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Myth and History in William Faulkner's *Light in August* (1932) and Yacine Kateb's *Nedjma* (1956)

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Abstract

This dissertation attempts to explore the use of myth and the construction of history in William Faulkner's *Light in August* (1932) and Kateb Yacine's *Nedjma* (1956). We have analyzed how the two authors introduced myth and history in the two mentioned novels. Our purpose in this study is to show how the two authors are affected by the situation of their society at two difficult periods; the American Civil War for Faulkner and the Algerian violent riots of the 8th May 1945 for Kateb. These events made the two writers question the values and the glorious history of their communities. Faulkner has created the mythical County "Yoknapatawpha" and Kateb Yacine his mythical character "Nedjma". Our aim also is to show how the two authors represented history of their countries by using myth. We have started our dissertation from an assumption that *Light in August* and *Nedjma* use myth to speak about history, and as a theoretical tool we draw on Claude Levi Strauss and Northrop Frye theory of myth. Our work is divided into three chapters. The first chapter, method and material, has introduced the concepts used in the analysis of our works. The Material section has introduced the lives and times of the two authors. The second chapter has explored the construction of myth in relation to the main characters, and the main themes of the two novels. The third chapter has focused on reading history in relation to Faulkner's and Kateb's perception of the important events that happened in America and in Algeria.

Introduction

The past is an important part in our life. Myth and history represent alternative ways for authors to look back to the past and write about it. It is easy to define history than to define myth. History is the study of past events, while myth, generally, is a narrative about supernatural stories, and beliefs based essentially on studying elements from oral traditions. In fact, myth is a product of man's imagination. In the world of literature, many writers are using myth and return to the past either in order to criticize the present and praise the past, or in order to defend an identity or history. In this respect, *Light in August* of the American writer William Faulkner and *Nedjma* of the Algerian Kateb Yacine are examples that reflect the use of myth and history in modern literature. Eventhough there are many differences between the two authors on the question of history and society there is a kind of dialogue between the two.

Kateb and Faulkner are poets, playwrights, and novelists. They are well known for their prominent works such as *Nedjma* (1956) for Kateb Yacine, and *the Sound and the Fury* (1929) and *Light in August* (1932) for Faulkner. Faulkner is skilful in creating complicated situations that involve a variety of characters, each with different reaction to the situation. He uses this technique to dramatize the complexity of life and the difficulty of reaching the truth. Kateb Yacine wrote poems such as *Soliloques* (1946), plays like *Le Cercle des Repésailes* (1959), *Mohamed Prend ta Valise* (1977) and other works. He wrote in the language of the colonizer. He is well known as a revolutionist, and defender of his country and identity. In fact, both Kateb and Faulkner use new and original forms of representation since both of them experienced difficult situations.

Faulkner's works are translated to many languages. Thus, they are read by many writers. Kateb after his travel to France he had read several works of the modernist European writers such as Rimbaud, James Joyce and others. Above all Kateb avowed that he had read Faulkner and he had been influenced by him, he states in an interview to El Moudjahid in

1975 : « Faulkner ne pouvait pas ne pas m'influencer, surtout que l'Algérie était une sorte d'Amérique de Sud, un Sud des Etats -Unis, au moment où j'écrivais avec cette minorité de Blancs et des problèmes assez identiques » ¹, so we can say that this quotation is the core to deal with Kateb Yacine and William Faulkner since Kateb avowed his readings' of Faulkner.

This influence, may partly explain the complex modernist techniques with innovative features used by Kateb to depict the situation of his community .Both of them experienced the change caused by the French occupation for Algeria and Civil War for the United States or the South. Kateb also observes : « je préfère un écrivain comme Faulkner qui est parfois raciste mais dont l'un des héros est un noir...» ² translated by Gafaiti “ I prefer a writer like Faulkner, who is at times racist but one of whose heroes is black...” ³ Obviously, Kateb has read *Light in August* when he said “l'un des héros est un noir.” Kateb means Christmas Faulkner's *Light in August* main protagonist, then Kateb says that Faulkner is racist when he says “at times racist” because Faulkner's position toward the Blacks is not clear.

The purpose of this work is to contribute to the study of two important notions, History and Myth in Faulkner's *Light in August* and Kateb's *Nedjma*. We consider that these two authors are among those who used Myth to speak about history and even sometimes to re-write the History of their countries. Our work will try to explore how both authors use myth to construct mythical characters, places, and history. We will try to find an answer to the question, is the construction and the investment of mythical feature done in the same way? To explore the notion of myth in the two novels we will refer to another theoretical concept: “*Myth and Meaning*” as developed by Levi Strauss.

Light in August, according to many critics, is one of Yoknapatawpha collection of Faulkner's novels, but this one is different not in terms of the themes accorded by the author, but in the relationship between the characters. As we know, in Faulkner's previous works the

characters are linked by a family relationship while in *Light in August* the characters are not held together by a familial relationship. In fact this relationship extends from the family unit to the community. In addition, scholars agree that Nedjma, the female figure in Kateb's *Nedjma*, is coined as the land, the nation. This is what leads us to make the link between Nedjma as a silent character as Lena the female protagonist of Faulkner's work. So, Nedjma in *Nedjma* and Lena in *Light in August* are characterized by the investment of mythical features to stand as symbols. Thus, both works are characterized by the investment of myth to refuse and reject the reality of their countries. That is what makes us choose and be eager to study these works from this perspective.

Review of Literature

Both authors' works have received a large amount of critical analysis in their countries and abroad. Most critics consider Kateb Yacine's *Nedjma* to be a "founding book" of North African francophone literature. Thus, countless studies have been devoted to it. It has also inspired several academic works and theses, like the distinguished Jacqueline Arnaud's doctoral Dissertation in 1978 "Recherches sur la littérature Maghrébine de la langue française: le cas de Kateb Yacine". Arnaud's work is an attempt to cover all the sides of Kateb Yacine's works studying the structure and the concerns of the author.

Nedjma n'est pas un roman français, d'une part, et il faut se garder de trop le rationaliser, parce que c'est un roman-poème dont les chapitres peuvent être lus comme des textes poétiques autonomes. Avant de voir se dégager les significations, il faut accepter de plonger dans le courant puissant et trouble, de participer aux actes, aux rêves des personnages, eux aussi immergés dans le mystère qu'ils cherchent à déchiffrer. Certains thèmes, dès l'abord, apparaissent très clairs. D'autres sont beaucoup plus compliqués et obscurs, mais petit à petit les choses se démêlent. Tout ? Non... Il reste une aura insaisissable. Après une bonne douzaine de lectures complètes, j'en suis encore à découvrir Nedjma que je connais presque par cœur.⁴

What Jacqueline Arnaud means in this passage is clear. It is not easy to understand everything in *Nedjma* as a poetic-novel. This novel is full of ambiguities and mysteries and someone can't clear up all the issues in the novel. Indeed, Arnaud claims that even after a dozen of lectures of *Nedjma* she is still discovering the novel. Therefore, it will also be difficult for us to deal with this novel.

In our opinion, Kateb's work is fueled with the events experienced in his life such as his discoveries about Nedjma. It is also considered as an autobiography which justifies the events of the 8th May 1945 and Yacine's love for his cousin. The same thing could be said of Faulkner's works which are typically characterized by the use of the modernist techniques and personal experiences. In fact, there are other academic works that have dealt with the two authors. These studies have focused especially on the style and structure as it is the case in the work of Frances A. Brahmi in his book entitled *William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury and Kateb Yacine's Nedjma: a Comparative Study of Style and Structure as Related to Time* in 1976.

Annette Trefzer wonders why the Third World writers are fascinated with Faulkner. According to her this influence is evident in the works of Mario Vargas Llosa, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Frank Etienne, Edward Glissant. She notices:

The Algerian Kateb Yacine identified with Faulkner, the same as the Ivorian Kourouma or the Malian Yambo Ouloguem. Actually, it is because he tackles the two primordial questions of the literature of young nations: language and the relationship with history.⁵

Trefzer shows that both Faulkner and Kateb wrote about the history of their young nations.

Other recent studies have compared the two authors in terms of themes. We can mention the study of the Algerian scholar Nabil Boudraa, *Hommage à Kateb Yacine* who writes:

Considerations of at least three kinds help delineate and comprehend Kateb's receptivity to the fictional world of William Faulkner. They are considerations of a historical and sociological as well as of psychological order: they also concern the artistic climate that surrounded the technical evolution of the modern novel; and they point up specific Faulknerian idiosyncrasies in Kateb's novelistic prose.⁶

Nabil Boudraa considers the way in which Kateb received the fictional world of Faulkner as based on three main points which are: the historical, sociological, and psychological considerations. Kateb's writing are a result of prevalent climate of his times that surrounded the modern novel.

Ali Rahmani a teacher in the English Department of Mouloud Mammeri in his Magister thesis has studied myth in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and Kateb's *Nedjma*. He refers to the past as it is depicted through the characters. He says:

Kateb Yacine explores the past in evoking Jugurtha and Numidia to prove that identity stems from ancient and glorious times, whereas Faulkner depicts the end of the Deep South which was once established by aristocratic families like Sartoris who were fashioned by a specific social order and rigid code.⁷

Ali Rahmani explains that Kateb Yacine took elements from history to show for the colonizer the glorious past and indigenous identity. The same goes for Faulkner who uses the ancestors, or the aristocratic families in its *Sound and the Fury* to glorify the southern values of the past before the Civil War.

Other critics agree that Kateb Yacine is largely influenced by William Faulkner. In the terms of Bernard Aresu, most of Kateb's works are inspired from Faulkner. He says: "it is thus easier to perceive why no single novel by Faulkner could have provided, as has been suggested quasi-exclusive impact on *Nedjma*..."⁸ So, for him we can find all the novels of Faulkner in Kateb's *Nedjma*, and in our point of view *Light in August* is also included. In Aresu's point of view:

among the several features that clearly link Kateb's work with Faulkner's are the high degree of elaboration, repetition, and disjunction of *Nedjma* and also the novel's narrative polyphony, common thematic preoccupation and, finally specific stylistic and syntagmatic parallelisms.⁹

From all what is said, many critics agree that there is a strong connection between Faulkner and Kateb's work.

Issue and Working Hypothesis

The review of literature that we have covered contains various studies about Faulkner and Kateb Yacine. As we can see most of those studies have focused on the innovative style of the two authors. This dissertation attempts to study the construction of myth in telling history in *The Light in August* and *Nedjma*. Both writers use elements of the past to criticize the present. Their critics reveal their quest for the lost 'Nation' for Kateb and the lost South for Faulkner. To reach this aim the mythicized characters are presented through the main themes developed in the two novels. So, how and why history and myth are used in the two novels? Is it possible to use fiction to re-write history? And finally how can myth transform history?

Methodological Outline

This dissertation will be divided into three chapters. The first one is an introductory chapter which deals with the explanation of Bakhtin's "discourse in the novel" in which we will discuss the novel from the social angle and theory of myth from Strauss and Frye's perspectives. The second part of this chapter is about the times and lives of Faulkner William and Kateb Yacine. In addition, we will summarize the content of *Light in August* and *Nedjma*.

The second part of this work is the discussion section also is divided into two chapters. In the second chapter, we will try to show myth construction in Faulkner's *Light in August* and Kateb's *Nedjma*. This will be done by applying Claude Levi Strauss's *Myth and Meaning* and referring to Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*. In the third chapter, we will focus on reading the history of Faulkner and Kateb novels using Bakhtin's "*Discourse in the novel*" as

it is explained in one of his four essays of *Dialogic Imagination*. The general conclusion will consist of a condensed restatement of the ideas developed through this dissertation.

References

¹ Bernard Aresu, *Counterhegemonic Discourse from the Maghreb: The Poetics of Kateb's Fiction*, (Deutschland, Tubinger, 1993), 40.

² Ibid, 40.

⁴ Jacqueline, Arnaud, *Recherche sur la littérature maghrébine d'expression française : le cas de Kateb Yacine*,(Paris 3, Etienne, 1986),257 .

⁵Annette Trefzer, Ann.J .Abadie, *Global Faulkner* (University Press of Mississippi, 2009) ,183.

⁶ Boudraa Nabil, *Hommage à Kateb Yacine*,(France, l'Harmattan , 2006), 111.

⁷ Ali Rahmani, *Tragic Myth in Kateb Yacine's Nedjma and William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury*,(Magister Thesis, 2008),6.

⁸ Bernard Aresu, *Counterhegemonic Discourse from the Maghreb*, 42.

⁹ Ibid., 42.

Method and Material

I-Methodological Considerations

In this part we will use two important concepts in order to deal with the two mentioned authors. First, we will consider Bakhtin's concept of Dialogism as it is mentioned in his work *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981) to show dialogues of the two authors with each other as well as that dialogue taking place between the characters and their symbols. Secondly, we will refer to the theory of myth as studied by Claude Levi Strauss in his book *Myth and Meaning* (1978). The concept 'meaning' will be the millstone of our study. In addition, we will refer to Northrop Frye and his *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957).

A-The theory of 'Dialogism'

Bakhtin's Dialogism is the first approach that we are going to apply to the analysis of the two concerned novels. Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) is a Russian writer concerned with the spheres of language, culture, philosophy and literature. Born in Orel, a town South to Moscow, Bakhtin studied at Petersburg University, and went on to teach at Navel and Vitebsk. In texts such as the essays collected together in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981), Bakhtin argues that there is a vital connection between novelistic language and genre. He states that the novel is a dialogic generic form, i.e. the novel is a form that contains a multiplicity of voices and perspectives. It exists in a constant process of change and renewal, and it is contrasted with other fixed literary forms¹ such as poetry.

Bakhtin wrote his theory back at the period of Russian despotism. His doctorate dissertation was banned and he was exiled for his influential ideas. According to Angela Maria*, the Russian Revolution in 1917 promised freedom and equality based on a communist society. However, the Communist Party applied one single vision of Lenin and Marx based on politico-economic society. In literature, socialist realism prevailed, with its aesthetics of praise and glorification of Stalinist politics and economics. Thus, the

sociopolitical context is one of dictatorship and purges.² Bakhtin writes in this context, and certainly the environment where his speech is produced also determines the thinker's position. In Bakhtin's view, when someone talks, his speech is double-voiced, it means oriented both to what already has been said and its replic action and is, as a result, inherently dialogical. Bakhtin's work is a dialogue with his time, fighting monology, the one single speech, the one official culture and party, and the oppression of the centralizing power and socialist dictatorship of the state. So, there is a clear "counterpoint" dialogue with his time and immediate context.³ The most important part of his work is built upon some distinguishable concepts; dialogue, carnivalization, polyphony, and the plurality of voices, either side by side or with clash with the social reality⁴. Therefore, it is in this mould that we put our selected authors and try to apply Bakhtin's approach in this dissertation.

