

THE JOYCE-KATEB LITERARY CONNECTION AND ELIOT'S MYTHIC METHOD



Literature

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Abstract

This research seeks to read James Joyce's *Ulysses* through Algerian eyes, with focus on its comparison with Yacine Kateb's *Nedjma* (1956). Taking its theoretical bearings from postcolonial historicism and dialogism, it makes the case that reading Joyce's *Ulysses* from the comparative perspective of the Algerian francophone writer's *Nedjma* helps shed light on the manner the Irish author deploys Irish vernacular culture, most particularly carnival or folklore, to undermine the presumably "mythic method" associated with his name since Eliot has employed this famous catchy phrase in 1923.

Introduction

'Il n'y a plus alors d'Orient ni d'Occident,' écrivait Kateb Yacine. '*Le polygone étoilé* reprend ses droits. Et si les rues de Dublin ont des échos à Alger, c'est que l'artiste créateur n'habite pas, il est habité par un certain vertige étoilé, d'autant plus étoilé qu'on est parti du plus obscure de sa ruelle' (p. IV). [*There is, therefore, neither an Orient nor an Occident,*' wrote Kateb Yacine. '*The starred polygon takes back its rights. And if the streets of Dublin have found an echo in those of Algiers, it is because the artist does not inhabit his work, but is himself inhabited by some starred vertigo, and what is more the work has its beginnings in its most obscure street*' p. IV.] (Trans. mine).

The above citation included in Giles Carpentier's preface (1997: IV) to Yacine Kateb's *Le polygone étoilé* does not refer explicitly to Joyce, but the reader can easily guess that the reference to "Dublin streets" finding an "echo in Algiers" surely alludes to Joyce's writings. I would even claim that Kateb is speaking as much about his work as that of Joyce in his description of his novel as a "starred vertigo" with its start in the "most obscure street" of the Kasbah, a popular neighborhood, in the city of Algiers. The belief in being inhabited by a genie is an Algerian belief.

Indeed, in Algerian popular culture, we often refer to someone who is madly inspired as a "maskun," that is a person inhabited by a genie, but in this case it seems that the creative genie that has inspired the writing of Kateb's work is that of the Irish author of *Ulysses*, *The Dubliners* and *A portrait of the artist as a young man* subtly alluded to but not named. It has also to be observed that *Le polygone étoilé* is constituted of the parts that Kateb has taken out of the original version of his novel *Nedjma*, in response to the suggestion of Le Seuil's editor to slim down its bulk, which was initially as huge as *Ulysses*.

Literature Review, Issue and Approach: A Focus on Eliot's Mythic Method

In Algerian critical literature, we often find Kateb's *Nedjma* (1956) compared with Faulkner's *The sound and the fury*, for the simple reason that the Algerian writer often cites Faulkner whom he favors over Camus because of the much more positive attitude that the American author observes in his dealing with the downtrodden or the "wretched of the earth" in his works. One of the most recent comparisons of Kateb on the one hand and Faulkner and Camus on the other that I can refer to in this regard is Riche and Zerar's "Kateb Yacine, Albert Camus, and William Faulkner: Dialogue and hidden polemics" (2017). The most salient characteristics of all the critical literature about the Kateb-Faulkner literary connection is the emphasis put on tragic myth in Faulkner's and Kateb's novels, most notably *The sound and the fury* and *Nedjma*. In what follows, I shall shift the direction of this Algerian comparative poetics by focusing instead on the way Kateb's reading of Joyce can help shed new insights on the manner Joyce taps Irish popular culture or folklore in *Ulysses*. I would argue that in tapping the vernacular popular culture of the colonized Algerians and Irish, both authors are highly motivated by an attempt to avoid critical misappropriation of the elitist, mythic type developed by Eliot (1970). Furthermore, I shall make the case that as postcolonial authors, they are much more interested in history, carnival as well as the contemporary quotidian life of their own people than in literary myth and mythologizing. Accordingly, this research borrows its major critical paradigms from the historicist, dialogic approach developed by Bakhtin (1999 a; 1992b; 1984c), with a supplement from postcolonial theory elaborated by Fanon (1968).

Since research issues on *Ulysses* and *Nedjma* are mostly circumscribed by the initial critical reception at the time of their publication, this review of literature focuses on the one of the first critics who has set the overall tone of research on *Ulysses* with his catchy phrase "The mythic method". The phrase, "the mythic method" has become a household statement in critical circles ever since Eliot (1923) has employed it to account for Joyce's use of Homer's Greek literary myth *Ulysses* or *The odyssey* (2003) as a structural prop for his novel. Joyce's novel, as the reader, who has the opportunity to lay her/his hand on the original version, can easily note, consists of three parts subdivided according to named major episodes of Homer's *The odyssey*. The first part comprises three chapters, suggesting Homer's episodes in this order: Chapter 1, Telemachus, Chapter 2, Nestor, and Chapter 3, Proteus. The second part composes 6 chapters also with Homeric allusions: Calypso (4), Lotus Eaters (5), Hades (6), Aeolus (7), Lestrygonians (8), Scylla ad Charybdis (9), Wandering Rocks (10), Sirens (11), Cyclops (12), Nausicaa (13), Oxen of the Sun (14), Circe (15). As for part III, like part I, it is made up of three chapters with the Homeric props that follows: Eumaeus (16), Ithaca (17), and Penelope (18). It is this Homeric mythos that has made Eliot qualify Joyce's narrative method as a mythic method. Since then, a huge number of critics have relentlessly continued to explore this so-called mythic method in modernist fiction by following Eliot's lead.

