinua Achebe's *The African Trilogy*: The Emancipation of Native Populations from Subalternity up to Agency

'When injustice becomes law,
resistance becomes duty.'[181]

In this chapter, I engage with the subalternity of indigenous populations in colonial moments which represent the starting point of the emancipatory trajectory of the Algerian and Nigerian peoples towards agency, as the beginning of this trajectory is articulated in Mohammed Dib's Trilogy —*Algeria*— and Chinua Achebe's —*The African trilogy*. My primary focus will be to analyse the development of the indigenous populations from a position of subalternity to one of agency. In so doing, I will use literary works to trace —and retell— the history of Algerians and Nigerians from colonisation to revolution. By comparing the novels of these two authors, I will also show the initial position indigenous populations occupy before they reach 'hybrid affirmation'. The observation of the developing trajectory is to play a crucial role in informing readers about the historical aspect of the research which is understanding the history of Algerian and Nigerian populations via fiction. This analysis will demonstrate that thematic connections can contribute to bridging the gap between Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian postcolonial fiction despite cultural and linguistic boundaries. In this chapter, the discussion unveils how subalternity was an instigator for change towards

[181] A quotation attributed to Thomas Jefferson. Source:
Wendy Robertson. No Jabiluka Uranium: 'When injustice becomes law, resistance becomes duty'. *Green left weekly*, 15 October 1997.https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/kakadu-belongs-all-us-stop-jabiluka. Accessed: Mar 03, 2022.

agency: the state of being discarded and underestimated would not last long because indigenous peoples would not accept living on the margin for the rest of their lives.

My chapter's approach engages mainly with theories examining power relations in a colonial environment: Malek Bennabi's concept of 'colonisabilité', Gayatri C. Spivak's theory of the subaltern and Frantz Fanon's theory of decolonisation which observes the binary opposition between the settlers and indigenous people and shows that decolonisation can only be achieved through a violent process. Although these three theorists have been extensively studied, the originality lies in the way this chapter organises and uses them to reach its objective. The chosen theoretical framework constitutes a connective thread that enables us to understand the reasons behind natives' colonisability and the way they started to move out of the margin: initially 'colonisabilité'[182] is the first theory which is applied, and it aims to show the extent to which native populations are ripe for colonisation. If people are easily colonised, then they can easily be made to occupy a subaltern position. To occupy a subaltern position means to be marginalised, to be deprived of the right to speak, the right to eat and the right to live a decent life. Therefore, Spivak's theory of the subaltern serves to analyse whether the marginalised and disempowered native populations are able to speak and to be heard. Ultimately, in such a context of colonisation and oppression, there are tensions between powerful groups and marginalised people. Forcing the native populations to remain in the periphery by oppressing them can lead the oppressed to react violently, and according to Frantz Fanon it is through violence that decolonisation can happen. By acting violently, the subaltern shifts from a position of passivity to one of empowerment because they can assume their subjecthood and refuse to occupy the position of passive victims who only undergo violence. In so doing, they can become individuals characterised by agency.

[182] Malek Bennabi. *Le Problème des Idées dans le Monde Musulman*. Algiers: El Bay'yinate, 1990.

This chapter presents a thematic and historical analysis of the indigenous peoples during colonisation as displayed in the literary texts written by Mohammed Dib and Chinua Achebe. It sheds light on thematic connections that Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian postcolonial fiction share as literatures of nations that experienced subjugation, as nations that fought to bring back freedom, and as nations that still search for hope even after gaining freedom. The novels to be analysed in this section are the constituent parts of Dib's *Algérie* trilogy: *La Grande Maison* (1952), *L'Incendie* (1954), and *Le Métier à Tisser* (1957) and Achebe's equivalent works: *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *The Arrow of God* (1960), and *No Longer at Ease* (1964). Both of the selected trilogies depict colonial times: they tell ordinary stories –that is to say stories of daily life - yet what is special about them is the history of two peoples who struggle to break the chains of subalternity in order to gain agency and embrace freedom. In the footsteps of Michael Sheringham, who reflected upon the everyday by connecting French everyday life to the fields of cultural studies, sociology and critical theory,[183] I connect Dib and Achebe's stories to subaltern studies, postcolonial studies, and history. By applying those theories, I offer an analytical and a theorised insight that allows me to analyse the emancipation of Algerian and Nigerian native peoples in the selected novels.

Knowledge of the writers and the contexts within which they wrote the novels is crucial to an analysis of these texts. Mohammed Dib and Chinua Achebe are amongst the writers that took the responsibility to make the cause of their countries known in the world of literature during European colonisation. As readers, we witness the birth of a nation in their respective trilogies: *Algérie* and *The African Trilogy*. In his book, *La Littérature Algérienne Contemporaine,* Jean Déjeux writes that Mohammed Dib 'a voulu d'abord être témoin de sa société et de son temps'.[184] The same can be applied to Achebe, who has written about the

[183] Michael Sheringham. *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 295.
[184] Jean Déjeux. *Littératures de Langue Française*. Ottawa: Naaman, 1973, p. 67.

political and social crises that pervaded Nigeria,[185] and who is said to be 'the man who gave Africa a voice'.[186]

Born on July 21, 1920 in Tlemcen, Algeria, a city to which he pays tribute in his famous trilogy, Dib was an educator for some time, then a translator, an accountant, and a journalist for the newspaper *Alger Républicain*. Having been expelled from Algeria by the French authorities for working towards national independence in 1959, he settled in France and started a literary career. He was the first Maghrebi writer who received the 'Grand Prix de la Francophonie'. *La Grande Maison* (1952) constitutes the first novel of his trilogy titled *Algérie*. The author sets his story against the backdrop of everyday life in an Algerian city before independence. He chooses the perspective of a young boy, Omar, to narrate the suffering of the indigenous population and the movements that will lead to the revolt of Algerians against colonial power. In *Algérie*, Dib offers a complex spatial construction: throughout the three novels we travel to different locales where we encounter different social groups —families, *fellahs*[187] and weavers— of the indigenous Algerian society each preoccupied by the concerns about their livelihoods. In *La Grande Maison*, for instance, Dib discloses the life of Algerian families with all the difficulties they face in the city. Thereafter, in *L'incendie* (1954) Dib brings us to the countryside where we learn the concerns of the *fellahs* —the farmers— in Bni Boublen. Finally, in *Le Métier à Tisser* (1957) we move back to the city but this time to see the life of vulnerable workers. The choice of locales is not random: in *La Grande Maison* the whole scene is mainly reserved for the presentation of family life which is the nucleus of every society, Dib then widens the circle to encompass neighbours. All the different families represent the real indigenous Algerian population. In

[185] Ogungbesan Kolawole. 'Politics and the African Writer.' *African Studies Review*, vol. 17, no. 1, 1974, pp. 43-53.
[186] Ella Wakatama Allfrey. 'The Great Chinua Achebe Was the Man who Gave Africa a Voice.' *The Guardian*, Mar 24, 2013.
[187] *Fellahs* is an Arabic word which means farmers. The term is used in the novels of Mohammed Dib *La Grande Maison* and*L'Incendie* to designate Algerian agriculturers during the colonial period.

this novel, the scene is set in Dar-Sbitar —the big house— which symbolises Algeria because it is described as having very large dimensions, it is very big and old, it shelters an unknown number of tenants who suffer economic problems, '[elle donnait] sur la ruelle, c'était la galerie d'entrée, large et sombre: elles 'enfonçait plus bas que la chaussée, et, faisant un coude … débouchait ensuite dans une cour à l'antique dont le centre était occupé par un bassin'.[188] As a matter of fact, the description of Dar-Sbitar can be read as a metaphor for the country: it is uncommon not to count the number of inhabitants in a house, but it is often difficult to gauge the true number of inhabitants of a country especially in a period of colonisation …. Additionally, Algeria has very large dimensions, the 'alley or the entrance gallery' is likely to be the Mediterranean Sea. Also, 'forming an elbow' mirrors the shape of Algeria's borders with Morocco, Mauritania and Mali. Ultimately, the sentence of 'opening on a courtyard centred by a pool' may refer to the centre of Algeria which is rich with natural resources that are vital for the economy of the country as water is vital for the inhabitants of Dar-Sbitar. The subsequent locale presented in *L'Incendie* reveals the unbearable working conditions of the farmer in the countryside under colonial control. Finally, *Le Métier à Tisser* brings us back to the city to depict the suffocating atmosphere in a weaving workshop where desperate and poor workers awaken Omar's consciousness about the real situation Algeria was experiencing during that colonial period.

Alongside the great Algerian Francophone writer Mohammed Dib, this chapter proposes to analyse a towering figure in Nigerian literature, Chinua Achebe. Albert Chinua Lumogu —his original name— was born in Ogidi, Nigeria, on November 16, 1930. Achebe's coming of age took place during a period of great social unrest. The restlessness he witnessed during those times deeply influenced his desire for political reforms, expressed in his works. As noted by Roland Barksdale-Hall, '[Achebe's] career aspiration to be a political writer early

[188] Mohammed Dib. *La Grande Maison*. Paris: Points, 1952, p. 67.

was rooted in the nationalist state movement that swept Africa'.[189] During the 1950s, Achebe's writings, including *The African Trilogy*, 'focused upon clashes between traditionalists with African values and emergent leadership'.[190] His works show the resulting crisis in leadership brought on by the lack of patriotism, and ethnic conflicts. He identifies a 'failure of leadership' because of corruption, mediocrity, injustice and lack of discipline. In *Things Fall Apart*, we learn about life in precolonial Nigeria, yet by the arrival of English missionaries the native traditions started to vanish because of the colonial manoeuvres. In this novel, Achebe creates a tragic hero, Okonkwo, who refuses to adapt to societal changes as a consequence of the arrival of European colonisers. Okonkwo is a patriotic tribesman, who wants to protect the land of his fathers from intruders. He struggles and fights against the missionaries, but he cannot stop them from gaining ground. His strength and exceptionalism —which make him an archetype of how a real patriotic person should behave so as to preserve his/her land and culture— caused his tragic end. Later events narrate how a considerable number of native Umuofians have become turncoats. In *No Longer at Ease*, the first thing one notices is the change that occurs to the names of the land and streets: Achebe no longer speaks of Umuofia, he rather refers to Umuofia and its surroundings as Nigeria, and he introduces Europeanised street names such as 'Moloney street'[191] and 'Lewis street'[192] instead of referring to places by measurement of distances such as 'Nwayieke lived four compounds away'.[193] Besides this, the power shifts from the chiefs of the clans and ancestral spirits to the white man, namely the colonial administrators; such as the District Officer Winterbottom.[194] In *Arrow of God*, Achebe continues to emphasise the collapse of native

[189] Barksdale-Hall Roland. 'Chinua Achebe: A Bio-Bibliographic Review.' *Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol. 1, no. 8. Nigeria: Gale Literature Resource Centre, 2007, pp. 9-11.
[190] Ibid., 9.
[191] Chinua Achebe. *Arrow of God*. London: Penguin Classics, 1960, p. 7.
[192] Ibid., 13.
[193] Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*. London: Macmillan Readers, 2005, p. 62.
[194] Achebe. *Arrow of God*, p. 7.

leaders on the hands of the white man: Ezeulu, a chief priest, goes to prison because of his refusal to surrender to the British colonial overseer, T. K. Winterbottom.

A glance at the contexts of Dib's *Algérie* and Achebe's *The African Trilogy* indicates important aspects for the analysis, that is, dehumanisation, oppression and identity erasure are at the heart of these texts. To take important examples of this, one can observe the aggressive scenes depicted in the novels. In colonial Algeria, 'les agents groupés …entourèrent [Hamid Saraj]…Il se produisit un éclatement dans la figure de Saraj. Quelques agents cognèrent aussi … Hamid se redressa … Il tentât d'enlever le sang qui lui couvrait le visage'.[195] On the other hand, a similar brutal scene can be observed in *Things Fall Apart* when the white man throws African natives in prison because they disobeyed the white man's law, 'they were beaten in the prison by the kotma and made to work every morning clearing the government compound and fetching wood for the white commissioner'.[196] Since the arrival of the French and the British powers on Algerian and Nigerian territories, subjugation, humiliation and brutality have become recurrent scenes in both trilogies. In this chapter, the task is to analyse the aspect of oppression during colonisation in order to set forth the origin of 'hybrid affirmation'. In the process of forging a complementarity between fiction and history, it is important for us to understand the tough colonial moments native Algerians and Nigerians experienced, and through it understand the history of these people.

[195] Mohammed Dib. *L'Incendie*. Paris: Seuil/Points, 1954, pp. 108-109.
[196] Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*, p. 109.

1. Bridging the Gap in Dib's *Algérie* and Achebe's *The African Trilogy*

Cultural and linguistic differences are far from being an obstacle to the collaboration of world literatures. The comparison of the Franco-Algerian trilogy and the Anglo-Nigerian trilogy brings to the fore a crucial historical juncture —which is oppression during colonial moments— at which the indigenous peoples start to develop from a subaltern to an agent status. In these texts, we find different and yet closely aligned elaborations of the theme of oppression. The difference between Dib and Achebe is self-evident, albeit they denounce the same enemy which is imperialism. Dib raises the issue of famine[197] and ill-treatment of workers[198] to depict subjugation while Achebe raises the issue of native Igbos' ignorance that led to subjugation. Actually, the difference lies in the fact that each author depicts the issues and preoccupations of his society. That said, the issues that weakened Algerians during colonisation are poverty and famine which is why Dib focuses on these subjects in his trilogy. Meanwhile, according to Achebe the issue that brought Igbos to their knees are superstitious beliefs. Moreover, Dib speaks with socio-political implications while Achebe uses mythological and political implications. The encounter with French colonialism pushed Dib to encourage the use of violence whereas the encounter with British imperialism pushed Achebe to denounce superstitions[199] —which prove to be at the origin of the subjugation of the Igbo people— in order to resist colonialism.

Yet, there are significant similarities between these two postcolonial writers. In their writings, we read and piece together snapshots of the past to make sense of history and reality. Thanks to the accurate reflection of reality in both trilogies, the reader grasps the history of the nations in question. Because of their historical aspects —political, social, economic, cultural and religious— and thanks to the reflection of life, Algeria and Nigeria are offered as open landscapes ready to be contemplated in these novels. Dib and Achebe's trilogies rely on

[197] Dib. *La Grande Maison*, p. 47.
[198] Dib. *L'Incendie*, p. 27.
[199] Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*, p. 94.

a lot of similar literary techniques. The writing style reveals many clues about the writer and the social conditions they intend to describe. At first glance, both Chinua Achebe and Mohammed Dib opted for the third person omniscient narrator. This narrative perspective gives the reader a complete picture of what is happening in either Dar-Sbitar or Umuofia and allows for insight into the lives of the characters. It also allows us to delve into the selves of indigenous peoples and at the same time to know what is happening in their surroundings. In *La Grande Maison,* for instance, we find sentences such as '… Omar se procurait du pain d'une autre façon', 'Hasna venait les voir'.[200] Equally, in *Things Fall Apart* or *No Longer at Ease* we find sentences such as 'Okonkwo was well known', '… Okoye came to see him', 'Okonkwo was one of the greatest men', '… Ogbuefi Ezeugo stood up in the midst of them', 'Okonkwo did not have the start in life'.[201] Accordingly, Dib and Achebe appear as all-knowing narrators who impose themselves between the story and the reader: the latter needs the narrators to grasp the story. Dib and Achebe are involved in their narratives in the sense that they have full control of it; they shape, interpret and judge the characters, and they dramatise or simplify the plot. Dib and Achebe's omniscient narration seems to reveal their opinions, beliefs and their political stance towards the coloniser. Besides, these quotations from the respective texts reveal a crucial characteristic in the personality of the characters which is agency. In other words, their attitudes reveal observation, action and leadership. For instance, Omar is agent because he is able to find bread, and he does not give up to famine imposed by colonial authorities. Also, Hasna and Okoye observe, and observation shows the characters' capacity to analyse their surrounding. Furthermore, Okonkwo has an authoritarian role in his tribe; he is able to lead a group of people. Accordingly, these stories contain diversity and richness because they talk about more than one aspect —culture, politics, society, and economy, and the reader needs to know all the elements that constitute the story

[200] Dib. *La Grande Maison*, pp. 8-9-13-68.
[201] Achebe. *No Longer at Ease*, p. 70.

in order to grasp it. In the postcolonial context, the reader needs to know the innermost thoughts and feelings of the coloniser as well as the indigenous people so as to establish doctrines such as Manichean dualism or theories such as Orientalism. In the case of these novels, omniscience offers flexibility to the narrator and a panoramic vision to the readers.

Both Chinua Achebe and Mohammed Dib choose the language of the coloniser as a medium of cultural exchange: prior to any considerations regarding the use of the language of the coloniser, it initially facilitates the spread of the work beyond the national borders of the writers. The latter is adopted by authors from postcolonial nations to show the resistance of indigenous populations towards the culture, the ideologies, and the assumptions of the Western world. In their works, postcolonial writers consider reflecting their pre-colonial culture to prove that native communities have their own heritage, culture, identity, and history. In *La Grande Maison*, Dib shows one of the traditions Algerians prepare for: Aini —Omar's mother— converses with Lalla —a friend of hers— about what needs to be done for her daughter once she becomes pubescent: 'il faut se saigner les veines pour lui constituer un trousseau, avant de s'en débarrasser'.[202] This passage shows that in Algerian traditions, girls marry as soon as their bodies are deemed mature —in other words, that they are ready for reproduction. This idea being written in a counter-discourse text shows the difference between the culture of the west and Africa (north —Algeria— and west —Nigeria— in this context) which consists in allowing the marriage of the young girls in the past. [203] Susheela Singh and Renee Samara,[204] together with other researchers, denounced early and forced marriages in the global south because of the negative consequences this has on health and the personal development.[205] On the other hand, we notice a similar tradition in the Nigerian culture:

[202] Dib. *La Grande Maison*, p. 86.
[203] Annick Billion. 'Dénoncer, pour y Mettre Fin, le Mariage des Enfants et les Grossesses Précoces: Un Enjeu Décisif pour les Droits des Filles, Partout dans le Monde.' *SÉNAT N° 262*, 2019.

[205] Susheela Singh, and Renee Samara. 'Early Marriage Among Women in Developing Countries.' *International Family Planning Perspectives*, vol. 22, no. 4, 1996, pp. 148–75.

despite being young, Okonkwo's daughter was ready for marriage. She 'gave the dish to her father's eldest brother and then shook hands, very shyly, with her suitor and his relatives. She was about sixteen and just ripe for marriage. Her suitor and his relatives surveyed her young body … to assure … that she was beautiful and ripe'.[206] The analysis of this passage shows that the age of the girl is still young and not suitable for marriage. It also shows that she is not free and that the bridegroom is not her choice. Though she seems happy, it is obvious that the arrangement of the union is made between Okonkwo and the guests. So, Okonkwo's daughter must only be happy and accept. In both cases, although Dib and Achebe might personally be against early and forced marriages, they nonetheless disclose this issue as part of the traditions of their countries.

The question I want to highlight here is that the colonisers wanted to leave an indelible impact on the indigenous culture and identity, the colonisers wanted to impose their culture and standards upon the local communities to perpetuate their control over them. As observed in these passages, there are opposite views between the writings of the postcolonial authors and the European researchers. While European activists denounce early marriages, authors such as Dib and Achebe speak about it. The novels in question were written after the colonisers had established themselves in the Algerian and Nigerian territories. This implies that the colonisers had had the time to create the sense of shame and ridiculousness of the colonised people with regards to their backward traditions as described by Westerners.[207] What is expected after the operation of the civilising mission is to detach the indigenous populations from their traditions, and push them adopt the culture of the masters.[208] However, Dib and Achebe challenge the canon —the literature of the west that undermines the culture of the indigenous people— by celebrating their habits and transmitting them to the whole

[206] Achebe. *Things Fall Apart,* p. 46.
[207] Henry Chukwubuike Oguh. 'Representation of Africa in Western Media: Still a 21st Century Problem.' Diss. Edinburgh Napier University, 2015, p. 8.
[208] Patrick Petitjean. 'Science and the "Civilizing Mission": France and the Colonial Enterprise.' Benediky Stutchey (ed). *Science across the European Empires - 1800-1950,* 2005, pp. 107-128.

world. In this way, they are rewriting history from the standpoint of the colonised, avoiding as such the danger of a single story.[209] We have to say that The core idea of celebrating one's culture and showing its particularity to the world in postcolonial literary texts joins the philosophy of Edouard Glissant's concept of *opacité*. Clément Mbom defines *opacité* as a vocable which has metaphorical and philosophical value. *Opacité* celebrates difference and the particularity of cultures as opposed to the assumptions of universal science which may be unable to legitimise realities of world cultures.[210] According to Western thought, in order to accept someone and interact with him/her, s/he has to be transparent. Transparency, here, means that s/he must fit readably into the hierarchy and norms imposed by the West. As a consequence, this means that s/he needs to be created anew so as to be part of the system. However, surrendering to this process means that s/he renounces his/her identity. In this way if transparency really occurs, distinct world cultures and the particularities of indigenous groups in the world disappear. Therefore, Glissant demands 'the right to opacity' in order to defend and maintain cultural differences.[211] As defined in the dictionaries, Glissant's *opacité* meaning does not change: it still has the virtue of impenetrability. Therefore, Glissant's *opacité* intends to shield the author from sactions ordained by authorities. Here Glissant adds his voice to Dib and Achebe for the necessity to protect the indigenous identity.[212]

Despite the fact that *literature de l'engagement*[213] —the literature that conveys issues related to society, politics, and ideology— has the virtue of dealing with sensitive subjects such as political strategies, oppression, and crimes in an overt way, writers opt for some literary techniques to deliver their messages in an indirect manner. As world-renowned

[209] Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. 'The Danger of a Single Story – Transcript'. New York: TED Global, 2009.
[210] Clément Mbom. 'Edouard Glissant, De l'Opacité à la Relation.' Cuny: University of New York, 2005, pp. 245-254.
[211] Edouard Glissant. *Poetics of Relation*. Ann Arbour, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1997, p. 189.
[212] Diana Akers, Rhoads. 'Culture in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart.' *African Studies Review*, vol. 36, no. 2, 1993, pp. 61–72.
Georges J, Joyaux. 'L'Engagement Chez Les Écrivains Nord-Africains Autochtones de Langue Française.' *African Studies Review*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1970, pp. 155–68.
[213] Nimrod. 'La Littérature Comme Engagement.' *Présence Africaine*, no. 187/188, 2013, pp. 253–59.

authors, Dib and Achebe can have an influence on readers. Therefore, they can contribute to the rise of readers' consciousness about social and political issues.[214] Conscious of this possibility, the authors have chosen to realise it through adopting the technique of opacity. The technique of *opacité* can be observed in the following passages:

> Menoune, malade, était couchée là … menoune répétait dans ses sanglots … ces paroles réitérées sur un ton d'absolue certitude avaient fait tressaillir le cœur d'Omar … la voix de Menoune s'éleva, pleine de tristesse … Je sais très bien que je vais mourir ... je ne reverrai plus mes enfants, de ma vie … Elle baissa la voix. Elle redit "De ma vie, mes enfants". Et elle se calma. Brusquement, Menoune recommença à pleurer. Elle regarda Omar. La voix de Menoune modulait à cet instant une antienne funèbre … Vous ne verrez plus, dit-elle, plus votre mère, mes enfants … Elle répétait encore … je ne vous reverrai plus mes enfants … Les policiers remplissaient la grande demeure de leurs mouvements … un autre cri de femme explosa; c'était Attyka, une pauvre possédée … qui lançait ses clameurs.[215]

This passage offers a scene that happens in the big house. It presents Menoune and Attyka — two neighbours— in a dramatic scene, which lasts long because it extends over more than three pages. In this scene, Menoune —as presented to us in the novel she does not have children— keeps crying and reiterating that she is going to die and that her children will never see her again. Analytically, Menoune, Attyka, and the big house itself are opaque representations of Algeria: through Menoune, Dib shows that Algeria is dying because of colonisation and the future generations —her children— will grow in a drastically metamorphosed Algeria if the country is not liberated. In addition to this, Attyka is also an opaque representation of Algeria: the parallel drawn between Algeria and Attyka is that both are possessed; Algeria is possessed by the coloniser and Attyka by demons. Finally, the image of the police entering the big house reproduces the conquest of colonisers to the country Algeria. We notice that Dib has used different opaque representations to allude to the same issue and this may be because 'an opaque method may be better suited to the communication

[214] Colin Clark. 'Resistant Literatures; Literatures of Resistance? The Politics and Poetics of Opacity in Kateb and Dib.' *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 47, no. 2, 2016, pp. 50-69.
[215] Dib. *La Grande Maison*, pp. 43-47.

of the deeper structures of oppression'.[216] We can see that the operation of opacity in such a realistic work permits the author to narrate 'profound political charge'[217] while occluding some facts s/he does not intend to overtly disclose because s/he is under pressure. We can also observe that opacity permits the author to evoke the same fact in so many different ways at the same time, something which does not occur in history where such literary techniques are not used, and where historical events and facts are evoked in a direct way, and without so much reiteration.

Both authors include orality in their texts, a technique used by both Achebe and Dib to convey Nigerian and Algerian folk songs and tales:[218]

> The folk tradition in African literature has thus become part of the essential qualities of its literary expression […] and judicious use of the folk tradition is at the root of the appeal of much of the literature emanating from black Africa, especially the works of Achebe. A writer with the sophistication of Achebe does not aggressively intrude the African folkways into his works but rather subtly and cunningly works them into his narrative.[219]

The songs, proverbs and all sorts of unrecorded traditions of a group of people as they exist in their popular tales, rituals, magic, superstitions, beliefs, customs and sayings represent the folklore or orality of indigenous peoples. Achebe emphasises the importance of orality in the Igbo culture by saying that: 'proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten' Postcolonial writers such as Mohammed Dib and Chinua Achebe include orality in their works of art in order not to deny their original culture. Besides, orality transmits the indigenous culture all over the world, namely through literature. Arguably, orality in these texts can be a technique for celebrating the culture of native peoples, and a way of claiming back agency.

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[216] Colin Clark. 'Resistant Literatures; Literatures of Resistance? The Politics and Poetics of Opacity in Kateb and Dib.' *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 47, no. 3. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2016, pp. 50-69.
[217] Ibid., 65.
[218] Guela Elimelekh. 'Muhammad Dib and Algerian Resistance Literature.' Israel: David Publishing, vol. 5, no. 9, 2015, pp. 463-740.
[219] Charles E. Nnolim. 'The Form and Function of the Folk Tradition in Achebe's Novels.' *Ariel*, vol. 14, no. 1, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1983, pp. 35-47.

In sum, Chinua Achebe and Mohammed Dib's works have common strategies of writing as well as common thematic issues. Even though they use different languages, it is possible to find commonalities whilst both of them witnessed colonial moments.

2. Thinking Oppression: A Means of Control or a Key to Power?

In the trilogies of Mohammed Dib and Chinua Achebe, the question of power is expressed in terms of Manichean dualism: the coloniser and the colonised, the occidental and the oriental, the civilised and the primitive, the scientific and the superstitious, the developed and the developing. Through my reading, I have noticed that there are correspondingly two parts: the first and the omnipresent part in the texts is the indigenous people, and the second represents the colonisers. Although reference to the French or British settlers is very minimal in the texts, they are the ones who possess power and exercise it over native Algerians and Nigerians. In a reversed perspective, we would speak of oppression when we refer to native peoples or the colonised. Oppression can be described as a strategy used by self-willed colonisers to maintain control over the colonised. Thus, in a reflection about these assumptions, we will learn whether oppression was a tool to subjugate the colonised, or rather was it an instigator to empower them. In Foucault's words:

> Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing or exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are like vehicles of power, not its points of application[220]

As an obvious observation, Foucault's analysis of power implies the establishment of an organisation. The latter is defined as a set of people grouped within a regulated structure which has a system of communication that facilitates the circulation of information.[221]

[220] Michel Foucault. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon Book, 1980, p. 98.
[221] 'Stratégie et Organisation.' Accessed: Jun 16, 2020, p. 9.

According to Foucault, power is effective when it circulates thanks to the people who exercise it and those who endure it. We understand that the collaboration of power's subjects is essential to the dissemination of power, so power can not produce the required effects without the consent of the subjects. If collaboration happens, it means that power succeeded in creating a persuasive and claustrophobic omnipresence within and amongst collaborators. The sympathetic implication Foucault's explanation of power suggests: while the prevailing Western belief is that power is an exclusive white man's piece of wealth or property,[222] Foucault contends that power is not static or peculiar to a specific group; it is rather 'something which circulates … it is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands'.[223] In essence, the system of power implemented by the coloniser had implications other than spreading religion and civilisation: the colonial relationship is really symptomatic of the negative image of the colonised. Europe's subtle purpose is to empty the colonised world of meaning,[224] 'colonialism colonises minds in addition to bodies and it releases forces within colonised societies to alter their cultural priorities once and for all'.[225] Taken together, Foucault and Nandy suggest that colonialism is the implementation of a system which aims at depriving the colonised of mental and physical capacities. Taking account of this latter assumption, the following analysis will show the tools used by the coloniser to oppress the colonised and maintain power over them in the trilogies of Dib and Achebe.

[222] Teresa J. Guess. 'The Social Construction of Whiteness: Racism by Intent, Racism by Consequence.' *Critical Sociology*, vol. 32, issue. 4, 2006. Missouri: University of Missouri-St. Louis, pp. 649-673.
[223] Nicholas B. Dirks et al. *Culture/power/history: A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory*. Princeton, N. J: Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 214.
[224] Leela Gandhi. *Postcolonial Theory*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998, p. 15.
[225] Ashis Nandi. *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983, p. xi.

2.1 Reading Oppression in *Algérie* and *The African Trilogy*: Tools of Control

a. Hunger as a Strategy of Preoccupation

The theme of hunger is made manifest all through Dib's trilogy, yet it is absolutely absent from *The African Trilogy*. Hunger is not only a problem faced by unemployed families; rather, all indigenous social categories suffer from it. Omar, the 10 years old protagonist, is always thinking of bread; he imagines the taste of bread while in class. He fights with his comrades to grab a piece of bread from the hands of native collaborators' children who always have a box of tasty food. Omar says'… si nous pouvions seulement avoir plus de pain, beaucoup de pain, songeait-il ... on pourrait peut-être acheter de la viande de temps en temps. N'est-ce pas? … au moins un jour par semaine. Et, peut-être des œufs. Ça coûte moins cher que la viande'[226] Omar's assertion shows the gravity of living conditions during colonialism. Bread is supposed to be the most affordable food, yet Omar and his family can not even buy it.

Also, Aini —Omar's mother— looks for a job that enables her to gain some coins so as to buy some bread. She constantly blames her plight and her absent husband for the miserable life she lives, yet the blame should be directed at colonialism that pushed Aini to hide a very small quantity of rice in case they received a guest: 'eh bien ce jour là il y avait quelque chose à manger: une poignée de riz qu' Aini gardait comme la prunelle de ses yeux. Aini l'avait sorti de sa cachette parce que ce jour-là l'occasion en valait la peine'.[227] The fact that someone hides a very small quantity of rice for occasions only emphasises the complicated situation of colonised people who can not eat enough.

'Et l'on nous met en présence d'une logique abjecte qui veut qu'un homme soit sans force parce qu'il n'a pas de quoi manger et qu'on le paye moins parce qu'il est sans forces'.

[226] Dib. *La Grande Maison*, p. 143.
[227] Ibid., 157.

Moreover, one of the fellah —who no longer works in Bni Boublen because the farms burnt down— complains about his life: 'Je suis du douard' Ouchba; Mais j'ai toujours travaillé ici. Moi, mes enfants et ma femme, nous avions tout le temps faim. Si vous me conduisiez chez un gargotier, je suis capable de manger tout ce qu'il a'.[228] The case of this *fellah* is that of all farmers evoked in *L'Incendie* as well as the case of weavers evoked in *Le Métier à Tisser*. The fellahs have all become beggars because lands in Bni Boublen were burnt. Likewise, weavers can not afford their daily needs because of their meagre salaries.

Each of the three previous passages represents a social category. All together, these groups constitute the Algerian people. In detailing the trials of Algerian indigenous people, Dib portrays a world that is both dreadful and cruel, a world that is unjust because it is full of paradoxes —survival is for the fittest, and the fittest in this context are the coloniser and the native collaborators. Dib shows the harsh conditions of the working class —*fellahs* and weavers— with shattered dreams and aspirations. Dib focuses on hunger, and he shows that people are so hungry that their dreams, aspirations and life goals are limited to the quest for bread. Therefore, one can deduce that hunger was a strategy adopted by the coloniser to keep indigenous people preoccupied and distant from serious issues that concern the future of the country.[229]

[228] Dib. *L'Incendie*, p. 26.
[229] Abdelaziz, Djeniene. 'Le Theme de la Faim dans *La Grande Maison* de Mohammed Dib'. Diss. Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, 2014.

b. Exploitation

Exploitation is an economic policy that grants the coloniser the right to exploit the native population in labour for very low incomes.[230] In the texts of Dib and Achebe, 'les ouvriers agricoles sont les premières victimes visées par l'exploitation qui sévit dans [le] pays [colonisé]'.[231] In Algeria, '[l'existence [*des fellahs*] se passe en journées agricoles et pastorales chez les colons'.[232] Despite being on their own land, farmers are exploited by the settlers who granted themselves the right to possess the lands: 'le colon considère le travail du fellah comme totalement sien. Il veut, de plus, que les gens lui appartiennent'.[233] Exploitation has not only been a means of economic gain for the metropole, but also a strategy of weakening the subaltern physically, psychologically and economically in order to control them. In addition to the physical exploitation and land dispossession, agricultural and trade taxes were imposed on the indigenous people, and the colonial government benefits from the income of taxations.[234]

In the Nigerian context, exploitation takes another form. The British missionaries have exploited the flaws of Igbo culture to manipulate native Umuofians who were rejected by Igbo superstitions. An example of that can be seen in Nneka's case who 'had had four previous pregnancies and child-births. But each time she had borne twins, they had been immediately thrown away' because Igbos regard twins as a curse.[235] Indeed, the intentions of colonisation are greater than just exploiting the naivety of a given people; rather, world forces conquer countries to empower the economy of the motherland.[236] However, in this research

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[230] Stephen Ocheni, and Basil C. Nwankwo. 'Analysis of Colonialism and its Impact in Africa.' *CSCanada Cross-Cultural Communication*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2012, pp. 46-54.
[231] Dib. *La Grande Maison*, p. 116.
[232] Dib. *L'Incendie*, p. 8.
[233] Ibid., 27.
[234] Albert Gray. 'Law and Taxation in Northern Nigeria.' *Journal of the Society of Comparative Legislation*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1906, pp. 46–48.
[235] Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*, p. 96.
[236] Olusegun Adeyeri, and Adejuwon Kehinde David. 'The Implications of British Colonial Economic Policies on Nigeria's Development.' *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2012, pp. 1-16.

we do not focus on other aspects of colonisation such as economic strategies; we rather focus on the native populations because our interest is to see their development from subalternity, weakness, voicelessness and oppression to agency and empowerment in the selected postcolonial texts. Accordingly, from *Algérie* and *Things Fall Apart* we see that Dib and Achebe have tackled different forms of exploitation, but the aim behind these different images of exploitation is the same: it is to show the way the coloniser controls the colonised.

c. Impoverishment as a Strategy of Subjugation

In my reading of *Algérie,* I have noticed poverty in each page of the trilogy. The poverty I have seen is immediately linked to the practices of the coloniser on the colonised. The coloniser controls the country and manipulates its institutions; even if indigenous people are allowed to work, their salaries would be very meager. One of the farmers asserts that they have only asked for 'des salaires plus justes. Est-ce un mal que de demander d'avoir juste, tout juste, à manger? Est-ce un mal de demander uniquement à manger pour ses enfants ? Est-ce un mal si les enfants pleurent souvent?'[237] Such proclamations prevailed in colonial Algeria, some people struggled with the few coins they possessed while others starved. In the Nigerian context, what can be noticed is that pre-colonial indigenous Nigerians are wealthy. They possess compounds and lands, and they always have food. However, poverty in Umuofia starts to be noticed after the coming of the white men because the latter dispossessed the native people of their lands and used them to build their institutions, and they enslaved the people.[238] Arguably, the colonisers not only exploit people, 'ils s'emparent de tout. Les colons … ont tout pris'.[239]

Besides this, colonisation has introduced a system of taxation to further impoverish the poor indigenous populations. In *Algérie,* a farmer declares: 'j'ai reçu une feuille d'impôts ou

[237] Dib. *L'Incendie*, p. 36.
[238] Achebe. *Things Fall Apart,* p. 91.
[239] Dib. *L'Incendie*, p. 54.

on m'a marqué huit chèvres; à présent, je n'ai plus rien'.[240] Algerian farmers are wrongly accused of burning the agricultural lands of BniBoublen, and because of that false accusation, colonial authorities divested them of all their possessions. In the Nigerian context, I have noticed that a similar situation occurred; Okonkwo and his friends decided to destroy the church of Umuofia. As a result, the District Commissioner '[has] decided that [Okonkwo] will pay a fine of two hundred bags of cowries. [Okonkwo] will be released as soon as [he] agree[s] to this'.[241] These two passages turn our attention to the fact that taxations were introduced to these African states because of the colonial encounter. Taxations were imposed on indigenous populations in colonial Algeria —despite them being poor— and colonial Nigeria. The taxation system in colonial states is supposed to be a revenue-raising strategy, 'ce sont eux the —colonisers— qui mettent de l'argent de côté … Et ils s'agrandissent tant qu'on ne sait plus où ils iront'.[242] This discussion suggests that forced unemployment, low salaries and taxation evoked in these texts were strategies to deprive and weaken indigenous populations. The purpose behind weakening them is to facilitate controlling them.

[240] Ibid., 26.
[241] Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*, p. 121.
[242] Dib. *L'Incendie*, p. 55.

d. Ideological State Apparatuses and Repressive State Apparatuses and their Role in Repressing Indigenous Populations

In these texts, the mapping of the colonial settlement relies upon a set of institutions. Known as Ideological State Apparatuses [ISA] and Repressive State Apparatuses [RSA], those are implemented in colonial Algeria and colonial Nigeria to dominate the subaltern.[243] ISA encompasses the set of institutions —such as schools and churches— which are responsible for legislating rules and methods other than physical to manipulate the *other*. Reading of *Algérie* and *The African Trilogy* has revealed that both the French and the British colonial systems relied on these apparatuses to inculcate westernised ways of seeing and evaluating issue; this chapter argues that educational ISA has particularly a dominant role anchoring the masked ideologies of the ruling class. Althusser contends that the school has exceeded the church in indoctrinating target subjects. As an illustration of this assertion, Achebe tells us that '… the white missionary had set up a school to teach young Christians to read and write'.[244] Through the teaching of reading and writing in a Christian missionary school, the pupils are taught to absorb the ideologies, beliefs and habits of the instructors. On the other hand, Omar recounts the atmosphere in a classroom of a French colonial school; '… dans la classe les élèves [apprenaient que] la France [était leur] mère patrie. Patrie ou pas patrie [Omar savait que] la France n'était pas sa mère. [Les élèves] apprenaient] des mensonges pour éviter la fameuse baguette d'olivier. C'était ça, les études. Les rédactions: décrivez une veillée au coin du feu. Papa, enfoncé dans un fauteuil, lit son journal et maman fait de la broderie'.[245] Accordingly, this passage clearly shows untrue facts; we observe that children learn those lies by heart to avoid punishment. The homework given by the teacher reflects

[243] Louis Althusser. 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation).' *In Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1971, pp. 79-87.
[244] Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*, p. 97.
[245] Dib. *La Grande Maison*, p. 18.

European habits. So, the school is used to shape the colonial subjects according to Western norms.[246]

In order to attain the same objects but to a larger extents, the colonial authorities also relied on the court, and the church. The District Commissioner says to Okonkwo that 'we have a court of law where we judge cases and administer justice just as it is done in my own country under a great queen'.[247] However, the court that is implemented in colonised countries is designed to oppress indigenous people, not to fix their issues. The court, as asserted by Hamid Saraj, an Algerian militant, is just an apparatus to control the colonial subject. Saraj says:

> je ne veux pas me soumettre à la Justice, clamait-il. Ce qu'ils appellent la justice n'est que leur justice. Elle est faite uniquement pour les protéger, pour garantir leur pouvoir sur nous, pour nous réduire et nous mater. Aux yeux d'une telle justice je suis toujours coupable; elle m'a condamné avant même que je ne sois né. Elle nous condamne sans avoir besoin de notre culpabilité. Cette justice est faite contre nous, parce qu'elle n'est pas celle de tous les hommes.[248]

Clear enough is the injustice of the justice proclaimed by the judicial ideological state apparatus of the colonial system. More drastic methods have been used by the coloniser to weaken, oppress and control the colonised. In their respective texts, Dib and Achebe illustrate the range of repressive state apparatuses that were used to tame the colonised. Dib and Achebe make reference to violence by referring to the police and the prison. In colonial Algeria, 'le colon Marcous fit travailler ses ouvriers, le revolver au poing'.[249] More than that, 'le jeune Charef Mohammed (a farmer) fut matraqué à la ferme Marcous. Le crâne ouvert, du sang répandu sur le visage et les habits … Quatre autres [fellahs] furent conduits en prison'.[250] Beyond the city, in 'douar Sidi-Moussa, [les] agents de la PRG brutalisèrent des paysans'.[251]

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[246] Nicholas, Harrison. *Our Civilizing Mission: The Lessons of Colonial Education*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019, p 45.
[247] Achebe. *Things Fall Apart,* p. 121.
[248] Dib. *La Grande Maison*, p. 49.
[249] Dib. *L'Incendie*, p. 125.
[250] Ibid., 125.
[251] Ibid., 128.

