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Introduction

Colonialism is the process of cultural, economic and political domination of a powerful nation over a weak one. This phenomenon affected countries of the Third World in various ways. Indeed, the colonizers imposed their culture, language and religion as well as their ideology on the original inhabitant. Thus, the colonized lose their identity in this process. Algeria was a French colony therefore; its history is linked to that of the French colonization as an experience marked by moment of subjection, domination, alteration and denigration of the colonized culture. Lahouari Addi cited in his article: “Colonial *Mythologies: Algeria in the French Imagination, the Myths Justifying the Conquest*” three myths: first, Christianity’s Moral Superiority Over Islam. Second, The Myth of France’s Civilizing Mission and at last the Myth of Ethnic Diversity¹. Addi’s article uncovers the realities that lie behind one hundred and thirty two years of social, political, economic and cultural domination. Under the name of what France claimed as: “national prestige, civilizing mission and France’s grandeur²” a whole nation was oppressed for more than one hundred years.

The French employed many strategies to erase the Algerian culture. Assimilation was one of them; it consisted of the imposition of French educational norms and the denial to the Algerian of his legitimate cultural identity through controls of language, curriculum, and methods of instruction³. It is worth stressing here the importance of language as an element of subjugation. Hebermas argues, in this context: “language is also a medium of domination and social power (...) language is also an ideology”⁴. To reach his goal, the colonizers use secular schools, administrations and other types of “Ideological state apparatus”⁵. This strategy induces the marginalization of the Algerian language and culture and the creation of colonized subjects who are directly affiliated to the colonizers way of life.

The engendered oppression and cultural trauma were the touchstone of a new Algerian literature which rose as a reaction to the false representations and to the founding myths of the civilizing mission. Those writings are inscribed in a vast array of fiction called Postcolonial Literature. In *The Empire Writes Back*, by Bill Ashcroft et.al, the term is defined as: “To cover all the cultures affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day”⁶.

Algerian writers responded to their oppressor in the language he could understand. Kateb Yacine once said: “I speak French, I write in French just to tell the French that I am not French”. For him, French language in Algeria is: “un butin de guerre”⁷. Kateb Yacine’s novel “Nedjma” (1956), can be considered as an example of an epoch marked by an intellectual consciousness launched by a desire to express a discomfort, caused by what Frantz Fanon called “*Negation*” and “*containment*”. The two were used by the colonial regime to dehumanize and dominate the colonized. Fanon said: “I owe it to myself to affirm that the Arab, permanently an alien in his own country, lives in a state of absolute depersonalization”⁸. Indeed, the novel depicts the violence that the Algerians leaved either under the menace of prison or death. But also it underlines the solidarity and the brotherhood between them. In this sense, in *The Empire Writes Back*, the authors Ashcroft et.al explain that Postcolonial Literature: “Emerged in their present form out of the colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with imperial power and by emphasizing their differences from the assumption of the imperial center”⁹.

Postcolonial writers seek to denounce and unmask the oppression and domination whether it is foreign or local. After independence, Algeria knew a period of uncertainties, a period that saw the emergence of what Frantz Fanon calls: “*National bourgeoisie*” which characterized the begging of local oppression. As they inherited the country from the French, this category oppressed the Algerian ethenies as the Kabylia for instance. Fanon argues:

The national bourgeoisie, who have assimilated to the core the most despicable aspects of the colonial mentality, take over from the Europeans and lays the foundations for a racist philosophy that is terribly prejudicial to the future of Africa. Through its apathy and mimicry it encourages the growth and development of racism that was typical of the colonial period¹⁰.

Rachid Mimouni's novel "*Le fleuve détourné*" (1982), can be taken as an example which describes that epoch. The novel reveals that the pre-independence literature of combat turned to become after independence, a literature of disillusionment. It also shows that Algeria passed from colonial racism to, in Fanon's word, a "*Reverse Racism*". The literature that characterized the pre-independence period by a revolutionist and liberationist tone changed after independence to express the disillusionment and the betrayal of the war by the "*National Bourgeoisie*". Benjamin Stora in his *Histoire de l'Algérie depuis l'indépendance* explains that after independence, the military took power what permits them to write their own version of history. Stora uses terms such as "*histoire fiction*" to refer to the process by which the military powers took control over the historical events, and how they opted for an abbreviated version of the latter. He explains: "This writing of history starts in June 1966, when it was decided to implement a measure of sovereignty by 'nationalizing', through Arabization, the teaching of history"¹¹. Indeed, what can be noticed in the Algerian school is that History books for instance, focuses only on few events of the war for independence neglecting and refuting the role of other ethnics and also these books usually describes only events that took place in the centers as Algiers or Setif giving the impression that the war took place only in those places neglecting again other places as the Montaigne or the Sahara.

Homi Bhabha, Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak can be considered as the main thinkers that theorized Postcolonial Literature. Their works converge in the way they denounce the oppression and injustice that colonial literature contains. In *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, Boehmer argues: "Rather than simply being the writing which "came

after” Empire, postcolonial literature is that which critically scrutinizes the colonial relationship it is writing that sets in one way or another to resist colonialist perspectives”¹².

Algeria is one of the most productive countries of francophone literature; this can be justified by her long French colonial past. Colonized countries like Algeria however, make use of their colonial past to develop a postcolonial literature and culture. Indeed, though the effects of colonialism are surely negative. However, the hybrid nature of postcolonial societies proves to some extent the flexible nature and the power of adaptation of these societies.

Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* cited terms as “*Mimicry*” and “*Hybridity*”; Bhabha advocates that postcolonial cultures blend, European and autochthonous traditions. He claims that: “the menace of mimicry is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority”¹³. Therefore, the “*Mimicry*” of the colonizer by the colonized deconstructs the basis of their ideologies and discourses and consequently, the dichotomy “*them*” and “*us*”. Bhabha also analyses one of the numerous aspects of postcolonial culture that is “*Hybridity*”. In this sense, Bhabha argues: “The social articulation of differences, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridity that emerges in moment of historical transformation”¹⁴. The result is a hybrid nation that is able to fully analyse, criticize and understand the European thinking and discourse, both from the inside and outside as one of us(Algerian) and one of them (French).

Moreover, Hebermas argues: “Language is also a medium of domination and social power; it serves to legitimize relation of organised force”¹⁵. In other words, he who has power holds by the same process the right to write history and he who has not, is demoted to the rank of “*Subaltern*” and “*Silenced Other*”. The term “*Subaltern*” means those people who are not part of the dominant groups, and “*Subaltern History*” refers to those who are neglected,

subordinated, and marginalized. The study of subaltern groups has played a significant role in the work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. In an essay entitled: “*Can the Subaltern Speak?*” she asks whether colonized people can have a place in the conservative pages of the elitist European historiography or is it something impossible to achieve?

Edward said in *Culture and Imperialism* exposes the driving forces behind France’s “Imperial Spirit”; he asserts that for the French publicists, the French empire was uniquely connected to their national identity: its brilliance, civilizational energy, and special geographical, social, and historical development¹⁶. However, he points to the fact that these are only justifications to legitimize their conquest. He adds that: “the inexorable process went on to make Algeria French”¹⁷. He draws an analysis of that process, and how colonial writers provide it with a platform and justification, by transforming its practices into mystic traditions that are to be considered immutable. The colonial literature became the vehicle that transports the colonialist thought and justifications to the colonial presence.

“*Self representation*” is one of the concerns of colonized nations. Postcolonial writers deal with this concern. They wish to provide us another version of the story. Therefore, the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed is unveiled in their writings, which represent not only a desire to challenge the colonialist assumptions, but also to correct them. Postcolonial texts are seen by Elzette Steenkamp as being: “characterized by a desire to challenge 'normative' European notions of power by giving voice to the marginalized, misrepresented and silenced other”¹⁸. This literature reveals the consequences of the colonial encounter such as, the difficulties of developing a cultural and national identity after years of assimilation to colonial culture.

Review of Literature

The tradition and the main tenet of Postcolonial writings as Salman Rushdie asserts is to write back to the centre. Continuing on this tradition Kamel Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation* published in 2013, has received a wide range of criticism, mainly because of its authors audacity to write back to an iconic colonial writer, Albert Camus who has a quite ambiguous place in the Algerian history. In fact, Daoud's work is a response to *The Stranger* (1942) of Albert Camus. His novel is presented in those terms: "Il sagit de faire contrepoint à l'ouvrage de Camus"¹⁸.

To begin with the critics on Camus' work, Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* chapter seven entiteled *Camus and the French Imperial Experience*, affirms:

Camus is particularly important in the ugly colonial turbulence of France's twentieth century decolonizing travail. He is a very late imperial figure who not only survived the heyday of empire, but survives today as a 'universalist' writer with roots in now forgotten colonialism¹⁹.

Said refers also to Conor Cruise O'Brein's critic. O'Brein demystifies the French iconic author by arguing that he was intensely European because he belonged to the frontier of Europe. He adds that no other writer, not even Conrad, is more representative of the Western "consciousness" and "conscience", in relation to the non western world²⁰. Said adds that this western consciousness: "is more likely to be considered as western dominance in the non European word"²¹. In the same sense, he argues:

The Western colonialism (...) is first a penetration *beyond* the European frontier (...) and second, it is specific not to an ahistorical "Western consciousness ... in relation to the non-Western world (...)" but to a laboriously constructed relationship in which France and Britain called themselves "the West" *vir-a-vir* subservient, lesser peoples in a largely underdeveloped and inert "non-Western world."²².

In this respect, Laouari in his article entitled « *Meursault contre enquête ou la revanche Postcolonial du fils prodige* », asserts about the main character, Meursault : « Si le héros de Camus était un jour traduit en justice, il serait pris pour un sadique qui savourerait l'acte de tuer. Alors comme l'a bien expliqué Sartre dans son livre *situations* "l'absurde de Camus est absurde »²³.

