



Frantz Fanon's Economic, Psychic, and Cultural Problematic of Decolonization in Ahlam Mosteghanemi's *Memory in the Flesh* (1993)

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Abstract:

Decolonization illustrates the attempt of the colonized to dismantle colonization and obtain economic, psychic, and cultural liberty. The first type of domination is economic. Fanon claims that in colonial days, the national leader reflects the colonized expectations for freedom. However, after independence, the national leader turns into a businessman. In *Memory in the Flesh*, Khalid Ibn Tobal, describes the character of Si Sharif who is redefined from a free revolutionary fighter to a businessman. The second type of domination, according to Fanon, is psychic. First of all, he correlates psychic alienation with the colonized loss of freedom. This is evident in Khalid's psychic alienation when his writings are officially censored. Moreover, Fanon mentions that physical torture stimulates psychic trauma. After independence, Khalid is shocked when he is tortured by his Algerian fellowmen. The third type of domination refers to the process of cultural assimilation that entails the erasure of indigenous knowledge structures and traditions, replacing them with European modes of thought. The most feasible sign of acculturation is the colonized use of the colonizer's language. This is evident when Khalid refers to the Algerian elites' use of the French language. When his beloved, Hayat/Ahlam is married to a nouveau riche, Khalid realizes that she belongs to the new, culturally assimilated, Algerian new generation. Although the ending seems to promote the inevitability of cultural assimilation, the fact that the novel is written by a young Algerian in the Arabic language gives hope to the possibility of a counter-hegemonic discourse.

Received: 21/4/2022

Accepted: 30/5/2022

Available online: 29/12/2022

Decolonization refers to colonized groups' quest for independence. The term illustrates the attempt of the colonized to dismantle colonization and obtain economic, psychic, and cultural liberty (Dutta 132; Smith 27; Mignolo 458; Tuck & Yang 22). Within the same argument, a psychiatrist and political philosopher, Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) focused on the oppressed Blacks and Third World African Arabs who suffered under colonialism and racism. He wrote four works in this field: *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), *A Dying Colonialism* (1959), *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), and *Towards the African Revolution* (1964), the latter was published posthumously. Throughout these four books, Fanon discusses the three aforementioned types of domination exerted by the colonizer over the colonized: the economic, the psychic, and the cultural.

Algeria is the nation most suitable to measure the condition of the colonized; it presents one of the greatest illustrations of Frantz Fanon's problematic of decolonization. In her novel, *Memory in the Flesh*, Ahlam Mosteghanemi investigates the traumatic experience of the Algerian Independence War and the equally traumatic situation of post-war Algeria.

Echoing Fanon's theory, Mosteghanemi shows that the 130 years of colonization were maintained by a strategy of economic domination, psychic estrangement, and cultural assimilation of native traditions.

According to Fanon, the economy of the colonized country is directed to the European colonizer. Fanon contends that the economy, in this context, is overlapped with racial aspects. That is to say, a link is formed between skin color and economic status where the whites are the privileged classes and the black natives are the economically disadvantaged: "In the colonies, the economic substructure is also the superstructure. The cause is the consequence; you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich" (*The Wretched of the Earth* 39). Since racial division evolves into an economic division, the colonized are excluded and rendered subordinate. One manifestation of the economic division appears in a similar division of two geographical partitions, the first is the "settler's town" and the second is the "native town": "The settler's town is a strongly-built town, all made of stone and steel. It is a brightly-lit town." On the other hand, "the native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light . . . a crouching village . . . It is a town of niggers and dirty Arabs" (38). The colonialist economic supremacy, thus, leads to the colonized economic alienation.

Furthermore, Fanon demonstrates that economic domination happens not only in a colonized country, but it also continues after the country is liberated. The newly independent countries' native aristocracy shows all manifestations of economic dominance. This aristocracy seizes control of the

society's structures in the same way the colonial power did. This is because although a shift of power took place, a shift of consciousness does not:

The national bourgeoisie turns its back more and more to the interior and on real facts of its undeveloped country, and tends to look toward the former mother country and the foreign capitalists who count on its obliging compliance . . . before independence; the leader generally embodies the aspirations of the people for independence, political liberty, and national dignity. But as soon as independence is declared . . . the leader will reveal his inner purpose: to become the general president of that company of profiteers. (164-165)

Indeed, the national economy during independence is not established on new socio-economic structures. The national elite is always calling for the nationalization of economic enterprises. Nationalization in this context does not mean to put the economic structure under the fair control of the state and to meet the nation's demands. On the contrary, nationalization simply means transferring unjust benefits left behind from the colonial past onto the native elites' possession (150-151). Moreover, the national economy becomes practically under the control of the former imperial authority which in turn raises its requirements and makes less effort to conceal its grip over the ruling party. Consequently, natives linger in dreadful destitution, gradually awakening to their leaders' incomprehensible betrayal. The bourgeoisie are unable to heed their lesson. It does not alter the income distribution across various sectors or social classes (166). According to Fanon, a rebellion should take place against these aristocrats in order to gain true freedom. Since social structures have not been demolished, alienation continues to exist (10). Economically, this meant that the conquered people's economy is now simply channeled towards the benefit of the bourgeoisie instead of the former European conquering power.

