

MAGHREB LITERATURE OF FRENCH EXPRESSION

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Received: Mar 22, 2024; Accepted: Apr 29, 2024; Published: May 28, 2024;

Abstract: Francophone Algerian literature is part of a special socio-historical and cultural context that determined its emergence under French colonization. Indeed, it was this French settlement that gave rise to the development of a very important element - the French language, which would later be used to condemn and challenge this occupation through literary texts.

Moreover, French-language Algerian literature, born from the writing models adopted in the French school during colonization, would gradually move away from them to create its own literary field with new values as well as different aesthetic categories.

Keywords: written or oral works, literary field, Algerian literature, postcolonial studies, Algerian novel, African writers, innovative writing



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Introduction

Literature in the broad sense: a body of written or oral works based on language and containing an aesthetic dimension (as opposed to, for example, scientific or didactic works), the significance of which is attested in 1764. Among the literary works noted in the literary universe we have the French-language literature of the Maghreb.

Maghreb literature is a French expression: it is a literature that was born mainly around 1945-1950 in the Maghreb countries; Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. The authors of this literature are indigenous, that is, from the country. Firstly, it originated in Algeria between 1930-1940, then cited outside the eastern Maghreb, it was the context marked by war and colonization that gave birth to this French literature. It would become a recognized form of expression after World War II.

Results and Discussion

Jean Amrouche was one of the first Algerian writers to highlight the cultural alienation and loss of identity of the colonized population, forced to express their opinions in French. The relationship with this language is also marked by turbulent feelings, as in the case of Kateb Yassin: her attendance at a French school means "throwing into the wolf's den" as she witnesses a "second rupture of the umbilical cord" and also an "internal exile". [1, 56]

Written by villagers, nomads, city dwellers, aristocrats, Berbers, Christians, Muslims, Jews, French, French-Algerians, Algerian literature in French reflects the complexity, diversity and richness of the history of the Maghreb.

Modern literature (1900–2009) follows in the footsteps of previous literature with new forms created by a range of authors, journalists, historians and others.

This language was imposed by history and the long presence of France on Algerian soil. But this colonial legacy was often questioned, especially after independence: Kateb Yassin founded a theater troupe and ensured that his plays were staged in dialectal Arabic, Malek Haddad withdrew from the literary scene entirely, refusing to write in French, a language which, according to author, will never be able to reflect Algerian authenticity in its diversity and cultural values. The same applies to Rachid Boudjedra, who broke with the French language for several years by adopting Arabic.

Among the most prominent authors of modern literature we will name: Mohammed Dib, Kateb Yassin, Asia Jabbar and Maloud Feraun.

As a literary field, Algerian literature in French, or francophone, has always faced the problem of its recognition, since in France it is still considered as a literature of an “exotic” nature, a literature of “other countries” and “periphery” in relation to the center of French literature. While some consider it a literature of acculturation, others think that it contributed to the creation of “a branch of French literature, since it not only uses the French language as a means of expression, but is also inspired by its literary forms and is aimed at the same audience” [2, 64]. Postcolonial theory takes as its object of study the connection that former colonists maintain with their traumatic past. This concerns English- and French-speaking countries in a disciplinary field that eventually gained a certain autonomy in university institutions: postcolonial studies. The postcolonial phenomenon underlay the creation of unique works devoted to issues that worried artists, writers, musicians, painters...) postcolony, to the point of giving rise to such concepts as mixture, hybridity, increased interest in race, chosen language and demand values of eradication and expulsion. Conscious of their multiple identities and their diverse affiliations with other spaces, francophone writers from various literatures from Quebec, North Africa, the West Indies, Vietnam... place at the center of their works a multifaceted challenge to Western ways of thinking. [1, 84]

In French-language literature, writers who are said to be “from outside France” or from the “periphery” now want to choose a different terminology, one that implies a literature that is open to the world, transnational, and refuses to be considered mere second-rate creators. These signatories respond strongly to the cultural hegemony that divides French and francophone writers, criticizing any form of “cultural imperialism” on the part of the Center.