In addition to the previous authors, Valerie K. Orlando in an article entitled "*Conversations with Camus as Foil, Foe and Fantasy in Contemporary Writing by Algerian Authors of French Expression*" affirms that: " Camus' writings have always arisen a kind of controversy and that he is a kind of an agitator figure"²⁴. She adds that: "Camus remains for many Algerian writers a settler that could never choose the independence of Algeria because he had chosen his mother"²⁵. In fact, Camus states: "si j'avais à choisir entre la justice et ma mère, je choisis encore ma mère"²⁶.

Moreover, in Mouloud Feraoun's letters entitled: *Lettres à ses amis*. We can read in a letter of 27 May 1951 addressed to Camus: "J'ai lu *La peste*... j'avais regretté que parmi tous ces personnages, il n'y eut aucun indigène et qu'Oran ne fut à vos yeux qu'une banale préfecture française"²⁷. Feraoun's letter emphasized on Camus' propensity to write in a colonialist style not only in *The Stranger*, but also in other novels.

Concerning critics on Daoud's work, Christiane Chaulet Achour in her article: "*La question de l'antériorité dans l'écriture; Albert Camus/KatebYacine/Kamel Daoud, 1942 /2013*", claims that in Daoud's novel there is an extension for Daoud chooses to narrate what Camus not mentioned in *The Stranger*; She argues:

L'extension qui donne le roman même de Daoud comble les non dits sur cette affaire algérienne et reancrer le récit dans la terre d'Algérie, laissée de côté par de nombreuses études de l'œuvre. Kamel Daoud rejoint des interprétations universitaires qui ont expliqué ainsi l'escamotage de l'Arabe sur la page²⁸.

She adds that Daoud's novel is not only an answer to Camus' *The Stranger*, but also: "Une invitation à se regarder en face dans l'Algérie d'aujourd'hui". Which means that reading Daoud's novel as only a rewriting of Camus' *the Stranger* is to diminish of the novel's as well as the writer's endagement with the issues of the present Algeria.

The apparent interest of Harun, who is Daoud's protagonist, is to give his brother a name, but also to show that he is not a simple anti-colonialist character. As it is mentioned in an article by Robin Yassin Kassab entiteled: "*The Meursault Investigation by Kamel Daoud Review-An Instant Classic*": "Harun is an ur-Algerian reflecting on colonialism, the legacy of thousands of Meursaults and their callous indifference to Arab life"³⁰. However, Kassab adds that Harun: "rejects simplistic anti-colonialist allegorizing"³¹. In fact, R.Yassin argues that the novel contains the elements of the "empire speaking back". Moreover, it is a commentary on post-colonial failure; which is not more than a Frenchman heritage.

Issue and Working Hypothesis

Literary works are to some extent the outcome or the product of their social, historical, economic and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, each work is somehow the product of its time. Following the same logic, Postcolonial Literature is the outcome of colonialist writings that advocated oppression and degradation.

Kamel Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation*, for example, is the antithesis of Albert Camus' *The Stranger* the two works can be considered as two sides of the same coin. The tone of Daoud's novel is clear right from the beginning. "It would be a novel that would recall an old story of more than a half century". Daoud investigates not only history that is never said, but also he presents his understanding of the failure of the Algerian Independence.

The novel has received a wide spectrum of criticism and a worldwide literary debate. Some critics and press reviewers saw it as the expression of an extraordinary literary talent. Others, however, have harshly dismissed Daoud's novel as an expression of a "neocolonial mind". It is quite astonishing in fact for an author's first novel to trigger a huge and worldwide heated polemic. Facts that motivated our academic curiosity, our work then would try to uncover what we think are the postcolonial traits of Daoud's novel. Leaning on Postcolonial Theory, we shall try to prove that on the contrary of what some critics may think the novel is not an expression of a neocolonial mind but an expression of a nationalist postcolonial writing back enterprise.

To achieve our analysis, we shall rely on Postcolonial Theory and make use of some of its concepts like hybridity, appropriation, abrogation, counter- canonical discourse and celebration of the local culture. Our work will be divided into four chapters where we will try to analyse Daoud's novel by concentrating on the writing strategies applied by the latter to

restore the truth and challenge the “colonial discourse”, as well as to denounce his homeland’s weakness to achieve the post independence promises. We will try to demonstrate that though seventy two years have passed since Camus has written his novel, the debate is still alive and the need to re-construct a historical retrospection and reaffirm the Algerian identity is more urgent than ever.

Moreover, to achieve a complete understanding of Daoud’s novel; we will devote a chapter where we will analyse Camus’ novel and try to disclose the “colonialist realities” behind his writings. We will try to demonstrate that *The Stranger* bears a “colonial discourse” and that its implications are highlighted in its style, the plot and its characters.

I. Method and Materials

A. Method

Postcolonial Theory invites readers to enter and analyze literary texts with a critical lens. A distinctive way of reading literature that unmask the effects of colonization and imperialism on people. In *The Empire Writes Back*, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin use the term “to cover all the cultures affected by imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day”³². It is an enterprise of rehabilitating, correcting, countering and writing back to the hegemonic center. Therefore, postcolonial literature is a “writing back project”; and as such it is defined by Ashcroft, et.al as: “A form of resistance, of reclaiming one’s ownership of oneself by resisting the hegemony and undercutting the tropes of orientalism, overturning the narratives of empire and thereby disjuncturing colonial discourse”³³.

Postcolonial Literature is a rewriting enterprise through a canonical counter discourse, which is a critical engagement with colonial texts and their common interpretation. As such, it embarks on the venture of revising past events either fictional or factual ones. The canonical counter discourse, results in the rehabilitation of the “Silenced Other” and the deconstruction of the westerns’ constructed falsehood. It is the expression of the cultural traumas that resulted from the colonial experience. In this sense, Postcolonial Literature’s venture is to re-voice the voiceless and reconstitute the right to denounce the devastating effects of colonialism and to reveal years of alienation, oppression, destruction, and dehumanization.

a. The Postcolonial Appropriation and Abrogation:

Among the main linguistic strategies of writing back to the colonizer are “Abrogation” and “Appropriation”. Both are related to the use of language. “Abrogation” on the one hand is defined by the trio of *The Empire Writing Back* as a process which includes the denial and

refusal of the western language and culture. “Appropriation”, on the other hand, stimulates accommodation as an alternative to a complete rejection of the colonial inheritance. It involves a mixture of two languages and two cultures in a reversal manner that seeks to create local sense³⁴. Ashcroft et.al affirm that:

The abrogation or denial [...] involves a rejection of the Metropolitan power over the means of communication. The appropriation and reconstitution of the language of the centre, the process of capturing and remoulding the language to new usages, marks a separation from the site of colonial privilege³⁵.

The development of Postcolonial Literature is characterized by the appropriation of the colonizer’s language. French language, for instance was used by the colonizer as a means of dominance. In this respect, the French used their language to replace the Algerian one. This imposition of the colonizers’ language indicates segregation, intolerance, as well as the destruction of the Algerian identity. In this sense, A.Heggoy confirms: “The denial to the Algerian of his cultural identity through controls of language, educational programmers and methods of instruction indeed revealed the colonialist policy in its most destructive aspect”³⁵.

Though, French has been considered as the language of the oppressors, it has been used by Postcolonial authors to respond to the colonial works; this fact is seen as an act of nationalism. In Laouari’s words: “Ecrire dans la langue du colonisateur est aussi perçu en théorie postcoloniale comme un act de melitantisme”³⁶, which means that the use of the colonizer’s language is viewed as an act of militancy. Therefore, most of postcolonial literary works used the language of the colonizer in order to express their needy wish to revise history, Or as Achebe declared: “to set the records right”

Postcolonial writings play both the role of an intermediate of resistance toward the oppressor and a representative of national identity for, most of postcolonial writers sought to write their own national narratives. It is through this literature that the apparent truth or reality is questioned. Ashcroft et.al argue: “Language becomes the medium ... through which

conceptions of 'truth', 'order', and 'reality' becomes established. Such power is rejected in the emergency of an effective post-colonial voice"³⁷.

In addition to appropriation and abrogation, there are varieties of textual strategies cited by the trio of *Empire Write Back* like glossing, code switching and code mixing. By so doing, postcolonial writers have shown the possibility to produce an effective counter discourse even in the language of the colonizers, which can challenge the power form and reveal the brutality of the colonial discourse and structure.

b. Hybridity and Mimicry:

"Hybridity" is another concept used in Postcolonial Theory. In hybrid nations, there is a mixture of languages and cultural codes through which writers create a third voice. According to Ashcroft et.al: "Hybridity [...] is the primary characteristic of all post-colonial texts whatever their source"³⁸. They add: "Hybridity commonly refers to the creation of new trans-cultural forms within the contact-zone produced by colonialism"³⁹. Postcolonial writers assume the hybrid nature of their respective societies and endeavour to express it. Ashcroft et.al argue in this context that postcolonial writers:

have realised that for the foreseeable future much of the artistic and social production of their world will take place within the constraints of the traces of the colonial and neocolonial moment, and that much of the distinctiveness of contemporary post-colonial societies will be produced by and against this process either by vigorous resistance or, more frequently in recent times, by a dialogic process of recovery and reinscription⁴⁰.

Moreover, Bhabha holds that: "the display of hybridity, its peculiar replication terrorizes authority with the ruse of recognition, its mimicry, its mockery"⁴¹. That is, in this quotation Bhabha demonstrates the particular condition of hybridity, which includes within its characteristics the fact of being particularly menacing to the colonizers authority and hegemony. Ashcroft et.al argue about Bhabha's analyses of the colonized/colonizer relation in these terms:

He (Bhabha) maintains that relations of power and knowledge function ambivalently, he argues that a discursive system split in enunciation, constitutes a dispersed and variously positioned native who by (mis)appropriating the terms of the dominant ideology, is able to intercede against and resist this mode of construction⁴².