The second type of domination, according to Fanon, is psychic isolation exerted by the colonizer over the colonized. This isolation leads to a form of a detachment of the person from him/her inner self. Fanon emphasizes that his study of alienation involves significant psychological factors (*Black Skin, White Masks* 12). A renowned psychiatrist who worked to cure Algerians from the repercussions of war and colonialism, Fanon realizes that colonialism in Algeria hampered his attempts to rehabilitate his patients. In his resignation letter from the French hospital in Algeria, Fanon shows intense alarm about the traumatic influence of French colonialism on the psychological health of the Algerians. First of all, he correlates psychic alienation with the colonized loss of freedom:

Madness is one of the means man has of losing his freedom . . . the degree of alienation of the inhabitants of this country appears to me frightening. If psychiatry is the medical technique that aims to enable man no longer to be a stranger to his environment, I owe it to myself to affirm that the Arab, permanently an alien in his own country, lives in a state of absolute depersonalization. (*Toward the African Revolution* 53)

In his book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon dedicates a whole chapter to “Colonial War and Mental Disorders” in which he describes different traumatic experiences of the post-war Algerians. He observes that war becomes a fertile environment for the growth of psychological disorders (250). Fanon notices that one of the main causes of psychic trauma in Algerian patients is because of torture. He talks about the colonizer's violence against the colonized by which he means the physical force in particular. According to Fanon, violence is unavoidable within the colonial regime. It is not only used at the beginning of colonial control but is also maintained throughout the whole reign of its domination. In colonial nations, the police and the army, via their immediate presence and continuous action, keep eye on the natives and instruct them not to rebel using rifles and grenades. It is clear that government agencies use the language of absolute force (37). This absolute force— that is the language of the colonial regime— induces traumatic responses on the part of the native Algerians, leaving them psychologically impaired. The post-independence government acted in the same way the colonial power did, restricting the natives' freedom and using physical force to control them, resulting, similarly, in the colonized psychic impairment.

Nevertheless, the French colonial rule did not only sustain its authority through pure physical force, but it also was keen on assimilating Algerians within the French value system, assuming cultural domination over them. Within the same argument, Antonio Gramsci distinguishes between "the night-watchman state" as an authoritarian apparatus based on police and army, and "the ethical state," which plays an educational and constructive role in the creation of individuals through securing their consent (Barker 463). Domination via force is combined with dominance via ideas. They counterbalance each other mutually without force predominating consent (Gramsci 80). Indeed, under French colonialism, the two models coexisted: the night-watchman state, which maintains repressive control over the state, and the ethical state, which maintains serious ideological authority over the various societal structures (Kellner 4).

In order to maintain its authority, the colonial power stresses its cultural superiority. Like the racial division that evolved into economic division resulting in rich whites and poor blacks, racial division similarly evolves into a cultural distinction between the high culture of the white Europeans

and the low culture of the indigenous Africans. Therefore, race becomes not an essential quality; rather, a sign of civilization. That is, if you are white, you are civilized; if you are black, you are barbaric. Europe aspired to assimilate the indigenous culture into the European culture to keep its domination. This process of assimilation entailed the erasure of indigenous knowledge structures and native traditions, replacing them with European modes of thought, cultural practices, and values. Fanon calls this: "rehabilitation" (*The Wretched of the Earth* 208). Rehabilitation refers to dismantling and debasing native cultures. It refers to convincing the natives that the colonizer is their savior against barbarism. As Fanon puts it:

Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it . . . the total result looked for by colonial domination was indeed to convince the natives that colonialism came to lighten their darkness. (209-210)

Trying to overcome their induced inferiority complex, the natives—especially the bourgeois elites and intellectuals—are willing to embrace the *superior* values. They become convinced that they will be taken out of the "jungle status" in accordance with their assimilation into Western cultural norms (*Black Skin, White Masks* 18). Thus, the natives reject their low culture/ inferior race and adopt the high culture/ superior race's views and ideologies. They declare their approval of the colonizer's cultural paradigm and their equal repudiation of their own cultural traditions (*Toward the African Revolution* 38-39); hence, they establish their consciousness on premises that are alien and become estranged from their own thought (*The Wretched of the Earth* 177).

