

Gender Dynamics, Space, and Identity Formation in Yasmina Khadra's *What the Day Owes the Night* (2008, 2011)

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www.ijrah.com || Vol. 3 No. 2 (2023): March Issue

Date of Submission: 30-01-2023

Date of Acceptance: 20-02-2023

Date of Publication: 02-03-2023

ABSTRACT

Yasmina Khadra's '*Ce Que le Jour Doit à la Nuit*' (*What the Day Owes the Night*) is an Algerian best-selling novel originally written in French. Yasmina Khadra is the *non de plume* of the Algerian army officer, Mohammed Moulesshoul. Moulesshoul utilised a female pseudonym to avoid the inspections of his manuscripts by the army. The version I use in this article is a translation from French by Frank Wynne (2011). Yasmina Khadra discusses the human existence in a way that seeks to determine the purpose of all life beyond one's social condition. In other words, Yasmina Khadra perceives life as a continuum of interpersonal and intrapersonal relations that possess a strong effect on the social subjects' existence in the world. Also, being an Algerian drives Yasmina Khadra to concentrate on issues of identity, colonialism, the production, and circulation of particular social and cultural knowledge, along with the struggle of gender and political identification. Yasmina Khadra's narrative is a manifestation of the struggle to produce a historic national culture and a narrative discourse free of the shackles of colonialist knowledge and mode of thought. This article uses CDA and thematic analysis to critically outline and investigate the gender dynamics and identity formation that characterise Khadra's narrative discourse.

Keywords- CDA, colonial identity, gender, narrative discourse, power relations, space.

I. INTRODUCTION

Without ever yielding to a plain and straightforward schematism, Yasmina Khadra outlines the social existence of a young man through a double-crossing: that of the destiny and social condition of Younes/Jonas Mahieddine, an Algerian boy living in a miserable village in Oran named Jenane Jato, in the thirties; and that of his country Algeria. Younes/Jonas is a young, relatively melancholic, and shy boy whose family home and land is burned to the ground by an all-powerful and ravenous 'Kaid'. His father ends up abandoning his family in Jenane Jato after entrusting Younes/Jonas to the care of his uncle, Mohammed Mahieddine, an enlightened and educated pharmacist. Issa Mahieddine tells his son: "*It's for the best, son. I am not abandoning you; I am not disowning you. I simply want you to have a chance in life*" (p. 61). Mohammed

Mahieddine considers himself a progressive Muslim who despite being married to a French woman, Germaine, is an ardent nationalist and believer in the freedom and independence of his country, Algeria. Younes/Jonas soon moves with his new adoptive family to Rio Salado, on the outskirts of Oran and never hears of his family again. Younes/Jonas's uncle "*lived in the European part of the city, in a quiet cul-de-sac {...} {He} had a two-storey house with a small front garden and a lane running down the side*" (p. 62). Describing his uncle's house, Younes/Jonas signals the wealth of his uncle and the sort of life-style he has never imagined.

After enduring misery, social discrimination, illiteracy, and state-enforced power relations in both the countryside and Oran, Younes/Jonas begins to fraternise with European settlers. He soon forms a group of French friends: André, Fabrice, Jean-Christophe, Simon, and Isabelle. As the protagonist, who is also the narrator,

progresses into adulthood, Younes/Jonas pays little attention to his African/Arab origins and gets immersed in the life and social habits of an entourage far from his own. It was Germaine who first calls Younes by his foreign counterpart: Jonas. When Germaine first meets Younes/Jonas, she exclaims: "He is so handsome! She cried, crouching down to study me more carefully." (p. 63). Germaine is initially fascinated by Younes's looks that she 'studies' him rather than just look at him. The narrator uses a lexicon that shows that Germaine does not associate the face with the name. That is why she soon states that:

- "This is your new home, Jonas." (p. 63).
- "My name is Younes, I reminded her." (p.64)
- "She gave me a tender smile, stroked my cheek and whispered: Not anymore, my darling..." (p. 64).