“Mimicry” is another concept of postcolonial theory. It describes the ambivalent relationship between the colonizer and the colonized by in Bhabha’s word mockery. Bhabha confirms that the “menace of mimicry that its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority”⁴³. In the same sense, Ashcroft et.al argue:

Bhabha contends that when re-articulated by the native, the colonialist desire for a reformed, recognizable, nearly-similar other, is enacted as parody, a dramatization to be distinguished from the ‘exercise of dependent colonial relations through narcissistic identification’⁴⁴.

Furthermore, Bhabha argues:

Mimicry marks those moments of civil disobedience within the discipline of civility: signs of spectacular resistance. When the words of the master become the site of hybridity—the warlike sign of the native—then we may not only read between the lines, but even seek to change the often coercive reality that they so lucidly contain⁴⁵.

c. Celebration and Rehabilitation of the colonized culture:

The colonialist political, historical, economic and literary practices have resumed the original inhabitant’s culture to one word that is “inferior”. The colonizers have perpetuated a discourse that praises the superiority of their race, culture, and civilization over the autochthonous culture that was presented in terms of “savage”, and as displaying “dangerous practices”. The westerners’ cultural and ideological “superiority” was imposed as an evident standard to be perpetuated. These hegemonic discourses have transformed autochthonous cultural manifestations into barbaric practices to be suppressed. To subvert such hegemony, postcolonial writers celebrate and rehabilitate their traditions and national cultures. During the process of decolonization, post colonial subjects tried to free their lands. But not only, they also engaged in retrieving their culture. The celebration of their traditions and identity can be presented in many different aspects, such as the use of autochthonous words, idioms, and

phrases. Postcolonial writers, then try to rehabilitate their ancient traditions. Their writings celebrate the original pre-colonial culture; emphasize the fact that colonized countries did have their own history, identity and culture. Indeed, postcolonial writings celebrate ancestral traditions and cultures that existed long before the arrival of the colonizers while taking into consideration the hybrid nature of their respective postcolonial societies. Another aspect that is quite radical however, chosen by some postcolonial writers as Ngugi Wa Thingo is the complete rejection of the colonizers language. Ngugi asserts: “The purpose of post-colonial studies is to assist the total and absolute decolonization of societies in psychological as well as political terms, involving massive and powerful recuperations of pre-colonial cultures”⁴⁶.

This is a clear shift, which reveals a profound need to construct a pure national identity and to demonstrate an intellectual independence. Postcolonial Literature deals with the consequences of colonialism on the colonized identity. It depicts the hardship that these societies have to express this identity. It is an important aspect to attain a self understanding and identification with the rest of the world. As such, the question of its formation is a significant one to postcolonial writers. The need to express the latter as opposed to that of the colonizer becomes their primary concern. To attain that goal, their first move was to differentiate themselves from the center. In the same sense, Paolini argues that the postcolonial “Other” came back in a newly formed identity that is far away from western identity; he reports Helen Tiffin’s words:

Postcolonial writers rehabilitate the self against European appropriation. In fracturing imposed European master narratives and perspectives, postcolonialism replaces them with an alternative vision. This is particularly the case for indigenous peoples (India, Africa) who are able to challenge European perspectives with their own metaphysical systems⁴⁷.

After having retrieved their lands, postcolonial subjects engage in the search of their identity. Postcolonial writers seem to adopt different ways to achieve that goal. There are those like Ngugi who advocated a complete rejection of the colonialist remainings. And there

are the one like Achebe, who focuses on the hybrid nature of their societies and uses this particularity to resolve their respective identity crises. Therefore, the concepts of “hibridity”, “language”, “multiculturalism” and “Otherness” are the main pillars that make the debate on postcolonial national identity. As such it is not surprising that they are also the major concerns of the postcolonial countries’ literature.

To sum up, Postcolonial Literatures sought to give voice to people, who were suppressed by the hegemony of the colonialist practices. In this sense, postcolonial narratives construct a different story of colonization. It allows whose stories that have been neglected, to correct and share their colonial experience. Through their engagement with those attitudes, postcolonial authors seek to dismantle and counter the western’s canon background. Most notably, postcolonial writing is a tool of constructing “difference, separation, and absence from the metropolitan norm”⁴⁸.

B. Materials

1. Summary of Albert Camus's *The Stranger*

“Maman died today, or yesterday maybe, I don’t know”. This is how the narrative of the novel starts. Meursault, the storyteller is a young, detached and callous character. The events of the novel begin with him receiving a telegram, informing of the death of his mother. He attends the funeral; however his coldness, lack of empathy and passivity calls out to the attendees. After he returns to Algiers, he goes in a beach vacation with his new fiancée Marie and a friend Raymond, a fact that accentuated his careless nature. During that vacation, he and his friend encountered two Arabs, with whom they came to use violence. Meursault kills one of the Arabs and he fires four more times into the body, for no other explanation than the sun. Meursault has “shattered the balance of the day”.

Meursault was taken to jail. However, he shows no guilt over his inexplicable crime. During his trial the court, insisted more on the fact that he shown no grief over his mother’s death, than on the fact that he killed a man. He was judged and punished by death not because he has taken an innocent life but because he was a cold apathetic character. While waiting for his execution, he embarks on an interior struggle. It is in prison that the reader came to know Meursault’s position toward religion, as he rejects Christianity. Moreover, he declares that life was meaningless. Finally, Meursault the Camusian anti -hero came to peace with himself once he accepted his fate and his last wish is that a large, hostile crowd attends his execution.

2. Summary of Kamel Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation*

“Mama’s still alive today”; this is how the novel starts; an utterance that is considered as a counterpoint to Camus’s epigram, “Maman died today, or yesterday maybe, I don’t know”. In Daoud’s work “the Arab” has a voice as well as a right to speak through his brother. In this sense, his work is a retelling of Camus’s *The Stranger*. Daoud gives the opportunity to a voiceless to tell his own identity and history. Daoud gives the Arab an identity “Musa”, a family and a story.

In the novel Musa is remained unable to recount his story thus, his brother Harun spoke at his place. Harun lived his childhood in the shadow of his painful memories; he rejected the idea to let his departed brother remain anonymous, as such, he restitutes to him a true story and a name, and describes in details the major events that led to Musa’s unexpected murder in a beach. *The Meursault Investigation* begins in a bar in Oran, a place where Harun revokes his solitude and his anger toward God. Harun was only seven years old when the murder happened. He remembered that it was a sunny summer morning; his brother left the house and tells his mother that he would return home earlier, but it was not the case. Harun and his mother discovered that Musa has been murdered in a beach, although they cannot demand his body since he has no name. After forty days, Musa was declared dead. His mother suffers from grief and remorse. She returns to tell different stories for what had happened: “A thousand and one stories”. Hence, Harun by seeing his mother suffering, he feels isolated and imprisoned by pain. He sees in revenge the only way to be released. Consequently, on a July night in 1962, he kills a French named Joseph Larquais. After his arrest, he learns that he is not judged because he killed a man, but for having killed him after the cease fire.

II. Results:

From the post-colonial study of Kamel Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation*, we explored the various strategies adopted by kamel Daoud to challenge the hegemonic colonialist discourse in Camus' work *The Stranger*. Thus, we demonstrated how Daoud endeavoured to resist and correct the misrepresentations conveyed through colonialist literature.

"Hybridity", is one of the characteristics of postcolonial literature. It is impossible to avoid this feature caused by years of colonization. Colonized countries become then the site of cultural, linguistic and artistic hybridity. Kamel Daoud makes use of this particularity to infiltrate and dismantle an iconic French figure. The hybrid nature of Daoud's novel permits to reduce the distance between the standard French culture and language and the Algerian culture and language.

The second strategy, engages with the use of the colonizer's language. This use subverts the French hegemonic discourse and demonstrates the possibility to produce an effective counter canonical discourse, even with the settlers' language. Through the "Appropriation" and "Abrogation" approach postcolonial literature tend to agitate the fixed use of language imposed by the colonial regime.

Another strategy concerns the celebration of the natives' traditions and values. By so doing, Daoud tries to rehabilitate the Algerian "Other". It is achieved through the way he gives a name to "the Arab". Kamel Douad's work shares the desire to re- affirm his national identity, to denounce the imposition of colonial practices and culture. Through this, Kamel Douad invites his audience to be conscioussse of the colonial realities and subversive strategies conveyed in colonial literature.

Endnotes

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- ⁴ Jurgen Hebermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), 284.
- ⁵ Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, Trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 141.
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- ⁹ Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, *Empire Writes Back*, 02.
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- ¹² Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Post Colonial Literature* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 03.
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- ¹⁵ Jurgen Hebermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 287.
- ¹⁶ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 171.

¹⁷ Ibid., 171.

¹⁸ Elzette Steenkamp, "Borrowing Identities: A Study of Identity and Ambivalence in Four Canonical English Texts and the Literary Responses Each Invokes" (MA diss., University of Stellen Bosch, 2008), 10.

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²⁰ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 173.

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²³ Boukhalfa Laouari, "Meursault Contre-Enquête ou la revanche postcolonial du fils prodige," *Liberte*, Dec. 23, 2014.

²⁴ K. Orlando Valérie (2015): *Conversations with Camus as Foil, Foe and Fantasy in Contemporary Writing by Algerian Authors of French Expression*, *The journal of North African Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/13629387.2015.1069741.

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²⁷ Mouloud Feraoun, *Lettres a ses amis* (Bejaia: Editions TALANTIKIT, 2015), 208

²⁸ Christiane Chaulet Achour, *La question de l'antériorité dans L'écriture Albert Camus/Kateb Yacine/Kamel Daoud, 1942_2013*. Available on www.limag.refer.org/new/index.php?inc.

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³⁰ Robin Yassin Kassab," *The Meursault Investigation by Kamel Daoud review- an instant classic*". Available on www.theguardian.com, 2015.

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³² Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 02.

