

Autobiography Between the Renewal of the Genre and Idiosyncratic Practice: The Case of Yasmina Khadra

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1-Introduction

Yasmina Khadra's autobiographical work, most notably his 2001 memoir *L'Écrivain (The Writer)*, represents a monumental turning point in contemporary literature by revealing the true identity behind the famous feminine pen name: Mohammed Moulessehou, a high-ranking Algerian army officer. Published shortly after his retirement and subsequent exile to France, this introspective narrative lifts the veil on a complex double life fundamentally shaped by Algeria's turbulent post-colonial history. Formed by the state at a military cadet school from the tender age of nine just after Algeria gained independence, Moulessehou spent decades navigating the permanent internal warfare between a soldier's duty and a poet's inner sensitivity. This psychological tension reached a breaking point during the "Black Decade" (*La Décennie Noire*) of the 1990s, a brutal civil war between the military regime and Islamist insurgencies that decimated the country and systematically targeted intellectuals. By adopting his wife's name as a pseudonym to bypass strict military censorship and safely publish his critiques of both religious fundamentalism and military corruption, his writing became both a tribute to her courage and a profound exploration of personal survival under institutional secrecy. Ultimately, Khadra's life writing transcends simple personal testimony, blending traditional autobiography with historical chronicle to offer a raw look at the heavy psychological toll of war and the redemptive power of literature.

2. Theoretical Reviews of the Autobiographical Genre

Autobiography plays a significant role in European and world literature. This importance granted to autobiography—as a relatively recent genre compared to other literary forms—is manifested not only by the growth of works directly classified as life narratives but also by the increase in scholarly studies addressing them. Thus, the exploration of the autobiographical field reached its peak in the 1970s with the foundational work of Philippe Lejeune. In 1971, he took the initiative to investigate this long-unexplored territory with his book *L'autobiographie en France*, which he described as "an introduction to the study of autobiography." Lejeune began by laying out the fundamental questions regarding autobiography: its foundation, its precursors, and its distinction from other life narratives. He also addressed secondary yet decisive problems in the execution of the autobiographical project, such as what can be told in an autobiography, whether it is possible to conform to the canons of the genre, and, above all, how to produce an autobiography while rejecting narcissism and egocentrism. While

L'autobiographie en France was merely the inauguration of a long-term scholarly endeavor, his subsequent works delved deeper into the most pertinent questions: how is the relationship between the autobiographer and their reader defined? Is it always identical? These are the primary questions raised in *Le pacte autobiographique* (*The Autobiographical Pact*). Shortly thereafter, driven by the media momentum surrounding the autobiographical genre, Lejeune published *Je est un autre* (*I is Another*). This work transcended the restriction of autobiography to the exclusive domain of literature, presenting it as an activity that could be practiced not only by established authors but also by ordinary individuals with no connection to the literary world, including laborers and expatriates.

Following Lejeune's contributions, academic research continued fervently with scholars such as Georges May and Jean Starobinski in the 1980s. In recent years, it has gained renewed momentum, establishing itself as a fresh area of research that is both perilous and rewarding to navigate.

It is worth noting that many other academic researchers are drawn to the field of autobiography. For instance, the Limag database—the website for Maghrebi literatures—contains six studies explicitly dealing with life narratives, while Philippe Lejeune's website lists twenty-four doctoral theses and Master's dissertations (DEA) analyzing autobiographies and their challenges. Furthermore, the study of an autobiography can vary depending on the approach adopted, the specific work under examination, and the objectives to be achieved. The following examples will illustrate the diversity of this research.

Trudy Agar's thesis, titled "*La notion de contreviolence créative dans l'autobiographie postcoloniale franco-algérienne: paroles d'identité et de résistance chez Assia Djébar, Malika Mokeddem et Nina Bouraoui*" (*The Notion of Creative Counter-Violence in Franco-Algerian Postcolonial Autobiography: Voices of Identity and Resistance in Assia Djébar, Malika Mokeddem, and Nina Bouraoui*), positions its research problem at the intersection of postcolonial critique and postmodernism. This study examines the presence of violence in the autobiographical writing of three women born out of the postcolonial "in-between" space resulting from the Franco-Algerian encounter. By focusing on the poetic framework of their autobiographies, the study aims to uncover the literary strategies that allow these authors to incorporate, while simultaneously resisting, the lived violence within their texts. Her research provides a thematic, linguistic, and textual analysis of six works, demonstrating how these authors use textual violence to transform the identity inherited from colonial and patriarchal discourses. Ultimately, they construct a new subjectivity that evades fixed structures and existing power dynamics.

