

The Bildungsroman in Makhoul Amer

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Abstract:

The question of the Revolution within academic periodization raises a ready-made epistemological question concerning the identity of the Algerian novel, as the revolutionary façade is clearly invoked to periodize the novel from a colonial perspective. Basing periodization on the Revolution thus extends a hybrid conception of the Algerian novel and covertly reproduces the colonial narrative in the construction of the concept of the Algerian novel. From this critical awareness, the Algerian novel is written as the eye of the Algerian nation: narratives of colonialism are dismantled as an epistemological model of periodization, while the novel is established as a distinctive model that defines its position in the world, away from the system of the colonial centre and its traditions. Instead, it emerges within conventions and periodizations that articulate representations of its unsettled identity as a national novel.

The concept of the novel as an art of the incomplete (Kundera) wagers on accompanying human beings in their ultimate questions. Its specificity is therefore closely connected to the extent to which it refers to the political, cultural, and social space of the narrative environment through the contractual pact between narrative and the poetics of periodization within which it is viewed. The novel possesses an open configuration, capable of being written through symbolic representation. This problematic will pursue the various colonial burdens attached to what is called the Algerian novel.

Keywords: Bildungsroman; revolutionary system; social system; colonialism; political unconscious.

Introduction:

The reality of canonization in literary production and criticism has imposed a slow movement in confronting the advance of Western and global criticism. This movement has remained behind the rapidly accelerating literary production, under a weak academic wager and a bias toward desire rather than production and awareness. Speaking about a group attracted to a conscious critical project has become necessary in the face of the challenges posed by the migration toward the novel, the kingdom of the age—a group that assumes the task of introducing Algerian textuality to world literatures.

Makhoul Amer states that “the 1970s were the period in which writing in Arabic flourished. At that time, we were living in a world divided between two camps, and because Algeria had chosen the

socialist path, we moved under the umbrella of that discourse with all the enthusiasm imposed by youth. This made us believe in the cause of commitment, so that political/ideological content occupied the forefront at the expense of the aesthetic dimension of the literary work, except in rare cases, but with an ardent national spirit” (Bahri, 2019, p. 44). The critic Makhoulf Amer is consequently regarded as one of the few critics who followed, with great attention, the birth of the Algerian novel through his various studies and through conscious critical positions grounded in a composite knowledge, method and vision. His critical experience developed over a long period that witnessed the different structural transformations of Algerian society and the political, cultural, and social stages that eventually shaped the Algerian cultural mind and its becoming. “In systematic criticism, his experience is considered one of the foundational experiences of this type of criticism in Algeria, from a perspective that makes criticism an immanent process to the text rather than a set of external categories and procedures. The elements of study become legitimate components of reading the text, and what the researcher can gain from this perspective is the ability to derive the structures of systematic analysis from the text itself, which becomes both source and objective, before these structures are presented against what constitutes them in the mirrors of global thought and literature” (Bahri, 2019, p. 44).

The impressionistic views of the critic Makhoulf Amer go beyond being merely critical-epistemological opinions; rather, they constitute problematic positions. They undoubtedly issue from comprehensive and holistic visions based on a reductive view of the object of criticism, producing a radical position toward certain issues, creative experiences, and civilizational, historical, and cultural situations. This may be called “the critical position toward the world.” What makes an opinion a critical position described as impressionistic is its lack of methodological grounding, evidentiary support, and scholarly documentation; this is an indispensable part of the life of every intellectual who carries a vision, perspective, and position toward his or her world (Bahri, 2019, pp. 44–45).

At the beginning of this study, we drew attention to the problem of approaching the Algerian novel from a single perspective that confiscates all textualities under a particular cover. This confiscation appears in Amer Makhoulf’s work in the direction he gives to all the texts periodized in his book *The Novel and Transformations in Algeria: Critical Studies of the Content of the Arabic-Language Novel toward an awareness of the Revolution*. This orientation seeks to privilege the particular system—the Revolution, or, alternatively, the colonial text—at the expense of the total system of narrative and the Algerian novel. The image of the Algerian novel consequently remains incomplete on the one hand and tied to this system on the other.