The most feasible sign of acculturation is the colonized use of the colonizer's language. In this context, language is not just a means of communication. As Fanon argues: "To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization" (*Black Skins, White Masks* 17-18). The native's ability to express him/herself successfully in the foreign language automatically earns him/her a higher position in the colonial class hierarchy. Fanon also argues that whoever speaks a certain language, he/she possesses the world represented by that language as "mastery of language affords remarkable power"(18). The better the native can speak the colonized language, the closer he/she is to the powerful, high class.

The result of the native's acceptance of cultural imposition is a complete disintegration of identity: "In the man of color, there is a constant effort to run away from his own individuality, to annihilate his own presence" (60). This *individuality* or *presence* refers to the native's essential race,

norms, traditions, and values. Since the colonial rule is a comprehensive denial of the *Other's* individuality and a frantic persistence to deny the *Other* all qualities of humanity, it alienates the people it dominates, forcing them to ask, "In reality, who am I" (*The Wretched of the Earth* 249). Moreover, despite renouncing his cultural structures and yielding to a new Western lifestyle, the native is eventually startled to discover that he is still the subject of the colonized scorn. The culture for which the native annihilates his identity does not acknowledge him/her in return:

Having judged, condemned, abandoned his cultural forms, his language, his food habits, his sexual behavior, his way of sitting down, of resting, of laughing, of enjoying himself, the oppressed flings himself upon the imposed culture with the desperation of a drowning man. The oppressed is shocked to find that he continues to be the object of racism and contempt. (*Toward the African Revolution* 39)

Within the same context, *William Du Bois* (1868-1963) refers to the notion of "double consciousness," which is the experience of the blacks in perceiving themselves through the views of the whites. Because the colonizer is superior in power and politics to the natives, the colonized develops a strong inferiority complex. He/she comes to despise his/her language and culture, adopting, instead, those of the colonizer. Indeed, the colonized embraces the colonizer's logic, despising his own people and considering himself superior to them (Du Bois 2). The assimilated adopts all the charges and denunciations of the colonizer that the former becomes used to view his/her countrymen through the perspective of the latter (Memmi 123). Likewise, Homi Bhabha refers to the notion of colonial mimicry. Copying, adaptation, and adoption are all considered forms of mimicry. Mimicry differs from simple imitation in that it involves an excessive degree of mimicking of languages, behaviors, and beliefs of the prevailing cultures (Bhabha 86). In the field of post-colonial discourse, mimicry refers to the colonized who, under certain impositions, starts to mimic the colonizer. These impositions are promoted, ironically, by the colonizers themselves. Conscious of its transience, colonial power develops innovative dominance strategies in order to ensure its survival by creating a class of native intermediaries between them and the people they control; these intermediaries become indigenous in blood but Western in moralities, thoughts, and perception. Bhabha notes that the colonizer does not allow for the full assimilation of the colonized into his/her dominant culture. Rather, the colonizer makes sure that the repetition that is done by the colonized will always be a "repetition with difference" (122). That is, the colonized can mimic the colonizer, but a space of difference must be maintained. Otherwise, the colonized subject will represent a threat to the original identity of the colonial authority eventually undermining its power (86). Therefore, a complete process of assimilation

proves impossible. As a result, cultural alienation persists. After independence, the native countries become more liable to the colonialist cultural hegemony. Though the colonialists martially retreat from the land, they culturally dominate the natives' mindset.

Memory in the Flesh (1993) investigates the traumatic experience of the Algerian Independence War and the equally traumatic situation of post-war Algeria. The influence of French colonial rule on Algeria is the most essential theme covered in Ahlam Mosteghanemi's works. Algeria is the nation most suitable to measure the condition of the colonized, and it presents one of the greatest illustrations of Frantz Fanon's problematic of decolonization. The 130 years of colonization were maintained by a strategy of economic domination, psychic estrangement, and cultural assimilation of native traditions, resulting in the infusion of French culture into the structure of the Algerian community (Bamia 1-2). Valassopoulos, one of the few Western critics who analyzed the novel, claims that *Memory in the Flesh* seeks to deploy mechanisms by which the political and social are reconstructed, enacted, and perceived via the personal (111). This perception is evident in the various allegories of the word "flesh". In the course of the novel, "flesh" is, on one occasion, an allegory of the connection to one's nation; at another time, "flesh" refers to the sacrifice of the whole body by the martyr; in a different context, "flesh" refers to the desecration of the female's body through its sexual submission. The novel refers to the personal experience of two protagonists: Khalid Ibn Tobal and Hayat/Ahlam. Through the interplay between the real and the allegorical, Mosteghanemi juxtaposes two generations: the old one is the martially French-occupied generation of the revolutionary war leaders vs. the culturally assimilated new generation of the post-war time, providing new perspectives on modern Algeria.