Jacques Godbout denounces the spread of the colonial fact, Alain Mabancou argues against the weight of “great French literature”, the fascination that African writers have for the Parisian literary environment as the only place of initiation or recognition. Abdurhaman A. Waberi, for his part, attacks the French readership, which preserves only the documentary and folkloric aspect of French-language literature. Algerian literature of the 1950s was marked by the publication of novels that became classics of our literature: “Le Fils du Pauvre” (1950) and “La Terre et le Sang” (1953) by Mouloud

Feraoun, "La Grande Maison" (1952) by Mohammed Dib and "La Colline oubliée" (1952) by Mouloud Mummery. This new generation of writers marks a break with previous literature, moving beyond the stage of assimilation, but also because the novelists of the 1920s no longer produce works, with the exception of Jean Amrouche, who did not stop writing.

Writers of this period also wanted to talk about their childhood and youth, touch on their problems, talk about their feelings and bear witness through the collective portrait they painted. On the aesthetic level, the canons of the realistic novel are reproduced and respected; the novels are mostly autobiographical, like the European coming-of-age novel, which traces the evolution of the hero from childhood and adolescence. This connection between the Algerian novel and the Western novel is explained by the influence of the educational training of Algerian authors. Moreover, at the thematic level, this literature was a "representation" of sociocultural space. Maghrebi literary texts appear to be produced by memory and imagination, expressing a movement between protest, demand, self-assertion, and appropriation of the French language and the Western novelistic form [2, 48].

A new phenomenon emerged around the emergence of the "I" in the 1940s and 50s. The symbolic and revolutionary work of Kateb Yacine (1956) is a novel that, with its commitment and original form, marked an event in the history of Algerian as well as North African literature. The author combines elements of oral history and modern novel techniques, breaking away from the realistic novel. "Nedjma" This novel was highly praised by literary critics and played a very important role in the further development of the Maghreb novel. This novel tells the complex story of the eponymous heroine, who is not always present in a romantic setting and remains in the background, like a shadow, where the other male characters of the story struggle in a very troubled Algeria and where historical background - May December 8, 1945 represents a very important moment in the course of events.

"Nedjma" is also a story of origins, ancestors, myths and oral histories, representing the opaque, mysterious and disturbing Algeria, its dark past and its complex history, where everything is played out in a detached revolutionary and innovative writing of any ethnographic, sociological or testimonial form, cultivating an original aesthetic in a kind of autobiography and fragmentary writing. It remained the most beautiful illustration of pragmatism, which wanted to unite criticism and aesthetics, reflection and action, revolutionary work in every sense of the term.

Assia Djebar's short story "Les enfants du nouveau monde" (1962) represents a collective female voice, a recording of both historical and personal memory, the result of which is a collective autobiography. Personal adventure in the novel becomes a space of historical demonstration together with the national adventure of the Algerian liberation war.

Since the 1960s, other women from the Maghreb began to write in increasingly demanding ways, and we may wonder how the language of the colonizer became the language of expression of liberation.

"La Dernière impression" (1958), "Je t'offrirai une gazelle" (1959), "l'Elève et la leçon" (1960) by Malek Haddad are also works of truly national literature. Expressing all the problems associated with identity, the author projects himself into his characters, as in "La Dernière impression", to emphasize the acculturation of the colonized intellectual, caught between two different worlds, on the one hand,

his own origins, and on the other, the cultural universe of the French the language through which he expresses himself.

These novels mix all genres: autobiographical, artistic, referential, self-fictional with many variations and tones in the expression of existence and lived reality. To this variability of tones (intimate, documentary, poetic, realistic and whimsical) corresponds a polyphony of political and mythical stories, all kinds of cross-cultural intersections.

Conclusion

Thus, this overview of French-language Algerian literature shows the circumstances under which it was born, tracing the main points of its evolution throughout history, as well as the rhythm of influences and cultural intersections that contribute to the creation of a literature of such diversity in an autonomous and specifically Algerian literary field.

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