What does Eliot's method say on the whole? In his "Ulysses, order and myth" originally published in 1923, Eliot starts with pointing out the controversy that Joyce's book has triggered in the critical circles by reporting first the mixed reception it is accorded before swerving very swiftly to the supreme novelty of Joyce's novel in the world of modernist fiction. His critique has had the immediate effect of setting the tone of further critiques, as Eliot takes a firm stand for Joyce's literary experiment by saying it loud and clear that the novelty of Joyce's novel is there to stay, and can by no means be overlooked by other modernist authors in the future. In Eliot's critical point of view, *Ulysses* is an asset to be added to the credit side of modernist literature, thus summarily silencing those critics who dare to tread other critical paths than those dictated by his mythic method. To sustain his critical appraisal, Eliot cites book reviews such as Valéry Larbaud's "James Joyce" included in *Nouvelle Revue Française* (1922, April), and an anonymous preface to "Gens du Dublin" (1926) as well as a critique by Deming. In Eliot's words, these book reviewers and critics rightly "appreciate the significance of the method employed – the parallel to *The Odyssey*, and the use of appropriate styles and symbols to each division" (p. 80). This mythic method is praised by Eliot as a structural innovation that fits in with its times, and which is wrongly or unjustly overlooked or glossed over by such critics as Aldington. He goes on to add that it is this critical oversight that has led the latter to dismiss Joyce as a "prophet of chaos," and his book as both an "invitation to chaos," and an expression of feelings which are perverse, partial and a distortion of reality" (p. 80). Though Eliot avowed that he shares the same goal with Aldington as far as the classicist, or neo-classicist orientation of modernist literature is concerned, he puts a caveat on this anti-romantic convergence with Aldington by observing that they strikingly differ in their idea about how modernist artists should tap the classical tradition. Eliot particularly lays emphasis on the fact that in deploying his mythic method, Joyce has departed from the role that the romantics assigned to literature and poetry, most particularly that of "legislator or exhorter". For Eliot, Joyce has no such romantic ambitions, for he keeps a low profile by looking at himself simply as an artist or writer interested solely in his art or aestheticism, and not in the sociological or political functions of literature.

In the second part of his short essay, Eliot draws parallels between the so-called mythic method invented by Joyce and the major scientific discoveries of the day. In his eyes, the comparison is an apt one because overall literary modernism is the effect of the various scientific discoveries of the time, ranging from Darwin's anthropological theory of the descent of men, Einstein's relativity, to Bergson's theories of time, and to Freud's psychoanalytic theory. The implication of the comparison that Eliot sets between the new scientific theories and Joyce's mythic method is that no artist can overlook it, or just put it aside without running the risk of being out of tune with one's times. When it comes to how Joyce's book has to be qualified, Eliot shows great hesitation in his terminology, employing alternatively the terms "epic" and "novel," before definitively settling for the term "epic" saying that the genre of the novel has outlived its usefulness. According to him, the generic form of the novel "ended with Flaubert and James."

Eliot clinched this argument by making the claim that Joyce's *A portrait of the artist as a young man* is the single shot that Joyce has made at writing a novel. In his capacity as a poet-critic, Eliot thus sees in *Ulysses* a revolutionary departure from or abjuration of the "obsolescent" genre of the novel for the renewal of the genre of the epic, which speaks much more to his own sensibility as a modernist poet. This issue of whether the novel has really become an obsolescent genre is problematic, and will be more fully discussed below.

The third and final argument that Eliot develops about the relevance of the astonishing literary feat that Joyce has performed in *Ulysses* pertains to its function. He first puts stress on the fact that Joyce has made a discovery, which other he urges contemporary fellow writers to pursue. After this suggestion that the artistic innovation of the mythic method made by Joyce would not wear off, he follows up this critical appraisal by assuaging the fears of potential modernist authors by claiming that in abiding by Joyce's mythic method, they should not be afraid of being rejected as Joyce's imitators. Eliot takes the typical case of the scientists or physicists who have deployed Einstein's theory of relativity as a perfect illustration of his argument. He further elaborates his idea, insisting that Joyce's mythic method sets both a theoretical and practical model for "controlling, or ordering, of giving a shape a significance to the immense panorama and anarchy which is contemporary history" (p.83). Eliot sees in his contemporary poet Yeats a precedent for Joyce's mythic method that he reads in counterpoint to what he calls the narrative method. He sustained that the mythic method is the one step that has to be taken by the artists to "make the modern world possible for art" (p.83). For him only daring artists, that is to say artists not scared of treading the path blazed by Joyce are likely to make a contribution toward the advance of modernist literature in an increasingly complex modern world.

***Nedjma* and *Ulysses*: Results and Discussion**

Eliot's critique of Joyce's *Ulysses* has contributed to make it a worldwide literary success, and as it is shown in the citation in the introduction to this research authors such as Kateb associates Dublin and Ireland with the name of Joyce. What is remarkable in terms of literary criticism is that if Eliot's theory of the mythic method has brought Joyce worldwide fame, it has concomitantly and permanently impacted criticism on modernist fiction in its emphasis on the thematic and structural functions of myth in its literary version. And yet as this research will hopefully demonstrate Eliot's mythic method, whether applied to Joyce's *Ulysses* or Kateb's *Nedjma*, can be criticized on several grounds. For one thing, the novel is not at all the obsolescent genre that Eliot would like to believe, since a huge number of authors have continued to write novels and wish to be referred to as novelists since Eliot has declared the death of the author as novelist. To paraphrase Bakhtin (1992b), the art of novel writing is an unfinished art, and as such I would contend that it has survived even Joyce's and Kateb's fresh attempts to make it new. Secondly, I would argue that Eliot's mis/reading of Joyce's novel is a blatant tentative recuperation of fiction to high modernism, marked by an elitist and conservative slant. His comparison of Joyce with Einstein corroborates this elitist and conservative attitude that he adopts toward Joyce's *Ulysses*.

