

The Duality of Belonging in the Algerian Novel Written in French: Yasmina Khadra's Novel "The Favor of the Night upon the Day" as a Case Study

Mannad Briki

PhD Candidate (World and Comparative Literature),
University of Amar Telidji - Laghouat (Algeria),
Language and Literature Research Laboratory,
Email: m.briki@lagh-univ.dz

Aissa Kouissi

Senior Lecturer A,
University of Amar Telidji - Laghouat (Algeria),
Language and Literature Research Laboratory,
Email: mr.aissakouissi@gmail.com

Received: 10/01/2026

Accepted: 11/03/2026

Published: 10/07/2026

Abstract:

In the contemporary era, the novel has successfully kept pace with all the transformations and changes affecting the cultural and intellectual arena, owing to the fluidity and flexibility it permits in simulating the lived reality of our societies, and due to its contributions to embodying the national character across its various dimensions, ideologies, and components. The Algerian novel written in French has faced considerable criticism and controversy concerning its content and underlying principles. Algerian writers of Arab origin who chose to write in French found themselves caught in a debate between affirming their Arab and Islamic affiliation and the Western ideas and culture with which they had become imbued. Their national allegiance, which compels them to defend their homeland and write about its tragedies and sorrows, was expressed through a language foreign to their society—the language of the coloniser. Among these writers is Yasmina Khadra, who excelled in his novel "The Favor of the Night upon the Day", which encompasses a duality of belonging and identity discernible through the narrative phases of the work.

Keywords: belonging, national character, Algerian novel written in French, identity, dual belonging, post-colonial literature

Introduction: The Algerian novel written in French represents a significant cultural phenomenon that emerged as a consequence of French colonialism, raising complex questions about identity, belonging, and linguistic duality among Algerian writers of Arab origin who chose to express their national narrative in the coloniser's language.

Methods: This qualitative study employs a textual analysis approach, examining Yasmina Khadra's novel "The Favor of the Night upon the Day" through the lens of post-colonial theory. The research analyses representations of dual belonging across four dimensions:

linguistic affiliation, religious identity, customary and traditional belonging, and the symbolism of the novel's title. Data were collected through close reading of the primary text and supported by secondary sources including literary criticism, historical accounts, and theoretical frameworks on belonging and identity.

Results: The analysis reveals that Khadra's novel effectively portrays the duality of belonging through multiple narrative devices. Linguistic duality is evident in the protagonist's name change from Younes to Jonas and the use of French to convey Algerian cultural realities. Religious belonging manifests through Qur'anic references, Islamic practices, and Christian influences, reflecting the intersection of cultures. Customary and traditional belonging emerges through depictions of traditional attire (burnous, turban), hospitality customs, and the contrast between Algerian and European practices. The novel's title symbolically represents the colonial period (night) and the liberation struggle (day), embodying the tension between oppression and hope.

Discussion: The findings demonstrate that Khadra navigates the duality of belonging not as a rejection of either identity but as a complex negotiation between Arab-Islamic heritage and Western cultural influences. The novel serves as a counter-discourse to colonial narratives that sought to obliterate Algerian identity. The representation of dual belonging in the novel reflects the broader historical and sociopolitical realities of Algeria during and after colonisation, illustrating how literature becomes a site of identity formation and resistance.

Conclusion: This study concludes that "The Favor of the Night upon the Day" offers a nuanced exploration of dual belonging, presenting it as an inherent characteristic of post-colonial Algerian identity rather than a source of conflict. Khadra's work contributes to the broader discourse on identity in post-colonial literature by demonstrating that belonging can encompass multiple affiliations without negating national allegiance. The novel successfully challenges colonial discourse while affirming Algerian cultural identity, suggesting that linguistic and cultural hybridity can serve as a foundation for a more inclusive understanding of national belonging.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In the contemporary era, the novel has successfully kept pace with all the transformations and changes affecting the cultural and intellectual arena, owing to the fluidity and flexibility it permits in simulating the lived reality of our societies, and due to its contributions to embodying the national character across its various dimensions, ideologies, and components (Fatima, 2016). The Algerian novel written in French has succeeded in establishing a significant intellectual field and a notable position within both Algerian and world literature (Ahmed, 2007).

This linguistic diversity and cultural richness in Algerian history and literature, particularly in the novel, served as an explicit response to French novelists who distorted the reality of Algerians' conditions and suffering during colonisation. This was achieved by employing their language to articulate Algerian national identity and sense of belonging (Ahmed, 2007).