As we are concerned with the novel and its content, Bakhtin starts his essay in 'the discourse of the novel' and he insists from the very beginning that the "form and content are one, once we understand that the verbal discourse is a social phenomenon; social throughout its entire range and each and every of its factors, from sound image to the furthest reaches of abstract meaning."⁵ So, he introduces the novel from its social dimension. Generally speaking, the novel is seen by many scholars as a mirror of what the author observes in his own society. Indeed, the novel is seen as a real depiction of society.

In Bakhtin's *Discourse of the Novel*, the previous critical frame works such as Stylistics which was oriented to poetry study can't fit the novel because poetry ignores the fact of heteroglossia. From this point of view, any utterance, including the novel, takes shape "at a particular historical moment in socially-specific environment" and is "an active participant in social dialogue."⁶ In regards to the novel, Bakhtin talks about the object of description as a "focal point for heteroglot voices among which his own must also sound; these voices create the background necessary for his own voice must also sound; these voices

create the background necessary for his own voice.”⁷ given that all discourse is always already “oriented toward the already uttered”, the “already known”⁸

Bakhtin argues that in the case of “parody per se”, the writer appropriates other’s discourses but with a desire to subject the same words to a different intention, to re-place them in a different context, to abrogate them. In the case of Kateb Yacine, he takes Faulkner’s style to project it within his intentions about the Algerian society and history. Therefore, the novel according to Bakhtin is a hybrid construction, it is multivoiced. It gathers in one speaker two or more styles to serve the author’s intention. The work also as a whole interacts dialogically with other ideologies and is characterized with a variety of languages.⁹ To sum up, for Bakhtin language is a central category in the Human institution. This means that he investigates, above all, the literary corpus in close relation with the concrete historical reality in order to systematize his concepts of dialogism, monologism and polyphony, which are central for the understanding of his writings.¹⁰

According to Holsquit there is a simultaneous relationship in Bakhtin’s Dialogism which is found in the dialogue of readers with the characters and their author.¹¹ The text appears as an interaction of distinct perspectives or ideologies, born by the different characters. These latter are able to speak for themselves, even against the author. It is as if the other speaks directly through the text.¹² The prose writer as a novelist does not strip away the intentions of others from the heteroglot language of his works, he does not violate those socio-ideological cultural horizons (big and little worlds) that open up behind heteroglot languages- rather he welcomes them into his work. The prose writer makes use of words that are already populated with social intentions, to serve a second master. Therefore, the intentions of the prose writer are refracted, at different angles, depending on the degree to which the refracted, heteroglot languages he is dealing with are socio-ideologically alien, already embodied and already objectified.¹³

To conclude, the following quotation summarizes Bakhtin's ideas about the discourse of the novel and the review of this Dialogism theory, by using Bakhtin's words:

Any stylistics capable of dealing with the distinctiveness of the novel as a genre must be a sociological stylistics. The internal social dialogism of novelistic discourse requires the concrete social context of discourse to be exposed, to be revealed as the force that determines its entire stylistic structure, its "form" and its "content", determining it not from without, but from within; for indeed, social dialogue reverberates in all aspects of discourse, in those relating to "content" as well as the "formal" aspects themselves.¹⁴

This quote provides in our opinion a good summary of the benefits and adequacy of using this theory of "dialogism" for the study of our two novels. In fact the novel is different from other genres. Thus, the novelistic discourse needs an actual social context which builds in one hand the structure of the novel as well as it determines on the other hand, the interactions and dialogues within the characters of the told story, which Bakhtin defines in his essay by the terms of 'form' and 'content' respectively.

B-Theory of Myth

Nowadays, many studies are devoted to the concept of myth by theorists and scholars. We distinguish different and various definitions of myth, each one depends on its concerned discipline and aims. With regards to literature and myth, it is worth to mention that many modernist writers are using myth or some elements of these myths in their prose. Indeed, we have chosen for our study of myth two important theorists who studied myth extensively, Claude Levi Strauss and Northrop Frye.

The first question that comes to mind is what myth is in general? This term is complex in history and meaning; it is defined by Homer as *muthos* and means a narrative and conversation, but not fiction. Later myth is used to mean fiction. Plato refers to *muthoi* to denote something not wholly lacking truth but for the most part fictitious. Nowadays a myth tends to signify fiction, but fiction which conveys a psychological truth. Generally, myth is a

story which is not ‘true’ and which involves a supernatural being. Myth is always concerned with creation and explains how something came to exist. Myth embodies feeling and concept like the idea of Diana.¹⁵

Claude Levi Strauss, a French anthropologist, has studied myth widely and most of his work is devoted to the structural study of Amerindian mythology. According to Levi Strauss: myth is both “historically specific”, that is why it’s always set in the past and “ahistorical” which means that its story is timeless. Levi Strauss also says that in addition to langue and parole, myth exists in a third dimension. This third dimension proves that myth is a language of its own “and not just a subset of language”. He says that myth “can be translated, reduced, paraphrased, expanded, and manipulated without losing its basic shape structure”.¹⁶

Basically, Levi Strauss’ method proceeds by taking a myth and reducing it to its smallest component parts-its “mythemes”. Each “mytheme” is usually one event or position in the story, the narrative of the myth. These mythemes can be read both diachronically and synchronically. Claude Levi Strauss made this statement in his book *Myth and Meaning* in a subtitle *When Myth Becomes History*: in the case when there are no written resources about a society or an event we can refer to oral traditions mainly myths to refer to those events.¹⁷

Myth is widely used as well in literary criticism, especially in historical criticism’s accounts of mythologies used by literary artists and archetypal criticism’s descriptions of the ways in which certain images, character types, and narratives designs persistently recur throughout literature. Northrop Frye (1912-1991), a Canadian literary critic and theorist, wrote his book *Anatomy of Criticism*, in which he summarizes myth and its importance to literature. Northrop Frye sees myth as the structural foundation of literature and presents a rhetoric of mythology which is similar to Tzvetan Torodov’s grammar of poetic expression.¹⁸

In fact, for Frye, mythology has nothing to do with science or “making direct statement about nature”, it is, instead, “the embryo of literature and the arts”.¹⁹

According to Gary Wack, Frye in his study places the seasons within the human sphere of experience and understanding, which means that all humanity is subjected to the seasons where it interprets, synthesizes and expresses that experience in language and myth. So, Frye begins by stating that seasons are a pattern of significance to all humanity. Frye’s basic theory of the seasons follows the central theme of the hero. He explains that the importance of the hero or god in myth lies in the fact that they are conceived in human likeness, are driven by the forces of nature, and encounter the passing of seasons such as the passing of human aging. They imitate the passing of the seasons with their embodiment of spring in birth, growth in summer, aging in fall, and withering in winter following here the idea of Joseph Cambell who calls the hero’s quest within a myth, the Mono-myth. That is to say, the hero is born, departs on a journey, struggles, and returns.²⁰ In relation to our dissertation we will try to prove to what extent the characters of the two novels are mythical.

According to Ford Russel, Frye in *Anatomy of Criticism* tries to bring the works of the moderns into the literary criticism of the 1950s, not only those of Joyce and Eliot but some of the works of myth theorists, who affected their cultural milieu.²¹ Frye was attracted to some theorists such as Jung, Cassirer and Frazer and tried to develop their ideas and then to study and analyse myth from his own perspective. He entitled the third essay of *Anatomy of Criticism* “Archetypal Criticism: Theory of Myths”, and he suggests by this a conceptual means of drawing individual and apparently unrelated archetypal images into a coherent and ultimately hierarchical framework of “mythoi”, one organizing not only individual literary works but the entire system of literary works, which means literature.²²

The place of myth is inescapable and irreducible in literature in Frye's view. So, according to Frye, western literature since it is massively funded by the powerful myths of the Bible and classical culture, should be thought of as having a "grammar" or coherent structural principles basic to any critical organization or account of historical development. He identifies the "quest-myth" in its various forms as the central myth (mono-myth) of literature and the source of literary genres is at the same time the logical conclusion of his approach to myth criticism and the source of unending debate.²³ From all what is said it is obvious that we can't study myth without referring to Frye, since we are looking for meaning he says: "whenever we read anything, we find our attention moving in two directions at once."²⁴ The first is about the word and its direct meaning; the second is about its abstract meaning.

In our coming analysis of myth and history in *Light in August* and *Nedjma*, we are going to knot many elements starting from Bakhtin's dialogical elements to prove that Kateb and Faulkner's works are 'dialogic'. Then, in order to enrich our work we're going to choose some ideas or points from Claude Levi Strauss and Northrop Frye who dealt with myth either as a word or as a concept widely studied. Indeed, to accumulate our dissertation we say that all those theorists are important for our study.

II-Material Section

1-Times and Lives of the two authors

In this part of the work, we are going to shed light on the climate that surrounds the two authors and which are the facts that pushed both of Kateb Yacine, and Faulkner to reinterpret the society of their regions through their imaginative vision in the novels *Light in August* and *Nedjma*. Indeed, the study and the analysis will be more difficult without digging into the the context which surrounded Algeria in one hand and the United States ,especially the South, in the other hand.

a- William Faulkner: Life and Time

William Faulkner is one of the prominent modernist American writers. He was born in New Albany, Mississippi, in 1897, in the South of the U.S.A. He is one of the leading authors of the American literature. He gained his fame after the publication a series of novels about the fictional “Yoknapatawpha county” and its county seat of Jefferson.²⁶

During First World War he joined the Canadian Royal flying corps, but the war ended before his training was complete, and he returned to Oxford to study. His first book was a collection of poems entitled *The Marble Faun*, appeared in 1924. *Sartoris* in 1929 was his first novel about Yoknapatawpha County, a mythical place that gradually became an enormous metaphor not only for the whole of the southern society but also, in many respects, for the world itself.²⁷ For this series of more than 16 novels in addition to a number of shorter stories, Faulkner created a long list of characters of every social stripe, from faded gentry and aggressive business men to humble Negroes and degenerate whites. He carried the story of their intermingling lives from early encounters with the Indians to his own day.²⁸

In 1929 Faulkner published *The Sound and the Fury*, his fourth novel and the first masterpiece, which at the beginning didn't receive much critical attention, but the recognition came only after the Second World War. In 1946, when most of Faulkner's works were out of print, Malcolm Cowley in Viking Press Volume presented Faulkner as a historian of the South, or rather as the man who converted Southern history into a legend:

Briefly stated, the legend might run something like this: the deep South was settled partly by aristocrats like Sartoris * clan and partly by new men like colonel Sutpen. Both types of planters were determined to establish a lasting social order on the land they have seized by the Indians (that is to leave sons behind them). They had a virtue of living single-mindedly by a fixed code; but there was also an inherent guilt in their 'design', their way of life; it was slavery that put a curse on the land and brought about the civil war.²⁹

George Tindall notes in his book *The Ethnic Southerner* (1976), the south has: "staged one of the most prolonged disappearing acts since the decline and fall of Rome".³⁰ Tindall

compares the decline of the South to that of Rome since this fall took time and brought disastrous consequences.

William Faulkner's life intermingles with the fate of the South, where the reality of the Mississippi joins the myth Yoknapatawpha. As a Southerner, Faulkner experienced the shadow of the South and its decline. Faulkner was influenced by his home of Mississippi as by the history and culture of the South, as a child he loved to listen to stories told by his elders about the Civil War and slavery. We have to mention that the author was obsessed by the image of his great grandfather. His great grandfather was a colonel in the Southern army during the civil war, he was a successful businessman, writer, and a civil war hero.³¹ In this respect, Faulkner said:

My great grandfather whose name I bear was a considerable figure in his time and provincial milieu. He built the first railroad in our country, wrote a few books, died in a duel and the country raised a marble effigy still stands in Tippah country.³²

It is obvious from this quotation how much Faulkner was influenced by his great grandfather. Faulkner was excessively obsessed by the image of the colonel, and some critics say that if someone wants to understand Faulkner writings he has to read about the colonel William Clark Falkner.

The Yoknapatawpha series has been called the human comedy of the South, with flattering reference to Balzac's celebrated saga, *la Comédie Humaine*. It has also been described as "a modern epic of the all corruption of man." However, the early volumes had, on the whole, a lukewarm reception, which apparently made little difference to Faulkner. "I think I have written a lot and sent it off to print", he once said, "before I actually realized strangers might read it." The "U" added was to Faulkner's family name by mistake when his first novel was published but, the author did not bother to change it so, he claims:" Either way suits me"³³, after this the name of the family was changed to Faulkner instead of Falkner.

Faulkner produced several novels after *Sartoris* and *The Sound and the Fury* the most discussed novel.