Khalid Ibn Tobal, the protagonist of the novel, is swept away by his nostalgia for his motherland, Algeria, which was crushed under the onslaughts of France, ironically, after its War of Liberation in 1962. Khalid joins the national revolution shortly after his mother died, which illustrates from the very beginning that Khalid identifies Algeria with his mother: "The revolution was entering its second year and I was in my third month as an orphan. I cannot remember now exactly when the country took over the character of motherhood and gave me an unexpected and strange affection and compulsive sense of belonging" (Mosteghanemi 14). Khalid's involvement in the premises of the liberation war begins at the demonstrations of May 1945. In Al-Kudya prison, Khalid gets to know Si Tahir, a true revolutionary leader. Throughout these days, Khalid comes to know the meaning of sacrifice and devotion for the sake of one's homeland. This is the Algeria that Khalid yearns for. Khalid's experience of the liberation war cannot be forgotten since he left there the memory not only of

the maternal warmth embodied in the issue of liberation but also the memory of his “flesh”: his amputated arm. However, in the post-war nation-state, Algeria fails to put up with the post-independence hardships. Khalid becomes alienated because of economic dominance, psychic traumas (due to intellectual censorship, alienation and physical violence), and cultural assimilation. Self-exiled in Paris, Khalid put his last hope in Hayat/Ahlam whom he fantasizes as the Algeria of the revolution. Yet, this last hope is destroyed when he realizes that cultural assimilation has firmly rooted itself within the mindset of the Algerian new generation.

The first reason for Khalid's sense of alienation is the French economic dominance in Algeria. According to Fanon, the newly-independent countries' native aristocracy seizes control of the society's economic structure in the same way the colonial power did. Fanon claims that in colonial days, the national leader typically reflects the colonized expectations for freedom, political reforms, and justice. However, when independence is achieved, the national leader discloses his real motive: to become the general director of a multi-national corporation (*Wretched of the Earth* 164-165). Khalid describes the economic situation of post-independence Algeria; he is resentful that economic dominance is maintained now by the corrupt post-liberation elites instead of the former colonial forces. According to Khalid, these are "the overseas Algerian elite" who talk about "foreign interest projects" sponsored by Algeria (Mosteghanemi 153), turning the socialist revolution into a capitalist regime. Moreover, Khalid describes the post-liberation elites as the "hangers-on or parasites emerging from nowhere, stretching their tentacles rapidly and doubling their leaves and branches until they soon covered the whole area" (152). One example of these Algerian elites is Si Sharif. Khalid expresses his disappointment at the transformation of Si Sharif from a free revolutionary fighter to a businessman. Khalid reflects that some of Constantine's aura remains in Si Sharif's attitude, some of past Algeria and its recollections, but he is now encircled by "the drones and dregs of society" and has already picked "his polluted pool" (153). Thus, the aim of those new leaders—the drones and dregs of the new Algeria—is to economically take the place of the colonialist forces. One example of the victims of these drones and dregs is Hassan, Khalid's brother. In Paris, Khalid enjoys economic comforts he would have never had in Constantine. On the other hand, Hassan struggles to provide for his family on the low pay of a school teacher. Khalid's meditations on his idealized lost nation is a luxury that cannot be afforded by Hassan who experiences the actual repercussions of corruption. Hassan and his likes focus only on how to survive brutal poverty.

Showing an intense alarm about the traumatic influence of French colonialism on the psychological health of the Algerians, Fanon correlates madness with one's loss of freedom: "Madness

is one of the means man has of losing his freedom" (*Toward the African Revolution* 53). This idea is applicable to Khalid whose freedom as the head of press and publications in Algeria is suppressed by the country officials. Khalid, *an organic intellectual*, had a great desire to "start a revolution in the human mind," (Mosteghanemi 97) but he was obliged not only to publish simple-minded books but also to censor the books that reveal bloody violent regimes (98-99). Thus, he was being forced to become a part of whom Gramsci calls *traditional intellectuals* who "produce, maintain and circulate those ideologies constitutive of hegemony that become naturalized as common sense" (Barker 466).

