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The Contemporary Algerian Novel and the Problem of Identity: Yasmina Khadra's "What the Day Owes the Night" as a Model

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Abstract: Algerian literature reflects the intellectual and historical development of Algerian consciousness, both collectively and from the perspective of individual writers. It contributes to crystallizing the evolving reality of the Algerian nation. The Algerian novel, written in French, has engaged with various societal aspects and their social and intellectual transformations. Yasmina Khadra's *What the Day Owes the Night* stands as a prominent example, exploring the problem of identity as a foundational element of its narrative. This raises the following questions:

- Why did Khadra choose to focus on identity in this novel?
- To what extent has the Algerian novel in French effectively reflected aspects of Algerian life, including political, social, and cultural themes?
- How does identity relate to the narrative of *What the Day Owes the Night*? How is the identity crisis acquired and portrayed within the novel?

we seek to understand the reasons behind our choice of topic, our motivation stems from a profound passion for contemporary Algerian literature, particularly as manifested in



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Yasmina Khadra's novel "The Advantage of Night over Day." This study aims to highlight the issue of identity within the narrative, which necessitates a great deal of precision and scrutiny.

The objective of this study is rooted in the belief that specialized literary, artistic, and scientific analyses of any literary work can assist researchers in enhancing their aesthetic sensibility, as well as cultivating a spirit of scientific inquiry among scholars and students.

The significance of this topic lies in its attempt to reveal the extent to which the issue of identity permeates contemporary Algerian novels, specifically in "The Advantage of Night over Day" by Yasmina Khadra, as a fertile area for study and examination. This section serves as an addition to the abstract.

Keywords: The Contemporary Algerian-Language - Identity - Representations - Yasmina Khadra - The Advantage of Night over Day" – Postcolonial Novel.

1. INTRODUCTION

The subject of Algerian literature written in the French and Arabic languages has sparked a range of methodological and ideological debates concerning its essence and identity. Its literary genres have been entangled in contradictions due to the linguistic duality inherently tied to Algeria's colonial history.

2. The Emergence of Algerian Literature in French:

Algerian literature, like global and Arab literatures, is shaped by historical, social, cultural, intellectual, and political factors. Foremost among these was French colonialism, which implemented policies of cultural erasure to obliterate the markers of Algeria's Arab-Islamic identity. The colonial authorities mobilized all means necessary to achieve this goal, including:

- Prohibiting Arabic education and dismantling Quranic schools and religious institutions (**zawaya**) that safeguarded the teaching of Arabic language and Islamic principles.

- Promoting missionary campaigns.

- Establishing French-language mixed schools in urban centers, where French settlers were concentrated, while Algerians remained a marginalized minority. The objective was to entrench French as the language of civilization and culture, while fostering a new generation detached from its heritage, one that idealized French values and internalized narratives justifying France's colonial claim over Algeria and its people.

"The fundamental principles of postcolonial literature and counter-discourse underscore that the artistic and literary process of decolonization requires a radical dismantling of European codes and a postcolonial subversion and appropriation of dominant discourse." (Boukemoum & Maoui, 2021, p. 45)

When addressing Algerian literature written in French—particularly the novel, which Algerians adopted as a medium to articulate their perspectives and emotions—it is imperative to confront the central dilemma plaguing this literary corpus: its identity and origins.

The use of French as the medium of expression has led some to categorize this literature as French, conflating Algerian novelists with European writers born in Algeria, such as **Albert Camus** and **Jean Sénac**, who also centered Algeria in their works. Certain European authors even "engaged with Algerian themes, expressing a genuine concern for the struggles of Algerians." (Adeeb, 1962, p. 53)

However, "the shared use of the French language did not homogenize Algerian and French writers, nor did it erase their differences. This divergence cannot be attributed solely to educational backgrounds, which were often similar for both groups, but rather to the distinct geographical, social, and historical contexts that shaped them. Algerians are the direct product of their land (...) whereas the other group remained merely attached to it." (Adeeb, 1962, p. 53)