The above exchange marks the transition that Younes undergoes from being a poor villager on the outskirts of Oran to an upper-middle class boy with a French mother and an Arab father. 'Jonas' becomes the name Younes carries around with a peculiar mixture of pride and disinterest. Younes/Jonas blends in with the European settlers not only because of the social identity he claims as his own but also because of his outward physique. Younes/Jonas has a fair skin, blue eyes, and copper, red hair. This sort of rare external looks accords Younes/Jonas a place within the community of the French settlers because an Arab does not usually look the way Younes does. The duality of the name accorded to the protagonist and narrator of the novel by the author signals and constantly reminds the reader of the impossibility of a genuine and proper equality between the colonisers and the indigenous people. Younes/Jonas is torn by this fluctuating duality and by his double belonging, caused by his origins and his European acquaintances: "How could I have been able to regularly do without this part of myself? Had I been tolerated, integrated, tamed? Who had I been in Rio? Jonas or Younes?" (p. 137). The events soon progress swiftly in the novel. The insurrectionary war in Algeria begins in 1954 and then reaches the village of Rio Salado. The first night visit of the fellaghas led by Jelloul, a former comrade from the village, marks the beginning of the end of Younes/Jonas' conventional western life-style and his association with the French settlers. Just as the country is ravaged by sudden and influential change, Younes/Jonas' life also disrupts. Friendships with his European relations weakens, his uncle dies, and the brusque end of a fraternity that he never anticipated, remind Younes that his country is headed towards inevitable transformation. Younes/Jonas is linked to the land and his gender identity by memories of camaraderie, and unfulfilled desires; especially vis-à-vis Émilie who remains an unforgettable love for him throughout the novel and towards the end of his life.

Not everything has been said about Yasmina Khadra. This author is often presented as the artist with

many prizes, multi-layered cultural construction, and dual lives. He is the author of a series of acclaimed novels such as *In the Name of God* (2000), *Swallows of Kabul* (2002), *The Attack* (2005), *The Sirens of Baghdad* (2006), and *The Angels Die* (2016). It is, however, in *What the Day Owes the Night* (2008) that his prose arouses nostalgia towards his country Algeria and, surprisingly, the colonial period. The flamboyant discourse that Yasmina Khadra utilises shifts between all the colours and shades of love and strong feelings of nationalism: the patriotic feeling of a nation, the affection of the 'Pieds Noirs' for the land where they grew up, the bond of fellowship uniting a group of young people of different origins, and the singular tenderness that unites an elderly couple, despite their opposing social backgrounds. Yasmina Khadra uses discourse structures that paint a tragic picture of a disintegrating nation and degenerate social conditions. Just like a painter tediously bent over his work, Yasmina Khadra sketches the Algeria of the 40s and 50s where, despite certain interferences, nationalists and settlers rub shoulder peacefully. He describes the cry of war that torn Algeria, depicts the interpersonal and socio-cultural torments of a young adult torn between two cultures and two opposing discourse structures of colonialism and nationalism, his fears and desires and his origins and friends. The strong passion that Yasmina Khadra describes is, in fact, a metaphor that elucidates the tumultuous encounter of an insatiable coloniser with the land of the proud Arab/Amazigh Algerian. Yasmina Khadra divulges a deeply existential and complex narrative discourse. *What the Day Owes the Night* (2008) brings into focus the nostalgic dignity of the Arab/Amazigh man, the importance of memory, the respect of women as part of the community, honour of the Arab/Amazigh nation, and contempt towards the renunciation of one's origins. Yasmina Khadra builds his narrative around a discourse of courage and pride in one's culture, and the refusal of concession and submission. Furthermore, the novel discusses issues of gender, power relations, and the interaction between male and female social actors. Through an exploration of three interrelated topics, feminine Identity Formation, gender representations, and the impact of gender roles on identity formation - this essay delves into the complexities of Khadra's narrative to uncover the ways in which the characters are shaped and influenced by the social and cultural constructions of gender and identity.