Artistic innovations, for Eliot, just as for Ezra Pound for that matter, concern a separate class of authors, and are presumably intended solely for an elite audience, the one literary sect capable in his eyes of appreciating the highly complex allusive texture of modernist literature.

The same categorization is used with Kateb's *Nedjma*, the complexity of which has made a huge number critics look at it as an artistic product aimed principally at those who are supposed to be the holders of a refined culture, a culture with a capital "C", that is to say "the best thought and written" in Arnold's words. In their views, these readers alone are considered as having the real knack for digging into and excavating its esoteric knowledge that informs and shapes modernist fiction. A short shrift is thus given to the vernacular, popular culture in which Joyce and Kateb have steeped their novels, and concomitantly to the capacity of the common reader to tune in to the rhythm of this integrated vernacular culture. Contra Eliot, I would say that Kateb and Joyce wrote their respective novels with popular culture and popular audience in mind, in line with Bakhtin's claim that the genre of the novel is principally inspired by the spirit of folk or popular culture (1999a). It is this popular culture not the "culture savante" or learned culture as conveyed by the sole literary myth that should take precedence in reading Kateb's *Nedjma* and Joyce's *Ulysses*.

In searching for innovation in artistic form, postcolonial authors have found in the novel an adequate form to reach their end, for as Bakhtin (1999a) put it, the novel arose from the popular spirit of folk culture, and the popular spirit no matter the differences between people around the world remains more or less the same. Moreover, as an unfinished art form, novelists are free to give to this genre a shape that fits in with their own popular form of culture and the concerns it expresses. Reading Joyce through Kateb yields a different picture from the one that Eliot gives us, for the simple reason that like Joyce, Kateb uses the authority of popular culture, more notably the legend of the migration and the settlement of the Keblouti tribe in the Nadhor, in the eastern part of Algeria not in order to sidestep history as Eliot does in his critique but to reinforce it. I would sustain that both authors resort to folklore or popular myths not in order to stabilize or shore up the fragments of their own contemporary world against the disorder and panorama of the futility of modern life as Eliot would have for literary myth. Nor do they resort to popular myth to invest themselves with a derived authority as some critics would believe. On the contrary, I would claim that folklore or popular culture in *Nedjma* and *Ulysses* is invited to the salons of modern literary myth not simply as a provocation but also as a means for debunking or debasing literary myth (which Barthes (1992) equates with ideology) and diminishing its authoritative hold on their respective author's historical consciousness. The reader has only to imagine a literary salon where all the guests are well dressed to realize the effect that the introduction of carnival or folklore can have on the holders of the older ideologies or literary mythologies like those of Eliot.

To keep it short and sweet, I would contend that those critics who still follow Eliot's lead by persisting in their analysis of how Joyce employs the mythic method to escape the seamy side of the modern world consciously or unconsciously overlook the historical and carnivalistic

dimension of *Ulysses*.

My reading of Joyce's novel through Kateb's *Nedjma* helps avoid falling into this critical pitfall. Such a cross-cultural reading also helps to shed light on the fact that if Joyce has deployed the classic literary myth of Homer's *The odyssey*, it is in order to debunk and deflate it by folklore or carnival. For example, the mythic ancestry of the six young characters of *Nedjma* is not at all glorified or celebrated for their heroism of whatever shade. What is put forward instead is the betrayal of these ancestors, their incapacity to be held up as models of fatherhood and paternity. It is not the forefathers or ancestors who appear in epic grandeur but their progeny who have engaged in the quest for Nedjma, a quest not devoid of the usual fare of adventure peculiar to romances of unrequited or impossible love. The case in Kateb, just as for Joyce, is to bring back myth to history as lived by the often dispersed and reunited characters, each one of them trying to have the love of Nedjma, the title feminine character, whose name means "star" in Arabic. Even the mythical figure of Nedjma around which the mythic structure is built does not solely belong to literary myth, for as Kateb himself avowed in all his public pronouncements, she represents the historical figure of a married cousin, with whom he fell in love during his childhood. In other words, Nedjma is not the sole creation of an author's mind wanting to create his own female mythical or romance figure out of scratch like Beatrice in Dante's *Divine comedy* or Juliette in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliette*, for "Nedjma" is also the name of his cousin, that is to say the flame of Kateb the writer during his childhood. According to the endogamous rules of marriage in North Africa, and particularly in Algeria, Nedjma is normally destined to be his wife, but as all star-crossed lovers in romance, he lost her for another man during one of the most tragic circumstances of colonial Algeria.

May 8, 1945 to this day is remembered and celebrated in Algeria as the day marking the end of World War II and the victory of the Allies over Nazism. However, in Algerian history and memory, this date is commemorated as the day when thousands of Algerian demonstrators who had taken to the streets were gruesomely massacred by the French military for having dared to reminded colonial France to keep its promises by giving independence to the country in return for the loyal services that they had provided during the war against fascism. It is during this tragic and traumatic day that Kateb's love for Nedjma, his cousin, took a fateful turn. Kateb participated in the demonstration, for which action he landed in prison and was summarily expelled from high school. This dramatically cut short his short and sweet vision of a happy marriage with his cousin, for by the time of his release from internment, Nedjma had already married another man and his mother had become mad. This loss of the desired or love objects caused him a nervous breakdown, a nervous condition that led him to metamorphose Nedjma into his muse.