Likewise in colonial Nigeria, the British authorities built a prison for the Igbo people who did not abide by the instructions of the coloniser; they had to 'obey without a murmur'.[252] When a group of Umuofians demonstrated against the Christian church, they were 'so quickly … handcuffed and led into the guardroom'.[253] In sum, such accounts of oppression actually serve to define the situation of the subaltern during colonisation. These stories of Algeria, BniBoublen, and Umuofia are cited to illustrate the actual situation the colonial encounter generated.

e. 'Colonisabilité': The Reason for Subalternity?

From Dib and Achebe's texts, it is clear that understanding and analysing the adversary is key to the exploitation of the country and its people. According to the Algerian theoretician Malek Bennabi, 'There is no colonisation without "colonisabilité"'.[254] *The African Trilogy* depicts the effects of the British colonisation of the Igbo people of Nigeria during the late nineteenth century. British men took control of the Igbo people and imposed their values upon them, but why was the task of colonisation so easy in Umuofia and the nearby villages? The flaw of those tribes lay in superstitions; once their sacred beliefs were questioned and destabilised by the missionaries, they started to doubt and easily embraced the new faith.

The fault in the Igbo culture resides mainly in superstitions; Achebe's underlying message is that they believe in untrue and illogical ideas. For instance, a child is cursed if he is an ogbanje:[255]

> Within a few weeks of his arrival to Umuofia Mr. Smith suspended a young woman from the church for pouring new wine into old bottles. This woman had allowed her heathen husband to mutilate her dead child. The child had been declared an ogbangi,

[252] Achebe. *Things Fall Apart,* p. 128.
[253] Ibid., 121.
[254] Zoheir Dilmi. 'Malek Bennabi (1905-1973 É.C.) et les Conditions d'une Nouvelle Renaissance de la Société Arabomusulmane.' Diss. Université de Montréal, 2013.
[255] Ogbange is a child who dies and his/her spirit comes back again to haunt his/her mother's womb.

> plaguing its mother by dying and entering her womb to be born again. Four times this child had run its evil round. And so it was mutilated to discourage it from returning.[256]

Such beliefs and actions caused the Igbo culture to be flawed. Mutilating a child is not only considered to be a crime, but also it represents just one example amongst many other defective practices. What is of interest to us in exposing the flaws of the Igbo culture is to prove that superstitions are the Achilles' heel of Nigerian indigenous culture. Because of superstitions, this culture could easily vanish. It could have been saved if it did not reject its people, but a lot of women and young men were considered outcasts because of natural and ordinary circumstances which are regarded as sinful. According to this, we can assume that the Igbo people are 'colonisable': to take hold of the land and subjugate its people is inevitable in such a situation.[257]

On the other hand, Dib's *La Grande Maison* shows the miserable conditions of Algerian families under the hegemony of the French coloniser. Dib's novel presents the consequences of colonisation on the indigenous people who were subjected to it. Whilst those peoples were colonised, they must have been ready to be on the receiving end of colonisation. According to Malek Bennabi, civilisation encompasses three problems: man, land and time. Together they constitute an inalienable block. When the problems of these three factors are not solved, then moral, social and intellectual handicaps appear leading to the loss of every civilising power; hence, to decadence. So, it is not the process of colonising and oppressing that gives rise to a disempowered class of people, and to the birth of the dichotomy of superior/inferior or hegemon/subaltern. Rather, it is *la colonisabilité* of Algerian and Nigerian peoples that allowed the process of colonisation to happen: 'pour cesser d'être colonisé, il faut cesser d'être colonisable'.[258] In a colonisable environment, it is impossible to see anything but a colonialist administration. Colonisation is a historical fatality; such peoples will not cease

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[256] Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*, p. 115.
[257] Bennabi, Malek. *Le Problème des Idées dans le Monde Musulman*. Alger: El Bay'yinate, 1990.
[258] Malek Bennabi. *Les Conditions de La Renaissance: Problème d'une Civilisation.* Algiers: Édition ANEP, 1949.

being colonised until they stop being colonisable. Algerians and the Igbo peoples could be dominated and colonised because there are problems within the three factors of civilisation: men [stands for people in general] are unconscious and preoccupied either by famine and poverty —the case of Algerian families— or by worshipping 'pieces of wood and stone […] which cannot do […] any —good or any— harm'.[259] Men were silenced or 'subalternised' because they accepted being so, their territories were occupied by Europeans —French and British, who exploited their resources, and sought to alter or erase their culture and history. Those serious problems cannot be solved by simple aphorisms. That said, despite thinkers such as Bennabi and Achebe conveying moral statements and observations about the world; people need profound and drastic transformation from within themselves. In other words the outer encouragement is important indeed, but without the inner determination change cannot happen.[260] The Quran offers a useful observation in that regard: 'Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves'.[261]

3. The Condition of the Subaltern: The Complex Path between Voicelessness and Speakability

Colonisation occurs only if it finds a propitious climate to grow in. Analogous debates often argue about colonisation, but they rarely speak of 'colonisabilité'. 'I am colonised' is the sentence which is always uttered, heard or written about, but a more constructive attitude would be to ask 'why am I colonised?' People tend to claim their rights, but they seldom care about their duties. Colonisation anchors and grows its roots in 'la colonisabilité'.[262] Colonisation and 'la colonisabilité' constitute a venomous plant which needs to be eradicated from its very root. It is one of this thesis's foundational hypotheses that 'la colonisabilité'

[259] Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*, p. 93.
[260] Ibid., 33-35.
[261] *Quran*: 'Surah Ra'd' verse n° 11.
[262] Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples*. New York: United Nations Publication, 2009, p. 53.

offers a propitious terrain for the coloniser to craft a subaltern space, where he enclaves the passive-subjects, the native populations. This can be illustrated by looking at the shift of Okonkwo's social position; he was a fierce fighter and the leader of Umofia, yet the coloniser destroyed his image by showing the weakness of his superstitious allegations. Hence, Okonkwo is 'colonisable'. According to the illustrations provided in Achebe's trilogy, the colonisation of Nigeria was inherently racist, and so was the social situation in Algeria: indigenous populations were deprived of many rights whereas the coloniser enjoyed all sorts of privileges.[263] The subaltern indigenous populations found themselves occupying the periphery which had been designed for them by the colonisers, who reserved the centre for themselves. If we consider Gayatri C. Spivak's famous rhetorical question, 'Can the Subaltern speak?', and try to answer it, then it is clear that Nigerian and Algerian subaltern populations could not speak. In this context, it does not have to do with physical capability, but rather means that Nigerian or Algerian subaltern voices could not be heard. The heroes and some characters were unable to or refused to adapt to societal transformations: as a result, they acted outside the realm of what was culturally acceptable to the majority of Umofia inhabitants, that is, they did not merged in the actual stream of the society they lived in. For instance, all the inhabitants of Umofia converted to Christianity because the influence of the coloniser was powerful except for Okonkwo and few elder chiefs of tribes. Therefore, they were locked in the space of subalternity.

In *The African Trilogy*, characters such as Mr. Brown, Reverend James Smith, and the District Commissioner are the privileged settlers who rule the fresh colony and usurp the richness of Nigeria, and at the same time they subjugate the native populations such as the six leaders of Umuofia; 'The six men were handcuffed and led into the guardroom […] the District Commissioner took down his razor and shaved off all the hair on the men's heads.

[263] Tunde Adeleke. 'Slavery, Race and Racism: The Peculiarities and Problems of Southern Studies in Nigeria.' *American Studies International*, vol. 31, no. 1, 1993, pp. 17–20.

They were still handcuffed, and they just sat and moped'.[264] The six leaders of Umuofia, amongst whom are Okonkwo and Okika, who are highly feared and respected in Umuofia. It is thanks to their hard labour that they have been granted high titles within their people. However, the powerful position of Umuofia's leaders was meant to be destroyed by the head shaving act performed by the District Commissioner: in some African cultures warrior men have long hair; the length of the hair that reaches the nape of the neck symbolises the mane of the lion. It means that those men are as strong as lions, and if the men's heads are shaved, then these men are regarded as cowards and weak. When we reflect upon the act of the district commissioner, why has he chosen to shave the heads of the respected and highly ranked elders of Umuofia? These men have been intentionally chosen in order to demote them from their position, and by shaving their heads the District Commissioner removes their strength and high-mindedness. In the Igbo culture, the six leaders of Umuofia used to occupy the centre: they used to pass instructions and solve their fellows' problems in the 'communal ceremony'?[265] But after the intrusion of the white men, the position of Umuofia leaders has been decentred.[266] Despite their resistance, turning the leaders into subordinate figures was an easy mission for the white men because of the flaws of the Igbo culture, which are laden with superstition. The native populations based their lives on untrue principles and beliefs —as pointed by the coloniser— that rendered their culture flawed, such principles consisted in the obligation to kill the women who give birth to twins because they are believed to be cursed.[267] Because of superstition, many individuals have been cast away from their tribe. These outcast individuals, who constitute a considerable number of the indigenous population, were vividly

[264] Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*. London: Macmillan Readers, 2005, p. 121.
[265] Communal ceremony is a cultural ritual where the leaders of Umuofia wear 'egwugwu', which are masks that represent ancestral spirits. The egwugwu sit in order of seniority and start to discuss and solve problems of their fellows.
[266] Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*, p. 57.
[267] Ibid, pp. 94-95-96.

welcomed by the culture of the white men who continuously received converts.[268] As a result of this phenomenon, the leaders of the villages were more easily rejected by their fellow countrymen and seen as evil, and the district commissioner or the white men in general found the 'subalternising' mission easy. Furthermore, during detention the six men ate nothing throughout that day and the next. They were not even given any water to drink, and they could not go out to urinate or go into the bush when they were pressed. At night the messengers — native collaborators with the British settlers— came in to taunt them and to knock their shaven heads together.[269]

In depicting such a humiliating scene, Achebe emphasises the fact that highly respected elders of Umuofia were reduced to the condition of beasts: they used to be free, but now they are imprisoned. They used to decide who should be jailed, but now they are the ones upon whom jail decisions are legislated. They used to be served the best kinds of meals and drinks by their wives and children, but now they starve. They used to have dignity: before this scene, Achebe had never evoked Okonkwo or any of his fellows in a disgusting picture such as going to the toilet or being beaten up. However, this scene marks the collapse of the grandeur of the tribe's noble men. In so doing, the idea of 'subalternising' the native populations is further accentuated.

Algeria's picture in *Algérie* is not so far from Nigeria's, that is, Aini —Omar's mother— and Omar work for a Spanish settler in very harsh conditions, working long hours each day in order to gain a few cents:

> La somme qu'elle recevait pour son travail était si ridicule, il est vrai, que c'en était exaspérant; il n'y avait pour ainsi dire pas d'issue à leur situation. Depuis plusieurs mois qu'Aini cousait ces empeignes d'espadrilles, il n'avait pas mangé une seule fois à leur faim. Omar l'aidait dans son travail; mais rien n'y faisait. Aini avait pensé un moment vendre sa machine. Mais elle était leur dernière défense contre le dénuement

[268] Ibid.
[269] Ibid., 122.

> complet […] il fallut accepter le travail et le maigre salaire qu'il lui offrait; et trop heureuse encore ! Sinon l'ouvrage lui passait sous le nez.[270]

This social situation reveals some clues about the lack of agency of these characters. Aini and Omar are at the mercy of Gonzales, the Spanish manufacturer; they are unable to decide or make a choice; they are compelled to accept what is imposed on them and surrender. Working all day long in tiring conditions distracts the characters' interest from more important issues —social, political and economic—. As a matter of fact, poverty leads to starvation, and if these people are starving they can only think about working more so as to provide at least some food for their families. Accordingly, being constantly hungry as well as working all day long can only drive the subaltern further down on their knees. As a direct consequence of this situation, the indigenous people can never preoccupy themselves with the issues of their country. The coloniser, hence, acts in the colonised country without constraints: Gonzales, the Spanish settler, controls the native workers in their home country. Although he is a foreigner, he occupies a central position as compared to Algerian workers, who are not even protected by law. They are discarded by the colonial government although they live in their own territory. What the colonial settlers

> appellent la justice n'est que leur justice. Elle est faite uniquement pour les protéger, pour garantir leur pouvoir sur nous, pour nous réduire et nous mater. Aux yeux d'une telle justice, je suis toujours coupable. Elle m'a condamnée avant même que je sois né. Elle nous condamne sans avoir besoin de notre culpabilité. Cette justice est faite contre nous, parce qu'elle n'est pas celle de tous les hommes.[271]

By installing a colonial government, the colonial regime introduced notions such as justice, equality and freedom, but they remained mere ink on paper. Those universalist notions served the purpose of the coloniser, they encompassed principles and beliefs that excluded the colonised. Gayatri C. Spivak indicates the separatist attitude of the coloniser by juxtaposing the centre with the periphery and by showing the characteristics of both camps. Spivak's rhetorical question invites us to reflect upon how the colonisers silenced the oppressed and

[270] Dib. *La Grande Maison*, pp. 123-124.
[271] Dib. *La Grande Maison*, p. 49.

marginalised people in colonial societies. According to Spivak's theory, the subaltern cannot be represented by privileged people because they can only speak for themselves. Their discourse is heard because it conforms to the cultural and social norms, but it will not change the condition of the subaltern. In both trilogies, there is an attempt to move away from the margin of voicelessness to the centre of speakability. Achebe's Okonkwo was a very influential man before the intrusion of the coloniser in their tribal life, but he started to lose virility and authority over his fellows when they embraced the coloniser's culture and faith. Okonkwo, in his original environment, is a tribe man who spoke for his fellows —men and women alike, yet Okonkwo's position has shifted from speakability to voicelessness because of colonisation. He no longer had any kind of influence over his family and tribe as it is illustrated in this passage:

> "Where have you been?" Okonkwo stammered.
> Nwoye struggled to free himself from the shocking grip.
> "Answer me," roared Okonkwo,"before I kill you!" He seized a heavy stick that lay on the dwarf wall and hit him two or three savage blows.
> "Answer me," he roared again. Nwoye stood looking at him and did not say a word […] he left hold of Nwoye, who walked away and never returned.[272]

This passage represents, in highly allegorical terms, the tremendous impact of colonisation over the traditions of the Igbo culture. Okonkwo; one of the strongest men of Umuofia drastically shifts position from authoritarian tribe man, father and husband to a marginalised native who cannot even exert authority over his own son.

Mohammed Dib and Chinua Achebe share a lot of themes such as the struggle between change and tradition, language as a means of subversion, and the influence of education**.** However, they opt for different types of protagonists. Achebe chooses different generations in his trilogy to show the transformation caused by colonisation in the Igbo culture over the years: in the first volume of the African trilogy *Things Fall Apart* the protagonist, Okonkwo, is powerful and very influential. He has three wives and ten children

[272] Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*, p. 97.

—the more wives one has in Umofia, the more powerful he is. In *No Longer at Ease* the protagonist, Obi Okonkwo is the grandson of Okonkwo; and he is absorbed by the culture of the coloniser, that is, he converts to Christianity and starts a western education. The last volume of the trilogy *The Arrow of God* centres on Ezeulu, the chief priest of several Igbo villages. By contrast, Dib chooses Omar —a ten-year-old boy who comes of age throughout the trilogy— as a witness of the suffering of all Algerian people during colonial times. The question that is raised is why did Dib choose one protagonist all through *Algérie* whereas Achebe chose protagonists of different generations and different groups? Omar —the protagonist of *Algérie*— is a child, and he is aware of this. He does not want to grow up so as not to live in falsehood like the adults surrounding him. He cannot bear lies; he asks himself questions that only aware, awake, and well-educated persons do. Omar might be the incarnation of Mohammed Dib himself; he is the young boy with mature characteristics. Dib wants to show the extent to which childhood can be violated because of misery: as a child. Omar never looks for toys; rather, he is in a constant quest for bread and is concerned with issues that usually belong to the adult world. Besides, he spends all his days wandering in the streets and observing the problems that he understands but never takes part in because he is too young. Omar is the unique perspective the reader has, yet this perspective is panoramic, we do not miss any detail. On the other hand, with respect to Achebe's trilogy, we encounter a different protagonist in each volume of the trilogy: Okonkwo is the archetype of the patriotic, strong tribe man. He simultaneously represents the real Igbo man before the intrusion of the coloniser, and also the paradigm that native populations must follow. Obi Okonkwo represents the population that is born during colonisation, that population is absorbed by the culture of the coloniser; this generation —the Igbo successors—fail to follow the paradigm prescribed by Igbo culture —the paradigm of Okonkwo. Finally, Ezeulu, the chief priest, is the protagonist of the last novel of the African trilogy: he is involved in a conflict with the

chief of another tribe. Ezeulu represents another category of the native population; he is elected chief priest, and is subjected to manipulation by settlers against his will. In choosing different protagonists from different groups of people, Achebe wants to show that both elders and youngsters have been affected by the ills of colonisation. That said, the Igbo culture is no longer respected: the younger generation —represented by Obi Okonkwo— underestimate the culture and beliefs of their ancestors. Also, the important persons of Umofia tribes —such as Okonkwo and Ezeulu— are belittled by the culture of the coloniser.

There are attempts to challenge the coloniser, though. In *La Grande Maison*, Hamid Serradj attempts to break the chains of silence, arguing that: 'les travailleurs de la terre ne peuvent plus vivre avec les salaires qu'ils touchent. Ils manifesteront avec force […] il faut en finir avec cette misère'.[273] Serradj, the activist, prepares the destabilisation of the colonial regime. But addressing injustice can go even further. Spivak's subaltern theory is also concerned with patriarchy: the hegemony of men over women. This point can be relevant in *Things Fall Apart* because women in Umuofia and the eight other villages depend on men's voices to represent them but in a way that suits men. In *La Grande Maison,* subalternity is also relevant in relation to the coloniser as well as men: the text makes it clear that Aini —being a widow— needs a man in her life; the only man she has by her side is Omar, her young son. Despite his being very young, Omar acts as a protector against the male gaze that his mother is exposed to in Arabo-Islamic culture.[274] In this culture, it is compulsory to separate both sexes; the separation also concerns tasks and space. In his work: *Femmes d´Algérie, Légendes, Traditions, Histoire, Littérature,* Jean Déjeux explains the Islamic rule with regards to women: 'la femme devant être protégée des regards extérieurs, ne devant pas être une fitna

[273] Dib. *L'Incendie*, p. 119.
[274] Jamil Hilal. 'The Management of Male Dominance in "Traditional" Arab Culture: A Tentative Model.' *Civilisations*, vol. 21, no. 1, 1971, pp. 85–95.

—une épreuve troublante pour les hommes, mais devant être voilée devant les étrangers'.[275] All these instructions imply that there must not be communication between men and women except in a case of necessity. In this case, besides the veil that a woman must wear, a male family member must accompany her outside the home. The woman's eyes must look down, and her voice must be low and unprovocative. Although women in *La Grande Maison* are deprived of power and all rights, they are not completely submitted in the sense that they can go outside their houses in order to work. However, they are never allowed to interact freely with male environments as Jean Déjeux argues: 'Lorsque la femme investit l´espace masculin, rompant l'équilibre de la société, dépassant les normes traditionnelles [...], des hommes diront qu'elle dépasse la mesure'.[276] Elisabeth Schemla and Khalida Messaoudi, the Algerian minister of Algerian culture and an ancient activist for women's rights have argued that: 'l´islam, chez nous, a été obligé de s'incliner devant le droit coutumier'.[277] In many cases, customary expectations do not favour women's condition. Before colonisation —the precolonial period, the Algerian woman was not different from the oriental woman:[278] under the influence of patriarchy, she received a traditional education that kept her inferior to men.[279] In Said's terms, women were already colonised because they were in the grip of patriarchy.[280] Tasks were dispatched according to sex: the role of a woman was reduced to looking after her family and to seducing her husband while the man, as a male, has to watch whether or not the woman respected the customs. Consequently, the characters in both novels are reduced to the space of silence because of colonial hegemony.

[275] Jean Déjeux. *Femmes d'Algérie, Légendes, Traditions, Histoire, Littérature*. Paris: La Boîte À Documents, 1987, p. 316.
[276] Ibid., 316.
[277] Khalida Messaoudi. *Une Algérienne Debout*. Paris: J'ai lu, 1995, p. 41.
[278] The oriental women as opposed to the occidental women.
[279] Kathleen, Sheldon. *African Women: Early History to the 21st Century*. Indiana University Press, 2017.
[280] M. A. Jaimes Guerrero. '"Patriarchal Colonialism" and Indigenism: Implications for Native Feminist Spirituality and Native Womanism.' *Hypatia*, vol. 18, no. 2, 2003, pp. 58–69.

4. Violence as a Way out to Agency

Being subjected to subalternity would certainly alter the psyche of the native person. *L'Incendie* moves to the countryside which is situated near Tlemcen, These impoverished villages are perched on a slope overlooking the fields owned and cultivated by the colonisers, who exploit farmers and agricultural workers. In the countryside, Omar discovers that:

> Leur existence (les fellahs/ agriculteurs) se passe en journées agricoles et pastorales chez les colons. Elle est si archaïque, et les gens se montrent si simples, qu'on les croirait issus d'un continent oublié. La terre là-haut, intraitable et sans eau, étouffe dans la garrigue: la griffe de l'antique araire à peine à l'entamer.[281]

Les fellahs[282] live in a state of poverty even harsher than poverty seen in the city. Like Aini who spends all day long working for the Spanish manufacturer, *les fellahs* spend all day long cultivating the lands owned by the colonisers. The situation and the hardship under which the agricultural men live would go on generate a strike led by the agricultural activist Hamid Saraj.

Okonkwo and Hamid Saraj are two strong men in Umuofia and colonial Algeria respectively. However, because of the coming of the coloniser they have lost their fearful and respectful positions. Okonkwo engages in several quarrels to lessen his anger and Saraj prepares coups to destabilise the colonial regime. Both of the characters opt for violent reactions to counter attack the enemy. This reaction is the one needed to reach agency according to Frantz Fanon.[283] Accordingly, violence is a fundamental element of colonisation, it is introduced by the colonisers and inflicted upon the colonised as part of the colonial oppression. In Fanon's view, the choice that the colonised must make concerning violence is either to continuing accepting violence —which means absorbing the abuse or displacing it upon other members of the oppressed native community— or taking this foreign violence and

[281] Dib. *L'Incendie*, p. 8.
[282] *Les fellahs* is an Arabic word, and it means the agricultural workers.
[283] Fanon, Frantz. *Les Damnés de la Terre*. Paris: Edition la Découverte, 1961.

throwing it back in the face of those who initiated it. The first of these two solutions must certainly not be chosen because it serves The interest of the coloniser. Therefore, Fanon's consistent existentialist commitment to choosing the second alternative means that decolonisation can only happen when the native takes in his or her subjecthood between hands and completely refuses to occupy the position of violence-absorber. As a result, throwing back violence to the enemy is the recommended step towards agency.

It is certainly true that violence is subject to moral condemnation. However, according to Fanon, it seems that it is illegitimate to ask questions about the legitimacy of violence when it is politically motivated. In *Les Damnés de la Terre*, he addresses the colonised peoples and not the French. With respects to this, Alice Cherki writes:

> *Les Damnés de la Terre* auxquels Fanon s'adresse sont les déshérités des pays pauvres qui veulent réellement la terre et du pain, alors qu'à l'époque la classe ouvrière du monde occidental, souvent raciste et manifestement ignorante des populations d'outre mer, témoigne d'une relative indifférence au sort des colonies dont elle tire indirectement bénéfice.[284]

In this sense, Fanon analyses decolonisation as a process that must 'porter sur l'être', and it is the role of collective violence —as a form of contestatory struggle— that enables the transformation of the self. Violence is the only means that detoxifies the alienated consciousness of the colonised. Violence is the only means to produce a free man: at the individual level, the free man is psychologically liberated, and at the collective level the entire people is free. In the following passage, we see that Achebe understands that violence is the sole escape from the labyrinth of colonisation; 'you should have killed the white man if you had listened to me'.[285] Accordingly, Achebe does not hesitate to show violent acts because —like Fanon— he knows that violence brings freedom. Likewise, Mohammed Dib shows that to free the society from the enemy, there must be unity to organise violent revolts:

> On nous propose, continua-t-il, de nous unir, de former un seul mouvement dans le but de secouer toute la vermine qui nous mange. Je dis qu'il est possible de guérir le mal

[284] Alice Cherki. *Frantz Fanon, Portrait*. Paris: Seuil, 2000, p. 89.
[285] Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*, p. 122.

> dont souffre le monde […] nous sommes ici pour discuter ensemble de ces questions, fit Hamid Saraj. Il ne s'agit pas que l'un de nous fasse de beaux discours et que les autres l'écoutent. Chacun participera à la discussion, et donnera son avis.[286]

One of the fundamental principles of Frantz Fanon's theory of violence is the unity between the members of the society in question: 'si les citadins et les fellahs pouvaient s'unir, le passage vers un monde plus facile deviendrait possible […] nous nous sommes réunis pour discuter de choses qui nous tiennent à cœur'.[287]

In the beginning of the trilogies, we witnessed the history of the indigenous Algerian and Nigerian people in their lands prior to and during the coming of the coloniser. Actually, poor Algerian families were struggling against misery and colonialism. However, 'si nous nous sommes tous rassemblés aujourd'hui, c'est justement pour que le monde cesse d'être outragé'.[288] It is thanks to unity that the colonised can shift the paradigm of authority and power: power can no longer be exerted by colonial authorities or complicit agents; it will rather become a matter of the people. In fact, to gain independence Algerians united and waged the war on November 1st, 1954 at midnight, wherein they entered into bloody confrontations with the French colonial enemy for eight years.[289] This war was cruel and merciless, and grim atrocities happened to Algerians. On May 8th, 1954 while France and its allies were celebrating their victory over Nazi Germany —France used Algerian fighters against its war with Germany, and promised them freedom after victory, yet France did not respect its promise: about 45 000 Algerians were killed during the repression of demonstrations in different parts of Algeria. A lot of corpses were discarded and thrown off cliffs in Guelma, Kherrata, and Sétif.[290] These tragic scenes lasted over years of struggle until

[286] Dib. *L'Incendie*, p. 82.
[287] Ibid.
[288] Ibid.
[289] Miquel Calçada. 'Analysis of the Algerian War of Independence: Les Evenements, a Lost Opportunity for Peace.' *Journal of Conflictology*, vol. 3, issue. 2, 2012, pp. 52-61.
[290] Ibid.

the FLN[291] organised attacks in Algiers starting from 1956.[292] The battle in Algeria was getting worse and France started to be unable to send more troops because a lot of French fighters were killed by Algerian militants.[293] Algeria's independence was inevitable. On July 5, 1962, Algeria was declared independent.

Unlike Algeria, Nigeria's transition from a colony to an independent state was not bloody. In the 1930s, there was an economic depression in Nigeria involving unfair taxation, lack of municipality self-government, and an authoritarian ruling elite. As a result, the economy of Nigeria was not allowed to develop in order to meet the needs of indigenous Nigerians. This paved the stage for the Nationalist movement —1919— to start protesting against the ruling elite. During that period, Great Britain was involved in World War Two —1939-1945;[294] this historical event put enormous pressure on Great Britain and strengthened the Nationalist movement led by Sir Herbert Macauley —a Yoruban Nigerian nationalist, political activist, and engineer (1864-1946).[295] Consequently, constitutional reforms led to an increased Nigerian self-governance at the regional level and finally led to the Nigerian complete independence on October 1, 1960.[296] To sum up, although unity was key to gaining freedom in both countries, the events leading to the independence of Algeria and Nigeria were drastically different because Algeria experienced a series of brutal events, while Nigeria went through rebellious protests.

[291] Front de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Front) is an Algerian political party that was founded in 1954.
[292] Charef Abed. 'The Tragedy that Paved the Way for Algerian Independence.' Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 2022.
[293] Paul Haspel. 'Algeria Revisited: Opposing Commanders as Warring Doubles in The Battle of Algiers.' *Journal of Film and Video*, vol. 58, no. 3, 2006, pp. 33–42.
[294] Toyin Falola, and Saheed Aderinto. *Nigeria, Nationalism, and Writing History*. New York: University of Rochester Press, 2011, pp. 3-26.
[295] Rina Okonkwo. 'The Lagos Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Rights Protection Society: A Re-Examination.' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 15, no. 3, 1982, pp. 423–33.
[296] Ibid.

5. Reading History through the Lines of *Algérie* and the *African Trilogy*

In telling the stories of Omar, his family and his neighbours, and the story of Okonkwo, his descendants and his kinsmen, Dib and Achebe actually tell the history of Algerian and Nigerian native peoples during colonisation. By writing these stories —that recreate the past, Dib and Achebe inject life into their characters and humanise history. The historical aspect of these trilogies can be seen in the authors' selection of places, periods of time and characters. For the purposes of authenticity, Dib and Achebe capture the details of the colonial period as accurately as possible and provide us with fictional works that are historically informative. In these novels, the locales are a mixture of the real and the fictional. Noting, reading the history of Algerian and Nigerian peoples through these postcolonial fictional texts can be realised by focusing on a set of elements which are the settings, the plot, the characters, issues or problems, and Labels[297].

a. Settings

Dib recounts the story of a family in Tlemcen, a city situated in the North West of Algeria. The setting of Dib's trilogy summarises the years between 1938 and 1942. Referring to history, these dates precede the massacres of Guelma and Setif in 1945 during which period Algerians' life was characterised by complete surrender to the French colonisation. What happens in Tlemcen is similar to what happens in the rest of the country during the colonial period. The locales, Dar-Sbitar —in the city— and BniBoublen —the village, where poor families, vulnerable workers and miserable *fellahs* live, have a unity that characterises the native peoples' relationship against disturbing hegemonic elements which are the French coloniser and the Algerian collaborators such as Si Salah —the landlord of dar-sbitar, Ali kara —the land owner in BniBoublen, and the settlers who constantly harass the families and the

[297] Labels: names or phrases attributed to places and persons.

fellahs. Life in those places is embittered by famine, poverty and oppression, which make for unbearable living conditions.

On the other hand, *The African Trilogy* tells the story of a Umuofia tribe in Nigeria. The scene is narrated in the nine villages of Umuofia, mainly in Umuofia. The latter is a fictional village which represents precolonial Nigeria. Then, Achebe shows the changes that occurred to Umuofia when the white man came; he shows that the Ibgo culture starts to vanish because the British missionaries implemented a government, a church and a school. These Ideological State Apparatuses endeavour to acculturate the indigenous Igbo people and to convince them to adopt the culture of the coloniser.

Accordingly, the places in *Algérie* are real: Tlemcen and BniBoublen existed during colonisation and still exist in today's Algeria while the locales in *The African Trilogy* are fictional. Umuofia is a fictional place with fictional characters. Achebe starts to refer to Umuofia as Nigeria after the coloniser settled down, and so from a historical point of view we understand that Nigeria is a colonial creation. The settings could therefore reveal historical hints to us. For example, in *Algérie* we learn that the *fellahs* lived in BniBoublen —the village— and worked for settlers during colonisation. Also, we learn that miserable families used to live in dar-sbitar —a famous collective habitation during colonisation. Likewise, Achebe provides us with scenes that are as accurate as reality and thanks to which we can imagine the location and the way Nigerians used to live prior to and after colonisation.

b. Plot

The events of the novels are organised in a chronological order except for the use of flashbacks in very rare instances. The flashbacks do not disturb the reader's grasp of historical linearity; their function rather adds some important details in order to help with completing the stories. For example, Achebe starts by introducing Okonkwo as a powerful villager, then suddenly Achebe returns to the past to speak of Unoka —Okonkwo's father. Indeed, this

flashback adds information for readers, yet Achebe's aim behind this is to depreciate the characteristics of Unoka, who was lazy and cowardly, and to valorise the courage and hard work of Okonkwo and make him an idol to be followed. In *Algérie* or *The African Trilogy* there is a combination of real and fictional events; indeed, the major real turning point in the histories of Algeria and Nigeria is the encounter with the coloniser. All the events turn around this encounter: the start of the texts shows the submission of the indigenous populations to the coloniser. The climaxes show the conflicts that happened between native peoples and settlers where we can observe the emergence of subalterns who sensed the need for agency to liberate their lands from the grasp of the enemy.

c. Characters

In these novels, the characters are a mixture of reality and fiction: Omar and his family are fictional characters that stand as a symbol for Algerian families during colonisation. Omar, the young major character, is not a hero as heroes are supposed to be. Omar observes, watches, interrogates, surrenders, and is a witness. As the main character of the trilogy, he is a hero. His heroism may be due to his capacity for surviving the harsh conditions of life, in spite of his very young age. Omar never reacts; he cannot revolt because he is too young. Dib relies a lot on Omar, who is the nucleus of the triptych, where Dib paints the miserable everyday life of Dar-Sbitar inhabitants and the *fellahs* of BniBoublen: we —readers— witness their daily existence through the eyes of Omar. The latter situates us in colonial Algeria by introducing us into his classroom: 'le maître fit quelques pas entre les tables … les coups de pieds donnés aux bancs … Les élèves se métamorphosent en merveilleux santons … Mr Hassan … proclama … La Patrie … La France est notre mère Patrie, annona Brahim'.[298] This indicates that the school system at —colonial Algeria— implements the assimilationist policy

[298] Dib. *La Grande Maison*, p. 18.

to acculturate and westernise the Algerian children —that is a primordial step to gain ground against the indigenous culture.

In a similar scene in colonial Nigeria, Nwoye —Okonkwo's son— abandoned his father and 'went back to the church and told Mr Kiaga that he had decided to go to Umuofia where the white missionary had set up a school to teach young Christians to read and write'.[299] Noticeably, from the fact that Dib and Achebe deal with the issue of integrating indigenous Algerian and Nigerian children into the European school system, we do not only learn that Algeria and Nigeria were colonised countries, but we also know that the colonial system has reserved for itself the right of civilising colonised people through school as proclaimed in the discourse of Jules Ferry in the House of Representatives in 1885: 'Je répète qu'il y a pour les races supérieures un droit, parce qu'il y a un devoir pour elle. Elles ont le devoir de civiliser les races inférieures'.[300] Thus, historically speaking we learn that France and Britain are colonising forces that allege that by colonising they enlighten indigenous populations.

d. Issues or Problems

The issues and problems that the characters encounter in both trilogies are the consequence of colonialism. Dib and Achebe evoke different problems. These problems unveil the nature of the social position and economic limitations of indigenous peoples. For instance, in *Algérie* the whole indigenous population suffers from famine; this issue does not spare widows, children, *fellahs*, and weavers. Dib includes all social categories to show that whatever were their gender and social position, colonised peoples faced the same difficulties —poverty and famine.[301] Unlike Dib, Achebe focuses on the problem of the vanished indigenous culture. In Umuofia —or pre-colonial Nigeria, we learn that things fall apart because Umuofians are not strong enough to protect their land and culture, we learn that

[299] Achebe. *Things Fall Apart,* p. 97.
[300] M. Jules Ferry. 'Jules Ferry: L'école Laïque (6 juin 1889).' *Assemblée Nationale*. Paris: La Chaine Parlementaire, 2019.
[301] Benjamin J. Sparks. 'The Economic of Colonialism: Hunger, Expropriation and Mendicancy in Mohammed Dib's Algerian Trilogy.' *Studies in 20th & 21st Century Literature,* vol. 40, issue. 1, 2016, pp. 1-18.

things fall apart because the Igbo culture is full of superstitions. The latter bann a lot of innocent Umuofians, some because they give birth to twins, others because they are ill. Thus, when the white man comes, he understands that the superstitious beliefs serve as Achilles' heel and can cause the conversion of the majority of Umuofians to Christianity. Historically speaking, we learn that one of the major problems of Algerians during colonisation was famine.[302] Famine of course has wider dimensions: it means that people are deprived of work and even if they work, they cannot afford the cheapest food which is bread. Further down in Western Africa, we learn the traditions of pre-colonial Nigeria, and also we learn that this culture vanished because of the colonial encounter.

e. Labels

As we have seen in the previous chapter, countries' labels, that is, names or phrases attributed to places and persons 'constitute a precious witness of the past.'[303] In his trilogy, Dib speaks of 'Algérie'[304] which is a North African country, and 'l'Aurès'[305] which is a mountainous region in the North-East of Algeria. The label 'Algérie' was attributed to El-Djezair by General Schneider on October 14, 1938. Also, the geographical borders have been delineated by the coloniser. Thus, historically speaking we understand that during that period of time Algeria was already controlled by the French authorities. On the other hand, Achebe shows the transition from pre-colonial Nigeria to colonial Nigeria by labels. When Achebe narrates the traditions and the everyday life of Igbo people before the coming of the white man he refers to the location as Umuofia while after the settlers came Achebe started to refer to that same location as Nigeria. Accordingly, the change in labels indicates the historical transition from indigenous to a suburban state under British colonial rule.

[302] Sparks. 'The Economic of Colonialism', p. 12.
[303] Brahim Atoui. 'Toponymie et Espace en Algérie.' Diss. Aix Marseille University, 1996, p. 32.
[304] Dib. *La Grande Maison*, p. 47.
[305] Ibid., 48.

In summary, the contact between fiction and history in the world of literature is interesting because we learn historical events while being entertained by fiction. *Algérie* and *The African Trilogy* can therefore fulfil a double purpose which is informing and entertaining simultaneously. These trilogies —which capture the colonial moments in Algeria and Nigeria— display a series of historical events which can subtly be grasped thanks to the actions of everyday life that are performed by the characters.

In conclusion, this chapter constitutes the analysis of the first station —which corresponds to subalternity— in the development of indigenous Algerian and Nigerian peoples. The importance of this chapter lies in the fact that it offers an understanding of the causes that led colonised people to be subaltern, and it finds out the ways that led to emergence from the grip of subalternity —which was imposed on indigenous peoples by French and British imperialists. A reading of Bennabi's theory of 'colonisabilité', Spivak's theory of the subaltern, and Fanon's theory of violence suggests that subalternity proved to be a condition or social status designed by the coloniser to deprive the colonised from his/her human agency and condemn him/her to the margin. However, despite the tremendous effects imperialism had on the indigenous Algerian and Nigerian people, the trilogies show that the colonised are endowed with the readiness to act violently —an attitude that is judged necessary by Fanon to gain back freedom. Accordingly, the readiness to act violently indicates that the colonised people are human beings with agency who are able to break the chains imposed by the coloniser and transcend subalternity. Thus, this chapter sets the stage for the subsequent stages; the next stage to be analysed —in the trajectory of the development of the indigenous people— is agency.

Chapter Three

A Study in the Liberation of the Native Populations: Agency in *Ce Que le Jour Doit à la Nuit* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*

Speak, for your lips are free,
Speak, your tongue as yet is yours,
Your stalwart body is yours,
Speak, for your life as yet is yours.
. . . . . .
Speak, for truth is alive as yet,
Speak, say what needs to be said.[306]

From 'Bol,' by Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1943),

who spoke against imperialism and injustice

Translated from Urdu by Ambreen Hai[307]

In this chapter, I examine the omnipresence of the theme of agency in *Ce Que le Jour Doit à la Nuit*[308] and *Half of a Yellow Sun*[309] to see how the oppressed and speechless colonised peoples turned into agents, who are able to decide and act for themselves. These fictional tales show love, family and war in Algeria and Nigeria before and during the struggle for independence. Yasmina Khadra is the pen name of Mohamed Moulshoul, a

[306] From 'Bol,' by Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1943), who spoke against imperialism and injustice. Translated from Urdu by Ambreen Hai.
[307] Hai Ambreen. *Making Words Matter: The Agency of Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2009, p. xii.
[308] Yasmina Khadra. *Ce Que Le Jour Doit à la Nuit*. Paris: Julliard, 2008.
[309] Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi. *Half of a Yellow Sun*. London: Fourth Estate, 2014.

former officer in the Algerian army, and an Algerian author who writes in French. In his novels, he explores the reality of politics, radical Islamism, and the conflicts between east and west in Algeria and the Arab world. He was born on 10 January, 1955 in Kendsa —in the Algerian Sahara.[310] In *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit*, Khadra depicts Algeria from 1930s to 1960s —a period that covers colonial Algeria and the war of independence. This period has been marked by an important historical event; 'le juillet 1940 le pays fut ébranlé par l'opération catapulte qui vit l'escadre britannique 'force H' bombardé les vaisseaux de guerre français amarres en rade à la base de mers el-kèbir'.[311] Facing the large scope of economic, material and human losses, France was weakened.[312] This situation led to Algerians undertaking revolts for independence, which was gained in 1962.