II. THE DISCURSIVE REPRESENTATION AND INTERPLAY OF SPACE AND IDENTITY FORMATION IN *WHAT THE DAY OWES THE NIGHT*

Yasmina Khadra's *What the Day Owes the Night* (2008) does not address the issues of geography

and colonialism alone. The novel also focuses on the spatial dimension of the Maghreb novel. The Maghreb novel defines identity through cultural and historic aspects; especially in previously colonised nations. The prior aim of the spatial Romanesque of the Maghreb novel is to describe. In this particular type of African narrative, space demarcates identity both geographically and culturally through a set of values and apparatuses specific to North Africa. This article does not seek to question literary spatiality per se, but to understand its influence on the discursive structure of the text and the issues of gender identity and power relations. Spatiality is a paramount component of the narrative text. It serves as evidence of the discursive and narrative structure that constitutes novels, especially the African novel. The element of space and/or spatiality is a discursive and enunciative structure that allows themes and characters to flow through the narrative and contextualise its account

Whilst space appears to take a significant part of the novel, where Algeria is described in the minutest details, it nevertheless primarily remains a space where characters both claim and debate their identity. Algeria here appears, as Bonn (1983) posits, as “a national identity of the described geographical space” {my translation} (p. 447). That is, Yasmina Khadra’s *What the Day Owes the Night* (2008, 2011) offers multiple readings of space which intertwine with identity formation. That is why, analysis in this section focuses on the interplay between space and identity. Each space evoked in the novel contributes to the process of identity formation of the narrator/protagonist. They also help model his identity. In other words, the choice of space in Khadra’s narrative is not random. It influences the identity of the protagonist along with the discourse structures that define the narrative. There is a continuous change of space and locations in Khadra’s novel; hence the need to demonstrate the importance of situating various spaces. Using theories of identity, discourse, and lexicon analysis; in addition to the thoughts and interpretations of critics such as Butor (1964) and Reuter (2003), this section studies the interplay between the conflicting and dual identity of Younes/Jonas and space.

Yasmina Khadra varies the spaces he mentions throughout the novel. By doing this, the author accords a specific décor to each new occurrence. As stated above, Khadra provides exhaustive descriptions of spaces and locations. He attempts to portray every space as accurately and as precisely as possible in order to provide a clear and inclusive image to the reader. As a result, space is no longer considered as a mere décor or mode of description. It transcends the simple act of being a spatial background to a narrative structure; to playing a paramount role in the identity formation of the protagonist. In order to capitalise on the importance and eventual transformation of Younes/Jonas’ identity, Khadra accords significant importance to the choices he makes. In fact, none of the places selected by Khadra are

arbitrary. Each locus carries a symbolic meaning. Each city and village convey a semiotic and discursive meaning that analysis in this section reveals. This helps change perspective concerning the African text and its perception via different and wider horizons. Also, this sort of analysis serves to situate the writing of Khadra within the entirety of the African literary canon; thus, incorporating the Maghreb novel as part of the narrative and stereotypical discourses on Africa.