From this perspective, it is necessary to define the concept of Algerian literature written in French as the body of work created by Algerian authors who carry within themselves the concerns of the Algerian nation. On the other hand, the works produced by another group can be categorized as French literature written in Algeria, which, in most cases, reflects the colonial and settler ideology. Thus, the difference lies in the vision, as "the perspective of French writers is entirely different from that of Algerian writers using the French language." (Al-Rakibi, 2009, p. 211)

It is worth noting that French culture, which dominated the majority of novelists writing in French at the time, does not necessarily indicate a French-oriented approach. This is especially true because that culture was imposed upon them, given their mastery of the French language, while their command of Arabic was almost non-existent. This deprived them of access to books that upheld the Arab-Islamic values of the Algerian nation.

As for the second and third generations, they learned the same language used by the first generation, but the circumstances were different. This is evident in the fact that some writers from the later generations wrote in both languages, reflecting their dual sources of influence. In other words, "the foundational cultural framework was shaped by a dual structure." (Buskin, 2007, p. 160)

3.The Evolutionary Stages of Algerian Literature

Algerian literature has gone through several stages, including:

Colonial Literature

This type of literature emerged as a natural result of the mixed schools established in Algeria and the group of educated Algerians who had a broad perspective on global developments. They adopted the French language, which they were forced to learn, as a substitute for their native Arabic. This language not only reinforced their connection to

French authorities but also became a tool for defending the rights of the Algerian people and advocating for their freedom. This was achieved through narrative writings that depicted the Algerian reality and exposed the falsehoods of the French administration.

The origins of this narrative writing go back to 1891, when Mohamed Ben Rahal (1856–1928) attempted it in a short story named 'La Vengeance de Cheikh' (The Sheikh's Revenge)(Djebbour, 2013, p. 23). This was a modest attempt by an Algerian writer to draw attention to the condition of his people under colonial rule. According to Diego, the story is "inspired by Algerian social traditions." (Mnouer, 2007, p. 37)

Due to its significance, this story was published in the *Algerian-Tunisian Literary and Artistic Journal* issue number 3 on September 26–October 3, 1889. (Djebbour, 2013, p. 36)

Algeria remained in a state of cultural stagnation and inertia until 1912, when **Ahmed Bourey** made a new attempt by publishing a collection of short stories in a book titled *Muslims and Christians*. However, these early attempts remained modest in scope and reach.

3.1. Assimilationist Colonial Literature

The early manifestations of Algerian literature written in French were attempts by a group of writers described as the *évolués* ("the evolved ones"). These writers were deeply convinced that France had succeeded in its "civilizational mission." Their works sought to present something to French and global public opinion that would justify the continued occupation of Algeria. (Ben Driss, 2011, p. 15)

This literary orientation was characterized by openly and unreservedly praising the "virtues" of colonialism and expressing admiration for French culture and civilization". (Mnouer, 2007, p. 95) This trend persisted until 1948, a period referred to as the *phase of acculturation and imitation*, during which Algerian writers demonstrated a degree of tolerance and harmony with their French counterparts.

In 1948, however, questions began to arise regarding the possibility of Algerians integrating with the French. This idea, advocated by only a small number of Algerians, marked a pivotal shift in the writing of the Algerian intellectual elite.

The historian of Algerian literature in French, **Jean Déjeux**, considers 1920 to be the true starting point of Algerian literature in French. This coincided with the publication of the first novel, *Ahmed Ben Mostapha, le Caïd* (*Ahmed Ben Mostapha, the Caïd*) by **Caïd Ben Cherif**. (Mnouer, 2007, p. 74) It was followed by other novels, such as *Zohra, la femme du mineur* (*Zohra, the Miner's Wife*) written by **Abdelkader Hadj Hamou** in 1925.