In 1950 he received a Nobel Prize fifteen years after the publication of *The Sound and the Fury*. He won the Pulitzer Prize with *a Fable*. By then he produced a prodigy of imagination that had no equal in the American literature of its time. Faulkner's fictional portrait of the Deep South was, obviously, not a smiling one.³⁴ Therefore, the traditions and history of the South were a favorite Faulkner theme. In *Sartoris* 1929 and *Unvanquished* 1938 he tells the story of several generations of Sartoris family. Faulkner examined the relationship between blacks and whites in several works, including *Light in August* 1932, *Absalom, Absalom!* 1936, *Go Down, Moses* 1942. Here, he was especially concerned with persons of mixed racial background and their problems in establishing an identity.³⁵ He continued writing until his death in 1962. As we are concerned with myth and history we have chosen one of the remarkable works of this author *Light in August*.

b- Kateb Yacine: Life and Time

Nowadays, some thinkers are struggling against the notion of authorship, claiming that texts should be considered as texts only. Others, when they talk about Baudlaire or Flaubert, they continue to use biographical information to understand the writing or the work of the author. In reading a text we used to ask the question about the life of the writer who reveals this. In this sense, Jacqueline Arnaud declares that Kateb's works push the reader to ask this kind of questions. Then, she states: « l'œuvre de Kateb, plus que d'autres, y invite. Et l'homme, pour qui le rencontre, semble un personnage tout droit sortit de son univers mythique ».³⁶

Kateb was born on August 6th, 1929, in Constantine, the eastern provincial capital of Algeria. Kateb Yacine belongs to highly literate family. His father was "Oukil Judiciare"

(attorney-at – law). Yacine first went to Coranic School in Sedrata, another eastern town where his father was working, but soon he experienced a significant turning point in his early childhood when he went to French school. His father decided that Arabic education through religious teaching was not enough at that time and he should learn the French language. Thus Kateb was cut off from his dear friend and companion, his mother, with her stories. His father was moved to Bougaa (formerly Lafayette), a little town in Kabylia, and Yacine went to the 'lycée Eugene Albertini' in Sétif until 1945 when he was sixteen. The demonstrations of 1945 and the ruthless French reprisals were tragic milestone in the history of Algeria and a major turning point in the life of Kateb Yacine.³⁷

He was arrested. The experience of prison was for him of the utmost significance, a bitter-sweet, tragic happy revelation. According to Jacqueline Arnaud, this experience is a central discovery of himself, mainly he discovers especially his real writer nature. In this regard Kateb said in interview:

Avant 1945 je n'avais aucune conscience de ce qui se passait dans le pays, j'étais un écolier, je vivais dans la poésie, dans les livres : je ne comprenais nullement ce se passait autour de moi. Puis, je me souviens, il y a eu une manifestation dans les rues (...). Je suis resté dans le cortège, et ça a mal tourné ; par la suite, il y a eu une dizaine de milliers de victimes, tout le monde le sait maintenant. Il y a eu Sétif et Guelma. Or, par hasard, je faisais mes études à Sétif et ma famille habitait à Guelma. Nous avons reçu des coups des deux cotés. Pour moi, ça n'était rien, j'ai été foutu en tôle, mais ma mère ça a été plus grave. Elle a perdu la raison.³⁸

Kateb here explains how the demonstration turns to massacre which made the death of thousands. These events caused his political consciousness and discovered the bitter reality of the French occupation. It is the last time that he went to school. His mother became mad. In addition, he saw many victims among the Algerian population. However, he argued in another interview that after his arrest he discovered two beautiful things in his life ' poetry and revolution':

Lorsque je suis sorti de prison, j'avais une vision du peuple. Ces gens que je n'avais jamais remarqués, alors que je passais chaque jour devant, dans les rues, quand je l'ai vus en les mêmes tortures, les mêmes chocs, j'ai commencé vraiment à les connaître. Et sorti de prison, j'étais prêt à travailler, j'étais tout à fait convaincu qu'il fallait faire quelque chose ; et pas une petite chose, tout faire.³⁹

Kateb took the positive side of his arrest, and he saw that it is time to do something for his country and becomes a militant for the national cause. He said in another words: "it is also at that time that I accumulated my first poetic urges. I can still remember some insights I had. Retrospectively, they are the most beautiful moments in my life. I had discovered the two things I cherish most: poetry and revolution."⁴⁰ In our point of view, this last quotation summarizes everything about Kateb Yacine and the 8 May 1945. Indeed, though he lost many precious things, he had discovered another two important things in his life; revolution and poetry.

When he was released from prison he was neither allowed back to the lycée, nor was he interested in further studies. So he left Setif and started traveling in eastern Algeria, mainly between Annaba and Constantine, where he met new people, particularly Ben Lounissi, his friend, and the woman he loved Nedjma, his cousin, the name of many poems and his first novel. In fact his literary career started in 1946 he published his collection of poems *Soliloques*. Then, he took a position and became a militant for the Algerian cause. In 1947, he went to Paris for a short stay to come back to Algiers to work in the news paper Alger Républicain, as a reporter. He left his job after two years. When his father died in 1950, he went again to France to look for work which took him to Marseilles, to Paris through Lyon, among other towns. Once in Paris he started his novel *Nedjma* (1956) and his first play in French *le Cadavre encirclé*. It is at that time that he read the works of many writers including Dos Passos, Dostoievski, and Faulkner.⁴¹

Kateb created the female character Nedjma and figured her in many of his works, plays and poems. This character was the focus of his imaginative creation. He wrote his first play *Le Cadavre encirclé* (1958) which is a drama about colonization and alienation. *Le Polygone étoilé* (1966), Kateb's major prose work, introduced several characters from Nedjma. As the author argued once:

I think, in effect that I am the producer of a single book. At the beginning, it was a poem which then transformed into novels and then into theatre, but it is always the same work that I will leave just as I began it, that is to say, as a ruin and as a construction site, exactly as is Algeria.⁴²

Kateb avowed himself Nedjma has haunted all his literary works. Inspired by many modernist writers such as Aeschylus, Rimbaud, and Brecht, whom he met in Paris, Kateb decided to break from lyrical tradition and create a more political theatre. Among Kateb's later works is a play *L'Homme aux Sandales de Caoutchouc* (1970), (*The Man in Rubber Sandals*). Its first scenes he had sketched out in 1949, while working as a journalist in Algiers. Kateb had visited Vietnam during the war in 1967, when the American troops fought with the South Vietnamese and bombed targets in the North. The play was simultaneously produced in Algiers and Lyon.⁴⁸ The play is about the Vietnamese struggle.

In 1971 he published *Mohamed, prends ta valise (Mohamed, take your Suitcase)*, which deals with Algerian immigration. It was performed in factories, and other industries, and reached 70000 people in five months. Kateb says in one of his interviews about the play, "I gave myself completely to the play with no experience in directing." In this work Kateb wanted to show the class complexity that exists between the French bourgeoisie and the Algerians. He had remarked that the revolutionary writer "must transmit a living message, placing the public at the heart of a theatre that partakes of the never-ending combat opposing the proletariat to the bourgeoisie." Kateb died on October 28, 1989, in Grenoble France.⁴³ One should admit that Kateb with all these noticeable and great works devoted to literature

with all its genres and mainly the Algerian literature, is always alive and his works are endlessly searched for meanings.

From all what has been said in this section, we conclude that both William Faulkner and Kateb Yacine were very attached and affected by the social and the historical events they witnessed in their lives. So, their reference to myth is a product of their observations and contacts with their social environment. History of their countries is also well reflected in their works.

2-Summary of the Novels

a- Light in August

Light in August was published in the beginning of the period of publication of Faulkner's best works. It tells a story of very different characters all trying to make their way in the South. The characters inhabit Jefferson, Mississippi, the central town in Faulkner's fictional Yoknapatawpha County, as we have mentioned above the setting of many of his novels. Each of these characters highlights one or more Faulkner's favorite themes. Joe Christmas faces a crisis of racial identity and finds sexualized women. Reverend Hightower is so obsessed with his family's past that he is barely alive, and Lena Grove is a fallen woman.

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In the 1920s Lena Grove a twenty-year old woman hitches a wagon ride to Jefferson, Mississippi, She's pregnant in search of the father of her baby Lucas Burch. In her road to Jefferson, she meets a guy named Byron Bunch. Bunch is a worker at the local planning mill. Once he told her about Joe Brown that he has a white scar on his face, so Lena knows that this Joe is the father of her baby so she went to the town trying to find him. However, Byron falls in love with Lena and promises to protect her with her baby.

Through flashback, the narrator recounts the lives of Joe Christmas and Reverend Hightower. Joe Christmas was dropped off at an orphanage on Christmas day, as an infant. When he was five years old, Joe accidentally witnesses the dietician have sex with a doctor at the orphanage. The dietician is afraid that Joe will tell about her then she plans to get him out of the orphanage, by setting him up with a strict religious couple named the McEacherns. Mr. McEachern beats Joe regularly and does not allow much joy or laughter into the young boy's life. As an adult, Joe begins to have sex with a prostitute named Bobbie. He sells a cow that his family by adoption gave him only to buy a new suit to take Bobbie to the local dance. After a fight with Mr. McEachern Joe steals money from Mrs. McEachern and runs away, and never sees either of his foster parents again.

Christmas for several years is sleeping with various women and trying to deal with his racial identity. He arrives in Jefferson and begins working at the planning mill with Byron Bunch and other local men. Christmas takes up residence in a cabin owned by Joanna Burden, a white woman from a long line of local abolitionists. The relationship between the two begins to have some troubles. So, Joe quits his job at the planning Mill. When he starts selling whiskey illegally, he takes another stranger in town, Joe Brown, as his business partner and invites Joe to live with him in Burden's Cabin. When Miss Burden tries to make Christmas become more religious, he hates her, he plans her murder.

Reverend Gail Hightower's story is also revealed in flashback. Hightower came to Jefferson because his great-grand father, a member of the confederate army, was murdered there. Indeed, as being obsessed by the town of Jefferson he comes to settle there. After years of being ignored, his wife begins having affairs with other men in Memphis. One day, she's found dead, having jumped or been pushed out of hotel window in Memphis. Hightower defrocked and forced to resign from the church after this he becomes a town outcast.

For the story of Christmas, one night Joanna tries to shoot him and then he retaliates, as a revenge, by murdering her with a razor. Miss Burden's nephew offers a reward for the one who will capture the murderer. After the announcing of the reward, Joe Brown comes and claims that Christmas is the killer. The police find him in Mottstown and he is imprisoned.

In Mottstown lives a strange couple named the Hineses. When Joe Christmas is arrested down town, Mr. and Mrs. Hines both have strange reactions to seeing him. They followed him to Jefferson when he is driven off for his trial. Mrs. Hines tells Reverend Hightower that Joe Christmas is her grandson. She reports that years ago, her daughter Milly got knocked out by a carnival worker who claimed he was Mexican. Doc Hines kidnapped the baby and dropped him off at a white orphanage, telling his wife that the baby was dead.

Meanwhile, Byron arranges for Joe Brown and Lena Grove to family meet. But Joe Brown escapes and jumps on a passing train, leaving Jefferson. At the end of the novel Joe Christmas escapes from the police custody. But he was hunted by a white supremacist named Percy Grimm who shoots, and castrates Christmas. Lena's story ends by her travel with Byron Bunch through Tennessee (with Lena's baby) in search again of Joe Brown.

b- Nedjma:

Nedjma as we have mentioned above was published in 1956, two years after the war of the independence. It tells the story of a group of people who suffer from the colonizer and his alienation. In this novel Kateb Yacine sheds light on the 8 may 1945 massacre when the population took to the street to ask for their right to freedom. The characters in *Nedjma* were marked by the tragic events that were described by the two characters; Lakhdar and Mustapha, and each one of them tells what he experienced during the demonstration.

The four protagonists are engaged as laborers by Mr. Ernest. As soon as they begin work, Lakhdar injures Mr Ernest. Then Lakhdar is arrested but he escapes. Violence is

manifested in the novel also when Mourad kills Mr. Richard who marries Ernest's Daughter Suzy; Mourad is arrested too. Lakhdar in the solitude of the prison resurrects his memories, and remembers his first arrest because of the 8 May 1945 demonstrations in Setif with his friend Mustapha. After his release, he took his way to Bone, Annaba, to live with his cousin Nedjma. Once there, he meets the other characters Mourad, and Rachid. Furthermore, Mourad vainly tries to remember the revelations made by Rachid about the origins of Nedjma. Nedjma's Paternity therefore remains mysterious « *filles d'une française juive et de l'un des maîtres de la tribu à savoir Si Mokhtar ou le père de Rachid* ». Nedjma may be his sister as well as the daughter of Kamel's father. Si Mokhtar cannot hinder the incestuous marriage of Nedjma's birth.

In the memories of Si Mokhtar, Nedjma is conceived during a night when Si Mokhtar and Rachid's father spent the night with the French woman. Indeed, the French woman was transported by the two lovers to a cave. In the same cave the body of Rachid's father is found dead, and is probably a victim of the "old brigand", despite the assassination of his father, Rachid befriends him. They go together to Nadhor after the kidnapping of Nedjma.

After unified pilgrimage to Mecca during which Rachid is revealed the secret by Si Mokhtar, the two men kidnap Nedjma, and take her to Nadhor where she is sequestered. The three friends, Lakhdar, Mustapha, and Rachid leave secretly the village. Later, Rachid, a deserter, meets again Mourad in prison. Everyone is obsessed by the presence of Nedjma and evokes her ceaselessly: Mourad in his prison, Mustapha in his diary, Rachid in his conversation with a stranger on the Rhummel banks. The end of the novel is not clear, whereas Nedjma is taken by the "nigger" Keblout", which means to her origins.

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* Main character of Faulkner's first novel and he is representation of the author Grandfather the colonel in the civil war.

Results

The analysis of Faulkner's *Light in August* and Kateb's *Nedjma* through the concept of myth as introduced by Levis Strauss who considers myth as one and the same in the world even if there is a difference in content has shown that both authors used it to re-read historical events of their societies. It is true that Kateb Yacine is deeply influenced by Faulkner but still he has his own style in his narrative. Myth of ancestors is referred to in the portrayal of the character Hightower in *Light in August* and Rachid in *Nedjma*. These two characters are looking for their identity by returning to the past, which refers both to the American Civil War and the "8 Mai 1945". Nedjma, the female character is also very important in the construction of myth in relation to the Algerian Nation. She stands as a woman that symbolizes the land that many wanted to acquire but everyone who tries to approach her loses her. Lena, the female character of *Light in August* has some features like those of Nedjma. She is the only character who lives in the present, she speaks rarely. She is loved by Byron Bunch who can't possess her; she stands to represent the community and hope. In addition, Faulkner's reference to race is marked by the character Christmas Joe white/black man who can't find himself in both races. Our analysis of themes has shown that historical events are used by the two authors to show the disillusionment of mythical investiture in the construction of a nation.