In *What the Day Owes the Night* (2008), Yasmina Khadra concentrates on space and describes each of its elements. He captures shapes and colours, the positioning of objects, and the way each character feels about the space that surrounds them. He also relays the places’ history and their signification. Precise and lively descriptions reinforce the imagination of the reader and create a bond between the reader and the fictional characters and places. This enriches the reading experience. In the same respect, Butor (1964) posits that “all fiction produces a space, on which is inscribed our imagination, just like a voyage...” {my translation} (p. 44). Space hence becomes an essential component in the study and analysis of fictional texts. Similarly, Mikhail Bakhtin terms the time-space combination ‘chronotope’ (an amalgamation of *chronos* and *topos*) in *The Dialogic of Imagination* (1981) in which he clearly, like Butor (1964), associates’ space with imagination and by extension, identity formation. In this way, time becomes secondary to the analysis of literary texts whilst space becomes paramount. Space is now considered the principal metaphor and *topos* in literature. Social sciences have witnessed an increase concern with space in the 1960s and 70s, particularly with the academic contributions of theorists such as Henri Lefebvre (1974), Deleuze and Guattari (1980), and Foucault (1984). Even now space’s importance increases as gender issues, globalisation, and power relations discussions are on the rise. De Certeau (1980) also speaks of spatial narratives; a scope of literary analysis that prioritises space, places, and geography. Glotfelty (1996) contends that space must become a new critical category stating that: “in addition to race, class, and gender, should place become a new critical category?” (p. xix). In the same respect, Rosemberg (2007) contends that “literature is an artistic form of an experimental geography” {my translation} (p. 261). Yves Reuter (2003) utilises space as a dual concept: he speaks of the ‘real’ space and the space ‘inside the text’. Yasmina Khadra seeks to give his narrative a touch of reality through the spaces he chooses, thus giving the impression that the spaces he refers to reflect the social reality and existential problems of his characters. Therefore, the description and precision of the places mentioned in the novel enhance the cultural and discursive knowledge of the text. As such, the analysis shall focus on “‘atypical’ elements, names and information that refer to cultural knowledge identifiable outside the novel, to the processes implemented to produce this realistic effect.”

{my translation} (Reuter, 2003, p. 55). Still, the effect of reality that Yasmina Khadra attempts to establish owes more to the textual representation of space than to its actual reality. The existential reality of the place seems to have inspired the author to not only describe but also create a discursive space worthy of study and analysis. The discursive space of Khadra's narrative offers insight into social conditions, gender identity, and gender power relations reflected in the text.

III. THE DISCURSIVE AND LEXICAL PRESENTATION OF THE FAMILIAL SPACE AND POWER RELATIONS

Through the very first lines of the novel, we can discern the author's association of place with the juxtaposed feelings of 'hope' and 'merriment', or 'despair' and 'melancholy'. For instance, the narrator looks upon the village as a place that inspires both melancholy and joy; an image the narrator infers from sight of his father, Issa, bent over field work. Issa, the usually lugubrious and brooding father, looks upon the close harvest as a sign of a promising and propitious tomorrow. His eyes sparkle with joy; his demeanour radiates optimism as he enjoys the sight of fully grown, ready for harvest, wheat. The narrator thus opens his account:

My father was happy.

It had never occurred to me that he was capable of such an emotion.

Sometimes, the sight of his serene face disturbed me. Hunkered on a pile of loose stones, knees clasped to his chin, he watched the breeze caress the slender stalks of wheat, breathe over them, scurry feverishly through them.

{...}

And my father was smiling. I could not remember ever seeing him smile; it was not in his nature to show happiness – if he could be said to have ever felt such a thing.

(Khadra, 2011, pp. 3-4)

Younes/Jonas introduces his father first in the novel. These are the lines with which he begins his account of an entire existence he spends in search of that same smile on his father's face; a father he will soon lose forever. This is the first and last time the narrator attributes to his father a set of positive adjectives: 'happy', 'serene', and 'smiling'. Discursively, Issa, presented through the adjectival phrase 'my father' is the CARRIER of a Relational verb process of intensive nature in the clause 'my father was happy'; and an ATTRIBUTE 'happy' expressing the relation of identification with the adjective 'happy' and the process of being, shown in the past tense of the verb 'to be'. The same could be said of the clause 'my father was

smiling'. Also, the adjectival phrase 'his serene face' also serves to emphasise on the moment and space where Issa finds a serenity he will soon perpetually be deprived of. The fields of wheat are where Issa finds his being. The land is the first open space the author uses to explain its importance in the shaping of an identity of a man who cares for nothing more than his land as these lines illustrate:

My father cared little.

He liked to be alone, hunched over his plough, lips flecked white with foam.

{...} I would sit for hours watching him, fascinated by his strength, his determination.

My father ate punctually, frugally, eager to get back to work. I would have liked him to say a kind word, take some interest in me for a moment, but he had eyes only for his land. Only here, in the midst of this tawny universe, was he truly in his element. Nothing and no one, not even those dearest to him, could distract him from it.

