The Algerian Novel of French Expression

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The literature of Black Africa written in French — especially that emanating from Senegal and Cameroun — has attracted a great deal of attention in the United States recently, in part due to the burgeoning output of works and in part due to the relevance which that flowering and the earlier achievements hold for the Afro-American. There is no less impressive a corpus of literary writings in French to come out of Arabo-Berber North Africa, but, whereas in the last three or four years many thousands of works on African and Afro-American art, literature, and culture have appeared in English alone, critical attention to North African literature was limited in the same period, to two Ph.D. theses and a few articles.

Morocco has given us novelists like Driss Chraïbi, Ahmed Sefrioui, and Mohammed Khair-Eddine and poets like Mohammed Aziz Lahbabi; and Tunisia has given us the works of novelist-essayist Albert Memmi; but the richest Francophone production by far is that which comes from Algeria.

It is natural that the impact of the French language and French cultural traditions should have been greater in Algeria than in the two neighboring countries: historical circumstances led to strong cultural and loose protectoral governmental ties with Morocco and Tunisia and to both strong cultural and governmental ties with Algeria which, unlike the two other areas, was considered an overseas province by the French. This led to a more thoroughly established infrastructure, from water purification plants to schools, and consequently led to a greater reluctance in France to part with the equity which had been established at great cost. This parting was consummated in a bloody seven-year war of independence — referred to euphemistically in Algeria as "les événements" — which brought about Algerian self-government in July, 1962. Algeria's attempt to break the French cultural hold has, of course, been less bloody but far less successful than the total political and partial economic severance.

How can one explain the facts that (1) a sophisticated autochthonous literature has emerged only in the last quarter century despite colonization as early as 1830 when the French "punitive" forces landed at Sidi Ferruch, and (2) so much of the literary achievement is in French rather than Arabic?

The first question is thorny and the answer must be conjectural. No doubt the hopes of the African independence movements, with spokesmen like Fahrat 'Abbās, which had begun to take shape in the 1920s and 30s were fanned by the events of World War II and the attendant statesmanship of De Gaulle. The fall of the metropolis in 1940 and De Gaulle's promise to reward loyalty with increased autonomy in a French federation gave many Africans a glimpse of liberty and made them accelerate their independence efforts. Thus there was a period of ever-increasing intensity in national awareness between, say, 1924 and actual liberation in the 1960s. Inevitably the writers of this generation responded with a new definition of culture inherent in the political redefinition of the ethos. Thus the Arabo-Berber writers of the prewar years wrote in many respects like overseas Frenchmen, but those of the post-World War II years — the so-called *génération de '54* —

carved out on new tablets politically and socially relevant literary commandments, albeit composed in the colonial language. This leads us to our second question: why was there no great upswing in Berber or Arabic literature concomitant with the nationalistic awareness? Berber is, of course, an oral language with no tradition of written literature, and classical Arabic was only taught on the lower level, in the *medersa* or Koranic school. The student who aspired to an education of the sort normally requisite in a creative writer of any subtlety or precision had either to travel far to one of the Arabophone universities in North Africa or switch to the French lycée and, despite great obstacles, try to attend the French university in Algiers. Much of the significant literature has, then, been in French and, furthermore, the literary models of the Algerian authors were French or foreign authors read in French translation and were only joined by Franco-Africans once a body of work developed with the bulk and quality and vintage to regenerate literature.

I should like to review the political backdrop to the generation of writers which has produced most of the authentic Algerian literature. The beginning of the independence movement in North Africa has been placed by some enthusiasts as early as Jugurtha — who resisted the Romans — or 'Abd al-Qādir, who resisted the first French pacification efforts in the first seventeen years of occupation. However, more realistic origins are to be found in the cells of liberation movements in the first half of the twentieth century and, specifically, in the massacres at Sétif and Guelma on May 8, 1945, in which thousands of Algerian demonstrators perished. The thrust toward freedom and the ever-growing discontent with colonial rule broke into full-fledged combat in November, 1954, and there ensued a complex and bloody struggle which lasted until the summer of 1962 and took the lives of well over a million Algerians and several hundred thousand Frenchmen and *pieds noirs.* Scarcely an author in the ranks of the Algerian literati did not witness from near or afar the terrible agony of his country, and, therefore, the independence movement — especially during the pivotal war years — played a major role in forming the vision of the Algerian writer as well as supplying him with dramatic subject matter.