- ³³ Quoted in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *THE POST-COLONIAL STUDIES READER*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 35.
- ³⁴ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 37.
- ³⁵ Ibid 39-37.
- ³⁶ Heggoy Alf Andrew, "Education in French Algeria: An Essay in Cultural Conflict," *Comparative Education Review*, no 17(1973), 180.
- ³⁷ Boukhalfa Laouari, "Meursault, Contre-Enquête ou la Revanche Postcolonial du Fils Prodige," 03.
- ³⁸ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 07.
- ³⁹ Ibid., 182
- ⁴⁰ Quoted in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *KEY CONCEPTS IN POST-COLONIAL STUDIES* (London and New York: ROUTLEDGE, 1998), 118.
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- ⁴² Quoted in Homi.K Bhabha, *The Locations of Culture*, 115.
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- ⁴⁶ Homi.K Bhabha, *The Locations of Culture*, 121.
- ⁴⁷ Quoted in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 194.
- ⁴⁸ Albert.J Paolini, *Navigating Modernity: Post colonialism, Identity and International Relations* (Colorado: Lynne Reinner, 1999), 79.
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III. Discussion

1. The Colonialist Thought in Camus' *The Stranger*

To discern the colonialist dimension of Camus' *The Stranger*, an inquiry into the writer's political views and the historical period when the novel was written needs to be done. First, Camus' political implications are highlighted; He was a pied-noir writer. The pied-noir were the French people who lived in Algeria during colonization. Politically speaking, Camus could have never chosen the Algerian party. Camus' famous declaration: "If I have to choose between justice and my mother, I would choose my mother"¹ may be considered as the label to his anti- independence stance. Furthermore, as Said points to: "Camus' involvement in the struggle with the FLN was a matter of life or death"².

Camus then, was fully conscious that the independence of Algeria means the exclusion of the settlers. For Camus, and many other pied-noir, Algeria was definitively their homeland and their possession "The French of Algeria are also natives, in the strong sense of the word"³. Camus totally and overtly opposed independence: "National independence is a formula driven by nothing other than passion. There has never yet been an Algerian nation"⁴. The strong attachment he and his fellows have with land can be traced back to what all empires inspire to that is geographical expansion and settlements. Camus' narratives are no more than the justified heirs of an imperialistic philosophy, based on colonizing foreign lands according Said: "Camus's narratives lay severe and ontologically prior claims to Algeria's geography"⁵. He adds: "He inherits and uncritically accepts them (claims made by French about Algeria) as conventions shaped in a long tradition of colonial writing on Algeria"⁶.

Moreover, Said in *Culture and Imperialism* reported Admiral La Roucière words: “Gentleman, providence has dictated to us the obligation of knowing the earth and making the conquest of it. (it is the) duty inscribed on our intelligence”⁷. This sentence, demonstrates the justification provided by the colonizers to invade any country. And it represents the heritage of colonial ideology and discourse; a heritage that would be transmitted by means of literature. In the same sense, Said argues: “Camus’s most famous fiction incorporates, intransigently recapitulates, and in many ways depends on a massive French discourse on Algeria, one that belongs to the language of French imperial attitudes and geographical reference”⁸.

Second, the historical backdrop of the novel is important to grasp its imperialistic positions. Indeed, as it is the case with many literary works, *The Stranger* is the product of its time. Written in colonial Algeria in 1942, a period that was teeming with social uprisings and resistance to the French oppressor. Said claims: “the years when Camus was working on *L’Etranger*, were filled with numerous events punctuating Algerian nationalism’s long and bloody resistance to the French”⁹. This fact widened the gap between the pied-noir population and the natives; the latter are no more perceived as “pacified, decimated Muslim population”¹⁰. They were rather considered as a threat to the colonial presence and authority. Camus’ *The Stranger* has for long been discussed as a novel questioning the absurdity of life. In fact, it is also and less discussed as a novel expressing the fear of post-independence outcomings and political changes. Said claims: “Camus represents the tragically immobilized French consciousness of the European crisis near one of its great watersheds”¹¹.

The claim that the novel bears elements of colonial discourse is linked to the novel’s historical context and to the writer’s political stance. However, to fully support this assertion we need proofs from the story thus, analysis of its plot, characters and style are required. In this sense, Promod K. Nayar thinks that the colonial discourse is manifested through:

Mask(ing) the power relations between races, cultures, and nations. It makes the relations *seem* natural, scientific, and objective. Colonial discourse therefore produces stereotypes from within European prejudices, beliefs, and myths¹².

Our aim is to use this definition as a map to trace the characteristics cited in it within *The Stranger*. First of all, the plot of the story is discussed. It is a story that takes place in colonial Algeria and as such, it is concerned with a particular social situation. The plot of the story gathers within its lines three social groups whom would decodes the political and the imperialistic inclination of the novel. Meursault, the protagonist is a young pied-noir man from whom the reader comes to know the story. He and his compatriots and the French authorities seem to represent the only social group constituting Algeria. The first time, Meursault speaks of an Arab was about the nurse he said:

The furniture consisted of some chairs and trestles. Two of the latter stood open in the center of the room and the coffin rested on them. The lid was in place, but the screws had been given only a few turns and their nicked heads stuck out above the wood, which was stained dark walnut. An Arab woman a nurse, I supposed was sitting beside the bier¹³.

The description of the Arab women, as being part of the furniture, provides the first insight into Camus' colonialist attitude toward the native population. This discourse conveys the notion of superiority as claimed by Lois Tyson: "Colonialist ideology [...] was based on the colonizers' assumption of their own superiority, which they contrasted with the alleged inferiority of native"¹⁴. Thus, the notion and the belief of superiority of a social group over another will characterize the plotline of the novel.

The following events of the story will disclose openly the imperialist thinking of its author. The second time the reader comes to know about Arabs is when Meursault declares: "I saw some Arabs lounging against the tobacconist's window. They were staring at us silently"¹⁵. Again Arabs are depicted as silent and passive characters, as if they were only part of the natural landscape. Meursault seems to create a kind of safety distance between his own group and Arabs. This attitude reveals a profound need to assert an authority over the natives or as Said points to: "contesting Algeria against its native Muslim population"¹⁶.

The plot presents two populations which are in opposition, the Algerian and the pied-noir population. The political message in the plot is delivered at the climax, when Meursault kills an Arab. This Algerian character was in fact, the only one who came to cross the safety line created by Meursault and consequently he was eliminated. The Arab was killed by a gun a superior and powerful weapon, comparing to his primitive knife. If we compare this event to the historical context cited earlier, we would understand notice Camus' political view. The Algerians tendency to revolt is then anyway going to be confined and suppressed by the more powerful colonial authority.

Camus' denouement consists of the imprisonment of Meursault and his trial. The latter has been analysed by O'Brien as being only a way to: "justify the French rules or an ideological attempt to prettify it"¹⁷. These two events, have been as Said says: "cover(ed) with a superstructure celebrated by Sartre as providing "a climate of the absurd"¹⁸. While reading the story, the plot seems to follow another way than that dictated by the climax. The Arab seems to be buried under an absurdist atmosphere and questioning. He has simply been over passed and his death translated as an event, to which the reader should not give any importance. Said's quotation of O'Brien can make the development chosen by Camus more evident. "The inner drama of his work is the development of this relation, under increasing pressure and increasing anguish"¹⁹. It can be deduced from this that the plot of the story follows the unbalanced social situation during colonial Algeria. The argument that affirms Camus' colonialist attitude is the fact that the novel has been developed by taking into consideration only a European stance. Thus, all along the story, no Arab except a mistress to whom a pied-noir character, Raymond has been too generous while she was unthankful and unfaithful, has actually talked. The Arabs are purely and simply ignored. Even during the trial, no Arab is present to represent the dead and nameless man who is supposed to be the cause of the latter. The focus is kept on the pied-noir population as to insist on the fact that

they are and will be the only socially interesting group in Algeria. In an overall view, the plot indeed conveys a Eurocentric thinking.

Second, a close analysis of the characters and especially the protagonist is of great importance to complete the arguments. Meursault is a detached character as Said remarks: “Meursault’s astonishingly existential isolation”²⁰. He seems to have no materialistic interests or any ambitions. He refuses a promotion proposed by his employer:

“You’re a young man,” he said, “and I’m pretty sure you’d enjoy living in Paris. And, of course, you could travel about France for some months in the year.” I told him I was quite prepared to go; but really I didn’t care much one way or the other.²¹

Meursault is the personification of the individual who seem to be against the morals of his time. He is indeed, an antagonist to the settlers’ principles as he seems stranger to their expectations; as to cry at his mother’s funeral or to confess to a priest. Camus wrote *The Stranger* as Said declared with: (a) focus on the individual in a social setting; this is true for *l’Etranger* (...) He prizes self- recognition, disillusioned maturity, and moral steadfastness²².

While Meursault seems to be in a complete disagreement with the French authorities; he is in contrast when it comes to the pied-noir. This fact is highlighted by his friendship to Raymond. Though Raymond is a “pimp”²³ in Meursault’s word, he finds no “objection of being pals”²⁴. He even helps him in getting a young Arab woman to be maltreated by writing to her a letter that served as bait to attract her. Meursault pretends to be anti-colonialist as he is against the French social values. However, he defends the pied-noir violent attitude towards Arabs.

Meursault’s attitude toward Arabs is characterized first by a complete indifference, but when the two groups come together; his attitude turns to become extremely violent. Meursault in fact kills the Arab and while one bullet may be sufficient, he shouts four more times: “But I fired four shots more into the inert body”²⁵. What alarms the reader is his legendary calmness;

he does not for once try to justify his gesture, this fact as Said points to: “revive the history of French domination in Algeria, with a circumspect and a remarkable lack of remorse or compassion”²⁶. Furthermore, Meursault can be considered as a colonialist protector because he neglects the Arab culture and identity, considers their property (land, women) as his own, and at last but not the least, he suppress the Arab language.

Third, Camus’ style is discussed. Said quotes Roland Barthes to explain it. He says: “le degré zéro de l’écriture” or “écriture blanche”²⁷. This means that Camus’ style is quite clear and easily understood. However, how can we use this fact to claim it as a strategy that works colonialism? Said claims that:

His clean style, the anguished moral dilemmas he lays bare, harrowing personal fates of his characters, which he treats with such fineness and regulated irony all these draw on and in fact revive the history of French domination in Algeria.²⁸.