(Khadra, 2011, pp. 4-5)

The land is a clear representation of the identity and honour of an African; especially an Arab in a country like Algiers. In the midst of hard work and preparations for the harvest, Issa gives himself entirely to the land. This is clear in the following clause of Circumstantial Relational process 'only here, in the midst of this tawny universe, was he truly in his element'. The Circumstantial discourse here is the prepositional phrase 'in his element'. 'Element' in this discourse instant connotes the land and the fields of wheat he works hard to plough. As explained in previous chapters, processes of Relation are processes of identification. They are linguistic and discursive statements the author uses to show the way in which the thoughts and feelings of characters come into existence and materialise out in the world of experience. The abundance of Relational processes used in the excerpts describing the father attest to his identification with the land; that is, his relation to the space that surrounds him. The land serves as the discursive and cultural element that sediments Issa's identity not as a father but as a peasant responsible for the production of a harvest. Issa perceives the harvest as an expression of his identity and of his impact on the world. The reader begins to grasp that Issa relates the zeal of his existential being to the land. This is apparent in his demeanour as he returns home after a long-day's work: "*In the evening, when we came back to our shack, the spark in his eyes would fade with the setting sun. He {Issa} would become someone else, someone ordinary, someone dreary and uninteresting.*" (p. 5).

However, Younes/Jonas, Zahra his sister, and the mother do not share Issa's love and devotion to the land. The rest of Issa's family suffocates in this space where they do nothing but 'exist':

We lived in isolation like ghosts on our patch of land, in the sidereal silence of those who have little to say to one another: my mother in the shadow of our shack, bent over her cooking pot, stirring a broth of root vegetables of questionable flavour; Zahra, my sister, three years my junior, crouched forgotten in some dark corner, so self-effacing that at times we did not even notice her; and me, a sickly, solitary boy, who had barely blossomed before I wilted, carrying my ten years like a burden.

This was not life; we merely existed.

(Khadra, 2011, p. 4)

The days were desolate in their sameness; not a single one brought with it anything new, and each day died taking with it the few remaining illusions that dangled before us like the carrots used to urge on a donkey.

{...}

And at night, as we readied ourselves for bed, we wondered whether it might not be better to close our eyes once and for all, convinced that we had seen all there is to see in life, and that life itself did not warrant further examination.

(Khadra, 2011, p. 4)

It must be noted that the choice of space here by the characters is not a conscious one. It is a space bequeathed from one generation to the next, that of the paternal ancestors. The characters' unconscious association with the present space reflects another complex dimension of the existence of power relations that transcend the gender dynamics; a hidden power exercised through unfortunate fate and circumstance. Issa inherited the land. He is a peasant by birth and by trade. He only knows how to plough the land and sell its goods. Such a choice in life is, for the family patriarch, the only one available. It is his destiny. To the family, however, the land is a place where they wither away and fade such as the mother who sits in *the shadow of the shack*' and Zahra who plays *'crouched and forgotten in some dark corner'* (Khadra, 2011, p. 4). The land, as an open space, that inspires joy and hope in Issa the father, rouses feelings of disgust and despondency in the rest of the family:

The narrator describes the land and the days they spend in the closed space of their shack pejoratively. Younes/Jonas feels lost in a place that inspires only revulsion, a place he calls a 'shack' to show its lowness and his hatred of it. He dislikes the fact that they live in 'isolation' and calls the land a 'patch' to signal its insignificance both to him and to the rest of the world. Finding themselves chained to a place devoid of interest and life, the members of the family embody their own frightening, ghostly appearances: *'we lived like {...} ghosts'* having no choice, but to endure this existence and wither under its toil. The narrator describes himself as a 'sickly boy' who had 'barely blossomed' before he 'wilted away, carrying {my} ten