Myth Construction and History in *Light in August* and *Nedjma*

In this following chapter, we will examine the use of ‘myth’ by the two authors in the two novels under study. We intend to demonstrate that Faulkner and Kateb share the same idea in using myth to refer to history and criticize their societies. Bakhtin in his study of the novel argued that the novel as a literary genre is heterogeneous (social). He considers that there is interaction between the word; i.e., what the author says and his environment. Our concerned novels, *Light in August* and *Nedjma* are good examples to explore Bakhtin’s social dimension whereby Faulkner and Kateb refer to ‘myth’ to speak about their societies. To explore the different connotations of ‘myth’ in the selected novels, we will analyze some characters, such as Lena, Christmas, and Hightower in *Light in August*, and *Nedjma*, Lakhdar, and Mustapha in *Nedjma*. Claude Levi Strauss’s concept of myth is suitable for our analysis. For him, “the sameness of myth lies in the structure which is almost the same worldwide.”¹

I-Myth in *Light in August*

Light in August, like other Faulkner’s novels such as *As I lay Dying*, *The Sound and the Fury*, and *Absalom, Absalom!* set in Yoknapatawpha County. These novels deal with some important themes in relation to America as slavery, the ancestor’s memory, and the Civil War and its consequences to the South. In Bakhtin view there is always the interaction between what the author wrote and his living or the environment “It is precisely in the process of living interaction with this specific environment that the word may be individualized and given stylistic shape.”² *Light in August* is a fictional work; however, the events came from the real life of the Southern society.

In *Light in August* Faulkner tells three major stories: the story of Lena Grove, Joe Christmas, and Gail Hightower. These stories are mythical, and each character symbolizes an

important myth, because myth helps to give meaning to the word. In Claude Levi Strauss's study myth can become history in the case of lack of the written resources.³ As it is the case with Faulkner who used two kinds of myths to describe the Southern society. He not only brought elements from Greek classical mythology, but also developed the myth of the South which is spread in most of his Yoknapatawpha novels. As far as, *Light in August* is concerned, we have tried to shed light in the main myths in this novel as follow.

1- Myth of Ancestors

Hightower and Miss Burden and the Past

Generally people question their origins to know about their ancestors. In *light in August* Hightower and Miss Burden live in the shadow of their dead ancestors. Our deep reading of the novel allows us to understand the symbolic use of the two characters. However, it is quite difficult to understand the author's message as a whole since it is highly experimental novel.

Gail Hightower is the grandson of a Confederate soldier killed in a raid in Jefferson during the Civil War. He is a son of a pacifist, an abolitionist "a phantom [...] the father who had been a minister without a church and a soldier without an enemy..."⁴. Hightower lives with the memory of a grandfather who was a soldier in the Civil War and a father who lived in the North as an abolitionist. This obsession destroyed his life, in this sense:

And they [people] told Byron how the young minister was still excited even after six months, still talking about the civil war and his grandfather, a cavalryman, who was killed, and about the general Grant's stores burning in Jefferson until until it did not make sense at all⁵.

Through the novel there is a repetition of Hightower obsession of the heroic past of his grandfather. His coming to Jefferson is to live in the memory of his Grandfather. He marries a daughter of the seminary teacher because he was quite sure that she has sufficient influence with the authorities to get him a call for Jefferson.⁶

This obsession has bad consequences. In the church Hightower's sermons have no sense and are always about the Civil War, and the death of his grandfather. Thus the members of his church protest:

[...] how he seemed to talk that way in the pulpit too, wild too in the pulpit, using religion as though it were a dream. Not a nightmare, but something which went faster than the words in the book; a sort of cyclone that did not even need to touch the actual earth. And the old men and women did not like that, either. It was as if he couldn't get religion and that galloping cavalry and his dead grandfather shot from the galloping horse untangled from each other, even in the pulpit.⁷

For Hightower his church and his wife, along with everything in the present, seem to him to be meaningless. Faulkner through the figure of Hightower reminds the human uneasy relationship with the past, its burden and omnipresence. Hightower's past becomes part of his life which he can never escape. Indeed, in his life there is no hope, and no change. After the scandal of his wife he was fired from the church as a minister, and he lived in isolation from society for the rest of his life.

The second character who is also obsessed by his ancestors is Joanna Burden. Though her ancestors were not originally from the South, their settlement in Jefferson makes them part of the Southern society. Like Hightower, Joanna, is compared to both her father and grandfather. They were rebellious, wanderers, and vigorous men. Joanna spends most of her time in her house, she feels ill whenever she leaves Jefferson, and she doesn't marry or have children. She is a victim of a strict religion and patronizing racism that her father taught her and that he learned from his father before him. Miss Burden narrates for Christmas about her dead brother:

his name was Calvin, like grandpa's, and he was dark like father's mother's people and like his mother. She was not my mother: he was just my half brother. Grand pa was last of ten, and father was the last of two and Calvin was the last of all. He has just turned twenty when he was killed in the two miles away by an ex-slave holder and confederate soldier named "Sartoris", over a question of Negro voting.⁸

Her family from generation to generation defends the black ;which leads to losing of all the family males, and the end of the family lineage. They lived in the South in isolation and marginalized by the southerners. Miss Burden continues the family tradition in defending the Blacks. She is engaged in a relation with Joe Christmas. She sheltered this latter in a nigger cabin front of her house. Christmas avowed later that he is part nigger, this makes Miss Burden to impose him her religion and life. Joe couldn't stand all this and he killed her in a mysterious way.

Miss burden who is obsessed with her ancestors and the Negroes but at the end of the story she is murdered by Joe Christmas who is both white and black i.e. his skin is white but his blood is black (his mother is a white woman and his father is black). Thus, Hightower and Miss Burden obsession stands to mythicize their ancestors. Faulkner mythicizing of the ancestors here can be understood as a negative one. In the context of the stories or histories of the two families the Burdens, the Reverends, Faulkner intentions are not clear. However we can refer here to Northrop Frye who considers this kind of stories as a tragedy “concerned with a breaking up the family and opposing it to the rest of society.”⁹ which means these two families live in the South but they are different, and they break up as families which led to their end. As a result, we can consider presentation of these characters in this way as an irony “whenever a reader is not sure what the author's attitude is or what his own is supposed to be, we have irony with relatively little satire.”¹⁰ Frye words fit Faulkner's novel. In fact, we can interpret the obsession of these characters in two different ways; either the pattern of decline, that is to say the present doesn't live up the heroic past, or we can say that the problems of the present come from the failure of solving those of the past.

2-Joe Christmas as a Myth of Race/ Religion

Most events in *light in august* are set in the town, villages, and countryside of the early 1930s Deep American South. It is a land of racial prejudice and strict religion. Faulkner is a skillful writer in his choice for his characters. Joe Christmas is one of Faulkner's characters

who are studied intensively by many scholars. This ambiguous and mysterious character may puzzle the reader. For us Joe is a myth itself since his life can be bifurcated in many individuals in one. That is to say, he is a white and lived as white in one hand, a black and treated as nigger in the other hand. In addition, he lived as a simple hard worker, then as bad, murderer and cheater. In one word is a devil and a Christ at the same time. In this part we will try to apply what Bakhtin says about a hero in the novel “one of the basic internal themes of the novel is precisely the theme of the hero’s inadequacy to his fate or his situation. The individual is either greater than his fate, or less than his condition as a man” ¹¹ that is the character cannot control his fate as a man.

The story of Joe Christmas in the novel we can summarize it as follow. Milly his mother falls in love with a Mexican who told her that he is a white man. While she is in love with this man her Father Mr. Hines is told by a fellow that Milly’s lover is a nigger or is from a slave family which makes him crazy. Mr. Doc Hines kills Milly’s lover, unfortunately she was pregnant with Joe, whose skin is nearly white. Hynes leaves his daughter alone the day of her deliverance and brings Joe to a white orphanage. Joe spends different and difficult situations onward, which make from him a man with personality troubles.

He is sometimes Black and sometimes white. This character couldn’t feel well in both races. Once white he behaves as a monster, cheating women and tries to kill Mc. Eachern his adopting father. This latter didn’t treat him well in his childhood. When he avows his blackness he is refused and marginalized, he tried to admit that he was a nigger and started to live with a black woman but he couldn’t stand the smell of the nigger as he says in the novel. He is coined “ a nigger” by the white people and he hates this. We can feel some absurdity in this character. His name is Joseph Christmas a significant, and religious name but he dislikes religion and religious people.

In Frye's view the western literature is rich of classical and Bible mythology and Faulkner is one of the American writers who use the Bible to refer to myth. So, his character Joe carries the name of the Christ but his behavior and deeds are so far from the person of the Christ. According to Robert M. Slabey a Christian symbolism accompanies Joe Christmas *Light in August* and he says in this sense:

if Joe Christmas is to be considered as the 'Christ figure' a preliminary observation must be made: Joe Christmas embodies a 'negative incarnation' ie ; he is not God but man dehumanized , not God accepted as human being. The abundant Christian allusions emphasize the lack of love and peace in the modern world where life is based, not in love, but on force and law. Faulkner in his earlier works like *A Fable* and *The Wild Palms* says that "if Christ returned to earth, he would have to be crucified again."¹²

Christmas in the novel was born without marriage, he lived and betrayed by a friend like the Christ then at the end he is crucified. Thus, Faulkner took elements from the Bible and the life of the Jesus to embody them in his hero.

Faulkner deepens his critique of the religious element in the South's understanding of itself by contrasting Puritanism with the innocence of Lena Grove. Lena represents all that the puritans are not: she is unselfconscious, above the stern morality of the community, in harmony with natural world, and absorbed in her journey rather than its goal. As in the final section of *the Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner has focused on an earthy, primitive figure to evoke the mythic consciousness that is not threatened by history.¹³ So the myth existed in Christmas is not mythicized positively in order to show the decline of racial religious values of the South. Frye refers to Joseph Campbell who calls the hero's quest within myth, the mono-myth. This is to say, the hero is born, departs on a journey, struggles, and returns.¹⁴

Classical Myth: Lena as Diana

In early times, every society developed its own myths; Greek society is among the richest societies with myths and the Romans influenced by creating their own too. Their life is

mixed of that of the gods and heroes of those myths for instance Madonna Myth, Diana myth. Indeed, Greek and Roman mythologies become an inspiration for many artists in sculpture, painting, and literature. Northrop Frye studied Myth in many European writers who use Greek mythology as it is the case with James Joyce. Applying this on William Faulkner we find that some elements of Greek mythology are present in *Light in August* mainly in the female character Lena. Bakhtin also mentions the presence of the previous works in any present work in this sense: “only the mythical Adam who approached a virginal and as yet verbally unqualified world with the first word”.¹⁵ Thus, Faulkner cannot escape his predecessors’ words in his work.

Diana is a Roman Goddess, a daughter of Jupiter and Latona, and sister of Apollo, was born in the island of Delos. She had a divinity, considered as Diana on earth, and Luna, moon, in heaven. She is known as presiding the woods and delighting in hunting. The Diana Venatrix, or goddess of the chase, represented as running on, with her vest flying back with the wind. She is tall of stature and face, handsome but she is something manly. Her feet are sometimes bare.¹⁶ Most critics agree that parts of Dianna myth(Greek Goddess) are present in Faulkner’s Lena. The connection between Diana and Lena appears in the way Diana has a guardian spirit looking after her, and Lena is protected by the kindness of the most human beings she met along her journey, to find the father of her child.

The images of the circle, the urn and the vortex bowl all resonate with image of the sacred grove and sanctuary of Diana of the wood. We already know that Faulkner read this classic.¹⁷ Faulkner smeared parts of this woods of Dianna myth all over this novel not in any structured way. These mythical elements which are spread in the novel refer to the pregnant Lena who registers the control of the present by the past. Her sexual activity controls her current pregnant condition. Her womb operates like every other womb. It proceeds in growth without independent decisions by Lena. Her past is heavy like the community past, war, and

racism then freedom. But as mother Lena changes and registers the current life. The infant is new, a new consciousness in the world. Lena released by the infants birth to selfness love and free will based individuality.¹⁸

If we relate Lena to history and the other Faulkner's works female characters we should note that the difference between Faulkner's treatment of Dilsey and his handling of Lena is that the latter figure shows no signs of having triumphed over history; for Lena history is simply does not exist. Lena, on the other hand, is pure innocence untouched by the besmirching hand of history.¹⁹ In Claude Levi Strauss view, it is only when elements of a myth are related to other elements that they begin to have meaning and become comprehensible.²⁰

Myth of the South: From the Community to the Universe

As we have mentioned above *Light in August* set in the mythical county Yoknapatawpha. This setting is typically represents the South and the Southerners as well. Indeed, Faulkner created this mythical place that allows him to deal with the South. So, Yoknapatawpha is at is said by Faulkner himself "[my] own little postage stamp of a Native Soil", then he follows in an interview with Stern "I created a cosmos of my own".²¹ We will apply Bakhtin's vision, in this sense "the living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment..."²² Faulkner's words have taken their shape in the region of the South and portrayed by a characters can be seen as "types" of Southerners. He used ordinary and poor white protagonists that generally stand to express a true expression of Faulkner's view of life.²³

Jefferson's treatment of Lena indicates how little value it places on the simplicity of acceptance of the natural cycle of life, just as its complicity in the death of Joe reveals the excesses to which its rigid enforcement of an arbitrary code can lead. The town's reaction to

both strangers, however, discloses the same fundamental flaw in moral standard to which it adheres. This typical Southern community is unable to reconcile the norms by which it defines itself with reality of human situation. Joe is a victim of racism which denies his full humanity, and which nullifies the possibility of any compassion in those who torment and finally destroy him. In her own rejection of accepted norms Lena by contrast; reveals the extent to which Southern culture is out rhythm with the cycles of nature that she represents.²⁴

Lena Grove in her calm and tranquil way is seeking Lucas, the father of her child whose birth is imminent. Traveling alone in the confident belief that he is waiting for her, she arrives in Jefferson on Saturday morning, the first day of Joe Christmas escape. At the sawmill to which she has been directed she meets a good , devout, earnest man, Byron Bunch, whose name is a southern colloquialism for "crowd" or "masses"²⁵ . In some way, Lena with her fertility represents the earth and Bunch mythicised as the community with ideals and values.