1.2 Problem Statement

The Algerian novel written in French has faced considerable criticism and controversy concerning its content and underlying principles. Algerian writers of Arab origin who chose to write in French found themselves caught in a debate between affirming their Arab and Islamic affiliation and the Western ideas and culture with which they had become imbued (Al-Rukaybī, 2009). Their national allegiance, which compels them to defend their homeland and write about its tragedies and sorrows, was expressed through a language foreign to their society—the language of the coloniser (Ahmed, 2007).

1.3 Research Questions

This research addresses the following questions:

1. Can the duality of belonging and the philosophy of identity be discerned within the narrative developments and circumstances of Yasmina Khadra's novel "The Favor of the Night upon the Day"?
2. Does the novel extend beyond surface-level representation to decode latent meanings that only become apparent through analysis, reflection, and contemplation?
3. How has the novel "the favor of the night upon the day" contributed to establishing and consolidating the features of belonging and its duality during both the colonial and post-colonial periods?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the enrichment of the discourse on belonging and its various dimensions within post-colonial literature. By examining how one of Algeria's most prominent contemporary writers navigates the complex terrain of dual identity, the research provides insights into the broader phenomenon of cultural hybridity in post-colonial societies. The findings have implications for understanding how literature functions as a site of identity formation, resistance, and cultural negotiation.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

This research focuses specifically on Yasmina Khadra's novel "The Favor of the Night upon the Day" (2013), examining representations of dual belonging across linguistic, religious, and cultural dimensions. The study is limited to textual analysis of the Arabic translation of the novel and does not extend to comparative analysis with other works by the same author or other Algerian writers. The research employs a qualitative methodology, recognising that interpretations of literary texts are inherently subjective and context-dependent.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Algerian Novel Written in French: Historical Development

Algerian literature written in French emerged as an inevitable consequence of French colonialism, which imposed its control over all components of Algerian national identity—language, religion, culture, and territory—working to distort and obliterate its features (Ahmed, 2007). The colonial authorities banned the Arabic language and prohibited its teaching by undermining schools, Qur'anic schools, and mosques, replacing Arabic with the French language and spreading it as an alternative.

The first of these writings was a short story titled "The Sheikh's Revenge," written by Mohamed Ben Rahal and published in the "Tunisian Literary and Artistic Magazine" in October 1891.

The first series of stories was written by Ahmed Boury under the title "Muslims and Christians" and published in the newspaper "Al-Haqq" in 1912 (Ahmed, 2007). However, the primary historian of Algerian literature written in French considers 1920 as the genuine starting point for this emerging literature. The work of "Al-Qaid Ben Cherif", entitled "Ahmed Ben Mustafa Al-Qoumi", is regarded as the beginning of that launch and is viewed as the first novel written by an Algerian in French (Ahmed, 2007).

After the First World War, between 1920 and 1930, literary works emerged including "The Poetic Collection of Salem Al-Qabi", "Oriental Calls" (1920), the autobiography of "Al-Qaid Ben Cherif", and the novel "Zahra, the Astrologer's Wife" by Abdelkader Hadj Hamou (1925) (Ahmed, 2007). This period was followed by questions and confusion among novelists regarding obtaining French citizenship or integration. Most novels from 1929 to 1948 addressed this issue, exploring the balance between being French by virtue of colonisation while maintaining Islamic faith, Arab identity, and national character (Ahmed, 2007).

With the beginning of the 1950s, specifically in 1952, a protest literature emerged that rebelled against the illusion of peaceful coexistence, integration, and throwing oneself into the embrace of French society (Ahmed, 2007). This approach and protest literature culminated in the novels "The Fire" (1954) and "The Loom" (1957), which revealed manifestations of poverty, deprivation, and misery in Algerian society (Ahmed, 2007). With the outbreak of the liberation revolution, narrative works emerged following the model of Mohamed Dib's works, including "Sleep of the Just" ("sommeil du juste") by Mouloud Mammeri (1955) and "Star" by Kateb Yacine (1956), which were designated as revolution novels (Ahmed, 2007).

With the beginning of independence, there was a new direction for the novel after the dispersion of members of the Writers' Association, particularly those writing in French who preferred voluntary exile despite their revolutionary orientation aligned with the country's policy (Ahmed, 2007). This socio-critical tendency continued until the late 1970s with works by Rachid Mimoun and Tahar Djaout in his novel "The Bone Seekers" (1984), persisting even after the October 1988 uprisings (Ahmed, 2007). With the dawn of the 1990s, narrative works emerged criticising Islamic ideology, considering it a political and social threat to freedoms and general principles, as exemplified by Rachid Mimouni's novel "The Curse" (1993) (Fatima, 2018).