Albert Memmi has categorized writers who deal with North Africa as (1) *écrivains-touristes,* like Gide and Duhamel, (2) colonialist writers like Camus and Jules Roy, and (3) autochthonous writers. The latter are the only ones who experienced the full spectrum of bitter-sweet emotions of the national emergence. In other words, these men could not go elsewhere without going into exile and yet had, during most of their lives, experienced another form of exile in their own land. It is this category of writer which concerns us here.

The principal literary forms to emerge in Algerian Francophone literature have been poetry and the novel. In Black Africa, poetry has been, until quite recently, the major literary form; but the novel has been pre-eminent in Algerian Francophone literature right from the beginning. Fiction, being of greater length and substance than poetry, also provides a better forum for the analysis of the special hybrid nature of literature written in French by non-Frenchmen. The principles of criticism applying to any hybrid literature naturally apply to the Algerian Francophone novel, but we can further refine the pertinent criteria. This will necessitate a digression into the nature of Arabic linguaontology.

The genius of the Arabophone people is subsumed in the special genius of the Arabic language which is, in turn, intimately related to a long existence in the desert. The desert's violent contrasts, the daily rigors it imposes upon its inhabitants, and the necessity to formulate snap all-or-nothing judgments in order to survive there, have spawned a way of life in which the polarity and the episodic pervade all aspects of life including the linguistic, the spiritual, and the creative. At the same time, the desert provides a fundamental sense of eternity and all-embracingness. The great haunting paradox of Arabic art lies in the union of duality, repetition, and contrast within the matrix of oneness, the union's quintessence residing in the arabesque. Whether musical, visual, or literary, the arabesque is at once repetitious and monolithic. As Henri Sérouya has expresesd it in *La Pensée arabe:*

> A côté de la nécessité d'un plan qui s'impose dans l'élaboration de toute oeuvre, qu'il eût été conçu avant la composition, ou au fur et à mesure de l'inspiration, il y a dans l'esprit arabe une prédilection pour les extrêmes et pour la juxtaposition des contraires qui se traduit par une succession brusque ou par un mélange sans intermédiaire. Cet état mental découle de la vie dans le désert et dans la steppe, ou des exigences de la vie nomade. L'infini que le désert suggère à l'âme arabe apparaît sous l'aspect grandiose de l'infini de l'étendue homogène.[1]

The contrast with the occidental tradition — or what Sérouya calls the Aryan tradition — has led to well-known differentiations in religions based on the ideas of unity vs. duality or plurality. The ethnic differences are expressed by Sérouya as follows:

> Ainsi formulée, cette caractéristique est à l'antipode du génie aryen. Celui-ci vise à l'union harmonieuse des contraires, en cherchant des moyens termes bien choisis. Il renferme l'unité dans la variété. Il a le sentiment des nuances, des degrés successifs au sein d'une hiérarchie ordonnée.
>
> La juxtaposition des contraires résume toute l'âme arabe, et l'âme musulmane: la religion, l'histoire, l'organisation politique et sociale, l'art sous ses diverses formes, la langue, même les particularités de l'habillement et de la cuisine. (p. 18)

The marriage of those modalities characteristic of the French mind, on the one hand, and those of the Arabo-Berber mind, on the other, gives the Francophone literature of North Africa its special flavor. Malek Haddad has expressed the regret that he must write in a language which is, perforce, alien to the most intimate modalities of his linguaontology. He has written in his essay, "Les Zéros tournent en rond": "Ce qu'il convient surtout de noter, c'est que même s'exprimant en français, les écrivains d'origine arabo-berbère *traduisent* une pensée *spécifiquement algérienne,* une pensée qui aurait trouvé la plénitude de son expression si *elle avait été véhiculée par un langage et une écriture arabes."*[2]