Byron Bunch another character who is close to Lena shares with Hightower, too, a desire to retreat from the evils of the world. He is working on Saturday in order to escape temptation. His life has changed with Lena's coming to Jefferson, he says "out there where I thought the chance to harm ere a man or woman or child could not have found me. And she hadn't hardly got there before I had to go and blab the whole thing [that Burch was in Jefferson]"²⁶. He falls in love with Lena and he involves himself in troubles he used to flee. He succeeded to get Hightower from his isolation by involving him in Lena's story. Byron Bunch learned to face evil with his love, kindness. He confronted Burch the father of the baby with courage, whereas the baby's father flees again. Thus, Burch earns the right to do with Lena, considered by critics like another Joseph going with Mary, as she continues her journey to Tennessee, just to serve her.²⁷ Faulkner mythicized Lena to reach the degree of Mary and Bunch with his ideals as a simple man to reach Joseph. In his point of view, Hugh argued that, in one sense she symbolizes the basic natural order.²⁸

The mythical elements are spread around in the novel, in an unstructured way. The author used ironic characters. Lena's story provides only a temporary escape from the negativity of the tale of Joe Christmas. The false myth contained in Puritanism produces a religion of death in which the will to power is absolute but unacknowledged; it provides no protection from the terrors of history. The truly mythic world of Lena Grove is an allusion historical man can enter only through the imagination. Although this novel is a product of Faulkner's special imagination, however, as Bakhtin argued about the words uttered by an author "reflect the social processes" ²⁹. It is important to keep in mind that many critics agree that this amalgamation of mythology by idealizing the heroic past to get rid of the shame of slavery and defeat. Thus, that is why the Southerners use religion as a pretext to justify their heritage; the right to own slaves, and their fighting in the civil war.

II- Myth in Nedjma

As it is the case with Faulkner, many of Kateb Yacine's works are characterized by the use of myth and he is known as one of the African pioneers who are fascinated by classical and regional mythology. The classical based upon the reading of works of the European writers and their use of Greek mythology such as Homer's *Odyssey*. The other one is concerned the local legends and family histories mythicized to reach the degree of myth.

1-Myth of Ancestors

In general, the designation of the ancestral myth is used in the narratives that are destined to distant past by using figures, places, and mythical symbols to attach any given group to its origins. So what is the ancestral myth for Kateb Yacine and from which sense and characters can we deduce it? In Claude Levi Strauss's view the mythmaker is a 'bricoleur', a handy-man who makes repairs with the items readily available. The mythmaker uses elements within a culture or people group to convey meaning, which is found in the structure rather

than the details. The elements have no special meaning in and of themselves, but rather gain meaning based on their use within the structure of the myth.³⁰

It is worth to mention that Kateb Yacine is the instigator of the ancestral myth in Algeria. He is also the founder of the lost and violated nation from many invaders, as J. Déjeux states “ il est dépositaire des trésors de la tribu”³¹ , it means to gather the same members of the same tribe around the one common identity. To our knowledge, *Nedjma* is written just after the massacres of 8 may 1945; where Algerian population is still living under the French despotism. Most of this population is illiterate and ignorant of their rights so Kateb Yacine in this period was one of the few of the elite who dared to write this masterpiece to tell or to show for the colonizer that the indigenes have their own origins and identity since the novel is in very sophisticated French. From his imagination Kateb has created a group of characters which are related to their ancestors. In addition, he used the historical figures and mythicized them to show the heroic past of North Africa or Algeria before the colonization. Claude Levi Strauss in his study declares : « on sait bien que tout mythe est une recherche du temps perdu ».³² In what follows we are going to mention these myths as it is reflected in the characters and historical figures.

Keblout

To start, the myth of origins is devoted by Keblout the father of the tribe, the father was Keblout and the mother Keltoum, who resisted against the Turkish and then killed. In *Nedjma* the four young men protagonists and *Nedjma* are the descendents of Keblout. Rachid is the character who is obsessed by the image of his father in particular and the image of the heroic past of his ancestors in general. So, *Nedjma* is a call from the ancestral voice exhorting its decedents to perpetuate the tradition. In the novel Si Mokhtar has to inform the new generation of their origins such as Rachid:

...Oui, la même tribu. Il ne s'agit pas d'une parenté au sens où la comprennent les français ; notre tribu, autant qu'on s'en souvienne, avait du venir dû venir du Moyen- Orient, passer par l'Espagne et séjourner au Maroc, conduit de Keblout. Quelqu'un m'a expliqué que c'était sans doute un nom turc : « corde cassée »,Keblout [...] il n'est resté aucune trace de Keblout. Il fut le chef de notre tribu à une date reculée qui peut difficilement être fixée dans le déroulement de seize siècles qui suivent la mort de prophète [...] [Keblout] eut été non un chef de tribu déjà puissant, établi en Algérie par pur hasard.³³

Kateb means that our ancestors rooted in this land so long ago, and it is difficult to give the exact date of the settlement or their coming to this land. So Keblout came from Spain and settles without intention. If we make a link with what Claude Levi Strauss says about how myth becomes history in the case of Kateb the official Algerian history is tampered and falsified. At school the teacher says to the children “ nos ancêtres les Gaulois” from this quotation we can relate the myth of origins in a way or another is an attempt to justify how any group took roots in such geographical space. In addition, through myth we know the appurtenance at a specific group of culture. It is also a way to make the contact between man and nature. Instead of describing origins or creation like Eliade, Levi-Strauss discusses myth as relating to how people think, how their society functions, economics, and related social issues.³⁴

In brief, the use of ancestral myth by Kateb Yacine constitutes a form of defense and struggle against the colonizer policy in eradicating the indigenes personality, identity, and traditions. Kateb focused in the use of this kind of myth because it is the best way, in order, to clarify the falsified incestuous History. In other words, the mythical discourse serves to support the historical discourse. Thus the mythmaking here is the target to unify the Algerian population about one idea which is the attachment by one identity by introducing them to their ancestors of the distant past. In this sense: « la fonction du mythe est de rendre compte du présent et de prévoir l'avenir en faisant appel au passé ».³⁵

In this part we will try to survey and refer to myth in *Nedjma*; all the mythicized figures including places or settings such as Nadhor and cities like Bone, and Cirta, then the character Nedjma, myth in relation to nature as reference to some symbolic animals ; cat, spider, vulture, and eagle. In addition, we will do the parallel between this literary work and reality or history or the meaning of those myth applying Bakhtin study and his discourse of the novel. So what is the message that Kateb wanted to convey from using all those symbols?

Unlike Faulkner who used the ancestral myth to show the heroic past before the civil war, and the collapse of the southern values after the war, Kateb makes use of this myth to shake the Algerian elite who wanted assimilation in one hand, and show the origins and the History that was falsified by the colonizer in the other hand and resistance is the key to get rid of these conditions as did Jugurtha to get out the Romans and Abedlkader who is the founder of the first Algerian modern government and fight the French in order to protect this precious land. Anyway, Bakhtin dialogism argues that meaning is relative in the sense that it comes about only as a result of a relation between two bodies occupying simultaneous but different space, where bodies may be thought of arranging from immediacy of our physical bodies, to political bodies and of ideas in general.³⁶

Rachid

The image of the fathers of the four protagonists is not a satisfying one. Indeed, from the flash backs and Rachid's monologues we can deduce this. The fathers were preoccupied with hunting instead of fighting the colonizer, so they lost their tribe. They betrayed the lineage and the ancestors heritage by kidnapping the French woman. She is the cause of the dissolution and the decline of Keblout tribe, «les trois descendants de Keblout, car c'était la mère de Nedjma, la française, c'était elle qui avait explosé la tribu, en séduisant les trois mâles dont aucun n'était digne de survivre à la ruine du Nadhor... »³⁷ In fact, the children of

the tribe were responsible for the loss of the incestuous and cultural values. In this context, Rachid asserts to Mustapha:

Des hommes comme ton père et le mien...Des hommes le sang déborde et menace de nous emporter dans l'existence révolue, ainsi que des esquifs désespérés, tout juste capables de flotter sur les lieux de de la noyade, sans pouvoir couler avec leurs occupants; ce sont des âmes d'ancêtres qui nous occupent, substituant leur drame éternisé à notre juvénile attente, à notre patience d'orphelins ligotés à leur ombre de plus en plus pâle, cette ombre impossible à boire ou à déraciner, -l'ombre des pères, des juges, des guides que nous suivons à la trace, en dépit de notre chemin...³⁸

From the above quotation, it is not the heroic past but it is the mistakes of fathers who are responsible of disastrous present; without values and no defense for their values. Thus, the children have not forgiven their parents passivity and cowardice :

le père de Mourad, Sidi Ahmed, est mort dans un accident d'autocar, en compagnie d'une prostituée retirée d'une maison close de Tunis, dans ce raid audacieux, le défunt a sacrifié les vestiges de l'héritage ancestral qui se montait, dit-on avant, l'invasion française, à trois mille pièces d'or, sans parler des terres.³⁹

Rachid's father was murdered in a cave after the kidnapping of ,“la française”, the French woman, Sidi Ahmed who “pratiquait le charleston et la polygamie “. ⁴⁰ He was the first instigator of the kidnapping of la “française”. For the children, the ancestors represent a tradition of honour and integrity, but the fathers have failed to maintain the continuity of the tribe because they wasted their time in “éternelles parties de chasse” ⁴¹ instead of fighting the colonists. Rachid adds too:

Ce sont nos père , certes, des oueds mis à sec au profit des moindres ruisseaux, jusqu'à la confluence, la mêlée, le vide -l'océan- et qui d'entre nous n'a vu se brouiller son son origine comme un cours d'eau ensablé, n'a couru et folâtré sur le tombeau de son père qui m'a conduit dans cette ville, perdu et abandonné...Sais -tu combien de fils, combien de veuves il a derrière lui, sans pour autant se renier ? ⁴²

Throughout the novel, Kateb Yacine focuses on the abdication of the fathers, blaming them for disintegration of the tribe. Rachid's monologue refers to Si Mokhtar's depravation and fornications which dishonor the Keblout lineage and sully the blood purity, Rachid says:

« je suis l'enfant de ce cadavre, je suis un bourgeon de cette branche pourrie ».⁴³ Rachid can't accept to have father as his one because he considers him as impure and irresponsible towards his family as well as his tribe and nation. So he seeks for his roots by tracing back to his ancestor Keblout, in the sake of identity and origins. After living his life in the sin Si Mokhtar seeks for redemption by his pilgrimage to Mecca. In addition, his kidnapping for Nedjma is not a revenge but it is a need and necessity for the search of the lost nation and its glory past. However, we can deduce his betrayal for the tribe is not forgiven so he is killed by "le nègre" and Rachid expelled from Nadhor and he loses Nedjma forever.

Nedjma in Kateb's view is the present, she represent the nation which belongs to the ancestors and to the tribe of Nadhor. According to Kateb "Nedjma c'est l'Algerie la quete de l'Algérie"⁴⁴ , Nedjma is Algeria. To our readings, Nedjma is Algeria that will back to her faithful children, although the males who didn't defend their land and maintain it as Keblout says: "Keblout a dit de ne protéger que ses filles. Quant aux males vagabonds, dit l'ancêtre Keblout, qu'ils vivent en sauvages, par monts et par vaux, eux qui n'ont pas défend leur terre." ⁴⁵ The ancestor Keblout declares that the protection will be provided only for the females, while males who left their land without protection against the colonizer were cursed by their ancestors.

In short, the meaning is that the fathers who are normally the protectors and defenders of their ancestry lineage and blood engage in life of the joy, which led to the collapse of the mythical tribe. Thus, the myth of Keblout disappears because of the indecent children. In Nedjma, Kateb Yacine shows that the reason behind this collapse of the mythical tribe is the weakness and chaos inherited from the fathers because they were notable to transcend the fear caused by the invaders. He advocates the struggle in order to get rid of colonialism. This is what Kateb Yacine calls the political awareness. For him the search for the roots by returning to the past is the only way to construct the myth of the future as Rachid says in his

monologue, “c’est moi Rachid, nomade en residence force, d’entrevoir l’irresistible forme de la vièrge aux abois, mon sang et mon pays; à moi de voir grandir sous son premier nom arabe la Numidie que Jugurtha laissa pour morte”.⁴⁶ This quotation according to Jacqueline Arnaud the armed struggle for the independence is a necessity. Indeed, the reference to Jugurtha known for his ferocity against the Romans is the clear message from Kateb to use of force to get rid of the French occupation.

2-Myth of History

Algeria is rich with its history and culture. Indeed we can divide the Algerian history into many important periods starting from the prehistorically period. Obviously, Algeria was a prey in the eyes of many colonizers; because of its geographical sitting, and natural resources. Thus, since the 4000 BC, the indigenous people, the Berbers, as they were labeled by the Romans were pushed back from the coast by successive waves of the invaders Roman, Vandal, Byzantine, Arab, Turkish, and, finally, French invaders. In fact, Kateb makes reference to the Algerian history by using the historical figures such as Jugurtha and Abedelkader as an example of our ancestors who are at the same time defenders and heroes. In addition, he makes reference to the great cities Bone and Cirta to convey a message for the colonizer, applying the Bakhtin’s study who considers there are always the intentions of the authors and someone should read between lines.

In this part of this work, we will refer to Kateb’s intentions and the meaning of the used myths. Jean Amrouche points « le héros dont le destin historique peut être chargé d’une signification mythologique. »⁴⁷, it is in this way that he defines the character. To derive the history to mythology, you should convert history to myth.

faire dériver l’historique vers le mythologique, verser l’histoire dans le mythe. Cela fait vivre le personnage, ramène le passé au présent, l’actualise (en faisant un mythe qui permet de comprendre, d’appréhender une réalité

complexe). Cela fait fendre gorge à l'histoire (faite est confisquée par les autres).⁴⁸

As the example of Jugurtha camped as a complicated, cute, and quiet but he was created to fight and, was eager for freedom. This convergence is not hazard one. Jugurtha is a hero though his strength and eagerness he was defeated. So the message of Jugurtha is that as a Numidia patriot is betrayed and defeated because of the lack of strong organization and appropriate frameworks.⁴⁹

To sum up, in Jacqueline Arnaud study, the history magnified into myth, is manifested by the resistance to the Roman conquerors by the Numidian Jugurtha. Cirta and Hippone were the prosperities, the glorious cities in the Punic wars. To memory of Abdelkader who was a man of the sword as well as of pen who succeeded to unify the tribes into nation “ l’homme de plume et d’épée, seul chef capable d’unifier les tribus pour les élever au stade de la nation, si les français n’étaient venus briser net son effort d’abord dirigé contre les Turcs”⁵⁰ The French colonizer erased the resistance and the all the rebellious chefs were executed as it is the case with the tribe of Keblout.

a-Myth of Nadhor

In addition to the mythicizing characters in Kateb’s work, it is worth to mention that he mythicized places such as the Nadhor Mountain. The Nadhor is a mountain set in the East of Algeria precisely in Guelma “le Mont de Nadhor qui domine la region orientale de Guelma.”⁵¹ It is considered as mysterious and precious for the Keblouti. ‘Nadhor’ was a refuge for the population who flee the invaders.