There is also Algerian literature in French known as the second generation of Algerian immigrants of Algerian origin who emerged in France, such as Zoulikha Bougherat, Mehdi Charef, Akli Tadjer, and others. "Some researchers judge this as rebellious literature that does not recognise artistic rules, nor even linguistic rules" (Ahmed, 2007, p. 126).

2.2 Theoretical Framework: The Concept of Belonging

Belonging is considered a fundamental concept in social and educational studies, reflecting the relationship between the individual and society and expressing the social and psychological connection between a person and their homeland (Ibn Manẓūr, 1955). Linguistically, belonging is derived from the verb "intamā" (to belong), meaning to attribute oneself to a party or group (Ibn Manẓūr, 1955). Terminologically, it is defined as "the individual's affiliation to their homeland in thought, sentiment, and behaviour" (Al-Bakālī, 2021, p. 78). It is "individuals' affiliation to their country, state, and society, an affiliation that makes them an integral part of

the homeland... in thought, sentiment, and behaviour. It is individuals' pride in this belonging through commitment to the values of the homeland" (Al-Bakālī, 2021, p. 78).

2.2.1 Forms of Belonging

-Religious belonging is considered "the individual's connection to and love for their homeland, a matter rooted in the self, as the homeland for the citizen is the place of life, the place of worship, and the place of wealth. The homeland is a blessing from God upon the individual and society... Love of homeland does not contradict love of Islam as a religion; rather, sincere belonging according to Sharia principles contributes to strengthening Islamic and religious belonging among members of society" (Ḥamāyil, 2011, p. 37).

-National belonging is "the individual's feeling of being part of the nation to which they genuinely belong, participating in its various political, cultural, economic, and social aspects of life, defending it and protecting it from any danger or threat, preserving its values, principles, systems, customs, traditions, and wealth" (Ḥamāyil, 2011, p. 37). The individual's emotional connection and loyalty to their homeland encompasses several values and practices that reinforce and consolidate this feeling in strengthening national belonging and preserving the components of national identity (Ḥamāyil, 2011).

-Political belonging brings together various segments of society despite their religious, ethnic, and cultural differences. It is a form of social identity that distinguishes membership in specific societal groups, influenced by the succession of political generations, the historical context, and the prevailing political system (Ḥamāyil, 2011).

2.3 The Novel as a Literary Genre

The novel is considered one of the most significant and ancient literary genres, as it depicts human reality with all its hopes and pains. It is "a literary genre that shares with myth and storytelling... the narration of specific events that represent reality, reflect human positions, and portray the world in poetic language. It employs prose expression to depict characters, and through time, place, and event, it reveals a vision of the world" (Hijāzī, 2005, p. 297). The novel has come to encompass all discourses, styles, and literary and artistic genres, both minor and major, becoming an open literary genre capable of accommodating all themes, forms, and aesthetic structures (Fatima, 2016).

2.4 Summary of the Novel "What the Day Owes the Night"

The novel "The Favor of the Night upon the Day" by Yasmina Khadra revolves around the story of Younes Mohieddine, whose family consisted of a mother, father, and sister living in the countryside, dependent on the annual harvest. His father had mortgaged his land, and during the harvest season, a fire broke out consuming all the crops and destroying abundant yields, undoubtedly a premeditated act that forced Younes's father to surrender his land to the French enemy—a plot orchestrated by the colonisers (Khadra, 2013).

This compelled them to migrate to the city of Oran after finding themselves bankrupt and the father unable to provide for his son and family. He took him to his uncle Mahi, a pharmacist married to a French woman named Germaine, to raise him, and he became known as Jonas. His uncle Mahi was arrested and imprisoned for a week due to his political views and was mistreated during detention. Upon returning home, he was a changed person, disturbed, and his perspective on the relationship between Algerians and France had shifted (Khadra, 2013).

In *Rio Salado*, a friendship story begins between Younes and French youths that accompanies him throughout his life, almost shattered by years of war, as each person finds themselves facing a test for their nation and homeland. Additionally, a new love story unfolds between Younes and a girl named Émilie. It was an impossible love, as Younes concealed his love for Émilie until the end, leading him to experience a hysterical state and seek his friends' help in finding his lost half, Émilie. The novel depicts events during the French colonisation of Algeria and the post-independence period, exploring themes of love, resistance, friendship, and longing for a homeland through the cultural and social conflicts experienced by Algerian society (Khadra, 2013).

3. Methods

3.1 Research Design

This qualitative study employs a textual analysis approach to examine representations of dual belonging in Yasmina Khadra's novel "The Favor of the Night upon the Day". The research is situated within the framework of post-colonial literary theory, which provides a lens for understanding how literature produced in post-colonial contexts negotiates questions of identity, hybridity, and cultural belonging (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2002).