The literary strata have been invoked in the form of a political unconscious within Makhoulf Amer’s periodizing trajectories, so that revolutionary consciousness—the periodization of the Revolution—turns into an awareness of “terrorism.” We use the term “interpellation” in the Althusserian sense: ideology subjects and subordinates human beings; individuals do not become subjects until social powers “call” or “interpellate” them. By naming a person as something, especially from a position of authority, that person is transformed into the named subject. Here, the Revolution is used metaphorically and figuratively to indicate an eternal, recurrent movement of arbitrary shifts in human

destiny. The essence of periodization is thus a cultural and poetic act; the facts it presents are interpreted according to literary and cultural criteria. Makhlouf Amer examines the intersections between the level of events and the referential dimension of the novels included in his classifications. The Algerian novel will take shape within this excessive symbolism of revolutionary consciousness, and it is explained periodically in light of the dialectical approach between the novelistic text and the subordinate social text. Deconstructing this mode of periodizing production may lead us to a periodization based on the Revolution as an immediate expectation of modes of novelistic production. Such a condition remains external to the national-novel model, because the form of the Algerian novel is made dependent upon the theoretical centre and is constituted only according to the disciplines of theory/centre, in a manner imposed by this theoretical pressure.

If strategies of interpretation represent the superstructure of consciousness and operate at the level of metaphor in Hayden White, strategies of periodization tend toward the superstructure of consciousness and operate at the level of cultural metaphor. Here the question that must be posed concerns what Aijaz Ahmad identifies in the category of the “Third World”: the tendency to regard nationalism, political position, and cultural energy as determinants of an epoch (Ahmad, 2019, p. 382). By “theoretical pressure” we seek to uncover the systemic condition of periodization built on a centralizing conception of Western theory, whereby the text is periodized according to a doubled symbolic code of the dominant colonial model. Michael Greaney argues that “literature” is merely another name for “literary theory” and discusses what he calls theoretical pressure, noting that Umberto Eco’s *The Name of the Rose* carries an implicit promise to theory and a theoretical and psychological readiness on the part of its readers (Greaney, 2006, p. 9).

At the level of the metaphor of the basic superstructure, the question arises whether it is founded on the economic basis of society or operates at the social level. Periodization as a sociological category wagers on adopting the sociological condition as a system of periodization. Although the social system is the system of systems, in Talcott Parsons’s formulation, and other systems—economy, culture, and literature—are arranged within it, culture in turn contains a set of partial systems. These partial systems act upon one another but ultimately return as a whole to the dominant sociological system. This leads us to formulate a significant hypothesis: theorization outside sociology is impossible from this perspective.

The question now is: how does the novel find a sociological equivalent for the ordeal in Makhlouf Amer? And to what extent can periodization preserve social functions and fields of action so as to realize creditable functions toward Algerian culture? Understanding the Revolution in this sense cannot be equated with or replaced by experience of a counter-revolution, since the counter-revolution, in Condorcet’s expression, has always been connected to revolution as a reaction linked to action. A counter-revolution is not merely an opposite revolution but the contrary of revolution (Arendt, 2008, pp. 22–23). Revolutionary anxiety raises an ontological question concerning the reality of revolution: does the end of revolution announce the birth of another class conflict? Hannah Arendt asked in *On Revolution* whether the end of revolution is the end of public freedoms. This intersects with Makhlouf Amer’s reflections on the reality of revolution: “Whether it refers specifically to the

war of liberation or to social revolution in general, revolution has become a frequently recurring subject in the Algerian novel written in Arabic. What concerned me primarily in these studies was to approach the image of the Revolution and the transformations that followed it, and how it is represented in a number of novels. This is because the fact that revolution is a subject of a literary text is not sufficient to make the text revolutionary” (Makhlouf Amer, 2000, p. 6).

The concept of periodizing revolutionary consciousness points to the relationship between the novelistic and the historical, between the possible imaginary and the historical. Written texts take shape within ideological ruptures as decisive moments in literary creation, and these are particularly capable of mobilizing reading because they contain what Hannah Arendt calls the counter-revolution. The emphasis on the social function of literature and the prioritization of content derive from socialist philosophy, which found fertile ground in countries engaged in liberation from colonialism and whose peoples simultaneously aspired to freedom and social justice. The period in which the social dimension emerged in both creative and critical attempts was the 1970s, to the extent that official discourse—the socialist discourse—was reflected almost mechanically in many works, including Muhammad Zetili’s *The Huts Are Burning*, Ismail Ghamoukat’s *The Sun Rises on Everyone*, Tahar Ouetar’s *The Earthquake*, Habib Sayeh’s *The Decision*, and some writings by Waciny Laredj, Amin Zaoui, Ammar Belhassen, and Ammar Yazli (Makhlouf Amer, 2000, p. 9).