In addition to these two novels, we can mention *Mamoun, L'ébauche d'un idéal* (*Mamoun: The Draft of an Ideal*) by **Chukri Khodja**, published in 1928, as well as *Captif des Barbaresques* (*Captive of the Barbary Pirates*) and *Clevldj*, both published in 1929 by the same author.

The dominant features of early Algerian novels in French revolved around a search for identity, shaped by the political forces of the time. These works embraced the

assimilationist trend, advocating for equality in rights and duties between Algerians and French citizens. However, this approach began to change in response to global events, such as the end of World War II and the massacres of May 8, 1945, which profoundly altered the convictions of the pioneers of Algerian literature. These events redirected their literary focus toward more critical and transformative forms of writing.

3.2. *Revolutionary Colonial Literature*

Like other nations, Algeria was deeply affected by World War II, particularly as it was a colony of one of the warring powers. The impact of the war was such that Algerians began to "write their way out" of the colonial predicament before achieving freedom in reality.

Mohammed Dib used the French language, which had been imposed upon him, as a weapon to unveil the truth about the oppression and occupation endured by the Algerian people. This literary movement became known as *Resistance Literature*. Dib's works and those of his contemporaries provoked strong reactions: they were denounced by right-wing factions, while leftist intellectuals celebrated them as a clear affirmation of the French language's adaptability to anti-colonial expression.

During this period, French publishing houses played a critical role in publishing and promoting these novels, providing them with both literary and cultural legitimacy.

Among these novels, we can mention *La Sommeil du Juste* (*The Sleep of the Just*) by Mouloud Mammeri, published in 1955, Then, the novel *Nedjma* by Mouloud Mammeri, published in 1955, then the novel *Nedjma* by Kateb Yacine, published in 1956, and other novels...

3.3. *Post-Independence Novels (Postcolonial Literature)*

It is well known that literature evolves in response to historical and social conditions, particularly during and after times of war. Algerian novels in the post-independence period continued to address themes of revolution and its aftermath, depicting the tragedies and struggles of the Algerian people while documenting a critical and painful historical era that permanently reshaped the nation's identity.

During the colonial period, Algerian society experienced linguistic, cultural, and civilizational diversity among the European identities residing in Algeria. "The Advantage of Night over Day" confronts these sometimes harmonious, sometimes conflicting cultures, portraying the dynamics of society from both sides, and documenting the migration of Europeans towards France.(mafqouda, 2022, p. 131)

One example from the 1960s is *Les Enfants du Nouveau Monde* (*Children of the New World*), published in 1962 by **Assia Djebar**, and *L'Opium et le Bâton* (*The Opium and the Stick*), published in 1965 by **Mouloud Mammeri**, (Ben Driss, 2011, p. 117) alongside numerous other works.

What marked the early 1960s was the notable absence of **Malek Haddad** from the literary scene. This was a deliberate decision, as Haddad sought to distance himself from

writing in French, a language he had used to combat colonialism but now rejected as unsuited to expressing post-independence Algerian realities.

The novels of the 1970s and 1980s, however, took diverse approaches. Some continued to focus on the themes of revolution and liberation, while others shifted their attention to the political and social conditions of the time, aiming to improve living standards and reflect the pulse of Algerian society. Additionally, autobiographical themes remained a constant presence in Algerian novels written in French, highlighting personal and collective struggles. (Mnouer, 2007, pp. 121-123)

3.4. Emergent Literature: The Crisis Novel in French

Algerian novels written in French during the late 1970s and 1980s bore the responsibility of addressing pressing societal issues that plagued the nation, such as corruption and other challenges that distorted social structures. These works were dominated by ideological themes, with each writer defending their principles and viewpoints.

In the 1990s, political discourse became the prevailing feature of most literary creations, transforming Algerian novels written in French into arenas for ideological and intellectual clashes. These novels vividly captured the turmoil Algeria experienced at the time, reflecting the profound impact of these crises on all segments of society.

