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Introduction

The introduction is considered a fundamental element in understanding the deep relationship between Algerian literature and collective memory, as it allows us to reflect on how national identity has been shaped through literary symbols over the ages. Literature, as a mirror of a people's conflicts, reflects their experiences, tragedies, and victories, making it a powerful tool for re-reading history in a way that combines documentation and creativity. In the Algerian context, literature appears as a flexible means to evoke events of struggle and resistance, transforming them into literary symbols that feed the collective memory, thereby strengthening the national fabric and establishing renewed historical awareness.

The importance of the introduction in this context is highlighted by its role in establishing a knowledge base to understand how literature can serve as a platform for expressing identity, a critical practice for history, and a corrective for distorted or suppressed historical memory. It lays the foundation for understanding that history is reshaped and interpreted through words and meanings, and that collective memory is not merely an individual event but an accumulation of stories and events preserved and repeatedly reaffirmed by the people through literature. From this perspective, Algerian literature becomes more than just art; it is an effective means to retrieve the lost tapes of the nation's history and revive them in the form of texts that allow new generations to envision the horizons of identity and belonging. In the end, the introduction calls for viewing literature as an effective tool in reconstructing historical consciousness, using images and words that transcend time, remaining present as a living heritage that contributes to building a renewed collective memory, preserving the dignity of Algerian identity and reviving its luminous past.

History of Algerian Literature

The history of Algerian literature goes back to deep roots connected to the civilizations that succeeded each other in the region. Since ancient times, literature developed in multiple contexts influenced by Amazigh, Arab, jurisprudential, and Andalusian civilizations, and later by the experiences of French occupation and colonization. Before that, however, we define the nature of Algerian literature and its beginnings, especially the novel. Its historical origin is represented in *The Golden Ass* by Apuleius Lucius as the first humanistic work, and discussing

Algerian novels takes us back to the ancient dawn of the novel, or what Bernard Valliet calls the "Age of the Ancient Epic," specifically to the second century CE, when the well-known writer Apuleius Lucius appeared, considered the author of the first complete humanistic novel, if not the very first ever. Abu al-Eid Dodo confirms this, stating: "There is nothing to prevent us from considering *The Golden Ass* the second novel to appear in the world, and indeed, if it is true that Gaius Petronius Arbiter's *Satyricon*, which reached us incompletely, was the first, the novel by Apuleius is in any case the first complete novel that reached us, forming a new literary type, known today as the framed novel," as mentioned by the French critic Bernard Valliet, who considered it the first novel written for amusement.

During the pre-colonial period, literature reflected the life and traditions of local communities, relying on songs, proverbs, and folktales carrying a rich heritage of collective memory, remaining an important source for transmitting values and history. From *The Golden Ass* by Apuleius Lucius, Algerian prose did not witness another novelistic work until about seventeen centuries later, when Muhammad bin Ibrahim produced his story *Lovers in Love and Longing* in 1849. He belonged to a family of high social standing in Algeria, as his grandfather Mustafa Pasha served as Dey of Algiers (1795–1805), a figure still remembered today, with his name associated with a suburb of the capital and a hospital.

With the beginning of colonization, literature took the form of cultural resistance, as writers expressed the people's suffering and protest against injustice through poetry, prose, and theater, preserving national identity and redirecting collective consciousness. The colonial period marked a pivotal turning point, with increasing national awareness and the emergence of literary resistance expressing the people's desire for liberation and independence. This was evident in works attempting to document struggles, depict suffering, and portray freedom and liberation.

After Algeria gained independence, Algerian literature underwent numerous developments, as writers sought to strengthen national identity through literary production reflecting historical and personal experiences, expressing the people's aspirations. Various literary forms emerged—poetry, novels, and theater—showing cultural richness and generational diversity, focusing on national issues, history, struggle, and heritage authenticity. Thus, literature became an effective means to rebuild collective memory, reinforce national identity, and advance society by highlighting past suffering and celebrating heroism, using creativity to critically re-read history for a broader understanding of the Algerian people's experience and the consolidation of their cultural presence.

Algerian Literature and Research into Its Origins

The origins of Algerian literature are among the most important foundations establishing Algeria's cultural and linguistic presence throughout history. These origins are rooted in the ancient civilizations that inhabited the region, influenced deeply and reciprocally by diverse cultures such as Phoenician, Roman, and Byzantine cultures, in addition to the fundamental influence of Arab culture brought by the Islamic conquest, which introduced literary and religious texts that effectively shaped the unique cultural identity of Algerians. Algerian literature was also influenced by Umayyad and Abbasid literature, with major cities such as Constantine and

Tlemcen witnessing many significant literary works from various historical periods, highlighting diverse topics and expressive styles.