No doubt Haddad is sincere, since he has repeatedly spoken in his essays and poems of the horns of linguistic dilemma upon which he uncomfortably squirms. This dilemma is not, however, restricted to overseas Francophone writers. Jean Grosjean, from Franche-Comté, is hopelessly drawn to the consonantal diction of English, Hebrew, and Arabic while being, by

birthright and schooling, condemned to the mellifluous vocables of the French language. He once wrote:

> Je n'y peux rien, mon coeur et mon esprit son asiates d'Asie antérieure et ma langue française de l'Est. La position n'est pas confortable, ça force ma paresse à penser. Or les philosophes ni les théologiens ne pensent; ils bâtissent des systèmes. Seule la poésie (une certaine poésie) pense, forcée qu'elle est au langage concret, au rhythme, etc.. sans jamais quitter l'expérience profonde ni savoir où ça la mène. Je suis rivé à perpétuité à mon banc sur la galère de la poésie et soumis à la cadence de forçat des vers français.[3]

Grosjean or the North African writer of French expression may lament the limitations of the language in which he has chosen, or finds himself condemned, to write his works — and what writer is *not* plagued by his own consistent failure to hew out in words the ideal thought he wished to express? — but, viewed from another angle, the paradox provides a unique and vigorous art form. That this is true is borne out by the fact that the autochthonous novels follow a pattern and possess a spirit quite different from those in the novels by colonialist North African writers like Camus, Roy, and Roblès.

I should like to consider, now, some of the prose by Algerian writers. The modern short story is not very common, perhaps because it is by definition self-contained, nonrepetitious. I am not speaking of collections of tales like the *Thousand and One Nights,* but of the story as invented by Poe and others. Mohammed Dib has two fine collections of stories — *Au Café* and *Le Talisman* — but there is little else of consequence. The novel provides the leeway and freedom appropriate to the mentality of the North African writer and it is extensive enough and loosely enough constructed to allow for repetition and arabesque. The European novelistic tradition in the last two hundred years has not stressed repetition but rather development (*Madame Bovary, Eugénie Grandet, Le Rouge et le noir,* etc.), but there is almost always an episodic pattern imposed on the Algerian novel, either spontaneously or inherently as in, say, a diary.

The major novelists of French expression in Algeria are Kateb Yacine, Mohammed Dib, Mouloud Feraoun, and Mouloud Mammeri, to whose names we can add that of Rachid Boudjedra, whose first two novels, *La Répudiation* (1969) and *L'Insolation* (1972) are brilliant and suggest the likelihood of an illustrious career for their author. The Arab authors — Kateb, Dib, and Boudjedra — are urban and their novels swarm with the vitality and complexities of city life; the Berber authors — Feraoun and Mammeri — have composed works whose contents and underlying spirit rely heavily on the tranquility and seasonal drama of rural life, both men coming from the mountains of Kabylia. The distinction between these groups lies more in the texture and content of their works than in the structure which tends to be episodic for both literary outputs. I shall consider these representative authors in terms of the ethos which is pertinent. The Arab — or urban — authors write from the annihilated status of the colonized being, and the paradox of which Haddad spoke bears perhaps more heavily on them than on the Berber writers whose language has no written tradition anyway. I should like to consider the works by the three Arab authors mentioned in which the linguaontological meld occurs. It is meet to discuss first the works of Kateb Yacine, all of which

are exteriorizations of the Arabic mind with its polarity and repetition contained within the cartouche of the infinite.