In the novel this mythical mountain is haunted by an eagle that is considered as the symbol of the ancestor Keblout rooted in the Nadhor. This mountain also is a source of calm and peace for Rachid who says “j’étais libre, j’étais heureux dans le lit de Rhummel.”⁵² In addition, it is the sacred land to where Nedjma is brought after her kidnapping by Si Mokhtar

and Rachid. Si Mokhtar wants to ask pardon from his ancestors for his sins, he accorded “ce n’est pas revenir en arrière que d’honorer la tribu, le seul lien qui nous reste pour nous réunir même si nous espérons mieux que cela... »⁵³. He thinks by this action to give a rebirth again to his tribe “le sang de Keblout retrouvera sa chaude, son intime épaisseur.”⁵⁴ It is important to mention that the myth of Nadhor, since it is a sacred land for Kateb Yacine and the lost land means the loss of nation, then the loss of a personal identity.

From all what is said, the myth of Keblout it is not typically a pure myth because it is really existed in history and Kateb Yacine is a descendant of the Keblouts. So, it is not easy in this novel to distinguish between the imagination and the real in Kateb’s work. It serves here as an argument for the indigenes to fight the oppressor, « les données du passé pour expliquer le présent et fabriquer l’avenir. »⁵⁵ this quotation shows at what extent the past explains the present and makes the future.

b- Myth of the Antique Cities and their Symbols

Kateb used his imagination to represent the realities of historical cities to shake those who wanted to destroy the Algerian cultural and national heritage. In this purpose, he has chosen the well known antique cities; Bone, and Constantine:

Constantine et Bône, les deux cités qui dominant l’ancienne Numidie, aujourd’hui réduites en départements français ... Deux âmes en lutte pour la résistance abdiquée des Numides. Constantine luttant pour Cirta et Bône pour Hippone comme si l’enjeu du passé, figé dans une partie apparemment perdue, constituant l’unique épreuve pour les champions à venir...⁵⁶

This passage affirms that Kateb is enthusiastic to deny the falsity of Algerian history by the colonizer. Thus, he demonstrated the authentic history which is going back the distant past. In addition to Carthage, these legendary cities such as Bone and Constantine which called respectively Hippone and Cirta are the testimony (a witness) and an evident proof about History. It is clear from reading the novel that Bone is Nedjma’s city. Cirta was the capital of

Numidia under the reign of Massinissa then his grandson Jugurtha, who is considered by Jean Amrouche as eternal” l’éternel Jugurtha” ⁵⁷ . In *Nedjma* Cirta is the city in which Rachid’s father was killed. In addition, it is the city where our characters drink alcohol, and ...hashish. It is the favorite and the admired city in the world for Rachid. Cirta is also described as a city of resistance against the enemy: « cité d’attente et de menace, toujours tentée par la décadence , [...]lieu de séisme et de discorde ouvert aux quatre vents et par où la terre tremble et se présente le conquérant et s’éternise la résistance »⁵⁸ , we should notice that the presence of historical elements in Nedjma blends to myth. In fact, the disintegration of the ancient cities is caused by the colonization, so they were mythicized to reach the degree of myth.

To sum up, this description of the two cities joins what Jacqueline Arnaud says “*la légende personnelle rejoint la légende collective*” ⁵⁹ which means a personal legend joins a collective one. Indeed, the two historical cities considered by Rachid as the most precious for him.” Deux villes qui (lui) sont chères [...] : la ville où (il est) né la ville où (il a) perdu le sommeil” ⁸⁴ then , where Rachid « habité tour à tour les deux sites, le Rocher, puis la plaine où Cirta et Hippone connurent la grossesse puis le déclin » ⁶⁰ We can notice at the end of novel the confusion for Rachid between the decline and the disappearance of the two cities with the loss of Nedjma. Nedjma veiled in black stroll(wander) between Bone and Constantine under the careful watch of the nigger. In this Abdoun conveys that these mythicized cities are a metaphor, and the veiled woman is a symbol “le deuil du pays vaincu” ⁶¹ which means the grief of the defeat country.

3- The Myth of Nedjma

From our readings we can consider the character Nedjma as one figure who represents many. She is the image of a woman, a goddess, and a nation. Nedjma as a real woman mythicized as ‘l’Ogresse’ classical myth who devours anyone who approach her, and local

myth. This mysterious character that the novel bears her name although she speaks rarely in the novel but she is the center, the star, and the myth everything in the novel is turning around her. She is as Lena of Faulkner the only character who lives in the present which may make anyone ask many questions. Is she real, unreal, the myth, the history and a legend. Therefore, there are a great amount of critics about this exceptional character. As we have mentioned above, there are those who consider her as female figure which symbolize Algeria, a quest or a search for the past, and for others Nedjma is an ordinary woman loved and attracted by four male characters.

a-‘Nedjma’ as a Woman

Nedjma is a woman who really existed. She seems to have influenced Kateb’s literary career. Kateb dedicates his work to his beloved cousin by creating a character called after her name as a central figure of his imagination. Nedjma in *Nedjma* is the obsession of the four male characters; including Rachid, Mourad, Mustapha and Lakhdar. We will identify this image through the the interior monologues and the thoughts of the characters. They are in in search of her but they can’t reach or get her.

To begin, Rachid compares his happiness as a child when he plays in the Rhummel the same as the day when he saw Nedjma getting out of her bath: “...C’était pareil à cette joie, sous le figuier, de voir Nedjma au sortir du bain...”⁶² So, Nedjma keeps haunting the four characters in the novel. Their thoughts, desires are built upon her and make her central in the novel like Mustapha:

étouffe et chair fraîchement lavées, Nedjma est nue dans sa robe; elle secoue son écrasante chevelure fauve, [...] épuisée, elle s’assoit à même le carrelage ; son regard plonge dans l’ombre ; elle entend remuer la broussaille ; [...] Invivable consommation du zénith ; elle se tourne, se tourne, les jambes repliées...et donne la folle impression de dormir sur ses seins.⁶³

We can deduce from the above quotation that the character is watching Nedjma freshly washed and her body is naked, then he describes every detail of her body as something venerable. Mustapha here can't resist his desire for her. Thus, Maurice Nadeau considered her the center of the universe. According to him Nedjma is the sun which gravitate a certain number of stars.⁸⁹ Maurice Nadeau makes a metaphor out of Nedjma. Nedjma is the sun around which the four protagonists gravitate. The sunlight is only seen through its reflections on the other bodies.

Like Faulkner, Kateb used elements from nature; Nedjma as Lena who symbolizes the earth. However, the force of attraction in Nedjma is the equal with the repulsion. Her force as the force of the sun light which may blinds the eyes in looking at directly. In this sense, Rachid says : « je ne connais personne qui l'ait approchée sans la perdre. .. »⁶⁴ that is to say he knows nobody that approached her without losing her. The four protagonists are from Keblout origin. They have the incestuous relation with Nedjma daughter of Rachid's father or probably Si Mokhtar, both from Keblout tribe. Their tribe is known for its concerted marriages and endogamy. Jacqueline Arnaud declares that the tribe advocates the inter-cousins marriages, and there is a preference for the paternal uncle's daughter, and these rules are strict with the Keblouti.⁶⁵

b-Nedjma as a Nation

The four protagonists though they discovered their mixed origins with Nedjma they still continue their love for her. Kateb uses the word incest in the novel to draw the symbolical figure of Nedjma. In fact, she symbolizes the lost identity of the scattered Keblout tribe. Arnaud Jacqueline explains that the incestuous relation of the four protagonists with Nedjma is a way to keep the identity of Keblouts origins: "figure de la nostalgie tribale, refuge contre l'effritement de la personnalité à une époque où la nation n'est pas encore constituée. Ils se

protègent par l'inceste contre la crise d'identité ». ⁶⁶ which means Nedjma is the tribal nostalgia, and a refuge against the disintegration of the personality in a period when the nation is not yet constituted. So they protect themselves from the identity crisis. Indeed, by this love to their cousin they want to knot, and keep their origins with Keblout.

The novel at the first sight seems as a love story doomed to failure. This failure occupied a great part of the novel. However, the story as progresses, Nedjma comes to symbolize a nation that is not constituted yet, and seeks for its lost identity:

Nedjma se développe rapidement comme toute Méditerranéenne le climat marin répand sur sa peau un hâle, combiné à un teint sombre, brillant de reflets d'acier, éblouissant comme un vêtement mordoré d'animal ; la gorge a des blancheurs de fonderie, où le soleil martèle jusqu'au cœur, et le sang, sous les joues duvetueuses, parle vite et fort, trahissant les énigmes du regard. ⁶⁷

This passage summarizes the climate of the north and the Sahara of Algeria. Nedjma in the novel is a passive character. Despite her silence and passivity becomes the source of conflict for the four friends. She is the source of their confessions and monologues. As Rachid says in his monologue for the nigger:

« Elle vient de se baigner, veuillez vous écarter, car cette eau la contient toute, sang et parfum, et je ne puis supporter que cette eau coule sur vous » ; même un nègre, même un fils de l'Afrique sensible aux sortilèges pouvait mal prendre pareil propos, et en tirer prétexte pour flairer la gazelle... ⁶⁸

Rachid obsession with Nedjma is obvious, since he can't resist her attraction. He hates anyone who approaches her. He says about Si Mokhtar that he is an old "brigand", he introduces her to him briefly and he left him alone with her but she is a prey of silence, and she smiling to him as a Sultana. ⁶⁹ It is the same thing with Mustapha and Mourad. So the quest for her love transcends a simple love to become symbol then a myth. Nedjma tends to show the real image of Algeria as a target of several invasions. The violence and jealousy in the novel represents that of the Romans, Turkish, Arabs then the French colonizers. We notice that Nedjma in the

novel bears different names “the Andalousse” “the Sultana”, the “Salamambo” ,”une Salamambo déflorée, ayant déjà vécu sa tragédie, vestale au sang déjà verse...Femme mariée.” ⁷⁰ Some noticeable critics recorded that those names symbolize the Algerian nation as a mixture of different races.

To conclude, we can say that some parallels in the authors’ mythical investment in relation to both characters Lena and Nedjma. Lena and Nedjma are both the center of the two novels even though their silence and passivity. They represent classical mythic characters as well as a local myth of each society Algeria and the United States. The same for Hightower who is obsessed by his ancestors Rachid in Nedjma seeks his origins and he is haunted by the image of his dead father. In the structure of the two novels also, we can notice the characters’ interior monologues in the both works that are manifested for the same aims. As in *Light in August*, the movement of the events and the shift from the present to past or verse versa is one of the main characteristic of the two authors. Indeed, both of Kateb and Faulkner return to the mythical past to depict the harsh situation of the present.

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- According to the rules of Newton which govern the universe ,the force of attraction and the force of repulsion which are equal keep the planets in a constant gravitation around the sun. In the system solar the sun is never reached, similarly Nedjma is never possessed by the four characters.

Reading History in Faulkner and Kateb Yacine

This chapter explores the two authors' perception of history of their countries, and show their discourse in relation to important historical events. The study will highlight some historical events of America - the Antebellum South, the Civil War, and the Reconstruction Era – and Algeria - before after the French colonization, and the popular awareness after the 8 May 1945.

I-Reading History in Faulkner's *Light in August*

Michael Millgate considers *Light in August* as a novel where Faulkner exercised a wholly new degree of structural freedom. He allowed each narrative sequence to expand according to its own inherent logic, introducing each sequence and each new character at precisely the point required in order to throw the maximum illumination upon some nodal point in the action usually one of those moments of arrested time that sought to persistently to explore and understand in terms of the full multiplicity and complexity of all their implications in the present and all their antecedents from the past.¹ Bakhtin in his study about Dialogism in the *Discourse in the novel* he considered the form of the novel that has to function as the classic paradigm of literary realism: the novel is thought to verbally re-present “life” as apprehended through the physical senses of its novelist.² In fact, if we analyze the novel with the eye of a historian looking at the period in which novel was written and the events mentioned in the novel we will try to show the narration of history through literature and how can fiction becomes history?

According to Don H. Doyle Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha novels and short stories, though required reading in colleges and high schools across America, may not have the quite the same impact on popular historical imagination, but his work represents “the richest troves of historically authentic fiction in American literature. The Yoknapatawpha stories span more than a century and a half of history, from 1800 to the 1950s, and they center on one particular

place whose landscape, people, events, and history all bear strong resemblance to those of his imaginary place.”³ Indeed, what makes the the Yoknapatawpha saga historical is not that each story is deliberately set in the past; Faulkner also took great care to develop a continuing cast of characters, families, landmarks ,and folklore and to envelope all in a process of change over time. Thus, every page in some way is a document of ordinary life, above all its idioms and dialects, but also the dress, the manners, work, and countless of other folk customs.⁴ Many other critics considers Faulkner as a historian of the South such as Macolm Cowley in his book entitled the *The portable of Faulkner*⁵ and Robert Penn Warren who gives some of his attention to this Southern author. In what follows we intend to examine some historical features in *Light in August* which are related and considered as important in the American History. *Light in August* draws all of Faulkner’s familiar themes the Reconstructed South, religion, gender, and the power of living past, and the civil war.