The Arabic language, with its flexibility and richness, is the fundamental pillar of Algerian literature and undoubtedly the defining feature of this rich heritage. However, it is necessary to note the impact of colonization, which left Algeria with multiple languages introduced during French occupation. The colonizers significantly weakened the use of Arabic, promoting French in educational and media institutions, resulting in two intertwined literary traditions interacting across cultures.

Algerian literature also draws its spirit from the rich folk heritage, represented in proverbs, tales, and folk songs with deep meanings, embracing today diverse forms of creativity expressing national identity and collective memory. The historical and linguistic origins, combined with cultural interweaving and accumulated human experiences, produced a vibrant literature engaged in continuous dialogue between past and present. This literature re-reads and reshapes history through a reverse perspective, revealing the ambitions and hopes of Algerian society, contributing effectively to preserving national collective memory and supporting the process of building a comprehensive national identity, drawing from its diverse and authentic sources clearly manifested in prominent literary and creative forms.

Algerian Literature During Colonization and After Independence

During colonization, Algerian literature faced significant challenges, as the occupiers attempted to impose a narrative that obscured the true history of the Algerian people. Algerian writers, however, did not remain silent in the face of this cultural invasion; they used multiple literary tools to resist this oppression and revive collective memory. Through literary works, novels and poetry emerged as effective means to convey experiences of resistance and suffering, depicting daily struggles and painful memories under colonization, reinforcing historical truths rather than distorted official narratives. In this context, Ramadan Hamoud's romantic novel *The Boy* (1929) stands out. Hamoud was a leading figure in Algerian literature of the 1920s and later periods, with works, especially *The Boy*, remaining subjects of study and debate among critics. Muhammad Nasser described it as "a reformist story and a mirror of a young man striving to elevate his people and advance his nation."

Literature also served as a voice against assaults on national identity, using language and culture as a means of resistance to reinforce community cohesion, remaining present in collective memory despite attempts at erasure and marginalization. Such literature did not merely recount events but re-shaped history from a popular and human perspective, adhering to heritage and traditions and striving to preserve national dignity. The colonial dominance that lasted over a century sought to erase national character to control the country and impose its authority, attacking not only language but all means of fostering public cultural awareness. By the twentieth century, the world war influenced Algeria positively in terms of ideas, such as equality, since Algerians contributed to France and its allies' victory, and they were affected by revolutionary French parties, Near Eastern events, and democratic ideas expressed by President Wilson.

Thus, literature became a living record of suffering and heroism, a tool for documenting historical facts serving identity and collective memory, transforming stories from mere narratives

into inspiring experiences strengthening resistance and reconstructing the Algerian individual through recalling a past filled with heroism and sacrifices.

After independence, Algerian literature exhibited new orientations reflecting social and political transformations. Writers, freed from colonial constraints, depicted Algerian reality in diverse styles, expressing national selfhood, collective identity, and historical memory that enhanced belonging and attachment to national identity. Literature post-independence responded to the nation's tribulations, becoming a tool for reconstructing collective memory and re-examining history through new perspectives, reflecting struggle and independence. Many writers used literature to express communal experiences and open new avenues for creativity that affirmed national identity and promoted unity and cultural pride. Writers employed various literary methods, such as realism to depict daily life, symbolism to express deep emotions and ideas, and narrative as the main technique to transmit stories of struggle. Literature post-independence also became a platform for expressing national aspirations and re-reading the past in ways that reflect societal developments, playing a pivotal role in shaping collective identity through language and artistic techniques, revealing the depth of communal experience and establishing a living memory bridging past and present while instilling national values in new generations, particularly through works addressing struggles and major historical events, enhancing history's presence in public consciousness and redrawing identity with a contemporary vision.

The initial phase of post-independence Arabic novel writing saw sparse and delayed emergence. Algerian writers only began producing works in the late 1960s. Aida Adib Bamia notes: "The emergence of this literary genre was delayed until 1967, when *Voice of Love* by Muhammad Mani' appeared, belonging to the reformist current, reflecting intellectual and aesthetic views limited in understanding social development and contradictions, unable to add significantly to Algerian narrative heritage but rather revisiting the past."

Despite the simplicity of situations, events, and arguments, and limited factual awareness, *Voice of Love* contained genuine narrative awakening, notably in linguistic richness and the author's bold use of heritage and local colors of Algerian rural life, showing intimate knowledge of details, though control over the narrative space was weak, and the work added little intellectually. Nevertheless, it challenged prevailing perceptions of the Arabic novel in Algeria.