According to Said, the dynamic that makes Camus’s diminishing of the Arab presence inevitable can be perceived in Bugeaud’s, who is a French Marshall, letters, proclamations, and dispatches²⁹. This fact informs us that Camus’ novels have always been related to his French ancestral way of writing. Likewise, Bugeaud’ affirmation that: “les Arabes ne comprennent que la force brutale”³⁰; echoed Meursault’s declaration during the trial: “I’d shot the Arab. After the first shot I waited. Then, “to be certain of making a good job of it,” I fired four more shots deliberately, point-blank, and in cold blood, at my victim”³¹. Indeed, as K.Nayar points to: “Said showed how literary, historical, anthropological, and other texts carried within them the same politics as those that inspired military and economic conquests”³².

Futhermore, Said points to the fact that Camus’s novels and stories thus very precisely distil the traditions, idioms and discursive strategies of France’s appropriation of Algeria.³³. Irrevocably Meursault’s declaration: “my little thrill of pleasure when we entered the first

brightly lit streets of Algiers”³⁴; which shows his strong attachment to this city is symptomatic of Camus’ writings and to the French obsession in general, of possessing territories.

Camus’ *The Stranger* has been studied as appertaining to absurdism or written by a humanist who as Said points at is: “a moral man in an immoral situation”³⁵. However, Postcolonial Theory makes the reader analyze literature with critical lens which decodes its events to reveal its hidden implications. Camus’ *The stranger* revealed that his writer’s situation as pied-noir in colonial Algeria would inevitably influence him. *The Stranger* has absolute right to be considered as an absurdist novel, what is less evident is that this absurdist atmosphere turns the reader’s attention to make him forget about the real humanist situation at play. To make the reader forget that a man has been shot and not only to have no interest in what was his identity. As a matter of fact, Daoud as a postcolonial writer, embarks in countering Camus’ colonial discourse of “superiority” which far from being naïve and inoffensive. Thus, discourse is defined by Promod as being:

Not innocent reportage or fictions of the mind. They do not simply reflect an event or a person in the form of an image or a description. Discourses define and constitute the reality of that person or event for the reader. That is, it is impossible to know a person or event outside the representation provided by discourse³⁶.

. Daoud tries to provide the reader with another image apart from that of Camus. He shows clearly the possibility to produce an effective counter discourse using the language of the former colonizer. Moreover, by so doing, he rejects Camus’ novel manichian attitude and narrates the story from another perspective and reveals oppressed Algerian voices. Daoud provides a transparent window to the reader, so that while looking through it, this reader could observe the difference between the segregated colonized and the hegemonic colonizer.

Counter discourse then is a method that seizes the colonialist canonical texts as a starting point of contestations against their major assumptions. Daoud’ title *Meursault, Contre-Enquête* may suggest “Opposition”. The reader immediately thinks of an attempt to

reverse and erodes the colonial discourse of the French colonialist writer and exposes its literary hegemonic strategies. Thus, the writer expresses a desire to retrieve a lost identity; Daoud's intention is to correct the misrepresentation of Arabs in *The Stranger*, as such, his book is full of reversals and parallel to Camus' novel, for instance:

I had to take hold of the clock that registers all the hours of my life and turn the hands back until they showed the exact time when Musa was murdered: Zujj, two o'clock in the afternoon. I killed the Frenchman around two in the morning³⁷.

Indeed, the more readers are familiar with Camus' work, the better they understand *The Meursault Investigation*. In fact, as it is justified by Sangeeta Ray and Henry Schwars: "Postcolonialism is an attempt to question the hegemonic position of Europe modernity as the culture of reference for the rest of the world"³⁸.

Endnote

¹ Gray- Grosier Raymond et.al, *Albert Camus Oeuvre Complètes, III: 1949-1956* (Paris: Gallimard, 2008), 287.

² Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 174.

³ Ibid., 179

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid., 180

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid., 170

⁸ Ibid., 181

⁹ Ibid., 178

¹⁰ Ibid., 181

¹¹ Ibid., 175

- ¹² Promod K.Nayar, *Colonial Voices: the Discourse of Empire* (UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 03.
- ¹³ Albert Camus, *The Stranger*. Trans, Stuart Gilbert (New York: Vintage Books, 1946), 05/06.
- ¹⁴ Tyson Lois, *Critical Theory Today* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 419.
- ¹⁵ Albert Camus, *The Stranger*, 32.
- ¹⁶ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 178.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 174
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 181
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 173
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 172
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, Albert Camus, *The Stranger*, 28.
- ²² Edward W. Said *Culture and Imperialism*, 174.
- ²³ Albert Camus, *The Stranger*, 19.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 20
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 39
- ²⁶ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 181.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 172
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 181
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 182
- ³¹ Albert Camus, *The Stranger*, 63.
- ³² K. Nayar, *Colonial Voices*, 03.
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³⁴ Albert Camus, *The Stranger*, 28.

³⁵ Edward Said *Culture and Imperialism*, 174.

³⁶ Promod K.Nayar, *Colonial Voices: the Discourse of Empire*, 04.

³⁷ Kamel Daoud, *The Meursault Investigation*, 63.

³⁸ Quoted in Sangeeta Ray and Henry Schwarz, *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies* (United Kingdom: library of congress cataloging-in-publication data, 2000), 150.

2. Rehabilitating “the Silenced Other”:

Albert Camus’ *The Stranger* has been influenced by the literary and historical context of the time of its production. The Post World War one literary context, which is absurdism and disillusionment, was the major focus of many studies about the work. Camus’ novel which was written during colonial Algeria depicts mostly the predicament that prevailed during that period.

The relationship between the colonizer and the colonized generates a discomfort which in turns unveiled the gap between the Algerian population and the French. In *The Stranger*, the dichotomy: power holders and colonized subjects is embodied in the characters, the language they use and even the plot. The story turns around Meursault, the protagonist who would be the vehicle of this dichotomized relation.

The historical reality of Algeria makes the reader question the real motifs behind Meursault’s actions. First, the plot is seen only through his view of the world; everything the reader can realize is presented through his perspective. Not once all along the storyline the colonized’s observations or views are revealed. This fact accentuates the image of the mysterious and threatening individuals that Arabs would bear all along the story. Second, Meursault holds the power of description provided by his imperial language. Ashcroft et.al affirm: “language becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated”¹. As a matter of fact, the one who does not hold that power is condemned to remain silent and be defined only via the colonialist view Arabs do not speak for themselves in *The Stranger*. Third, from the beginning till the end Meursault, allies himself to the French cause and do his best to work the westerners, he declared: “I tried my best to satisfy Raymond”².

In *The Stranger*, the process of “Othering” is engaged from the moment Meursault encountered Arabs: “I saw some Arabs lounging against the tobacconist’s window. They were staring at us silently, in the special way these people have”³. Arabs are always depicted in group in their respective ethnic belonging as opposed to the European norm; Arabs always need to be categorized. Micheal Azar remarks that in *The Stranger* “between European Algerians and the Arabs, there is no possible reconciliation, no communication, only a fight to death”⁴.

The climax of the story is when Meursault murders a man in a beach. However, as the reader expects Meursault to be judged for this crime, it is another reason that interests the justice court. Meursault will be condemned for not mourning his mother’s death. “This man, who is morally guilty of his mother’s death, is no less unfit to have a place in the community than that other man who did to death the father that begat him”⁵. During that time, the dead Arab remains silent without a name and identity. In fact, the Arab is not only reduced to silence by Meursault, who only refers to him as an “Arab”, but also he is victim of a judicial system which does not consider his life and which prefers to condemn Meursault for a seemingly more serious reason (not mourning a mother’s death). For Conor Cruise O’Brian, the conception that a colonial court would not confer convenient treatment to a European is unrealistic; he asserts: “It implicitly denies the colonial reality and sustains the colonial fiction.”⁶. Meursault kills a man and almost forgets his crime. The Arab population is dehumanized, when he says: “Then, all of a sudden, the Arabs vanished; they’d slipped like lizards under cover of the rock”⁷. They are not only dehumanized but also reduced to a less worthy rank. As Micheal Azar suggests: “This people reduced to a kind of backdrop for the European Algerians”⁸.

Moreover, it is not only Meursault’s victim who is silenced. Indeed, the whole community is reduced to muteness; this negation cannot be resumed to the unfortunate Arab

killed on the beach. Arabs in general are categorized and only depicted as Meursault see them only from his gaze “I kept my gaze fixed on the Arab”⁹. None of them has a story or a voice of his own. In the novel they are all anonymous, they are presented either as passive characters or oppressive and threatening with danger inspiring actions: murmuring for instance. “The native prisoners and their relations [...] didn’t raise their voices [...] managed to converse almost in whispers. This “murmur of voices”¹⁰. The natives are depicted by Meursault as enigmatic and mysterious in an occult like atmosphere. Camus in his autobiography *The First Man* said: “We lived cheek by jowl with this so close and yet so foreign people. With their hard, impenetrable faces and sheer numbers, the Arabs constituted an invisible threat that we could feel in the air”¹¹.

In addition, Edward Said asserts: “If the Arab occupies space enough for attention, it is as a negative value”¹². This is the case in *The Stranger* where all Arabs are either dangerous or completely passive entities. Without a story to tell they are condemned to muteness. In fact, as Micheal Azar suggests this: “Uncovers an underlying solid structure, discriminatory machinery that ultimately rests on murder”¹³. This has engendered as Ashcroft et.al affirm that:

A valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by dislocation resulting from [...] or it may have been destroyed by cultural denegation, the conscious and unconscious oppression of the indigenous personality and culture by a supposedly superior racial or cultural model¹⁴.

Gayatri Spivak claims: “To read a text through its gaps and silences means to expose its hidden messages and its repressed characters”¹⁵. In short, this can resume Daoud’s work on Camus’ novel. In fact, Daoud assigns himself the work of naming the repressed Arab.