Some researchers focus on autobiography by highlighting the uniqueness of the literary project itself; this is the case with Stéphanie Michineau's "*L'autofiction dans l'œuvre de Colette*" (*Autofiction in the Work of Colette*), which examines how the concept of "autofiction" is manifested in Colette's writing. Given that Colette's work has always maintained an ambiguous relationship with reality, and that the writer drew heavily from her real life to fuel her fiction, this has led to a significant oscillation between the canons of autobiography and the principles of pure fiction. It was only with the emergence of the neologism "autofiction" that readers could fully understand the narrative identity, as well as the underlying motives of ambiguity, falsehood, and aesthetic distancing. Michineau also observes that Colette favored the novelistic

form over strict autobiography—a choice explained by her quest and need to assert her identity at a time when the societal status of women was highly precarious. Autofiction therefore allowed her to construct and reconstruct herself without facing accusations of dishonesty.

Furthermore, autobiography can be viewed as an overarching theme that characterizes a social group, governed by both the degree of sincerity and the archetypal images specific to that group. In his thesis, *"Le récit d'enfance dans la littérature antillaise d'expression française. Mythes et réalités, fiction et vérité"* (The Childhood Narrative in French-Expression West Indian Literature: Myths and Realities, Fiction and Truth), Gérard Christon demonstrates the true nature of the childhood narrative in Caribbean literature. It is through the diverse portrayals of this society born out of former colonies that one can delineate the boundaries between reality and the imaginary. Resentment and pain, pride and happiness, condemnation and revolt taint these novels, which carry either an overt or an awkward autobiographical resonance. Whether recounted in adulthood or derived from an oral tradition, all these narratives occasionally seem to turn their backs on the canons of the autobiographical pact. Christon investigates how the imaginary and a spirit of revolt can affect the veracity of West Indian life writing.

Paradoxically, the study of autobiography can be framed within its temporal boundaries. For instance, Anaïs Lomberger's dissertation, *Journaux d'une famille sous l'Occupation : première approche pour une réflexion sur les écrits personnels en temps de guerre (1939-1945)*, seeks to elucidate how wartime was experienced, conceptualized, and represented by contemporaries, serving as a dominant paradigm of the period.

Conversely, the construction of a life narrative remains contingent upon the subject's demographics, such as age, occupation, and idiosyncratic motivations. Drawing on an analysis of textbook activities and classroom implementations, Marie-France Bischof's thesis, *Les écritures de soi à l'école : places, fonctions et enjeux*, interrogates the structural relationship between ego-documents and educational institutions. The author thus exposes the inherent ambivalence surrounding the institutionalization of autobiographical writing. Ultimately, this inquiry underscores the extent to which the formal educational system can meaningfully accommodate these writings while preserving their distinct particularities.

Nevertheless, the preceding exemplars pertain to the autobiographies of ordinary individuals who, prompted by diverse motivations, elected to document their trajectories. Line Legrand investigates an emergent autobiographical paradigm in her doctoral thesis, *Écriture autobiographique de personnes handicapées physiques et sensorielles : enjeux et impacts*. This research compiles a systematic catalog of autobiographies authored by individuals experiencing physical and sensory impairments. These texts are scrutinized as vital vectors of information to elucidate the daily realities of disabled individuals, comprehend their lived experiences, and evaluate their subjective responses to both their historical and contemporary circumstances. This corpus ultimately facilitates the formulation of a quality-of-life assessment grid—or, at minimum, delineates the criteria deemed indispensable for personal well-being—which can be calibrated according to the nature of the disability, the residential context (institutional versus independent living), and the density of familial or professional networks. Additionally, the study interrogates the reception of these texts among both able-bodied and disabled readers, exploring the utility of life-writing as a "therapeutic" modality for confronting deficiency. Consequently, the inquiry ponders whether an able-bodied reader can identify with a disabled

individual's autobiography, and what pedagogical or existential value such a reading experience may yield.