Reasons for the absence of Arabic novels during this period include the country emerging from devastation imposed by monopolistic French bourgeoisie, leaving a colonial legacy requiring reconstruction. Algeria had no independent economy, only a French-managed one. Cultural and artistic factors also contributed to the scarcity of novels; only one Arabic novel appeared after independence until 1967. Traditional education in Muslim schools did not equip writers for novel production, and there were no Algerian models to emulate, unlike French-language writers who had a rich French literary heritage. Printing and publishing difficulties compounded the issue.

By the 1970s, Algerian Arabic novels began their true emergence, coinciding with social and democratic changes and revolutionary achievements. The Arabic novel post-independence was thus the legitimate offspring of revolutionary transformations with all their contradictions. This is reflected in *What the Winds Do Not Scatter* by Muhammad Arar, then *The South Wind* by Abdelhamid Benhedouka, followed by two novels by Latif Watar, *The Earthquake* and *The Laz*.

The serious emergence of the novel was associated with *The South Wind* during a period of political discussion on the agrarian revolution. Completed on November 5, 1970, it aligned with political discourse promising broad hope to lift rural communities from isolation, alleviate peasant suffering, and curb exploitation. Collective memory played a central role in forming cultural and literary awareness in Algeria, manifested in recalling historical events, documenting shared experiences, and shaping national identity. Elements of collective memory and literature worked together to rebuild history through storytelling, revive popular memory, and embody Algeria's cultural diversity. Literature expresses collective pain and hope, reflecting struggle, suffering, and victories forming the nation's collective memory. Historical symbolism and the use of language to revive pivotal moments consolidate values and traditions. Folk literature, especially poetry and tales, transmits collective memory across generations, transcending time constraints. Modern literature addresses resistance, colonization, and identity, using diverse narrative forms to enhance belonging and collective consciousness, reinforcing social cohesion, and rediscovering self in historical and cultural contexts of struggle. Literary and historical figures strengthen collective memory by celebrating heroism and constructing a unified view of historical events, solidifying shared memory and stimulating ongoing collective awareness of national history. Ultimately, collective memory interacts with cultural and literary dimensions, providing a vibrant framework for re-reading history and enhancing literature's role in preserving national identity and transmitting collective experience to future generations.

The Importance of Collective Memory in Literature

Collective memory plays a vital role in shaping Algerian literature, serving as a reflective mirror of historical influences and national identity. It encompasses experiences, events, and values shared by members of a society, forming its identity and common history. It is not merely an individual record of events but a social structure transmitted across generations, reshaped, and reinterpreted according to cultural and political contexts. Collective memory links the present and past, contributing to a unified conception of history, especially during periods of conflict, struggle, and resistance. In Algerian literature, its significance appears in the use of literary texts to convey collective stories and experiences, reconstructing national identity by recalling shared historical events, especially those ignored or denied by dominant forces. Literature demonstrates the function of collective memory in preserving historical heritage, enabling communities to express suffering and latent capacities while ensuring intergenerational transmission of meanings and events in culturally and socially appropriate ways. Understanding collective memory is essential to comprehend how Algerian literature re-reads history, contributing to a renewed vision of national identity through reconstructing historical scenes using varied artistic techniques, highlighting literature as an integral part of Algeria's memory and historical process. Collective memory serves as the primary source of literary material, shaping narrative, story, and poetry, expressing communal experiences and shared memory. By recalling historical events and facts, Algerian literature revives critical phases of national struggle, allowing generations to revisit and symbolically or directly embody them. Collective memory unites the people, shaping collective awareness reflecting the struggle for liberation and defining communal identity against erasure and distortion attempts. Its importance lies in reconstructing history, especially post-colonial periods, when literature corrects official narratives and provides

alternative perspectives consistent with people's experiences. Drawing literature from collective memory is an effective means to connect with and enhance the past, creating narrative forms that sensorially and artistically simulate history, closely aligning with public sentiments and realities. Literature thus becomes an active tool in preserving collective memory, affirming the people's right to narrate history freely and truthfully, reimagining events to highlight past generations' suffering and sacrifices, emphasizing the symbolic national identity formed across multiple eras. In conclusion, Algerian literature, through its close link with collective memory, expresses communal desire to preserve and rediscover historical heritage, contributing to building a national identity that transcends forgotten voices and the fragile fabric of collective memory, opening it to the present and future.