Alongside Yasmina Khadra, Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* is chosen to analyse the agency of the Nigerian indigenous people and their wish to rid themselves of colonial aftereffects, which are represented in the accentuated ethnic conflicts. Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie is a Nigerian feminist writer, who was born on 15 September, 1977. Adichie grew up in Nsukka —a small university town in southeastern Nigeria. She abandoned her studies in medicine, in Nigeria, to start studying communication, and political sciences at Drexel University —Philadelphia, United States.[313] In her second novel —Half *of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie shows the ethnic divisions between the Nigerian tribes —Igbo, Fulani, Hausa and Yoruba; those tribes' divisions were accentuated by colonialism under the strategy of 'divide and rule', which prepared the stage for more conflicts and the civil war of 1967.[314] In the novel, colonisation is blamed for favouring northern Nigeria economically over

[310] Alexie Tcheuyap, and Hervé A. Tchumkam. *Avoir Peur. Insécurité et Roman En Afrique Francophone*. Quebec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2019.
[311] Khadra. *Ce Que Le Jour Doit à la Nuit*, p 166.
[312] Jan C Jansen. 'Fête et Ordre Colonial: Centenaires et Résistance Anticolonialiste En Algérie Pendant Les Années 1930.' *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'Histoire*, no. 121, 2014, pp. 61–76.
[313] Chimamanda Ngozi, Adichie. 'African "Authenticity" and the Biafran Experience.' *Transition*, no. 99, 2008, pp. 42–53.
[314] William F. S Miles. *Hausaland Divided: Colonialism and Independence in Nigeria and Niger*. 1st ed. New York: Cornell University Press, 1994.

southern Nigeria; this resulted in regional discrimination —a political and economic situation analysed in the book titled *Lugard and the Amalgamation of Nigeria*.[315] Arguably, this period illustrates the second stage —agency— in the time frame that represents the emancipation of the Algerian and Nigerian indigenous populations. It is analysed, in this chapter, through Khadra and Adichie's historical novels.

The poem —opening this chapter— is chosen on account of its unquestioning emphasis on the determination to speak; a determination which is underpinning the core aims of this chapter. To understand this poem is to understand the intellectual advance of Algerian and Nigerian indigenous populations, who regardless of oppression, manage to transcend unspeakability and move towards speakability and agency. We saw in the previous chapter that in colonial Algerian and Nigerian societies, the native populations were subjugated, marginalised and silenced. They were, principally, locked in a subaltern space and a position which was designed by the coloniser who meant to oppress them. However, instead of obedience, pressure can rather cause revolt and violence. The latter was the case of Algerians and Nigerians who resorted to revolt against colonial control over their territories —Algeria and Nigeria— and, more generally, their lives. Once the chains of subalternity were broken, the subaltern population shifted from a passive state of being into an active one. As a result, the downtrodden people emerged from the cocoon of subalternity in order to become individuals fully empowered with agency. According to Gayatri C. Spivak, 'subalterns cease to be subalterns when they speak'.[316] She further argues that 'the subalterns cannot be represented by privileged people; they are subjects who should speak for themselves'.[317] Essentially, agency is the capacity and freedom of living and acting in a defined world.[318]

[315] Kirk-Greene. *Lugard and the Amalgamation of Nigeria*, p. 28.
[316] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Ed.Cary N and Lawrence G. London: Macmillan, 1988, pp. 271 - 313.
[317] Ibid.
[318] Pranab Panday. *Women's Empowerment in South Asia*. London and New York: Routledge, 2016, p. 20.

When it comes to literature, agency is the ability of characters to make choices, to act freely and control their respective lives within the novel.

The first section explores to what extent native populations resisted colonialism and to what extent they have transcended the limits of subalternity. This section gives a critical account of the assumption and the definition of indigenous origins mainly according to Molefi Kete Asante's concept of Afrocentricity. The second section scrutinises Khadra and Adichie's representation of female characters. It assesses the circumstances that led to the emancipation of female characters from doubly colonised characters to independent women. Part three seeks to interpret loss and pain during resistance for independence as a means of gaining agency. Gaining agency and full independence is the key idea that will be explored in this chapter.

Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit and *Half of a Yellow Sun* have been discussed by different researchers, and the novels have received stylistic analyses and critical interpretations. There are limitations when examining the literary works selected for this chapter: the novels have never been juxtaposed in a comparative framework. Separately, they were tackled either from a postcolonial perspective —treating the issue of identity, or from a feminist perspective, or a stylistic one. I make a point of situating these cultural products according to the historical and political framework of resistance against the colonial presence. I acknowledge that the selected narratives for this chapter have been studied from different perspectives. For instance, Kherroubi Romaissa tackles the issue of intertextuality in *Ce Que Le Jour Doit à La Nuit* and *Les Amants de Padovani* by Youcef Dris.[319] She studies the extent to which Yasmina Khadra has been influenced by Youcef Dris in terms of narratological structure, and the resemblance between characters and their relations. Bendib Soraya gives

[319] Romaissa Kherroubi. 'L'intertextualité entre le Récit Biographique Réel et Fictionnel dans *Les Amants de Padovani* de Youcef Dris et *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit* de Yasmina Khadra.' Diss. Université Kasdi Merbah, 2016.

different philosophical interpretations of the terms ‘day’ and ‘night’; she contends that the term ‘night’ refers to problems of war and revolution that the narrator evokes in his novel.[320] Furthermore, Bendjehiche Sofia assesses the extent to which *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit* is a postcolonial novel. She finds that Khadra’s novel is a postcolonial narrative *par excellence* because it encompasses specific criteria and key concepts that pertain principally to postcolonial theory.[321] However, the limitation that is observed in these studies is that they overlook the theme of agency in the narrative of Yasmina Khadra.

The same can be said of the studies that have been interested in analysing some angles of Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*. For instance, Umelo Ojinmah studies the inhumanity and the atrocities of the war. She contends that Adichie’s evocative story of the Biafran War shows her refusal to forget the past. As a writer, Adichie demonstrates her commitment to the concerns of her people. Her literary attitude emphasises one of the most crucial functions of African writers such as René Wellek, Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe and Chukwudi Maduka who agree that ‘the writer in African society is the conscience of the society and functions either as its historian, rescuing its past; as a critic, analysing its present; or as a mentor, helping to guide it towards its future.’[322] Despite the fact that Adichie lives in the twenty-first century and this conflict emerged and stopped in the twentieth century, Adichie still evokes it as the bitter past of African nations because she believes that:

> It is only the story [that] can continue beyond the war and the warrior. It is the story that outlives the sound of war-drums and the exploits of brave fighters. It is the story, not the others, that saves our progeny from blundering like blind beggars into the spikes of the cactus fence. The story is our escort; without it, we are blind.[323]

[320] Soraya Bendib. ‘La Lutte du Jour et l'Ambiguïté d’un Destin dans *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit* de Yasmina Khadra.’ Diss. Université Ferhat Abbas, 2010.
[321] Sofia Bendjehiche. ‘Pour une Étude Postcoloniale dans *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit*.’ Diss. Université Mohamed khider, 2018.
[322] Ojinmah Umelo. ‘No Humanity in War: Chimamanda Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*.’*Journal of Nigeria Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, Fall 2012, pp. 1-11.
[323] Chinua Achebe. *Anthills of the Savannah*. New York: Anchor Press, 1988, p. 114.

Thus, it is through storytelling that Adichie perpetuates the history of her nation. Thahiya Afzal speaks of the identities altered by the war; she examines the way Adichie universalised the atrocities brought in by the wars in the world.[324] Besides that, Karen Hua tackles *Half of a Yellow Sun* from a feminist perspective, contending that Adichie is uneasy with the conditions of women. Therefore, she evokes crucial subjects related to women in her society such as their education, their marginalisation, the relationship with corruption and finally the place of women and children at war.[325] Whilst the interpretations of Adichie's novel are locked within the themes of war and feminism, I see the text as ripe for a new study, which focuses on the question of agency, from a comparative angle. With this in mind, I propose a fresh approach, which examines the extent to which the colonial circumstance contributed into the exteriorisation of the capacity to withstand the difficulties surrounding them. Therefore, I propose to analyse the agency of the characters in that narrative so as to examine the extent to which the colonial circumstances participated in setting the novels' characters free from oppression and how they could move from a position of subalternity to one of agency.

1. Breaking Unspeakability: The Construction of an Affirmed Indigenous Identity and Culture

Gayatri C. Spivak, in *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, establishes the realities of the subaltern populations. She explains that this category of people can never be heard if they do not speak for themselves and if they are represented by the elite, which in reality does not report the needs of the common people. She also contends that it is impossible for third world[326] countries to speak up because they are divided by gender, class, caste, region, religion and other problems. Those divisions do not allow them to rise up in unity. As a direct

[324] Afzal Thahiya. 'Warring Identities: Metaphor of War in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's: Half *of a Yellow Sun*.' *Man in India*, vol. 96, no. 11, 2016, pp. 4729-4736.
[325] Hua Karen. 'Beyond the Single Story: A Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.' Diss. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 2016.
[326] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. *The Spivak Reader*. Eds. Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean. London: Routledge, 1996, p 24.

consequence of the flaws that affect third world countries, Spivak notes the construction of truth, where the coloniser creates a truth that justifies the barbarism of the subalterns' acts in order to prove their logic. For instance, burning women alive in India or burying girls alive in ancient Arab cultures led to the famous statement coined by Spivak: '*white men are saving brown women from brown men*'.[327] This sentence constructs as a regime of truth the belief that Indians or Arabs are barbarians and the British —or any colonising power— are civilised and playing the role of a civilising force. Therefore, the construction of truth in this situation lies in the fact that the colonists justify their rules over the subaltern through depreciating their deeds. This means that the subalterns' conscience, personality and identity are presented to the world on the basis of wrong assumptions. Henceforth, the identity of the indigenous people is a colonial construct. Odenigbo affirms that:

> The only authentic identity for the African is the tribe…I am Nigerian because a white man created Nigeria and gave me that identity. I am black because the white man constructed black to be as different as possible from his white. But I was Igbo before the white man came.[328]

In this passage, Odenigbo, also known as Master in the novel, converses with his friends about the realities of their nation and identity. He is aware that the Nigerian identity has been attributed to him by the coloniser; he is also conscious that his country happens to be named Nigeria because the white man decided so.[329] He affirms that the colonisers' practices are meant to make Nigerians as different from the white man as possible. According to Odenigbo's declarations, the white man has imposed a dichotomy that always keeps the white man superior to his *other*, who is the colonised as was argued in *Orientalism*.[330] According to Said, the West —which represents the colonising powers such as Great Britain, France and

[327] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Ed.Cary N and Lawrence G. London: Macmillan, 1988, pp. 271 – 313 (p. 297).
[328] Adichie. *Half of a Yellow Sun*, p. 20.
[329] A. H. M. Kirk-Greene. *Lugard and the Amalgamation of Nigeria A Documentary Record*. London: Frank Cass & Co. LTD, 1968, p. 28.
[330] Edward W. Said. *Orientalism*. India: Penguin Books, 2001, p. 79.

the USA— created a distorted image of the *other* in order to justify its control and its imperialist expansion into the East; the Oriental was described as backward, emotional and weak, and 'the real tragedy of our postcolonial world is not that the majority of people had no say in whether or not they wanted this new world; rather, it is that the majority have not been given the tools to negotiate this new world'.[331] Obviously, the new world as identified by Odenigbo is the world introduced by the coloniser, it is the world that has been imposed on indigenous people without their permission and without them approving or disapproving of it. This world, that is life, culture and rules transplanted onto the lands of indigenous populations, has norms that are alien to the colonised people. Thus, they can never fit into it because they do not have the ability or power to contribute or participate in it. Hence, 'faced with the obvious decrepitude and political impotence of the modern Oriental, the European Orientalist found in his duty to rescue some portion of a lost, past classical Oriental grandeur in order to facilitate ameliorations in the present Orient'.[332]

What has been addressed in the previous paragraph implies that the arrival of the coloniser was intended to be the advent of the history of the colonised lands —Algerian and Nigerian histories in this context. This also means that '[t]he African has no character because he or she exists solely as a projection of European desire and [Africans] have no history before the coming of the Europeans'.[333] Frantz Fanon points out that many indigenous peoples adopt 'white masks'[334] in order to enter the culture of the coloniser. In so doing, the native peoples embrace the values and attitudes of the white men, but also they erase their own identity. Accordingly, in response to the colonisers' project which is depriving indigenous peoples from their identity, culture and history, Frantz Fanon sees that the first step for colonised

[331] Adichie. *Half of a Yellow Sun*, p. 101.
[332] Said. *Orientalism*, p. 79.
[333] Simon Gikandi. *Reading Chinua Achebe: Language & Ideology in Fiction*. London: James Currey Publishers, 1991, p. 27.
[334] Fanon Frantz. *Black Skins White Masks*. London: Pluto Press, 2008.

people in finding a voice and an identity is to reclaim their own past.[335] The past or the history of people is crucial in constructing identity because it helps finding one's bearings, and identifying one's personality. In *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit*, the protagonist Younes becomes Jonas after he moves to live with his uncle the pharmacist, who is perfectly integrated into the community of *pieds noirs*[336] and his French wife, Germaine. Younes has become part of that community too: his friends were French settled in Rio Salado —the part of Algeria that is occupied by French settlers, and so was his lover —Emilie. Jonas has never heard of a country called Algeria despite the fact that he lives in Algeria and his parents are indigenous Algerians. He says that:

> Parfois, mon oncle recevait des gens dont certains venaient de très loin; des Arabes et des Berbères, les uns vêtus à l'européenne, les autres arborant des costumes traditionnels. C'étaient des gens importants, très distingués. Ils parlaient tous d'un pays qui s'appelait l'Algérie; pas celui que l'on enseignait à l'école ni celui des quartiers huppés, mais d'un autre pays spolié, assujetti, muselé et qui ruminait ses colères comme un aliment avarié – l'Algérie des Jenane Jato, des fractures ouvertes et des terres brûlées, des souffre-douleur et des portefaix… un pays qu'il restait à redéfinir et où tous les paradoxes du monde semblaient avoir choisi de vivre en rentiers.[337]

Algeria seems to be a remote place in the thinking of Jonas: he affirms hearing of this country only when some men pay a visit to his uncle and start a conversation. He is not responsible for what he believes, but he rather is a victim of the colonial system which inculcates such beliefs in the fresh minds of youngsters. Jonas asserts that he was never taught about Algeria at school, nor does he hear about it in the rich agglomerations. A *sine qua non* step in the colonial system is to format and dominate the 'mental universe' of the indigenous populations through controlling their culture, the way they 'perceive themselves' and 'their relationship to the world'.[338] A full economic and political dominion can never be achieved unless there is a complete control over the mentalities of the native populations. Through controlling the

[335] Fanon Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 1961, p. 192.
[336] Pieds noirs is a term that signifies people of European descent living in North Africa until the independence.
[337] Khadra. *Ce Que Le Jour Doit à la Nuit*, p. 46.
[338] Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: Portsmouth, N.H.:J. Currey; Heinemann, 1986, p. 16.

indigenous culture, the imperialist can shape their perception of themselves and of their surroundings. This process can not be guaranteed unless the indigenous culture, religion, history, orature, literature and language are destroyed. Not solely this, but 'the domination of a people's language by the languages of the colonising nations [is] crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonised'.[339] So, the most propitious terrain for this strategy was the school where the children of the colonised were exposed to French literature that glorified the coloniser and demonised the colony and the native populations. 'The child was [thus] exposed to images of his world as mirrored in the written languages of his coloniser'.[340] Besides, the education of the colonial system made sure indigenous subjects detached from their traditions and endeavoured to incorporate in their subconscious that all the colonies were subordinate whereas Britain or France were the 'metropolitan —colonial axis'.[341]

While the purpose of the coloniser was to 'subalternise' the native populations, scholars such as Spivak, Fanon, Ngugi and Molefi Kete Asante endeavoured to raise peoples' consciousness and to help them move from a state of passivity to a state of agency by raising their consciousness over the fact that they are the ones who decide how to end their plight. Native populations should not follow what is prescribed for them by the coloniser. All these scholars agree over the fact that the colonised —African people in the case of this study, would do well to reassert a sense of agency so as to achieve rationality. In the late 1970s, Molefi Kete Asante started to speak about the need for creating an Afrocentric orientation to data[342] as opposed to Eurocentric perspective, and in 2009 he concretised the concept and the theory in an article entitled 'Afrocentricity'. According to Asante:

> The Afrocentric paradigm is a revolutionary shift in thinking proposed as a constructural adjustment to black disorientation, decenteredness, and lack of agency.

[339] Ibid.
[340] Ibid., 16-18.
[341] Bill Ashcroft et al. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, eds. London: Routledge, 1989, p. 18.
[342] Kete A. Molefi. *An Afrocentric Manifesto: Toward an African Renaissance*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007.

> The Afrocentrist asks the question, "What would African people do if there were no white people?" In other words, what natural responses would occur in the relationships, attitudes toward the environment, kinship patterns, preferences for colors, type of religion, and historical referent points for African people if there had not been any intervention of colonialism or enslavement? Afrocentricity answers this question by asserting the central role of the African subject within the context of African history, thereby removing Europe from the center of the African reality.[343]

In this passage, Asante aims at reconceptualising the perception of the world in the minds of African people; it is advised to rebuild the notion of African identity in a way that pertains to Africans and at the same time different from the definition that has been allocated by Europeans. Based on the same principle, 'hybrid affirmation' intends to reconstruct the image of the postcolonial individual to show his/her neglected qualities. In so doing, African people become the subject of studies and no longer the objects because Afrocentricity studies concepts, personalities, ideas and political and economic concerns from an African standpoint. This is in line with Dipesh Chakrabarty's slightly earlier call to 'provincialize Europe'[344]:

> Provincialising Europe is not a project of rejecting or discarding European thought... European thought is at once indispensable and inadequate in helping us to think through the experiences of political modernity in non-western nations, and provincialising Europe becomes the task of exploring how this thought - which is now everybody's heritage and which affects us all - may be renewed from and by the margins.[345]

Dipesh Chakrabarty stresses the fact that European thought is indispensable, but the issue is that it is inadequate to be applied uncritically in third world countries. As Europe is substantially different, geographically, economically and culturally from third world countries, it is unhelpful to attempt to apply European thoughts and paradigms when studying these nations. The same principle applies to the approach of 'hybrid affirmation' that seeks to revise the postcolonial criticism and adjust it according to the characteristics of postcolonial

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[343] Kete A. Molefi. *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change*. Chicago, IL: African American Images, 2003, p. 1.
[344] Chakrabarty Dipesh. *Provincialising Europe Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. United States: Princeton University Press, 2000, p. 3.
[345] Ibid., 16.

peoples. While it is true that European thought is part and parcel of the heritage of third world countries because of colonisation, this historical fact does not necessarily involve the adaptation and implementation of incommensurate thought in unfit locales. Therefore, there is a pressing need to develop theories that are adequate to third world societies. As a matter of fact, it would become possible to study sentences such as 'yes, sah'[346] instead of 'yes, sir!', that is, if 'yes, sah' was to be analysed from a Western standpoint, it might be interpreted as deficiency in the pronunciation of the English language because the proper pronunciation is /jɛssər/, but not /jɛssæh/. However, from an Afrocentric standpoint, it might be interpreted as a form that must be acknowledged amongst world Englishes in accordance with Braj Kachru's three circles of world Englishes.[347] Therefore, Afrocentricity enables researchers to operate and act out of Africans' collective interest. It has gained ground as an anti-Eurocentric theory which liberates Africans from the margins of Western dominion and colonisation. As it sets out, this theory promotes agency, which stands for:

> The ability to make purposeful choices. They consider agency to be strongly determined by people's individual assets (such as land, housing, livestock, savings) and capabilities of all types: human (such as good health and education), social (such as social belonging, a sense of identity, leadership relations) and psychological (self-esteem, self-confidence, the ability to imagine and aspire to a better future), and by people's collective assets and capabilities, such as voice, organization, representation and identity.[348]

Obviously, this passage shows the definition and the characteristics of agency according to Afrocentricity. It is argued that the traits that contribute to a person's agency are all the assets s/he possesses. The environment of the people is very important in determining their agency as well; agency would be completely achieved if the self is educated, is in good health, is self-confident and has a sense of leadership, and if its environment positively contributes to its

[346] Adichie. *Half of a Yellow Sun*, p. 4.
[347] Braj Kachru et al. *The Handbook of World Englishes*. London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.
[348] Ruth Alsop et al. *Empowerment in Practice: From Analysis to Implementation.* Washington DC: World Bank, 2006, p. 11.

flourishing. It is meant by the environment of the self: the human resources —such as people's collaboration, solidarity and encouragement— and financial resources —such as land, housing, livestock, savings. However, external factors—which are human and financial resources— should not be vital for the internal —which is the person/the self, that is, if the external factors are absent or play against the agent person, this does not mean that agency cannot be achieved. It can still be achieved, but achieving it may be harder because the person striving for agency would fight against the external factors that constitute an obstacle for his/her development.

If agency characteristics are to be applied to the selected texts, we find that a remarkable difference exists between the characters analysed under colonial conditions —in the previous chapter— and those studied in this chapter. Under colonial oppression, the colonised subjects were dispossessed of their properties —houses, lands and cattles. Besides this, they were dispossessed of speech. We have seen that characters such as Hamid Saraj[349] and Okonkwo[350] were silenced, tortured and jailed because they raised their voices to ban the injustice of imperialism. However, at this stage we can observe the reverse situation. The characters possess properties, they have jobs, and they can express their opinions. Odenigbo, for instance, is a professor at the university of Nsukka, he possesses a house, and a car. Not only this, he is a clever man who reflects upon history and the issues of his country. He expresses his thoughts loudly and proudly. Hence, in Alsop words Odenigbo is an empowered or an agent person.

According to Ruth Alsop, Mette Bertelsen and Jeremy Holland, agency or the capability of making choices can lead to empowerment if the person can achieve certain results. The

[349] Hamid Saraj is a character *in La Grande Maison*, who seems conscious and intelligent. He wants to raise the consciousness of his fellow Algerian subjects to revolt against the colonial oppressing system.
[350] Okonkwo is the protagonist of *Things Fall Apart*. He is a well-known and fearful wrestler in the nine villages of Umuofia.

agent person should not be governed by external factors and put the blame on them if s/he fails to achieve the fixed goals. Yasmina Khadra writes:

> Là où sévissent les hommes, le Seigneur est disqualifié. Ce n'est pas juste de l'accabler des méfaits que nous sommes les seuls à rendre possibles. Qui pouvait t'en vouloir au point de brûler tes récoltes, Issa, mon brave?
> — Dieu décide de ce qui nous frappe, dit mon père.
> Le marchand haussa les épaules :
> — Les hommes n'ont inventé Dieu que pour distraire leurs démons…ce qui est fait est fait, dit mon père à court d'arguments. Dieu en a décidé ainsi.
> — Ce n'est pas Lui qui a ordonné la dévastation de tes champs… Dieu n'a rien à voir avec la méchanceté des hommes. Et le diable non plus.
> Mon père leva la main pour mettre fin au débat.
> — Je suis venu m'installer en ville, dit-il. Ma femme et ma fille m'attendent au coin de la rue.
> — Allons d'abord chez moi. Reposez-vous à la maison quelques jours, le temps de voir ce que je peux faire…
> — Non, trancha mon père. Qui veut remonter la pente doit commencer tout de suite. Il me faut un toit à moi, et aujourd'hui.[351]

In this passage, the merchant refuses to blame God for the conflagration that occurred in the land of Yonas' father, Issa. The merchant makes it clear that the bad things that happen in life are due to men. The type of personality of the merchant may apply to the agent person who can achieve his goals successfully and become empowered because he does not allow outer circumstances to affect his choices. On the other hand, despite the fact that Issa is a poor peasant in colonial Algeria and even though he blames God for what happened to him, he is an agent in the sense that he does not accept defeat and that he is ready to take on the challenge of rebuilding his life immediately after the breakdown. A successful agent is the one who lives '…life; [not letting] life living him,' 'If the sun refuses to rise we will make it rise': this is what every person invested with agency believes in.[352] In postcolonial fiction, the crucial issue of agency has not only been the preoccupation of men, it has affected the situation of women to a greater extent. Therefore, there is a need to explore the drastic change that Algerian and Nigerian women have experienced from colonial moments to resistance.

[351] Khadra. *Ce Que Le Jour Doit à la Nuit*, pp. 10-14.
[352] Adichie. *Half of a Yellow Sun*, p. 219.

2. Female Affirmation: From Second-Class Citizens to Agent Citizens

In literature, women have long been presented from the perspective of men; this representation can be biased in the sense that a literary work and characters may be affected by gender and societal values.[353] For most of history, the literary arena has been dominated by the male sex be it author or characters. That said, in the past there were more male writers than female writers in different parts of the world.[354] Even when the literary texts are written by women, the texts disclose an environment —be it a society, a house, or a workplace— which is dominated by men. On the other hand, the portrayal of women had been restricted to selfless nurturers, dutiful homemakers and submissive wives; they were determined virtuous by right of beauty and dominated by emotions.[355] For thinkers, namely feminists, framing women into a restricted picture was suffocating. Therefore, they focused on opening a new horizon for analysing works written by women.[356]

With specific focus on the indigenous identity, the prior section —on breaking unspeakability— examined the extent to which the indigenous populations in Algeria and Nigeria could 'dismantle the hegemonic boundaries and determinants that create unequal relationsof power, based on binary oppositions such as *Us* and *Them*, *First World* and *Third World*, *White* and *Black*, *Coloniser* and *Colonised*, etc'.[357] This section scrutinises Khadra's and Adichie's representation of female characters. It evaluates the circumstances that led to the emancipation of female characters from doubly colonised characters to independent

[353] Claire Nally, and Angela Smith. *Twenty-first Century Feminism: Forming and Performing Femininity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, p. 2.
[354] Lillian Robinson. 'Treason Our Text: Feminist Challenges to the Literary Canon.' *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 2, no. 1. University of Tulsa, 1983, pp. 83-98.
[355] Sunhee Kim Gertz, and Paul S. Ropp. 'Literary Women, Fiction, and Marginalization: Nicolette and Shuangqing.' *Comparative Literature Studies*, vol. 35, no. 3, Penn State University Press, 1998, pp. 219-254.
[356] Kerstin Elert. 'Portraits of Women in Selected Novels by Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster.' Diss. Acta Universitatis Umensis, 1979, p. 12.
[357]Ayobami Kehinde. 'Post-Colonial African Literature as Counter-Discourse: J.M. Coetzee's Foe and the Reworking of the Canon.' *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, vol. 32, issue. 3, 2006, pp. 92-117.

women despite living within a patriarchal societycompounded by the experience of colonial oppression. Khadra's *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit* and Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* invite the world to share the Algerian and Nigerian history which may still be unknown to some parts of the world. In this section, the focal point is to a large degree far from proving or justifying whether female characters managed to obtain women's suffrage, the right to education, better working conditions, marriage and property laws, reproductive rights — which are the objectives of the first wave feminism.[358] Furthermore, it is far from raising consciousness about sexism and patriarchy, raising consciousness about gender-based violence, domestic abuse and marital rape, inequalities in the workplace, legalising abortion and birth control, sexual liberation of women —which are objectives of second wave feminism.[359] Also, it is far from trying to put women of colour on the same footing as white women during the episode of resistance for independence.[360] It is rather a study of a position shift of women: it is an analysis of the development of women from a status of oppressed or 'second-class'[361] citizens during the colonial moments to agents and independent-class citizens politically, and economically during post-independence. As opposed to most of the women seen in the trilogies of Dib and Achebe who were silenced, beaten, and starving, it can be assumed that agency is an acquired step for female characters during the struggle for independence and the independence periods as shown in Khadra's *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit* and Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Women who are evoked in both of these fictional works surpass male characters, they are strong and independent. Olanna, for instance, 'decided to go to Nsukka … in two weeks … [she] applied for a job as instructor in the

[358] Lisa Hill. 'The First Wave of Feminism: Were the Stoics Feminists?' *History of Political Thought*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2001, pp. 13-40.
[359] Linda Nicholson. *The Second Wave a Reader in Feminist Theory*. New York: Routledge, 1997.
[360] Leslie Heywood, and Jennifer Drake. *Third Wave Agenda: Being Feminist, Doing Feminism*. Minnesota: Minnesota Press, 1997, p. 8.
[361] Buchi Emecheta. *Second-Class Citizen*. Great Britain: Heinemann, 1974, p. 38.

Department of Sociology and [she] just got it'.[362] We remark that Olanna plans for her future on her own, she applies for the job that suits her, and she informs her parents only two weeks before. Thus, Olanna is a Nigerian woman with full agency. Also, her sister Kainene decides to move to 'Port Harcourt to manage her daddy's business'.[363] Besides, we see that it is men who need these women, not the reverse. For example, Richard, the English writer, is so attracted to Kainene that he decides to change the course of his life because of her: '"I've left Susan", he blurted out. "I'm staying at the Princewill Guesthouse in Ikeja. I'll pick up the rest of my things from her house before I leave for Nsukka". Kainene stared at him, and he saw surprise on her face and then something else he was not sure of. Was it puzzlement?'[364] we can contrast these characters with women under colonial conditions, when women's lives and fate were tied to men's will. For instance, Mama —Kara's wife in Dib's *Algérie*— always surrenders to Kara's domestic violence because she has nowhere to go and nobody to feed her. She cannot protect herself; neither can she report her husband's crime to the authorities because Algeria was occupied by the coloniser. However, during resistance women have become strong enough to assume responsibility for themselves within male-dominated societies; Olanna Ozobia and Kainene Ozobia embody the figures of socially imposing and independent women. Likewise, in Khadra's novel Lalla Fatma N'Soumer appears as an Algerian historical figure and a symbol of feminine strength. My comparison of Khadra's and Adichie's novels seeks to shed light on the resistance and strength of women who managed to move from double oppression —which are patriarchy and colonisation— to liberation and are able to define themselves and to choose their futures on their own. Although Lalla Fatma N'Soumer was born in 1830, I still selected her and chose to compare her with Olanna and Kainene, who were born between 1950s and 1960s —as deduced according to the settings of the novel— to demonstrate the resistance of women who free themselves from the constraints

[362] Adichie. *Half of a Yellow Sun*, p. 31.
[363] Ibid.
[364] Ibid., 69-70.

of male dominated societies. In comparison with Olanna and Kainene, one might argue that N'Soumer might be irrelevant to cite as a juxtaposing example of resistance since she was born in 1830.[365] I suggest that Yasmina Khadra, the author of *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit* has not evoked her as a mere historical figure to teach Jonas the history of his country, but I believe that Khadra purposefully memorialises her to incite women of the twentieth century to act as courageously as her.

Women have long been and still are the subject of a number of studies. Simone de Beauvoir —1908-1986— was a remarkable figure in feminism, who revolutionised the historical and the philosophical conceptions of inequality between men and women by writing *The Second Sex*.[366] What makes De Beauvoir interesting to explore in relation to the analysed texts is that '[she], en femme lucide et éprise de liberté, s'est engagée sans détour aux côtés du peuple algérien dans sa lutte pour l'indépendance. Elle a été notamment la présidente du Comité "Pour Djamila Boupacha"'.[367] Therefore, famous for the denunciation of women's oppression and in favour of Algerian independence, De Beauvoir demonstrates that the condition of women is not the result of their feminine biological features, but rather the result of cognitive constructions elaborated by the patriarchal society through education and established laws. In patriarchal societies, women stood as the *other*, they were good only for marriage and reproduction.[368] According to Simone De Beauvoir, the situation of women can be improved only when they refuse to surrender to men; and so as to achieve this situation, equality between men and women must be established, a woman 'must never behave as if

[365] Samia Touati. 'Lalla Fatma N'Soumer (1830–1863): Spirituality, Resistance and Womanly Leadership in Colonial Algeria.' *Societies*, vol. 8, no. 126, 2018, pp. 1-16.
[366] Ingrid Galster. *Le Deuxième Sexe de Simone de Beauvoir*. Paris: Presse de L'université Paris-Sorbonne, 2004.
[367] Djamila Boupacha was born on February 9, 1938 in Bouloughine (colonial Saint-Eugène). She was a militant in the Algerian front of National Liberation. She was arrested in 1960 for an attempted attack in Algiers. She was raped and tortured because of her avowals. However, Gisele Halimi and Simone De Beauvoir intervened to transform her case into a media trial to denounce the methods adopted by the French army in Algeria. She was sentenced to death on June 28, 1961. Yet, she was granted amnesty as part of the Evian agreements on April 21, 1962.
[368] Edmund Dahlström, and Rita Liljeström. 'The Patriarchal Heritage and the Working-Class Women.' *Acta Sociologica*, vol. 26, no. 1, Sage Publications, Ltd., 1983, pp. 3–20.

[her] life belongs to a man … Aunty Ifeka said. [A woman's] life belongs to [her] and [her] alone'.[369] De Beauvoir suggests that women can become better only when they stop giving themselves up to men, and Adichie's passage overtly corresponds to De Beauvoir's principle, that is, Adichie's passage demonstrates reciprocal signs of agency emanating from women; she insists on the fact that a woman must never give up her life for the sake of a man. That said, an agent woman is a woman who relies on herself.

Accordingly, in order to develop equality between men and women, the action must start from the source which is the education of the children: it is permitted for the little boy to proudly exhibit his manhood while parents inculcate in their little girls submissive values such as femininity, passivity, and dependence.[370] That is what De Beauvoir explains in her work: 'on ne naît pas femme: on le devient. Aucun destin biologique, psychique, économique ne définit la figure que revêt au sein de la société la femelle humaine; c'est l'ensemble de la civilisation qui élabore ce produit intermédiaire entre le mâle et le castrat qu'on qualifie de féminin'.[371] De Beauvoir aims at deconstructing the social indoctrination which claims that women are *de facto* females. In so doing, women must no longer be 'women' per se, that is, the inferior sex, the *other*, they should rather act as freely and independently as they can. They must assume themselves and take in hand their plights.

In line with De Beauvoir's designation of the oppressed women as 'the Second Sex', Assia Djebar pays a closer attention to the condition of women in patriarchal societies. She penetrates within the apartments of Algiers to see women's lives. The title *Femmes d'Alger dans leur Appartement* in itself is intended to reflect the social reality. That said, the targeted category of people is *les femmes d'Alger* as opposed to western women. In addition, their

[369] Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi. *Half of a Yellow Sun*. London: Fourth Estate, 2014, p. 226.
[370] Delphine Fongang. 'Narrating Fatherhood and Masculinities in Senegal: The Case of Naffissatou Diallo in *a Dakar Childhood*.' *Spectrum: A Journal on Black Men*, vol. 3, no. 1, Indiana University Press, 2014, pp. 25–48.
[371] Simone De Beauvoir. *Le Deuxième Sexe*. Paris: Gallimard, 1986, p. 285.

location is in *leurs appartements* but not the garden or the workplace; they are locked in their apartments which Assia Djebar calls prison or birds' cages.[372] Throughout the text, Djebar struggles to give voice to women because women do not speak when men are present. The communication between them was limited to whispers. It is only during resistance that women saw the light of the day:

> Des femmes qui n'étaient pas militantes structurées, ont contribué elles aussi, mais de manière plus diffuse et donc plus difficile à appréhender, à la guerre de libération nationale. Leur rôle a été décisif au cours des manifestations populaires de décembre 1960 qui ont marqué un tournant dans l'évolution de la guerre. Impossible à quantifier, le soutien des mères et des épouses fut déterminant. Il peut aller du geste le plus anodin, mais plein de tendresse.[373]

Thus, even if colonisation has been devastating, to some extent it liberated women because their participation in the liberation of the country was indispensable especially when huge numbers of men died in each confrontation with colonial soldiers. Some archives such as 'Les Combattantes de la Guerre d'Algérie' prove that women played a significant role in the Algerian war. The same applies in *Our Fighting Sisters: Nation, Memory and Gender in Algeria, 1954-2012*, where Natalia Vince unveils the prominent role assumed by Algerian women in one of the most violent wars of the twentieth century:

> The importance of the role of rural women in the nationalist struggle was emphasised at a conference held on 20 August 1956 in the valley of the Soummam in Kabylia […] a tract seized by the French army on 7 August 1961 addressed to 'patriot sisters' paid homage to the Algerian peasant woman, described as sublime in her resolve: A poignant spectacle is offered by the Algerian peasant women who have remained alone in entire douars [villages]because all the men have been taken to prisons from where they never return, or killed in cold blood before their eyes by the criminal occupier.[374]

[372]Assia Djebar. *Femmes d'Alger dans leur Appartement*. Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2004.
[373] Djamila Amrane. 'Les Combattantes de la Guerre d'Algérie.' *Matériaux pour l'Histoire de notre Temps*, n° 26. Paris: Matériaux, 1992, pp. 58-62.
[374] Natalya Vince. *Our Fighting Sisters: Nation, Memory and Gender in Algeria, 1954-2012*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015, p. 76.

In line with Vince and Amrane's glorifying depiction of Algerian women at war, Yasmina Khadra strives to put the emancipation of the native woman at the heart of his work when he evokes Lalla Fatma N'Soumer:

> — Il faut que tu saches une chose, mon garçon. Tu n'es pas tombé d'un arbre droit dans le fossé… Tu vois cette dame, sur la photo ?… Un général l'avait surnommée Jeanne d'Arc. C'était une sorte de douairière, aussi autoritaire que fortunée. Elle s'appelait Lalla Fatma, et avait des terres aussi vastes qu'un pays. Son bétail peuplait les plaines, et les notables de la région venaient laper dans le creux de sa main. Même les officiers français la courtisaient. On raconte que si l'émir Abd el-Kader l'avait connue, il aurait changé le cours de l'histoire… Regarde-la bien, mon garçon. Cette dame, cette figure de légende, eh bien, c'est ton arrière-grand-mère.[375]

This passage shows a dialogue that involves Jonas and his uncle —Mahi the pharmacist— who is teaching Jonas the history of his country. The uncle evokes the strongest and the most famous feminine figure in the Algerian history, Lalla Fatma N'Soumer. Lalla is the title given to a woman who is considered a saint, or one who occupies a high ranking, like the title Sidi for men. From the start Lalla Fatma N'Soumer happened to be as strong as one could hear of the strongest conquerors in the history of the world. She was a girl who had her own way of thinking and when she became a woman, she was revered by others and became a legendary figure. Lalla Fatma N'Soumer became synonymous with the Resistance Movement and was a key figure in the fight against the French invasion of Algiers.[376] It is mentioned in the above passage that 'un général l'avait surnommée Jeanne d'Arc', who was a French female figure that embodies resistance and strength in the French history, as she participated in many battles and died in 1431. Jeanne's 'cœur [était] plus chaud que les flammes … [elle était un] petit être de bon sens et de chair fraîche, petite fille […] petite créature en flammes, mieux que la sensualité du vaste monde. Oui, tu règnes sur cette populace anglaise'.[377]

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[375] Khadra. *Ce Que Le Jour Doit à la Nuit*, p. 40.
[376] Samia Touati. 'Lalla Fatma N'Soumer (1830–1863): Spirituality, Resistance and Womanly Leadership in Colonial Algeria.' *Societies*, vol. 8, no. 126, 2018, pp. 1-16.
[377] Joseph Delteil. *Jeanne d'Arc*. Paris: Grasset, 1925, p. 24.