Writing or imagining the Revolution, and thinking about it as an object placed at the disposal of the novel, allows art to appropriate the values of revolution and establish a form of communicative reason that continually demands moving beyond the centering of the Revolution. This enables us to reject the idea of an absolute sacralization of the Revolution, despite the long-standing dominance of the theme of revolution over the novel (Belaghoulali, 2006, p. 56). The narrative imaginary necessarily points to an organic bond between event and occurrence, between the revolutionary as a novelistic theme and its transcendence; this bond, however, does not imply a real correspondence. The narrative system instead directs us toward a narrative imaginary that invites reflection on the theoretical ground of the theory of the novel in general. The event moves toward imposing a theoretical model that pre-exists theory itself. Makhlouf Amer therefore argues that ideological or content-oriented criticism, or an excessive concentration on social significance, has largely deprived the literary text of its literariness. It failed to elevate the text from mechanical reflection to a reflection of reflection, and sometimes contributed to promoting “minor” literature while overlooking “major” literature; nevertheless, this is not a justification for moving from one extreme to the other, namely, for abolishing or remaining silent about social significance (Makhlouf Amer, 2000, p. 10).

Following social significance, according to Amer Makhlouf, requires following the reflection of reflection, which prompted us to question revolutionary periodization. Insisting on pursuing the institution of periodization reveals thinking in other places (*lieux autres*) and threatens institutional balances, producing a shift in structural relations. This enables an interpretation of the highly complex in-between of the cultural form of movement—the movement of time—and sequence and rupture. The novel can thus explain the historical and cultural mind within which economic, cultural, and social systems coexist, by pursuing the non-synchronous use of simultaneity that has become ossified

in the face of historical transformations because it has failed to move between modes of narrative production in their harmonious forms. Yet the pursuit of the “inside of history” enables us to think within these transformations. As Althusser taught us, we are no longer in the event but in knowledge—that is, in narrative as knowledge.

“The writer’s function is nothing other than to search for the literary form appropriate to formulating the decision. There is no doubt that dividing the labor in this manner between the writer and authority would obscure the truth and divert the writer from playing his real role. The result becomes a postponement of revolutionary action, with the major difference that exists between *The Inferno* and other novels in form and content. This does not contradict what was said earlier, because the reformist vision itself has different degrees. The 1970s and the transformations the country witnessed at the time were the source of this reformist understanding” (Makhlouf Amer, 2000, p. 20). The reformist understanding in Amer Makhlouf constitutes a subsidiary adaptation of the social system. The subsidiary incorporation of reform into literature is an adaptation of the literary situation to its environment, in Niklas Luhmann’s perspective. Such adaptation must ensure the production of symbolic capital within the sociological class and its capacity to respond to unexpected environmental conditions, thereby ensuring conditions of performance and better functioning through external functions—that is, through the relationship between system and environment, provided that this external function realizes the concept of adaptation.

The literary writer at that time was exposed to a political/ideological discourse that did not generally conflict with his aspirations, particularly if he belonged to the younger generation who had not been contaminated by bourgeois mentality and its ethics. Yet a writer who writes under the influence of mass enthusiasm remains limited in outlook and faces a future full of risks and difficulties; his hope may become disappointment, isolation, and withdrawal, or the prevailing ideological network may absorb him. He may become a mouthpiece or make it his profession to provide justifications for developments in reality by giving political discourse a literary dimension, if possible. The other possibility lies in the writer’s ability to detach himself from the prevailing ideological network and its political discourse, enabling him to rise above reality and set it in motion within a broader mental space, rebuilding it according to a sound perspective and thus arriving at the revolutionary alternative that qualifies him to produce revolutionary literature. In my view, the 1980s could serve as a sieve on which to base the sorting and differentiation of the trajectories of writers who began their literary production in the 1970s and have continued to the present (Makhlouf Amer, 2000, p. 21).