The continuous expansion of academic scholarship addressing life narratives—and autobiographies in particular—does not merely index the newfound recognition of the genre as a legitimate domain of inquiry; it further demonstrates that a singular autobiographical text can catalyze diverse methodological frameworks derived from disciplines ancillary to literary studies, such as linguistics, discourse analysis, sociology, psychology, psychopathology, social psychology, historiography, and ideological analysis. This interdisciplinary convergence accounts for the polysemic interpretations to which autobiography is subject.

3. Generic Classification in the Works of Yasmina Khadra

Cultural practices have proliferated across epochs, constituting the bedrock of artistic creation. Whether seeking to emulate divine creation, distort empirical reality, or construct alternative realms, humanity has continuously manifested its innovative impulses through artistic production—be it through engraving cavern walls, adorning vestments, leaving graphic testimonies of existence, or liberating the human voice. Through refinement and aesthetic labor, these primal activities evolved into the distinct cultural practices recognized today. Consequently, establishing the lines of demarcation that govern the taxonomical alignment of an artwork within a collective paradigm remains imperative: whether distinguishing a refrain from a song, abstract from figurative canvas, or prose fiction from drama.

Nevertheless, an overreliance on these generic classifications can be reductive, given that their utility is primarily instrumental, serving to impose order onto an otherwise amorphous mass of cultural expressions. Although certain generic designations purport to describe autonomous ontological entities, the crucial epistemological problem of genre classification within the literary sphere cannot be marginalized. Thus, a rigorous interrogation of literary genericity becomes essential, particularly given the semiotic primacy of literature, as a verbal praxis, over alternative artistic media.

Moreover, any discourse on literary genre remains futile without establishing an operative definition: what, indeed, constitutes a literary genre (to invoke Jean-Marie Schaeffer), and which taxonomical criteria determine the generic classification of works? By extension, how might one classify Yasmina Khadra's corpus, and more specifically *L'Écrivain*? Stated differently, does Yasmina Khadra ascribe significant weight to the formal architecture through which his work is mediated?

In *Éléments de littérature comparée*, Alain-Michel Boyer initiates his conceptualization of genres by delineating the ambiguity inherent in the term "genre"—conventionally understood as a taxon or "a collective of objects that, by virtue of shared characteristics, are ideally associated." Yet, the concept far exceeds this naive definition, being formulated instead as follows: "... if a genre is defined as a class that enables the categorization of a given corpus of texts based on diverse criteria, it functions as an aesthetic category, identifiable by markers and devices often codified by tradition, which govern the taxonomical alignment of a work within a specific category." Boyer underscores the primacy of aesthetics in generic determination. Although verified as the most pertinent criterion, it nonetheless catalyzes protracted debates: are formal idiosyncrasies and thematic content the sole complications in generic classification?

Accordingly, we shall first attempt to delineate a panoramic overview of genre through a historical lens.

Grounded in the premise that literary genre is a highly contested and profoundly polemical construct, ancient Greek philosophers identified diverse discursive modalities as the primary mechanism for generic determination. Plato posited that modes of enunciation (*mimesis* versus *diegesis*) are foundational to defining genre, asserting that an author either speaks directly, imitates a character, or employs a hybrid of both. His disciple, Aristotle, formulated a more decisive taxonomical framework by operating within three paradigms of generic definition: an ontological definition (its essence), a differential definition (what distinguishes it), or a teleological definition (what it ought to be). The essentialist paradigm presupposes an epistemological mapping of the evolutionary phases a genre traverses to attain its finalized morphology. Tragedy, for example, underwent radical mutations, metamorphosing from a ritualistic hymn accompanying caprine sacrifices at the Dionysian festivals into a dominant paradigm where heroic figures evoke *eleos* and *phobos* (pity and fear). Conversely, the structuralist paradigm operates on the codification of criteria that differentiate literary works. Within this framework, the taxon "genre" aggregates texts that share distinct invariant features; a historical novel and a science fiction novel may exhibit divergent semantic and thematic topoi, yet both are subsumed under the category of fictional prose narrative. While these two approaches remain strictly descriptive, the normative paradigm is fundamentally prescriptive, dictating rigorous conventions at both the semantic and formal registers. A tragedy, under this normative lens, is codified by its pragmatic efficacy—specifically, its capacity to induce *catharsis* in the audience.