3.2 Primary Source

The primary source for this analysis is the Arabic translation of Yasmina Khadra's novel "The Favor of the Night upon the Day" ("Faḍl al-layl 'alā al-naḥār"), translated by Muhammad Sari and published by the Ministry of Culture in 2013. The choice of the Arabic translation is justified by the need to examine how cultural and identity-related content is conveyed in the language of the target audience while maintaining the original's thematic concerns.

3.3 Analytical Framework

The analysis is organised around four dimensions of belonging identified in the literature review:

1. Linguistic belonging: Examination of language use, code-switching, naming practices, and linguistic duality as markers of identity
2. Religious belonging: Analysis of religious references, practices, and the intersection of Islamic and Christian influences
3. Customary and traditional belonging: Investigation of cultural practices, traditional attire, hospitality customs, and social rituals
4. Symbolic belonging: Analysis of the novel's title and its metaphorical significance for understanding dual identity

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through close reading of the primary text, identifying passages related to each of the four analytical dimensions. Passages were selected based on their explicit or implicit reference to themes of belonging, identity, linguistic duality, religious practice, cultural custom, and colonial/post-colonial experience. Quotations were recorded with page numbers for accurate citation.

3.5 Data Analysis

Textual analysis was conducted using thematic analysis techniques (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Passages were coded according to the four analytical dimensions, with sub-themes identified

within each category. The analysis sought to identify patterns, contradictions, and nuances in the representation of dual belonging, considering how individual passages contribute to the overall thematic architecture of the novel. The analysis also drew on secondary sources, including literary criticism, historical accounts, and theoretical frameworks on belonging and identity, to contextualise and interpret the findings.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity of the analysis, multiple passages were examined for each theme, and interpretations were grounded in explicit textual evidence. The analysis was conducted systematically, with findings compared against existing scholarship on Khadra's work and post-colonial Algerian literature. The use of direct quotations allows readers to evaluate the interpretations independently.

4. Results

4.1 Symbolism of the Title

The title "The Favor of the Night upon the Day" in Yasmina Khadra's novel is laden with profound symbolic connotations related to the struggle between good and evil, darkness and light, oppression and liberation. The night symbolises darkness, oppression, despair, and the difficult moments experienced by individuals and societies—in the novel, representing the period of French colonisation of Algeria and its accompanying repression and violence. The day symbolises hope, light, liberation, and bright moments—in the novel, representing the Algerian revolution and victory over colonisation. The title thus reflects the Algerian reality and the historical struggles it underwent on both personal and national levels (Khadra, 2013).

4.2 Linguistic Belonging

Language is the sole conduit for achieving connection and communication between generations, individuals, and societies. It is a foundation and component of national identity and a determinant of belonging. Most societies and nations are not free from the phenomenon of linguistic duality, which is attributable to colonial legacies. Algerian writers wrote in French, the language of the coloniser, yet despite writing in the language of the Other, they did not disavow their past, history, and authenticity; the discerning reader can discern and perceive the Arab-Islamic identity in their writings.

In the novel "The Favor of the Night upon the Day", Yasmina Khadra accorded language a status inseparable from belonging, mentioning this in several instances:

> "Uncle Sam did not only deploy his military forces; he also brought his culture, jars of milk powder mixed with concentrated milk, chocolate, corned beef, Schweppes, Coca-Cola, candy sugars, red cheese, and blonde cigarettes. Bars train Yankee music, while shoe-shine boys who have turned into newspaper vendors run from public squares to tram stops shouting 'Star and Stripes' in an incomprehensible dialect" (Khadra, 2013, p. 106).

Here, he conveys the prevailing Algerian cultural reality in the language of the French coloniser, revealing the dual belonging and the Arab and French identities, as he worked to obliterate the language by promoting the coloniser's language. In the novel, we find:

> "Oh yes, your name is Younes, isn't it? Younes. Why then do you call yourself Jonas?" (Khadra, 2013, p. 90).

Here, the writer embodies the contradiction and identity duality in the character of "Younes"—the Algerian Arab—and "Jonas"—the foreign Frenchman. This touches the protagonist through the difference in identity and belonging based on his name. We also observe the influence of colonial, racist discourse on this duality and the rejection of all things Arab:

> "I am from the Rossignol family, have you forgotten? Can you imagine that I am married to an Arab? Death is preferable" (Khadra, 2013, p. 90).