The Revolution emerges as a central system for correcting the social condition haunted by historical memory, while functioning as a subordinate text (a subsystem) that secures the balance of the second subordinate text—the social text—and helps us understand the reciprocal relations between the two. Frederick Jameson warns us against writing a text inside a text stronger than it, by which he means the symbolic system. Periodization, as a second-order text in systems theory, is a text written within the narrative of the Revolution. That narrative was imposed by the colonial centre as the basis of periodization; it embodies an imperial desire invested in the act of periodizing, through which all narratives were confiscated in the name of the colonial novel. It also accumulated a homogeneous

aesthetic consciousness through continuous pressure on the Revolution as a factor of periodization, producing a soft symbolic hegemony—or “soft power,” in Joseph Nye’s terminology.

This periodizing condition fragments the Algerian novel’s epistemological situation at the expense of its ontological condition. The historical wound of colonialism becomes a stamp (étampage) on the body of the national narrative, and every narrative act becomes tied to a dominant colonial system governing creative action. Thus, various academic and critical periodizations of the Algerian novel privilege the historical wound at the expense of the structural wound of the national narrative and the national novel.

“Some writers began to reconsider the traditional political/ideological discourse and to adopt instead another, deeper discourse: a discourse that establishes a class division within the homeland and approaches the nature of the conflict in a critical spirit. Thus, the novel began pointing accusing fingers at the exploiting class, which had betrayed the covenant of the pioneers and monopolized the land and livelihood. In *The Son of the Judge*, in *The Wind from the South*, the son of the judge uses every trick and means to retain ownership of his land and looks at everything else in the same spirit. He therefore wants to control his daughter as he wishes in order to prevent her from continuing her studies and marry her to the mayor, Malik, so that he can save his property from nationalization” (Makhlouf Amer, 2000, p. 21).

The concern with the Revolution in the novel does not refer only to production and representation within texts; it makes the experience of writing the Revolution a decisive turning point involving the displacement of the centre in the official representation of the national novel. It thereby becomes the only model of cultural resistance. Deconstructing the fixed systemic organization of periodization in Makhlouf Amer reveals possible intersections between revolutionary experience, historical anxiety, and wounded memory. These cultural signs, marked by forms of subalternity—colonialism—as a governing paradigm in periodization allow experiences of identification between the colonial moment and revolutionary experiences as wounded memory to produce a concealed homogeneity in periodization.

Experience occupies an advanced position in shaping the writing consciousness of a group of novelists who sometimes began from an awareness preceding the formation of the narrative text. The journey toward the theme of revolution thus developed as a social system. The novels that embody the Revolution from this perspective—*The Wind from the South*, *The Earthquake*, *Love and Death in the Time of Harrachi*, and *The Time of Nimrod*—tend more than others to draw a map of the class conflict present in the country. In *Love and Death in the Time of Harrachi* and *The Time of Nimrod*, the Revolution is presented as a project of the exploited working classes, an image that came to occupy the forefront of novelistic writing. Yet some models distinguish themselves through their artistic dimension and mode of writing: in these works, class conflict does not appear starkly across the literary work, but is given a degree of transparency, even though the enemy targeted by the Revolution remains the same in most cases.

The organic unity of the texts *The Wind from the South*, *The Earthquake*, *Love and Death in the Time of Harrachi*, and *The Time of Nimrod*, together with their ideological structural units, cannot be

reduced to a purely ideological unity. Rather, this systemic unity aims at a higher-order objective. It is a relative transition in literary forms that cannot be located solely at the ideological level; it is a transformation at the level of literary production, producing an artistic consciousness of the “counter-revolution” or the counter-revolutionary. These texts founded the period and possessed an artistic maturity appropriate to the revolutionary event, placing it at the centre of the first text through its artistic structure and through its full response to the institutional normativity and aesthetic standards of the sociological class of the time. Amer Makhoulf states: “The time is the time of the war of liberation, and the obsession pursuing adults and children alike is the Revolution” (Makhoulf Amer, 2000, pp. 22–23). Makhoulf seeks to extract the political system from literary discourse and to grasp what is essential in the movement of society and history; for him, this is the aim of literary creation. The political system is a subsystem and should not be imposed upon another subsystem, the artistic system (Makhoulf Amer, 2000, p. 28).