1- The Antebellum South

Most of the Southern American literature of the late 19th century and the beginning of 20th century is the real depiction of the new South after the civil war. Margaret Mitchell and her saga *Gone with the wind* is the best example of that. There is a kind of romantic nostalgia to the Old South before the civil war. Therefore, what is known in the past as racism is still exist until now, and many questions of nowadays we seek their answers in the past. As a consequence, Faulkner work is the real today as it was a century ago. His Yoknapatawpha County comes as additional proof that sometimes the imagination equals the present reality or it goes further, into anticipating a future reality. The characters and the events in the book come to re-affirm an essential fact, that is fiction makes the real appear real than it actually is, or than it should be.⁶ In fact, if we have to define the word antebellum; it is the period before war and it is specific to the era of the southern society before the civil war. At the end of this war this pre-war period was romanticized by the southern people in general and the writers in

particular such as Faulkner. Through his works he conveys the idea that the South has its own identity and personality which is different from the North. In this sense Robert Penn Warren says:

The South which Faulkner had grown up in particularly the rural South was cut off, inward –turning, backward-looking. It was a culture frozen in its virtues and vices, and even for the generation that grew up after World War I, that South offered an image of massive immobility in all ways, an image, if one was romantic, of the unchangeableness of the human condition, beautiful, sad, painful, tragic...⁷

The above quotation shows how the south is different. There are many factors which contributed in the South distinctiveness. Among the characteristics which make the South different from the North are: the slavery system, religion, and the Aristocratic family and the place of woman in the Southern society. So, as Bakhtin noticed that the text appears as an interaction of distinct perspectives and ideologies, born by the different characters.⁸

As far as Faulkner's *Light in August* is concerned, we may say that the event of the novel is a clear depiction of the collapse and the loss of the southern values after the civil war. The big plantations and mansions like those of the Burden family. The narrator in the novel describes what Joe sees in his arrival to the Mississippi country road: "...he saw several Negro cabins scattered here and there along it; then he saw, about a half mile away, a larger house..."⁹ This is one of the South's architecture or landscapes which was characterized with; a big mansions for the white man surrounded with small cabins for the slaves working for the rest of white. At the Antebellum period a third of the southern families were slave owners, and most of them were independent farmers. Nevertheless, the slave system represented the basic of the Southern social and economic system. Thus, even the non-slave-owners opposed any suggestions for ending the system. In the North the blacks were household servants or farm laborers and the abolition of the slave system started in the beginning of the 1800s. As a result, the Southern leaders organized for a secessionist

movement from the North in order to maintain their way of life, and their personality as they considered.¹⁰

The Southerners established an agrarian society based on master-to-servant relationships strengthened by morbid and omnipresent religious currents. The Southern society was divided into three social classes at the top were the slave owners, the aristocratic families, owners of large tracks of land, the yeomen (very poor white people) and finally the black slaves.¹¹ In fact, the industrial revolution in Europe and the North didn't reach the south. So, when the Northern society is progressing the South was stuck to the old traditions which maintained and considered later as backward. In Bakhtin Dialogism the character is the image of reality taken by the author. If we analyze that dialogue between Kateb Yacine and Faulkner, we should make a parallel between what the northerners' localization for Southerners as backward and what the French considered the Algerian indigenes as savages.

2- Religion and the Southern history

The birth of the American nation has a religious bases since the first settlement started with the flee from the war of 'reformation' against Catholicism in Europe. As we are concerned with the South, its religion was built on the Calvinistic Protestantism which is divided into three main sects or groups the Presbyterians, the Methodists, and the Baptists. Indeed, the Southern religion is deeply rooted in the society that it shaped the southern culture and identity. Most of the historian of the antebellum period focused in the idea the place that the Calvinist occupied in the Southern society. Faulkner's light in August is the obvious depiction of the importance of the religion in the mind of the southern. In fact Faulkner's use of names such as Calvin, Christmas, McEachern may make us to reexamine this side carefully.

Light in August also features much Christian symbolism. Does this symbolism suggest that Faulkner wants to convey a message? Or, on the other hand, is this juxtaposition of Christian symbolism with the life of a violent man meant to be one additional way of criticizing Christianity? Most readers think that the Christian symbolism emphasizes Joe's suffering and sacrifice without necessarily conveying a specifically a religious message.¹² Christmas hate for religion and his crime by murdering Miss Burden when she starts to ask him to be more religious is the evidence proof of Faulkner criticizing for the southern religion

"Kneel with me" she said

"No" he said "I'm going.

"Kneel with me "¹³

Miss Burden asks Joe to kneel for prayer but he can't. It is probable that his experience as a child with the religious persons which makes him like that, or may be his unclear identity. According to Hugh Holman the stern Calvinism of Simon Mc Eachern represents the accepted religious order of Joe's world, an equivalent of the Pharisaic order of Christ's, and Joe achieves what he later senses to be manhood and maturity when at the age of eight he sets himself against the formal codification of that order by refusing to learn the Presbyterian catechism. He rejected also Mc Eachern's attempt by means of a cow to purchase Joe's allegiance to his orthodox conventions.¹⁴ After his flee from his adoptive family he comes to live in a slave cabin in the house of Miss Burden. He becomes her lover and when sex is no longer interesting for her, she tries to convert him to the Pharisaic religious order.¹⁵ Thus, the religion is part of the southern society but it is harshly criticized by many writers especially Faulkner.

To conclude, Religion plays a very important role in *Light in August*. In effect, the potentially corrupting influence of Christianity seems to be harshly indicted from the

orthodox Calvinism of Simon McEachern to the ravings of Doc Hines and the bizarre religious blend preached by Calvin Burden. In much of *Light in August*, the Christian religion is sanctimonious and malicious, sometimes even racist and misogynist.

3- The Civil War and its Effects

The whole South was affected at the end of the war the the individual psychology, the social institutions, religion, and the economy. *Light in august* is the story of Joe Christmas, a man of indeterminate race who believes himself to be black despite appearing white. Because the exact details of his birth are lost to history and retold vaguely through unreliable narrators, he might be part black, part Mexican, and he might be part white. It mirrors perfectly the American experience as a nation built on different races. So the novel prefigures just as an ancestor precedes a descendant. The story begins with the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in the world in 1521, the story continues with the importation of between 11 and 15 million captives via the middle passage, the enslavement of their descendants, the denial of all essential human rights, then the abandonment of an entire people after sudden emancipation, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and other terror groups, the denial of voting. The story is long and violent and composed of so many strands of the American history.¹⁶

Light in August summarizes the period after war; the conflict and the hatred between whites and blacks. The radical change that occurred in the South seems a sudden and unbearable for the citizens. They can't accept to be equal the man who was before their slave: "Do you expect a man doing the work of a nigger slave at a saw mill to be rich enough to own a watch?"¹⁷ The white man now is working like a nigger and he is poor. The character Brown says to the sheriff after the discovery of the crime committed to kill miss Burden: " Go on... Accuse the white man and let the nigger go free. Accuse the white and let the nigger run."¹⁸

“Nigger?” the sheriff said.”Nigger? ”¹⁹ The sheriff’s reaction and perception changed when he discovered that Joe has a black blood in him.

In the other hand, some whites can’t forgive themselves about what happened to the blacks as it is the case with the Burden family. Mr. Burden after he moved westward to get away from the democrats.

[...] Here Burden spent much of his time talking politics and in his loud harsh voice cursing slavery and slaveholders. His reputation had come with him and he was known to carry a pistol [...] he would wake his son with his hard hand. I’ll learn you to hate two things,’ he would say, ‘or I’ll frail the tar out of you. And those things are hell and slaveholders.”²⁰

From this passage we can understand that contradiction in the life of the southerners between alcohol, religion and slavery every point is related to the other.

In addition, his daughter Miss Burden tells Christmas about her father what he says about the blacks:

Another damn black Burden,’ he said. ‘Folks think I bred to a damn slaver. And now he’s got to breed to one, too[...] low built because of the weight of the wrath of God, black because of the sin of human bondage staining their blood and flesh.’ ...‘But we done freed them now, both black and white alike.” They’ll bleach out now. In hundred years they will be white folks again.²¹

The curse and the history of the blacks and whites will stay forever, the father of miss Burden again continues in this sense:

“Remember this. Your grandfather and brother are lying there, murdered not by one white man but by the curse which God put on a whole race before your grandfather or your brother or me or you were even thought of. A race doomed and cursed to be forever and ever a part of the white race’s doom and curse for its sins. Then he said:”I had seen and known negroes since I can remember. I just looked at them as I did at rain, or a furniture, or food or sleep. But after that I seemed to see them for the first time not a people, but as a thing , a shadow in which I lived, we live, all white people, all other people. I thought of all the children coming forever and ever into the world, white with black shadow already falling upon them before they drew breath.”²²

In this failure he is inescapably linked with the Southern society and its refusal to recognize the balck man as a human being: a society which went to war in order to preserve the moral

shame of slavery and paid for its defeat.²³ The pessimistic view of Faulkner is manifested clearly in the above passage. Whites with black shadows as it is the case with Joe a white with a black blood with his ambiguous identity he killed even the woman who sheltered him and feed him and gave him everything.

In short, even the situation of woman becomes worse after the war. Faulkner exemplified this by Miss Burden: “she wants to be married. That is it. She wants a child no more than I do” “it’s just a trick” he thought.²⁴ For Miss Burden all what she wanted is to be married and have a child but the history of her family as a lover’s of the niggers destroyed her simple dream. The hatred between people of the two sides grows with years Miss Burden lived her whole life marginalized by the southerners because of her ancestors who used to defend the blacks, as well as she she does, “She has lived in the big house since she was born, yet she is still a stranger..”²⁵ The situation of the society seems difficult after the civil war, for women and even the the married couples. In the novel we feel the gap between men and women. Indeed, Hightower who was obsessed for his ancestors which led to the death of his wife. We have Luckas Burch who fled Lena as pregnant young woman. Even the religious couples Mc Eacherns and the Hines all those relation are bad one. However, Faulkner gave a slight hope at the end of the novel when a man tells his wife about his journey and his met for Lena and Byron.

To sum up, the United States lived a bitter experience with the civil war and the wounds are still to our era. It is true that the union emancipated slavery officially but it stayed in the heart of the southerners for so many decades. So, we notice the birth of racism and hatred and Ku Klux Klan is one of the groups that are nourished with the blood of the Civil War. With regard to this group Faulkner makes reference to this in *Light in August*: “And when Hightower waked the next morning his study window was broken and on the floor lay a brick with a note tied to it, commanding him to get out of the town by sunset and signed K.

K.K...”²⁶ Obviously, Faulkner is rewriting history of South and his nation, in our point of view without taking a side. Bakhtin’s referred to the form as important in relation to the content so Faulkner’s modernist form tended to this side argued by Bakhtin.

II-Reading History in Kateb Yacine’s Nedjma

North African literature in French is considered as one of the dazzling expressions of the North African reality. In this perspective, the novel is one of the favorite means that emerged to express the colonial background. Maghrebian novel is the heir to a long literary western tradition. It is not only a representation of reality of the Maghrebian society at the period of colonialism but also a reflection to the evolution of its history and the hidden aspects of daily life. In our case, Kateb Yacine is among the authors who deal with the Algerian society, and history. Therefore, he depicts the history of our ancestors in his major works. Indeed, as we are concerned with Nedjma we will try in this part of the paper to show at what extent Kateb Yacine refers to history on his masterpiece *Nedjma*. In reading *Nedjma* it is easy to grasp many historical elements but it is difficult to make a link with what is said, and the message that he wants to convey. Sometimes one should read between lines. In this context Bakhtin says: “the way in which the word conceptualizes its object is a complex act all objects [...] are from one side highlighted while from the other side dimmed by heteroglot social opinion, by an alien word about them.”²⁷

Nedjma is written during the Algerian war. It is published in 1956. The novel depicts the social universe of the colonized Algeria. He started by introducing the climate between the Algerian and the French. He speaks about the prison, the colons then he returns to the glorious past of the ancestors. In this part we will reverse the situation by reading the distant past of Algeria to come back to the 8 May 1945 and link this to the disaster of the present situation which made Kateb to make a cry through *Nedjma*.

1- Algerian History before the French Colonizer

It is worth to mention that Algeria was conquered by different invaders before the French colonization, such as Vandals, Byzants, Romans as well as the Turks; In fact, Kateb Yacine referred almost to all these colonizers in his works through the magnification of our ancestors. As we are concerned with *Nedjma* we should mention the reference to the important historical figures like Jugurtha, Abdelkader and the resistant cities in history; Citra and Bone. These heroes were the source of inspiration for Kateb, he focused on the Algerian struggles in order to protect their identity. Throughout the novel he underlines a kind of pride drawn from his ancestors. Thus, he mixes historical facts and mythology. In this sense, Rachid asserts: « la Numidie que Jugurtha laissa pour morte; et moi, le vieil orphelin, je devais revivre pour une Salammbô de ma lignée l'obscur martyrologue... »²⁸ Kateb adopts the example of Jugurtha to ask the new generation to be more resistant and courageous as was Jugurtha at his time.

Kateb brings the past to the present in the in an artistic way to show the presence of Algeria through time. The monologues of Mourad in Lambese are the best example for that:

Mère le mur est haut ! Me voilà dans une ville en ruines ce printemps. Me voilà dans les murs de Lambèse, mais les Romains sont remplacés par les Corses ; tous les Corses, tous gardiens de prison, et nous prenons la succession des esclaves, dans la même bague, près de la fosse lions, et les fils des Romains patrouillent l'arme à la bretelle ; le mauvais sort nous attendait en marge des ruines, le pénitencier qui faisait l'orgueil de Napoléon III ... !²⁹

The above quotation shows the political awareness of the character. Kateb Yacine was writing that way to search the Algerian roots. His intention may be an urge for the defense of Algerian land and personality. Kateb continues his return to the past echoing the the defeated and victorious voices of the ancestors. As is shown in Rachid's monologue about the resistance of the Algerians to the different intruders:

Il suffit de remettre en avant les ancêtres pour découvrir la phase triomphale, la clé de la victoire refusée à Jugurtha, le germe indestructible de la nation écartelée entre deux continents, de la Sublime Porte à l'arc de Triomphe, la vieille Numidie où se succèdent les descendants des Romains, la Numidie dont les cavaliers ne sont jamais revenus de l'abattoir, pas plus que ne sont revenus les corsaires qui barraient la route à Charles Quint...Ni les Numides ni les Barbaresques n'ont enfanté en paix dans leur patrie. Ils nous la laissent vierge dans un désert ennemi, tandis que se succèdent les colonisateurs, les prétendants sans titre et sans amour...³⁰

Kateb depicts the history of Algeria. The succession of invaders and the resistance is rooted in the blood of our ancestors, thus no one can prevent this resistance in the present times. Kateb wants to convey a message for both colonizer to inform him about our history, and the Algerian to tell them it is time of union and don't forget who our ancestors are. The indigene in the present time of the novel becomes a slave and the colonizer absorbs all his possessions and energy for his interests.