This class and living disparity between the native population and the colonisers is depicted by the writer in his distribution of places inhabited by Algerians:

> "I searched for him in the popular kitchens, cafés, and Arab baths... in vain" (Khadra, 2013, p. 116).

On the other hand, he portrays the living and cultural conditions of the colonisers, which prevented Arabs from entering these places:

> "Do not set foot here again, you louse-ridden one... this is not a place for your kind. Take your shoes, you wretched Juha..." (Khadra, 2013, p. 67).

The writer thus depicts these barriers and obstacles targeting Arabs, insulting them with abusive words that offend their person and belonging: "louse-ridden, wretched Juha".

4.3 Religious Belonging

Religion constitutes an essential pillar in the identity of cultural societies, determining individuals' behaviour, actions, and emotional responses—what is known as nationalism. "It is not strange for religion or religious doctrine to be a fundamental element in forming the national character, because religion generates a kind of unity in the feeling of individuals who belong to it and arouses in their souls certain emotions and tendencies that affect their actions. From this perspective, religion is among the most important social bonds connecting individuals to one another" ('Aṭiyyah, 2024, p. 39).

Consequently, educational systems and curricula during the colonial period were influenced by religious beliefs. However, the French educational system separated state affairs from religion and oversaw secular education far removed from any religious direction from the Church, while religious institutions operated educational establishments and supervised them through Church principles. This was intended to instil in the minds of Algerians in French schools the alienation of Islam and its suppression as one of the pillars of Algerian cultural identity, spreading Christianity and Judaism through missionary campaigns.

The relationship between the self and the other (Algerian and French) is an ideological war fundamentally based on conflict over sacred things, through the Crusades led by the Church. The first thing they targeted was the institutions teaching the Qur'an, religious schools, and the demolition of mosques. However, Algerians clung to their Islamic identity, as we find in the novel through the strength of their faith and their articulation of Qur'anic verses and expressions:

> "He spends most of his days contemplating the crop that promises a sure joy after lean years of drought and barren land" (Khadra, 2013, p. 8).

This is adapted from the story of Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) in the Qur'anic verse: "And the king said, 'Indeed, I have seen [in a dream] seven fat cows being eaten by seven lean ones and seven green spikes [of grain] and others [that were] dry. O eminent ones, explain to

me my vision, if you should interpret visions'" (Qur'an, Surah Yusuf, verse 34). The novel also refers to the accounting of people for their good and bad deeds, with one group in Paradise and another in Hell:

> "My father did not realise that the girl had not moved on, and that something had been in her mind since that night when Hell chose to throw its fire on our fields" (Khadra, 2013, p. 12).

Religious belonging and identity appear in the response of will to God and submission to Him:

> "That night, when I saw the fire from afar, I realised that a wretched poor man was returning to Hell, but I did not imagine that it concerned you," my father replied, "It is God's will" (Khadra, 2013, p. 13).

The novel also shows influence from Christianity and its rituals, and what they believe about evil spirits pursuing humans:

> "That day was Sunday morning, and I was at home fighting boredom. My uncle had returned to isolating himself in his office, so he was like a dead man, and Germaine went to church" (Khadra, 2013, p. 89).

And his statement:

> "And counting the stations of the cross that had to be challenged to reach the moon" (Khadra, 2013, p. 85).

This demonstrates the extent of his Christian influence.

4.4 Customary and Traditional Belonging

This belonging emerges through the portrayal of Algerian society during the French colonisation, presenting the contradictions and conflicts arising between authentic customs and traditions rooted in Algerian society and the alien practices and customs imposed upon it. Identity intertwines with customs and traditions, revealing belonging through adherence to customs and traditions that reflect cultural and collective identity in the face of the coloniser, who sought to impose them as new practices.

This generates conflict between the novel's characters, as belonging is influenced by customs and traditions on one hand and by the new reality on the other. Given that societal culture is a primary determinant of identity, differences in intellectual orientations lead to different cultural identities, which derive their dimensions from the constants of Algerian society that preserve its customs, traditions, and religious and cultural values. These include modes of dress, types of celebrations, social rituals, and traditional behaviours.

Traditional attire and clothing are prominent markers of a people's culture. In "The Favor of the Night upon the Day", the writer portrays the image of the Algerian preserving their heritage and origins. Younes mentions his ancestors' attire:

> "My uncle passed by a second photograph gathering three men in masters' burnouses, dignified faces with well-groomed beards, strong looks as if they might burst from the frame" (Khadra, 2013, p. 56).

The burnous, a traditional garment passed down through generations, reflects the identity of the Algerian proud of his authenticity and belonging to his homeland, resisting all that is foreign to his culture and customs. The writer also highlights a traditional headwear of the region, the turban:

> "The shopkeeper muttered while adjusting his turban that had fallen over his face" (Khadra, 2013, p. 9).