The Aristotelian classification appears overly demanding. Indeed, can a genre be discussed without considering its historical evolution? Furthermore, what are the implications of these rigid classifications that prescribe what a work ought to be? Do they not create an immediate conflict with the intrinsic status of the artwork?

Restricting oneself to pragmatic purpose without addressing the formal structure, or falling into arbitrary classification by prioritizing structural configuration over the intended message, represent major methodological challenges. These issues were central to the frameworks adopted by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century thinkers, most notably Hegel and Brunetière. While their contributions to the field are undeniable, they render the problem increasingly complex. Hegel prioritizes evolutionary generic laws as fundamental to determining the literary organism, whereas Brunetière approaches the issue by emphasizing the evolution of genres through perpetual struggle.

Consequently, one can comprehend why researchers such as Schaeffer favored a structural methodology in generic analysis. Rather than categorizing genres, attempting to systematize them, or constraining them within a taxonomic straitjacket, this paradigm paradoxically endeavors to circumscribe the autonomous domain of each work through a comparative juxtaposition with its divergent counterparts. To circumvent protracted debates on this inherently elusive issue, Laurent Jenny elucidates Jean-Marie Schaeffer's approach as a reclamation of the Platonic concept of the discursive mode of enunciation, insofar as the latter constitutes the foundational locus for the generic analysis of any literary text. Universalized, this operates as a "discursive convention." Within this framework, three modalities of discursive

conventions emerge: constitutive conventions, which instantiate the communicative act they govern by establishing it and imparting specific formal configurations; regulative conventions, which superimpose rules upon these preexisting communicative modes; and traditional conventions, which delineate the semantic architecture of the text via thematic criteria.

As restrictive constructs, these conventions remain susceptible to transgression. While a failure to comply with traditional conventions—that is, a divergence from the generic prototype—engenders the paradoxical effect of mutating and enriching the genre, a distinct consequence occurs when regulative conventions are dismantled. In contrast, the violation of a genre's constitutive conventions precipitously results in the abortive realization of the intended generic form. Laurent Jenny exemplifies this through the "alethic contract" (or contract of truth); once subverted, it misleads the reader by attributing deliberately fabricated fictional elements to the autobiographical protagonist. This ontological shift underscores why the term "autofiction" was formulated to designate this generic deviation from autobiography as a primary genre.

This historical overview of theoretical impasses highlights the increasingly fluid and contested status of literary genres, which are now frequently dismantled despite traditional categorization methods. Consequently, modern writers, including authors like Yasmina Khadra, are reimagining these conventional literary boundaries through a different critical lens.

4. Generic Classifications and Choices in the Corpus of Yasmina Khadra

Turning now to the core text of this inquiry, Yasmina Khadra's *L'Écrivain*, published in 2001 by Éditions Julliard, effectively demystified the authorial identity after protracted speculation regarding his pseudonymity. The narrative unveiled the persona of Mohammed Moulessehou, a former senior officer within the Algerian military. For an author whose aesthetic singularity testified to Algeria's "years of embers," this thematic pivot generates a multiplicity of hermeneutic readings that frequently misalign with authorial intent. Khadra himself asserted: "I wrote *L'Écrivain*, first and foremost, to halt the speculations that were disrupting my novels." This indicates that the selection of the autobiographical paradigm is never politically or rhetorically neutral. Khadra consciously calibrated his self-narrative and discursive positioning against the backdrop of public expectations and readerly anticipation. Consequently, it is imperative to elucidate the mechanics of reception theory, most notably articulated by Hans Robert Jauss, whose seminal work, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, may be conceptualized as...

...predicated upon the desire to revitalize literary theory at large and, more specifically, historiography. According to Jauss, literary history must neither be conceptualized as the mere accumulation of texts published within a specific epoch, nor as a historical chronicle of the political, economic, social, or philosophical milestones that catalyzed their production. Rather, it constitutes a stratified sediment of readings and receptions. The aesthetic of reception, therefore, interrogates the shifting modalities through which a text is consumed across historical continuums.