In the above cited passages, it appears that both Jeanne d'Arc and Lalla Fatma N' Soumer share similarities: both of the female figures are young, strong, and independent, they are able to make decisions on their own and they are able to lead troops of soldiers despite the fact that they are women and young. The French General referred to Lalla Fatma N'Soumer as Jeanne d'Arc, N'Soumer may symbolise Jeanne d'Arc for the French General. However, in the context of colonisation and resistance the most probable assumption in nicknaming N'Soumer as Jeanne d'Arc is to consider that there is no other reference or identity for Algerians and Algeria but France and French personalities. Therefore, what is of interest to us, is the inspirational characteristics of the agency these historical figures release. A woman such as Lalla Fatma N'Soumer never left the minds of Algerians; she is still alive in the songs and the depictions of the country. In 1995, her remains were moved and reburied in El Alia, a cemetery reserved for heroes in Algiers. In *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit*, Khadra glorifies the woman; he writes that women are crucial in men's life because:

> L'homme n'est que maladresse et méprise, erreur de calcul et fausse manœuvre, témérité inconsidérée et objet d'échec quand il croit avancer vers son destin en disqualifiant la femme… Certes, la femme n'est pas *tout,* mais *tout* repose sur elle… Regarde autour de toi, consulte l'Histoire, attarde-toi sur la terre entière et dis-moi ce que sont les hommes sans les femmes, ce que sont leurs vœux et leurs prières quand ce ne sont pas elles qu'ils louent… Que l'on soit riche comme Crésus ou aussi pauvre que Job, opprimé ou tyran, aucun horizon ne suffirait à notre visibilité si la femme nous tournait le dos.[378]

This passage clearly elaborates the importance of women. Khadra redefines gender roles which is a highly important end in itself. It is shown here that women are indispensable for the life of men, and thanks to the rise in awareness about the importance of women, the latter come from a position of subordination —during colonial moments— to one of empowerment during the war for independence. Certainly, women were doubly colonised during the period of colonialism. On the one hand, they were under the control of their brothers and fathers. On the other hand, they were colonised. Some of the findings claim that colonialism 'had very

[378] Khadra. *Ce Que Le Jour Doit à la Nuit*, p. 137.

little effect on improving women's actual life',[379] it rather worsened the position of women because it introduced third world feminism which was supposed to free women, but it only aggravated 'the oppression of [these] women by overlooking questions of race, sex, class, and ignoring the social, historical and cultural contexts while voicing their concerns'.[380] However, what is perhaps distinctive about colonisation is creating an escape from cultural and moral constraints for women through changing their way of life, that is, as a strategy of the colonial rule, women resident in the centres *extra-coutumiers*[381] were the target of the emancipation process because '[w]hile in the traditional villages, women suffer as a beast of burden and men are usually quite idle, in the centres *extra-coutumiers* men work and their wives become aware of their freedom and often they use it improperly'.[382] This passage shows that urban migration would reverse gender power relations in the sense that men would be busy working the whole day in colonial administrations while women stay home without the control of their husbands and become aware of their freedom and the absence of men's authority. Hence, it can be considered that women may be tempted by social evils such as prostitution, adultery and alcoholism. As a result, there would be a consequent increase in divorce, and a considerable augmentation in the number of liberated women.[383] These assertions can be seen in the behaviour of Olanna and Kainene: they are free from patriarchal control, so they can do acts that may be unacceptable from the standpoint of patriarchal societies. For example, Olanna has got her own flat in Nsukka, yet she lives with her lover. Besides, she makes love with Richard —her sister's boyfriend— while being engaged to Odenigbo. It has to be pointed out that our interest is not direct towards the libertinism exhibited by female

[379] Varsha Chitnis, and Danaya Wright. 'The Legacy of Colonialism: Law and Women's Rights in India.' Diss. University of Florida Lenin College of Law, 2007.
[380] Ritu Tyagi. 'Understanding Postcolonial Feminism in Relation with Postcolonial and Feminist Theories.' *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2014, pp. 45-50 (p. 49).
[381] *extra-coutumiers* colonial towns, under the rule of colonial law.
[382] Congrès Colonial National. *XII Session: La Promotion de la Femme au Congo et au Ruanda Urundi. Rapports et compte rendu.* Bruxelles: 1956, p. 36.
[383] Ilaria Buscaglia, and Shirley Randell. 'Legacy of Colonialism in the Empowerment of Women in Rwanda.' Diss. University of Siena, vol. 4, no. 1, 2012, p. 73.

characters of the novels, nor must agency be confused with the lack of restraint and the immoderate indulgence of these women's personal desires. However, our aim is to note that women during resistance for independence are endowed with freedom and power to decide what they want and what they need to do in their lives. In other words, they are endowed with agency which is key to reaching 'hybrid affirmation' during post-independence.

The selected postcolonial fiction certainly acts to empower women and even participates in establishing mechanisms for women's equal and equitable representation at all levels of the political process and public life in each community and society and enabling women to articulate their concerns and needs. Not long ago —during the colonial moments, the main activities that were allocated to a woman's life were taking care of the children and the household, being an obedient wife and a good cook. In fact, the role of women in society has significantly changed during recent decades. The first positive changes connected with the role of the women became especially obvious in the West after the Great War.[384] In today's world, strong, intelligent and ambitious women proved that the term 'inferior' has nothing in common with their gender. Women have surpassed the social mould that restricted them to being only a tool for bringing up children. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the female characters are very influential members in society. For instance, Olanna firmly speaks of her future intentions; 'yes, I applied for a job as an instructor in the department of sociology and I just got it'. Besides, Kainene looked Chief Okonji right in the eyes, with that stare that was so expressionless, so blank, that it was almost hostile. […] She raised her eyebrows. 'I, too, will be putting my newly acquired degree to good use. I'm moving to Port Harcourt to manage Daddy's businesses there'.[385] Accordingly, these young ladies are powerful and determined, they look men straight in the eyes —an attitude which is unacceptable in patriarchal societies.

[384] Tippabhotla Vyomakesisri. 'Presentation of Women in Literature from Past to Present.' *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, vol. 22, n. 11, 2017, pp. 18-20.
[385] Adichie. *Half of a Yellow Sun*, p. 31.

During colonial moments, self-affirmation by women was a far-fetched dream because patriarchy was deeply rooted in manly societies. For example, in Dib's trilogy *Algérie,* Aini —the protagonist's mother— could never look straight in the eyes of a man; she relied all the time on Omar, her son, to speak on her behalf. However, during resistance and the preparation for independence, women came out of the cocoon of patriarchy; they deployed their own resources in order to decide their destiny. In the colonial era, a woman never dared to raise her voice over a man's, whereas now Miss Adebayo, Odenigbo's friend, raised 'her voice […] above Master's in the living room, challenging and arguing. He [Ugwu, the houseboy] often fought the urge to raise his own voice from behind the kitchen door and tell her to shut up, especially when she called Master a sophist. […] Nor did he like the way she looked at Master'.[386]Above all, 'Miss Adebayo, who drank brandy like Master … was nothing like Ugwu had expected a university woman to be'.[387] The image portrayed by Adichie of these women is denounced by patriarchal norms.[388] However, because of political circumstances such as the war, women who endured double colonisation managed to cause radical transformation of social and economic orders.

3. Turning Pain and Loss into Strength

In this section, I examine how Yasmina Khadra and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's characters use their pain and hurtful conditions to transgress fragility and subvert moral and material loss —engendered by the practices of the hegemon occupier— into fortitude. Since Khadra and Adichie manage to accurately depict the atrocities of the Algerian and Nigerian national struggles, I focus on their depiction to scrutinise the role of pain and loss in turning fragility into fortitude. Adichie discloses the tragedy of the Nigerian civil war in her novel, revealing the personal and emotional experiences of the Biafran people. The author captures

[386] Ibid., 20.
[387] Ibid., 19.
[388] Uthara Soman. 'Patriarchy: Theoretical Postulates and Empirical Findings.' *Sociological Bulletin*, vol. 58, no. 2, Indian Sociological Society, 2009, pp. 253–72.

terrifying scenes that create war imagery in the mind of the reader.[389] Because of the civil war, it was impossible for people to farm and go about their usual business: 'of the 1 to 3 million Igbos that are estimated to have lost their lives, only a small fraction (10%) died of military violence. The majority succumbed to starvation. In August 1968, the first international relief operations were launched, but the amount of food provided was clearly not sufficient and the great majority of the Igbos did not get access to this relief food'.[390] On the other hand, Algerian Native people were dying in the miserable Jenane Jato, the opposite side of the well-off Rio Salado:

> Jenane Jato: un foutoir de broussailles et de taudis grouillant de charrettes geignardes, de mendiants, de crieurs, d'âniers aux prises avec leurs bêtes, de porteurs d'eau, de charlatans et de mioches déguenillés; un maquis ocre et torride, saturé de poussière et d'empuantissement, greffé aux remparts de la ville telle une tumeur maligne. La mouise, en ces lieux indéfinissables, dépassait les bornes. Quant aux hommes – ces drames itinérants –, ils se diluaient carrément dans leurs ombres. On aurait dit des damnés évincés de l'enfer, sans jugement et sans préavis, et largués dans cette galère par défaut; ils incarnation, à eux seuls, les peines perdues de la terre entière.[391]

The colonised people were suffering the most horrific consequences of war, they lived in a corner of the city called Jenane Jato, where no essential amenities could reach them. They did not only lack material comfort, but they were also deprived of the liberty of acting freely:

> Mais on nous a forcés à tout abandonner et à partir en catastrophe, nos valises chargées de fantômes et de peines. On nous a dépossédés de tout, y compris de notre âme. On ne nous a rien laissé, rien de rien, pas même les yeux pour pleurer. C'était pas juste, Jonas.[392]

These passages portray the suffering of Algerian native people. Jonas, the protagonist, describes the disastrous living conditions in Jenane Jato, and he compares the *gourbis*[393] to hovels where life is unbearable and nearly impossible. Then, in the following passage Mahi, Jonas' uncle, explains the way the coloniser dispossesses people from moral or material tools

[389] Adichie. *Half of a Yellow Sun*, p. 317.
[390] Martin Hult et al 'Hypertension, Diabetes and Overweight: Looming Legacies of the Biafran Famine'. *PLOS ONE*, 2010.
[391] Khadra. *Ce Que Le Jour Doit à la Nuit*, p. 14.
[392] Ibid., 203.
[393] *Gourbi* is a tiny house designed for the poor to live in.

that may contribute to the empowerment of the people. Actually, the description of Jonas corresponds to Fanon's study of colonialism:

> Fanon asserts that the colonized world is divided into two compartments wherein the colonized is positioned, and principally made to perform the role of a foreigner in his or her own land. Colonialism is not merely a political domination and economic manipulation, it is also the separation of the colonized from their values and because it forces to question their identity: 'in reality, who am I?[394]

In this sense, the colonised becomes the *other*, who by definition lacks identity, propriety, purity, literality and is made a binary opposition to the 'Self'.[395] Besides, colonial forces were furious with the native populations, many civilians were deliberately killed in individual murders and executions: ' La station arabe de sa TSF racontait la répression sanglante qui frappait les musulmans de Guelma, Kherrata et Sétif, les charniers où pourrissaient les dépouilles par milliers, la chasse à l'Arabe à travers les champs et les vergers, le lâcher des molosses et le lynchage sur les places publiques'.[396]

Logically, the chaotic life that characters live in both *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* bring them [characters] further to their knees. However, 'the more civilians [the enemy] bomb [ed], the more resistance [he] gr[e]w'.[397] What is striking about the native populations is that they neither surrender to the hegemony of the enemy, nor to misery. They rather challenged the hardship of colonialism in order to transform their misfortune into strength. Arguably, pain and loss caused by colonisation serve as an empowering force: they help native people to gain empowerment, that is, people are not passive waiting for external directives to control them such as letting the coloniser control their lives, or giving themselves up to death. Rather, they are agent individuals endowed with full power to decide what suits them, they are the ones who make the sun rise when it refuses

[394] Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 250.
[395] Joy Osedebamen. 'An Investigation of the Stability of Gender Roles and Expectations before and during the Nigerian Civil War in Chimamanda Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun.'*All Institutions.* CICERO Center for International Climate and Environmental Research – Oslo, 2017.
[396] Khadra. *Ce Que Le Jour Doit à la Nuit*, p. 93.
[397] Adichie. *Half of a Yellow Sun*, p. 371.

to do so.[398] On the other hand, Jonas confesses that he never thought his father capable of surmounting the loss of many acres of his agricultural lands, which are the source of livelihood of Jonas' family:

> Mon père était heureux.
> Je ne l'en croyais pas capable.
> Par moments, sa mine délivrée de ses angoisses me troublait.
> Accroupi sur un amas de pierraille, les bras autour des genoux, il regardait la brise enlacer la sveltesse des chaumes, se coucher dessus, y fourrager avec fébrilité. Les champs de blé ondoyaient comme la crinière de milliers de chevaux galopant à travers la plaine. C'était une vision identique à celle qu'offre la mer quand la houle l'engrosse. Et mon père souriait. Je ne me souviens pas de l'avoir vu sourire ; il n'était pas dans ses habitudes de laisser transparaître sa satisfaction - en avait-il eu vraiment?… Forgé par les épreuves, le regard sans cesse aux abois, sa vie n'était qu'une interminable enfilade de déconvenues…[399]

In this passage, Jonas describes the positive attitude of his father: for Jonas it is astonishing to see his father smiling instead of lamenting his burnt agricultural lands. As readers, we learn that Issa, Jonas' father, is a tough man who never expresses positive feelings, he is often angry and shouting at people. However, what is vehemently striking is that after the incident that Issa experienced, quietness and satisfaction appear on his face. So, as a resulting effect of the loss, Issa is neither desperate nor rancorous; the incident has truly forged him. He decides to 'remonter la pente […] tout de suite. […] et aujourd'hui'.[400]

In this way, it becomes apparent how pain and loss which are supposed to make the mind fragile fortify it instead. It can also be explained that what man judges to be negative and devastating experiences in life contribute to forging and strengthening the person. Evidently, agents act out of motivation and out of the desire to achieve objectives.[401] However, in a hostile environment such as colonial Algeria and Nigeria, there was no motivations to stimulate the colonised. The Algerian as well as Nigerian native populations were surrounded by chaotic elements such as poverty, diseases and homicides which are thought to destroy the

[398] Ibid., 411.
[399] Khadra. *Ce Que Le Jour Doit à la Nuit*, p. 6.
[400] Ibid., 14.
[401] Mayr Erasmus. *Understanding Human Agency*. Oxford: Oxford scholarship online, 2011, p. 8.

people mentally and physically. Nonetheless, complete chaos —the annihilation of the population at all levels— was missed:

> What struck me upon my arrival in the *maquis* was the order and discipline which reigned. The extraordinary morale of our populations. The women are particularly admirable. They are the ones who stay in the *douars*, alone with the children and old people, as the men come and serve in our troops … After battles, when the enemy has gone, these women are the ones who welcome us with smiles, despite us knowing that they have just suffered the worst cruelty: torture and rape. I never heard them complain. On the contrary, although they had to put up with much more than us, it was they who encouraged us, who blessed us. I often see them bury their dead - husbands, sons – and each time they repeated these words: 'we do not mourn them. Why cry, since they died for the motherland, they died the most beautiful and glorious of deaths.[402]

The above words reveal astounding mental force, and demonstrate that despite pain, the native people remained optimistic, that is, neither the war nor homicides destabilised them. In this case, the basic assumption underlying my argument is that agency can be achieved following despair, oppression, or subjugation. In *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit*, the striking entrance to the narration takes the reader into the misery of Jenane Jato, a misery caused by colonisation. Khadra intentionally assaults the reader with realistic images right from the beginning in order to show that in spite of hardship, the 'wretched'[403] native people can still make their way out of the gloomy life path. Khadra sees that the straightforward way to agency is that the person shapes his/her destiny the way it is suitable for him/her; it is clearly mentioned in the novel that 'si le monde ne te convient pas, réinventes-en un autre, et ne laisse aucun chagrin te faire descendre de ton nuage. La vie sourit toujours à celui qui sait lui rendre la monnaie de sa pièce'.[404]

Just as agency, an alternative concept is *swaraj* —self-government— coined by Mohandas Gandhi who contends that it:

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[402] Natalya Vince. *Our Fighting Sisters: Nation, Memory and Gender in Algeria, 1954-2012*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015, p. 77.
[403] Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*, p 19.
[404] Yasmina Khadra. *Ce Que Le Jour Doit à la Nuit*. Paris: Julliard, 2008, p. 147.

> Can mean generally self-governance or home-rule (swa- self', raj- rule) but the word usually refers to Mohandas Gandhi's concept for Indian independence from foreign domination. Swaraj lays stress on governance not by a hierarchical government, but self-governance through individuals and community building. The focus is on political decentralization. Since this is against the political and social systems followed by Britain. Gandhi's concept of Swaraj laid stress on India discarding British political, economic, bureaucratic, legal, military, and educational institutions.[405]

Here, we learn that *Swaraj* may be used as an alternative to agency. The concept of *swaraj* — self-government— developed by Gandhi in the early twentieth century was meant to illustrate an alternative way of understanding resistance and liberation: not as overthrowing the colonisers, but as 'cultural or material transformation' of the discursive structures developed by the colonisers that 'shape social relationships'. This form of resistance advocates for a 'way of living' or a 'practice of consciousness' that people in a postcolonial society should perform.[406] In line with this, Adichie stresses the fact that 'this is our world, although the people [from metropolises] who drew this map decided to put their own land on top of ours. There is no top or bottom, you see'.[407] This quotation demonstrates how imperialists decide on the place of the rest of the world. They mapped the globe, and on the map they occupy the dominant position while they reserve the underdog one for the others. Adichie is very critical of the situation imposed by imperialist on the rest, the latter must stick to their beliefs and never accept what is chosen or decided for them.

Furthermore, death, injuries and subjugation are not the only hurtful aspects of colonisation; ignorance is the most painful one because it is the source of being colonised, killed, raped and subjugated. Adichie draws attention to the importance of education because people who are educated can never be used for the own advantage of imperialists;[408] educated people constitute the category of people that can make change in the society because they

[405] Nazmul S. Sultan. 'Self-Rule and the Problem of Peoplehood in Colonial India'. *American Political ScienceReview*, vol. 114, issue. 1, 2020, pp. 81-94.
[406] Yao Huijun. 'Chapter 2: Redefining Postcolonial Resistance and Agency – The Ainu People of Japan.' Diss. National University of Singapore, 2014, pp. 8-38 (p. 13).
[407] Adichie. *Half of a Yellow Sun*, p. 10.
[408] Kathleen Lynch, and Cathleen O'Neil. 'The Colonisation of Social Class in Education.' *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, vol. 15, no. 3, 1994, p. 309.

have the ability to analyse the situation of their country. Besides, they are able to awake the consciousness of the rest of the population.[409] 'Education is a priority! How can we resist exploitation if we don't have the tools to understand exploitation?'[410] So, how can someone understand exploitation and what are the tools for understanding it? Certainly, education is the only means for understanding exploitation and protecting one's self from it. Education is key to agency and empowerment. Therefore, despite writing most of the characters are educated, Adichie still selects a young Nigerian boy coming from the suburbs to work as a house boy in the city. She makes him learn and grow as educated as the other important characters in the novel. Ugwu is a symbol for the innocent human being who is born in an illiterate environment, yet he does not surrender to the situation of inferiority —working as a house boy— and ignorance. On the contrary, he is eager to learn:

> Ugwu did not understand most of the sentences in the books, but he made a show of reading them. Nor did he entirely understand the conversations of Master and his friends but listened anyway and heard that the world had to do more about the black people killed in Sharpeville ...[Ugwu] struggle[s] through difficult sentences in one of Master's books … .[411]

This passage shows the extent to which Ugwu is impressed by Master, Odenigbo. Ugwu did not understand English, but he spent his time listening to the conversations of master and his friends. He made huge efforts to learn how to write and read although he did not understand everything. Also, 'He always responded in English to [Olanna's] Igbo [questions], as if he saw her speaking Igbo to him as an insult that he had to defend himself against by insistently speaking English'.[412] Ugwu spent most of his days exploring the books of Master despite not knowing reading and writing. A few years later, Master decided to enrol him at school because he believed in his capacities. Sometimes, when Ugwu addresses himself to 'Sir', the

[409] Jere R. Behrman, and Nevzer Stacey, editors. *The Social Benefits of Education.* University of Michigan Press, 1997.
[410] Adichie. *Half of a Yellow Sun*, p. 11.
[411] Ibid., 18-83.
[412] Ibid., 47.

latter replies that 'Odenigbo will always be [his] name. Sir is arbitrary. You [Ugwu] could be the sir tomorrow'.[413] Odenigbo thinks that Ugwu is 'very clever', and that he was likely to become a great man in the future.[414] Through this conversation, Adichie implies that one is not born poor or illiterate and remains as such forever; she implies that humans are prone to change and develop. Her implications are made clear in the achievements of Ugwu:

> The pictures in the book Mrs Oguike [the teacher] gave out, of a long-haired man with happy rats following him, were incomprehensible, and the more Ugwu looked at them, the more certain he became that it was all some sort of senseless joke … [Mrs Oguike] noticed how fast … he has such an innate intelligence [Oguike said] … *innate intelligence* instantly became Ugwu's favourite expression.[415]

Ugwu has clearly evolved in this passage. The pictures presented in the book are meant to denigrate the *other*, and to inculcate in him/her an inferior picture of him/herself. Ugwu's reaction to these pictures is unexpected: the more he looked at them, the more he understood that these pictures were nonsense. This situation illustrates the way strength can be built out of pain: the school book is designed by the colonial system; the pictures are intended to cause pain because the reader will identify himself/herself with the long-haired man followed by rats. However, after long reflection Ugwu could distinguish the pictures from reality, and he believes that they are senseless. Arguably, the target of the pictures is to diminish the value of the *other* and create an inferiority complex for him/her. However, the result aborted because Ugwu is as intelligent as any other human being, so he just needed to reflect upon the pictures to realise that they do not correspond to reality. Therefore, instead of hurting the feelings of Ugwu and destroying his self-esteem, the pictures just made him realise how intelligent he was. Moreover, besides the determination Ugwu had to make a better version of himself, Odenigbo —Ugwu's educated Master— has been a source of inspiration to him. Extremely impressed by the education and wealth of Master, Ugwu goes to his office:

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[413] Ibid., 13.
[414] Ibid., 18 .
[415] Ibid., 84.

> Late at night, after Master was in bed, Ugwu would sit on the same chair and imagine himself speaking swift English, talking to rapt imaginary guests, using words like *decolonize* and *pan-African*, moulding his voice after Master's, and he would shift until he too was on the edge of the chair.[416]

Here are Ugwu's steps towards agency. In spite of the fact that he does not master the English language, he learns very important words such as 'decolonize' and 'pan-African'. It is not a mere coincidence that he learns these words: Adichie alludes to the need to make the young, illiterate and naïve persons aware of the constraints caused by colonisation. *Decolonise* and *pan-African* are terms that involve agency; to set a decolonising process or a pan-African movement there needs to be people who are able to think freely, make choices that suit them, and take decisions that correspond to their needs. Ugwu embodies all these characteristics, he is eager to learn, he is intelligent, and master helped him evolve in this way, he encouraged him to become excellent at school and a distinguished cook. When Ugwu started school, Master inculcated in him a very important notion:

> There are two answers to the things they will teach you about our land: the real answer and the answer you give in school to pass. You must read books and learn both answers. I will give you books, excellent books."… "They will teach you that a white man called Mungo Park discovered River Niger. That is rubbish. Our people fished in the Niger long before Mungo Park's grandfather was born. But in your exam, write that it was Mungo Park.[417]

The instructions of Odenigbo raise the consciousness of Ugwu and by extension the reader about the fact that the information that was given at colonial school is biased; it served the purpose of the colonisation process while truth is other. The one who knows the truth is Odenigbo, he knows the truth because he reads a lot of books. He came to know that Mungo Park was not the one who discovered the River Niger thanks to reading. Throughout the novel, Odenigbo is a character who is always reflecting upon and criticising the issues of his country. People who 'read and write enhance their self-confidence, and [...]; as a result, they

[416] Ibid., 20.
[417] Ibid., 11.

are less hesitant to voice their opinions'.[418] In the centre of this assumption, we understand that intellectuals can never be deceived, and that naïve people can easily be misled unless their consciousness is awakened. The straight forward path to raising awareness is reading literature. Hence, Adichie and Khadra tackle the importance of education as a way to agency. Ugwu is a keen observer of his environment and the interactions of people. As he listened to the conversations of Master and his friends, Ugwu started to mimic them and could form an opinion about politics. For a house boy, the life of Ugwu goes far beyond expectations; he realises incredible successes in professional life. He became a teacher, then was forcibly conscripted into the Biafran army where he was almost killed. Finally, inspired by Frederick Douglass, he began to write a book on Biafra. At the start of the story, it is hard to guess that Ugwu would grow so importantly throughout the narrative; as he is the most vulnerable houseboy amongst the educated and wealthy characters. Ugwu successfully managed his trip from fragility to fortitude: he was a young illiterate houseboy, but he ended up being a writer because he was full of ambitions. A writer acts as the catalyst and healer of the society, Ugwu precisely —not Master, or Richard, or Olanna— can function as a catalyst and healer of the society. Why? Unlike the other characters, Ugwu comes from a very poor background, so he knows what it really means to be deprived of food and shelter. Then, he enters the world of the rich where he realises the mediocrity of ignorance and the importance of knowledge, so he is the best person to urge people to get educated in order to become aware of and understand the events that are taking place in the world. The important point in these assumptions is that blaming and accusing the exterior world for the misery people surrender is a wrong approach because:

> […] dans la plupart des cas, nous demeurons les principaux artisans de nos malheurs. Nos torts, nous les fabriquons de nos mains, et personne ne peut se vanter d'être moins

[418] Ruth Alsop et al. *Empowerment in Practice: From Analysis to Implementation.* Washington DC: World Bank, 2006, p. 13.

> à plaindre que son voisin. Quant à ce que nous appelons fatalité, ce n'est que notre entêtement à ne pas assumer les conséquences de nos petites et grandes faiblesses.[419]

So, there is seemingly an agreement between Adichie and Khadra on the fact that they grant value to 'the personal or the human dimension',[420] meaning that the person is the nucleus of her/his life in the sense that she/he is the decision maker, the exterior world then has little impact on the self if the latter is agent. Khadra clearly states that in most of the cases it is the people who are responsible for their unhappiness. As a result of these assumptions, it can be understood that again both Khadra or Adichie give responsibility to their readers, both of them are planting the seeds of agency within readers. By observing the personalities of the characters, it is clear that there is an urgent call to transform the passive personalities into agent ones. As readers, we are impressed by the success Ugwu has made, and we absolutely understand that education is key to empowerment. In the case of *Ce que le Jour Doit a la Nuit*, the same principle is shown in the narrative; Younes is a young boy who lived in the *douar*,[421] and who had no access to education; after the lands of his father burnt, his family was obliged to travel to the city to have a better life. However, at some point Issa realised that he was unable to guarantee the future of his family so he painfully and grudgingly decided to let Mahi, his brother the pharmacist, adopt Younes. Therefore, Younes experiences the same plight as Ugwu. he travels from the countryside and leaves his family to live amongst a rich and educated couple —Mahi and Madeleine. Younes declares:

> […] mon père m'emmena dans la pharmacie de mon oncle. Il tremblait comme un fiévreux, avec ses yeux rouges et sa barbe folle.
> Mon oncle ne contourna pas son comptoir pour s'approcher de nous. Notre intrusion matinale, à une heure où les boutiquiers commençaient à peine à lever leur rideau de fer, ne lui disait rien qui vaille. Il pensait que mon père était revenu laver l'offense de l'autre jour, et grand fut son soulagement quand il l'entendit dire, d'une voix atone :
> — Tu avais raison, Mahi. Mon fils n'a aucun avenir avec moi.
> Mon oncle resta bouche bée.

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[419] Khadra. *Ce Que Le Jour Doit à la Nuit*, p. 144.
[420] Michael Chapman. 'Postcolonialism: A Literary Turn.' *English in Africa*, vol. 33, no. 2, South Africa: Rhodes University, 2006, pp. 7-20 (p. 8).
[421] *Douar* is the countryside, it is where most of the peasants and the poor lived during colonisation.

> Mon père se mit à croupetons devant moi. Ses doigts me firent mal lorsqu'il me prit par les épaules. Il me regarda droit dans les yeux et me dit:
> — C'est pour ton bien, mon enfant. Je ne t'abandonne pas, je ne te renie pas; je cherche seulement à te donner ta chance.
> Il m'embrassa sur la tête – usage réservé aux doyens révérés –, tenta de me sourire, n'y parvint pas, se releva et quitta brusquement l'officine en courant presque, sans doute pour cacher ses larmes.[422]

This painful scene of a father who grudgingly abandons his son because of poverty is heartbreaking. However, the financial problems which are a major force obliged him to confide his son to Mahi. Issa wanted his son to get involved into the world of his uncle because he can go to school and work in the future. From the first year of adoption, Mahi '[l]'avait inscrit dans une école'[423] where he would learn a lot of things such as developing a critical thinking that enables him to distinguish what is being taught at school and what really exists in reality. People in his surroundings 'parlaient tous d'un pays qui s'appelait l'Algérie; pas celui que l'on enseignait à l'école ni celui des quartiers huppés, mais d'un autre pays spolié … l'Algérie des Jenane Jato, des fractures ouvertes et des terres brûlées … un pays qu'il restait à redéfinir.[424] Here again, Khadra emphasises the issue of education. If Jonas had remained in Jenane Jato where he would have no access to school and no opportunity to meet intellectuals, he would never have been able to become aware of a country named Algeria, neither would he make the distinction between two paradoxical sites within the same country: Oran and Rio Salado reserved for the occupiers whereas Jenane Jato was for the 'wretched on the earth'.[425] In line with physical pain and ignorance, it appears that emotional pain can also be an instigator towards agency. Issa suffered emotionally because he felt the incapacity of providing better living conditions for his family in spite trying many times to find a job and planning for a decent future; Issa 'était capable de soulever les montagnes, de mettre à genoux les incertitudes, de tordre le cou au destin!…', but unfortunately he finished by disappearing,

[422] Khadra. *Ce Que Le Jour Doit à la Nuit*, p. 35.
[423] Ibid., 46.
[424] Ibid.
[425] Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*, p 34.

no one knows whether he was detained or dead.[426] As a result of the emotional suffering, Issa traced a different future for his son by taking him to the opposite side of the country where life was more prosperous. In so doing, Issa guaranteed that his son would certainly not become like him. The action of Issa can be considered as a way to agency because he prevented his descendants from experiencing the contagion of disempowerment.

The road to agency and empowerment seems fraught with obstacles; it is a process which demands patience and sacrifice. Since achieving agency could not be possible without the elimination of all forms of domination, and the experience of physical, moral and emotional pain, Adichie and Khadra wrote *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit* as constructive novels. They are constructive in the sense that they aim at reducing and eliminating the dependence of Algerians and Nigerians from the French and the British colonialism, and simultaneously make these peoples self-reliant because self-reliance is one of the most important components of agency. Readers all over the world, whether they have they experienced colonisation or not can understand that:

> Independence begins at the bottom... A society must be built in which every village has to be self sustained and capable of managing its own affairs... [people who are targeted by imperialism must be] trained and prepared to perish in the attempt to defend [themselves] against any onslaught from without... This does not exclude dependence on and willing help from neighbours or from the world. It will be a free and voluntary play of mutual forces... In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever widening, never ascending circles. Growth will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose center will be the individual. Therefore the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it.[427]

This passage explains that change emanates from the bottom of society, and what constitutes the bottom in a colonised society is the colonised, most of whom lived in the villages. If the colonised can make change, it means that they fully agent individuals. However, the only

[426] Khadra. *Ce Que Le Jour Doit à la Nuit*, p. 48.
[427] Rout Dhananjaya Kumar. 'Concept of Swaraj and Mahatma Gandhi: A Critical Analysis.' *Odisha Review*, 2015, pp. 16-21 (p. 36).

condition according to Mohandas Gandhi is self-reliance. If the colonised are self-reliant, then colonisation can never last because the adversary who is supposed to be an easy target proves the opposite. The principles of ideas such as Fanon's violence, and Ghandi's solidarity and self-reliance were actually implemented in colonial Algeria and Nigeria, and after so many years of struggle they finally gained independence from Britain and France to become independent nations. The 1960s introduced them to a new era where no hegemonic power ruled them, an era where they led their lives according to their desires; some of them chose to travel to the other side of the Mediterranean Sea to join the ex-coloniser with the intention of leading a modern life. Indeed, the imperialists deserted the lands of the natives, and post-independence was alleged to be the hoped-for era. However, would this fresh independent period be flawless?

Chapter Four

The Black Decade and Boko Haram in Question: How Did Aida and Patience See Light at the End of the Tunnel? Maïssa Bey's *Puisque Mon Coeur est Mort* and Patience Ibrahim and Andrea C. Hoffmann *A Gift from Darkness: How I Escaped with my Daughter from Boko Haram*

'Healing begins where the wound was made'[428]

Having succeeded in abrogating the foreign exploitation and domination of the French and British colonial powers over Algeria and Nigeria respectively, the ex-colonised peoples thought that they had taken a step forward in history. However, after escaping the colonial tragedy, the Algerian and Nigerian peoples found themselves involved again in a national tragedy each, in which brutality, slaughtering, and kidnapping became the talk of the post-independent era. At this point, my study of the development of indigenous populations in Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian postcolonial literatures continues to explore further literary themes and common experiences. The cross-linguistic investigation in the previous chapters has shown that themes such as oppression during colonial moments, and resistance to obtain decolonisation, and independence have travelled between these two linguistically and culturally distinct areas. This chapter pursues further this cross-cultural dialogue across the linguistic divide between Francophone and Anglophone postcolonial African literatures in order to analyse the extent to which Algeria and Nigeria have been subjected to terrorism and

[428] Stanford Alimni. 'Taking the Arrow out of your Heart with Alice Walker.' *Youtube*, 14 November 2017.

violence in the post-independence period —namely during the black decade and the Boko Haram insurgency respectively. In this chapter, I situate Maïssa Bey's novel *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort* (2010) and Patience Ibrahim and Andrea C. Hoffmann's eyewitness testimony *A Gift from Darkness: How I Escaped with my Daughter from Boko Haram* (2017)[429] within the context of violence in order to show the extent to which both Bey and Ibrahim and Hoffmann transcend the geographical boundaries of Algeria and Nigeria as they represent common experiences of terrorism in a postcolonial context, and therefore illustrate the after-effects of, and potential obstacles to, 'hybrid affirmation'.

The texts selected for analysing this period are of different genre, that is, *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort* is a novel while *A Gift from Darkness: How I Escaped with my Daughter from Boko Haram* is an eyewitness testimony. The latter is a type of writing that emerged as a new literary genre in the mid-twentieth century.[430] Testimonial writing is based on statements of evidence given by survivors of state violence, terrorist groups or natural disasters; this type of narrative aims at documenting real events to attest to historical facts.[431] Despite the fact that eyewitness testimony is said to lack legitimacy because of negation, denial or forgetting,[432] this situation is more likely to be the case for testimonies in the courtroom.[433] The testimonial narrative remains vivid because it is an account of real life experiences, that is, testimony connotates proof, evidence, and it is 'told by a witness who is moved to narrate by the urgency of a situation' —terrorism in this context.[434] As a matter of fact, it is a challenge to juxtapose an eyewitness testimony with a historical novel for a comparative study especially

[429] Original title in German; *Die Hölle von innen: In den Fängen von Boko Haram*. The novel was published in 2016.
[430] Frédérik Detue, Charlotte Lacoste. 'What Testimony Does to Literature.' Greece: National Documentation Centre (EKT), *Synthesis: An Anglophone Journal of Comparative Literary Studies*, vol. 13, 2021, pp.22-36.
[431] Ibid.
[432] Lawrence Rosenthal. 'Eyewitness Identification and the Problematics of Blackstonian Reform of the Criminal Law.' The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology (1973), vol. 110, no. 2, 2020, 181-243.
[433] Liu Fangting. 'The Reliability of Eyewitness Testimony.'Conference. Proceedings of the 2021 International Conference on Public Relations and Social Sciences (ICPRSS 2021). Paris: Atlantis Press, 2021.
[434] George Yudice. 'Testimonio and Postmodernism.' *Latin American Perspectives*, vol. 18, no. 3, 1991, pp. 15–31.

given that the preceding and the following chapters compare only novels. From an ethical perspective, comparing an eyewitness testimony with a novel might seem harmful to the veracity of the testimony —which is based on reality— because it reduces it to the level of fiction —which is based on imagination.[435] The verb 'reduce' does not mean that eyewitness testimony is superior while the novel is inferior. It means that eyewitness testimony is stronger because it is direct and based on reality; it is direct because it tells the personal story of the narrator and not the story of someone else. Meanwhile, the novel is indirect and fictional. That said, it is based on real events, but it is told by someone else —the author.[436] Thus, the comparison might be judged unfair.

However, our analysis of historical books, and the selected novels shows that the historical narratives accurately recreate the past by constructing characters, settings, movements and events that convey the spirit of past time periods.[437] For instance, in this context *Puisque mon Coeur est Mort* is a novel that conveys important historical moments of Algeria during 1980s and 1990s, and the protagonist —Aida— lives exactly the same experiences Algerian families lived during the black decade.[438] Writers of historical novels are aware of history, and according to their knowledge they recreate the past through a story that reflects a given era.[439] The historical novel is, also, vivid in the sense that it conveys the sounds, smells, sights and flavours of the past event.[440] In the historical narrative, the people, their thoughts, personalities, habits and their values are authentically captured.[441] I would argue that eyewitness testimony and the historical novel develop a sense of fellow-feeling and

[435] Richard Kearney, and James Williams. 'Narrative and Ethics.' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes*, vol. 70, 1996, pp. 29–61.
[436] Stacie Friend. 'Fiction as a Genre.' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. 112, 2012, pp. 179–209.
[437] Alastair MacDonald Taylor. 'The Historical Novel: As a Source in History.' *The Sewanee Review*, vol. 46, no. 4, 1938, pp. 459–479.
[438] Maria Flood. 'Women Resisting Terror: Imaginaries of Violence in Algeria (1966–2002).' *The Journal of North African Studies*, vol. 22, Issue. 1, 2017, pp. 109-131.
[439] Kearney and Williams, 'Narrative and Ethics,' pp. 29–61.
[440] Taylor, 'The Historical Novel,' pp. 459–479.
[441] Ibid.

shared humanity within readers. Thanks to their vivid aspect, they have the capacity to transform readers into imaginative participants, and implicate them in the events. Therefore, I contend that the selected eyewitness testimony and the historical novel form an appropriate combination for a comparative study wherein terrorism is denounced, and the intention to construct a resilient individual is present.

Maïssa Bey's *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort* unveils one of the obscurest pages of history Algeria has ever known; it divulges facts on the black decade in the 1990s. Through fifty short chapters, Bey's novel voices the clamour of a mother whose only son was tragically slaughtered by a terrorist. Aida, the protagonist, is a 48-year-old divorced woman. She is a teacher of English at the University of Algiers. Her late son, Nadir, was 24 years old. He was promised a prosperous future because he was about to become a doctor. Living on her own in a country where violence simmers and during a critical period in history, Aida sinks into melancholy when her son passes away. However, she finds refuge and relief in writing: she starts writing a letter to her son where she recounts her feelings, her everyday routine, the atrocities of terrorism, and her intentions. This letter ends up being the novel itself. Aida's anger is accentuated because the policy known as the Civil Concord Law[442] has increased the number of *les repentis* —criminals that have been granted freedom from jail— and Nadir's murderer is one of them. Aida is ungry at the fact that her son's assassin can move around freely while her son has gone forever. As a result, she enrols in courses to learn how to use weapons in order to avenge her son.

In another context, *A Gift from Darkness: How I Escaped with my Daughter from Boko Haram* tells the life experience of Patience Ibrahim, a nineteen-year-old Nigerian girl, whose first husband —Youcef— was killed in front of her eyes by Boko Haram. Escaping the

[442] The Concord Law proposed by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika in April 1999. It aims at reconciliating the terrorists and the state authorities to reduce terrorism. This law enabled terrorists who no longer opposed the government to peacefully integrate society.

terror, Patience flees back to her parents' village, Ngoshe, to be safe. A few months later, Patience is overjoyed when she learns that a wealthy suitor has come to ask for her hand in marriage. She then travels to Gwoza to live with Ishaku, her new husband, but her happiness is short-lived because Boko Haram are at her door again. Abducted and forced to convert to Islam, Patience spends several days in the Kauri camp facing the challenge that she has to hide her pregnancy otherwise she will be slaughtered and her foetus will be taken out. After she manages to escape the kauri camp, where she witnesses horrible scenes committed by terrorists, Patience is trapped in a net posed by Boko Haram to catch those they label as infidels. This time, she is taken to Gavva camp. Luckily enough, she can run away for the second time. She crosses the Cameroonian border to be safe and joins the Nigerian escapees amongst whom was her husband. Yet the perpetrators of terror murder her second husband in the refugees' camp in Cameroon. Despite living in constant terror and losing all her family members, Patience and her newborn child were able to survive. This eyewitness testimony of terrorists' crimes is reported to us thanks to the collaboration of Patience Ibrahim and the journalist Andrea Claudia Hoffmann. Together, they create this ground-breaking story.