This period saw the rise of what has been termed "black novels" or "journalistic novels," a label originating in France, where there was significant interest in Algerian literature that chronicled the country's crises. Notably, the works of **Yasmina Khadra** became emblematic of this genre, as they effectively conveyed the multifaceted dimensions of Algeria's struggles. (Dek, 2013, p. 111) Khadra's novels, rooted in the act of documenting and engaging with contemporary events, expressed the depth of the crisis through a blend of literary artistry and journalistic immediacy.

This type of Algerian literature, particularly the novels of Yasmina Khadra, became a powerful platform for exploring and illustrating the complexities of the crisis.

During this period, the cultural and linguistic landscape of Algeria presented significant challenges. With more than 80% of the population illiterate and unfamiliar with any written language—let alone French—Algerian writers who used French as their medium of expression were, in reality, addressing a French-speaking audience, primarily in France rather than Algeria.

This raised contentious debates about the "Algerian-ness" of such literature. Critics argued that the continued use of French as a literary language after independence undermined its legitimacy. **Malek Haddad**, for instance, famously called for an end to writing in French, asserting that there was no longer a valid reason to use the language of the colonizer after liberation.

However, this stance was met with resistance. Many writers and intellectuals defended their use of French, emphasizing its role as a tool for engaging with broader audiences and articulating Algerian experiences on a global stage. Critics of these authors

contended that their language of expression alienated them from the Algerian people, as French was far removed from the linguistic realities of the majority of the population.

Nonetheless, Algerian literature in French persisted and continues to thrive to this day, despite the ongoing debates about its cultural and linguistic legitimacy.

3.5. Those who claim that it is literature without identity:

This perspective stands between two opposing viewpoints: The first opinion holds that Algerian literature written in French is Algerian literature, while the second opinion asserts that the literature is French, as it is written in French. The third stance stands between these two views, suggesting that Algerian writers who wrote in French were unable "to satisfy either their French or even their Algerian audience (...) which made these writers feel as though they were on the margins, standing between the French society and the Algerian one." (Djebbour, 2013, p. 45)

Therefore, it is literature without identity, as it possesses only the French identity through the language in which it is written. How can such literature convey its feelings and ideas to the French reader, who possesses a culture entirely different from that of the Algerian writer? Moreover, the writer who composes in French cannot effectively communicate his thoughts and feelings, which he considers to be in a foreign language, to his own people.

This is because they do not master this language due to the ignorance and illiteracy that plagued Algerian society during that period. Evidence of this can be seen in the fact that the percentage of intellectuals at that time was extremely low. As Oum Elkhir Djebbour argues, "The novel written in French in the Maghreb does not represent French perceptions or Algerian concepts; it is more akin to a distinctive being that combines the French form and the Algerian content." (Djebbour, 2013, p. 46)

The critic Abdelmajid Hanoun noted this analogy, comparing it to an exceptional being that is born, grows, and contributes to life but has no counterpart and cannot be discarded.

From these conflicting views about the identity of Algerian literature written in French, which has sparked much debate among critics, scholars, and researchers in the field of literature, a key point can be highlighted as the essence of all these conflicting opinions. This point is introduced by Dr. Oum Elkhir Djebbour, who states about Algerian literature written in French: "It is a distinctive being that combines the French form and the Algerian content; therefore, we cannot deny its Algerian identity, given its close ties to Algerian reality and the great national revolution." (Laredj, 1986, p. 68)

Thus, we find that the writings of "Malek Haddad," "Mouloud Feraoun," "Mohamed Dib," and other writers were the means of resistance they used to express the tragedy of the Algerian people, call for revolution, and strive for freedom and independence. A good example of this is Mohamed Dib's trilogy, which is considered by many, including WacinyLaredj, to be a prophetic and accurate depiction of the revolution.