The systemic activity of social and class concerns in the novel wagers on an organic transformation of relations, a transformation in meaning that centralizes organicity and imposes a displacement within relations. Ultimately, it constructs the official novelistic project by extracting everything political in favor of the symbolic protest of the sociological class against political action itself. According to Amer Makhoulf, the fundamental wager is that “during the war of liberation there was not a conflict between two internally coherent blocs, because the conflict was horizontal as much as it was vertical” (Makhoulf Amer, 2000, p. 29). If classes in this sense constitute a false centre, the novel possesses a real centre; these distorted models are an aesthetic betrayal of this ideological contradiction in favor of a particular political treatment. The critic observes that “a large proportion of Algerian novels written in Arabic represent conflict from a bloc perspective; at most, they reach the contradiction by depicting the character of the traitor/harki who lacks national consciousness and turns against the Revolution, whereupon he is subjected to cursing, humiliation, pursuit, persecution, and killing” (Makhoulf Amer, 2000, p. 29).

The Revolution constitutes a credit-bearing system for the sociological class that orders individuals’ social questions. Yet excessive attention to the Revolution in the periodization of the Algerian novel led us to employ the monitoring system in systems theory so as to reconsider the novel and the concepts of communication and consciousness in Niklas Luhmann, and to reorder views of the world by reordering the system from which the study of literary and human phenomena should begin.

The novel corresponded to a set of compatibilities between subjective and structural formation—that is, between its own formations and the structural transformations of society. Makhoulf Amer states: “The echo of the Revolution in its emotional dimension marked most writings, causing writing to tend toward a romantic, didactic, or slogan-like mode overflowing with a spirit of victory” (Makhoulf Amer, 2000, p. 28). Every transformation occurring in the novelistic form is reflected in the concept and procedure, that is, in the concept of the novel and its function.

The Wind from the South may be considered a Bildungsroman, a text that claims to constitute a reality competing with actual reality. Perhaps the most dangerous element that can be discerned beneath Makhoulf Amer’s periodizing act is the revolutionary act itself, as a mark of the novel’s artistic

maturity. The troubling question, however, is the relationship between revolutionary action and the periodization of the novel of crisis, as though a communicative act linked the two periodizing lines. “One of the things most harmful to understanding the Revolution is the common assumption that the revolutionary process ended when liberation was achieved, and that turmoil and violence therefore ended, although both lay at the heart of the wars of independence as a whole” (Arendt, 2008, p. 200). Most of the novels examined contain, consciously or unconsciously, a reference to terrorism: *The Wind from the South*, *The Earthquake*, *Love and Death in the Time of Harrachi*, and *The Time of Nimrod*. The logic of seeking independence thus turns into the pursuit of the interests of particular classes. The social question strongly intersected with the course of the Algerian Revolution, while the only authority retained by the people is the reserve authority of revolution, in Hannah Arendt’s formulation. The writer did not employ the phenomenon of terrorism merely as a fashion or to keep pace with events; rather, terrorism is present in the collective imagination, whether desired or not, and therefore had to leave its imprint on writing. In *Timimoun*, for example, the effect of terrorism does not make it the engine of history but an incidental phenomenon in history—an event that may obstruct movement and interrupt the chain of reading. It remains a dark station on the road of history, appearing as dark spots on the body of the novel, yet these obstacles do not prevent the novel from being read or written. Frederick Jameson warned against the formalistic aesthetic fears associated with Third World literature, since such an approach would not only depoliticize these texts but, as Tiefen argues, make them “derivative” or “secondary” (Makhlouf Amer, 2000, p. 91).

Aesthetic value is easily reduced to a set of ideological codes concerned solely with revolution through the delegation of the idea of colonialism, driven by the history of the subordinate margin. Consequently, everything that contradicts the theme of revolution is relegated to the margins. One underlying reason for this failure of periodization is what Crooks-Seshadri identifies as an insufficiently clear concept of the margin—a margin different from the concept of multiculturalism of spatial and thematic marginality. The homogenizing confusion resulting from anxiety over the loss of the margin led to redrawing boundaries and contesting the margin itself. Crooks-Seshadri argues that postcolonial critics were keen to recover the “critical position” and support “the margin as a site of struggle for the external limit.”