More details about the terrorists' crimes can be found in these narratives. Before analysing any more deeply the thematic, historical and political aspects of the texts, we need first to state our interest in conducting a comparative study between these two texts. Despite the cultural or even the geographic distance separating Algeria and Nigeria, it appears that historically speaking they have a lot in common. Both of the texts show the height of religious fanaticism in post-independence Algeria and Nigeria. Religious fanaticism, or also religious extremism, is an exaggerated and unreasonable 'zeal' that can be perceived in the behaviour and convictions of a group of people —the Front Isl mique du Salut (FIS) and Boko Haram in this context— who profess religion, and declare that anyone who does not adhere to their

principles is an infidel.[443] This point in history is important to our study because it shows an important turning point in the developing trajectory of the Algerian and Nigerian indigenous populations. Previously, our study selected subalternity during colonisation as its starting point. Later, it examined resistance for the sake of independence to finally arrive at this stage of civil violence inflicted upon indigenous people. Now, we reach the stage of analysing the impact of trauma and the urgent need of trauma victims to come to terms with their suffering. In this way, it will be possible to assess the origins of; and possible obstacles to, 'hybrid affirmation'.

The choice of these texts for investigation is justified by the fact that analyses of the texts in question are very limited. Mylissa Tiab engages in a structural analysis of the text to see the extent to which Bey's novel is a modern tragedy. Tiab concludes that Bey successfully combines two literary aspects: *Puisque mon Coeur est Mort* displays modern aesthetics together with tragic content, a combination which is assumed to be rare according to Tiab.[444] For Issad, Bey's text was subjected to a thematic study where mainly the theme of suffering has been tackled alongside the themes of womanhood and loneliness in Algeria during the black decade.[445] While Tiab and Issad focused on the structural and thematic aspects of Bey's novel, Ibri sheds light on the sociological aspect of the novel. Ibri observes that through a semiotic study of Bey's novel, one can understand the reality of Algerian society: the omnipresent theme of death and Aida are symbols that disclose the structure and the social functioning of Algerian society during the Black decade. Indeed, when we refer back to history death was what prevailed most during the 1990s.[446] Moreover, Aida, the lonely woman whose convictions contradict the religious fanatic trend that reigned that time —the

[443] Puspita Arum. 'Religious Fanaticism in the Middle of Modern Era Reflected in Carrie.' Diss.Semarang State University, 2015, p. 2.
[444] Mylissa Tiab. 'L'Écriture Moderne dans *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort* par Maïssa Bey.' Diss. Université de Béjaia, 2015, p. 52.
[445] Dihya Issad. 'Le Tragique en Question dans *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort* de Maïssa Bey.' Diss. Université Abderrahmane Mira Bejaia, 2015.
[446] A. R. Bridbury. 'The Black Death.' *The Economic History Review*, vol. 26, no. 4, 1973, pp. 92-577.

refusal to wear Hijab,[447] to live as a single mother alone in an apartment at a time when women were supposed to be under the protection of male family member, to speak her opinion loudly,[448] is an example of the many marginalised women in a phallocratic society.[449] Stepanov interprets other dimensions of the text: she contends that Bey presents a solution of counter-violence to the atrocities of terrorism. Stepanov contends that unlike Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, and Frantz Fanon, whose advocacy consists in using violence in the decolonising process, Bey rather resorts to literature to denounce violence and to promote reconciliation. Stepanov interprets Bey's focus on terrorists' deeds and the terrible consequences they cause as a way to denounce violence. That is to say, when the text mirrors too much violence and its consequences —namely the effects of Post-Traumatic Stress, it creates repulsion within readers and pushes them to condemn violence.[450] *Puisque mon Coeur est Mort* contains numerous mournful terms such as 'ténèbres', 'douleur', 'lamentation', 'guerres', 'affrontements', and 'ennemis'.[451] The text is, actually, a reflection of the state crackdown. State violence during the black decade in Algeria was the centre of interest of all Algerian writers, and it was the most common subject of literature and films.[452] Our investigation into previous literature also shows that Ben Meddour and Benoumhani's assessment of the novel focuses on sorrow as perceived in Aida's feelings, thoughts and reminiscences. Benmeddour and Benoumhani contend that Aida lives in a state of constant emotional unease since the murder of her son. Aida resorts to memories to detach herself from that bitter reality. Arguably, she creates a world of her own where she can find her son; this world is in her psyche and is penetrable only by readers who have access to the letter she

[447] Hijab head cover worn by Muslim women.
[448] Mamia Lazreg. 'Gender and Politics in Algeria: Unraveling the Religious Paradigm.' *Signs*, vol. 15, no. 4, 1990, pp. 755–80.
[449] Zohra Ibri. 'Une Sémiotique de la Mort dans *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort* de Maïssa Bey.' Diss. Université Mouloud Mammeri, 2015.
[450] Brigitte Stepanov. 'Post/Past Violence: The Aftermath of Revolutions and Literature as Reconciliation.' *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*, vol. 23, issue. 3, 2019, pp. 305-315 (p. 307).
[451] Maïssa Bey. *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort*. La Tour d'Aigues: L'Aube 2010, pp. 15-186.
[452] El Guabli Brahim, and Jill Jarvis. 'Violence and the Politics of Aesthetics: A Postcolonial Maghreb without Borders.' *The Journal of North African Studies*, vol. 23, issue. 1-2, 2017, pp. 1-12 (p. 7).

writes to her son. Benmeddour and Benoumhani's analysis concludes that Aida's desperate situation is a way of renouncing life.[453]

On the other hand, there are, to my knowledge, no critical assessements of *A Gift from Darkness: How I Escaped with my Daughter from Boko Haram*. Therefore, as the major point that this chapter treats is violence caused by Algeria and Nigeria's civil unrest in the aftermath of independence, it is important to have some evidence about the existence or the activity of terrorist groups in the countries in question. There have been studies and reports treating the subject of terrorism in which Algeria and Nigeria, together with other African states, are the case studies. For instance, Dalia Ghanem-Yazbeck reports key information on the birth, development, and spread of terrorist groups in the Sahel. This report contends that the danger of terrorism varies from one country to another. Consequently, it assesses the Jihadist threat and attempts to suggest policy recommendations to address it.[454] Also, Adriana Lins de Albuquerque conducted a study on terrorism in Africa. The important finding of her study is that terrorism in Africa is a problem associated with the activity of a select number of specific organisations and the armed conflicts they are involved in. The study also shows that terrorism has become more common on the continent from the late 1970s onwards.[455] Moreover, she believes that in order to fight terrorism in Africa, efficient and legitimate programs of security must be implemented.[456] Moreover, Major Sadau Zubairu Azama studies the reasons for the continuous spread of the Boko Haram movement in Nigeria and the neighbouring countries around the lake Chad region, and proposes the implementation of Mao's theory of revolutionary war in order to prevent the expansion of Boko Haram and find

[453] Yassamine Benmeddour, and Imene Benoumhani. 'La Construction de Soi à travers les Emotions et les Souvenirs dans Puisque mon Cœur est Mort de Maïssa Bey.' Diss. Université de Guelma, 2017, p. 12.
[454] Dalia Ghanem et al. *The Sahel: Europe´s African Borders*. Barcelona: The European Institute of the Mediterranean, 2018, p. 11.
[455] Adriana Lins de Albuquerque. 'Terrorism in Africa: A Quantitative Analysis.' *FOI-R-- 4398--SE*, Jan 2017, p. 8.
[456] Richard Reid. *Terrorism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021, p. 25.

more effective methods than those that have been used so far by the government of Nigeria to fight Boko Haram.[457] An example of how to counter attack terrorism is to increase the capabilities of the cyber security services to detect the movements, the contacts, and the locations of the terrorist groups to abort their plans and to punish them by imprisonment for life without release.[458] Furthermore, Aliyu Ahmed analyses the organisation of Boko Haram from its very beginning to find out the reasons for its transformation from a peaceful religious sect to one of the most dangerous terrorist movements in the world.[459]

Against these aforementioned studies, I argue that the absence of a comparative debate between Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian postcolonial literatures in regard with post-colonial terrorism is visibly absent. Therefore, my comparison of *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort* and *A Gift from Darkness: How I Escaped with my Daughter from Boko Haram* is an unprecedented proposal in the field of postcolonial literature. This comparison seeks to open up Bey's and Ibrahim and Hoffmann's similar concerns of writing that has been organised around the denunciation of terrorism. By tackling a fictional representation and an eyewitness testimony which contain prominent literary tropes in these texts, notably violence, terrorism and trauma amongst native populations, I will highlight that despite the protagonists' experiences of terrorism in Algeria and Nigeria, people can regain normalcy and power after trauma. Let us not forget that at this stage, the Algerian and Nigerian people are newly independent. Thus, they still bear the consequences of the trauma of war, but of course they also hold the seeds of resistance because they had shown that they could liberate their countries from the hegemony of the colonisers regardless of material and financial limitations. In accordance with these assumptions, this chapter aims to show that the Algerian and

[457] Major Sadau. 'A Critical Analysis of Boko Haram Insurgency.' Diss. University of Abuja, 2015, p. 4.
[458] Aaron M. Hoffman, and William Shelby. 'When the 'Laws of Fear' Do Not Apply: Effective Counterterrorism and the Sense of Security from Terrorism.' *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 70, no. 3, 2017, pp. 618–31.
[459] Ahmed Aliyu. 'Towards Understanding the Boko Haram Phenomenon in Nigeria.' *AsianSocial Science*, vol. 11, no. 10, Canada: Canadian Center of Science and Education, Apr 20, 2015, pp. 307-317 (p. 308).

Nigerian people must not be annihilated by terrorism. Rather, I show that they are able to live in the present without being overwhelmed and tormented by the thoughts and feelings of the past, and therefore able to assume the status of 'hybrid affirmation'.

The idea of choosing A *Gift from Darkness: How I escaped with my Daughter from Boko Haram* to be part of this study may seem contradictory to the main idea of the thesis which is about 'comparing the Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian postcolonial literatures'. Unlike the other selected texts, *A Gift from Darkness: How I escaped with my Daughter from Boko Haram* is not an Anglo-Nigerian novel. It is an eye witness testimony originally written in German —*Die Hölle von Innen: In den Fängen von Boko Haram*. It was transmitted to Andrea in English by Asabe, a 'seventy-year old … retired English teacher and the spokeswoman for the widows of Maiduguri, [who] patiently translates each of [Patience's] words for [Andrea] from the Hausa language'.[460] Finally, the text was translated from German into English by Shaun Whiteside. I acknowledge that the process of translating the story from Patience Ibrahim to Andrea Hoffmann passing by the intermediary of Asabe may alter the story, causing 'cultural lacunae' —gaps.[461] That is to say, the text may lack 'some specific elements in the national picture of the world that cannot correspond to one-word notion, these lexical elements have zero equivalents in the recipients' language'.[462] Aware of the risks of lacunarity and its consequences upon lessening the authenticity and credibility of the interviewee of the eyewitness testimony, I have searched for novels and testimonies written in English by Nigerian writers to see to what extent the reported experiences of terrorism victims are similar. My study shows that an abductee, Leah Sharibu, is still in captivity by Boko Haram —the terrorist group— does not want to release her because she refuses to pronounce

[460] Andrea Hoffmann, and Patience Ibrahim. *A Gift from Darkness: How I Escaped with my Daughter from Boko Haram*. Great Britain: Little Brown, 2017, p. 43.
[461] Iryna Kobyakova, and Tetiana Anokhina. 'Something is lost: Lacking Information in Translation.' Conference. *National Championship in Scientific Analytics, Open European and Asian Research Analytics Championship*, 2017, pp. 1-7 (p. 2).
[462] Ibid.

the shahada —the muslim profession of faith.[463] The case of Leah Sharibu has also been written in a novel by the lawyer, Reno Omokri. The latter exposes the daily threats Leah is exposed to, and urges the world to use 'whatever influence [they] have ... to speak for Leah'.[464] It is interesting that the story of Leah Sharibu is similar to that of Patience: escapees who were in the same camp as Leah tell exactly what Patience has endured while in captivation. Therefore, the process of translation does not harm our choice of the text. My study has also shown that other books such as *Overcoming Boko Haram*[465] and *The Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria*[466] have been tackling the subject of Boko Haram from a socio-political perspective to see the reasons, origins of the movement's insurgence and the possible solutions to contain it. Indeed, these books do not inform us about the abductees, yet I can relate them in the eyewitness testimony I analyse. Such details are the social conditions in Nigeria, the location of Boko Haram, and the purpose and activities of the terrorists. So, this again shows that translation does not affect the choice of the text —in the sense that the translated provides the necessary elements for analysis— because authentic and important historical details are available in Ibrahim and Hoffmann's eyewitness testimony. Finally, the investigation into existing Anglo-Nigerian novels ends with *The Chibok Girls*.[467] Though speaking of Boko Haram victims and written by an English-speaking Nigerian professor — which make of the novel an Anglo-Nigerian postcolonial text, *The Chibok Girls* does not meet the same ends as *A Gift from Darkness: How I escaped with my Daughter from Boko Haram* when compared to *Puisque mon Coeur est Mort*. The latter tends to interview the parents of

[463] Kyle Abts. 'Where is Leah Sharibu, Boko Haram Captive?' *International Committee on Nigeria*. Nigeria: ICON, 2018, pp. 1-2.
[464] Omokri Reno. *Leah Sharibu: The Girl Boko Haram Left Behind*. Kingwood: Revmedia Publishing, 2018, p. 3.
[465] Mustapha Abdul, and Kate Meagher. *Overcoming Boko Haram: Faith, Society & Islamic Radicalization in Northern Nigeria*. Great Britain: James Currey, 2020.
[466] Edlyne Anugwom. *The Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria: Perspectives from Within (NewDirections in Islam)*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.
[467] Habila Helon. *The Chibok Girls: The Boko Haram Kidnappings and Islamist Militancy in Nigeria*. New York: Columbia Global Reports, 2016.

the abductees —which make trauma analysis indirect because we do not deal with abductees themselves, rather we deal with their parents. Besides, the novel tends to speak of the history and the politics of Nigeria, rather than sequencing the life of people during terrorism. Thus, it lacks substance for analysing the journey of an individual. However, addressing Maissa Bey and Patience Ibrahim and Andrea Hoffmann's texts through a comparative approach makes the analysis richer and more appropriate for the thesis for several reasons. To begin with, *A Gift from Darkness: How I Escaped with my Daughter from Boko Haram* is more vivid because it is told by Patience Ibrahim who is an escapee of Boko Haram. This gives palpable evidence for trauma analysis. Furthermore, both of the compared stories are told by women, who have been victims of terrorism: they both lost their family members in the most brutal of ways. In addition, the use of a text which bears multicultural touches —Nigerian, German and English— brings to the fore one of the principal elements of the thesis which is hybridity. Translation and the presence of multicultural touches within Ibrahim and Hoffmann's text does not affect the content of the story — this is a fact which further affirms the characteristic of hybridity and shows that it is a positive point rather than a negative one. Finally, both of the texts present a development of events. Thus, it enables us to study the development of indigenous Algerian and Nigerian peoples during the period of social violence which characterised post-independence Algeria and Nigeria paving the way to the last station of the self-itinerary which is 'hybrid affirmation'.

This chapter first proceeds by analysing the state of post-independence Algeria and Nigeria during their national wars: the black decade and Boko Haram, in Algeria and Nigeria respectively. To achieve our goal, we need first to assess life during the national tragedies of both countries. We also need to analyse the effects of violence upon people in order to see their ability to become characters assuming 'hybrid affirmation': on the one hand by assessing the traumatising facts, on the other hand by analysing the formation of identity during trauma.

If the characters fail to overcome the difficulties they face, then they can not assume the status of 'hybrid affirmation'. However, if the characters are able to reconstitute their shattered selves, then they can successfully integrate 'hybrid affirmation'.

1. Shattered Dreams: A Historical Retrospect of the National Tragedies of Algeria and Nigeria.

When they finally obtained their independence from France and Britain, the Algerian and the Nigerian peoples aspired to start a prosperous post-independence period. However, the aftermath of independence had known only a few years of social rest. The latter has disappeared as soon as disparate ideologies appeared within fellow citizens. Contemporary Algeria and Nigeria have been central locations for anti-Western movements.[468] Years after independence, citizens of Algeria and Nigeria experienced an unprecedented era of state violence.[469] In Algeria in June 1990, the results of the alleged 'country's first ever democratic parliamentary election' surprised everybody, with the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS)[470] poised to be elected by the majority of the prefectures. Yet, a group of major generals suspended the parliamentary elections that were to be held in December 1991. As a consequence, the elections were abruptly annulled, and a civil war was triggered. This latter event was not an internal conflict between two clear-cut sides, it was rather an armed opposition between the military-dominating regime and Islamist armed groups, where most of them were affiliated to the FIS and its armed branch, the GIA —Groupe Islamique Armé. All the belligerents were inclined to terrorise the population. This conflict has become known as the 'Black Decade', or

[468] Roman Loimeier. 'Boko Haram: The Development of a Militant Religious Movement in Nigeria.' *Africa Spectrum*, vol. 47, no. 2/3, 2012, pp. 137-155.
[469] Keith Krause et al. 'War, Violence and the State.' *The Graduate Institute Geneva*, 2017, p. 183.
[470] FIS –*Le Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS) (al-Jabhah al-Islāmiyahlil-Inqādh) is an Algerian militant political group claiming extremist Islamist principles so as to create an Islamic Algerian state. It was Founded in February 1989 and dissolved in 1992 by the administrative court in Algiers.

the 'Dirty Decade,'[471] these ten years were named black and dirty because different crises occurred at that time. That said, politically the country was unstable because the *Front de Liberation National* (FLN) and the *Front du Salut Islamique* (FIS) violently competed over elections. As a result of this conflict, thousands of civilians were murdered and the president was assassinated. Moreover, the country suffered economic mismanagement, and Algeria was burdened with a considerable foreign bedt from the International Monetary Fund. Thus, the government continually planned economic reforms to overcome the crisis.[472]

Equally, Nigeria has witnessed similar terror movements by a Jihadist group commonly referred to as Boko Haram —Jamā'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lādda'awatihwal-Jihad— [People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad], a religious movement which wanted to apply sharia[473] in 2002 in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria. In 2009, when a clash occurred between the security forces and the Jihadists, Muhammed Yusuf, the leader of the terrorists was executed. The Jihadists committed a series of attacks against the police to avenge the murder of their leader. However, the group did not limit its attacks to the authorities: it increasingly expanded its violent campaign against 'civilians, schools, teachers and students to prevent people from receiving Western education'.[474]

Following the Algerian revolt movements in 1988 and the political agreement for creating 'associations à caractère politique' in 1989, the candidacy of FIS was approved in that same year. A considerable number of independent imams —the person who leads prayers in a mosque— rallied the new party, which had Abassi Madani as the president and Ali Belhadj as the vice-president. The party developed so rapidly that it continuously attracted new young adherents eager for the quest of spiritual renaissance in a newly independent

[471] Djamila Ould Khettab. 'Comparative Study of Transitional Justice in Africa, Algeria.' The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2018, p. 20.
[472] Martin Stone. *The Agony of Algeria*. London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 1997.
[473] Sharia is the set of laws extracted from the Quran and Sunnah.
[474] Amnesty International. *Our Job is to Shoot, Slaughter and Kill' Boko Haram's Reign of Terror in North-East Nigeria*. London: Amnesty International Ltd Peter Benenson House, 2015.

Algeria. However, FIS was a movement that lacked structure: it was not prepared for an important role in a very short period of time. Besides, the party suffered from internal tensions, as it was based on different conceptions, and constituents had diverse views because not all of them were radical Islamists. Besides the Jihadists who founded the party, *Afghans* and other groups of rebellious people who had no religious interests, and whose objective was only to dismantle the FLN —Front de Libération Nationale, were also affiliated to the FIS. Those groups believed that only an armed revolt would be able to overcome the leading regime. Hence, starting from January 1992 onwards, FIS chose to wage an armed confrontation against the leading power, the FLN.[475]

The late 1980s and early 1990s were considered as the 'black decade' because of three main reasons: First, the disengagement of the government. Second, the impoverishment of the population. Third, the political demands of the Islamist movements. During the early 1990s, the Algerian political regime was jeopardised by three elements; the first of which was the emergence of armed Islamist violence immediately after the interruption of the electoral process. The Islamist movement was at that time powerful because it was supported by the majority of the population, and the Algerian regime was going to be defeated by the jihadist movement. General Touati contends that through supporting religious fanatics, people introduced the danger of the 'talibanisation' of Algeria at a time where the focus have been on more serious issues, such as reducing the rate of poverty.[476] In line with Touati's assertion, Bey shows that Algeria successfully 'talibanised', and the minority of Algerians who had liberal convictions suffered terribly. Aida, the protagonist of *Puisque mon Coeur est Mort,* was marginalised because she chose to divorce and refused to cover her hair. To make her pay

[475] Faouzia Zeraoulia. 'The Memory of the Civil War in Algeria: Lessons from the Past with Reference to the Algerian Hirak.' *Contemporary Review of the Middle East*, 2020, pp. 25-53.
[476] Luis Martinez. 'Algérie: les Nouveaux Défis.' HAL open science, 2003, p. 9..

the price of her convictions, her only son was brutally murdered by a terrorist who benefited from the Civil Concord Law. Aida declares:

> J'aurais dû me taire, faire le dos rond, j'aurais dû penser à toi, à nous. Je me serais même ensevelie sous des voiles épais et me serais prosternée des heures durant si j'avais pu imaginer un seul instant que l'on pouvait t'enlever à moi. Naïvement, je pensais être seule comptable de mes actes et de mes prises de position. C'était mal les connaître. Je savais … pourtant que tout était prétexte pour la folie meurtrière qui s'est emparée de ceux qui se sont arrogé le droit d'exécuter des sentences divines fabriquées par des esprits malades.[477]

Aida bitterly regrets having overtly expressed her opinion upon liberalism. She regrets not hiding herself under veils only for the sake of saving her child. This passage shows that Algerian people during the 1990s were subjected to atrocities unless they supported Islamists. Aida stands for women and men who chose to live their lives freely without harming anybody else. However, the problem in the Algeria of 1990s was not restricted to an Islamist-military conflict. The situation was rather more threatening because it extended to harm civilians who supported the military regime. Aida was one of those who aspired to a stable Algeria free of 'les fous de Dieu'.[478]

In addition to that, the Algerian political regime was jeopardised by financial bankruptcy which occurred for many reasons. First, the price of a barrel of oil nosedived. Besides, 'la politique de la guerre' extolled by Belaid Abdeslam[479] proved to be inefficient for the government because it prevented it from reimbursing its debts. In addition to this, there was the risk of demobilisation of the workers because of unpaid salaries. Finally, it was almost impossible for the government to pay the cost of the implementation of the anti-guerrilla measures.[480] There is a clear hint to the financial instability in Bey's novel. Aida was dismissed from her job because she had some days off when her son passed away. She says

[477] Bey. *Puisque mon Coeur est Mort*, p. 30.
[478] Amina Cheraiet. 'Algérie: Dire les Années 1990.' *Revue Expressions°9*. Annaba: Université Badji Mokhtar, 2019, pp. 15-29 (p. 26).
[479] Belaid Abdeslam was the prime minister of Algeria from 1992 to 1993.
[480] Ibid., 9-10.

that 'j'ai donc appris que j'étais mise en demeure de reprendre mes fonctions, sous peine d'être définitivement exclue des rangs de l'enseignement supérieur. Avec les sanctions matérielles prévues dans ces cas-là. Dernier avertissement avant mise en exécution. Sans état d'âme'.[481] Arguably, Aida's situation does not necessitate a job dismissal. Besides, this decision means that there is no respect and no understanding for the human being and the life circumstances s/he experiences by. It also means that Aida would have no income for the rest of her life. Finally, Bey has evoked an extremely important issue specific to the 1990s. As a solution to appease political and social tensions, President Bouteflika had enacted the Civil Concord Law in 1999 which consisted of pardoning the terrorists and granting them advantages in return for social peace. This point in history is palpable in the text of Bey. She frequently states 'les repentis' or terrorists who have been granted presidential pardon. Aida is furious at the fact that dangerous terrorists live freely amongst civilians; her son was murdered by a 'repenti'. In this context, Maïssa Bey writes her novel *Puisque mon Coeur est Mort* by referring to society and most importantly to history. The three aforementioned historical landmarks of Algeria —which are the triumph of the Islamist group and their crimes inflicted upon civilians, the economic collapse and the Civil Concord Law— reveal the history of that country during the 1990s. The reading of this novel informs us that late twentieth century Algeria has been devastated by an unprecedented terrorist wind which advocated the application of Islamic chariaa in all sectors of the country. The text is also historically informative because it not only depicts the stated facts, but it also discloses the economic difficulties the country faced at this very period. Moreover, by mentioning 'les repentis' Bey is alluding to the most important law that has been legislated at that time.

[481] Bey. *Puisque mon Coeur est Mort*, p. 78.

Thanks to the term ‘les repentis’ we also learn the strategy of the Algerian president, and the politics of the country.[482] As a result, the history of Algeria is skilfully disclosed in this work.

On the other hand, thanks to Hoffmann’s interview with Patience Ibrahim, an escapee of Boko Haram, it is possible to learn what exactly happened in Nigeria when there was no safety anywhere in the country because of the ravages of the terrorist group. Hoffmann provides an eyewitness testimony which presents every important historical detail that is pertinent to that period of time. Several decades after Nigeria gained independence, people still suffered from significant problems such as youth unemployment despite Nigeria being the largest economy in Africa in 2014.[483] As a matter of fact, great inequalities were hidden behind the image of a wealthy country: there was huge social disparity or gap between the rich and the poor. Hoffman confirms that: ‘the Muslim north is structurally the weakest region of Nigeria, and the people there feel chronically neglected by the politicians in the seat of government in Abuja’.[484] Contrary to the rest of Nigerian regions, the north-eastern region was the one that socially and economically lagged behind because of various reasons. First of all, it had the highest rate of poverty in 2010. Second, the percentage of infant mortality exceeded the average of the country. Moreover, in 2006 the north-east of Nigeria included the highest number of illiterate people mainly because of *almajiri*[485] system. In accordance with the assertions of Amnesty International, Hoffman states that because ‘… Western education was … prohibited … high educational deficit [existed] in the North: seventy percent of people can neither read nor write’.[486] Because of the latter system young men had no formal

[482] Jacques Berque. ‘Les Hilaliens Repentis ou l'Algérie Rurale au XVe Siècle d'après un Manuscrit Jurisprudentiel’. *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, vol. 25, n. 5, 1970, pp. 1325-1353.
[483] T. Terwase Isaac et al. ‘Nigeria, Africa's Largest Economy: International Business Perspective.’ *International Journal of Management Sciences*, vol. 3, no. 7, 2014, pp. 534-543.
[484] Hoffmann and Ibrahim. *A Gift from Darkness*, p. 46.
[485] *Almajiri* is a system of Islamic education practised in northern Nigeria. Almajiri derives from an Arabic word, rendered ‘al-Muhajirun’ in English transliteration, meaning a person who leaves his home in search of Islamic knowledge.
[486] Hoffmann and Ibrahim. *A Gift from Darkness*, p. 46.

qualifications. Hence, they were marginalised and 'receptive to radical social programmes'.[487] In his research, Loimeier studies the emergence of Boko Haram, where he first refers to 'ahl al-sunnawa-l-jama'awa-lhijra' which was led by Muhammad Yusuf (1970–2009) as a terrorist movement that existed before the emergence of Boko Haram.[488] What is important to us is that Hoffmann's text accurately conveys that part of history. While asking Patience questions about her experience with terrorists, Andrea notes that 'the army defeated the uprising and the sect leader, Yusuf, was killed … It was only a year later that Boko Haram was revived'.[489] In 2003, Yusuf formed Boko Haram —an extremist sect— to found an Islamic state ruled by sharia[490] in Nigeria and prohibited Western education. These terrorists claimed to eradicate corrupt people, false Muslims, and western culture adherents. Nigeria counted numerous communal conflicts that originate principally from ethno-religious conflicts. That said, the conflicts are attributed to individuals who have been divided by culture, ethnicity, and religion namely Christian and Muslim.[491] In 2003, Boko Haram attacked political targets such as police stations. Also, schools wre bombarded and teachers and students murdered because according to Boko Haram School symbolises the West and causes the colonisation of the mind. Moreover, prisons were attacked to release militants. At the same time mosques and Muslim imams endoctrinated new and young terrorists, and encouraged the detruction of all what was opposed the Islam they preach. Boko haram have spread their terror movement — attacking churches this time— outside of Borno and Yobe only when their chief Mohhamed Yusuf was killed in Maiduguri in July 2009.[492]

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[487] Amnesty International. '*Our Job is to Shoot, Slaughter and Kill' Boko Haram's Reign of Terror in North-East Nigeria*. London: Amnesty International Ltd Peter Benenson House, 2015.
[488] Roman Loimeier. 'Boko Haram: The Development of a Militant Religious Movement in Nigeria.' *Africa Spectrum*, vol. 47, no. 2/3, 2012, pp. 137–55.
[489] Hoffmann and Ibrahim. *A Gift from Darkness*, p. 47.
[490] Sharia designs the set of laws extracted from the Quran and Sunnah.
[491] Oluwaseun Afolabi, and Olanrewaju Yusuf. 'Phases of Boko Haram: Manipulation of the Name of God and Religion.' *Peace Research*, vol. 51, no. 1, 2019, pp. 67–93.
[492] Alexander Thurston. *Boko Haram: The History of an African Jihadist Movement*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018.

2. Traumatising Facts

Because Algeria has gone through a bloody *guerre fratricide* which often took the shape of a bloodthirsty craze, the novelist Bey decided to break the silence in 1996 when she published her first novel *Au Commencement Etait la Mer*.[493] In her novels, Bey makes a recurrent use of 'je' —I— in order to rise the scorned voice of the humiliated, hurt, and submitted women. Bey sheds light on an important subject that annihilated women during the black decade —terrorism. In *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort*, Aida, the protagonist, lives a tragedy. She lives in a small apartment near Algiers. Because she is divorced, Aida doubles her efforts to protect herself and her child, and to conserve her reputation in a male-dominated society. However, her life turns upside down when her son is slaughtered by an Islamist militant while getting back home. Devastated, she sinks into depression, and she at a given time thinks of putting an end to her life and to join her son: 'après m'être dangereusement approchée du vide, je veux donner forme à l'informe, par le truchement des mots. Je t'écris parce que j'ai décidé de vivre. De partager chaque instant de ma vie. Je t'écris pour défier l'absence et retenir ce qui en moi demeure présent au monde'.

Every evening, Aïda finds refuge in words; through writing she can reassemble her sentiments, and she can conserve the tie with her deceased child in a strange dialogue full of memories, interrogations, anger, and revolt. Through writing, she exteriorises her mourning and she expresses her refusal of societal conventions. 'Que m'importe l'opprobre, l'exclusion ? Je n'ai plus rien à perdre puisque j'ai tout perdu. Puisque mon cœur est mort'.[494]

Folded over her son's copy book, she writes down the pain that blocks her present, the pain that prevents her days from moving forward. Aida visits daily the tomb of her son, and there she discovers that other women share the same pain: in the cemetery she encounters

[493] Maissa Bey. *Au Commencement Etait la Mer*. Alger: Edition Barzakh, 1996.
[494] Bey. *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort*, p. 86.

many women who lost their husbands, brothers and fathers, all of whom were murdered by anonymous Islamist militants. Unexpectedly, Kheira, a woman that Aida encounters in the cemetery, will help her to unleash her revenge. 'C'est depuis que tu n'es plus là, mon seul avoir, mon seul bien. A présent, c'est la haine qui me tient debout (...), je me sens prête à affronter tous ceux qui viendraient me parler de réconciliation'.[495] However, is revenge the only way of delivering anger? This chapter will analyse this question and answer it, within the theoretical framework of the 'hybrid affirmation'.

Likewise, Patience is exposed to the most horrific scenes. Besides having witnessed the slaughtering of both her husbands in front of her eyes, she declares having seen 'two human bodies lying at the end of the path [with] a sickly, rotten smell that was coming from them'.[496] Not only this, in the detention camp Patience saw 'the dead … chopped up and cooked.[497] And the worst and most terrorising scene of all is when the terrorist knew about one of the detainee's pregnancy: the terrorist 'lifted her blouse so that her belly and her breasts were visible. Then he stood up again and drew his machete from its sheath … I watched him running that great knife along her belly as if taking measurements … They left the woman bleeding in the grass'.[498] Thereby, we can say that violence inflicted by the terrorists upon vulnerable citizens is traumatising. In the case of Aida and Patience, trauma is both psychological and physical. 'La violence est définie comme l'utilisation de force physique ou psychologique pour contraindre, dominer, causer des dommages ou la mort. Elle implique des coups, des blessures, de la souffrance'.[499] As observed in the texts, the physical and the psychological types of violence have a cause-and-effect relationship. Aida's main torture is psychological, yet it is reflected upon her body which is tired. On the other hand,

[495] Ibid., p. 30.
[496] Hoffmann and Ibrahim. *A Gift from*, p. 91.
[497] Ibid., p 142.
[498] Ibid., pp 145-146.
[499] Etienne G. Krug et al. *Rapport Mondial sur la Violence et la Santé*. Genève: Organisation Mondiale de la Santé, 2002, p. 5.

Patience experiences physical violence and it immediately affects her psyche to the extent that she has disturbed sleep and nightmares. Patience avows that at night she saw:

> her dead mother … then [her] father, who had also been murdered in [her] imagination. Last of all, she saw Ishaku with blood all over his face. Those images left [her] seriously shaken, because she couldn't tell whether [her] mind … was coming with evil fantasies or … something out there in the real world.[500]

Accordingly, the violence, be it physical or psychological, has tremendous consequences for the human being, because emotions are shattered and personal self-esteem is annihilated. *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort* and *A Gift from Darkness: How I Escaped with my Daughter from Boko Haram* poignantly show the human toll of a crisis that demands serious consideration. Both texts provide accurate depictions of traumatic terrorist experiences. Both Nadir's and Patience's husbands have been murdered by terrorists. Like Patience, Aida was totally desperate. However, neither trauma victims —Aida and Patience—surrendered to the frightening threats of terrorists. On the contrary they could perceive the light at the end of the tunnel despite all the brutality of terrorism.

Bey's novel and the eyewitness testimony of Ibrahim and Hoffmann are two sad, harrowing, and realistic narratives. From one narrative to the other, the reader moves into a world of terror, anguish and death. Both of the female writers courageously launch a call of distress to denounce terrorism. Aida, the protagonist of is traumatised by the horror of the crime of her only son, Nadir. The other, Patience is annihilated because of mass slaughtering of her beloved ones and fellow tribesmen. Both of the protagonists are alienated from their societies because of a fanatic religious system. Therefore, both of the narratives constitute a complaint about an interior sufferance, a call for freedom, and a revolt against oppressors.

The titles of the selected literary corpuses foretell significant information on the literary works: *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort* evokes despair and death, and the narrator seems

[500] Hoffmann and Ibrahim. *A Gift from Darkness*, p 134.

to cut all ties with life. The narrator's heart is dead. On the other hand, the title chosen by Ibrahim and Hoffmann, *A Gift from Darkness: How I Escaped with my Daughter from Boko Haram* carries hope in spite of the hardships of life. In sum, there is an intertextual link that appears between both of these texts: both of the titles incarnate and suggest death and suffering under the power of religious fanatics.

The theme of terror and violence is omnipresent in both texts: in *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort*, Aida, the mother of the assassinated boy, was afflicted by the death of her only child when the terrorism of fanatic religiosity was ravaging Algeria. Aida was emotionally annihilated: she describes her feelings as 'un mal irréversible, incurable,' or as 'une houle venue de l'intérieur, ensuite une secousse, un tremblement de tout le corps avant que survienne ce que j'appelle la montée de la douleur'.[501] This affliction is also clear through the adversity of Patience Ibrahim in *A Gift from Darkness: How I Escaped with my Daughter from Boko Haram* where Patience sinks into despair; she declares that:

> Whenever I looked all I saw was horror and cruelty: people who forced us to marry them, and who chopped each other's heads off or slit women's bellies open. It couldn't be true. Perhaps I had been possessed by a demon, or perhaps I was falling seriously ill.[502]

In fact, the above passages show the execution of Nadir, the son of Aida, which occurs in the morbid silence of the night, and the second passage demonstrates the execution of the Christian Nigerian people which happens in an untenable climate of trance and collective madness: both situations are horrible and sordid. Indeed the crimes do not have the same form, yet their actions are based on the same beliefs which are: to kill because of hatred, to kill in order to purify the population from western influence, and to kill so as to spread religious fanaticism.

[501] Bey. *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort*, pp. 79-88.
[502] Hoffmann and Ibrahim. *A Gift from Darkness*, p. 159.

3. Trauma and Identity Formation

In this context, identity and trauma are central issues. Therefore, they are studied in relation to each other in order to analyse the formation of the indigenous identity. Drawing on the above discussion of the selected texts' passages and the analyses undertaken in the previous chapters, trauma proves to be very present in the life of indigenous Algerian and Nigerian populations. Not only I argue that trauma marked Algerians and Nigerians at different periods, but also it has disrupted the healthy development of their identity. The latter is defined as a 'collective term for the roles, goals, and values that people adopt in order to give their lives direction and purpose'.[503] These peoples have experienced wars, slavery, torture, mental and physical abuses and terrorism. Because trauma has marked the history of Algerians and Nigerians at multiple stages, it can be argued that the normal development of identity was breached by trauma.[504] It is true that traumatic events are external, but they have a huge impact on the mind, brain and body because they are etched in the minds of traumatised subjects.[505] Bessel Van Der Kolk contends that:

> Traumatic experiences do leave traces, whether on a large scale (on our histories and cultures) or close to home, on our families, with dark secrets being imperceptibly passed down through generations. They also have traces on our capacity for joy and intimacy, and even on our biology and immune systems.[506]

Van Der Kolk presents two dimensions of trauma. He explains that the effects of traumatic experiences can affect either large community members when the traumatic event affects the history and culture of a nation/s —in the case of natural disasters or war where many people are affected, or they can leave traces on a smaller scale when trauma affects individual

[503] Steven Berman. 'Identity and Trauma.' *Journal of Traumatic Stress Disorders & Treatment*, vol. 5, issue. 2, Florida: University of Central Florida, 2016, p. 2.
[504] Cathy Caruth. *Unclaimed experience: Trauma, Narratives, and History*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
[505] Bessel Van der Kolk. *The Body Keeps the Score: Mind, Brain, and Body in the Transformation of Trauma*. New York: Penguin, 2014.
[506] Ibid., 1.

subjects or families. The worst is that trauma can be passed on through generations, and it has tremendous effects on the human being: body and soul. In this research, I argue that dealing with trauma is not a question of studying one dimension or the other. Our analysis of the history of Algerian and Nigerian populations in the previous chapter and in this chapter shows that those peoples have experienced both dimensions of trauma. Firstly, as we have seen in the previous chapters, the history and culture of these two nations still hold traces of trauma because of their alteration by several external events such as colonisation and its practices. In this account, we speak of cultural trauma where a group of people is affected by the 'loss of identity, [and] a tear in the social fabric'.[507] Secondly, traumatic experiences on a narrower scale —that is to say trauma experienced by each person individually or a family— are very present in the selected novels. Such experiences have been lived by Aida and Patience when their relatives were murdered or when Patience was tortured and Aida threatened with death. The subject of trauma is not new either in the field of postcolonial literature or in psychology, and works about this subject are numerous.[508] For instance, Ndigirigi Cichingiri analyses the memoir of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o to see the impact of trauma during the emergency period in Kenya. The study shows that Ngugi was deeply affected by the loss of his family, Ngugi felt homeless and experienced deep emotional void that he had been able to overcome progressively through revelation. That said, Ngugi narrated his trauma in his memoir titled *In the House of the Interpreter*. Accordingly, revelation helped Ngugi defeat trauma.[509] My study about trauma is not exhaustive; I concentrate on the impact of trauma on the human being emotionally and physically so as to observe their impact on the development of the

[507] Jeffrey C. Alexander. *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. California, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004, p. 61.
[508] Fatmawati Eka Desy. 'Revealing Charlie Gordon's Trauma in Daniel Keyes's Flowers for Algernon.' *Diss*. Surabaya States University, 2014, p. 35.
[509] Ndĩgĩrĩgĩ, Gĩchingiri. 'Bloodhounds at the Gate: Trauma, Narrative Memory, and Melancholia in Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o's Memoirs of Wartime.' *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 47, no. 4, 2016, pp. 91–111.

postcolonial hybrid subject.[510] A close reading of Bey and Hoffmann and Ibrahim's texts shows how Aida and Patience respond to trauma by showing post-traumatic symptoms. In the following lines, we will explore those symptoms in order to see whether trauma has led to post-traumatic distress, or it has led to post-traumatic positive growth despite all the negative effects. The post-traumatic attitude of the analysed characters is key to determining the manifestation of 'hybrid affirmation' in the postcolonial identity.

[510] 'Trauma and Recovery of Victims.' *Sage Publications*, 2019, pp. 57-73. Accessed: Oct 3, 2020.