Within Jauss's framework, a given text is fundamentally conditioned by antecedent readings, operating as either a replication or a transformation of these prior discourses. He posits that:

"...the reception of a text always presupposes the context of prior experience within which aesthetic perception occurs. The problem of the subjectivity of interpretation and taste in the

isolated reader, or within different categories of readers, can only be meaningfully addressed if one has first reconstructed this horizon of a prior, intersubjective aesthetic experience, which grounds any individual understanding of a text and the effect it produces."

If, for Jauss, a text relies on its precursors—serving as their stylistic and thematic continuation—the author will simultaneously introduce a distinct rupture between the preexisting horizon of expectations and the new work, the reception of which can trigger a "change of horizon." Jauss defines this phenomenon as an aesthetic distance that directs the reader toward the horizon of an unfamiliar experience:

"The artistic character of a work of art is measured by the aesthetic distance by which it separates itself at its appearance from the expectations of its first audience. It follows from this that this distance—which, implying a new way of seeing, is experienced at first as a source of pleasure or astonishment and perplexity—can vanish for subsequent readers as the original negativity of the work transforms into self-evidence. Once it becomes a familiar object of expectation, it integrates itself in turn into the horizon of future aesthetic experience."

This phenomenon explains Yasmina Khadra's choice of autobiography as a genre. When examining his entire corpus, it becomes evident that his literary production began well before the media surge that started in 1997 with the publication of *Morituri*, which achieved meteoric success and brought immediate fame to the author. We have identified nineteen novelistic works that can be categorized into distinct "writing cycles," each responding to the readerly expectations of a specific moment. The author initially began with short stories that addressed diverse themes yet remained linked by a central motif: superstition. This is exemplified by his collection *Houria*, about which he noted: "When I wrote *Houria*, I was still a soldier; I wrote it under heavy censorship. When I entered the underground in 1989, I acquired a kind of impunity that matched my inspiration." Following the publication of other works such as *Amen*, *La Fille du pont*, *El Kahira*, and *De l'autre côté de la ville*—culminating in *Le Privilège du phénix* as the peak of his testimonial novels about a fractured society—Khadra transitioned to his first detective novels. These works possessed the dual merit of bearing witness to Algiers society while showcasing the author's talent for the noir genre. Notable among these is *Le Dingue au bistouri*, which depicts a country plagued by violence. This novel, along with *La Foire des enfoirés*, marked the first use of a pseudonym, published under the name Commissaire Llob. Khadra's mastery of the detective genre is most visible in his crime trilogy—comprising *Morituri*, *Double Blanc*, and *L'Automne des chimères*—published under the pseudonym "Yasmina Khadra." Acclaimed as literary successes that propelled him to international recognition, these works reflect the author's selection of the crime novel as a primary mode of expression. In doing so, he rejected the label of "paraliterature," asserting: "...What matters in literature is generosity—that share of truth that enlightens individuals in search of tolerance and communication. Chester Himes brought me as much light as Giono and Taha Hussein. It is through the diversity of their talents that I sometimes come to understand the world a little better."

Paradoxically, classifying Yasmina Khadra exclusively as a crime novelist undermines his broader literary merit, a point demonstrated by his subsequent thematic shift: "...to consider me solely as a crime writer is an error. I am, above all, a novelist." A new writing cycle emerged from the necessity to bear witness to the "Red Decade" that Algeria endured as a result of the

horrors of fundamentalism. *Les Agneaux du Seigneur* and *À quoi rêvent les loups* trace the individual and collective descent into madness and horror:

"...I wish to inform the reader that the plot of my novel is inspired by the daily reality prevailing in our country... I have thus devoted my time entirely to studying the phenomenon of fundamentalism, from its initial stirrings to the terrifying cries of hatred that, even today, still echo through the nights of our regions, drowning out the screams of women and children massacred with rare bestiality. I have witnessed numerous horrors. I wrote the outlines of my book on the very scenes of the crimes. I am still there, standing within our tragedy like a beacon in the darkness, attempting to cast an intermittent light upon the torrents of blood and tears that irrigate our ancient land of Numidia."