The “margin” of the Revolution in Amer Makhlouf’s proposed periodization consequently constitutes, in this sense, “a remnant of colonial representation,” in Eli Park Sorensen’s terms. The agency-oriented negotiation of periodization by the imperial machinery of theory is articulated through the novel by concealing the complexity of “the conditions of production of its own trajectory” (Sorensen, 2010, p. 5). Periodizing by the Revolution constitutes a major loss in Algerian novelistic production, or what Franco Moretti calls “the loss of distance” in modern criticism. It may also resemble what Lazarus identifies as a certain similarity in postcolonial literary analyses: a self-conscious postcolonial literary method remains under the control of the dominant terminology of much postcolonial criticism. Such coherence can contribute to what Crooks-Seshadri regards as the consolidation of a unified, limited, theory-centred radical norm—an erosion of a differentiated critical margin.

All other attempts, on the pretext of violating the sociological normativity of identity—writing without the Arabic language and not engaging in writing about the Revolution—could not forget the historical colonial wound of the centre or free themselves from its authority. They negotiated the historical record by excavating wounded memory, leaving the Algerian novel hostage to the authority of the referential centre, the colonial centre, and to a central, “civilizational” consciousness that institutionalizes local and national creative action.

The novel exceeds being merely a rhetorical genre; from this perspective it is a cultural form embedded in what Frederick Jameson calls “the political unconscious.” The latent desire within the political unconscious is revealed as a movement toward restructuring the potential fields of representation, history, and cultural production as a central function of narrative and discursive reason. It is a colonial unconscious disseminated through the periodizing movements identified by the critic in the novels he periodizes and examines in *The Novel and Transformations in Algeria*. This movement paves or periodizes the national narrative. Clément Moisan criticized the scholastic practice in phenomenological approaches to literature and the novel in *The Phenomenon of Literature*, regarding such practice as educational, emerging under a dogmatic certainty and producing normative results. Such normativity gives the literary phenomenon a doubled consciousness and clothes it in a scholastic form devoid of critical consideration. In my view, this is a scholastic guise that became one of the obstacles diverting the Algerian critic from attention to the specificity of the Algerian novel. What, then, are these epistemological obstacles, and to what extent did they fragment the phenomenon of the Algerian novel?

A careful critical reading of periodization provides a distance from the aesthetic conventions of the centre and liberates the margin. Periodization through the Revolution as a colonial moment of memory can thus be reconsidered. The novel, as an imperial form in its formulation of theoretical problems, exceeds the sterile reduction of literature to a genre founded on its relationship with history. As an imagined form, it seeks to reshape imagined communities according to its understanding of the wound and structural concern of those communities. The narrative trajectory of the possible imaginary therefore makes it possible to move beyond the historical wound toward an attempt to heal the structural wounds of the nation and the community. The novel thereby becomes an epistemological discourse that penetrates political organization.

In a recent interview published in *The Nation*, Noam Chomsky was asked whether “the master’s house” can be dismantled with the master’s tools. He replied that dismantling the system is a realistic and critical alternative to despair and apathy. Chomsky’s view intersects with Chatterjee’s idea of derivative discourse and Ranajit Guha’s concept of the “small voice of history.” Derivative discourses and the small voices of history are unable to achieve systematicity on their own. At best, in order to establish their own concept of agency, they can chip away, signify, and mark an existing and often alien text. These political agencies are unable to write their own text; at best, they reduce the dominant text, as Jacques Derrida argues (Krishnan, 2004, p. 67).

According to Radhakrishnan, the tools available to groups for dismantling discourse carry two interrelated relationships. The first concerns what Marxist analysis calls the theory–practice relation;

the second, and more dangerous, concerns the question of agency capable of being realized. With regard to the relationship between tools and those who use them, the postcolonial condition offers itself as a complex and interesting example. If modernity and nationalism are historicized as derivative discourse in the Third World, how can derivative discourse be appropriated by those who embody or represent the West precisely as its opposite? How damaging is the stigma of derivativeness, and is there any way to repair it? Can derivativeness be denied, or is there a way of working from within and outside derivativeness toward a world of authenticity and self-ownership? (Krishnan, 2004, p. 68).

How should the novel express the differentiation of the imaginary as a form of difference from the paradigm of classification/periodization?