3.1 The Journey of the Self

The journey of the self or self-itinerary refers here to the series of events whereby Aida and Patience attempt to determine the way they feel about their lives, priorities, and future. Aida is a divorced woman, a professor of English at the university, and a mother of an only child, Nadir. Her life falls apart when she loses her son on a night of March. This disastrous event overwhelms her life and dragged her down into a gloomy, cold, and bitter world. At this point in the text, she comes across the photograph of her son's murderer, and gradually Aida starts to plot her revenge. With the help of Hakim —the friend of Nadir— she manages to obtain a gun.

The self-itinerary of Patience, meanwhile, encompasses a number of violent events. Her story starts as a young girl married to Youcef, a Christian shop owner in a village known as Damaturu. Her life turns upside down when Boko Haram militants slaughter her husband and abduct her. Luckily, Patience escapes the detention camp. She goes to Ngoshe so as to seek refuge in her parents' compound, where she would not stay for long because Ishaku wants to ask for her hand in marriage. Patience's happiness is short-lived because shortly thereafter she meets a similar fate: she is captured again. There, she witnesses the horror and violence inflicted upon the non-Muslim native population. With the help of a Boko Haram militant who is a Christian man converted to Islam for survival, Patience can escape. She heads towards the Cameroonian border thinking she can be safe, yet she is going to be widowed by Boko Haram for a second time. At this point in the text, Patience is emotionally and physically annihilated. She has no protection; all she possesses is a knife Ishaku had been stabbed with. The knife is the only weapon she could have.

Based on the series of the harrowing experiences Aida and Patience went through, we notice that their self-itineraries are similar to a great extent. To begin with, both are female

characters left on their own to face up to their fate in patriarchal societies, Aida is 'une mère qui élève seule son enfant',[511] and so does Patience: she declares that she has to protect her child and provide a shelter for her, but she ponders 'how in God's name was [she] to do it all on [her] own?'[512] In addition, they both find mentors to help them step back from the abyss: Aida found some support thanks to the presence of the wise aunt Halima who tells her: 'ressaisis-toi et redis-toi ces paroles d'Abou Hourayra, le compagnon de notre prophète bien-aimé, qui exhortait les affligés par ces paroles si sages, si sensées: les croyants qui savent se résigner quand Dieu aura fait mourir l'être qu'ils affectionnent le plus en ce monde, n'auront aucune autre récompense que le paradis'.[513] As may be recalled, Hakim, the friend of Aida's son, has also helped her to address anger and trauma through revenge. Likewise, Patience escaped Boko Haram detention camp twice, but without the help of Petrus —the militant who helped her escape the first time— and Muhammadu —the militant who helped her escape the second time— she would have certainly been killed by terrorists a long time ago. Ultimately, the most important defining characteristic shared between both protagonists is that they have been victimised by fanatical religious militants, and thereby suffered profound psychological trauma. While some victims quickly gain back a normal and healthy level of functioning, others such as Aida and Patience experience consequences which affect their normal functioning in a profound way.[514] Therefore, the following lines explore the consequences of trauma on Aida and Patience in order to see their ability to recover despite the post-traumatic symptoms they show.

As a 48-year-old divorced and unveiled woman, Aida doubles efforts in order to preserve her reputation because she is socially perceived as transgressing the established order. She says 'qu'elle ne porte pas le voile… Elle dit qu'elle a ses convictions… Elle dit

[511] Bey. *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort*, p. 68.
[512] Hoffmann, and Ibrahim. *A Gift from Darkness*, p. 266.
[513] Bey. *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort*, pp. 48-49.
[514] 'Trauma and Recovery of Victims.' *Sage Publications*, 2019, pp. 57-73, (p. 62).

qu'elle ne veut pas que son comportement soit dicté par la peur… Qu'elle vit dans le respect des autres. Dans le respect des traditions… que ses rapports avec Dieu ne concernent qu'elle'.[515] However, Aida is part of a social category which is highly looked down upon by Islamist militants in the newly independent Algeria.[516] The previous passage demonstrates that Aida is a woman who refuses to conform; she does not abide by the dictated principles of the FIS, which promulgated its attacks upon carelessness, corruption and pro-westernisation.[517] In the eyes of the FIS, Aida is a pro-western citizen who must be eliminated from society.

In the Nigerian context, Patience was only 17-years-old when she was widowed by Boko Haram, and 'what worried [her family] the most of all was that in [their] culture widows have a terrible reputation: they are generally suspected of yielding to the attention of men in return for financial rewards'.[518] According to Patience's confession, being a widow brings shame on the family. Thus, Ngozi N. Iheanacho confirms Patience's declaration by saying that the practices inflicted upon widows, namely in Western Nigeria, consist of violence besides being bizarre and dehumanising because they imply dispossessing the widow of her freedom, family properties and alienating her from people.[519] The objective behind mentioning the difficult social conditions of Aida and Patience is to unveil the extent to which those women were already suffering because of social alienation and the pressure inflicted upon them by the society in addition to their tragic plights. Here I analyse the post traumatic symptoms experienced by Aida and Patience:

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[515] Ibid., 29.
[516] Neil MacMaster. 'The Colonial "Emancipation" of Algerian Women: The Marriage Law of 1959 and the Failure of Legislation on Women's Rights in the Post-Independence Era.' Stichproben. Wiener Zeitschrift für kritische Afrikastudien, no. 12, 2007, pp. 91-116.
[517] Ahmed Ghouati. 'Éléments Pour Comprendre L'Algérie.' *HAL open science*, 2017, p 94.
[518] Hoffmann and Ibrahim. *A Gift from Darkness*, p. 27.
[519] Ngozi N. Iheanacho. 'The Alienation of Nigerian Women in Widowhood.' *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol. 8, no.7, 2015, pp. 18-40.

a. Madness and Denial

It is said that 'll est des portes qui, lorsqu'elles se referment sur une douleur en font un abîme que même la lumière divine ne saurait atteindre'.[520] This quote by Yasmina Khadra shows that deep sorrow is so deep that it can not be consoled. The pain lived by Aida because of the murder of her son drives her to madness, 'oui elle est folle, folle de chagrin, folle de douleur'.[521] As soon as the protagonists were shocked by the execution of their beloved ones, they entered the gloomy tunnel of trauma. Aida radically refuses to acknowledge that her son was murdered, she says '… Je suis folle. Au point de dire que si l'on m'avait laissé le choix, si je pouvais croire un seul instant qu'une renonciation lucide et consentie te permettrait de revenir, je renoncerais à tout, et même au paradis'.[522] She mentions that she is ready to give up paradise and all the rewards God grants for the patience people have when God dispossesses them of the persons they love. The intensity of pain pushes Aida to admit the fact that she was becoming mad because of the loss of her only child. Despite the fact that madness is more internal than external, it is evident to those around the traumatised protagonists that the victims' behaviours are odd; Aida affirms that 'le mot [folie] n'est jamais prononcé devant [elle], jamais. Mais il plane dans les regards, s'insinue dans les gestes … se glisse dans les coups d'œil navrés ou inquiets qu'on échange'.[523] As a result of these restrictions —the gaze of the surrounding people, the shame, and the fear— women frequently experience depression and connot be healed from trauma; their positions as mothers and housewives within patriarchal societies restricted their freedom.

On the other hand, Patience is psychologically tormented because she has been abducted for the second time. She fell into the trap set posited by Boko Haram while she was

[520] Yasmina Khadra. *Ce que le Jour Doit à la Nuit*, p. 195.
[521] Bey. *Puisque mon Coeur est Mort*, p. 44.
[522] Ibid., 49.
[523] Bey. *Puisque mon Coeur est Mort*, p. 47.

fleeing to the Cameroon borders through the mountains. This time, Boko Haram took her to Gavva camp:

> The hell that I had so recently escaped had very quickly caught up with me again. At the beginning of my time in Gavva I simply couldn't accept it. I crept away inside myself and acted as if the outside world didn't even exist. Perhaps these figures were only products of my imagination, or perhaps I'd been put under a spell. Was that why my family had left me behind?[524]

After Patience managed to flee the Kauri camp thanks to the help of Petrus, she thought her nightmare was over. However, upon her escape, she is abducted again. For Patience, the camp is like hell because fanatic religious militants are like demons: they are pitiless, they torture people, and they slaughter them and drink their blood. Patience could hardly bear the situation. Having no choice and no escape, she develops a denial of her surrounding and forces herself not to believe the atrocities that were performed in front of her eyes. This experience of trauma is frequently recounted amongst the subjects victimised by terrorism — or any other trauma. An example of this can be seen in the case of Abigail Ali who is said to be the first escapee from the abduction of Boko Haram. Despite having been captivated for a short period of time, Abigail declares she 'suffers from flashbacks, guilt, depression, and other signs of post-traumatic stress disorder'.[525] Mojubaolu Okome's observations of the behaviour of Boko haram escapees reveals that 'the immediate effects of trauma include shock, denial, fear, despondency, despair … among others'.[526] Another study finding confirms that 'an individual's reaction to traumatic events involve … intrusive thoughts; impaired memory; denial; flashbacks and confusion'.[527] Drawing on Amusan, Ejoke and Okome's observations, denial seems to be a frequent response to trauma, maybe because it detaches the victims from the hellish environment they live in. Noticeably, the reactions of

[524] Hoffmann and Ibrahim. *A Gift from Darkness*, p. 176.
[525] Mojubaolu Okome. 'Fleeing Boko Haram: The Trauma of Captivity and Challenge of Freedom.' *Social Science Research Council*, 2017, pp. 1-43 (p. 4).
[526] Ibid., 9.
[527] Lere Amusan, and Ufuoma Ejoke. 'The Psychological Trauma Inflicted by Boko Haram Insurgency in the North Eastern Nigeria.' *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, vol. 36, South Africa: Elsevier, 2017, pp. 52-59.

Aida and Patience towards the executions of their beloved are madness and denial, respectively. Thus, the psychic instability these women have to endure because of terrorism is interpreted as madness, and denial. One deduces that these psychological conditions are pointers that indicate the presence of trauma.

b. Guilt

Guilt related to trauma refers to the tormenting sentiment of regret stemming from the conviction that the witness of trauma should have done something to prevent, stop or change the traumatic event. Patience is devastated by what her family endures because of Boko Haram while she is away living her life with Ishaku, her second husband, in Gwoza. When terrorist attacks reach Ngoshe, Patience worries about her parents and decides to go and look after them. When she arrives at Ngoshe, she describes:

> We approached the *kral*. That curious silence again… I saw two human bodies lying at the end of the path. I felt an impulse to hurry over to them. But then I became aware of the sickly, rotten smell that was coming from them. I was terrified when I realised that they were corpses… I barely dared to look into the hole. Yes, there she lay, my dear mother. She was wrapped in a white cloth with a big red stain level with her chest. Her eyes were closed forever …I had to turn away because I couldn't bear the sight of it. How could it be that the people close to me were being slaughtered while I went on living?[528]

Patience hoped to find her parents safe. However, this passage shows the opposite: it depicts the horrendous scene Patience discovers once she arrives at the compound of her parents; she perceives the very bad smell before she discovers the body of her blind mother lying down at the bottom of a hole in the ground. Profoundly shocked, she preferrs to turn away to avoid seeing the terrible crime. This scene traumatises Patience to the extent that an interior conflict emerges within her: she blames herself for having left her parents on their own and she

[528] Hoffmann and Ibrahim. *A Gift from Darkness*, pp. 88-90.

believes herself faulty because she went on living her life while her parents were being tortured and murdered by Boko Haram.

On the other hand, hatred grows within Aida from the day she sees the photograph of the assassin of her son. The scene of murder keeps haunting her throughout the novel, and she feels guilty for not being able to protect her son. She says:

> J'aurai dû, comme toute mère digne de ce titre, c'est-à-dire dotée d'un instinct maternel surdéveloppé et conscieuse avant tout de protéger son petit, j'aurai dû te mettre en garde, comme lorsque tu étais enfant…j'aurai dû te répéter toutes les recommandations que répètent chaque instant de chaque jour les mères, encore et encore, au risque de te lasser, de te "gonfler" comme on dit dans votre langage.[529]

Aida feels guilty because she thinks she was not enough of a responsible mother. She believes that if she was one of the kind of mothers who unfailingly look after their children, and persevere in raising their children's awareness of security, Nadir could have been able to avoid fatality. As a core idea in both of the previous passages, the remorse of consciousness —or regret— is also an indicator of trauma. According to the assumptions of Kubany and Watson, guilt is defined as 'an unpleasant feeling with accompanying beliefs that one should have thought, felt, or acted differently'.[530] This feeling is the result of the traumatic events Patience and Aida experienced: harm has been caused to their family members, yet they are the ones who feel guilty. Although they are not truly at fault for the events which befall them, 'I should not have done this' is an uncontrollable recurring sentence in their consciousness.[531]

[529] Bey. *Puisque mon Coeur est Mort*, p. 68.
[530] Victoria Follette, and Josef Ruzek. *Cognitive Behavioral Therapies for Trauma*. New York: The Guilford Press, 2006, p. 259.
[531] Sabrina J. Stotz et al. 'The Relationship Between Trauma, Shame, and Guilt: Findings from a Community-Based Study of Refugee Minors in Germany.' *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 2015, pp. 2-10.

c. *Resistance to Telling Trauma*

Sometimes, traumatising events are so painful for the victims that they cause amnesia.[532] However, in the present study the protagonists still remember every little detail from the traumatic events they experienced. Andrea gains in-depth insight into the Christian minority and the practices of Boko Haram, she learns that:

> Boko Haram has particularly targeted churches and schools … The Qur'an students [with white embroidered praying-caps and old-fashioned slates sitting under a tree] are writing suras on their slates and trying to learn them by heart. Beside them a teacher in a white robe with a stick in his hand keeps an eye on their progress. . . The boys are barefoot; their clothes are unwashed and threadbare. Many of them come from the countryside, from very poor conditions. Their families send them to the Qur'an school, but they aren't fed there and have to beg for their own meagre subsistence. Some of them stand by the side of the road, pleadingly holding out their tin bowls. They ask for alms, something to eat. At first glance they look as harmless as all children. But it was here among the madrasas of Maiduguri that the Boko Haram movement formed and radicalised a few years ago, and it is here that it continues to enjoy its strongest support.[533]

In Maiduguri, Andrea perceives striking poverty and total anarchy. A lot of children are left on their own without the supervision of their parents, supervised only by a teacher who inculcates Quranic suras. Having had much experience of studying terrorism and the work of terrorists in her career as a journalist, Andrea hints at crucial points at which the whole movement of Boko Haram could make its way. On the one hand, she notices that the children are extremely poor; they wear shabby and dirty clothes. On the other hand, the children are unfed throughout the day, and whenever they are hungry they take their tin bowls, they stay in groups in the streets and beg for something to eat. Purposefully, Andrea uses *harmless* as an adjective to qualify these children; indeed at this stage they are harmless. However, they are the seeds of the future terror that would be caused by Boko Haram, in other words they are the most harmful creatures the Nigerian history could ever witness. As a matter of fact, o ne of the reasons that gave birth to this terrorist group is poverty and regional discrimination

[532] Onno Van Der Hart et al. 'Trauma-Induced Dissociative Amnesia in World War I Combat Soldiers.' *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 1999.
[533] Ibid., 19.

in Nigeria.[534] So, Boko Haram rallied the maximum number of children possible in order to indoctrinate them and cause the terrorist group to grow in number.

In order to produce an accurate account of the situation in her reporting, Andrea needed the testimony of someone who lived with Boko haram, and for this no candidate could be better than Patience, who 'has seen terrible things'.[535] However, at a given time, Patience refuses to talk about her experience by avoiding meeting Andrea. As an expert, Hoffmann has an awareness that refusal to speak is a common reaction of traumatised individuals because recounting their experience plunges them into moral suffering and revives their fear. 'When the memories become too painful … the victims of violence find themselves, consciously or unconsciously, unable to continue the conversation. They provoke interruptions; they look for excuses not to go on talking'.[536] Patience says that 'that time was so bad [she'd] really prefer not to think about it anymore [because] she can't sleep at night'.[537]

Aside from remembering and recounting her traumatic memories, there are other reasons why Patience avoids revealing her experience. She tries to protect Andrea from the disturbing details because Patience's stories are leaving their mark on Andrea as well; at night she keeps thinking of Patience's stories and feels quite uneasy.[538] Moreover, Patience feels that they do not translate well to someone who knows nothing of war. She often says to Andrea that 'the rest is really unimportant'.[539] Patience believes one can neither translate those details fully nor expect others to understand them. In these moments, Patience believes that Andrea is asking for the stories out of curiosity, when that is surely not the case because Andrea says that 'it is all important … Nothing that [Boko Haram] did to you [Patience] and

[534] Ibid., 48.
[535] Ibid., 23.
[536] Ibid., 150.
[537] Ibid., 145-152.
[538] Ibid., 148.
[539] Ibid., 147.

the other women should be forgotten'.[540] Andrea encourages Patience to tell the stories because it relieves her from the pain Boko Haram caused —and continues to cause. Another reason she gives for avoiding remembering her traumatic past is that she does not want to capitalise on the glorification of Boko Haram. Andrea encourages Patience to speak of them, and of her experience with them, claiming that 'it's still important for the world to learn of these things'.[541] She and Andrea have a very long debate about the true nature of Boko Haram and which method they use to implement their doctrine and plan.

Returning to the Franco-Algerian context, Aida is traumatised to a great extent; she imagines her son still alive and does not stop evoking him in her interior monologues. However, when it comes to speaking of him overtly, Aida encounters enormous difficulties and prefers to avoid doing so. One day, she goes to the beach to contemplate the sea, and one of the children who was playing in the sand approaches her and says:

> Tu as des enfants ?
> Oui.
> La réponse à fusée. Avant même que je ne me rende compte que je ne pouvais pas dire cela. Que je ne pouvais plus le dire. C'était la première fois que l'on me posait la question depuis que tu n'es plus là.
> J'ai repris :
> Euh . . . non. Un fils . . . mais il est parti.
> Mon frère . . . il est là-bas. Enfin . . . on ne sait pas. Il est parti, lui aussi. Dans une grande barque.
> Je n'ai pas voulu à ce moment-là rectifier ce que je venais de dire. Lui expliquer que, non . . . ce n'était pas vraiment ça . . . Non. Je ne pouvais pas prononcer le mot juste. Lui dire: j'avais un fils et il est . . . il est mort. Parce que je refusais . . . ce qu'il y a d'irrémédiable, de définitif dans ce mot.[542]

The passage depicts the dialogue that occurred between Aida and one of the children who were playing on the beach. She attracts his attention because she seemes lost, looking at the point where the sky met the sea. He approaches to converse with her trying to know what caused her thoughtfulness, he starts to ask her questions about whether she has children or

[540] Ibid., 145.
[541] Ibid., 154.
[542] Bey. *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort*, p. 136.

not. Deliberately, Aida answers yes as if her son, Nadir, was still alive. However, when she tries to correct her answer in order for the child not to misunderstand her, she finds great difficulty pronouncing the fact that Nadir has gone forever. Aida is unable to admit the loss of her son, she is incapable of saying she 'had' a son, but now he has passed away. Simply, she refuses to acknowledge overtly that her son is dead.

Accordingly, in both cases, either Patience or Aida prefer to keep their trauma dormant somewhere in their brain and not tell anybody about it. When it comes to publicly admitting the traumatic events they endured, they prefer to interrupt or stop the conversation because telling traumatic experiences is as painful as the day they experienced them. In accordance with these assumptions, resistance to telling the emotional and psychological wounds is an indicator of trauma.

d. Recovery through Narrating and Writing

Before delving deep into the analysis of recovery from trauma in the texts, we need to recall what trauma means? It is an 'affliction of the powerless. At the moment of trauma, the victim is rendered helpless by overwhelming force … When the force is that of other human beings, we speak of atrocities. Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection, and meaning'.[543] The foregoing question is thus 'do we forget the traumas we suffer, losing them in an amnesic haze, or do our moments of deepest pain remain available to us?'[544] 'The ordinary response to atrocities is to banish them from consciousness,[545] by avoiding recalling or speaking of them because they are too dreadful to be told aloud or publicly. Therefore, the violations and atrocities lived by trauma

[543] Judith Herman. *Trauma and Recovery*. New York: Basic Books, 1992, p. 24.
[544] Joshua Pederson. 'Speak, Trauma: Toward a Revised Understanding of Literary Trauma Theory.' *Narrative*, vol. 22, no. 3, Ohio: The Ohio State University Press, 2014, pp. 333-353.
[545] Herman. *Trauma and Recovery*, p. 1.

victims are referred to as the *unspeakable*.[546] Judith Herman contends that traumatising events are like ghosts that haunt the victims' consciousness all along their lives as far as they are not utterly exteriorised. She adds that the issue that worsens trauma is the conflict between refusing to acknowledge the horrendous events —referred to as the unspeakable— and the will to disclose them.[547]

In a similar light to the dialect of trauma which prevents traumatised persons from disclosing the terrible events loudly, a link can be drawn to the subaltern who can not speak because the colonial hegemony deprives him/her of speech. Analogically, in the context of this chapter the question becomes 'can the traumatised speak?' In line with Gayatri Spivak's famous question 'can the subaltern speak?' Here, silence is a common criterion between the traumatised and the subaltern. This analogy serves to frame the image of the indigenous Algerian and Nigerian populations in light of the practices of the enemy. In other words, as shown in the second chapter —on subalternity— Algerian and Nigerian peoples were first silenced by the coloniser. Then, they were silenced by the trauma caused by the terrorist groups, the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria and Boko Haram in Nigeria. Examples of silencing and subalternising Aida and Patience can be seen in the texts. First of all, Aida creates an imaginary trial at the judicial court to examine the murder of her son.[548] In this case, if Aida has recourse to imagination to defend her son and present her arguments to the judge, it simply means that she is unable to do it in reality. She was unable to speak loudly and publicly because women in the Algeria of 1990s were the most vulnerable social class.[549] That is to say, women were 'targets and pawns in the power struggles between the Islamists

[546] Ibid.
[547] Ibid.
[548] Bey. *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort*, pp. 27-29.
[549] Rohloff Caroline. 'Reality and Representation of Algerian Women: The Complex Dynamic of Heroines and Repressed Women.' *Honors Projects: French and Francophone Studies*. Illinois Wesleyan University, 2012, pp. 1-38 (p. 16).

and the government'.[550] Women did 'not have the right to work outside the home, become political leaders, or participate in sports. They should not wear makeup, perfume, fitted clothes, or mingle with men in public'.[551] The next example is when Patience loudly declares to terrorists that she wants to remain Christian: she is silenced, slapped on her face and forced to pronounce the shahada and wear the niqab.[552]

At the time of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, women were subjugated and completely submitted to the will of terrorists.[553] Therefore, the inability to speak is a common feature between Aida and Patience. The criterion of silence shared between both protagonists is the behavioural response to fear, either Aida or Patience's fear is directly linked to the threats by terrorist. Aida and Patience avoid speaking loudly to avoid attracting the attention of terrorists. Thus, in attempting to analyse silence, we understand that trauma —which according to Rubin et al refers to the traumatising event— causes fear, and fear generates silence.[554] What is of interest to us in drawing an analogy between the subaltern and the traumatised is the ability of these indigenous peoples to transcend silence —which is perceived as an obstacle to their freedom and well-being. In other words, in the previous chapters we saw that the colonisers deployed different means to weaken, frighten and silence the subaltern. However, the resistance of the colonised enabled them to fight for their independence. Here, the important idea is to note that the inner force that enabled the subaltern to move from a position of passivity to one of agency is the one that is going to allow Aida and Patience to transcend silence. The inner force and the self-determination of

[550] Meredeth Turshen. 'Algerian Women in the Liberation Struggle and the Civil War: From Active Participants to Passive Victims?' *Social Research*, vol. 69, no. 3, 2002, pp. 889-911 (p. 896).
[551] Ibid., 898.
[552] Hoffmann and Ibrahim. *A Gift from Darkness*, pp. 119-120.
[553] Zena Eugenia. '(Impossible) Women and Boko Haram: The Paradox of Female Support to Sharia Law.' *E-International Relations*. Geneva: The Graduate Institute Geneva, 2019, pp. 2-3.
[554] Michael O'Loughlin et al. *Fragments of Trauma and the Social Production of Suffering: Trauma, History, and Memory.* London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015, p. 4.

Aida and Patience —and the indigenous Algerian and Nigerian peoples in general— are key to recovery.

In the case of Patience Ibrahim, disclosing the terrible scenes she lived was out of the question because for her 'it is the world of horror, which she doesn't really want to think about. She had buried the terrible things that happened in Boko Haram deep inside her . . . the gloomy thoughts went with [her] as [she] walked through the streets,' as if 'demons of the past are coming after her'.[555] Freud confirms the phenomenon that Patience experiences by characterising the memory of trauma as 'a foreign body which long after its entry must continue to be regarded as an agent that is still at work'.[556] Patience is haunted by the atrocities she saw and lived during terrorism. While Patience tries to deny all what she lived by refusing to tell her experience, 'the part of [the] brain that is devoted to ensuring [people's] survival is not very good at denial. Long after a traumatic experience is over, it may be reactivated at the slightest hint of danger … This precipitates unpleasant emotions, intense physical sensations, and impulsive and aggressive actions', when this happens 'survivors of trauma often begin to fear that they are damaged to the core and beyond redemption'.[557] According to Van Der Kolk's assumption, we understand that if Patience continues denying the trauma she lived, she will perpetuate the undesirable post traumatic syndromes such as fear, stress, and nightmares. However, the importance of the inner force we highlighted earlier appears here. After refusing to talk about her traumatic experience, Patience finally decides to reveal what happened to her. Thanks to unveiling the unspeakable, we assume that Patience can recover and can literally start a new life. Indeed, 'it must take a huge amount of courage

[555] Hoffmann and Ibrahim. *A Gift from Darkness*, p. 147.
[556] Josef Breuer, and Sigmund Freud. 'On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena.' In *Sigmund Freud*. London: The Hogarth Press, 1893-1895, p. 6.
[557] Van der Kolk. *The Body Keeps the Score*, p. 2.

to describe the barbaric things that she has had to see and experience. And she's agreed to do so. For that decision she deserves the very greatest respect'.[558]

On the other hand, Aida chooses another manner of defeating silence, pain and overcoming trauma. Despite having difficulty admitting that her son is dead, Aida courageously transcends her psychological obstacles and decides to write her anger, fears, madness and hopes to her late son, and to the reader. It was women of a particular social class who were well educated who started writing at this time —after the bloody decade in 1990s. Thus, the Algerian literature of French expression turned essentially around the theme of violence which ended the lives of many. Devoted female writers such as Assia Djebar, Malika Mokeddem, and Maïssa Bey have become notorious literary figures from that period onwards; Maïssa Bey has the particularity of writing during emergencies because she draws inspiration from the facts surrounding her.[559] In *Puisque mon Coeur est Mort*, Bey grants her quality of writing to the protagonist, Aida, in order to allow her to exteriorise her ambivalent feelings and sadness. Bey contends that 'dans notre société, mais pas seulement dans la nôtre, l'acte d'écriture apparaît essentiellement non pas comme un acte de création mais surtout comme un acte délibéré de transgression'.[560] Thus, through transgressing the social order, Aida is also transgressing her limits because she needed a huge amount of courage to admit that her son was executed by a fanatic religious militant. Through writing, she is also making her cause collective rather than keeping it individual, and most importantly she is creating her path towards recovery. Before starting to write, Aida is so devastated by pain that she thinks of suicide, but soon she finds relief through writing; she says 'après s'être dangereusement rapprochée du vide, je veux donner forme à l'informe, par le truchement des mots. Je t'écris parce que j'ai décidé de vivre. De partager chaque instant de ma vie. Je t'écris pour défier

[558] Ibid., 155.
[559] Fatima Mokhtari. 'Récit de Filiation ou Ecriture du Père chez Maïssa Bey, Malika Mokeddem et Assia Djebar.' Diss. Université Oran 2, 2019, p. 24.
[560] Seza Yilancioglu. 'Maïssa Bey: Une Voix Algérienne.' Synergies Turque n°3, 2010, pp. 35-41 (p. 37).

l'absence et retenir ce qui en moi demeure présent au monde'.[561] Here, the emotional state of Aida after she starts writing has improved exactly the way it has been proved in a study aimed at observing the post-traumatic emotional states after using 'narrative technique'.[562] For Aida, writing enables her to maintain the umbilical cord with her son. She writes —addressing her son: 'Comment ai-je réussi à supporter la douleur d'une telle brûlure, à ne pas me laisser totalement dévorer par les flammes? En allant vers toi. En te retrouvant chaque soir'.[563] For her, writing is a therapy for her interior suffering. It renders the unbearable bearable. It permits the reconstitution of the fragmented self. Aida declares that 'là, à l'heure présente, alors que je trace ces mots sur la page, dans ce face-à-face avec toi qui m'est plus que jamais indispensable, je suis apaisée'.[564] This relief that Aida feels thanks to exteriorising her pain through language saved her from devastating consequences of trauma. Van Der Kolk confirms that '"Silence = Death". Silence about trauma … leads to death —the death of the soul. Silence reinforces the god forsaken isolation of trauma. Being able to say aloud to another human being, "I was raped" or "I was battered by my husband" … is a sign that healing can begin'.[565] Self-introversion and limitations as well as suffering from traumatising experiences can transform gradually into normalising and calming qualities thanks to oral expression and the narrative therapy. Therefore, confession in this journey cannot merely be seen as self-transgression of the protagonists themselves but also their return to humanity and normalcy. Finding words after being silenced or ignored is the best solution for a traumatised person to get out of the cocoon of the isolation of trauma.[566] In simple words, 'communicating fully is the opposite of being traumatised'.[567]

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[561] Bey. *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort*, p. 19.
[562] Yule William, et al. 'Writing for Recovery a Manual for Structured Writing after Disaster and War.' 2005, p. 1.
[563] Bey. *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort*, p. 145.
[564] Ibid., 157.
[565] Van der Kolk. *The Body Keeps the Score*, p. 231.
[566] Ibid., 235.
[567] Ibid.

Also, in this melancholic novel, Aida proposes a solution which seems to be a universal approach to processing trauma, and an attitude that any traumatised individual must undertake so as to carry on living. Observing Kheira, a friend of hers, Aida contends that she is always in a good mood despite the poverty and the civil war's terror they lived in. Aida, finally, understands that Kheira:

> Affronte tout ce qui la touche avec une sorte de détachement … c'est autre chose que du fatalisme ou de la résignation. Une sagesse plutôt, une philosophie de la vie nourrie de tant de confrontation avec la misère, l'injustice, la méchanceté, la bêtise humaine, qu'elle lui sert de bouclier contre tous les maux. Il faut la voir pester contre les malheurs de la vie sans jamais se départir de sa bonne humeur. Un véritable tour de force! J'ai beaucoup à apprendre d'elle.[568]

Aida understands that the only means to overcome the difficulties of life is treating life's challenging situations with distancing and 'self-detachment'. In fact, Kheira's attitude is a kind of shield that either prevents her from emotional harm or attenuates its severity; Aida perceives this as an appropriate and helpful philosophy to overcome the harsh situations of life. On the other hand, Patience's only reason for clinging to life is Gift, her baby daughter whose 'birth had coincided with a disaster', but whose mother does all that she can to survive together with her child.[569] Patience declares:

> My daughter means everything to me … I would love to give Gift a healthy environment and a good future. I want her to be able to go to school, learn to read and write and then have a great job, like being a doctor. I want her to grow up into a strong, independent woman. A woman who doesn't need a man to look after her, but can manage on her own. That will make her much freer than me.[570]

The passages above show the extent to which life instinct triumphs over surrendering to death:[571] neither Aida nor Patience have given in to the horrendous experiences they have undergone. Though traumatised by the loss of their beloved ones, Aida and Patience defeat

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[568] Bey. *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort*, pp. 200-201.
[569] Hoffmann and Ibrahim. *A Gift from Darkness*, p. 266.
[570] Ibid., 271.
[571] Kwon Young-Hee. 'Eros and Psyche: Freud's Configuration of the Sexual Drive and the Body-Ego.' Korea Citation Index, no. 57, Seoul National University, 2007, pp. 131-157.

loss and death and continue to live; the first for the sake of proving to her late son and the society that she is strong, the other in order to protect her newly born child and to secure a better future for her. The works of Maissa Bey and Andrea C. Hoffmann and Patience Ibrahim effectively show the tacit and uninterrupted communication between the authors. Thanks the analysed novel and the eyewitness testimony, the authors offer a snapshot of the time and space so that the entire world will not forget the horrors of religious fanaticism.

In conclusion, reading Bey's *Puisque mon Cœur est Mort* alongside Hoffmann's *A Gift from Darkness: How I escaped with my Daughter from Boko Haram* shows that in both cases mourning becomes an experience from which they struggle to emerge. Both characters lost their dearest loves in the most brutal ever ways, and they are not ready to forget them. For the protagonists, love has been extinguished forever: Aida lost the meaning of life when her son was abruptly assassinated by the fanatical religious *repenti*.[572] Likewise, Patience had her heart shattered when she saw both of her husbands, mother and fellow tribesmen beheaded in front of her eyes. Indeed, the atmosphere created by both narrators is dramatic and apocalyptic; in other words it seems that the characters in both narratives are sentenced to death within societies which are poisoned by terrorists. Unbeknownst to themselves, the protagonists end up as prisoners of an omnipresent inquisitional religious system, where they are defenceless in the face of patriarchy, injustice and hegemony. In spite of all these hardships, Aida and Patience seem to cling to life thanks to the intermediary of love. Maternal love is the fuel that maintains the protagonists alive, that is, despite the fact that Aida feels almost unable to go on after the assassination of her son, she clings to writing to her late son because she thinks that it is the means that keeps her in connection with him. Likewise, the

[572] In Algeria, *les repentis* are the terrorists who abandoned mountains and who were forgiven by the state. This strategy was adopted by Algeria in late 1990s to reduce the number of terrorists and allow them to integrate the society to start a new life.

maternal instinct of Patience pushes her to survive despite the difficulties in order to save her newly born baby girl.

In sum, by examining these experiential journeys, we sought to see how deep trauma affects postcolonial people. Our focus in this chapter was to analyse the symptoms generated by terrorism trauma. However, we have to acknowledge the fact that the analysed individuals have been exposed to other traumatic events such as war, torture and social alienation — points analysed in the previous chapters. Our interest in this chapter has been to focus on the state of Algerians and Nigerians during post-independence. This point which constitutes the third stage in the development trajectory of Algerian and Nigerian populations has revealed that trauma characterised this period of Algerian and Nigerian histories to a great extent. Therefore, this subject has attracted our attention because it deeply affects the human being and his/her personal development. As a result of our analysis, four key conclusions can be drawn. To begin with, madness and denial are key indicators of the presence of trauma. Neither of these afflictions necessarily condemn women as insane; on the contrary, they are the consequences of traumatic experiences, and they can be healed through therapy. Furthermore, avoiding admitting trauma is devastating, it is synonymous to death as Van Der Kolk proves. So, denying trauma is another proof that the affected person is heavily traumatised.

In addition, in the case of trauma —psychological or physical, like that experienced by both Aida and Patience, confession is almost impossible. However, when the victim develops the ability to confess what hurts the self, s/he becomes relieved. Moreover, the refusal of articulating and narrating experiences of violence and terror indicates the presence of trauma. It is recognised when the person shows signs of conflict between the desire to tell about one's own trauma and the compulsion to resist such revelation. Recovery is the last stage of the self-journey in the context of trauma; recovery is closely linked to confession;

when the victim confesses, s/he embraces recovery. What is important to us, here, is the inner force and the ability that pushed the traumatised individual to speak. That same ability is what will enable postcolonial individuals reach and embrace 'hybrid affirmation'. Finally, there is no question that self-determination and the will to survive are the most required attitudes because the sense of 'hybrid affirmation' depends on being able to repair what trauma has destroyed. Significantly, trauma and recovery are key points in the self-itinerary of indigenous Algerian and Nigerian peoples. By emphasising that the characters had to face these traumatic events, we want to show that despite the 'series of mental health issues,' the inner force and self-determination that lay deep within these characters are key to their post-traumatic growth and recovery.[573] In fact, the gained self-worth that we observed in the previous chapter —on resistance and independence— and the will to recovery observed in this chapter are crucial points through which the postcolonial population can embrace 'hybrid affirmation.'

[573] Tor-Johan Ekeland, and Vidar Myklebust. 'Social Workers in Mental Health. Epistemological Identities and Preferences among Social Workers.' *Social Work in Mental Health*, vol. 20, issue. 2, 2021, pp. 159-173.

Chapter Five

'Hybrid Affirmation' as the Object of Development of Post-Independence Algerian and Nigerian Native Populations.

This chapter concentrates on the 1960s in Algeria and Nigeria to highlight a specific aspect of African literature since the post-independence period. This chapter analyses Maïssa Bey's *Bleu Blanc Vert* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*. These novels are situated in the post-independence context so as to analyse the situation of post-independence individuals and the way they manage their cultural hybridity. Essentially cultural hybridity is an expression that designates the 'diverse cultural intermixes', the 'encounters, interferences and exchanges in the era of globalisation'.[574] In this chapter, cultural hybridity is problematised because of the social and personal destabilisation it causes for indigenous peoples in the aftermath of independence. In the selected novels, these destabilisations can be read as the outer —the individual versus his/her society— and the inner —the individual versus him/herself— conflicts caused by cultural hybridity. We have seen in the previous chapters that the indigenous Algerian and Nigerian populations have been in fact subjected to several traumas such as colonisation, the struggle for independence, and civil war. Now this chapter not only shows the cultural conflict that emerged in post-independence Algeria and Nigeria, but more importantly sheds light on the unease culturally hybrid people lived. In fact, social relationships were characterised by tensions between citizens who inherited some cultural aspects of the coloniser —language, and habits— and those who proclaim the purification of the indigenous culture and identity.[575] In an attempt to address the problematic traits of cultural hybridity displayed in the novels and the apparent incompatibility between

[574] Manisha Shah. 'Cultural Hybridity: A Postcolonial Concept.' *Smart Moves Journal IJELLH*, vol. 4, no. 12, 2016.
[575] Sama Molem. 'Cultural Diversity in Conflict and Peace Making in Africa.' *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2007, pp. 193- 218.

groups of the same society, this chapter focuses on the culturally hybrid characters of the novel so as to assess their personality change following traumatic life events. Thus, this chapter studies the post traumatic growth of culturally hybrid characters by adopting a comparative approach which allows me to coin a new term which is 'hybrid affirmation'.

The selected novels in French and English respectively suggest the theme of 'hybrid affirmation' that is a concept that involves the affirmation and the assumption of cultural hybridity instead of sinking into disillusionment because of it. In the postcolonial novel, there is a tendency to focus on disillusionment, alienation, and displacement of postcolonial characters.[576] For instance, Adetuyi confirms this assumption by declaring that African literature is confined into three main categories. 'The first is cultural nationalism; the second encompasses all issues that have to do with anti-colonialism, while the third is that of post-independence disillusionment'.[577] Ekpebison et al also confirm the idea that alienation is a leitmotif that is strikingly present in postcolonial novels. Essentially, persons who are not part of the hegemonic power structures are left to occupy the margin.[578] Through the lens of 'hybrid affirmation', the literary interpretation aims to focus on how post-independence characters manage to assume their lives in spite of being culturally hybrid. 'Hybrid affirmation' intends to reconcile post-independence nations with the heritage of their colonial legacy instead of radically rejecting it, and causing social conflicts and tensions because of this rejection.

Maissa Bey and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie are key figures within postcolonial literature in an Algerian/Nigerian context. *Bleu Blanc Vert* traces the life of Lilas and Ali — the protagonists— from childhood until adulthood. Lilas is the daughter of a martyr, and Ali

[576] Chris Ajibade Adetuyi. 'Post Colonial Disillusionment in Contemporary African Prose Fiction.' *The Criterion: An International Journal in English*, vol. 10, issue-II. Edo State, 2019, pp. 103-110.
[577] Ibid., 104.
[578] George Ekpebisong et al. 'Alienation and Identity Outrage in Post-Colonial Anglophone Cameroon Literature. Aspivakian Reading of Bate Besong's the Banquet: A Historical Drama.' *International Journal of* History *and Cultural Studies*, vol. 4, issue. 2, 2018, pp. 12-24.

is the son of a *mujahid*[579] of the Algerian war. In 1962, they were enrolled in primary school, where they discovered a new freedom and the duty to build a nation. Bey's novel is full of symbolism. For instance, at school pupils are not allowed to use the red pen. As the paper is white and the ink is blue, adding a red pen will constitute the French flag. Pupils must not use 'bleu, blanc, rouge', which are the hated colours of colonisation, but use green instead of red. The first day at school marks the cultural breach between the assimilated French culture and the newly imposed Arabic culture. Ali and Lilas represent the generation that face inner and outer cultural conflict. Lilas and Ali fall in love and marry according to the Algerian traditions. The protagonists face social obstacles when they engage in social life; both of the characters find it difficult to get a job, but at the end Ali has become a lawyer and Lilas a psychiatrist. Lilas and Ali hesitate to conceive a child because of their dissatisfaction with the quality of life in post-independence Algeria. After long reflections, they give birth to a girl and name her Alia. Over the years, Ali and Lilas begin to experience tensions between tradition and modernity, and feelings of disillusionment. Faced with social refusal, and threatened by the terrorist repraisals in Algeria, the couple decides to go to France. Unexpectedly, when they arrive at the hotel and say that they are Algerians, the receptionist declares that the hotel has no vacancies. They understood that they were unwelcome. Having spent a few days in France, they came back to Algeria. Although we learn that the post-independence period was troublesome in Algeria, the final passage provides a hopeful projection towards the future. That is to say, Bey opens a new horizon that expands beyond post-independence disappointment, a horizon that gives a new meaning to life where tolerance and affirmation characterise post-independence people.