Among the customs is generosity and hospitality, which are inherent traits of the people of the countryside:

> "My father sent me to ask him what he wanted from us. He is a shepherd wearing tatters, with a withered face and rough hands. He proposed that we stay and eat; my father refused... The shepherd insisted; the neighbours would not forgive him for leaving a family to sleep in the open near his hut. My father replied with a categorical refusal" (Khadra, 2013, p. 15).

Conversely, he mentions the customs and dress of foreigners among the colonisers with whom Jonas associated and mixed in their neighbourhood and environment:

> "There are some Romans moving here and there, and Muslims in European suits, the tarbush on the ears" (Khadra, 2013, p. 94).

4.5 Summary of Results

The analysis reveals that Khadra's novel effectively portrays the duality of belonging through multiple narrative devices. Linguistic duality is evident in the protagonist's name change from Younes to Jonas and the use of French to convey Algerian cultural realities. Religious belonging manifests through Qur'anic references, Islamic practices, and Christian influences, reflecting the intersection of cultures. Customary and traditional belonging emerges through depictions of traditional attire (burnous, turban), hospitality customs, and the contrast between Algerian and European practices. The novel's title symbolically represents the colonial period (night) and the liberation struggle (day), embodying the tension between oppression and hope.

5. Discussion

5.1 Interpretation of Findings

The findings of this study demonstrate that Khadra navigates the duality of belonging not as a rejection of either identity but as a complex negotiation between Arab-Islamic heritage and Western cultural influences. This aligns with post-colonial theoretical frameworks that emphasise hybridity as a characteristic feature of cultural identity in societies that have experienced colonisation (Bhabha, 1994). The novel serves as a counter-discourse to colonial narratives that sought to obliterate Algerian identity, illustrating how literature becomes a site of identity formation and resistance.

The representation of dual belonging in the novel reflects the broader historical and sociopolitical realities of Algeria during and after colonisation. The linguistic duality represented through the protagonist's name change from Younes to Jonas symbolises the forced and voluntary transformations that Algerians underwent during the colonial period. This naming duality is not merely a superficial change but represents the fundamental tension between indigenous identity and the imposed colonial identity—a tension that many Algerians experienced in their daily lives (Ahmed, 2013).

5.2 Linguistic Belonging and Colonial Legacy

The linguistic dimension of belonging is particularly significant in the Algerian context. The choice to write in French—the language of the coloniser—has been a subject of considerable debate among Algerian intellectuals. Some critics have argued that writing in French represents a form of cultural submission, while others contend that it allows Algerian writers to reach a

broader audience and subvert the colonial language from within (Ahmed, 2007). Khadra's novel demonstrates the latter position, using French to convey Algerian cultural realities and critique colonial oppression.

The scenes depicting linguistic and social exclusion—such as the Arab baths, popular kitchens, and the colonisers' spaces—illustrate the spatial and social dimensions of colonial hierarchy. These depictions reveal how language and space were intertwined in maintaining colonial power structures. The insulting terms directed at Arabs ("louse-ridden, wretched Juha") further demonstrate the racialised discourse that underpinned colonial rule and its lasting impact on Algerian identity.

5.3 Religious Identity and Cultural Hybridity

The religious dimension of belonging in the novel reveals the complex intersection of Islamic and Christian influences in Algerian society. Khadra does not present religious identity as a simple binary of Muslim versus Christian but rather as a spectrum of influences that shaped Algerian identity during and after colonisation. The Qur'anic references and Islamic practices in the novel demonstrate the persistence of Islamic identity despite colonial attempts to suppress it. At the same time, the references to Christian rituals and beliefs reflect the cultural contact and influence that occurred during the colonial period.

This religious hybridity is not presented as a source of confusion or conflict but as a reality of Algerian experience. The protagonist's uncle's transformation after imprisonment—becoming disturbed and changing his perspective on the relationship between Algerians and France—illustrates how political experiences could reshape religious and cultural identities. This aligns with 'Atiyyah's (2024) observation that religion generates unity among individuals who belong to it while also being influenced by historical and political contexts.

5.4 Cultural Practices and Resistance

The representation of customary and traditional belonging in the novel demonstrates how cultural practices became sites of resistance during colonisation. The traditional attire (burnous, turban) and hospitality customs depicted in the novel represent continuity with pre-colonial Algerian culture and resistance to colonial cultural imposition. The contrast between Algerian and European practices highlights the cultural difference that colonial rule sought to erase.