Dismantling the political unconscious of the Revolution theme in this periodization requires avoiding mediation as a symbolic system (Jameson) inhabiting the articulations of periodization, and avoiding excessive emphasis on the Revolution and its historical memory as a dominant theme. Such emphasis obscures differentiation and fails to reveal the structural contradictions that distinguish the Algerian narrative. The historical wound becomes entangled with narrative as an epistemological condition for defining and periodizing the Algerian novel.

The idea of mediation between two homogeneous dimensions—society and literature—seeks to understand literature as one of the results of active social consciousness that produces practical outcomes, not merely ideologies. When mediation is based on the production of literary models and genres from social facts, it becomes more coherent and complex than the communication structures of societies, away from the idea of derivation imposed by theory. This does not deny the dynamic relationships among different systems, nor does it neglect other systems, since society is the system of systems in Talcott Parsons's formulation.

Derivativeness, as a negative concept of theory, produces a "micro-voice" or a small, pale voice of history. This pallor results primarily from the alienation of consciousness from that voice: stripping consciousness away leaves the voice without a bearer through whom it can establish its existence in history. If the nation has been liberated from colonialism, the texts nevertheless remain under the weight of colonialism as a result of central periodization. This is a kind of recoding of the symbolic exchange of theory through a symbolic derivation of struggle emerging from the colonial act itself—a form of symbolic violence in Pierre Bourdieu's sense. The social subordinate text remains tied to the political system, and the novel is radically alienated within a historically extended periodizing system linked to the imperial machinery. This constitutes a coded form of negation and consequently a reactivation of the periodizing model as a form of modernity and central organization of national narratives. It produces a Weberian model of periodization that expels and avenges national narratives in the name of geography and language, thereby excluding many national narratives that will be examined in subsequent chapters. It is symbolic violence imposed upon literary production. Eli Park Sorensen argues that critics construct a mode of critical discourse production that fractures and frustrates the project of "decolonization" and monotonously repeats colonial rhythms by excessively and unconsciously focusing on the "brand" of literary production in the Third World. This type of

criticism consequently fixes a stereotypical discourse about marginalization and reveals a lack of awareness of its own position as marginal minority; critics unconsciously reproduce and reinforce Eurocentric logic. The periodization of the Algerian novel through the Revolution functions in the same way, as an unconscious colonial system that reinforces the discipline of theory.

Ranajit Guha attributes this neglect in our narratives to the fact that “we who are included in world history owe our understanding of the past, our craft, and our academic knowledge to the very Revolution itself. We work within the governing paradigm it built for us, which makes us closer and more committed to it than to recognizing the need to challenge and change it. It is therefore not surprising that our criticism should look elsewhere, beyond sovereignty, toward a place that differs greatly from history” (Guha, 2019, p. 47). The concerns of the colonial system in dealing with historicity have remained embedded in the possible imaginary and in the political unconscious of the novel. This has confined the Algerian novel’s writing about the Revolution within the global model and its revolutionary narratives, reducing it to public affairs and preventing it from containing historicity at the level of literary representation.

As Guha sees it, these concerns have diverted attention from containing historicity at the level of literary representation. This is clearly visible in academic research, which remains attached to public affairs and to critical periodization that has confined most scholarly efforts and exercises concerning the Algerian novel to what is called revolutionary consciousness—a consciousness institutionalized in favor of the imperial map of periodization. In other words, it enters the game of the governing paradigm and participates in it. Thus, every periodization of the novel brings the novel back to this periodizing industry as a basic condition for the symbolic exchange of the novel’s sociological value. “The West wrote the battle over the governing conceptual frameworks” (Guha, 2019, p. 160).

Conclusion:

The conceptual architecture of the periodization adopted by the critic Makhlouf Amer has deprived the Algerian narrative mind of its organic and structural system through submission to the central system and colonial memory, by privileging colonial consciousness and the Revolution as a theme directing Algerian historical memory. This memory has extended into the present through an anticipation of the doubled violence of memory, namely terrorism, as a second historical theme of periodization. Periodization through the Revolution is thus constituted as a form of colonial knowledge, an extension of colonial bourgeois consciousness. These periodizations become a starting point for excluding everything national.

The article therefore argues that a critical reconsideration of the periodizing architecture is necessary in order to recover the structural and aesthetic plurality of the Algerian novel and to examine its historical, social, and cultural dimensions without reducing them to a single revolutionary paradigm.

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