On the other hand, *Americanah* is at its heart a love story. It traces the trajectory of the lives of two young Nigerians, Ifemelu and Obinze, who met at high school and fell in love.

[579] *Mujahid* is a fighter in the Algerian war, who fights against the colonial enemy to free the country.

Over the years, there were recurrent agitations at the political level in Nigeria caused by dictatorship. Therefore, Ifemelu and Obinze planned for their future: Ifemelu joined Uju, her aunt, in the North-east of the United States in order to study whereas Obinze was denied a visa for the United States, so instead he travels to England where he lives as an undocumented migrant. Their lives progressively grow more and more distant. Ifemelu becomes a well-known blogger whose main concern is race and racist experiences in the United States from the standpoint of a black African woman. Obinze is deported to Nigeria where he later becomes wealthy. During their stay abroad, be it America or England, both Ifemelu and Obinze experience the sentiment of alienation and dislocation; Obinze finds old acquaintances in England such as Emenike, who has married an English girl. He also encounters Emenike's friends who belong to an important social class —referring to the rich families in Nigeria, and at this stage Obinze starts to feel the striking social gap and the question of skin colour and poverty. Ifemelu has difficulties finding work, and connecting with people around her. It is only then that she realised the significance of her skin colour: in Nigeria she was not black, she had realised she was a woman of colour the time she arrived in America, where race and class are very present. 'Americanah' is a term used by Nigerians to describe their fellow compatriots that come back from a long stay in the United States of America. This applies to Ifemelu, who after living in America for thirteen years suddenly decides to go back to Nigeria. Ifemelu was raised in Lagos in a middle-class family, in a poor country where a lot of violent events happened—events seen in the previous chapters such as colonisation, war, and terrorism. As a consequence, the situation of Ifemelu's family becomes very difficult, but fortunately there is aunt Uju who provides Ifemelu's father with money because she is the lover of a general, a powerful man in the political regime. Despite the financial difficulties, Ifemelu continues her studies. She went to Philadelphia where she would be hosted by her aunt. Young and inexperienced at being independent and living abroad, Ifemelu was faced

with the racial problems that are profoundly anchored in American culture —the discrimination between blacks and whites.[580] While abroad, her life alternated between defeat —when she felt rejected because of her skin colour— and success —when she managed to impose herself despite being different, but she ended up coming back to Nigeria.

Cultural hybridity is the result of the global cultural flows, interferences, interdependencies and influences that occur because of the coexistence of different cultures.[581] In this chapter, cultural hybridity is a key concept that describes the state of postcolonial Algeria and Nigeria because both of these countries hosted the culture of the colonisers, French and English respectively. Therefore, I will restrict myself to the analysis of the cultural hybridity of these two nations particularly during post-independence in order to indicate that it is necessary to move beyond the disillusionment that can be caused by the fact of being culturally hybrid. That is to say, it is time to interpret the culturally hybrid state of being from a tolerant stand point. Tolerance will start when individuals —in the case of fictional accounts, characters— begin to assume their hybridity, and to affirm themselves as culturally hybrid people who fully assume their hybrid identities without being trapped by or condemned by the portrait of disillusionment. As aforementioned, the objective of this chapter is to provide a new look at postcolonial texts by validating the new notion of 'hybrid affirmation'.

[580] Beauty, Bragg. 'Racial Identification, Diaspora Subjectivity, and Black Consciousness in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and Helen Oyeyemi's *Boy, Snow, Bird*.' *South Atlantic Review,* vol. 82, no. 4, 2017, pp. 121–38.
[581] Marwan Kraidy. *Hybridity or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005, p. 1.

1. From Cultural Hybridity to 'Hybrid Affirmation'

'The word "hybridity" has its origin in biology and botany where it designates crossing between two species by cross-pollination that gives birth to a third "hybrid" species'.[582] The concept of 'cultural hybridity' was first introduced by Homi Bhabha in order to shed light on the coalescence of the practices of different cultures that once happened to coexist. According to Bhabha's stand point, 'cultural hybridity' is the result of 'the mutual intermingling' of distinct cultures; the latters merge together and develop something new that Bhabha calls 'third space'. In Bhabha's view, culture is not static; it is fixed neither in time nor in space. On the contrary, for Bhabha culture is characterised by fluidity, and perpetual development. Bhabha states that there cannot be pure or uncontaminated identities; he does not validate the idea of pure culture which is distinguished and kept separate from another foreign culture.[583] Bhabha argues that hybridity is empowering for formerly colonised peoples, including those living in the diaspora, and enables them to displace colonial authority and gain agency.

In this context, the idea of cultural purity or cultural isolation and distinctiveness is not valid because there is a physical interaction and a cultural influence when the coloniser communicates with the colonised. Hence, cultural contamination occurs when contact happens between different groups of people. In the context of post-independence, it is more accurate to speak of cultural influence rather than cultural contamination: the latter implies that culture A impacts culture B and vice versa, yet cultural influence is more accurate because it implies that culture A influences culture B while culture B absorbs the influence without impacting culture A in return. This latest reasoning applies to the context of colonisation because the coloniser is in a powerful position to influence the colonised.

[582] Vanessa Guignery et al. *Hybridity: Forms and Figures in Literature and the Visual Arts*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2011, p. 2.
[583] Sayan Chattopadhyay. 'Homi Bhabha and the Concept of Cultural Hybridity.' *Youtube*, Lecture 14, 31 January 2017.

Arguably, this situation marks the commencement of a new culture which displays characteristics from the initial cultures A and B. Therefore, the phenomenon of cultural hybridity starts when the coloniser needs to communicate with the native populations. Certainly, in order to communicate with one another, the coloniser as well as the native populations need translation. Through the process of translation, both of the coloniser and the colonised can understand the culture of each other. Through this process, the notion of isolated culture comes apart.[584]

Accordingly, the world around us is witnessing an ever-growing percentage of experiences of displacement. Humans are moving from one location to another because of various reasons such as wars, natural catastrophes, political persecutions, and economic aspirations. As a consequence, the condition of being culturally hybrid is gradually becoming more and more common.[585] In large part, these conditions apply to the situation of the characters that this chapter analyses: they have been exposed to new cultures —French and British— because of colonisation, they have then moved overseas —to Great Britain, America, and France— because when the war ended, they felt out of place at home. Many such individuals thought they might feel at home if they migrated to the metropolises. However, they could not adapt to Western societies. Thus, they came back home and learnt how to cope with their native societies.[586] That proves their ability and strength to accept their plights despite their anxious selves and their agitated surroundings. In an attempt to interpret the postcolonial texts from a fresh perspective, I introduce the notion of 'hybrid affirmation' to interrogate ways in which characters have challenged disillusionment, displacement, third space, and alienation.

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[584] Ibid.
[585] Guignery et al. *Hybridity*, p. 11.
[586] Karen Amaka, Okigbo . '*Americanah* and *Ghana Must Go*: Two Tales of the Assimilation Experiences of African Immigrants. *Sociological Forum*, vol. 32, no. 2, 2017, pp. 444–48.
Lydie Moudileno. 'La Fiction de La Migration : Manipulation Des Corps et Des Récits Dans 'Bleu Blanc Rouge' d'Alain Mabanckou.' *Présence Africaine*, no. 163/164, 2001, pp. 182–89.

Well before the notion of cultural hybridity became widely used in cultural studies, the concept started with other terms that designated hybridity such as miscegenation also known as mestizaje or mestiçagem, zambaigo —Black-Indian, mulatto —Spanish-Black, mestizo —Spanish-Indian, half-caste, etc.[587] These terms were used by ethnographers in British and European colonies to classify native populations and to differentiate them from a supposed pure caste. Miguel Vale de Almeida in his essay acknowledges there were troubling debates on race and hybrids. He contends that miscegenation and *mestiçagem* —used mainly in the nineteenth century to refer to people of mixed blood— and mixing in general terms were 'condemned' because they challenged ideals of cultural purity. He argues that mixed-race groups are regarded as negative because they are the product of 'procreation outside the hierarchical and classificatory order'.[588] So, according to him both language and sex generated hybrid products —creoles, pidgins, mixed children etc. Miguel Vale de Almeida comes to the conclusion that hybrid people are the by-product of the colonial encounter, and today it is no longer possible not to talk of hybridity since we live in a globalised world.[589] This validates the assumption of our study which contends that the cultural contamination and influence of the colonisers —France and Great Britain— has created a group which is culturally hybrid. The correlation between Almeida's study and our assumption is that the group that is born out of the imperial encounter is considered inferior: the imperialist perceives it as such because it is culturally impure, and the fellow citizens of this culturally hybrid group perceive it as a foe because s/he —the postcolonial hybrid subject— holds the traces of the enemy —French and British imperialism.[590] What is of interest to us is the impact of the social division —that occurs within the colonised society because of cultural

[587] Lovell Taunya. 'Mestizaje and the Mexican Mestizo Self: No Hay Sangre Negra, So There Is No Blackness.' *Southern California Interdisciplinary Law Journal*, vol. 15, 2006, pp. 199-234 (p. 209).
[588] Miguel Vale de Almeida. *An Earth-Colored Sea: 'Race', Culture and the Politics of Identity in the Post-Colonial Portuguese-Speaking World*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2004, p. 84.
[589] Ibid.
[590] Jurgen Osterhammel. 'Colonialisme et Empires Coloniaux.' *Labyrinthe, n° 35*, 2010, pp. 57-68 (p. 58).

differences— upon the post-independence subject. The most striking drawback of cultural division that we see in Bey and Adichie's novels is disillusionment. As a response to this disillusionment, this chapter proposes 'hybrid affirmation', which is a concept that enhances the affirmation of the culturally hybrid identity and condemns the negative stances towards it such as the feeling out of place.

Since Homi Bhabha introduced the notion of cultural hybridity, the term has been extended to serve linguistic purposes. Mikhail Bakhtin, particularly, 'developed a linguistic version of hybridity that was related to the concepts of polyphony, dialogism and heteroglossia. For Bakhtin, the process of hybridisation is the dynamic ongoing process while hybridity is the end result'.[591] According to Bhabha and Bakhtin, hybridity engenders all kinds of results because of religious, linguistic, political or ethnic intermixing. The hybrid is also referred to as belonging to a 'third space', a concept similar to Derrida's 'différance', where alterity is accepted and new modes of thought are possible. 'Différance' like 'third space' engulfs doubleness:

> Différance est un concept nouveau forgé par Derrida en une fusion créatrice des deux sens étymologiques du verbe français différer. La première signification implique un sens spatial, c'est-à-dire des relations non identiques entre deux choses ; la deuxième, un sens temporel, c'est-à-dire un délai ou un report : ajourner un acte. En remplaçant le "e" par un "a" , Derrida veut inclure les deux significations. Il assemble deux sens : être différent et reporter, dans le néologisme "différance". Le mot différer enveloppe déjà ce double sens. Cela veut dire que la signification d'une unité linguistique diffère toujours déjà dans l'espace et est reportée dans le temps.[592]

This passage shows that according to Derrida, the possible conceptualisation of 'différance' —because Derrida refuses to refer to it as a concept— is fluid and flexible; it is not radical in the sense that it either means 'yes' or 'no. 'Différance' suggests that there is no absolute binarism which proposes that the world can be understood only in terms of opposites: male

[591] Guignery et al. *Hybridity*, p. 2.
[592] Alphonse Irudayadason Nishant. 'Penser un Monde par-delà les Frontières: Derrida et Tirumular, Essai de Philosophie Comparative.' Diss. Université Paris-Est, 2008.

versus female, black versus white, poor versus rich. This notion is inclusive rather than exclusive because it encompasses presence and absence at the same time, the 'yes' and 'no', time and space.[593]

In sum, we understand that Derrida and Bakhtin, like Bhabha, encourage openness in the sense that they do not adhere to the fact that the world is composed of single and pure essences. The world is not based on dichotomies, which makes it seem either black or white. On the contrary, 'grey' is what characterises most of the current world. In fact, these thinkers have introduced the world views that help people understand that choices in life, cultures, and peoples' origins are not restricted to two polar opposites. In other words, current life conditions —namely under imperialism and globalisation— are understood in terms of inclusiveness, that is, diverse elements such as cultures, people, thoughts, and beliefs can merge together to form a genuine synthesis.[594] The world has arrived at a stage where cultural intermingling due to trade, politics and natural catastrophes is unavoidable. Their views serve the purpose of this chapter in the sense that cultural hybridity, linguistic hybridity and 'différance' lead to 'hybrid affirmation'. While M. K. Gandhi and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o urge the return towards the past and the native traditions —a call that creates frustration, suffering, displacement and disillusionment because people got used to two cultures, Bhabha, Bakhtin and Derrida propose to find a common ground where the two cultural components coalesce instead of creating tension and anxiety.

In addition, Bill Ashcroft engages with the idea of hybridity which he terms 'transnation'. His term applies to national citizens who at the same time are transnational subjects. So, Ashcroft's assumption reveals that the transnational citizen is someone who holds the elements of two different cultures: his/her native culture and the culture of the

[593] Ibid., 81.
[594] Melanie U, Pooch. 'Globalization and its Effects.' *DiverCity – Global Cities as a Literary Phenomenon: Toronto, New York, and Los Angeles in a Globalizing Age*, Transcript Verlag, 2016, pp. 15–26, 2022.

nation he moves to. According to Ashcroft, the typical individual that 'transnation' refers to is someone who belongs to the second-generation diaspora because s/he finds himself born in 'a transcultural space and indicates an interesting way in which the borders may be crossed'.[595] Ashcroft emphasizes the multiplicity of identities and subjectivitie. Arguably, Ashcroft, like Bhabha, points out that there is a figurative space in between cultures. This in betweenness or the cultural 'entre-deux'[596] is not particularly related to any culture, it is rather a new form of culture which encompasses a mixing of cultural traditions and languages, and it is the culture of contemporary generations who experienced colonialism —this is the case of the characters this chapter studies, and migration due to different reasons. In this regard, one notices that hybridity came to describe the contemporary world, and to respond to what conservatives claim as uncontaminated identities. Indeed, in the first place there were the pure cultures according to M. K. Gandhi.[597] That said, the Arab culture alone is considered as pure cultue, and the French culture alone is also considered as pure culture or uncontaminated culture — that means that cultural intermingling has not yet happened. However, the Franco-Algerian culture —as its name suggests— is not pure because the French and the Algerian cultures are intermingled due to colonialism. Accordingly, this situation happens when a group of people share particular habits, language, food, beliefs and customs which are different from those of another group, and which come into contact to influence one another. Briefly, this is cultural hybridity.

So, what is there beyond hybridity? If we were to have a look at the analyses of characters in postcolonial fiction, then we would notice that the characters are suspended in-between modernity and traditions: neither are they truly 'native' nor authentically

[595] Bill Ashcroft. 'Beyond the Nation: Post-Colonial Hope.' *The Journal of the European Association of Studies on Australia*, vol.1, 2009, pp. 12-22 (p. 17).
[596] Valérie K. Orlando. 'Conversations with Camus as Foil, Foe and Fantasy in Contemporary Writing by Algerian Authors of French Expression.' *The Journal of North African Studies*, vol. 20, issue. 5, 2015, pp.
[597] Sayan, Chattopadhyay. 'Homi Bhabha and the Concept of Cultural Hybridity.' *Youtube*, Lecture 14, 31 January 2017.

westernised. They are caught in a space where the feelings of unbelonging and ambivalence reign. However, the question to ask is when would postcolonial characters be exempted from being portrayed as disillusioned, tormented, alienated, anxious, and displaced. This chapter proposes the solution for that. It suggests a positive assessment of the hybridity of post-independent characters through coining the new expression: 'hybrid affirmation'.

There have been attempts to reconsider hybridity positively; for instance, Jacqueline Lo has coined 'happy hybridity' where the by-product absorbs the differences of the two initial cultures and constitutes a new culture, it is a kind of synthesis of the primary cultural elements.[598] However, even if 'happy hybridity' comes up with a new culture, there will always remain the two nations to which the two primary cultures belong, and hybrid people will be in one of these nations if not spending their time travelling between both; the idea is that creating a new culture out of the differences of the initial cultures does not necessarily mean creating a new country. Hence, the problems of belonging and displacement will perpetuate. Therefore, I believe that 'hybrid affirmation' is the solution to pacify problems of identity in post-independence nations such as Algeria, Nigeria or any other country that have experienced colonisation in the world.

'Hybrid affirmation' then is a concept that appeases the tormented selves of the post-independence era, although it does not recreate them, that is, they will always hold the DNA of their native culture and the traces of the intruder culture. As such, 'hybrid affirmation' can be interpreted as a form of post traumatic growth, and it implies a settling of identities. It is precisely the affirmation of the hybrid identity the way it is —where self does not enter into a conflict with tradition and modernity, the local and the global, Algerian or Nigerian, and oriental or western— that makes post-independence native people avoid the intercultural

[598] Jacqueline Lo. 'Beyond Happy Hybridity: Performing Asian-Australian Identities.' InIen Ang, Sharon Chalmers, Lisa Law, Mandy Thomas (eds.). *Alter/. Asians: Asian-Australian Identities in Art*, Annandale, NSW: Pluto Press, 2000, pp. 152-168.

conflict these encounters can cause. 'Hybrid affirmation' can be a solution because it reconciles post-independence subjects with the fact of living with differences without necessarily feeling displaced and disillusioned. In simple words, 'hybrid affirmation' encourages the affirmation of the hybrid identity.

2. 'Hybrid Affirmation' as a Post-Traumatic Growth.

2.1 Cultural Hybridity as a Fact in Algeria and Nigeria

Algeria has been the subject of a massive amount of writings. It has attracted the attention of writers because of the different aspects it possesses and because of its rich past: 'Punic, Greek, Roman, Arab, Turkish, and, of course, French' settlers.[599] By assuming that Algeria has been the cradle of many civilisations, then it would be cited amongst the multicultural countries. There is no doubt that Algeria has been mostly known for and influenced in the late modern period by French colonisation. Today, it is assumed that Algeria is a multicultural country where French culture still has its faithful supporters amongst Arabs and Amazigh who live within the Arabo-Islamic country. As a matter of fact, one finds a lot of books in French together with books in Arabic available in Algerian libraries; a considerable number of such books is dedicated to the subject of colonialism.[600] On the other hand, 'Nigeria is a culturally diverse and a multi-ethnic society that has witnessed conflicts arising from this ethnic and cultural diversity'.[601] Nigeria hosts about 400 languages; in terms of linguistic policy, Nigeria embraced the French language in 1965. French could not be officially introduced because of the lack of qualified teachers to teach it whereas English was

[599] Abdelmajid Hannoum. 'Writing Algeria: On the History and Culture of Colonialism.' *The Maghreb Center Journal*, issue 1, Spring/Summer 2010, pp. 1-19.
[600] Ibid., 4.
[601] Edewor Patrick et al. 'Managing Ethnic and Cultural Diversity for National Integration in Nigeria.' *Developing Country Studies*, vol.4, no.6, 2014, pp. 70-76 (p. 71).

compulsory starting from primary school.[602] The presence of different cultures within the same society indicates that its people are culturally hybrid: both Algeria and Nigeria share this very characteristic.

Historically, 'l'Algérie Française' is a term that finds its origins back to the colonial period from the seizure of Algiers in 1830 until independence in 1962.[603] That period is also known for the presence or the occupation of the French.[604] Ali attended the French school before Algeria gained its independence, he says:

> Nous, on n'apprenait pas l'arabe à l'école primaire. On a commencé l'année dernière seulement parce qu'on doit apprendre notre langue nationale, mais je connais mieux le français. L'arabe qu'on apprend à l'école n'est pas exactement le même que celui qu'on parle à la maison. C'est plus difficile. Mais mon père dit que nous devons reconquérir notre langue. Par tous les moyens. Je comprends maintenant pourquoi il ne voulait pas rester au village. Parce que, s'il était resté, il serait aux champs.[605]

The first thing the passage describes is that the transition from colonialism to independence has not prevented the French from continuing to exist. Although Ali is from then on exposed to Arabic, he confesses that he masters French better than Arabic. Besides, the version of Arabic taught at school is more difficult than the one spoken at home. Noticeably, independent Algeria brings together disparate elements of its nation: an everlasting French culture which finds itself anchored in the selves of its faithful supporters besides the newly restituted Arab culture.

Many years after, time has come for the next generation to get enrolled in schools and get involved in life as whole. Alya, the daughter of Ali and Lilas was subject to the new system of institution, that is, at school she learned Arabic as a principal subject, French was introduced only at the fourth year; 'Alya sait déjà reconnaître les lettres, et déchiffre même

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[602] Emmanuel Aito. 'National and Official Languages in Nigeria: Reflections on Linguistic Interference and the Impact of Language Policy and Politics on Minority Languages.' Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press, 2005, pp. 18-38 (p. 28).
[603] Maissa Bey. *Bleu Blanc Vert.* Alger: Barzakh, 2006, p. 31.
[604] Martin Claude. *Histoire de L'Algérie Française 1830 1962*. Paris: Edition des 4 fils Aymon, 1963, p. 27.
[605] Bey. *Bleu Blanc Vert*, p. 48.

quelques mots. En arabe bien sûr. Depuis l'application de la réforme instituant l'école fondamentale, l'apprentissage du français ne commence qu'en quatrième année de primaire'.[606] Despite the fact that the system changed, French is still included within the institutional programme. It can be assumed that even if French is taught at a later stage, the new generations would still be affected by the issue of cultural hybridity. If not influenced by school, then their parents who are originally culturally hybrid would be a major source of influence.

'Il y a quelques années, juste après l'indépendance, les enfants qui entraient à l'école apprenaient les deux langues dès la première année'.[607]According to the mother of Lilas, immediately after independence when their children learnt both languages together, their parents complained because their children found difficulties in coping with both subjects: Arabic in the morning where they wrote from the right to the left and French in the afternoon where they wrote from the left to the right. A lot of children were disillusioned because of this very reason, Alia was subjected to the same difficulty:

> Alya a, elle aussi, été désorientée les premiers jours. Pas pour les mêmes raisons. L'arabe que parle la maîtresse à l'école n'est pas tout à fait le même que celui qu'elle connaît et parle couramment […] il a fallu lui expliquer la différence entre langage parlé et langue écrite. Mais alors, a-t-elle rétorqué du haut de ses six ans, cet arabe-là, celui qu'on apprend à l'école, c'est seulement pour l'école, on ne peut pas le parler à la maison ? Lilas et moi avons dû nous y prendre autrement […] comment expliquer à une enfant le métissage, le brassage et l'interpénétration des langues dans un pays qui a subi autant d'occupations étrangères que le nôtre?[608]

Besides the ideological conflict that the coexistence of French and Arabic causes, there seems to be another reason that further contributes to the disorientation of the second generation after independence. Alya does face problems because at home she does not speak the Arabic

[606] Ibid., 224.
[607] Ibid.
[608] Ibid.

she studies at school. She contends that *al fusha*[609] is very difficult, as a solution her parents decide to help her assimilate the Algerian dialect through examining 'l'origine des centaines de mots qui sont aujourd'hui totalement intégrés dans le corps de cette langue dite dialectale, la langue du peuple, objet de mépris et de rejet de la part de ceux qui prônent, avec une véhémence … le retour aux seules sources de la personnalité, de l'identité algérienne : l'arabité et l'islam, à l'exclusion de toute autre composante'.[610] Ultimately, the French colonisation has indeed a principal role in the cultural hybridisation of the Algerian people, but the author adds an important piece of information where she mentions that the Algerian dialect is in itself hybrid: it is a mixture of Turkish, Spanish, Berber, French and Arabic; the reason for that is certainly the Roman, Turkish and Arab invasions of Algeria when people intermingled through mixed marriages. Hence, French colonisation is not the only reason for cultural hybridity. If we overlook the French language and consider only the Algerian dialect, then it can be assumed that Algeria was the cradle of cultural miscegenation. In the novel, there is a passage that illustrates these cultural hybridity traces:

> Le propriétaire de la boutique est un personnage extraordinaire. En parlant, il mélange l'arabe, le kabyle, le français et l'espagnol, et il incorpore même quelques mots d'anglais à ses discours sur la décadence des civilisations et l'immoralité de l'art. Il cite Cervantès, Camus et Ibn Khaldoun. Comme s'il était à lui tout seul le concentré d'une histoire encore vivante, encore présente dans chacune des pièces qui composent son univers.[611]

Cultural hybridity is flagrantly present in this passage: the merchant switches between different languages as he speaks Arabic, Kabyle, French, Spanish and English. Besides that, he is highly cultivated, as he feels comfortable referring to Cervantès, Camus and Ibn Khaldoun who are well-known authors from different nationalities. What is striking in this passage is that Bey refers to the merchant as extraordinary because of his cultural hybridity. Her conviction that cultural hybridity is a positive characteristic instead of a contamination of

[609] *Al fusha* (in Arabic) is classical Arabic, the language taught at schools.
[610] Bey. *Bleu Blanc Vert*, p. 224.
[611] Ibid., 269.

the purity of one culture by another is in line with the philosophy of H. K. Bhabha, Mikhail Bakhtin, Jacques Derrida and Bill Ashcroft which indicates that the coexistence of different essences simultaneously —different cultures, in this context— is not a tragedy *per se*. On the contrary, it is a cultural richness where different cultural components peacefully coexist.

In a similar context, we observe that the characters of *Americanah* also occupy a space somewhere between the Nigerian and English cultures. This is obviously one of the consequences of the colonial confrontation between two different societies. The liminal space that characterises the sequences of this novel depicts to what extent colonialism and colonial hegemony could transform the identity of the indigenous population and create hybrid identities in Nigeria. By considering the situation of hybrid characters such as Ifemelu, Obinze and Ginika, we will understand the issue of being caught in 'entre-deux' cultures, and we will understand that cultural hybridity is a fact amongst Nigerians exactly as it is for Algerians. The lives of Ifemelu or Obinze have been based upon the effects of colonialism, and their identities have undergone transformations as a result.

In this context which posits cultural hybridity as a fact, we are likely not to talk about hybridity as the result of a clash between two cultures or the quest for identity. On the contrary, we observe the effects of colonialism on native subjects, and explore the new category of people that holds the traces of two different cultures. Ifemelu and Obinze, the protagonists, grew up in post-independence Nigeria, and went to a Nigerian school. After graduation, when in the United States, Ifemelu decided to go to a hair salon and noticed that:

> They were full of Francophone West African women braiders, one of whom would be the owner and speak the best English and answer the phone and be deferred to by the others … The conversations were loud and swift, in French or Wolof or Malinke, and when they spoke English to customers, it was broken, curious, as though they had not quite eased into the language itself before taking on a slangy Americanism. Words came out half-completed. Once a Guinean braider in Philadelphia had told Ifemelu, "Amma like, Oh Gad, Azsomeh." It took many repetitions for Ifemelu to understand that the woman was saying, "I'm like, Oh God, I was so mad … the Pidgin English

> news on Wazobia FM … She spoke with the unplaceable foreign accent, British and American and something else all at once.[612]

According to this passage, Ifemelu describes a scene in America where she gets into a hair salon and finds a lot of African American women who talk different dialects and accents. They swift from one language to another: most of the time they use broken English mixed with local African dialects. Ifemelu was then witnessing a scene rich with speech varieties or what is linguistically known as pidgin.[613] Apart from the pidgin secondary characters use, Ifemelu herself does not speak proper English, the politics behind this suggests that even if she lives in America and is a cultivated person, the Nigerian origins of Ifemelu will always be part of her identity.

In addition, Ifemelu shows an exceptional capacity of absorbing both cultures: she easily grasped American culture while she does not hesitate to exhibit her knowledge of the Igbo language:

> "But I bet I speak Igbo better than you." "Impossible," he said, and switched to Igbo. "Ama m atu inu. I even know proverbs." "Yes. The basic one everybody knows. A frog does not run in the afternoon for nothing." "No. I know serious proverbs. Akotaife Kasubi, e lee oba. If something bigger than the farm is dug up, the barn is sold." "Ah, you want to try me?" she asked, laughing. "Achoafuadiakon'akpadibia. The medicine man's bag has all kinds of things." "Not bad," he said. "E gbuo dike n'oguuno, e luonaoguagu, e loteya. If you kill a warrior in a local fight, you'll remember him when fighting enemies." They traded proverbs. She could say only two more before she gave up, with him still raring to go. "How do you know all that?" she asked, impressed. "Many guys won't even speak Igbo, not to mention knowing proverbs." "I just listen when my uncles talk. I think my dad would have liked that." They were silent.[614]

According to Herbert Igboanusi, the phenomenon of Igbo English is said to be found in creative writing —in novels— 'as a deliberate but significant stylistic device, which arises from the influence of the Igbo language and culture on English […] Has spawned what has

[612] Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi. *Americanah*. London: Harpercollins Publishers, 2014, pp. 12-19- 26.
[613] Viveka Velupillai. *Pidgins, Creoles and Mixed Languages*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2015, p. 3.
[614] Adichie. *Americanah*, pp. 48-49.

been categorised as ethnic literary tradition, and, as such, African literature today is characterised by linguistic diffusion and cultural diversity'.[615] In the extract above, we can identify the use of Igbo words that interfere with the English language or substitute it in some instances. This shows that Adichie wants to show how Nigerians or namely the Igbo people communicate with each other in the United States. The scene presents Ifemelu and Obinze competing about who knows Igbo proverbs the most. Ifemelu makes note of the fact that Obinze is unlike other boys who fervently exhibit the culture of the coloniser. On the contrary, he does speak English constantly while at the same time he mentions Igbo expressions. Adichie uses Igbo expressions as spoken by Nigerian characters to explain that either or both of the native culture —Nigerian— or the culture exhibited by the individuals —English— can be simultaneously assimilated and integrated; they can coexist and enrich one another in several ways without creating conflicts at the level of the self or the community.

[615] Herbert Igboanusi. 'Style and Meaning in Igbo English Novels.' *The Reading Matrix*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2006, p. 2.

2.2 In-Betweenness as a Major Source of Disillusionment

'Edmund Fuller remarks that in our age man suffers not only from war, persecution, famine and ruin, but from inner problems'.[616] This section will discuss passages of both *Bleu Blanc Vert* and *Americanah* to see the extent to which life in a liminal space can be tormenting. Central to both of the novels is the theme of identity. As the plots develop, Lilas and Ali as well as Ifemelu and Obinze are coming off age and are trying to find their ways in countries which are newly independent, namely Algeria and Nigeria. During that period, identity was inextricably linked to indigenous traditions and national identity. The newly independent people had no objective but reconstructing the indigenous identity, this case clearly appears when Ali's teacher says:

> Maintenant vous ne soulignerez plus qu'en vert. Avec un stylo vert. J'ai levé le doigt. Il m'a autorisé à parler. J'ai demandé pourquoi. Pourquoi on ne devait plus utiliser le rouge […] si on écrivait avec un stylo bleu sur la feuille blanche et qu'on soulignait en rouge, ça ferait bleu blanc rouge. Les couleurs de la France. Celles du drapeau français. Il a dit qu'on était libre maintenant. Libres depuis quatre mois. Après cent trente-deux ans de colonisation. Sept ans et demi de guerre. Un million et demi de martyrs. Il a dit qu'on devait maintenant oublier la France. Le drapeau français. Et la Marseillaise.[617]

The passage which is addressed to the fresh generation reveals the rejection of the presence of any trace that reminds the culture of the ex-coloniser. The independence of Algeria has brought Algerians from the status of colonised to that of free men: the teacher firmly forbids his pupils from utilising the red pen anymore because together with the blue ink and the white paper the colours of the French flag would reappear surreptitiously. Hence, it is no longer permitted to revive the spirit of the coloniser even through colours. The teacher then focuses on numbers so as to amplify the importance of the information and to inform the young generation about the long period of suffering their parents endured in order to free their land.

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[616] Reena Mittal. 'Theme of Alienation in Modern Literature: The Advent of Existentialism, With Life as Seen Through Indian English Fiction Writers.' The Asian Conference on Arts & Humanities, 2018, p. 1.
[617] Bey. *Bleu Blanc Vert*, pp. 13-14.

Surprisingly, Maissa Bey discloses that longing for freedom was not the aspiration of adults solely because

> A l'école du village, [Ali] … chantait [la Marseillaise] tous les matins. En saluant le drapeau français … Mais [il] avait … changé quelques mots. Par exemple, au lieu de dire "Le jour de gloire est arrivé ", [il] disait "La soupe est prête, venez manger. " C'était [une] façon … de résister. C'était la guerre des mots … Maintenant après la rentrée scolaire, [il] chante Kassaman.[618]

In this passage Ali confesses what he used to do before independence. As a child, Ali had no power over his environment, all that was in his possession was the barrel of the words, and that was what he opted for. He substituted the core meaning of the French national anthem by infantile ridiculous sentences, but what is important behind that substitution is that Bey wants to show that colonial hegemony was not penetrating enough to have full control over children. Although he was a pupil at school, the declaration of Ali —'c'était [une] façon … de résister. C'était la guerre des mots'— sounds remarkably mature. Noticeably, the new generation seems to hold the seeds of an affirmed identity that Algeria needs in order to grow stable and powerful. As a part of the colonial project, Ali 'apprenait le français correct et bien soigné. Parce que l'Algérie, c'était la France. Et le maître en CM2, répétait toujours: "être Français, ça se mérite"'.[619]However, after independence the teacher at school inculcated to pupils subversive and nationalist ideals such as 'être Algérien, ça se mérite'.[620] We notice here that Bey engages in a subversive reasoning, so she implies the presence of two conflictual elements and opts for writing back: French culture versus Algerian culture. Ali is aware of the coexistence of these two essences since he has inherited the Algerian culture from his family and the French culture from colonisation. Rejecting colonialism has been inculcated to him by his teacher, but this rejection does not mean that he gets rid of the amount of influence the French culture had on him. Consequently, he is culturally hybrid.

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[618] Ibid., 14.
[619] Bey. *Bleu Blanc Vert*, p. 15.
[620] Ibid., 20.

When the characters started to grow up, their interaction with their environment has evolved. Now, they start to live their own experiences. There are no instructions from any teacher or parent to dictate to them the way they think and behave. Henceforth, they face the world alone. As a sign of transition towards maturity and independent thinking, both Lilas and Ali enter into multiple episodes of reflection. Lilas declares that:

> [son] avenir se dessine de plus en plus nettement. [Elle] avance sur une route balisée avec l'illusion d'en avoir tracé l'itinéraire, mais [elle] reste encore pleine de doutes. En fait, [elle a] la certitude d'avoir construit des rêves à la mesure du possible. Sans [se] laisser prendre au piège de l'inattendu, de l'imprévisible.[621]

This passage reveals that Alia has the capacity of planning her future, and the plans she sets are reasonable and achievable. However, according to her declaration, there seems to be an outer force that complicates the realisation of her dreams. On the other hand, Ali is preoccupied by finding answers for questions that are evident and simple, but despite them being evident, he still cannot find the response. He says that 'm'obsède l'absurdité évidente d'une question à laquelle pourtant je ne cesse de chercher des réponses.'[622] Apparently, both Lilas and Ali are disillusioned. Their similar psychological state of mind stems from the unexpected violent events Algeria experienced after independence. Thirty years into independence, while the Algerian people were finally relieved, a local struggle started because the state wanted to create 'mechanisms towards a controlled liberalism.'[623] This conflict has woken up the sentiment of disillusionment within the characters in the sense that they recently experienced the struggle for independence, yet they did not have enough time to taste freedom. They were immediately involved in a violent spiral between the state and terrorists, where the only loser was the people. At a given time, Ali ponders the path of their life. He unceasingly reflects upon what Lilas told him:

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[621] Ibid., 128.
[622] Bey. *Bleu Blanc Vert*, p. 131.
[623] Belgacem Tahchi. 'Algeria, a Post-Dark-Decade Peace Process. From Successful Experience to Reproducible Model, the Long Way.' Diss. Université de la Sorbonne, 2018, p. 1.

> Lilas me dit que je devrais plutôt penser à notre avenir. A ce que nous voulons construire ensemble. Mais c'est justement ce qui me fait peur. Nous allons nous marier, nous allons avoir des enfants […] Des enfants que nous aimerions libres et heureux, comme nous avons cru pouvoir l'être au lendemain de l'Indépendance […] Aujourd'hui, pour nous, le bien-être se mesure à la quantité d'eau que nous avons réussi à stocker dans la baignoire.[624]

In this passage, Ali is fearful and Lilas is doubtful. The passage sadly shows the extent to which state violence has reduced the ambitious objectives of the citizens into rudimentary practices of survival, that said, Ali and Lilas aspired for a flourishing future in the sense that they aimed to find jobs in a peaceful independent state, they wanted to build their own mansion and found a family in a decent environment. However, the actual state of Algeria has caused their projects to crumble. Not to mention only this, from then on the most important preoccupation Ali and Lilas thought of was to stock water in the bathtub because the state released water only two hours a day. From that, it is clear that the life of Ali and Lilas was disorientated because of political reasons. As aforementioned, post-independence in Algeria was characterised by the imperative restitution of the native Arabo-Islamic culture, among teachers as well as politicians:

> Rappeler à tous à chaque instant de la vie, que nous ne devons pas dévier du chemin tracé pour nous. Je suis Arabe et musulman, on ne me permet pas de l'oublier. On me le répète sur tous les tons. Du plus doucereux au plus menaçant. On m'assure qu'il n'y a point de salut hors de ce retour aux sources.[625]

This passage shows the pressure Ali and his generation were subjected to the constant call to preserve the Arabo-Islamic identity. Certainly true, Ali is not against that identity, but the inherited colonial culture is part and parcel of his person, and the same applies for his generation. However, being exposed to continual pressure causes him inward troubles. He says that 'on m'a appris une langue, le français. On m'a répété que seuls comptaient le niveau d'instruction et le désir d'apporter au pays ce dont il avait le plus besoin. Des compétences et

[624] Bey. *Bleu Blanc Vert*, p. 133.
[625] Ibid., 145.

des savoirs faires pour le propulser au niveau des pays développés'.[626] Ali is justifying his position by saying that he has not chosen to learn French, he was taught French because that was the only option available during colonisation. He adds that all he has been told was that what mattered most were the competences and knowledge a person possessed. However, after independence Ali faced a contradictory principle which said that the most important issue was to learn Arabic. As a result, Ali is caught in a conflictual situation; he is disillusioned because of the contradictions he faces. As a matter of fact, Ali, Lilas and their generation transgressed from the French school to the Algerian school in terms of 'rite de passage/rite d'institution' which implies framing the limits —before and after something happens— in order to legitimise the transgression from one stage to another. In this case, the transgression is the revolution and the independence as defined by Pierre Bourdieu:

> Parler de rite d'institution, c'est indiquer que tout rite tend à consacrer ou à légitimer, c'est-à-dire à faire méconnaître en tant que arbitraire et reconnaître en tant que légitime, naturelle, une limite arbitraire; ou ce qui revient au même, à opérer solennellement, c'est-à-dire de manière licite et extra-ordinaire une transgression des limites constitutives de l'ordre social et de l'ordre mental qu'il s'agit de sauvegarder à tout prix […] Le rite attire l'attention de l'observateur vers le passage.[627]

Pierre Bourdieu implies that it is the duty of the institution to legitimise and clarify the passage or the transgression from one state to the other. The Algerian institution had to justify and explain to the young pupils the rupture between the French school and the Algerian school; it had to subtly make the distinction between the identities both these schools inculcated. Had Bourdieu's view been applied, then the risk of disillusionment would have been lessened if not completely eradicated. As the teacher of Ali was very brutal in his way of conveying the ideals of the nation, Ali considered that his coming back to school after independence not to be a 'vraie rentrée scolaire' and the teachers 'vrais professeurs'.[628] Consequently, the generation of Ali is the most tormented one because it can not fit into the

[626] Ibid.
[627] Pierre Bourdieu et al. *La Sociologie de Bourdieu: Textes Choisis et Commentés*. Paris: Le Mascaret, 1986, p. 58.
[628] Bey. *Bleu Blanc Vert*, p. 15.