Harun’s aim is: “To speak in the place of a dead man, so I can finish his sentences for him”¹⁶. To fully understand his business, he suggests a retrospective, he says: “It’s a story that

begins at the end and goes back to the beginning”¹⁷, by so doing, he dismantles the process that makes of his brother an “Other”, and a nameless Arab. That process is unveiled through the way he reworks Camus’ novel. He claims that the reason for the omission of his brother in the story is because: “The original guy was such a good storyteller; he managed to make people forget his crime”¹⁸.

The process that makes of Harun’s brother the: “Anonymous person who didn’t even have the time to be given a name”¹⁹ and whose death was regarded just as an element in the decor of the absurd life, is named by Gayatri spivak “Othering”. She defines it as the way colonial discourse creates colonized, subaltern subjects, “Othering” she claims, expresses a hierarchical, unequal relationship²⁰. This process which is embedded in Camus’ colonial narrative is highlighted when Harun remarks that: “The only shadow is cast by “the Arabs” blurred, incongruous ghosts, with no language except the sound of a flute”²¹.

Harun’s task, as mentioned earlier, is to speak in the place of a dead man. This fact implies that the dead man would have a voice, and consequently a history and more importantly a name; “I want to tell you the story Musa was never able to tell you”²². But before, Harun denounces the killer of his brother in a kind of uncertainty between the writer (Camus) and the fictional character (Meursault). Harun claims: “the title of the book was *The Other*, and the murderer’s name was written in severe black letters on the right: Meursault.”²³ After denunciation, Harun continues on telling his story or the story of his brother and finally releases his name. “My brother was the one who got shot, not him! It was Musa, not Meursault”²⁴.

Meursault kills Musa not only by a bullet, but also by categorizing him all along his telling as the “Arab”. Harun notes that, in fact, he kills him by “passing over him”, “not by shooting him”²⁵. Therefore, Harun wants “justice to be done” and thus “the scales to be

balanced”²⁶. All along the novel, Harun embraces that cause, by taking possession of Camus’ affirmation and correcting the story of his silenced brother from the beginning till the end; he asserts: “Starting when the Arab’s body was still alive, going down the narrow streets that led to his demise, giving him a name, right up until the bullet hit him”²⁷.

The process of “Othering” in *The Meursault Investigation* is then inversed. Suppressing one’s name involves the suppression of his identity. Consequently, the restitution of that very name, results in its rehabilitation. Harun provides a meticulous description of his brother Musa when he says:

His head seemed to strike the clouds. He was quite tall, yes, and his body was thin and knotty from hunger and the strength anger gives. He had an angular face, big hands that protected me, and hard eyes.²⁸

In so doing, everything in the novel seemed unlocked and clear; all facts come along Musa’s name. The way he lived and the way he reacts to his environment. Musa is not only given a physical description but also a culture and a belonging; he was “*Uled el-assas*”²⁹ no more the vulgar elderly Arab or a “common bit player”³⁰ he becomes “a simple god, a god of few words”³¹.

Daoud undertakes the mission of regaining a dead man’s name and identity. He is no more the Arab who as he remarked: “Exists only in the white man’s eyes”³². He is Musa who has a brother, a mother and a culture of his own. Harun explains that no one not even after independence searched after his brother’s name, this is a way of denouncing not only the colonial practices but also the post-colonial collective amnesia. Harun declares: “A brief Arab, technically ephemeral, who lived for two hours and has died incessantly for seventy years, long after his funeral” he adds: “For seventy years now, everyone has joined in to disappear the victim’s body”³³. As a matter of fact, his mission is elaborated not only to retell the story of Camus from another perspective; it also suggests a self criticism on a larger scale. As millions of Musas are still buried in empty nameless graves. Post-independent Algeria

tries then hard to forget her historical injuries and traumas or quarrels to retrieve a unified national identity by suppressing her national ethnic diversity.

Endnotes

¹ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 07.

² Albert Camus, *The Stranger*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (New York: Vintage book, 1946), 19

³ Ibid., 32

⁴ Micheal Azar, "The Stranger, the Mother and the Algerian Revolution A Postcolonial Reading of Albert Camus," in [www.eurozine.com.Pdf.04](http://www.eurozine.com/Pdf.04).

⁵ Albert Camus, *the Stranger*, 32

⁶ Conor Cruise O'Brian, *Camus* (London: Fontana, 1970), 23.

⁷ Camus, Albert. *The Stranger*, 37.

⁸ Micheal Azar, "The Stranger, the Mother and the Algerian revolution A Postcolonial Reading of Albert Camus," [www.eurozine.com.Pdf.03](http://www.eurozine.com/Pdf.03).

⁹ Camus, Albert. *The Stranger*, 38.

¹⁰ Ibid., 44

¹¹ Albert Camus, *Le premier homme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 257.

¹² Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1977), 286.

¹³ Micheal Azar, "The stranger, the mother and the Algerian revolution: A postcolonial reading of Albert Camus," [www.eurozine.com.Pdf.03](http://www.eurozine.com/Pdf.03)

¹⁴ Quoted in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 09.

¹⁵ Gayatri Spivak, *The Burden of English* (Philadelphia: Muthum, 1993), 134.

¹⁶ Quoted in Kamel Daoud, *The Meursault Investigation*, trans. John Cullen (New York: Other Press, 2015), 11

¹⁷ Ibid., 13

¹⁸ Ibid., 11

¹⁹ Ibid., 21

²⁰ Hitchcock Lois, *Theory for Classics: A Student's Guide* (London: Routledge, 2008), 197.

²¹ Kamel Daoud, *The Meursault Investigation*, 13.

²² Ibid., 16

²³ Ibid., 227

²⁴ Ibid., 15

²⁵ Ibid., 18

²⁶ Ibid., 20

²⁷ Ibid., 21

²⁸ Ibid., 23

²⁹ Ibid., 26

³⁰ Ibid., 27

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid., 116

³³ Ibid., 19

3. Appropriation and Abrogation in Kamel Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation*

Language is the problematic that imposes itself in almost all the former colonies. Algeria is no exception, the need to formulate an authentic national culture and identity independent from the French effect, urges the first postcolonial writers to refute their collective history and try hard to return to the pre-colonial state. However, as Ashcroft et.al argue in their conclusion of *The Empire Writes Back*:

It is not possible to return to or to rediscover an absolute pre-colonial cultural purity, nor is it possible to create national or regional formations entirely independent of their historical implication in the European colonial enterprise¹.

Thereafter, the negation of the colonial language and authority becomes the major trait of the postcolonial discourse. The imperial power uses language as a means to control and subvert the identity of the colonized. Bill Ashcroft et.al point to the fact that one of the main features of imperial oppression is control over language². Consequently, language would be the ally against that same oppression.

Moreover, the problematic is more complex; as the reformulation of a national Algerian culture and the articulation of a self definition after years of assimilation are more arduous to achieve. The French colonizer ruled almost by consent rather than by force. This was accomplished by education, as part of a “concerted drive to suppress indigenous cultures and languages and replace them with the culture and language of the French colonisers”³. The Algerian populations learnt French history, literature, culture and language. The whole of France’s imperial mission was based on this strategy, Said names it: “The personal style of being French in a great assimilationist enterprise”⁴.

The assimilation of the Algerians engendered a composite community who are torn between two cultures and languages. Algerian authors try to claim their rights and reveal to

the world the oppressive conditions under which Algerian population lived. What remained to be known was the answer to the question: which language to use to attain that goal? Many Algerian writers used French language as a means to convey a truth that was hidden by colonialist literature and discourse. Authors like Kateb Yacine did the same. However, he stopped writing in French and turned to write in the vernacular Algerian dialects; concentrating by this act on the issue and ambivalence concerning the use of language in postcolonial Algerian literature.

Postcolonial Algerian literature was marked by two distinctive historical periods. The first, the pre independence period was pronounced by writings in the French language. Its aims were both to disclose the inequalities and France's authoritative rule over the Algerian, and to support and praise the revolution. The use of French language was for many writers an effective mean of liberation. In the same sense, Mouloud Mammeri argues:

Nous avons voulu faire comprendre aux Européens ce qu'est l'Afrique sentie de l'intérieure [...] nous sommes condamnés à faire connaître, à faire connaître notre pays. Donc nous sommes obligés d'écrire pour les étrangers ⁵.

The second, post independence period was marked by a debate as the use of French language was seen as a barrier to achieve authenticity and identity of the Algerians. However, as Ashcroft et.al argues:

The concept of authenticity itself was endorsed by a centre to which they [i.e. the postcolonial writers] did not belong, and yet continually contradicted by the everyday experience of marginality. The consequence of this experience was that notions of centrality and the 'authentic' were themselves necessarily questioned, challenged, and finally abrogated⁶.

Nonetheless, the Algerian Literature, though written in French, was wholly distinct from the French literature imposed on the Algerian writers. Malek Heddad claims: "the style, expression, thought and the creation are not French"⁷. In fact, the colonial influence resulted in a hybrid postcolonial culture; this fact induces the refutation of the privileged position of a standard code in the language and any monocentric view of human experience⁸.

Since language has been the medium of oppression; Postcolonial Literature is by consequence the process by which the language with its power, and the writing, with its signification of authority has been wrested from the dominant European culture⁹. This feature is put in evidence by Ashcroft's et.al definition of postcolonial writings: "post colonial writing defines itself by seizing the language of the centre and re- placing it in a discourse fully adapted to the colonized place".¹⁰ According to this explanation, using the language of the colonizer is then an act of militancy but not only, it is also a way of questioning the linguistic imperial authority and superiority of the centre over the linguistic variants that were considered as impure minorities to be suppressed.

The rebuttal of a definitive and official use of language and the adaptation of the latter to the colonized experience are two distinct and complimentary processes. These processes are clarified by the trio of *The Empire Writes Back* in their use of two key words; "Abrogation" and "Appropriation" of the colonizers language. Abrogation is defined as: "The refusal of the categories of the imperial culture, its aesthetic, its illusory standard of normative or 'correct usage', its assumption of a traditional and fixed meaning 'inscribed' in the words"¹¹. While, appropriation is defined as: "Reconstruction of the language of the centre, the process of capturing and remoulding the language to new usages, marks a separation from the site of colonial privilege"¹².