Similarly, Kateb Yacine succeeded in making Algeria's voice heard across the world through his masterpiece, portraying Algeria in its finest form through images of challenge and resistance. Hence, Algerian literature written in French is French in form but Algerian in content. This was affirmed by Ahmed Menour in an interview with the newspaper *Al-Ittihad* about the identity of this literature, where he said: "It is an addition to both the Arab-Algerian and French literatures. As for its identity, it is Arab in spirit, reflecting the emotions of its writers and the topics of their works, even in the way they express themselves, which is derived from their original language and culture. On the other hand, its identity is French because of the language in which it is written." (Mnouer, 2013)

Certainly! Here is a specialized translation of the provided text into English, maintaining the literary context and using appropriate academic vocabulary:

4. Representations of Language and Identity in the Novel

"What the Day Owes the Night" by Yasmina Khadra:

It is well known that language is the sole medium through which communication is achieved between individuals and societies. A person cannot express their intentions, goals, and objectives without relying on language. Language is the foundation and cornerstone of every nation and one of its key components of identity. Language is also closely tied to identity, as it determines belonging and establishes cultural and ideological elaboration.

In discussing human societies, it is rare to find a society or nation in the world that does not experience the phenomenon of linguistic duality, or more precisely, linguistic expression. This is due to several factors, including civilizational and historical reasons, such as the remnants of colonization. Among these is Algerian literature written in French, as well as Algerian writers who chose to write in the language of the "other," considering it a form of exile, as expressed by Malek Haddad.

Furthermore, the Algerian writer who chooses the language of the colonizer, French, does not imply that the Arabic language is insufficient for the purpose at hand. Rather, the writer faces an undeniable reality. As such, "he is convinced that writing in his native language would achieve more goals and be more capable of expressing the true nature of his thoughts, and it would reveal through that language the very essence of Algerian identity." (Lounis, 2014, p. 44)

It is universally acknowledged that if a writer disconnects from their mother tongue, they sever ties with their past, history, and authenticity. However, despite writing in the language of the colonizer, the Algerian writer's works are highly symbolic. The reader, critic, or scholar encountering these writings will sense the Algerian national identity between the lines, reflecting the Arab-Islamic identity of Algeria.

We will attempt to highlight representations of language and identity in *"What the Day Owes the Night"* by the Algerian writer Yasmina Khadra, where language occupies a significant role, as it is inseparable from belonging or non-belonging. The narrator, Yasmina Khadra, illustrates this in several instances throughout the novel, particularly when

he states, 'Uncle Sam didn't just deploy his military forces; he also imported his culture. Algerian society became saturated with condensed milk, chocolate, corned beef, chewing gum, Coca-Cola, Kennedy candies, red gin, blonde cigarettes, and dance halls blaring American music. Meanwhile, the 'boys,' who were once shoe shiners and later became newspaper vendors, run from the public square to the tram stop shouting 'Stars and Stripes' in an incomprehensible accent." (Khadra, p. 106)

In this narrative excerpt, Yasmina Khadra addresses the issue of Algerian culture and the dominance of the French language, which has become prevalent in the streets of Algeria. The narrator highlights the dominance of foreign culture (the culture of the French colonizer) in the Algerian society that has been culturally alienated and is wavering between two conflicting identities: the Arab-Algerian identity and the French identity. We know that when French colonization took over Algeria, it did not stop plundering the land and heritage; it went further, looting the symbolic possessions of the colonized people. The colonizer sought to destroy their symbolic structures, including language, culture, customs, traditions, and various values that form the identity of the people. Additionally, the language of any colonized or occupied country is subjected to a destruction, with colonial regimes imposing their language through a powerful educational system. This is exemplified in the narrator's words in *"What the Day Owes the Night"*: "Ah yes, you didn't lie. Your name is Younes, right? Younes? Why do you call yourself Jonas?" (Khadra, p. 90)

Here, the narrator transports us through the central character—"Younes" in the Algerian cultural context and "Jonas" in the French one—into the core dilemma brimming with contradictions: the emotional and psychological rift between Algerian and French cultures and identities. He remains tethered to the tree of language—his mother tongue—deeply attuned to the linguistic perceptions that have shaped his existence. Thus, any disruption to his expressive system or any attempt to efface the traditional linguistic framework he has internalized would inevitably lead to fragmentation, psychological distress, cognitive dissonance, and a rupture in value systems—ultimately exposing him to existential crises. The narrator best illustrates this idea through the following passage:

"I come from the Rossiglio family, have you forgotten? Do you think I would marry an Arab? Death would be preferable." (Khadra, p. 90)

In this narrative excerpt, the narrator highlights the marginalization imposed upon the indigenous Algerians, while the French settlers enjoyed full rights and access to a dignified life. They erected barriers between their immediate environment and the external world—particularly anything associated with the Arabs. The writer thus presents the image of the Algerian as an alienated figure within his own land. Furthermore, he underscores the spatial segregation that prevailed in public spaces between Algerians and French settlers, as illustrated in the following passage:

"I searched for him in the popular printing houses, cafés, and Arab bathhouses (...) to no avail." (Khadra, p. 116)

Here, the most popular printing houses and Arab bathhouses are depicted as spaces designated for the deprived Algerian population. In contrast, the author paints a picture of

the luxurious cultural life enjoyed by the French settlers in their exclusive establishments—spaces often barred to Arabs by signs posted on the walls. This idea is further reinforced by the narrator's statement:

"Do not set foot here, you lousy wretch—this is no place for your kind. The waiter entered the tavern and emerged moments later with a slipper in hand... 'Here's against your shoe, miserable Juha! Run faster, and hasten your own downfall. '" (Khadra, p. 67)

The narrator also addresses the colonial boundaries that were off-limits to Algerians or Arabs. Should an Arab trespass these demarcated spaces, he would be cast aside into the streets, ignored and unnoticed.

Additionally, the narrator provides a stark portrayal of the indigenous Algerians and their relationship with the French settlers, who often referred to them with derogatory terms that belittled their identity and appearance—labels such as *"lousy wretch"* and *"miserable Juha."*

In Algerian society, the individual constantly strives to assimilate in order to assert his presence and identity. However, he frequently encounters disparities in social interactions and treatment that profoundly impact him. This is poignantly captured in the narrator's remark:

"Does he speak French?"

Unclearly, John states that his first grandmother was French, from the Haute-Savoie region, yet he never spoke our language. (Khadra, p. 107)

From this, we can infer that the colonizer's language is one of the most enduring remnants that have persisted in certain societies post-colonization. The colonizer understood that the true battle was not merely the one waged with weapons in the jungles and mountains but also the one fought on the battlefield of language. It became imperative for the occupier to assert its presence and secure its continuity. Here, language assumes its central role in reshaping and restructuring the socio-cultural system within these societies, creating disruptions in the vanquished's perception of their own existence and the world they must articulate through their native tongue.

It can be argued that language holds a fundamental position concerning cultural revival. Moreover, language is a prerequisite for the existence of culture; culture cannot exist without language. As it is often said, "Language is both the vessel that preserves culture and the medium through which it is expressed. It is the identity that is transmitted across generations. Just as there can be no culture without language, there can be no language without culture, and neither can exist without a human society." (Mehdaw, 2016, p. 164)

Furthermore, "Culture is the cumulative result of human interaction with the environment. It is an intricate and interwoven fabric of knowledge, customs, traditions, rituals, social and religious systems, spiritual values, and literary and artistic expressions acquired by individuals as part of their belonging to a society. It shapes individual identity and collective consciousness. Since culture is the product of a prolonged and continuous

dialogue across centuries, representing both an ancient legacy and a dynamic reality, it is inherently linked to the past, present, and future." (Harris, 2017, p. 15)

Thus, language serves as the vessel, the framework, and the means through which culture is preserved and expressed, transmitting identity from one generation to the next. Culture and language are intrinsically intertwined, inseparable entities. Just as there can be no culture without language, there can be no language without culture, nor can either exist without a human society.