The hospitality scene—where the shepherd insists on offering shelter despite the family's initial refusal—illustrates the deep-rooted cultural values that persisted despite colonial disruption. This scene also reveals the social pressure within Algerian communities to maintain traditional customs, as the neighbours would not have forgiven the shepherd for failing to offer hospitality. This demonstrates how cultural practices were not merely individual choices but were embedded in community expectations and social structures.

5.5 The Novel as Counter-Discourse

Khadra's novel functions as a counter-discourse to colonial narratives that represented Algeria as culturally inferior and in need of French civilisation. By presenting Algerian culture—its language, religion, customs, and traditions—with depth and complexity, the novel challenges orientalist representations and affirms the value of Algerian identity. The title itself, "The Favor of the Night upon the Day", suggests that liberation (day) is built upon the experiences of oppression (night), and that both are integral to Algerian history and identity.

The novel's exploration of impossible love between Younes and Émilie further illustrates the barriers created by colonial hierarchies and how they affected personal relationships. The love story symbolises the broader impossibility of genuine connection across colonial divides, while also suggesting the persistence of human connection despite these barriers.

5.6 Implications for Understanding Post-Colonial Identity

The findings of this study have broader implications for understanding post-colonial identity formation. Khadra's novel suggests that dual belonging is not a pathology or a source of confusion but a legitimate and rich form of identity that encompasses multiple affiliations without negating national allegiance. This challenges essentialist notions of identity that insist on singular, fixed categories of belonging.

The novel also demonstrates that hybridity can serve as a foundation for resistance rather than a sign of cultural weakness. By writing in French while affirming Algerian culture, Khadra subverts the colonial language and uses it to articulate a distinctly Algerian experience. This strategy of appropriation and transformation is characteristic of post-colonial literature (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2002).

5.7 Comparison with Existing Literature

The findings of this study align with previous scholarship on Algerian literature written in French. Ahmed (2007, 2013) has documented the historical development of this literature and its role in articulating Algerian identity. The present study extends this scholarship by providing a detailed textual analysis of how dual belonging is represented in a contemporary work.

The study also resonates with broader discussions of hybridity in post-colonial theory (Bhabha, 1994; Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2002). The novel's representation of dual belonging as a creative and productive tension rather than a source of crisis aligns with theoretical perspectives that view hybridity as a characteristic feature of post-colonial cultural production.

5.8 Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides a detailed analysis of dual belonging in Khadra's novel, several limitations should be acknowledged. The analysis is limited to one novel by a single author and may not represent the full range of approaches to belonging in Algerian literature written in French. Future research could extend this analysis to other works by Khadra or comparative studies with other Algerian writers.

Additionally, the study focuses on the Arabic translation of the novel rather than the original French text. While this choice was justified by the research focus on cultural content, future research might examine how the linguistic dimension of dual belonging operates differently in the original French text. Research could also explore readers' responses to representations of dual belonging in the novel, investigating how different audiences interpret and engage with these themes.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Findings

This study has examined representations of dual belonging in Yasmina Khadra's novel "The Favor of the Night upon the Day" across four dimensions: linguistic affiliation, religious identity, customary and traditional belonging, and symbolic representation through the novel's

title. The analysis reveals that Khadra's novel offers a nuanced exploration of dual belonging, presenting it as an inherent characteristic of post-colonial Algerian identity rather than a source of conflict.

The linguistic duality represented through the protagonist's name change from Younes to Jonas and the use of French to convey Algerian cultural realities demonstrates how language functions as a site of identity negotiation. Religious belonging manifests through Qur'anic references, Islamic practices, and Christian influences, reflecting the complex intersection of religious traditions in Algerian society. Customary and traditional belonging emerges through depictions of traditional attire, hospitality customs, and the contrast between Algerian and European practices. The novel's title symbolically represents the colonial period and the liberation struggle, embodying the tension between oppression and hope.

6.2 Answering the Research Questions

The analysis has addressed the three research questions posed in the introduction. First, the duality of belonging and the philosophy of identity can indeed be discerned within the narrative developments of the novel, particularly through the protagonist's experiences of linguistic duality, religious pluralism, and cultural negotiation. Second, the novel extends beyond surface-level representation to decode latent meanings, such as the symbolic significance of the title and the deeper implications of naming practices and cultural references. Third, the novel contributes to establishing and consolidating the features of belonging and its duality by presenting Algerian identity as inherently hybrid, shaped by both indigenous traditions and colonial influences.