Literature as a Means to Re-Read History

Algerian literature plays a central role in reshaping the concept of history and collective memory by embodying events and transforming them into literary symbols with deep meanings that reclaim past identities and reinterpret them with new perspectives. Literature serves as an effective means of documenting historical milestones, particularly those that were attempted to be forgotten or marginalized, as narrative prose and poetic scenes offer diverse visions of different periods in Algerian history, from resistance to occupation, through independence and beyond. Literature provides the youth and new generations with the opportunity to explore their historical heritage by portraying characters and events in a way that touches the conscience and revives collective memory in a renewed manner, while also highlighting the challenges and setbacks experienced by Algerian society. Through these literary means, writers can prompt readers to reconsider previously recorded history and contribute to building an enlightened national identity rooted in its past and capable of embracing the diversity of its experiences. Additionally, literature contributes to enhancing cultural awareness and guiding discussions about identity and resistance by portraying national issues through multiple artistic styles, ranging from realism to symbolism and narrative storytelling. This reflects the ability of literature to be an honest mirror of society, engaging with its events and reshaping them in a way that allows for a rereading of history that elevates the collective memory, providing new generations with intellectual and artistic tools to understand their past and reconstruct it in a way that serves their national unity and future aspirations.

Among its forms, historical novels represent one of the most prominent literary types aimed at recovering major events and analyzing them through narrative storytelling that serves the historical treatment of facts. These forms rely on reimagining characters and events in a way that blends reality with imagination, aiming to bring history to life and provide a deeper understanding of the relevant period. In Algerian literature, historical novels have become an effective means to correct prevailing perceptions of stages of struggle and colonization, where facts intertwine with individual and communal experiences, enhancing shared awareness and rebuilding collective memory. This literary type is characterized by narrating events through imagined or real characters, with precise representation of places and times, focusing on details that highlight the resistance of the Algerian people and their cultural identity in facing crises. Historical novels also employ various expressive techniques, such as symbolism and realism, to create a balance between political reality and national symbolism, contributing to consolidating national

values and principles within collective consciousness. By relying on strong narrative language, historical novels explore the experiences of ancestors in ways that engage the senses and emotions, strengthening collective memory ties and rereading history by integrating historical facts with the human stories carried by oral and written history. Ultimately, historical novels serve as an effective means to redefine historical concepts, rebuild national identity, and deepen the understanding of new generations regarding Algerian history through texts that combine artistic narrative with historical analysis to create a comprehensive picture of the past, interacting meaningfully with the present and future.

Poetry and Resistance

Algerian poetry plays a prominent role in deepening resistant awareness and promoting the spirit of struggle throughout history, as poetry was used to highlight the suffering of the people and expose injustice and colonization. Poets evoked images of resistance in their works, using the power of words to uplift morale and reinforce national identity. Among the most notable poets expressing the spirit of resistance is Mufdi Zakaria, who embodied the voice of the people in their struggle against French colonization, awakening national spirit and hope. Their poems relied on high symbolism, portraying freedom and the homeland as sacred goals, and employing rhetorical images that inspire resistance and steadfastness. Poetry remained a crucial means of reviving collective memory, as poets competed to embody the memories of struggle and anchor them in major historical events, helping to document stories of resistance and affirm the people's stance against colonization. Furthermore, Algerian poetry addressed social and political issues, presenting diverse content that reflects the aspirations of different generations, using literary techniques that enhance the power of words and employ national symbols. The poems served as literary and historical documents, conveying the experiences of heroes and connecting the past with the present, contributing to a rereading of history beyond official narratives and giving voice to the people in shaping their identity and asserting ongoing resistance. Ultimately, Algerian poetry remains an active marker in resisting oblivion, a literary weapon with a lasting impact in reshaping collective memory and affirming the value of resistance in the national consciousness.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the importance of reading Algerian literature lies in its role as a living mirror reflecting the depth of collective memory and society's aspirations for continuity. Rereading history through literary texts is not merely a process of recalling events but a revitalization of collective memory, enabling new generations to understand the deeper dimensions of Algeria's historical stages. Literature proves to be an effective tool for preserving collective memory, as it expresses the experiences of the people and reinforces their sense of identity and belonging through the depiction of resistance, sacrifices, and shared memories. The use of diverse literary techniques, such as symbolism, realism, and narrative storytelling, deepens the narrative dimension and allows the audience to explore the deeper aspects of historical and social reality. Literary characters and their stances mirror real-life heroes, linking the past and present, enhancing individual awareness of the importance of recalling and appreciating history. Literary works play a central role in solidifying national identity and embodying cultural heritage in the

face of contemporary challenges, as threats of oblivion and distortion confront historical memory, necessitating continuous review of literary heritage to preserve the components of collective memory. Ultimately, this perspective highlights the necessity of integrating literature with elements of culture, arts, and modern media to serve as a living voice expressing the aspirations of the people, promoting historical awareness, correcting misconceptions, and reinforcing national identity. Literature can thus serve as a bridge between past and future, reconstructing history with a new vision and from a creative platform enriched with wisdom and suffering, enhancing the presence of collective memory and upholding the values of the nation and its cultural reality.

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