Moreover, Nedjma, the Arabic word for "Star," besides being the heroine of a fiction stands for the political movement known as L'Etoile Nord Africaine (ENA), the North African Star, founded in France in 1926, by a group of Algerian immigrants in France, mostly in defense of Algerian independence. Among its leaders, we can mention Messali El-Hadj, Salah Bouchafa, Amar Imache, and Hadj Abdelkader. The ENA also advocated the immediate annulment of what

is known in the history of French Algeria (1830-1962) as the discriminatory, repressive *Code de l'indigénat*, the release of all political prisoners, locked up or exiled for political activities, as well as the freedom of the press, syndicalism, the freedom of association, and most importantly, as I already said above, the emancipation from the yoke of colonialism. So as both a political symbol and an existing human being, Nedjma the muse and the beloved in Kateb's novel is not just an unsubstantial, ephemeral mythic figure. Her historical and existential substantiality undermines literary myth and steeps the novel in history of the country and the life and times of Kateb, whose name means "writer" in Arabic language. Myth for Barthes is depoliticized speech, a speech or discourse that is naturalized so as to be left unquestioned. But this is far from being the case in *Nedjma* because the quest for the heroine is not devoid of political motivations, one of them consisting of catching hold of Nedjma, the ever-fleeing feminine erotic figure, which as both a symbol of colonized Algeria and Kateb's lost cousin, has become an impossible object of "mimetic desire" (Girard, 1992, pp. 145-58) for the six rebelling young Algerian characters, who live and act like "bandits of honor" in the colonial context of French Algeria.

Kateb's fragmented narration of the erotic quest for the lost country and woman enables the author to transform his text into a symposium, that is to say a banquet, as each of the characters vies for the definition, defense and realization of their erotic desire for the heroine. In this regard, Kateb's *Nedjma* reminds us of the Platonic or Socratic dialogue of the same name in its questioning of the place of Eros in the city. It has also to be noted that for Bakhtin the Socratic dialogue is that popular, folkloric genre at whose source alongside Menippea he locates the origin of the novel. By comparison with the six young characters, all in love with Nedjma, their biological fathers look very petty. It is in the laughter directed against the decadent old generation of Algerians for having betrayed the country to the French by their lack of character, their indulgence in debauchery, and settling of old scores at the expense of the home country that the novel wears its mock-epic garb.

The same interweaving of symposium and menippea can be noted in Joyce's *Ulysses*. The quotidian wanderings of Leopold Bloom in the streets of Dublin find an echo in Kateb's heroes' wanderings in the streets of the colonial Algerian cities of Bone (present-day Annaba) and Constantine in flight from French colonial authorities, and also in the erotic quest for Nedjma the lost mother country and cousin. In the compressed juxtaposition of the one-day wanderings of Leopold Bloom in colonial Dublin with the 10 years of wanderings of Odysseus or Ulysses during his *nostos* or return home (Ithaca) and his Penelope, Eliot would like us to see the pettiness of a modern hero or anti-hero, who in comparison and contrast with Odysseus the Sacker of Cities reflects the poor image of the modern man. It is this too obvious poor figure that Leopold cuts by contrast with Homeric heroes such as Ulysses that has made Eliot think that in *Ulysses* history is purposefully put under brackets to the advantage of literary myth. For Eliot, this unfavorable comparison of the present condition of man with his peers during classical age shows Joyce's rejection of history in favor of literary mythology. Eliot does not see the other side of the coin, where Leopold in the Menippean, or carnivalistic, mock-epic spirit is employed to uncrown by comparison and contrast the Homeric hero, best represented by Ulysses or Odysseus.

I would make the case that Eliot's reading might have been intended to serve his artistic project of creating a modern literature for the elite to comfort his position as a conservative poet, but for Joyce the artistic project consists principally in bringing back the novel to its origins in the folk spirit and carnival. The literary and mythic scaffolding out of which Eliot has built his whole theory (the mythic method) is just a thin veneer a disguise that Joyce the colonial exile has arguably put on his title character to circulate and facilitate the reception of his novel without betraying the objective of laughing at the classics of literature like *The odyssey* in the form of parody. Parody in the words of Bakhtin is linked to laughter, laughter at the glorification and exaggerated heroism of epic heroes in the field of literature best represented by renaissance or neo-classical novels such as Cervantes' *The ingenious gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha* or Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (Bakhtin, 1984 c).

This carnivalesque laughter or parody is of course double-edged, for by setting side by side the Achaean or Greek world consisting of cities and Dublin, Joyce subverts the glorified image of Ireland and its capital, Dublin, circulated by the Celtic revivalists. It has to be observed that the usable past created by the writers who participated in this Celtic revivalist movement is made as glorious as the golden age of the Greeks. What Joyce reproaches for the Irish revivalists is that escape from the paltry condition of colonial Ireland in the present to a glorious past that never was. Seen from this subversive side, the laughter is also leveled at the foreign oppressors, i.e., the Britons who thought that they have created a "New England in Ireland," as Kiberd has put it. In British mythology, Britain is an extension of the Romanized Greek Civilization, founded by Brutus, a descent of Priam's son Aeneas, who had founded Rome in the aftermath of the sacking of the city of Troy. This literary myth is circulated in a subtle manner by Shakespeare in the *Tempest* and *Cymbeline*. It is in the context of the idea of a grossly glorified Britain including "John Bull's Other Island" (Ireland) that gives another subversive dimension to the foibles of the quotidian wanderings of a Leopold Bloom.