"Appropriation" and "Abrogation" are then two writing techniques. They are chiefly important in the processes of identity reconstruction and acceptance of the colonial heritage, as part of the collective history in the former colonies. They are two complimentary strategies as Ashcroft et.al argues:

Abrogation is a vital moment in the decolonization of the language [...] but without the process of appropriation the moment of abrogation may not extend beyond the reversal of the assumptions of the privilege the 'normal' and correct inscription¹³.

Insofar as, the theoretical components of both terms is made clear by Ashcroft's et.al explanations. Yet, to attain a complete understanding and go beyond the abstract aspect of these postcolonial writing strategies a practical model is needed. Thereafter, and since consequences of colonialism stretch beyond the existent period of decolonization; the model to be used is then Kamel Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation*. In the very first pages of the novel the protagonist Harun asserts:

I'm going to do what was done in this country after Independence: I'm going to take the stones from the old houses the colonists left behind, remove them one by one, and build my own house, my own language. The murderer's expressions are my unclaimed goods.¹⁴

In fact, by this claim Harun asserts that he is going first to abrogate the colonialist materials by removing the stones. Then he is going to appropriate the same materials and use them to rebuild his own house, his own language. Since, in Daoud's novel there is a kind of coexistence between the colonizer and the Algerian language. It extends beyond the moment of Abrogation. In short, the language of the oppressor is used to challenge his authority and mostly the veracity of his narratives.

The colonialist writings embodied the notions of authenticity and superiority. These are conveyed through their narratives and have as consequence, the denial of the native culture and the oppression of his personality. The colonialist stories as that questioned by Daoud (Camus' *The Stranger*) mostly tell the story from only the European perspective and assume that they are the leaders of the other inferior ethnic groups; Arabs in this case. Moreover, Harun points to the fact that the story was accepted as truth even by the colonized because of the language used, as he claims: "Everyone was knocked out by the perfect prose; by language [...] everyone declared their empathy with the murderer's solitude"¹⁵. These divulge the embodiment of the colonialist writings and discourse. As K. Nayar claims: "Discourse is not reality, but it is the only means of accessing that reality"¹⁶.

Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation* obeys to the features of postcolonial discourse. He draws attention on the fact that there is no neutral story, and as his proper narratives work the oppressed; Camus' narratives work the imperial powers. The novel is a conglomerate of Postcolonial writing strategies. Likewise, Harun went to school and learned to read and write French, so he might be able to continue his inquiry into his brother's death: "I've learned to speak this language, and to write it too: so I can speak in the place of a dead man, so I can finish his sentences for him"¹⁷. He suggests another version of the story, and, by the same process, he dismantles Camus' false assumption; Harun claims: "It's simple: The story we're talking about should be rewritten, in the same language, but from right to left"¹⁸. In other words, a story written using as means the French language to transmit the colonized perspectives and voices; "one reason for learning this language was to tell this story for my brother"¹⁹. Harun while mentioning the reasons that incite him to learn the colonizers' language, he mentions that his brother asks him to read! "Oh my brother Harun, why did you let this happens? I'm not a sacrificial lamb [...] I'm your brother! Go on, read!"²⁰. This demand implies that the only way to dismount the colonialist discourse was by understanding it. Thus, he could be able to reveal the falsity of the latter. "Let's be clear from the start: there were just two siblings, my brother and me. We didn't have a sister, much less slutty one, as your hero suggested in his book"²¹; he adds:

When the murderer leaves prison, he writes a book that becomes famous, in which he recounts how he stood up to God, a priest, and the absurd. You can turn that story in all directions, it doesn't hold up. It's the story of a crime, but the Arab isn't even killed in it—well, he is killed, but barely, delicately, with the fingertips, as it were. He's the second most important character in the book, but he has no name, no face, no words. Does that make any sense to you, educated man that you are? The story's absurd! It's a blatant lie²².

By the reversal of the imperiousness of the colonialist narratives, Harun reveals the truth and abrogates simultaneously the colonialist fixed discourse. Harun is the question from the present asked to the past, in his answer, there is the truth about what colonial history hides in its elitist and standardized documents.

As already mentioned by Ashcroft et.al, the moment of abrogation may not extent beyond the reversal of the assumptions without the process of appropriation. Indeed, abrogation alone would only cause the substitution of the standing and powerful colonial language, with the native language that is newly constructed²³. As a matter of fact, “Appropriation” is a vital postcolonial writing process that induces the penetration of the linguistic code constrained by the hegemonic language. This infiltration is conducted by means of vernacular speech.

The Meursault Investigation is mined by vernacular speech; this strategy assists the postcolonial writers in their abrogative enterprise. In *The Empire Writes Back* it is mentioned that:

Post-colonial writing abrogates the privileged centrality of ‘English’ by using language to signify difference while employing a sameness which allows it to be understood. It does this by employing language variance, the ‘part’ of a wider cultural whole, which assists in the work of language seizure whilst being neither transmuted nor overwhelmed by its adopted vehicle²⁴.

The appropriation of the colonizers language is meant to highlight the cultural differences and so mark the separation between the local and the urban foreign center. This demarcation is conveyed through writings strategies that are common to all postcolonial literatures. In *The Empire Writes Back* six strategies are cited: *Code Switching, vernacular translation, Glossing, Untranslated Words, Interlanguage and syntactic fusion*.

The strategy used by Kamel Daoud in almost all the novel is untranslated words. These words, forces the reader into an active engagement with the horizons of the culture in which these terms have meaning.²⁵ As such, words like: *shahid, uled el_bled, gaouri, huma*, represent the metonyms of the Algerian culture. In the same sense, Ashcroft et.al argue: “In the post-colonial text the absence of translation has a particular kind of interpretative function. Cultural difference is not inherent in the text but is inserted by such strategies”²⁶.

The appropriation of the French language by Daoud is a way to inject the Algerian culture into a novel written in the hegemonic language. The fact that he uses for example proverbs like “Echedda fi Allah”²⁷. He forces the curiosity of reader to know the Algerian culture. Thus, appropriation is not only a strategy that permits the infiltration of the standardized French language; it is also a way to introduce to readers of all horizons the culture in which such different words are displayed; and so to transport ones culture to a wide world audience. Consequently, this cracks the isolation imposed on by the colonizers on the colonized.

Endnotes

¹Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 221.

²Ibid., 7

³Quoted in Patrick Corcoran, *The Cambridge Introduction to Francophone Literature* (New York: Cambridge university press, 2007), 5.

⁴Edward Said. *Culture and Imperialism*, 169.

⁵ Mouloud Mammeri, “*The Writer in Modern Africa*,” In *The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies 1967*, ed. Per Wastberg (Sweden: Uppsala, 1967), 35.

⁶Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 40.

⁷ Mohammed Saad, *In Search of Identity: Algerian Literature After and During Occupation*. (University of the west of England), available in [www. Westminster. Ac.uk](http://www.Westminster.Ac.uk).

⁸Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 41.

⁹Ibid., 7

¹⁰Ibid., 38

¹¹Ibid., 39

¹²Ibid., 37

¹³ Ibid., 38

¹⁴. Kamel Daoud, *The Meursault Investigation*, trans. John Cullen (New York: OTHER PRESS, 2015), 12.

¹⁵ Ibid., 16

¹⁶ Promod K. Nayar, *“Colonial Voices: The Discourse of Empire”* (UK: Wiley- Blackwell, 2012), 04.

¹⁷ Kamel Daoud, *The Meursault Investigation*, trans. John Cullen, 11.

¹⁸ Ibid., 21

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Ibid., 22

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid., 21

²³ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *“Re-placing language textual strategies in post-colonial”*, in *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 38.

²⁴ Ibid., 50

²⁵ Ibid., 64

²⁶ Ibid., 64

²⁷ Quoted in Kamel Daoud, *The Meursault Investigation*, trans. John Cullen, 44.

4. Hybridity and Mimicry in Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation*:

The question of an authentic and a pure national culture rose by the very early postcolonial writings, as the need to create a distinct identity and assert the racial origins was part of the resistance and contestation against the colonizers' culture. However, after years of deliberate cultural suppression by the colonial machinery and its politics of assimilation; this distinctiveness becomes almost a myth impossible to reach. Homi K. Bhabha developed critical term such as "mimicry". A concept induced by a process that is defined by Ashcroft et.al in these terms:

When colonial discourse encourages the colonial subject to 'mimic' the colonizer, by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, the result is never a simple reproduction of those traits. Rather, the result is a 'blurred copy' of the colonizer that can be quite threatening¹.

Bhabha states that mimicry is: "The most elusive and effective strategies of the colonial power and knowledge"². That is, mimic men are created by the colonizer among the natives that would form a category which will help the colonial power in their subversive rule. However, this category will turn as Bhabha asserts: "Part-objects of a metonymy of colonial desire (...) in which they emerge as 'inappropriate' colonial subjects"³. Inappropriate subjects, because they represent a menace and a threatening presence to the colonial authority. In short, they represent the new hybrid cultural forms that will challenge the colonialist essentialist view of culture and identity. In this sense, the mimicry of the colonizer by the colonized creates a kind of parody of the masters that threatens its authority and its authenticity. The image of superior is disrupted by this copy displayed by the colonized subject.

Moreover, Homi K. Bhabha developed another term which is Hybridity. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* asserts: "An important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of otherness"⁴. Conversely, the main

concern of postcolonial writings is to deconstruct that fix image of the colonized. Likewise, the concept of hybridity would be the mean by which postcolonial discourse would attain that goal. In fact, hybridity deconstructs the idea of an immutable identity or culture. Bhabha argues: “All forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity”⁵.