In addition to the traumatic influence of confiscating one's freedom, Fanon talks about the "the degree of alienation" of the Algerians (*Toward the African Revolution* 53). This alienation is evident in Khalid's relation to art. Khalid resorts to art as the last alternative that can preserve his psychic stability. Khalid's arm amputation in the Algerian liberation war represents his detachment from his homeland. The doctor tells Khalid that in order to regain his psychic health, he must establish a new connection with the world via either painting or writing: "If you prefer painting, then paint. It can reconcile you to things around you and to the world that has changed in your view because you have changed and are looking at it, touching it with only one hand" (36). Art thus can prove to be therapeutic from the traumatic experience of arm amputation/homeland separation. Indeed, painting becomes a psychic consolation for the physical loss of Khalid's arm. In galleries, Khalid contemplates, people may focus not on his amputated arm, but rather on his creative works of art (43).

However, psychic therapy through art eventually fails because of "the degree of alienation" that Fanon refers to as inflicting the Algerians. First of all, in Algeria, Khalid's painting exhibition was ignored by the Algerian press and consequently the Algerian reader (118). Secondly, in France, Khalid is alienated because his handicap—not his works of art—become "a display" in the galleries (44). Khalid realizes that his once-revered symbol of resistance; that is, his amputated arm, has lost its significance long ago. Indeed, in the initial years of independence, the amputated arm used to be a dignified cultural declaration of national struggle sacrifice. Twenty-five years later, it becomes an embarrassing sign of agony and seclusion. The sign has eventually lost its signification. Beforehand, the injured Soldiers were regarded with admiration, not pity. Nobody was supposed to explain the memory of his wound or *flesh*. Nowadays, a soldier gets embarrassed by the bare sleeve that was cautiously inserted into a pocket as if attempting to hide a personal recollection or make an apology to others who have no history for "the missing hand disturbs them and takes away their appetite" (43).

Finally, psychic therapy through art eventually fails because while attempting to substitute for his lost arm and to build connections between himself and his homeland, Khalid only manages to

augment the traumatic loss of his arm and of the past of his nation. This failure is because Khalid suffers from a high degree of alienation. For instance, Khalid becomes obsessed with drawing a series of Constantine bridges in his paintings. The bridges symbolize his pursued connection between Paris and Constantine, between the dreary present and the idealized past. Yet, Khalid is not able to establish such a connection. The bridges seem only to accentuate his feelings of pain and agony brought about by his amputated arm / the treacherous past of his homeland. This is evident when, drawing a new painting of a new bridge, Khalid feels that "the colors suddenly started to take on the color of my memory and became a gaping wound very difficult to stop" (125). Associating the colors of bridges with wounds denotes that Khalid's sense of alienation augments his psychic trauma.

Furthermore, Fanon mentions that one of the main causes of trauma in Algerian patients is physical torture. This pure force that is the language of the colonial regime induces traumatic responses on the part of the native Algerians, leaving them psychologically impaired. Khalid had already been imprisoned, interrogated, and tortured by the French police in Al-Kadya prison after the demonstrations of May 1945. But even after the independence in June 1971, Khalid is again imprisoned, interrogated, and tortured but now by his Algerian fellowmen. He questioned whether he, a quarter of a century before—a proud, enthusiastic, and dreamful young revolutionary—would have anticipated living a time when an Algerian would "strip" him, remove his watch and everything else, and then toss him into prison in the name of the revolution, the same revolution that had already "stripped" him of his arm (Mosteghanemi 159-160). Comparing his first experience when he was tortured by French colonialists and his second experience of being tortured by post-revolutionary Algerians, Khalid admits: "which experience was the most painful? I had avoided raising these questions; the answers had made me pack my bags, and leave 'home'" (159). Khalid realizes that some countries practice degradation, cruelty, persecution, despotism, and greed over their natives leaving them feeling like orphans who have been abandoned by their mothers (189). Consequently, Khalid chooses to leave his *motherland* and live in a self-imposed exile in Paris. Later on, Khalid will relive the same experience when his brother, Hassan, is shot dead by the Algerian government in the 1966 demonstrations. Burying his brother, Khalid would express his shock that whereas Si Taher was killed by the French, Hassan is killed by the Algerians (257). Hassan's "flesh" becomes an offering to the new totalitarian state of Algeria.

In addition to the economic and psychic dominance, Khalid is shocked at the culturally assimilated Algerians. According to Fanon, colonialism "turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it" (*Wretched of the Earth* 209-210). In Si Sharif's dinner, Khalid