For Joyce, the mere escape to a glorified and rosy past is not a secure way to ensure a revival that could be done only by a return to history in its daily making. To laugh at the Irish pretention to a glorious past, I can mention these words put in Buck Mulligan's mouth to mock Yeats' praises for the one muse of the Irish revivalist movement Lady Gregory: "The most beautiful book that has come out of our country in my time," Mulligan enthusiastically intones at one of her exchanges with another character. She follows up this statement with the comment: "One thinks of Homer" (p.178). It is in this manner that Joyce sarcastically undermines the cult of memory of a glorious Irish past which was propagated by the proponents of the Celtic Revival at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. As I have already contended above with reference to Kateb, the epic heroes of the past are not necessarily better or superior than the supposedly fragmented reality of the present like that of Leopold Bloom. The laughter in the case of Buck Mulligan comes at his own expense and all those, who in their blind celebration of a glorious Irish past overlook the impoverished state to which colonial Ireland was reduced by the double empire of colonial Britain and the Catholic Church.

To develop further the above idea, I shall use the first chapter of Joyce's book "Telemachus" for illustration. This chapter which in the original version of *Ulysses* was named after the title hero's son covers the quest of Telemachus for his father who does not make it home on time after the war because of his offense to the god of the oceans, Poseidon. Without telling his mother, Telemachus embarks on a boat in the direction of two cities whose two leaders have already returned from the battle field in Troy: Pylos and Lacedaemon under respectively the rule of Nestor and Menelaus, Agamemnon's brother. Telemachus in *Ulysses* might well stand for Stephen Dedalus who symbolically at least has no father worth that name, but the issue that retains my attention in this chapter is the question of colonial anthropology or ethnography that has come to shape modern literature. Eliot (1970) in support of his reliance of anthropology has this to say in favor of using its findings, particularly myths and rituals in modern literature and poetry: "Psychology (such as it is, and whether our reaction to it be comic or serious), ethnology and *The golden bough* have concurred to make possible what was impossible even a few years ago" p. 271. This pronouncement is made in the context of his promotion of the mythic method employed by Joyce but with a wink to his own poetry, which heavily borrows from the myths and rituals described by Frazer in *The golden bough*. Joyce has made a short work of such claims for colonial ethnography or the ethnography concerned with what was then called "primitive societies" is concerned, Joyce by bring onto the stage a colonial ethnographer under the name of Haines in the Telemachus chapter. Looking for informants about Irish traditions and customs, Haines falls in with Mulligan and Stephen Dedalus.

I have already mentioned Mulligan's mocking enchantment with Lady Gregory's writings about the Celtic traditions. Her writings remind us of Homer, she says about one of the later's works. But in the ethnographic encounter of the first chapter he comes directly in contact with an English ethnographer whose name is Haines, who has crossed the Irish Sea to study or rather to collect the fragments of Irish culture for preservation. Much more importantly, Mulligan is not alone but in the company of Stephen Dedalus, a more or less highly cultivated person, who impresses Haines with his witticisms. From the outset, Stephen Dedalus is aware of Haines's colonialist attitude in the very practice of ethnography, so he does not hesitate to criticize it openly by qualifying his activity as complicit with colonialism, and as a betrayal or selling out on the part of informants such as Mulligan, who is all too ready to provide information about his culture in exchange for what Joyce in one of his articles calls a "mess of pottage".

In this encounter, Mulligan plays a double game. On the one hand, she is full of praise for Haines who as a civilized ethnographer shows interest in collecting the folklore of a declining culture like that of the Irish. On the other hand, she tries to make Stephen an accomplice in trading out a bogus folklore to Haines. This is what she urges Stephen to say to Haines the next time he meets him to trick him out of his money:

Cracked looking glass of a servant. Tell that to the oxy chap downstairs and touch him for a guinea. He's stinking with money and thinks you're not a gentleman. His old fellow made his tin

by selling jalap to Zulus or some bloody swindle or other. God, Kinch, if you and we could work together we might do something for the Island to Helenize it. (p.7)

Before coming back to the ironical thrust at the Irish revivalist movement, I would like to invoke Ellison's *Invisible Man* (2014) as a typical illustration of the debunking of the so-called science of colonial ethnography. In one of the famous episodes of this novel, a peasant by the name of Trueblood comes to have an incestuous relationship with his daughter during one of the coldest winters in the South. For lack of space in his shack and lack of money to buy firewood to heat their shack, father, mother and daughter sleep together in the same bed. One of these nights, whilst Trueblood thinks that he is just dreaming a dream love, he commits the unredeemable sin of incest with his daughter. His love making ends with the pregnancy of the daughter. This sin that confirms the white man's sexual prejudice about the black man's sexuality puts father and wife apart for a quite long time. The father just takes to the fields singing the Blues all day long and the mother outraged by what the father has done just stays in the home brooding on how to revenge the offence. It happens that one day, on his coming back from the Blues sessions in the fields, she takes to her mind to chop him with an axe, but he manages to pierce her intentions just in time to ward off her death blow and to take flight to the fields, where he continues to sing the Blues until his wife comes to realize that what is done cannot be undone.