Rumors and speculations began to intensify regarding Yasmina Khadra's identity. However, this time, they questioned not merely his persona, but his actual authorship. A multitude of questions arose: was Yasmina Khadra the true author of his novels? Did he rely on a ghostwriter? At this critical juncture, continuing with the same thematic focus became untenable, and the author deemed it essential to produce a work that would dispel these misconceptions. *L'Écrivain* emerged at a decisive moment when the author had to choose between maintaining his anonymity while enduring the scathing critiques of the press, or finally revealing himself to end a profound mystery. His resort to autobiography is thus justified by...

"...I wrote *L'Écrivain*, first and foremost, to put an end to the speculations that were disrupting my novels. There were Algerian writers and journalists who passed themselves off as me, and others who let it be assumed. Furthermore, I was operating in anonymity; my books had already been translated into a dozen languages and were highly successful, yet no one could put a face to my pseudonym. The circumstances had shifted. I needed to step out of the shadows and reach my readership. I owed it to myself to justify this 'mystery' that some were labeling a masquerade."

5- On *L'Écrivain*: A Structural and Pragmatic Approach

This inquiry has sought to approach Yasmina Khadra's text by situating it at the nexus of his entire literary production, thereby elucidating the hermeneutic effect of an autobiography emerging in the wake of numerous crime novels and testimonial narratives. Subsequently, this study will analyze *L'Écrivain* as an autonomous autobiographical genre, utilizing a structural analysis to validate its status as an incontrovertibly autobiographical text.

Cognitive of the epistemological challenges surrounding a unified theory of genre, Schaeffer posits three distinct modalities for interrogating any literary work: treating the text as a communicative act, analyzing its conformity to specific prescriptive rules, or contextualizing it relationally against a network of other texts. Grounded in the linguistic framework of Roman Jakobson, speech acts are manifested within what he defines as the conative function of language. This function recognizes that language possesses an intentional trajectory directed at the addressee and exerts a pragmatic efficacy upon the recipient.

Accordingly, Khadra's autobiography can be conceptualized as a discursive communicative act. The narrative functions as an instrument deployed to act upon the author's sociocultural milieu through verbal means; he endeavors to apprise his readership of his idiosyncratic lived experiences, stimulate readerly engagement, and persuade them of specific ideological stances.

While such a framework typically implies the deployment of grammatical devices like the vocative or the imperative mood, or performative verbs such as "to demand," Khadra paradoxically addresses his audience via a mediated narrative structure. His text remains fundamentally narrative and descriptive; it documents the empirical events that occurred at a precise historical juncture in his biography—specifically, his internment within the Cadets of the Revolution Military Academy.

Furthermore, Khadra's narrative aligns with the generic constraints and prescriptions codified within autobiographical theory: namely, the ontic identity between author, narrator, and character; retrospective focalization; and the autobiographical pact. In the inaugural pages of *L'Écrivain*, the author employs the first-person singular "I" to delineate his subjectivity, his filial relationship, and his psychological distress upon realizing his father had abandoned him in an environment entirely alien to an eight-year-old child. It is only on page 42 that he explicitly instantiates his onomastic identity: "...Cadet Moulessehoul Mohamed, service number 129, at your command, officer." Consequently, the canonical triadic equation—author = narrator = character—is rigorously sustained. Concurrently, the aforementioned narrative modality operates in autobiographical narratives: the narrator must cast a retrospective glance over the events being recounted. In other words, the moment of writing must take place after the lived experiences; this is known as retrospection. In *L'Écrivain*, the presence of retrospection can be verified through specific dates and temporal markers. This is further demonstrated by the relationship between the narrator and the protagonist: the one who writes is the adult, whereas the one being described is the child.

Furthermore, while the act of narrating and exposing one's private life constitutes a painful task for the autobiographer, it is equally challenging for the reader. Indeed, how can the latter be assured of the authenticity of what they are reading? This problem requires a treaty between the author and the reader—a contract that obligates the author to report their life faithfully, while prompting the reader to engage with and believe the account. This autobiographical pact is also respected in *L'Écrivain*. When Yasmina Khadra chose to reveal his true identity, he did so in consideration of his readership, who had highly appreciated his novels and would not question his sincerity. Consequently, *L'Écrivain* can be seen as adhering to all the conventions of the autobiographical genre, as illustrated by the following passage:

"...On that autumn morning of 1964, while the Peugeot sputtered along the grueling roads of Tlemcen, he drove in silence, his neck stiff, his movements mechanical. My father fell silent like this whenever he was unhappy."