notices: "It was a French evening in which they spoke in French . . . And he asks whether Algeria had really gained its independence" (Mosteghanemi 154). The French language and the French attitude of the Algerian elites are conspicuous manifestations of the success of the French cultural infiltration into the Algerian culture. As Fanon puts it: "To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization" (*Black Skins, White Masks* 17-18). Si Sharif and other Algerian elites' ability to express themselves successfully in French automatically grants them a higher status in class and power hierarchy; it also refers to their full acceptance of French cultural domination. Another victim of cultural assimilation is Hassan. Before independence, his dream was the liberation of a country; after independence, Hassan's greatest desire becomes to possess a modern home and a refrigerator! Hassan confesses that the leaders have created for the youth minor objectives that have no connection with the issue of their age (Mosteghanemi 197). Thus, French culture manages to transform Hassan from a multi-dimensional individual to a one-dimensional individual whose dreams are restricted to material consumption. Hassan's ambitions become ahistorical; he becomes homogenized within the dominant cultural structure. As a result, he becomes completely detached from his old self. He starts to, as Fanon puts it, "run away from his own individuality, to annihilate his own presence" (*Black Skin, White Masks* 60). Khalid feels a sense of bitterness against the youthful Algerians who are culturally detached from their past. At the end of the novel, Khalid refers to such detachment in an incident with a young, bad-tempered Algerian customs official. Khaled writes: "We stood close to each other, but he could not read me. It happens that nations become illiterate" (262). The young man is indifferent to Khalid's handicap and is unable to understand him because of being culturally *amputated* from his own past. Thus, Khalid concludes that the main reason for the success of French cultural infiltration is the impotence of a real cultural revolution: All of the world's revolutions began within humans, and it is for this fact that Japan and Europe evolved into the countries they are nowadays. However, Arabs continued to construct huge buildings and referred to the walls as a revolution (Mosteghanemi 97).

Hayat/Ahlam is the female protagonist of the novel who epitomizes the cultural alienation of the Algerian modern generation. She is the daughter of Si Taher, the true revolutionary leader and martyr whom Khalid got to know in Al-Kudya prison. At the opening of his exhibition is their first meeting, Hayat/Ahlam's bracelet reminds him of his mother. She is the first real Algerian that Khalid meets in his exile; the only Algerian who seems to retain in her physiognomy and character the aura of past Algeria. Hayat/Ahlam, on the other hand, regards Khalid as reminiscent of her father. She attempts to

come to terms with a past that was ripped from her when her father died. Thus, both of them are victims who complemented each other:

Both of us were victims of the war. Destiny had placed us in its pitiless quern, and we emerged, each carrying a different wound. My wound was obvious and yours was hidden deep. They amputated my arm, and they amputated your childhood. They ripped off a limb of my body and snatched a father from your arms. We were the remnants of war: two broken statues under elegant clothes. (Mosteghanemi 64-5)

It is for *this* Hayat/Ahlam—the Algeria of the revolution time—that Khalid dedicates his paintings of Constantine bridges. For Khalid, Hayat/Ahlam can help him cross the bridge from his sense of alienation to a sense of wholeness once experienced in the past: "Khalid's cycles of paintings of Constantine bridges in different lights seems less a representation of natural landscapes than an effort to bridge psychological and political chasms" (Ghazoul). Instead of seeing Hayat/Ahlam as a part of the new independent Algerian generation who lives in Paris and who is cut apart from the Algerian past, Khalid pins Hayat/Ahlam down as an allegory for his homeland. This reduction of Ahlam into an allegory is evident when Khalid fully identifies Hayat/Ahlam with Constantine bridges in his paintings: "As I painted those bridges, I thought I was painting you. But in fact, I was only painting myself . . . I was unconsciously reflecting onto it my worries, my fears, my turmoil" (137).

As soon as Khalid identifies Hayat/Ahlam with Constantine, he describes the paintings of the bridges with gendered, sexual overtones. Khalid thus fantasizes he can possess a gendered Constantine; that is, Hayat/Ahlam. He becomes the subject/ painter; she, the object/blank paper. Khalid becomes the lover who wants to possess his beloved through a sexual act. Thus, Khalid declares that he wants to satisfy Constantine's desires, stone by stone, bridge after bridge, like a lover gratifying the desires of his beloved (125). The painter/the lover plays the active hegemonic masculine role who aims to possess the passive compliant Constantine/ a female beloved. Indeed, Khalid imagines he is drawing the shape of Hayat/Ahlam's body with his lips, and that he is sketching her femininity with his masculinity. He imagines he controls her with his one hand, altering her body shapes to match his own body: "Woman! You became my homeland" (120). Gendering Constantine, Khalid thinks he should be able to restore the connections (or extend bridges) to his homeland. He imagines he owns a masculine power with which he can subdue the feminized Constantine or, his beloved Hayat/Ahlam whom he equates with Constantine.