years like a burden' (p. 4). Discursively, the narrator associates Relational processes of Intensive nature to 'days' in the clause 'the days were desolate in their sameness'. The CARRIER of the clause is 'the days' and the ATTRIBUTE is the pejorative adjective 'desolate' and the Circumstantial Element of manner here is the prepositional phrase 'in their sameness'. The 'days' symbolise the ascendancy of time over space for Younes/Jonas. 'The days' later on become the ACTOR of a series of Material Event processes in 'not a single one (days) brought with it anything new' and 'each day died'. The Transitivity patterns here could be interpreted as the narrator's way of demonstrating how he relates his being and identity to the passing days in a space he deems confining despite its openness. Whilst Issa identifies with the open space of the land and its reaping, Younes/Jonas and his family associate their wasted, insignificant existence to the space that surrounds them. Yasmina Khadra thus utilises the land as space with a dual significance; both positive and pejorative. Through the land, Khadra also shows that Younes/Jonas does not identify with it like his father; hence the need to continue the narrative and by consequence Younes/Jonas' search for his identity and place in the world beyond the land. That being so, the first spatial discourse structure symbolised by the land (the wheat fields), represented both positively and negatively, guarantees the narrator/protagonist transposition to other spaces. Khadra sets up the land as a catalyst to boost the narrative forward and ensure the continuity of a wide variety of discursive events. The author evokes the misery of the rural life and the confinement it exercises on Younes/Jonas and his family as a starting point towards seeking freedom from the captivity that contain them beyond the space-time continuum. The impediment represented by this place allows the characters to search for a way out and an answer elsewhere. Thus, space is not only a constraining stop, it is also a propellant: it gives the story a push forward. Concurrently, the author decides to erase this space by setting it on fire. When Issa refuses to sell his fertile lands to the Kaid, the latter sends his servants to set Issa's land on fire. This fire places the story in a dramatic dimension, strewn with heartbreak, melancholy, and dejection. The power of the Kaid signals the author's exploration and clear reference to a different of sort of power enactment. The presence of the Kaid in the first space mentioned in the novel attests to ascendancy of Algerian culture, its reproduction and transformation; especially with regards to social stratification and the reproduction and exercise of power. The Kaid symbolises the powerful, male social actor who enjoys cultural, economic, and social capital. His presence, and the economic transaction he enforces on Issa, demonstrate that capital and its ensuing power enactment are inevitable results of such social exchanges where the powerless social subject assumes the social acts of the powerful one. Furthermore, this discursive

instant conceptualises structural constraints and unequal access to institutional resources based more on social class than gender and race. However, the discursive and narrative contribution of gender dynamics cannot be overlooked. *What the Day Owes the Night* offers significant analysis and exploration of gender and identity formation within a novel, rarely explored social and discursive context, which is that of North Africa.

IV. THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN FEMALE GENDER IDENTITY AND IDENTITY FORMATION

The narrative discourse of the novel clearly explores the role of feminine identity formation through close descriptions and social contextualisation of its main female characters. The author identifies the various elements that shape femininity through discourse and narration. Yasmina Khadra capitalises on the female protagonists' search for autonomy and independence, their exploration of motherhood and marriage, their struggle with the traditional roles of a devoted religious woman; Muslim or Christian; along with their desire to break free of social, cultural, and religious constraints. Some of these women, such as Émilie and Germaine, also strive for knowledge and recognition. In addition, Khadra emphasises the importance of the female relationships with family, friends, and community in the formation of their gendered identity. The complex social and historical context in which these women dwell play an important role in shaping the discursive manifestation of their identity; either through social or linguistic behaviour. Also, family and close human interactions either of love or a mixture of love and hatred, anger and passion, provide these women with a sense of wholeness and refinement. Furthermore, the novel provides a close scrutiny of the difficult social existences of Muslim women and how they navigate their lives within the constraints of context of their culture. Ultimately, a close study of *What the Day Owes the Night* demonstrates the complexity of feminine identity formation and its significance for contemporary and future readers of the African social and cultural experience.