With time the skeleton in the family cupboard has become too obvious to be kept a secret. Eventually, the Trueblood family whose house lies in a segregated black community close to a college for Negroes supported by white philanthropists from the North turns into an attraction for the white big shots who come to visit the college. Naturally, for a short time span, Trueblood has shame to relate his incest story. "They'll say that all Negroes do such things," he keeps ruminating (p. 53). However, Trueblood the sharecropper, who has been denied access to the college situated just next door to his shack, realizes that he can make a profit by recounting his story to his highly, white prejudiced visitors craving for incest stories of sin-adoring "darkies" like him. So as the narrator goes on to recount, "he talked willingly now, with a kind of satisfaction and no trace of shame (p.53). Though devoid of book learning, Trueblood has not failed to garner some knowledge of marketing a highly demanded commodity to white consumers, which in a way resembles the Blues or the Spirituals that he sings. One of the big white shots to come to listen to Trueblood's incestuous stories is the biggest philanthropic donor to the Black College, Mr. Norton, driven over to the home of the sharecropper-storyteller by *Invisible Man*. The stories in Joyce's book and Ellison's might sound different, but Buck Milligan, just like Trueblood, realizes that folkloric commodities, especially if they are salacious and distorted to suit the white Western audience could be cashed on. The difference is that unlike Ellison, Joyce is too critical with Buck Milligan, who shows herself up as an amoral merchant of folklore, forging pieces of folklore to sell to a colonial ethnographer.

What Mulligan intends to do is to turn Stephen Dedalus into her accomplice by urging him to trade off his store of mordant witticisms as folklore. Stephen Dedalus's refusal to transform his knowledge into a saleable commodity speaks of his critical attitude toward colonial ethnography,

and the Irish cultural revival that seems to lean heavily on it to establish its authenticity. Mulligan's final argument to persuade Stephen Dedalus to sell out himself to Haines, the British ethnographer reads as follows: "God, Kinch, if you and we could work together we might do something for the Island to Hellenize it." Such a state of mind indicates how far the Irish/Celtic revivalists are ready to go to counterfeit or forge the authenticity of their own culture in order to establish parallels with Greek Civilization. Joyce is strikingly different from Eliot as regards the place of ethnography in literature. In his refusal to give in even to the argument to Hellenize his native culture, we also realize that Stephen Dedalus is not using Homer's *The odyssey* or *Ulysses* as a propping structure or theme to Hellenize his novel. In other words, Joyce's use of folklore is not there to celebrate but to subvert the enterprise of those ethnographers and the writers who relies on their findings to glorify Irish popular culture or to reduce it to a primitive culture. His use of folklore to carnivalize his novel can be regarded as a form of resistance to appropriation to both the elitist, conservative type of modernists best represented by Pound and Eliot, and to the proponents of the mainstream of Celtic revivalist such as Yeats and Lady Gregory.

I shall appeal to Fanon (1968) at this point to categorize the two characters Stephen Dedalus and Mulligan with regard to their reaction to their own folklore or popular culture. As we know Haines mistakes Stephen for one of the Irish species, or custodian of popular culture without knowing that his witticisms are the creations of his individual talent. Fanon observed that the colonizer very often succeeds to "disrupt in a spectacular fashion the cultural life of a conquered people" (p. 236). In his description of how the colonized people face this cultural obliteration, Fanon cites two typical responses made by two types of colonized intellectual to confront the destruction of their native culture. The first type of intellectual shows a lack a reverence toward popular culture. Adopting the gaze of the colonizer, he looks with disgust at a culture that a people under colonial conditions like his/her, "solidifies into a formalism which is more or less stereotyped" (p.237). The forces of repulsion toward this threadbare culture are such that this alienated type of intellectual "throws himself in frenzied fashion into the frantic acquisition of the culture of the occupying power and takes every opportunity of unfavorably criticizing his own national culture" (p.237). The other type of colonized culture "takes refuge in setting out and substantiating the claims of that culture in a way that is passionate but rapidly becomes unproductive" (p.237).

Fanon calls the first type of intellectual the "turncoat", and the second the "substantialist," and regards both as failures in their relation to a popular culture that is already stereotyped. In Joyce's novel, we can easily see that Mulligan without any ambiguity qualifies as a turncoat because of his fawning praise that he addresses to Haines, and the derogatory terms that he uses when he speaks of the Irish peasantry. For him, the culture of his people can be sold out without regret. As for Stephen Dedalus he is neither a turncoat, nor a substantialist, standing in that "third space" in his attempt to fashion out as he says it in *The portrait of the artist as a young man* to "forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race."

This goal of creating a new culture does not figure in the program of the mainstream Celtic revivalists, who deserve the name of that type of intellectual Fanon calls the “substantialist”.

In the Algerian literature as Charles Bonn (1985) remarked in his *Le roman algérien de langue française*, that the end of what is called ethnographical literature came with the outbreak of the Algerian Revolution in 1954. “L’événement révolutionnaire a vite frappé de caducité la plupart des romans ethnographiques. [The revolution has quickly made the ethnographic novel obsolescent,” (p.30) he wrote. Such a claim contains some truth for some Algerian novels, but it does constitute the whole truth, particularly in the case of Kateb, who abjures the ethnographic strain that we can find in some novels by Mouloud Feraoun and Mouloud Mammeri. However, in these two novelists’ works, the ethnographic strain is included with first the hidden purpose of correcting the skewed exotic image that French ethnographic novels have developed about the Algerian/Kabyle culture. In other words, there is a change of optical vision in the society they described in the constraining conditions of colonialism that have debased their native culture and that they intend to straighten up. Kateb is sharply different from his Algerian fellow authors because whilst looking at the past and the ruin of the present, it is the future that matters for him. Written during the period of the Algerian revolution, but without making explicit reference to it as Dib does in his *L’incendie (The fire)* Kateb nonetheless employs some of the modernist techniques of the French Nouveau Roman to speak about the quest for Nedjma which, as already suggested above, prophesies the advent of the Algerian nation. The name Nedjma as noted evokes the name of the first Maghribi political party “The North African Star” that first advocated the independence of Algeria in its platform of 1926. As Seth Graebner aptly remarked: “*Nedjma* remains the book of the collapse of colonialism, since its chronology conveniently ends in 1954” (Graebner, 2007, p.264).