However, Khalid is shocked when Hayat/Ahlam is married to *a nouveau riche*. Her husband is called Mr. X. The anonymous name of her husband is a reference that Hayat/Ahlam chooses to belong

to the new corrupt, culturally assimilated Algerian elites: "the wedding of Ahlam to *nouveau riche* points to the frustrations of a father/lover possessiveness and to the militant/artist disappointments in the course of Algerian development" (Ghazoul). Khalid understands that his attempt to surmount his alienation through the bridges he drew between himself and Hayat/Ahlam was only a fantasy. In one instance, Khalid describes Ahlam's names in four abbreviations: *Alif* is for *Alam* or agony; *ha* is for *Hurqa* or burning; *l* is for *la* or no, *mim* for the word *mut'a* or pleasure (Mosteghanemi 21). Moreover, the dichotomy of Khalid's dreams about Hayat/Ahlam and her independent reality is mirrored in her two names. The first one "Ahlam," meaning dreams; the second "Hayat," meaning life reality. Indeed, Khalid fantasized that Ahlam would not succumb to the seductions of the material pleasures of the Algerian bourgeoisie. However, he comes to realize that the past he and Hayat/Ahlam shared has been interpreted differently by each of them (Valassopoulos 117). Hayat/Ahlam does not relate to the past Algeria of the revolution; rather, she belongs to the post-independence Algeria. As Hayat/Ahlam proves to be more than just his own projections and fantasies, Khalid disintegrates as the connection to his idealized homeland becomes hopeless. Realizing that Ahlam /the new Algerian generation has been culturally assimilated, an "unhealable rift" is imposed between Khalid and his nation. This rift is essentially "between the self and its true home; its essential sadness that can never be surmounted" (Said 173). The novel ends with the grumpy custom official in the airport asking Khalid: "what have you got to declare?" And Khalid says: "I declare memory, my son" (Mosteghanemi 262). Khalid could not deny his nostalgia for the distant memory of an authentic national culture when the land was colonized, but the minds were free.

The ending of the novel seems to promote the inevitability of cultural assimilation, yet Fanon refers to the possibility of an awakening of the native intellectuals to resist this assimilation. Fanon argues that the impassioned desire for reclaiming their lost national culture leads some native intellectuals to the fear of being overwhelmed by Western civilization. Filled with rage, these intellectuals are determined to reestablish a relationship "with the oldest and most pre-colonial springs of life of their people" (*Wretched of the Earth* 209-210). Examples of these native intellectuals who attempt to resist cultural invasion are evident in the novel in the figures of Ziad, Hayat/Ahlam and even Khalid himself. Each of these characters leads a counter-hegemonic discourse.

A counter-hegemonic discourse is directed by Ziad, the Palestinian poet who sacrifices his "flesh" as a martyr for the sake of the Palestinian struggle. Like Khalid, Ziad falls in love with Hayat/Ahlam who reminds him of his homeland and who becomes a source of inspiration for his poems. Yet, he does not look at his relationship with Hayat/Ahlam in terms of masculine sexual dominance over a

feminized homeland. On the contrary, Ziad's relationship with his homeland is not built upon mere nostalgia; neither is it built upon agony over a lost, idealized past. Rather, he acts positively to save his homeland. He decides to be a fighter, dedicating his life to changing the harsh reality of occupation. He even acts as the exact opposite of Khalid. He leaves *Ahlam* (meaning dreams) to change the realities of his life (meaning *Hayat*). Even after his martyrdom, Ziad's patriotic poems shall live to inspire new generations.

Another counter-hegemonic discourse is directed by Hayat/Ahlam. Hayat/Ahlam refuses to be reduced to an allegory of past Algeria because of her father, the renowned struggle fighter. Moreover, despite identifying with the new culturally-invaded Algerian generation by marrying (or giving her "flesh" to) Si X, Hayat/Ahlam refuses to be a passive blank paper and is able to assert her individuality through the art of novel writing. When asked by Khalid why did she choose novel writing in particular, Hayat/Ahlam answers "Father became the property of the whole of Algeria. Only writing became my property, and nobody's going to take that away from me!" (67). Hayat/Ahlam uses writing to actively resist social pressures and patriarchal expectations. She is able to prove that she is not a docile object; but rather, an active subject who can search for an identity all by herself.