Kateb is Algeria's foremost writer. He was born in 1929 in the department of Constantine. After an early education in Koranic school, he attended the French lycée in Sétif, became enamored of the French language, and began to develop what was to become a masterly control of that language. The fact that Kateb sums up the hybrid and somewhat ambiguous situation of the Algerian Francophone writer is attested to even by his name. He publishes under the name Kateb Yacine, retaining the Arabic order which places the surname first, leading most critics to refer to him as Yacine.

Kateb was arrested during the violence of May 8, 1945. He was sixteen at the time and the massacre and Kateb's stay in jail made a profound impression on him. Furthermore, his mother broke down mentally over the events, a drama commemorated in many of the writer's pages, notably in the poem entitled "La Rose de Blida." Kateb has held numerous itinerant and temporary jobs and for many years now he has lived in Paris where he is devoting his current energies to theater.

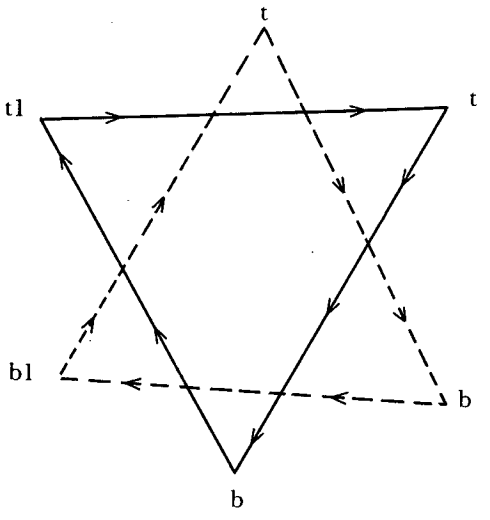
Besides a *plaquette* of poems, printed when he was very young and which has long-since disappeared, Kateb has published four books, all of which develop more or less the same theme. Indeed, Kateb not only resumes, in each of his individual works, the concept of the arabesque which I have already mentioned, but his life's work in its overall vision has also tended to combine repetition and universality. As he himself has said, all of his works "sont une seule oeuvre de longue haleine, toujours en gestation."[4] Kateb Yacine — in whom poet, novelist, playwright, and critic are interwoven as one — published the first installment of this life-long work in *Mercure de France* in January, 1948. The main elements of his artistic vision and the icons — people and objects — with which he has consistently sought to communicate that vision, are all present in the poem entitled "Nedjma ou le poème ou le couteau." Despite slightly over-exuberant imagery, the poem contains some of Kateb's finest writing. We are introduced to the figure of Nedjma — the girl-spirit who will move hauntingly through most of Kateb's subsequent works — the palm trees, the primeval desert, the archetypal ancestor who even in incestual, moronic decadence contains a certain glory derived from the millennial magnificence of accumulated victories, turpitudes, and stubborn inviolability:

> Nedjma tenait mon coursier par la bride greffait des cristaux sur le sable
> Je dis Nedjma le sable est plein de nos empreintes gorgées d'or!
> Les nomades nous guettent leurs cris crèvent nos mots ainsi que des bulles
> Nous ne verrons plus les palmiers poussés vers la grêle tendre des étoiles
> Nedjma les chameliers sont loin et la dernière étape est au Nord!
> Nedjma tira sur la bride je sellai un dromadaire musclé comme un ancêtre.[5]

The poet's cosmic breath instilled additional life in his subject in the novel, *Nedjma,* published in 1956. This work has remained his masterpiece

and the greatest Francophone work to come out of North Africa. It is, furthermore, a work worthy of standing beside the great novels of literary history. In it, the unique meld of the French language and "l'âme arabe" has expressed itself in dimensions of genius. Subsequently, Kateb was to publish a curious work of mixed prose and poetry entitled *Le Polygone étoilé* — which appears to be a blend of new writing, salvaged cuttings from *Nedjma,* and other earlier pieces like "Le Fondateur" — and a collection of plays entitled *Le Cercle des représailles,* but these works echo and support *Nedjma* without supplanting it. His latest work, *L'Homme aux sandales de caoutchouc* (1970), does not develop the Nedjma theme but is structurally episodic.