2-The Colonial Period in *Nedjma*

Kateb's novel was published shortly after the declaration of the war between the French and the Algerian armies and it is considered as a direct contribution to the national struggle. It appears too that *Nedjma* is a narration of the Algerian society during the colonial period, "[...] the elaboration of a narrative perspective based upon peculiar socio-historical reality. *Nedjma* is a reference to the social Universe of the colonial Algeria at a specific moment of its evolution."³¹ Indeed, Algeria is a French colony and *Nedjma* is the novel which depicts the colonial society. In this sense according to Bakhtin, any utterance, including the novel, takes shape "at a particular historical in a socially specific environment" and it is "active participant in social dialogue."³² So, in Bakhtin's view, language is dialogical in nature in the arena which is coming socio-linguistic points of view or fixes on reality that corresponds to several classes in society.

The author focuses from the beginning in the gap between the Algerian and the colons. In fact, the first chapter opens with the escaping of Lakhdar from the jail "Lakhdar s'est

échappé de sa cellule.”³³ which means Lakhdar escaped from his cell. This event is happened in the present to shake and attract the reader at the present situation. In one hand the Algerian and on the other hand the colons. Mr Ricard for example is rich and he owns a car as most of the Europeans is a racist who considers himself as superior and the other as inferior: “M. Ricard demande une cigarette, mine de rien. Et comme il ne s’adresse jamais particulièrement à un Arabe, chacun reste coi...”³⁴ This means two different worlds in the public places, racism, hatred, the absence of communication between the two sides.

In our point of view, there is no difference between the black Americans of Faulkner and the Algerian natives since they considered as slaves and their work is for the rest and the comfort of the superior French or as he thinks as a dominant. The above passage summarize everything; only his leather hat may make distinction between him and the other citizens whom they couldn’t possess even the necessities of life. It is a clear description the social reality of Europeans. There is also M. Ernest, a contractor of a yard, and his daughter Suzy who is representation of European woman in Algeria and her difference from our women. Mourad meets Suzy and he reveals the gap between the two societies through his words:

et voila, pense Mourad, le charme est passé, je redeviens le manoeuvre de son père, elle va reprendre sa course à travers le terrain vague comme si je la poursuivais, comme si je lui faisais violence rien qu’en me promenant au même endroit qu’elle, comme si nous ne devions jamais nous trouver dans le même monde, autrement que par la bagarre et le viol.³⁵

This quotation does not need any comment it explains itself by itself. When he says “I become once more” means the social hierarchy between him and Suzy. Indeed, the violence predominates the two sides (the French and the Algerian), when he uses the two words “bagarre” and “viol” i.e. “fight” and “rape”. Thus, Kateb wants to say that the intruders put natives in the margin. Ameziane too, says about Suzy « Qu’est-ce qu’on peut dire à une jeune fille debout sur une route, et encore: la fille du chef d’équipe ! Et d’une autre race par-

dessus le marché ...”³⁶ So, as Frantz Fanon declares: ”the two zones are opposed obedient to the of pure Aristotelian logic, they both follow the principal of reciprocal exclusivity.”³⁷ However, this silence will explode with the events of the 8 May 1945 when the Algerian get to the street to ask their part of freedom after the end of the World War two.

3-The 8th May 1945 event in Nedjma

During the events of 8th May 1945 Kateb Yacine participated in the demonstration which led to his imprisonment. It is in this moment that he becomes aware of the repression and injustice of the colonizer. Indeed, Kateb engaged was in the quest for the lost Algeria through his writing. Thus, in *Nedjma* he recreates the events of 8th May 1945, the novel then is departed from this bitter reality. The most important place where this complexity is developed is in the voice of the author. Thus, the dialogues that constitute novelness are to be found not primarily in the compositionally expressed dialogues among the characters, but in the hybridized, double voiced, dialogized heteroglossia of the author’s own voice:

A dialogue is played out between the author and its characters, not a dramatic dialogue broken up into statement and response, but that type of novelistic dialogue that realizes itself within the boundaries of constructions that externally resemble monologues.³⁸

This kind of dialogues between the author and the character we notice it between Kateb Yacine and Lakhdar. Indeed, Lakhdar in his monologue remembers his first arrest:

le printemps était avancé, il y a un peu plus d’un an, mais c’était la même lumière; le jour même, le 8 May, je suis parti à pied. Quel besoin de partir ? J’étais d’abord revenu au collège, après la manifestation ; les trois cours étaient vides. Je ne voulais pas le croire ; j’avais les oreilles semblables à des tamis, engorgées de détonations ; je ne voulais pas le croire. Je ne croyais pas qu’il s’était passé tant de choses.³⁹

What happened is not easy for the character even after more than a year he still remembers the image of the events as it was at that time.

The 8th May 1945 which corresponds to the end of the Second World War in the whole world was a turning point for the Algerian political awareness especially for Kateb Yacine. The writer in the novel praises the resistance of the Algerians' cities to numerous invasions such as Romans, the Arabs, the Turks, and lastly the French. In addition, he shows the failure of this nationalist demonstration as a starting point for the characters especially Rachid to reach their political maturity. Rachid after these events he parts in the search of his roots and origins in his tribe Keblout. Therefore, even though the four protagonists are born outside of their tribe Keblout, the events of 8 May 1945 stimulated them to be more aware about what is happening around them. In the memories of Mustapha is written: "Mère, je me déshumanise et me transforme en lézard et, en abattoir! Que faire de son sang, folle, et de te venger? C'est l'idée du sang qui me pousse au vin..."⁴⁰ He adds: « depuis le 8 May 1945, quatorze membres de famille sont mort, sans compter les fusillés... »⁴¹ We notice that this day is recorded in the memory of the character. It is also a part of Kateb Yacine reality when his mother lost her mind after the demonstration. In addition, Bakhtin considers that the novel can't escape the biographical elements of its author.

Rachid manifests his despair for the present by coming back to the glorious past. Such backward movement teaches Rachid the way to construct a nation. His great grandfather Keblout was a strong and ferrous in his defense and maintaining the values of the tribe and the family. Thus, Keblout comes to Rachid's dream « et le vieux Keblout légendaire apparut en rêve de Rachid...crépuscule et de la prison. »⁴² It is true that as Si Mokhtar claimed for Rachid that is not by coming back that we honor our tribe, but it is the only way to unify ourselves because we not yet a constructed nation.⁴³ So, Kateb's return to the past and the traditional tribal realities is a necessity to build a nation. Rachid's reconstruction for history in looking for his origins and lost identity is in order to establish a nation as well as a national identity.

Kateb demonstrates that this land belongs to the ancestors and it is marked in the Algerian history. Obviously, the novel is an ancestral call to free the country. As we have mentioned previously Kateb's work is written at a time when the Algerian people are haunted by the quest for their identity. As Aimé Césaire noted in his book *Cahier de retour d'un pays natal*: "qui et quel nous sommes ? admirable question. »⁴⁴ It is the major question for all the oppressed and colonized peoples and Algeria was one of them at that time.

To conclude, if we want to define the nation in general is a group defined by having a particular and a distinctive geographical historical fact. According to Kamel Salhi the Algerian nation, like Algerian modes of fictional narrative, has its origins in myth, and realizes its potential in the mind of the reader and people as a whole. The image of the nation may be highly metaphorical, but it has undeniably inspired historically important political thought and powerful literary works. In Kateb's *Nedjma* there is a high degree of thematic unity which is reflected in the author's narrative strategy. Nedjma is an 'autobiography in plural'. It translates the hardship of Kateb's personal experience and the dilemma faced by his mother country into a range of situations and fictional characters. The author seeks to record his origins, to seek some comfort in his confusion of the past and, to discover himself.

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To sum up, Nedjma as a character with her complicated parentage represents Algeria rich heritage. So, the Algerians are descended from the indigenous Imazighen, mixed, to different degrees depending on the group and the region with Arabic speaking people from the Middle East as well as with Phoenicians, Romans, and Vandals. In addition, Nedjma elusiveness stands for Algerians resistance to different invasions; none of the invaders could subjugate the country. The four friends' obsession with Nedjma symbolizes the Algerian love for their country, their conflicts, and their struggle is to define themselves and to envision a future nation.⁴⁶

In *Light in August* and *Nedjma* multiple dialogical relationships are established, between the authors and each one of their characters and their consciousness, between characters themselves, and between characters and readers. What on a first consideration appear to be monologues contain within them dialogic tensions. The authorial figure has been removed from control. The author's voice is also dialogized, as shown in the characters' discourse.⁴⁷

In Don H. Doyle view, Faulkner's authority as a guide to the Southern History is by no means unimpeachable. He was careless with facts, blind to many issues, and wedded to several themes of the old South, and blacks, in particular. But beyond using his fiction to document his observations of his people and their land, Faulkner was also at work probing the South's past and raising disturbing questions about it, at times challenging some of the fundamental premises on which Southern whites had built their society.⁴⁸ Kateb Yacine too departed from his society and his own personal life beside *Nedjma* is full many biographical elements, that is why is labeled as "an autobiography in plural"⁴⁹, we can find parts of Kateb Yacine's life in the four characters mainly Mustapha and Lakhdar.

To sum up, the two writers wrote stories which are considered by many critics as established legends. On one hand they are realistic drawn from history of their communities, and on the other hand they symbolic through their thematic concerns. Kateb Yacine deals exclusively with Algeria and Algerian whereas; Faulkner is a clear depiction of his South. As they do this, their works is a constant conflict between the present and the past.

In addition, the work is based specifically around the mythology of the Keblouts in our concerned novel. She explains the necessity of returning to the past in order to build the future as follows:

les difficultés d'une société déstructurée, de personnalités aliénées, brouillées par l'irruption étrangère, à reconquérir leur propre identité, et donc le besoin de récupérer le passé, de se relier aux origines, et de redécouvrir, fût –ce par

les voies en apparence détournées de la quête amoureuse, les valeurs ancestrales pour pouvoir prendre du recul et opérer les mutations qu'exige l'avenir.⁵⁰

We can translate this quotation in this way: the difficulty of the non-structured society, alienated personalities, quest for identity, may create the need to restore the past by re-establishing of the ancestral values. Thus, for Arnaud *Nedjma* is novel where Kateb seeks for the lost nation and identity.

Finally, the two novel by applying our theory are dialogic and multi-voiced. Any author can't avoid and escape the influence of alien words as Bakhtin states: "the word is born in a dialogue as a living rejoinder within it, the word is shaped in dialogic interaction with an alien word that is already in the object..."⁵¹ along our study from the beginning to the end we have referred to the dialogue which is set between Kateb and Faulkner through their words. However, it is obvious that each author has his own mark which is typically specific to him without the other reflecting then their own native land, and culture.

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- ³ Doyle ,Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha and the southern history narratives, p 79.
- ⁴ Ibid, p 80.
- ⁵ Cowley Malcolm, *The Portable of Faulkner*,(Malcolm Cowley, The Viking portable library . Penguin books, 1977).p
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- ⁷ Robert Penn Warren, pp 3-4
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- ¹³ William Faulkner, *Light in August*, 211 - 212
- ¹⁴ Holman Hugh, *The Unity of Faulkner Light in August*, 157
- ¹⁵ Ibid , 157.
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- ¹⁸ Ibid, 75.
- ¹⁹ Ibid, 182-183.
- ²⁰ Ibid, 186.
- ²¹ Ibid, 190.
- ²² Ursula Brumm , *William Faulkner and the Southern Renaissance*, (The penguin History of American literature Since 1900, Edited by Marcus Cunliffe, Volume 9, penguin books, England, 1993), 197.

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- ²⁹ Ibid, 165.
- ³⁰ Kristine Aurbaken, *L'étoile d'araignée: une lecture de Nedjma de Kateb Yacine* (Publisud, 1986) , 25.
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- ³³ Ibid. ,13.
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- ⁴¹ Ibid., 49.
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General Conclusion

William Faulkner and Kateb Yacine are two important authors whose works have been locally and internationally studied. In this study, we have dealt with history and myth and how the writers invest characters, places, and events using myth. Kateb's *Keblout* is mythicized to refer to history and the period before colonization. The incestuous relationships of the characters in Faulkner's *Light in August* refer to an important American historical event the Civil War. Both authors use history, some biographical elements, and the glorious past to refer to the disastrous situation of the present to criticize the present of their societies.

Faulkner's influence comes from his great grandfather and folk stories from the oral culture and tradition to show the Southern identity. The same thing for Kateb's characters Lakhdar and Mustapha whose features may make us think of Kateb. The latter has lived a harsh experience with 8 may 1945 and was haunted by these events. They changed his life at many sides: love, writing, and his political awareness. After these events he discovered his cousin Nedjma which became the center of his universe and literary works mainly *Nedjma*. For Bakhtin, the social environment is an important element in the authors' writings.

It is evident that precedent authors influence the coming authors generations. However, it is worth to mention that each author relies on his own experiences and society to produce any literary work, and there is no work which starts from nothing. As far as the two studied authors are concerned, both of them departed from facts of their societies. In fact, Kateb has read Faulkner and might have borrowed some of his modernist techniques, but *Nedjma* stays as Kateb's original work an Algerian novel. Even if Kateb is writing in French, there are words from the Algerian Arabic and Berber language to tell the colonizer about the existence of the Algerian culture and identity. In these two novels we have tried to cover the myth investment using ideas from Northrop Frye and Claude Levi Strauss. There are parallels

in the use of myth in both narratures and structure whereby the is same, whereas the content is specific to each writer and his society.

Though we discovered many affinities between the two authors it is worth to mention that the studied works are different. If Faulkner refers to the Southern identity in his work Kateb's novels stand as an answer to the colonial discourse, defending a noble cause of people to get rid of the colonizer's despotism exploitation. In the case of Faulkner, it is a criticism towards his country since the North and the South of the United States are from one country and one culture even though there are some differences between the two.

Any academic research can't pretend to be exhaustive. In fact, there are always some additional aspects that would be covered by further research. I wish that this work may open other perspectives for future students and researchers to extend the analysis and cover other aspects of it.

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