Moreover, Yasmina Khadra's *What the Day Owes the Night* provides an insightful probing of the salient gender representations in colonial Algeria, as well as the underlying social dynamics that shape them. Through the story of the protagonist's (Younes) journey from childhood to adulthood, Khadra demonstrates the constraints placed on women's identities in a male-dominated society. In fact, Khadra's use of discourse in this particular novel illustrates the power of language to convey meaning and to shape the perception of gender roles and expectations in a particular society. This is best elucidated through the character of Younes's mother, who, despite her intelligence and ambition, is unable to pursue her dreams due to the rigid patriarchal system in

which she is forced to exist. Through his writing, Khadra exposes the oppressive forces that prevent women from achieving their full potential, while highlighting the courage and resilience of individuals who fight against these oppressive systems. By exploring gender roles in colonial Algeria, Khadra sheds light on the universal struggle of women to achieve true gender equity in a patriarchal society.

In addition to the tangible representations of gender, the discursive gender social roles also figure extensively in the narrative. Socially assigned gender social play a major role in the formation and shaping of North African identity. The characters in the novel experience a clash between traditional and modern values, and this clash is exemplified through their gender roles. Zemmit and Dehimi (2018) explore this clash between traditional and modern values in the novel and its effect on the protagonists' identity formation. They contend that the traditional values of the protagonists' culture are imposed upon them, leading to a conflict between the protagonists' own desires and their society's expectations. This conflict heavily influences the protagonists' identity formation, as they must reconcile their personal values with those of their society. As the protagonists attempt to resolve this conflict, they are forced to re-evaluate their sense of identity and their position within the status quo. The protagonists never actually overcome this conflict; and this results in the formation a unique identity that is a coalescence of traditional and modern values. In this way, gender roles play a crucial role in the protagonists' identity formation, as they are constantly negotiating their own values and those imposed by their society's existential condition.

The common thread that links and develops the lives of these women is the agency they assume through their social condition and devotion to the men in their lives. Younes/Jonas' mother devotes herself to her husband Issa till the end. Even when all hope is lost, she continues to hope and believe in her husband. Her devotion to him is absolute. Germaine also adores Mahi. She supports him during his illness and assumes his business affairs. She also loves Younes/Jonas like a son and raises him as such. Émilie loves Younes/Jonas passionately to the point where she is consumed by this passion. But unlike the Mother and Germaine, Émilie bravely and decisively abandons her love of Younes/Jonas. She takes control of her life and refuses to be directed by the whims of an irresolute man. Human relations are part of a historical background that conditions friendships and love affairs during colonial Algeria. Lives intersect and uncross; and so much is lost in unsaid words and relations coming undone. Yasmina Khadra's text represent a mirror in which the evolution of the female condition is reflected in a country where destinies are made and unmade, and where agency and challenge of the dominant status quo and asymmetrical power relations is difficult for both women and men.

V. CONCLUSION

Yasmina Khadra is one of the most influential contemporary North African authors. His collective body of narrative fiction provides insight into the workings of the human psyche and social condition. It delves deep into the social, linguistic, and behavioural existence of humanity through the interplay of salient discourse structures and language. The study of the interplay between identity and space in *What the Day Owes the Night* reveals the author's hidden shame, chagrin, and mortification of the current state of Rio Salado, now known as El Melah. He resorts to literary ellipses to summarise the years passed in a few words. Yasmina Khadra's compunction is consistent with the current social reality in Algiers. Also, Khadra treats issues of gender and femininity with great care and concern. The current state of the African woman is reflected in the diachronic historical and social condition of gender identity of Algeria as it progresses in time and space. In an interview with Altayar in 2022, Yasmina Khadra states: "There is no emotional misery in my books, only a concern to popularise the human factor by opening it up to other cultures and mentalities" (Gomèz & Moya, 2022). Women and the social gendered condition of his female protagonist proves that Khadra's perception of the gender dynamics goes beyond the male versus female antagonistic discourse. The female gender condition represents the collective human condition in which both women and men can and must contribute a verse.

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