It is impossible to summarize *Nedjma.* Even the editors' prefatory résumé is confusing. The story involves four men and Nedjma and a gallery of secondary characters of varying importance. Although the basic story is readable enough, the vitality of the work lies not in the narrative content *per se,* but in the structure of the novel. The adventures of the four men, who are all involved with Nedjma in one way or another, are not told in such a way as to constitute either pure chronology or pure repetition. There are often several versions of an incident, told as seen through the eyes of two or more characters, and the iridescence of a hashish-fed imagination distorts more than one section of the book, but the greatness of the work lies in its special tension between order and disorder. The book exemplifies to the fullest degree possible in French, the concept of contrast, repetition, and the universal characteristic of the arabesque. *Nedjma* appears at first reading to be a spontaneous, anarchic work, possibly even created by use of trance or automatic writing of the sort practiced by the Surrealists. However, upon closer analysis, one discovers that the work is very neatly and rationally divided into six sections which are, in turn, divided into twelve or twenty-four sections. Where there are twenty-four subsections, furthermore, these are numbered I through XII twice rather than straight through to XXIV. The fact that "nedjma" means "star" in Arabic plus the presence of several other clues revealing Kateb's inordinate fascination with stars and geometry (e.g. references to stars as in the poem already cited, references to spiders and webs, the mystical connotations of the polygon in the play entitled *Les Ancêtres redoublent de férocité,* and the title of *Le Polygone étoilé)* lead one to ponder the purely geometric implications of Kateb's structure of *Nedjma.* The six sections permit one to imagine a hexagon or a six-pointed star. A hexagon with lines connecting its angles to the center would have six sides, twelve lines altogether, and a starlike configuration of the lines inside the polygon. The possibility of a six-pointed star providing inspiration for the novel's structure becomes more than wild conjecture when one tries to derive a geometric rationale for the subdivisions. The distribution of subsections within the six main sections is as follows: 12, 12, 12/12, 12/12, 12, 12/12. Taking the mere fact of renumbering within some sections as some sort of sign, we can attribute to them a value and to the sections containing only twelve subsections another value. The only reasonable relationship I could conceive of — and I admittedly relied on all the clues pointing to the star motif — was to attribute to 12 the value of "top" and to 12/12 the value of "bottom," or vice versa. Thus we would have t,t,b / b,t,b. By drawing two intersecting triangles, we derive the essential shapes for the six-pointed star:



It is noteworthy that the geometric components of this star are six triangles and a hexagon.

Even if we discard such geometric sleuthing as absurd, the general tone of the novel is best described as radial. Its action or force is neither chronological nor purely repetitive; it rather moves out from a central point, returning time and again to that point to move out on another radius. We have universality implied in the center and in the circumference and an infinite variety of repetitions possible in the radii: a geometric modification of the arabesque, if you will.

Mohammed Dib was born near Tlemcen in 1920. After earning his living at various jobs as a weaver, journalist, schoolteacher, and so forth, Dib moved to Paris where he has devoted all his efforts to his writing. Dib's first three novels — *La Grande Maison* (1952), *L'Incendie* (1954), and *Le Métier à tisser* (1957) — form a loose trilogy entitled *Algérie.* These works resemble somewhat the novels of Zola. Hunger is the driving force of this cycle which contains a combination of raw naturalism and stilted allegory. After *Algérie* came *Un Eté africain* (1959) in which, I feel, Dib first achieves a reconciliation between his vehicular language and his soul. *Un Eté africain* is the story of a young girl in one brief summer of her life. She is embroiled in a complex nexus of conflicts. Besides being confronted with the usual problems of adolescence, Zakya is caught in the middle of an Algerian-style generation gap. Outside the house in which most of the novel is set, war, terror, and the brutal emancipation of women is taking place. In the uncertain shelter of the house governed by age-old customs, Zakya tries to find herself. The chronology is polysynchronic rather than linear and the beauty of this delicate masterpiece is in the use of modalities proper to mystical poetry within the traditional structure of prose. The configuration of the work is, in other words, not narrative and contextual, but modal and rhythmic. One should, ideally, read *Un Eté africain* as a companion work to Frantz Fanon's *L'An V de la révolution algérienne* and the film *The Battle of Algiers.* All three works eschew the dimensions of chronology and the rate of speed associated with their genre and rather speak — from the respective vantage points of the novel, the essay, and the cinema — with the same wave length.