Admittedly, one might say that Kateb’s novel is not a revolutionary or war novel in the sense of the holders of socialist realism, but I would argue that this Algerian Nouveau Roman, in its refusal to indulge in the description of the revolution turns into a novel about the liberation of the Algerian novel of the reading expectations of the French audience. The young characters’ wanderings in the intricate streets of the hilly Kasbahs and slums of ancient cities like Constantine and Bone (present-day Annaba) and their scouting in the settlers’ modern areas of these cities prefigure the urban phase of the Algerian revolution. The same claim can be made about Joyce’s novel. It is not so much a novel about the Irish fight for home rule or independence as the liberation of the Irish novel from the expectations of the British audience and the skewed cultural nationalism in the name of which some Irish were ready to die. The issue of reception of Joyce’s writings has already been dealt with extensively by John Nash, one of them being the interpretation that Eliot gave to the novel. (Nash John, 2009) It is important to point out at this stage that *Nedjma* has experienced many attempts at recuperation. By the time of its publication in 1956, as Kateb proclaimed in one of his pronouncements, Algerian writers had been hunted to give witness accounts of what the French then called the “Algerian Events”, but instead of

satisfying this curiosity, Kateb served the French audience an Algerian novel that is revolutionary in its exploded style, marked among other things by a fragmented temporality.

Some critics have seized upon this time feature figuring prominently in the agenda of colonial ethnography to contain Kateb's stylistic innovation in *Nedjma* by characterizing it as a temporality peculiarly Arab and Muslim. In the "Avertissement" (warning or alert) to the first edition intended as a preface, the French readers are warned by Chodkiewicz (1956), who would later become the Director of Le Seuil Edition), to adjust their expectations to fully grasp the idiosyncrasies of Kateb's novel. For him, *Nedjma* smacks of something eternally Arab and Algerian that sharply distinguishes it from the Western literature and thought. So, for him, it would be a totally futile exercise for the reader to look for comparisons with French/Western literary models. Chodkiewicz concluded his argument about the so-called disguise or garb that Kateb has presumably made his novel to wear in order to make it pass for an occidental literary work by relying on the sharp differences of cultures in terms time: "Le rythme et la construction du récit, s'ils doivent quelque chose à certaines expériences romanesques occidentales, – ce que nous ne contestons pas – résultent surtout d'une attitude purement Arabe de l'homme face au temps." [The rhythm and the construction of the plot, if ever they owe something to Western literary experiments – which we do not question – result rather from the purely Arab man's attitude toward temporality" (p.6), Chodkiewicz sustained.

Chodkiewicz's old clichéd view about differences in the conception of time across cultures relies heavily on colonial anthropology or ethnography. The reader knowledgeable with such clichés would certainly have a "strong" sense of *dejà vu* as s/he reads about the sharp distinctions that Chodkiewicz establishes between the European and Oriental perceptions of temporality. As an amateur cultural anthropologist, Chodkiewicz told us that "la pensée européenne se meut dans une durée linéaire, la pensée arabe évolue dans une durée circulaire ou chaque détour est un retour, confondant l'avenir et le passé dans l'éternité de l'instant," [European thought moves in a linear duration, Arab though evolves in a circular duration where at every turning is a return, confusing the future and the past in the eternity of the instant" (p.6). Mousing borrowed, specious anthropological clichés, Chodkiewicz blatantly reduces Kateb the novelist to a specimen of his race by providing the following sustaining argument to the potentially dubious reader:

Cette confusion des temps, que les observateurs hâtifs imputent au gout de l'équivoque, et ou il faut voir d'abord le signe d'un génie de la synthèse, correspond à un trait si constant du caractère, à une orientation si naturelle de la pensée que la grammaire arabe, elle-même, en est marquée. [This confusion in time that observers have hastily imputed to the taste for equivocation, and where we have if anything the sign of a genius in synthesis, corresponds to a constant strain in character, to an orientation so characteristic of thought that Arabic grammar, itself, bears its mark.] (p.6.)

Overall, what is implied in the above quote is that Le Seuil edition delivers to the French readership, most notably the armed-chair intellectuals who love the exotic, a truly Arab oriental

work that smacks of the good old times before the Algerian revolution came to disturb what was then called French Algeria. At the same time, in the wartime context, this warning sounds like an explanation for what the French government calls “the Algerian events” in its implications that the “troublesome Algerian natives” in spite of themselves are not like “us” the French because they do not think and act like us.

In her argument about this “warning/preface,” Graebner (2007) has come out with the idea that this kind of Othering originates from the orientalist reading of Ibn Kheldun’s *Kitab al-Ibar* and the *Muquaddimah* translated into French by William de Slane in 1854 for serving various purposes, among which figures the legitimacy of the conquest, and the way to proceed smoothly with it. Always in the words of Graebner, the colonial historian Gautier’s book on medieval North Africa, *Le passé de l’Afrique du Nord: Les siècles obscures* is inspired by Ibn Khaldun’s sociological thought in its bid to explain why this region never managed to rule itself. Gautier’s work appeared in 1952, two years before the start of the Algerian Revolution. According to Graebner, French colonial historians like Gautier were mostly interested in the idea of the circularity of thought of the Arab Algerians, and the concomitant Kheldunian concept of *asabiya* or group feeling that seem to have condemned them to live in a spiral of violence wherein a series of dynasties topple down one another with every emergence of powerful tribes from the desert. As they violently displace one another, they fail to bring any element of progress in their wake. I would sustain that if placed in the wartime context of the Algerian Revolution, the “Avertissement” functioning as a preface attached to Kateb’s *Nedjma* ironically turns into a political alert informed by a sense of threat that the days of colonial French in Algeria, which I would constitute another dynasty in Algerian history, are counted.