The third modality of generic analysis operates through a comparative juxtaposition of the text against contemporary or historical literary productions subsumed under the same category. Having previously delineated the historical trajectory of life-writing—tracing its mutation from elementary, religiously inflected confessions to a secularized practice encompassing heterogeneous themes and governed by diverse motivations—one can posit a fundamental structural convergence between these antecedents and Yasmina Khadra's *L'Écrivain*. This affinity is primarily evidenced by the shared prioritization of overarching topoi, such as domestic recollections, structural adversities, failures, and achievements, irrespective of the idiosyncratic subject matter or narrative trajectory. The author explicitly instantiates this aesthetic commitment through the following reflection:

"...I was cast out by my family, that is a fact: an unfortunate initiative on my father's part. And I was adopted by the army, which I leave without bitterness; it raised me, and I served it, I believe, with dignity and courage. I never sought to deviate from the path that had been mapped out for me. I never rebelled. But I never renounced what I consider to be stronger than destiny: my vocation as a writer. I continued to write in a world that denied me that freedom, and I realized my dream, perhaps because of it: prohibitions forge inflexible wills."

6- Conclusions

Ultimately, Yasmina Khadra's deliberate subversion of genre boundaries represents a sophisticated literary response to the fragmentation of identity caused by trauma, censorship, and war. By refusing to confine his life story to the rigid boundaries of traditional autobiography, he utilizes a hybrid narrative structure that weaves together personal confession, historical chronicle, and the *Bildungsroman* (coming-of-age story). This generic fluidity allows him to navigate the profound disconnect between Mohammed Moulessehoul, the high-ranking officer bound by military silence, and Yasmina Khadra, the feminine pseudonym that granted him artistic voice. The autobiography ceases to be a mere chronological accounting of facts; instead, it adopts the emotional depth of a novel to capture the psychological toll of a child cadet stripped of innocence, and the grim realism of a historical archive to document the horrors of Algeria's "Black Decade."

Furthermore, this generic defiance serves an essential political and therapeutic function. The introduction of a feminine persona as the authorial voice creates a brilliant narrative paradox: a mask designed to evade institutional censorship ultimately becomes the very tool that uncovers the rawest truths of state violence and religious extremism. By blending the subjective memory of the self with the objective trauma of a nation, Khadra shifts the focus from individual memoir to a collective testimony. In doing so, his generic choices prove that when a writer's reality is fractured by totalitarian constraints and civil bloodshed, traditional literary genres are insufficient. Only through the deliberate blurring of fiction, history, and autobiography can a writer successfully reconstruct a shattered identity, challenge institutional secrecy, and reclaim absolute personal freedom.

Through the preceding analysis, we have attempted to demonstrate that Yasmina Khadra's *L'Écrivain (The Writer)* is an autobiographical narrative, and to explain that choosing autobiography as a new mode of expression was closely linked to the critical and reader reception of his work. We have also addressed the question of its generic classification. This deliberate subversion of literary boundaries represents a sophisticated aesthetic and political response to the fragmentation of identity caused by trauma, censorship, and war. By refusing to confine his life story to the rigid constraints of traditional autobiography, the author deploys a hybrid narrative structure that weaves together personal confession, historical chronicle, and the *Bildungsroman* (coming-of-age story). This generic fluidity allows him to bridge the deep chasm separating Mohammed Moulessehoul, the high-ranking officer bound by military silence, and Yasmina Khadra, the feminine pseudonym that granted him an artistic and public voice.

Consequently, the work ceases to be a mere factual account and instead adopts the depth of a novel, capable of capturing the psychological toll of a childhood spent under military rule and

the grim realism of the Algerian "Black Decade." The introduction of this feminine persona creates a fascinating paradox: the mask initially designed to evade the control of the military institution ultimately becomes the very instrument of liberation against the expectations of critics and readers. By blending the subjective memory of the self with the objective trauma of a nation, Khadra transforms individual memoir into a collective testimony. In the end, his generic choices prove that when faced with a reality fractured by state violence and terrorism, traditional genres prove insufficient. Only through the deliberate blurring of fiction, history, and autobiography can a writer successfully reconstruct a shattered identity, respond to his audience, and reclaim absolute freedom.

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