Dib has also published, aside from *Un Eté africain* and the trilogy, the two collections of stories mentioned in the beginning of this paper, four recent novels — *Qui se souvient de la mer* (1962), *Cours sur la rive sauvage* (1964), *La Danse du roi* (1968) and *Le Maître de chasse* (1973) — and two collections of poems, *Ombre gardienne* (1961) and *Formulaires* (1970). The most interesting of the prose works is probably *Qui se souvient de la mer* in which we are provided with a crepitating, explosive collage of word-images and symbols reminiscent of Picasso's *Guernica* to which Dib expresses his indebtedness in a "postface." In this remarkable work, the archetypal symbols of sea and star and woman-spirit (Nafissa) blend with cold fantasy of the sort we find in science fiction. The narrator's quest for the infinite — the primordial sea-womb whence mankind came — takes him through a monodramatic labyrinthine city with dilating, contracting, crumbling, and mushrooming walls. Whether or not the ultimate goal has been achieved, and to what extent the journey is reality or dream, remain in doubt at the end of the book. The journey itself is, however, adequate *raison d'être* for the work.

Rachid Boudjedra was born in 1941 in Aïn-Beïda in eastern Algeria. Before publishing his first novel, Boudjedra had only authored a competent but derivative and undistinguished book of poems, *Pour ne plus rêver* (1965). *La Répudiation* came, then, as a pleasant surprise to observers of Algerian literature. The story is that of a man's childhood and young manhood in the Qasbah of Algiers. The narrator's father repudiates his wife and takes a young bride. By the end of the book most of the characters are dead, exiled, or mad, save the old patriarch who prepares to take yet another wife. The details of life in the big family house, in Koranic school, and during such ceremonies as the sheep sacrifice on Aïd al-Adha form the fabric of this vivid, robust tapestry. The density of style is new to Algerian literature, being different from the density we associate with Kateb's work. The same episodic, radial, rationale which we discovered in novels by Kateb and Dib governs this work. With his first novel, Boudjedra made a brilliant début. The follow-up novel, *L'Insolation,* is a superior achievement; however, Boudjedra seems to have tried in it to imitate his own masterpiece and it falls short of *La Répudiation.*

The Berber novelists have in common a rural village upbringing and a mother tongue without a written tradition. I believe that the reliance on the oral as well as a general association with Arabic culture has caused the Berber Francophone novelists to create works which are episodic. However, since the Berbers have no written literary tradition and, aside from the immortal Si Mohand, no major literary heroes from the past, it is perhaps natural that they should have assimilated the French literary masterpieces more readily than the Arab novelists have. Having no masters, no tradition, they more readily adopted as their own the tradition of Corneille, Racine, Balzac, Stendhal, and Flaubert. The styles of Mouloud Feraoun and Mouloud Mammeri are, then, bookish and classical, while the structure and content of the novels betray a greater dependency on the part of the authors on their own upbringing and traditions. The works tend to be a bit dull compared to the Arab novels, just as life in Michelet is dull compared to life in Algiers or Constantine. The dramas we encounter are those repetitious daily dramas of the *djemaâ,* or local square, and those most subtle dramas of one's inner-most feelings which become more salient in relative solitude.