6.3 Contributions to Knowledge

This study contributes to the enrichment of the discourse on belonging and its various dimensions within post-colonial literature. By examining how one of Algeria's most prominent contemporary writers navigates the complex terrain of dual identity, the research provides insights into the broader phenomenon of cultural hybridity in post-colonial societies. The findings demonstrate that literature functions as a site of identity formation, resistance, and cultural negotiation, challenging colonial discourse while affirming Algerian cultural identity.

6.4 Theoretical and Practical Implications

The theoretical implications of this study extend to post-colonial literary theory and identity studies. The novel suggests that linguistic and cultural hybridity can serve as a foundation for a more inclusive understanding of national belonging, challenging essentialist notions of identity. This has practical implications for understanding how post-colonial societies navigate the legacies of colonialism and construct new forms of identity that incorporate both indigenous and colonial influences.

6.5 Final Remarks

Yasmina Khadra, in his novel "The Favor of the Night upon the Day", successfully presents an image that brings together two different cultures, attempting to integrate one into the other and open towards it. Belonging and identity thus take on their dimensions without forgetting the other or excluding them, and without changing negative views of all things Arab. Rather, superiority lies in mastering sciences and knowledge and attaining what Western civilisation has achieved. This novel thus serves as a response to colonial discourse that worked to

eliminate Algerian identity and turn away from everything constituting belonging to local Algerian culture. Ultimately, Khadra's work demonstrates that the duality of belonging, far from being a source of confusion or conflict, can be a source of richness and creativity in post-colonial cultural production.

References:

1. Ahmed, M. (2007). *Al-adab al-jazā'irī bi al-lisān al-faransī* [Algerian literature in the French language]. Diwan al-Matbū'āt al-Jāmi'iyyah.
2. Ahmed, M. (2013). *Azmat al-huwiyyah fī al-riwāyah al-jazā'iriyyah* [The crisis of identity in the Algerian novel]. Dar al-Sāhil, Ministry of Culture.
3. Al-Bakālī, A. (2021). *Min wahy al-ḍamīr fī al-intimā' wa al-muwāṭanah* [From the conscience's inspiration on belonging and citizenship] (1st ed.). Ministry of Information and Tourism, Yemen.
4. Al-Rukaybī, A. (2009). *Al-qissah al-jazā'iriyyah al-qasīrah* [The Algerian short story] (1st ed.). Dar al-Kitāb al-'Arabī.
5. 'Aṭiyyah, M. A. (2024). *Al-ta' līm wa azmat al-huwiyyah al-thaqāfiyyah* [Education and the crisis of cultural identity]. Faculty of Education, Cairo University, Al-Azhar University, Taybah Foundation for Publishing and Distribution.
6. Fatima, M. (2018). *Istrāṭijyyāt al-tajrīb fī riwāyat Rashīd Būjidrah* [Experimental strategies in the novel of Rachid Boudjedra] (Master's thesis). University of Guelma.
7. Fatima, Z. H. (2016). *Tarjamat al-'anāṣir al-thaqāfiyyah fī al-riwāyah al-jazā'iriyyah al-maktūbah bi al-faransiyyah: Riwāyat bimādhā taḥlum al-dhi'āb li-Yāsmīnah Khaḍrā* [Translation of cultural elements in the Algerian novel written in French: Yasmina Khadra's novel *What Do Wolves Dream Of*] (Master's thesis). University of Oran.
8. Ḥamāyil, A. Y. (2011). *Dawr idhā'at "Amin FM" fī ta'zīz al-intimā' al-waṭanī ladā al-ṭalabah al-jāmi'iyyīn* [The role of "Amin FM" radio in strengthening national belonging among university students] (Master's thesis). Middle East University.
9. Hijāzī, S. S. (2005). *Al-naqd al-'arabī wa awhām ruwwād al-ḥadāthah* [Arab criticism and the illusions of modernity pioneers] (1st ed.). Taybah Foundation for Publishing and Distribution.
10. Ibn Manẓūr, J. M. (1955). *Lisān al-'arab* [The tongue of the Arabs]. Dar Sader.
11. Khadra, Y. (2013). *Faḍl al-layl 'alā al-nahār* [What the day owes the night] (M. Sari, Trans.). Ministry of Culture, Sidia Publications.
12. Murtadā, A. (1998). *Fī naẓariyyat al-riwāyah* [On the theory of the novel]. Dar 'Ālam al-Ma'rifah.

Online Resource

13. *Buḥūth wa dirāsāt: Al-intimā' wa al-walā' al-waṭanī—Nahj al-sharī'ah wa al-sunnah al-nabawiyyah* [Research and studies: Belonging and national loyalty—The approach of Sharia and prophetic tradition]. Retrieved from <https://almanalmagazine>