Arabicised new mentality. ‘Le temps viendrait assez vite, où nos enfants et les générations suivantes, ayant appris leur langue [arabe] dans des écoles accessibles à tous, prendraient la relève’.[629]

Being in the in-betweenness was hard to live in societies that only recognised the national culture as accepted. Culturally hybrid individuals were marginalised and frown down upon. Ali, Lilas and those who were in their situation were ‘quelques-uns à vouloir secouer les préjugés pour que les choses changent à l’intérieur même de la société. A commencer par [leur] propres familles’.[630] However, as not all the people could go to school during colonisation, it was impossible for Ali and Lilas to have an influence over their environment because they were different: most of the generation of Ali and Lilas was culturally hybrid while the rest of the population was closer to Arabo-Islamic culture. As a consequence, either Ali or Lilas were homeless within their home. Besides that, Ali declares that :

> J’ai de moins en moins confiance en l’avenir. Moi-même, j’ai l’impression qu’il ne reste plus rien de l’élan qui nous portait, qui portait tout un peuple il y a à peine quelques années ? Rien non plus de cette prodigieuse envie de refaire le monde, de modeler nos vies à la mesure de ces promesses que nous faisions tous ensemble dans l’euphorie d’une liberté chèrement conquise. Oui, j’ai l’impression qu’il ne reste plus que des coquilles vides, vidées de leurs contenus par une réalité de plus en plus stérilisante, par un quotidien desséchant.[631]

Lilas was full of hope like all the people who fervently struggled to get their freedom back. However, post-independence brought a sterile reality, Lilas regrets the past when hope still enabled people to survive. In her tone, Lilas seems to be disappointed. Instead of growth and progress, the post-independence era sees decay and a serious alienation of the self from society: Lilas is detached from her society because she is different from the majority, but her scepticism about the future makes her feel an enormous void around her. Disillusionment is

[629] Ibid., 145.
[630] Ibid., 138.
[631] Ibid., 163.

one of the greatest problems confronting the newly independent societies due to local political and social appraisals.

Both Lilas and Ali love their country and make a conscious effort to fight back the inward conflict that resurrects from within their tormented selves, Lilas confesses that she 'essay parfois de [se] convaincre qu'il [Ali] a raison. Que c'est [elle] qui [est] toujours insatisfaite. Que [elle] n'[a] pas à[se] sentir brimée et agressée de toute part'.[632] Lilas' situation is very critical; she believes that the problem is in her and not in the society. As a consequence of this feeling, a gap starts to be created between Lilas and the society, and then she becomes socially alienated, and no longer at ease. Lilas says: 'je ne suis plus sûre de rien. Pas même de vouloir me plonger dans un enfant. Et si c'est une fille, sera-t-elle plus heureuse, ou simplement moins tourmentée que moi? Si seulement je pouvais en être certaine!'[633] Lilas is psychologically annihilated, and her perception of the future is hazy. Lilas is anxious about the future of the second generation to which her daughter belongs –by extension all young people. She says: 'je ne veux pas que ma fille grandisse dans cet environnement'.[634] Given that the state of Algeria was decadent, Lilas wonders to what would life resemble in the coming years because:

> On dit aujourd'hui qu'Alger a perdu son âme … Alger reste, encore et malgré tout, ville de rencontres, de ruptures et de déchirements, de scènes de liesse ou de désespoir. Je ne saurais dire d'où vient cet appel, cette envie d'aller à la rencontre de la ville. Peut-être du sentiment de plus en plus aigu d'une lente détérioration, lente mais irréversible, et le besoin de me raccrocher à l'histoire, de rechercher dans les rues, dans les pierres, et sur les visages des hommes et des femmes, les traces, l'espoir d'une possible résurrection.[635]

Such a passage makes obvious Lila's loss. Her view of the country is depressing, emptiness and despair are what characterise Algiers. In W. B. Yeats' words, Lilas is lost in a nightmarish scene, she is like the falcon which turns in a spiral without having the ability to

[632] Ibid., 166.
[633] Ibid.
[634] Ibid., 178.
[635] Ibid., 186.

land because it does hear the falconer. Likewise, Lilas' spath is a mere disillusion, 'plus nous avançons, plus nos rêves s'éloignent'.[636] She has no objective because she lives in a country where anarchy is loosed upon everything.[637]

Ali, on the other hand, suffers 'd'avoir un esprit et des comportements incompatibles avec [la] culture arabo-musulmane'.[638] He has been accused of renegation amongst his peers at work because:

> Je m'insurge contre l'obligation de plaider en arabe classique sur injonction d'un juge arabophone qui ne supportait pas mon intervention dans une langue qu'il a qualifiée d'arabe francisé. Il est vrai qu'il m'arrive souvent, comme bon nombres de confrères de mon âge et qui ont eu le même parcours universitaire que le mien, de commencer mes plaidoiries par les formules convenues en arabe, mais de les terminer en français, seule langue dans laquelle il m'est possible d'exposer clairement les faits et de me référer à la loi. Le magistrat m'a menacé de poursuites pour outrage parce que j'ai aussitôt répondu que je n'étais pas directement impliqué dans l'histoire de l'Algérie, et que je n'étais pour rien dans la colonisation française. Tout se passe aujourd'hui comme si nous devions payer le prix de cette colonisation dont nous représentons, bien malgré nous, une séquelle.[639]

In the above statement, Ali is marginalised and looked down upon because of a fact he is not responsible for: the cultural hybridity of Ali has been the by-product of the progression from colonialism to post-independence. As a consequence, Ali is denounced and belittled by his young colleagues because the latter attended the Algerian Arab school. According to Fanon, if someone takes up the language of the coloniser, then s/he accepts to adopt his culture and adheres to its standards. The issue is that different languages imply different views of the world. Hence, Ali as compared to his fellow Arabic-speaking colleagues has a different world view which is not compatible with theirs. That is, we not only speak in particular languages,

[636] Ibid., 228.
[637] William Y. Butler. 'The Second Coming.' Cambridge: Peacework **N**° 301, 1999/2000, p. 1.
[638] Bey. *Bleu Blanc Vert*, p. 226.
[639] Ibid., 225.

but, more fundamentally become the person we become because of the particular language community in which we grew up.[640]

Unlike anything else, language in particular resonates with people's 'distinctive ways of being in the world'.[641] Ngugi Wa Thiong'o adheres to Fanon's position, contending that 'the bullet was the means of physical subjugation. Language was the means of spiritual subjugation'.[642] By now, the common theoretical claims Fanon and Ngugi share go in line with the principles that Arabic speakers use in order to justify their positions towards Francophone Algerians. With this context in mind, the hybrid generation grew tormented because of the radical and urgent need to go back to Arabisation and Islamism. This generation feels rather positive about hybridity: Ali is at ease when he joins French to Arabic because it is the best way he can express his ideas.

To this end, after the Islamic Salvation Front triumphed, culturally hybrid people were assumed to be the wrong people in the wrong place. Lilas, Ali, and Samir –Lilas' brother- started to think of fleeing the country because 'la révolution algérienne garantit le droit d'asile à tous ceux qui luttent pour la liberté'.[643] As compared to Ali and Lilas, the situation of Samir is more complex; 'je sais aujourd'hui pourquoi il est parti. Pourquoi il lui était impossible de confier son tourment à quiconque. Tourment causé par la pire des choses qui puissent arriver dans une société aussi radicale dans ses rejets et ses interdits que la nôtre. Une société qui nie, condamne et réprime farouchement toute différence, toute déviance… chaque allusion, chaque regard, chaque mot, le plongeaient dans des abîmes de désespoir' because of his homosexuality.[644] When cultural intolerability was so obvious in post-independence Algeria,

[640] Viveka Velupillai. *Pidgins, Creoles and Mixed Languages*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2015, p. 15.
[641] Ibid., 6.
[642] Ngũgĩ. *Decolonising the Mind,* p. 1986.
[643] Bey. *Bleu Blanc Vert*, p. 132.
[644] Ibid., 232.

the only possibility for a new start was to flee towards the country where freedom, tolerability and equality were basic principles.

In the other text *Americanah,* the story also represents characters who experience this same feeling of disillusionment because of cultural hybridity. Before Ifemelu travels to America, she imagines the streets and houses to be like those shown in the Black American serials *Cosby Show.* However, when she arrives there, Ifemelu feels she is always waiting for the 'real America' to disclose itself because reality proves to be far from resembling what was shown on TV. Ifemelu realises that she:

> Came from a country where race was not an issue; [she] did not think of [herself] as black and [she] only became black when [she] came to America. When you are black in America and you fall in love with a white person, race doesn't matter when you're alone together because it's just you and your love. But the minute you step outside, race matters. But we don't talk about it. We don't even tell our white partners the small things that piss us off and the things we wish they understood better, because we're worried they will say we're overreacting, or we're being too sensitive. And we don't want them to say, Look how far we've come, just forty years ago it would have been illegal for us to even be a couple blah blah blah.[645]

This passage shows the way Adichie 'expands her boundaries to expose the relationship between blacks and whites in different parts of the world', namely America and England. For Ifemelu, 'who grew up with romanticised notions of the West', race has never been an issue in Nigeria where she comes from.[646] Her notion of being black started from the moment she went to the United States. Ifemelu describes a subject that has been and still is a very sensitive issue which is racism. She says that if a black person falls in love with a white person, race would not be an obstacle for their relationship. However, it would attract attention and critics the day it becomes public. In the United States, Ifemelu belongs to a minority group whose image is marginalised and looked down upon. Such a situation becomes obvious because:

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[645] Adichie. *Americanah*, p. 212.
[646] Jenefer A. Menorah. 'Racism in Adichie's Americanah.'*Research Journal of English Language and Literature (RJELAL)*, vol. 5, issue. 3, 2017, pp. 586-588.

> Nigeria particularly has experienced mostly negative exposure in global media, a major negative aspect being the myth creation of what its people are perceived to be contrary to what they really are. Decades after Africa's colonial experience, the victor's right to history persists in perpetuating false claims about the basic humanity of Blacks.[647]

According to what has been claimed in the above passage, Ifemelu is a victim of the propaganda spread by the media. In a country such as the United States, race and class are the social parameters that either grant respect to any human, or deprive them from it. Van de Berge explains that 'the Negro was defined as subhuman, a disenfranchised part of the polity, as a special form of chattel, assessed as three fifths of a man by constitutional compromise between South and North'.[648] As a consequence of these social and political facts, the issue of identity has become a tormenting issue in the life of Ifemelu.

Besides that, at a given time Dike —the cousin of Ifemelu who lives in America— attempts to commit suicide because of the void that characterises his life. When the society imposes alienation on particular citizens, tragic consequences such as suicide and crimes become very frequent. Deeply affected by the incident, Ifemelu immediately emails Obinze to tell him what just happened: 'Dike attempted suicide. I didn't want to tell you earlier and I don't know why'. Even the speech tone Ifemelu uses unveils much about her state of being: normally, in such a situation a person does not hesitate to inform the people surrounding her in order to find support, but Ifemelu is hesitant to do that because she is disorientated, fearful and disillusioned.

The novel also shows the case of Aunty Uju —Dike's mother— who initially went to America to have a better life, but when she arrives there Uju is confronted with the harsh reality of being Black and living in America. Now, Uju only buys what's on sale. Ifemelu notices that she adopts an American accent when she speaks to white Americans because she

[647] Amonyeze Chinenye. 'Writing a New Reputation: Liminality and Bicultural Identity in Chimamanda Adichie's Americanah.' *Journal of Black Studies*. California: SAGE Open, 2017, pp. 1-9.
[648] Ibid., 2.

knows that if she discloses her African accent she will be discriminated against. Aunty Uju finally admits that she had thought things would be better for her and Dike after all this time in America, but she is still studying and working several jobs in order to provide for her child. Ifemelu feels bad, and notices that Aunty Uju is brought down to her knees and looks so much less put-together than she did in Nigeria. She thinks, 'America has subdued her'.

In *Bleu Blanc Vert*, Algeria appears to be in total anarchy. The state is still chasing terrorists, and terrorists are destroying it. There have been huge 'material losses that destroyed the national economy and painted a dark image of Algeria'.[649] Ali and Lilas are witnessing human tragedies daily: people are killed and buildings are destroyed. Lilas says 'j'ai peur pour moi, pour ma fille, pour nous, j'ai peur de ce qui est en train de se jouer en ce moment même, sous nos yeux impuissants'.[650] There is no escape in Algeria especially that the 'victoire du FIS aux élections municipales' has been announced. As a result of the disappointing news 'Ali m'a appris que plusieurs de nos amis avaient commencé à se préparer au départ. Certains se sont déjà exilés, tout de suite après l'annonce de la victoire du FIS aux législatives'.[651] For Ali and Lilas, things will not be different as they decided:

> d'aller en France. Pour la première fois … Pour moi [Ali], ce sera la première traversée de la Méditerranée. Lilas, elle, est déjà allée en France, mais elle était enfant et n'en garde que de très vagues souvenirs ... Il me tarde de partir. Non seulement pour découvrir un pays qui a fait longtemps partie de ma vie, mais surtout pour perdre de vue, un temps, les nuages qui s'amoncellent dans le lointain.[652]

The passage shows that due to national disturbance, Lilas and Ali decided to go overseas, to land in the country that has long been part of their life without them physically meeting it. Ali states that he has never been to France, so he will discover it for the first time. Nevertheless,

[649] Belgacem Tahchi. 'Algeria, a Post-Dark-Decade Peace Process. From Successful Experience to a Reproducible Model, the Long Way.' Diss. Université de la Sorbonne, 2018, p. 2.
[650] Bey. *Bleu Blanc Vert*, p. 261.
[651] Ibid., 282.
[652] Ibid., 248.

Lilas has been there only once when she was a child, but she has very vague memories. It is clear in the passage that Ali is very impatient to leave Algeria and go to France not because he hates his home country but in order to be far from the sad reality that reigns in there. Once settled in France, Lilas was very surprised: she finally visited beautiful places she had read about in literature. The couple had to go to the hotel to book an en-suite, 'le jeune homme … [leur] pose des questions qui lui sont posées. Durée du séjour, chambre simple ou double, nationalité. Puis il repose le combiné. Il a l'air gêné. Je ne crois pas que vous puissiez y aller. Ali … lui demande pourquoi. On vient de me demander si vous n'étiez pas euh … enfin, si vous étiez propres'.[653] This last scene is overwhelming: Lilas and Ali who belong to the educated, and cultivated category have been struck down because of the reaction of the French receptionist. As soon as they said they were Algerians, Lilas and Ali were immediately rejected regardless of who they really are. Hence, Ali and Lilas move from an enthusiastic mode, in which they finally thought they woke up from a haunting nightmare, to a desperate situation, confronting a harsher reality where they realise that they have no place in this world.

Ultimately, the ordeal of unbelonging occurs to the characters of both novels, the characters experience it most when they go and live in the metropolises thinking they will be better. Ifemelu left Nigeria in order to study in the USA because Nigerian universities organised recurrent strikes while Obinze went to England because he was unsatisfied with his life in Nigeria. On the other hand, Lilas and Ali suffered serious social and political problems in Algeria, so they decided to go to France where they can find an environment inoffensive to their culture. However, the idea of fleeing their own countries so as to find refuge in the metropolises proved to have tremendous effects on their personalities: Ifemelu became depressive mainly because of racism and individualism, Obinze was subjected to humiliation

[653] Ibid., 249-250.

because he was a clandestine in England. Likewise, Lilas and Ali, despite them being respectful and educated, were the victims of prejudice because of their Algerian nationality. According to this, both Bey and Adichie depict fleeing towards the metropolises as a major source of disillusionment because it creates displacement, alienation and depression. The novels' characters thought of leaving their country of birth as an escape from troubles but the reality was that this decision was actually the source of troubles. The characters found themselves longing for their homelands anew because of racism, and depression or anxiety.

2.3 Towards the Hybrid Affirmation of Postcolonial Identity

In my earlier discussions, I note that cultural hybridity is one of the main elements Bey and Adichie disclose about the Algerian and Nigerian characters. As these characters are born a few years before independence, they have been subjected to the institutional programme designed by the colonisers. The institutional effect, before and after independence, draw attention to the cultural hybridity of the characters —in the Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian contexts. Yet this section is more than just an attempt to point out the hybridity of characters, it is rather an analysis of the affirmation of the self after a long trajectory loaded by many traumatising experiences. This section essentially addresses the question of 'hybrid affirmation' by observing the attitudes of the postcolonial characters at the end of the narratives. To begin with, the first subsection demonstrates that cultural hybridity is a fact in Algeria and Nigeria because of the colonial encounter. The second subsection shows that despite the apparent conflicts around cultural hybridity, the characters finally assume their hybrid identity. The discussion of 'hybrid affirmation' is part of a number of attempts to appease tensions around the identity of the postcolonial individual as well as the colonial legacy. As a mode of interrogation, one might question the relationship between 'hybrid affirmation' and the appeasing implications it involves? The answer is that the postcolonial character is depicted as psychologically disillusioned and depressed because s/he is perceived

as a threat to the national culture, and an outcast to the ex-colonising culture. In other words, these individuals are subjected to marginalisation in their home country, and to humiliation in the metropolis. As a result of their suffering, I second that the term 'hybrid affirmation' has the potential to reframe the widespread depiction of culturally hybrid characters who are presented as displaced and alienated, such as Lilas and Ali —the heroes of *Bleu Blanc Vert*— 'après avoir passé toute une vie à essayer de n'être plus qu'une ombre blanche'.[654] As a solution, 'hybrid affirmation' lessens the conflicts by adjusting the vision of literary criticism towards the postcolonial character.

In *Bleu Blanc Vert* and *Americanah*, the characters have at the end come to the evidence that being culturally hybrid do not involve the unsettling and dismantling of the self and the environment. In this sense, they have come back to their home lands, and started to preoccupy themselves with their life projects. Being culturally hybrid has actually not prevented them from living and succeeding in life, '[Ali] dit que l'avenir appartient à ceux qui savent façonner leurs rêves à la mesure du monde qui les entoure.'[655]

What is also illustrative of 'hybrid affirmation' in *Americanah*, is the character of Ginika —Ifemelu's best friend. After the political troubles that occurred in Nigeria, the family of Ginika decided to go to America. When speaking, 'Ginika had lapsed into Nigerian English, a dated, overcooked version, eager to prove how unchanged she was … And now she was saying 'shay you know' and Ifemelu did not have the heart to tell her that nobody said 'shay' anymore'.[656] Despite the fact that she is a Nigerian living in America and mastering the English language, Ginika remains faithful to her origins, and she proudly exhibits both cultures that form her hybrid identity. She neither suffers from nor complains about that.

[654] Bey. *Bleu Blanc Vert*, p. 115.
[655] Ibid., 99.
[656] Adichie. *Americanah*, p. 92.

The last sequences of the novels show hybrid characters who are more self-confident, and more at ease with who they are. For instance, 'la mère de Lilas semble s'être affranchie depuis qu'elle a décidé de ne plus se voiler pour sortir', Ali contends that '[ils ont] fait beaucoup de progrès.'[657] Life has become better, people no longer focus on cultural differences, they are now concerned with more serious issues such as 'conquérir. Découvrir. Construire. Fonder. Créer. Façonner. Forger. [et] Produire' in order to help the country develop.[658] In addition to this, Lilas got rid of the shell she lived in: she has stopped tormenting herself by inward dialogues, hesitations, and cultural constraints. Ali tells her:

> Cette supériorité que tu as aujourd'hui sur [les femmes du passé]. Et ton aisance dans ton rapport au monde du dehors. Fais le bilan de nos conquêtes, ... Tu n'as jamais porté le voile. Il n'en a jamais été question. Personne ne t'a jamais empêché de faire des études. Au contraire. Tu travailles, tu sors sans demander d'autorisation à quiconque. Bientôt tu conduiras notre voiture quand nous en aurons une. Et tu as choisi toi-même ton mari et quel mari! C'est ça la vraie révolution. Et il éclate de rire.[659]

In the above passage, Ali counts the numerous virtues Lilas enjoys. The phrase 'ton aisance dans ton rapport au monde du dehors' is very important here, that is, in the sentence the outer world has a secondary position in terms of importance, what comes first is 'ton rapport' — your— which means that what matters first and most is the self: the self is the element of priority in one's life. When the person is at peace with his/herself, then its relation to the outer world becomes stable. In the opposite situation, if the word order in that sentence was reverted in this way 'le monde du dehors par rapport à toi', the self would come in a second position, and would depend on the outer world as a parameter that controls all his/her deeds, intentions and state of being.

Lilas has finally come to the conclusion that the situation of her life will be better only when she assumes her hybridity:

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[657] Bey. *Bleu Blanc Vert*, pp. 166-118.
[658] Ibid., 207.
[659] Ibid., 166.

> [Si] j'accepte les choses telles qu'elles sont, admettons enfin que je me rende à ces arguments, que je prenne enfin conscience de mon statut privilégié. Que je renonce à ce comportement incompréhensible pour toute personne sensée. Que je rentre dans le rang. Que je jette dans le vent ces désirs d'un bonheur fait de tout petits riens qui peuvent tout changer, désirs incompatibles avec la réalité qui est la nôtre. Que je me tourne vers les autres, au lieu de m'apitoyer sur un sort comme toute enviable. Que j'étouffe cette voix séditieuse qui me souffle de tout plaquer, de tout recommencer. Que je cesse de me demander chaque matin comment faire une brèche dans ce monde qui se referme au seuil du jour, comme un énorme crapaud aux yeux glauques et qui à peine sorti d'un marécage n'a d'autre désir que de s'y plonger à nouveau.[660]

The above confession shows the extent to which Lilas has become relieved when she finally accepts reality as it is without problematising or dramatising it. Lilas has finally realised that her outer world was mere anarchy because she surrendered to her inwardly ambivalent sentiments. She is now conscious that she has to recognise the value of the virtues she has in her life such as her job, her family and especially her freedom. She now knows that she has to get rid of the irrealisable desires that prevented her from living her present, it is the way Lilas affirms her hybrid identity.

Similarly, Ifemelu has the conviction that she can never be seen differently than an African in the United States. Despite the fact that she was subjected to racism, depression and marginalisation, Ifemelu never tried to fake her accent to deceive white Americans and make herself seem Black American. One day, Aisha asks Ifemelu why she doesn't straighten her hair with chemicals. Ifemelu defensively finds herself explaining that she prefers keeping her natural hair as God created it, she also explains how it can be combed if it is properly moisturised. Ifemelu brought her own comb and combed her hair herself. Accordingly, Ifemelu was very imposing in that scene, all Africans put chemicals to soften their in order to look prettier, yet by refusing to do so, Ifemelu imposes her personality. One day Ifemelu was offered a job where she had to look after her physical appearance. So, she tried to put on chemicals to soften her hair, yet she felt more at ease if she kept them natural. According to

[660] Bey. *Bleu Blanc Vert*, p. 218.

this, even though Ifemelu tried hair chemicals and looked nicer, she preferred her hair being natural as a sign of hybrid affirmation. In the novel, Adichie mentions Happily Kinky Nappy. com, a website on which can be found a whole online community of black women embracing their natural hair, to emphasise the importance of being united while defending a cause. Ifemelu uses Happily Kinky Nappy. com and finds a whole online community of black women embracing their natural hair. Ifemelu starts ordering homemade products for her hair and feels better about herself. Ifemelu looks in the mirror and realises that she has fallen in love with her natural hair. Accordingly, this scene holds a politicised message: blacks' natural hair or braided hair is looked down upon whereas blacks' hair with chemicals is seen as more professional. Yet, Ifemelu keeps them natural be it for work or daily life as a sign of 'hybrid affirmation'.

In both narratives, we have merely lived thirty years of post-independence in few pages, yet what is important is that 'personne ne peut assassiner l'espoir … l'espoir appartient à la vie. C'est la vie même qui se défend'.[661] Indeed, this end of the narrative is very promising, the characters have managed to assume their cultural hybridity, and they no longer suffer because of it. On the contrary, they are active and important elements of the culturally hybrid society.

In conclusion, by investigating the extent to which Bey and Adichie's novels depict the post-independence condition of indigenous Algerian and Nigerian populations and by comparing these narratives which are from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, I have disclosed a fresher reading approach that applies to the selected prose narratives in particular and may apply to texts dealing with post-independence in general. Despite scholars' attempts to provide positive interpretations of cultural hybridity, postcolonial texts be they Francophone or Anglophone have until now predominantly been contextualised and analysed

[661] Ibid., 284.

within the themes of marginalisation, disillusionment, displacement and alienation. My comparison of *Bleu Blanc Vert* and *Americanah* has built on and developed a new notion related to cultural hybridity. Specifically, it is 'hybrid affirmation' which has attempted to examine the state of the post-independence self so as to shed light on the post-traumatic growth of the characters, and their capacity to transcends multiple traumas and anarchy to finally build an affirmed personality.

I maintain that such an expression of 'hybrid affirmation' offers a viable solution to some of the imbalances and tensions outlined in *Bleu Blanc Vert* and *Americanah* —by a large extent postcolonial literature, and as we have seen with the cases of Ifemelu, Obinze, Lilas and Ali, when the notion of 'hybrid affirmation' is applied to the texts, many long-held assumptions about identity construction are fixed. Despite being socially alienated, Ali and Lilas indeed suffer. However, they manage to surrender the difficulties thanks to reflection and assumption of their hybrid identity. Likewise, Ifemelu portrays a culturally hybrid person par excellence, in America she experiences the real meaning of otherness due to her skin colour, back home she is also seen differently because she comes from America. While reading we understand the unease she experiences due to cultural differences and background. Nevertheless, Ifemelu remains very strong. Her strength and confidence can be drawn to 'hybrid affirmation' principal.

Conclusion

History Bears Witness that Strength is Achieved through Hardship

> *"Life's reality is that we cannot bounce back. We cannot bounce back because we cannot go back in time to the people we used to be. The parent who loses a child never bounces back. The nineteen-year-old marine who sails for war is gone forever, even if he returns. 'What's done cannot be undone,' and some of what life does to us is harsh."*[662]

People often think of adversity as defeat. While adversity has the potential to break an individual, if they surrender to it, it can often be a way to success. This is exactly what I have sought to prove throughout this thesis. What happens to us in life becomes part of us and constitutes our identity. Even if life treats us mercilessly on some occasions and we cannot bounce back, we have to turn challenging incidents into an opportunity to strengthen our personality and move forward. Finding some way to overcome traumatic experiences is the attitude I analyse in the behaviour of the characters in this thesis. As a response to trauma, 'bouncing back' is particularly an important attitude because it is the behaviour that enables postcolonial characters to reach 'hybrid affirmation'. In the introduction, I have stated that the concept of 'hybrid affirmation' is a possibility to pacifying social tensions and lessening suffering because of cultural hybridity. The texts studied here reveal the omnipresence of antagonistic tensions between the subaltern —the colonised— and the imperialist —the coloniser, between members of the same society, and towards the colonial legacy.

What I have sought to demonstrate through this research is the fact that the conflicts and the relational tensions that the culturally hybrid postcolonial subject faces must not

[662] Eric Greitens. *Resilience: Hard-Won Wisdom for Living a Better Life*. Boston and New York: Mariner Books, 2016, p. 72.

sentence them to rejection, and must not deteriorate their personality. Rather, I have shown that despite all the traumatic experiences the postcolonial individual undergoes through, there still is room for growing stronger. The philosophy that 'hybrid affirmation' promotes is that we cannot change our past or erase it. Our past will always hold what we or others claim right or wrong, we can not avoid it. Indeed, we are not responsible for the traumas and incidents that happen in our life, we are not responsible for the colonisation of our country, we are not responsible for terrorist attacks that mark our history. However, we are responsible for how to deal with them. Each person can develop the virtue of resilience for a better present and a better future. Resilience is primordial to reach 'hybrid affirmation'. Therefore, 'hybrid affirmation' does not only promote self acceptance and affirmation, but also it incites others to overcome the identity crisis which has overwhelmed the post-independence era. This is what 'hybrid affirmation' is about.

My starting point was the predicament of postcolonial peoples who have to deal with the consequences of the acculturation process that have been inflicted upon them by colonialism. Based on the evidence laid out in this thesis, I demonstrate that despite being a victim of different historic events such as colonialism, war, and terrorism, the postcolonial individual continues to be victimised by postcolonial criticism. Therefore, I contend that researchers like the author of this thesis have a social role to play, in particular in ex-colonial countries, such as the one which I belong to. For me, the change will start when postcolonial criticism becomes more adapted to convey a more positive assessment of the value of culturally hybrid postcolonial subjects. As part of this process of change 'hybrid affirmation' is a strong contender. As a result of its application, some form of negative interpretations and antagonistic tensions are likely to disappear and become part of remote history.

Analysing Dib's Algerian trilogy —*Algérie*— alongside Achebe's *The African Trilogy* has revealed that a range of literary criticism has dealt with limited subjects that focused on

concepts of famine, poverty, clash between traditions and modernity. Dib's *Algérie* has been associated with the themes of starvation, poverty, resistance and the working conditions of the *fellahs* —agricultural labourers, whereas Achebe's trilogy has been associated with multiculturalism, the distortion of local culture and the tensions between tradition and modernity. My engagement with existing criticism has shown that the trilogies constitute a good source for studying the theme of subalternity as a starting point for a long trajectory of emancipation. The main principle of this investigation has been to study the transformation of the indigenous Algerian and Nigerian populations from a state of subjugation to a state of affirmation. Therefore, to study this process of change, I deployed tools such as theories and concepts to get to the outcome of this emancipation which is 'hybrid affirmation'. I found that the main idea of subalternity was highly present in these trilogies, and my questioning of it was in light of seeing whether submission and subjugation to the coloniser can ever be an instigator of power. Using some theoretical lenses, I have found that the Foucauldian logic contends that power is similar to a net organisation where people contribute to the circulation of power —some of them wield power and others are subjected to it.[663] This led to the understanding that that power cannot circulate if one of its elements —power executors = coloniser/ undergoers = the subalterns— is absent. Throughout the trilogies, I have observed the omnipresence of manichaean dialogism which might validate the power relation between power executer/undergoer —which stands for subaltern, and disproved the hypothesis which asserts that subalternity instigates power. The texts revealed that despite suffering from poverty, subjugation and cultural tensions, the indigenous people demonstrated resistance and a determined will to move beyond the chains of imperialism. Drawing on this observation, I could validate the assumption that subjugation generates power, and paves the way to 'hybrid affirmation' after going through different stages of development —which are resistance and

[663] Michel Foucault. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. New York : Pantheon Book, 1980, p. 98.

violence. Benabi's concept of 'colonisabilité' examined the reasons for the aptitude of the subaltern to be colonised, while Spivak's theory considered the reasons for the silencing of the subaltern. Fanon's theory of violence, meanwhile, looked for the possibility for the subaltern to break free from the chains of repression. Brought together as a mutually enriching set of theoretical lenses, these works supported the thread of the thesis's argument for the positive, liberating dimension to 'hybrid affirmation', and helped establish the conclusion that—in the cases of these two nations —subalternity can, indeed, foster resistance.

The texts analysed for the next stage dealt with the history of colonialism and resistance. Considering *Ce Que le Jour Doit à la Nuit* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* revealed that the characters demonstrate signs of a shared trajectory, and similarities in the nature of their empowerment that are established through the comparative approach. As implied by Spivak's theory of the subaltern, the Algerian and Nigerian subjugated peoples ceased to be subaltern when they spoke for themselves.[664] It has been discerned that the existing literary criticism relating to these texts revolved around the narratological structure, the postcolonial aspects of the novel —as far as the Francophone text is concerned— while the existing studies of the Anglophone text turned around feminism, and the atrocities of the war. As my comparison has demonstrated, both these texts opened themselves up for the theme of agency permitting the investigation on the emancipation of indigenous Algerians and Nigerians to transcend the limitations of subalternity and gradually approach 'hybrid affirmation'. Like Asante, Chakrabarty, and Alsop et al, I argue that the self-determination of subalterns is the essence of change. This assumption has been proved by the comparative reading of Khadra and Adichie's texts, where the characters do not obey the coloniser/settler instructions. Rather, the postcolonial characters display strong character in acting the way it sounds correct to them.

[664] Spivak. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', pp. 271 – 313.

This project moves forward to analyse the developmental trajectory of Nigeria and Algeria. This time, it reads the theme of postcolonial violence in Bey's *Puisque mon Coeur est Mort* and Hoffmann and Ibrahim's *A Gift from Darkness: How I Escaped with my Daughter from Boko Haram*. Historically, this part informs us about the atrocities of post-colonial episodes of terrorism Algerians and Nigerians have been through. This period of history is very important in the study of the self-development of indigenous peoples because it accentuates the inner force and self-determination of these peoples to transcend difficulties. In these texts, terrorism marks the gaining of independence and the troubles of post-independence because terrorist insurgencies —FIS in Algeria and Boko Haram in Nigeria— occurred years after those countries gained independence. At that stage, the important point is to analyse the impact of trauma on the self, and the ways trauma victims could overcome this difficulty. Drawing on Van Der Kolk's observations on trauma patients, I could draw parallels with characters from the novels in the processes of overcoming psychological trauma and the movement towards hybrid affirmation. The characters display a remarkable growth of the self. This demonstrates how important are the inner power and determination in changing one's life from a state of being to a better one.

The project ends with the final stagein the trajectory of emancipation of the indigenous peoples. It analyses the 'hybrid affirmation' of the postcolonial character in Maissa Bey's *Bleu Blanc Vert* and Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie's *Americanah*. 'Hybrid affirmation' is a fresh approach proposed by this project after long observations and readings of postcolonial criticism. 'Hybrid affirmation' sees predominantly the positive side of postcolonial characters —namely agency, resilience, and self-affirmation— which has long been overlooked by postcolonial critics. On the basis of Homi K. Bhabha's theory of hybridity, Mikhail Bakhtin's view on hybridity, Jacques Derrida's 'différance', and Bill Ashcroft's 'transnational' approach, 'hybrid affirmation' denounces the views based on dichotomies that split the world

into opposing categories, creating as such conflicts of interests, tensions and differences. Therefore, 'hybrid affirmation' is an approach intended to be used by researchers —of postcolonial studies namely, but can also be used by psychology and sociology researchers, and it can be applied by critics to study the resilience of postcolonial characters. In fact, secondary studies in the last chapter have shown that the most common theory of hybridity that is used in postcolonial studies is Bhabha's theory of hybridity, I have noticed that despite the fact that Bhabha's theory has been introduced to the world in the late twentieth century, problems of racism, ethnic intolerance, cultural tensions, social alienation, and disillusionment are persisting problems. That is to say, today postcolonial literary studies are still overwhelmed by the question of identity, and cultural tensions. As a result, this leads me to understand that Bhabha's theory has been describing a socio-political and cultural situation without his views necessarily being put into practice in reality. Therefore, 'hybrid affirmation' is introduced as literary approach that needs to be applied in postcolonial criticism. The importance of approaching postcolonial texts from a 'hybrid affirmation' perspective will provide secondary sources that highlight the positive assets of postcolonial individuals. As a consequence, people — mainly readers— will become acquainted with this perspective, and the postcolonial mindset will start to be reshaped. As a consequence, 'hybrid affirmation' will be a state achievable by individuals. Then, individuals facing rejection because of their cultural hybridity in postcolonial societies will assume their hybrid identity and accept it. If each culturally hybrid individual achieves this first step, this way 'hybrid affirmation' will spread from an individual level to a community level. Thus, it will become a common situation, and people who reject it will start to be acquainted with it. Nevertheless, it is important to note that this approach absolutely does not deny the disillusionment, trauma, and the socio-political conflicts caused by imperialism. On the contrary, it acknowledges these consequences and confirms that they were direct consequences of imperialism. However, such

subjects of conflicts have occupied a remarkable space in the field of postcolonialism; and it is my view that if studies continue in highlighting this unique negative side of postcolonial texts, conflicts will persist. Therefore, it is important to transcend this phase by liberating some space for a fresh positive thinking; the postcolonial character is no longer in crisis, s/he is impressive because not everyone is able to overcome colonialism, terrorism, trauma, and post-independence disillusionment and still be resilient.

Approaching the selected texts through the framework of subalternity, resistance, violence and 'hybrid affirmation' also disclosed that colonial history and the development of the peoples in these two nations can be conveyed through literature. That is, in the novels selected for this study, the subjugation to the hegemony of imperialism, the process of decolonisation and the personal development of indigenous peoples show parallelism to a great extent. By negotiating the Franco-Algerian and the Anglo-Nigerian postcolonial texts in a juxtaposed way, I am first showing that my research has a wider impact, it is not only about Algeria or Nigeria, it is actually universal —'hybrid affirmation' applies to postcolonial societies worldwide. Also, I want to show that the interdisciplinary dialogue between literature and history is another way of conveying the history of nations. The evidence provided throughout this essay proves that studies have all too often been dealing with Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian literatures in isolation. Thus, my aim through comparing these disciplines and corpuses is not only to demonstrate the universality of 'hybrid affirmation', but also to show that history is accessible through literature. Bringing these linguistically and culturally distinct literatures together in a comparative framework provides clear answers to my interrogations about the various aspects these literatures share, such aspects are colonial experience, resistance, violence, and independence, which constitute key elements in tracing the history of Algerian and Nigerian postcolonial populations. This project has built on these existing literatures and themes to elaborate a new comparison where themes

are organised according to the development of Algerian and Nigerian peoples so as to show their emancipation trajectory from subalternity to 'hybrid affirmation', and to inform about their history via literature.

Although studies dealing with the complementarity of history and literature have been a growing trend in the domain of literary and comparative studies, I can tell —based on the results of this research— that comparative studies about Franco-Algerian and Anglo-Nigerian literatures are almost non-existent. This project does not seek to provide a thorough historical analysis of Algeria and Nigeria, but rather to provide insights into how these peoples have attempted to manage their hybridity through the narratives of writers originating from both countries. The cross-linguistic approach is maintained along the chapters, and it has allowed us to show that neither geographic boundaries nor linguistic and cultural differences prevent us from drawing historical and developmental comparative analysis. This project has focused particularly on the development of the Algerian and Nigerian populations from a state of passivity to one of agency in a postcolonial context so as to introduce the concept of 'hybrid affirmation', It is a concept that involves the affirmation of the hybrid identity, coming to describe the state of indigenous peoples who have been affected by colonisation and whose identities have been altered by the coexistence of their local cultures and the culture of the coloniser. In this project, this concept has been positioned as the very last stage of the trajectory of the development of Algerian and Nigerian peoples not only to show from what position they have departed and to what position they have arrived, but also to acknowledge the strength of culturally hybrid peoples who could affirm themselves despite social constraints and the trauma they went through.

I argue that this project opens previously uncharted horizons for new discussions because it explores many issues that are pivotal to our understanding of the postcolonial condition. On the one hand, in literary studies, 'hybrid affirmation' can be developed into a

literary approach and can be officially integrated into the set of literary tools for analysing postcolonial novels.[665] In this way, we will start to see more positive interpretations of the hybrid postcolonial subject. On the other hand, at a political level, 'hybrid affirmation' appeases the tensions between politically opponent groups. Algerian or Nigerian postcolonial individuals who claim cultural purity should open up their minds to embrace diversity and acknowledge that cultural hybridity is a historic phenomenon that can not be escaped. Fighting this phenomenon would only create resistance and will perpetuate antagonistic tensions. However, coping with this phenomenon will stop conflicts, and will help move forward to another phase in history. Also, this innovative concept offers new directions to understand how postcolonial metropolitan societies should try to embrace the consequences of their own attempt to expand. Those societies are the ones that inflicted cultural changes on third world countries, so they should start to perceive cultural hybridity and metissage as an asset for their ex colonies. Having explored the situation in Algeria and Nigeria which are ex-colonised territories of France and Britain respectively, this thesis offers a valid framework for ex-colonised societies and helps to overcome the tensions these countries have been experiencing since decolonisation. By doing that, this thesis shows that it has a global impact: its findings are not only about postcolonial societies, but they can also apply to the metropolises.

Beyond the literary and historical implications of the present research, this study has also highlighted the possibility for a contemporary application of the concept of 'hybrid affirmation' within the sphere of international relations, as the concept encompasses an incentive to a global reconciliation, and the end of national and international antagonistic tensions. With this in mind, I conclude this thesis with the very premise which has

[665] Cohen Geoffrey, and David k Sherman. 'The Psychology of Change: Self-Affirmation and Social Psychological Intervention.' *Annual Review of Psychology*, vol. 65, 2014, pp. 333-371.

underpinned this study, a call for the learning of history of populations through literature. It is a diffusion of the key phases of history of Algeria and Nigeria that contributed to the formation of the hybrid postcolonial people. This thesis testifies that no history is free of hardship, and it is adversity which makes a strong being. It is through these experiences that we become the self-asserted, independent, and strong beings for whose interests thinkers such as Malek Bennabi, Frantz Fanon, Gayatri Spivak Chakravorty, and many other thinkers fought.[666]

[666] Ngũgĩ. *Decolonising the Mind*, p. 108.

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