Mouloud Feraoun was born at Tizi-Hibel in the mountains of Kabylia in 1913. He was assassinated by the OAS (Secret Army Organization) on

March 15, 1962, just three days before the signing of the Evian accords. Feraoun's works are an on-going diary of sorts, fittingly culminated in his real and stirring *Journal 1955-1962*. Vacillating between fiction and poorly disguised autobiography (the name of the protagonist of his first book is Menrad Fouroulou, an anagram of the author's name), Feraoun tells the story of the internal identity struggle of a small-town Kabyle who has become a Frenchman culturally and then returned home to find that he is no longer certain as to who or what he is. All of Feraoun's works portray this anguished conflict: *Le Fils du pauvre* (1950), *La Terre et le sang* (1953), *Jours de Kabylie* (1954), *Les Chemins qui montent* (1957), and the diary itself, published posthumously in 1962.

Mouloud Mammeri was born in Taourirt-Mimoun in Kabylia. He is professor of ethnology and Berber at the University of Algiers. He is also a critic and has, like Feraoun, published translations of *isefra* (nine-line poems) of Si Mohand. Mammeri has published three novels which generally follow a chronological pattern from the prewar days through the revolution: *La Colline oubliée* (1952), *Le Sommeil des justes* (1955), and *L'Opium et le bâton* (1965). Mammeri admits to the fact that he is culturally a Frenchman even if politically and ethnically an Algerian. His style and methodology reflect influence by French masters. *L'Opium et le bâton* was in the curriculum at the University of Algiers in 1968-69 and Mammeri agreed to a question and answer session with the literature students. Some of the militant students accused Mammeri of being anti-Algeria because his hero is not certain of his feelings and has bourgeois tendencies. Mammeri pointed out to these doubting Thomases that they were accusing him of the feelings of his protaganist and that, furthermore, his protagonist was a reflection of and not a real portrait of the author, and that, in any case, a novel must have its own self-justifying rationales. I suggested, analogically, to the stern-faced critics in the audience that whereas Flaubert had supposedly said "Madame Bovary, c'est moi," he would never have said "Je suis Madame Bovary." The itinerary of Mammeri's hero, leading from village to city and winding through turbulent political years, is not over and further novels will, no doubt, develop that journey. It is safe to say, however, that Mammeri will remain essentially a novelist in the classical French tradition and rely on "le mot juste" and convincing content rather than on stylistic pyrotechnics.

In 1965, after deposing Ben Bella, Houari Boumediène launched an Arabization campaign in an effort to align his country, culturally as well as politically, with the Arab world and to eradicate French cultural influence in Algeria. In 1966, he Arabized the first year of school, in 1967, the second, and so on. The Arabization program has suffered some setbacks. In the third year they were obliged to rely on French teachers and textbooks for science and mathematics classes, but the program is, nevertheless, making headway. One can only conjecture how effective Arabization will be in eliminating Francophone literature in Algeria. Even if utterly successful, however, the fact that a number of middle-aged and young writers have committed themselves to a literary career in French would suggest that it will take at least another fifty years before French falls out of use, and in that time the already rich bulk of Algerian literature in French will have grown considerably. The appearance of such young talents as poets Malek Alloula, Youcef Sebti, and Rachid Bey, and novelists like Boudjedra and Ali Boumahdi — whose beautiful recollections of growing up in Berrouaghia, *Le Village des Asphodèles* (1970), proclaims a distinguished career if the book is not a one-

shot attempt of the memoir variety — assures the French language a full line of devoted and able practitioners in North Africa for a good many years to come.

NOTES

[1]Henri Sérouya, *La Pensée arabe* (Paris: PUF, 1967), p. 21.

[2]*Anthologie des écrivains maghrébins d'expression française,* edited by A. Memmi et al., (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1965), pp. 149-50. Haddad's emphasis.

[3]Quoted in *French Review,* XLI, 2 (November 1967), 278.

[4]*Prière d'insérer* of *Le Polygone étoilé.*

[5]Kateb Yacine, "Nedjma ou le poème ou le couteau," *Mercure de France,* No. 1013 (1er janvier 1948), 70-71.