I agree with Graebner when she claims that Kateb and integrated Ibn Kheldun’s sociological and political thought in his novel. However, I would widen this claim by saying that if the French colonial authorities deployed the translation of Ibn Kheldun’s books to understand the Algerian natives the better to pacify and rule the country, Kateb in *Nedjma* re-deploys it to send the hidden message that another cycle of violence against the colonial French was under way and would eventually sweep them away. The people of *albadia* or the desert people have already invested the uphill ancient cities and the surrounding shanties characteristic in a colonial space that Fanon describes as essentially Manichean space. The sense of encirclement and implosion of the colonial cities makes Ibn Kheldun’s theory of political change of dynasty by violence ironically augurs the ultimate disappearance of French Algeria like all the Algerias ruled by the precedent dynasties in the Maghribi medieval age. So, having cited Ibn-Khedoun in *Nedjma*, and being fully aware of how French historiographers have contributed to the maintenance of colonial rule by appealing to this Arab sociologist, Kateb, turns upside Ibn Kheldun’s political thought to create a panic in the French ranks. The subtle reference to the influx of Algerian natives into the cities of Constantine and Bone (modern Annaba) represented by the six major young characters traumatized by May 8, 1945 massacre can be regarded as harbingers of Algerian revolutionaries preparing for that modern urban guerrilla, captured in the war film *The Battle Algiers* which has made the Algerian Revolution famous all over the globe.

Conclusion

If Kateb's *Nedjma* is informed by Ibn Khaldun's works and popular sagas like that of the turbulent Banu Hilal (referred to as "the people of the moon" in the novel), Joyce's *Ulysses* appeals to *The book of conquests* also known as *The Book of invasions* or *The book of the taking of Ireland* to give the lie to those critics like Eliot who see in the colonial Dublin that it describes in its most specific topographical features a carbon copy of Ithaca, the Island of the Cyclops, or the Island of Circe. *The book of invasions* (*Bebor Gabala Eren* in Gaelic) largely accounts for the puzzling names that the characters (Leopold Bloom, Molly Bloom and Stephen Dedalus, etc.) in *Ulysses* bear. *The book of invasions* traces the genealogical tree of the Irish people as far back as to the Sons of Mil or the Goidels. The Sons of Mil, as this book recounts, invaded Ireland after a long captivity in Egypt/ Greece and their relationships with the Jewish people were so close that they invited them to join them in their exodus, an invitation which they declined preferring to go further west instead. I would say that Joyce's three central characters suggestively form a blended Irish family of sorts. Leopold Bloom the surrogate father carries a Belgian/ Celtic first name, and is Jewish on his Hungarian father's side. Molly Bloom is of Mediterranean origins like the Milesians since she hails from Gibraltar where she was apparently born and lived for a long time. Joyce further puts into relief Molly Bloom's Mediterranean sensuality at every turn of the story. As for the surrogate son, Stephen Dedalus, his first name is Latin and Christian, and his last name is Greek. It is through this strategy of naming that Joyce underlines the hybrid nature of the Irish people and at the same time undermines any critical bid to Hellenize his book by making it appear under the catchy title name of a Latinized Greek hero Ulysses, The Sacker of Cities like Dublin.

Clearly, in *Ulysses* Joyce applies the advice that he gives to a budding author, Arthur Power, where he urges him to "write in your own tradition ... with what is in your blood and not what is in your brain" (as cited in Tymoczko, 1989, p.17), if ever he wants to achieve international success as a writer. Hence, though Joyce focuses on the hybrid character of Ireland and the Irish, he does not fail at every turn of the story to point at the sore subject of the decadence of the Irish in *Ulysses*. However, in doing so, his carnivalistic resistance does not confuse the cause with the effect, for his title character Ulysses is a prototype of a plundering colonizer or a sacker of cities. So it can be inferred that what Joyce says about the resistance of the Irish to colonial plunderers in his fiction *Ulysses* is more or less similar to what he explicitly says in one of his famous essays: "And, although the present race in Ireland is backward, it is worth taking into account that it is the only race of the entire Celtic family that has not been willing to sell its birthright for a mess of potage" (Joyce, 1959:166). This statement follows up a rhetorical question, naming the various invasions of Ireland, giving away one of the essential sources of inspiration of *Ulysses*, and the spirit in which it was written and intended to be read. Kateb does the same thing in a book that bears the name of a mixed-blood heroine. *Nedjma* was born to a French mother and a native Algerian father, but in her double capacity as a female and a mother country she is courted by a huge number of young Algerian suitors with various degrees of convictions in their love. To conclude, though *Nedjma* and *Ulysses* were written in the borrowed language of the colonizer, the linguistic hybridity that ensues their fathering by subaltern native authors does not make of them

mere appendages of French and English literatures. Both of them have a familiar ring, Celtic or Gaelic for Joyce's book, and Algerian, Arabic and Berber, for Kateb's. This double-voiced, hybrid, or polyphonic discourse is Joyce's and Kateb's way of sticking two fingers up at Algerian and Irish die-hard nationalists as well as critics of all shades who would deny the Irishness and Algerianity of these two classics of world literature.

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