

The Algerian Literature (Elite Novel / Folk Poetry) and the Post-Colonial Discourse: Witnessing to an Intellectual Liberation

Hemza BOUDERSA

Higher College for Teacher Training, Constantine, Algeria

Abstract

The shift of African literature from oral performances and traditions to written texts was a result of the colonial discourse. Therefore, African literature can be divided into a pre-colonial literature dominated mainly by folk poetry recited by the masses and post-colonial fiction adopted greatly by the elite. Written literature refreshes its themes with borrowed oral traditions drawn from people's lives and folk songs relevant to a history peppered by a story-telling traits, riddles, and proverbs. Accordingly, the following question is raised: in what ways does the Algerian novel provide a critical approach towards a 'genuine' intellectual decolonization? Using the history of the Algerian literature as a reference, it is noteworthy assuming the following hypothesis: the Algerian novel contributes to a far extent in the liberation of the Algerian mind. Through using a content analysis and research synthesis approaches, this study highlights whether the Algerian novel can contribute fully in the intellectual freedom of the Algerian elite. Initial findings of this paper showed that witnessing to a 'Différend' tackled by Jean-François Lyotard and referred to by Abd el Kader Aoudjit's book the Algerian Novel and the Colonial Discourse provides a new reading towards the matter. This analysis advocated before by Mouloud Feraoun and Kateb Yacine, who claimed for 'name, land and differentiation'. Thus, the pertinent recommendation drawn from this study is that 'being different' from the colonizer means a step forward to 'being intellectually liberated.'

Keywords: Algerian Literature, Elite Novel, Folk Poetry, Intellectual Liberation, Post-Colonial Discourse