Additionally, the Arabic language holds significant importance in affirming personal and collective identity, as it reflects an individual's self and thought. Arabic is a defining characteristic and an essential pillar of the cultural fabric of the social community to which an Arab individual belongs. It embodies the shared identity of the Arab nation across its vast expanse.

"Language is not a neutral factor; rather, it carries the values of its speakers and is polluted by the spirit of Western superiority over non-Europeans."(Saadouni & Jenadi, 2025, p. 17)

When discussing Arabic as a reflection of Algerian identity, it is important to note that language defies singular definitions. It is not merely a set of symbols and words. The Algerian scholar Mouloud Kacem Naït Belkacem defined language as follows:

"Language is the essence of human nature, that is, the common national essence. It constitutes the fundamental unit that shapes an individual, imprints upon them its unique character, and profoundly influences them to the extent that it molds them into an entirely distinct being with unique attributes."(Naït Belkacem , 1993, pp. 57-58)

The Arabic language stands as a symbol of national sovereignty and a marker of Algerian specificity. It holds an esteemed status among Algerian scholars and writers. One could even assert that it embodies a philosophy of life in general and a philosophy of the Algerian nation in particular. The perpetuity of a nation is intrinsically tied to the preservation of its language.

"Peoples rely on language... Language plays an active role in building the identity of individuals and societies, and it is on this basis that their affiliations are determined." (bedda & belouahem, p. 487)

This notion aligns with the perspective of Mouloud Kacem Naït Belkacem, who stated:

"Language is the emblem and essence of a nation. The degree of a nation's authenticity and its survival as a distinct people is determined by its ability to preserve its original language. The loss of language signifies the loss of identity, reducing a people to mere fragments scattered in history." (Naït Belkacem , 1993, p. 56)

From Mouloud Kacem Naït Belkacem's statement, we can discern that language plays a crucial role in preserving society and its authenticity, serving as one of the fundamental bonds that unify a nation.

Mouloud Kacem Naït Belkacem ardently defended the esteemed status of the Arabic language, emphasizing its role in the life of all nations and its continued existence. The best illustration of this is found in his words:

"Language is not merely the external representation of thought and emotion; in reality, it is far more than that. It is the very structure that gives content its form and substance. It is imbued with the elements that shape national identity and individuality. It is the lifeblood that breathes spirit into every corner of the national entity, the cement that fortifies the unity of the national edifice. Without its cohesion, no nation can maintain its existence." (Naït Belkacem , 1993, p. 56)

The Arabic language occupies a highly significant position due to its distinctive characteristics, which set it apart from other languages and elevate it among the world's greatest tongues. It also holds immense historical importance, as evidenced by his assertion:

"The scientific nature of Arabic—Arabic has no need for validation; rather, our intent is to remind, not merely to prove." (Naït Belkacem , 1993, p. 56)

Language serves as the fundamental driving force and the natural power that propels nations forward, fostering interaction and strength among them. This is why Mouloud Kacem Naït Belkacem devoted exceptional attention to the Arabic language. Among the topics he explored in relation to it are his articles *"Speak the Language of Your People"* and *"The Meaning of Original Education."*

5. CONCLUSION

After analysing the novel *Ce que le jour doit à la nuit (What the Day Owes the Night)* by Yasmina Khadra, we have arrived at several conclusions:

- From the title itself, *What the Day Owes the Night*, the narrator seeks to convey the idea of France's separation from Algeria, as well as the colonizers' perceived role in revitalizing Algerian land.
- The novel portrays the colonial era preceding the outbreak of the Algerian Revolution, depicting the social and intellectual landscape that characterized Algeria at the time.
- It addresses themes of homeland, nationalism, colonialism, liberation, lost identity, violated dignity, and the usurpation of land.
- Yasmina Khadra successfully immerses the reader in the painful events of the period, offering a compelling account of the political upheavals that Algeria endured during those turbulent times.
- The language employed in the novel is deliberately elaborate, as the author attempts to infuse it with a sense of somberness while skillfully utilizing expressive linguistic play.

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