This interaction is no more seen as the colonizer being the oppressor and the colonized as silenced and oppressed character. The colonized meanwhile, who by absorbing the colonizers’ culture, would erase the binary opposition that kept him inferior. Hybridity as such, is no more a weakness or contamination but strength and a powerful counter narrative. It is as Hoogvelt asserts: “Celebrated and privileged as a kind of superior cultural intelligence owing to the advantage of in-betweenness, the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference”⁶. In addition, Bhabha introduces another term which is “*Third Space*”; he asserts that the position of the hybrid subject in this space (between the colonizer and the colonized) represents the clue that would erase the binary thinking on which colonial discourse is standing. Bhabha argues: “For me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the ‘Third Space’, which enables other positions to emerge”⁷.

Postcolonial literature encompasses the impact of colonialism within its pages. The culture and the language are the avatars of this influence. Most notably, it is through language and the culture it conveys that these works are ranked among the anti hegemonic narratives. Since, language as Ashcroft et al argue is a: “versatile tool”⁸, it is by means of this flexible and changeable language that the postcolonial writers tend to counter the colonial discourse.

To attain an understanding of what hybridity either cultural or linguistic implies; an analysis of Daoud’s novel is needed. For it is firstly required to spot on the linguistic hybridity, the primary source which is the French version, is going to be used to discuss this chapter.

In the novel the language used is that of the colonizers as their influence is visible all over Algeria as Harun asserts:

Le pays est d'ailleurs jonché de mots qui n'appartiennent plus à personne et qu'on aperçoit sur les devantures de vieux magasins, dans les livres jaunis, sur les visages, ou transformés par l'étrange créole que fabrique la décolonisation⁹.

The novel is characterized by the appropriation of the colonizers' language; this implies the use of untranslated words, code switching and proverbs like: "Malou khouya, malou ma jache. El b'har eddah àliya rah ou ma wellache"¹⁰. Daoud by making use of terms such as: "djounoud"¹¹, "Haik"¹² or "chahid"¹³, certainly incorporates the Algerian cultural distinctiveness into the hegemonic language. He contaminates the standardized French language with Algerian linguistic forms. Harun asserts: "les mots du meurtrier et ses expression sont mon *bien vacant*"¹⁴. From the start he claims his right to possess this language about which he says: "une langue se boit et se parle, et un jour elle vous possède; alors elle prend l'habitude de saisir les choses à votre place"¹⁵. The French language has taken possession of the protagonist. However, this fact that mirrors his hybridity is not as negative as it seems. Because it is by making use of this language that he aims to revenge his brother's death. Harun asserts: "la langue française est ainsi devenue l'instrument d'une enquête pointilleuse et maniaque"¹⁶.

. Moreover, Harun makes distinction between the language he uses and that of his mother that he describes in these words: "la sienne (the language) riche, imagée, pleine de vitalité, de sursauts, d'improvisatons"¹⁷. This distinctiveness can be seen as a way to impose on the French language the opposite adjectives used to describe the Algerian language. Furthermore, when Harun gives voice to his mother, it is always thought written in French, to express typical Algerian mind: "la mer vous mangera tous!"¹⁸ or "ou l'une de ses parentes ou, au moins, une *roumia* comme lui"¹⁹ and or "ma mère appelait cela "un serpent sans fin"²⁰. Likewise, it is the same process that he summons when he gives voice to his brother: "O mon

frère Haroun, pourquoi as-tu laissé faire ça. Je ne suis pas une génisse, bon sang, je suis ton frère!”²¹. In addition to this, as language expresses culture; the hybrid language used by Daoud inevitably unveils a hybrid culture. The cultural hybridity as Daoud shows in his novel is a kind of historical or original hybridity that goes to the origins of the country. That is, as Harun claims: « Cette ville (...) elle est construite en cercle. Au milieu, le noyau dur: les frontons espagnols, les murs ottomans, les immeubles bâtis par les colons, les administrations et les routes construites à l’Indépendance »²²

This country has received various hosts as Spanish or Turkish. In short, at her origins the country is marked by the hybridity imposed on by her invaders. Even in her architecture the country is an amalgam of various and influential other foreign buildings. The cultural hybridity is also as on the buildings, very visible on the Algerian people. First, during the colonial period Harun describes: “En bas dans les quartiers français, traînaient parfois des Algériennes portant des jupes (...) des sortes de Marie_Fatma”²³. A combination of two cultures, that of the French Marie and of the Algerian Fatma, to give birth to a third woman caught between the two genealogies. Second, Harun while talking to an Algerian man says: “Bonjour, monsieur vous avez l’air d’avoir des origines latines, rien de surprenant à cela, dans cette ville qui s’est donnée à tous les marins du monde depuis la nuit des temps »²⁴. This remark brings us again to the fact that hybridity in Algeria is not only the effect of French colonialism, but also the effect of an interior history. This description urges the reader to think not only about linguistic or cultural hybridity but also about racial hybridity. In short, racial hybridity as cultural hybridity distract the binary classification between Algerians and the French. Harun describes himself in this way:

Dans la liste, il ne reste que deux couples et un orphelin. Ton Meursault et sa mère d’une part; M’ma et Moussa de l’autre; et, au beau milieu, ne sachant être le fils d’aucun des deux, moi²⁵.

He represents himself in a state of in-betweenness. This word echoes Bhabha's notion of the in between space or the "*third space of enunciation*". Harun as all postcolonial figures is hybrid. He is, as he himself describes neither the son of a French descendant nor that of an Algerian one. Harun presents the characteristics of both cultures. He said: "ces vieux qui, comme moi, affectionnaient le turban rouge, le gilet, le nœud papillon ou les belles chaussures brillantes"²⁶.

Moreover, the main concern of postcolonial writings is to challenge the veracity of the colonialist narratives and to correct its assumptions. The appropriation of these stories is one way to attain this goal; that is to say Daoud for instance, uses whole passages from Camus' novel by so doing, he questions the authority of this canonical work he claims: "cela te déstabilise, hein, que je te résume ainsi ton livre! C'est pourtant la vérité nue. Tout le reste n'est que fioritures, dues au génie de ton écrivain"²⁷. He adds few pages later "une histoire fabriquée par ton héros"²⁸. The fact that Daoud uses Camus' novel and language make of his work a hybrid piece of literature, which makes use of this particularity, to undermine Camus' story and to reveal the truth that was hidden by his colonialist writing. Daoud uses Camus' words in different situations, from the point of view of the colonized:

J'ai vu récemment un groupe de Français devant un bureau de tabac à l'aéroport. Tels des spectres discrets et muets, ils nous regardaient, nous les Arabes, en silence, "ni plus ni moins que si nous étions des pierres ou des arbres morts"²⁹.

The same passage can be found in Camus' novel however, it is written from his point of view. That is, Daoud is reclaiming that the colonialist culture rely on the Algerian to form its own meaning. As such, he deconstructs the very notion of superior culture and inferior culture; he rather emphasize on the mutuality of cultural construction.

To sum up, Daoud's novel is indeed a hybrid piece of literature. First, it is because of the language used however, as it is used by Harun it has evolve to express another meaning and the concern of the colonized. Second, it is hybrid because of the culture, as language

conveys culture; we may believe that Daoud's novel only expresses the French civilization. However, the language used is appropriated thus; it can no longer be used to stand for the dominant, hegemonic culture. It is no more the propriety of the colonizers but that of the colonized.

Endnotes

¹ Quoted in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Key Concepts in Post-colonial Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 139.

² Quoted in Homi.K Bhabha, *The locations of Culture*, 85.

³ Ibid., 126.

⁴ Homi.k Bhabha, "Frontlines/border posts," *In Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*, Ed. A. Bammer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 66.

⁵ Quoted in Homi Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 221.

⁶ Hoogvelt, A, *Globalization and the Postcolonial World: The New Political Economy of Development* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997), 158.

⁷ Rutherford, J, *The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha. Identity, Community, Culutre, Difference*, ed, J. Rutherford (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 211.

⁸ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 39.

⁹ Quoted in Kamel Daoud, *Meursault, Contre-Enquête* (Algiers : barzakh, 2013) ,14.

¹⁰ Ibid., 108

¹¹ Ibid., 186

¹² Ibid., 35

¹³ Ibid., 17

¹⁴ Ibid., 14

¹⁵ Ibid., 19

¹⁶ Ibid., 124

¹⁷ Ibid., 55

¹⁸ Ibid., 64

¹⁹ Ibid., 65

²⁰ Ibid., 135

²¹ Ibid., 25

²² Ibid., 157

²³ Ibid., 33

²⁴ Ibid., 181

²⁵ Ibid., 88

²⁶ Ibid., 96-97

²⁷ Ibid., 75

²⁸ Ibid., 86

²⁹ Ibid., 23-24

Conclusion

The French colonizer surely had impacts on African Literature and especially the Algerian one. Kamel Daoud's *Meursault, Contre- Enquête* is among the modern classics in which the French language has been adapted to challenge the colonial discourse. In fact, Daoud has the audacity to tackle Albert Camus' canonical work *l'Etranger*. Daoud chooses the French language as a tool to defend and to celebrate the Algerian identity and culture. This linguistic strategy permits to deconstruct the hegemonic French language as being the standard language of knowledge. We believe that Daoud accomplished an incredible duty by making alive the Arab who has been killed by the French discourse of "superiority". He provides him with not only a name but also a family and an identity. By so doing, Daoud correctes Camus' stereotypical image of Arabs being either aggressive or apathetic.

The Cultural and linguistic hybridity of Daoud's work are one of its main literary forces. These traits that are the outcome of the French presence in Algeria are used against them to both infiltrate and correct their corrupted discourse. The hybrid nature of Daoud's work permits to display an adaptation to the most despicable processes which is colonization.

To sum up, Daoud's work, as its title suggests, is an inquiry into Camus' novel. Daoud uses as means to proceed to the latter an adapted French language with which he restores the Algerian identity and culture. His novel acts as court justice that resists and subverts the hegemony of an anterior novel. By celebrating the Algerian identity and culture and the hybrid nature of both, he permits an insight into the colonialist practices and implications. In fact, Camus being compared to Conrad is quite evocative of a possible comparison of Daoud to Achebe another postcolonial writer that tried to give voice to Africa.

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