Even Khalid shows some elements of a counter-hegemonic discourse. The novel is written and narrated by Khalid, who, writing for the first time, attempts to apply Hayat/Ahlam's "criminal theory of literature" (80). Hayat/Ahlam's sarcastic yet serious view is that when a novelist writes about someone, it is a form of effacing his/her memory. Hence, she likens writing to murder. Thus, the first act of resistance shown by Khalid is the novel itself which is narrated in the form of a letter to Hayat/Ahlam: "I have had to write this book to kill you." (28). In addition, when Khalid returns to Constantine to attend Hayat/Ahlam's wedding, he undergoes a sort of epiphany. Wandering around the city, Khalid feels directly connected to every stone, and every bridge (237). He is not drawing the bridge from a distance; rather, he experiences it firsthand. He can also see that besides its ancient bridges, the city is full of poverty, corruption, and oppression. The disillusionment happens when Khalid learns to accept the new Algeria as a complex entity that encompasses beauty and disfigurement, the past and the present, the old and the new. Khalid realizes that in Paris, he has been attempting to escape rather than reconstruct the memory of Algeria. However, he should have faced the complications of reform. He realizes he must take part in a new intellectual decolonization that can unfetter the minds of the youthful Algerians. Facing the elites at Hayat/Ahlam's wedding, Khalid asserts his counter-hegemonic new identity: "I defy them all, the pot bellies, the bearded ones, the bald ones, those with countless stars on their shoulders, those [who] have raped you before my very eyes"

(237). For the first time, Khalid is not embarrassed by his amputated arm (218); rather, he comes to terms with his own body and his own self as well. Khalid decides to return to Constantine for good. He stops remembering the once-idealized Algeria and starts taking an active part in the process of its decolonization.

Finally, the fact that the novel is written by an Algerian of the new generation in the Arabic language is a sort of counter-hegemonic discourse. Indeed, according to Mosteghanemi, writing in Arabic is a form of rejection of the French cultural hegemony. She declares that the success of her novel "offer[s] moral support to Algerian writers writing in Arabic who confront unarmed the onslaughts of Francophony and its diverse temptations, while they stand patriotically against the dubious and devious tendencies to which Algeria is exposed" ("To Colleagues of the Pen"). Challenging the linguistic authority of the colonizer, the novel itself stands eventually as a victory against the colonialist's alienation strategies. Bhabha's post-colonial theory rejects the antagonistic binary opposition of *the colonizer* vs. *the colonized* in favor of a dynamic dialogic discourse. Deconstructing these dichotomies, Bhabha refers to the emergence of a third, hybrid space (38). The most significant implication of Bhabha's cultural hybridity is that it enables the colonized to resist the hegemony of the colonizers; it reveals a prospect of agency and dynamicity. As a result, hybridity destabilizes the egocentric aspirations of the colonial authority using subversive strategies that direct the oppressed gaze back to the eyes of authority (Bhabha 112). Stepping into the third space, Mosteghanemi strategically reverses the processes of domination, turning the gaze from the colonized to the colonizer.

المستخلص

إشكالية فرانتس فانون الاقتصادية والنفسية والثقافية لإنهاء الاستعمار في ذاكرة أحلام مستغانمي في
الجسد (1993)
مي محمد عباس

يشير مفهوم إنهاء الاستعمار إلى سعي الجماعات المستعمرة من أجل الاستقلال والحصول على الحرية الاقتصادية والنفسية والثقافية. النوع الأول من الهيمنة اقتصادي. يدعي فانون أنه في أيام الاستعمار، يعكس الزعيم الوطني توقعات المواطن للحرية. ومع ذلك، يتحول الزعيم الوطني بعد الاستقلال إلى رجل أعمال. في ذاكرة الجسد، يصف خالد بن طوبال شخصية سي شريف التي تحولت من مقاتل ثوري حر إلى رجل أعمال.

النوع الثاني من الهيمنة، حسب فانون، هو العزلة النفسية التي يمارسها المستعمر على المستعمر. بادئ ذي بدء، يربط فانون بين الاغتراب النفسي وفقدان الحرية. هذه الفكرة تنطبق على خالد الذي قمع المسؤولين في البلاد حريته ككاتب بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يذكر فانون أن التعذيب هو أحد الأسباب الرئيسية للصدمات النفسية للمرضى الجزائريين. بعد الاستقلال، يتعرض خالد لصدمة عنيفة بعد تعذيبه من قبل رفاقه الجزائريين. يشير النوع الثالث من الهيمنة إلى عملية الاستيعاب الثقافي التي تنطوي على محو هياكل المعرفة والتقاليد المحلية، واستبدالها بأساليب التفكير الأوروبية. من أوضح علامات الاستقطاب الثقافي هي استخدام المستعمر للغة المستعمر. يلاحظ خالد إن اللغة الفرنسية للنخب الجزائرية هي مظهر واضح لنجاح هذا الاستقطاب. عندما تتزوج حبيبة خالد، حياة / أحلام من ثري عربي، يدرك حينها خالد بأن الجيل الجديد من الجزائريين قد تم بالفعل استقطابهم ثقافياً. على الرغم من أن النهاية تبدو وكأنها تعزز حتمية الاستيعاب الثقافي، إلا أن فكرة أن الرواية كتبتها شابة جزائرية باللغة العربية تبعث الأمل في إمكانية وجود خطاب مضاد للهيمنة.

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