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**Displacement, Memory, and The Wounds of Colonialism in Chinua Achebe's
Things Fall Apart and Yasmina Khadra's *What the Day Owes the Night***

التهجير والذاكرة وجروح الاستعمار في رواية تشينوا أتشيبي *الأشياء تتداعى* ورواية ياسمينه
خضرا *ما يدين به النهار لليل*

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Abstract:

This article explores colonial rupture, identity displacement, and cultural memory in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Yasmina Khadra's *What the Day Owes the Night*. Although rooted in different historical contexts, British colonial rule in Nigeria and French occupation in Algeria, both novels portray the destructive impact of colonial domination on individuals and communities. Drawing on postcolonial theories of Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, and Edward Said, the study argues that displacement involves the loss of land and traditions as well as a profound crisis of identity and belonging. Achebe depicts the collapse of Igbo cultural structures through Okonkwo's tragic fate, while Khadra presents Younes's divided identity as a result of colonial assimilation and alienation. Yet, both authors transform memory into a form of resistance: Achebe through the preservation of oral traditions and Khadra through nostalgic remembrance. Their works demonstrate how literature records colonial wounds while safeguarding cultural memory and reconstructing identity.

Keywords: colonialism, identity displacement, postcolonial theory, cultural memory, resistance.

المخلص:

تستكشف هذه المقالة قضايا القطيعة الاستعمارية، واغتراب الهوية، والذاكرة الثقافية في روايتي *الأشياء تتداعى* لتشينوا أتشيبي و*ما يدين به النهار لليل* لياسمينه خضرا. وعلى الرغم من انتماء العملين إلى سياقين تاريخيين مختلفين، يتمثلان في الحكم الاستعماري البريطاني في نيجيريا والاحتلال الفرنسي للجزائر، فإن الروايتين تصوران الآثار المدمرة للهيمنة الاستعمارية على الأفراد والمجتمعات. بالاعتماد على نظريات ما بعد الاستعمار، خاصة أعمال فرانز فانون وهومي بابا وإدوارد سعيد، تُجادل الدراسة بأن التهجير لا يقتصر على فقدان الأرض والتقاليد، بل يشمل أيضًا أزمة عميقة في الهوية والانتماء. يصور أتشيبي انهيار البنى الثقافية الإيغوبية من خلال المصير المأساوي لشخصية أوكونكو، بينما يقدم خضرا الهوية المنقسمة ليونس باعتبارها نتيجة للاستيعاب الاستعماري والشعور بالغربة. ومع ذلك، يحول الكاتبان الذاكرة إلى شكل من أشكال المقاومة؛ إذ يعتمد أتشيبي على الحفاظ على التقاليد الشفوية، بينما يستند خضرا إلى استحضار الماضي ببنية حنينية. وتُظهر الروايتان كيف يعمل الأدب بوصفه شهادة على جراح الاستعمار، وفي الوقت نفسه وسيلة للحفاظ على الذاكرة الثقافية وإعادة بناء الهوية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاستعمار، اغتراب الهوية، نظرية ما بعد الاستعمار، الذاكرة الثقافية، المقاومة.

1. INTRODUCTION

Colonialism remains a significant historical and cultural force that continues to influence the identities, memories, and social structures of formerly colonized societies. Beyond political domination, colonial rule disrupted indigenous traditions, imposed foreign systems of knowledge, and created complex experiences of cultural displacement and identity crisis (Fanon, 1963; Said, 1978). Literature produced in postcolonial contexts often becomes a space where these experiences are remembered, questioned, and reinterpreted. Through

narrative, writers challenge colonial representations and recover voices that were marginalized under imperial systems (Bhabha, 1994).

This study examines the representation of colonial rupture, identity displacement, and cultural memory in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and Yasmina Khadra's *What the Day Owes the Night* (2008). Although the two novels emerge from different historical contexts, British colonial expansion in Nigeria and French colonial rule in Algeria, they both portray the lasting effects of colonial domination on individuals

and communities.

Achebe's novel depicts the disruption of Igbo cultural structures through the tragic story of Okonkwo, whose personal collapse reflects the wider breakdown of his society. By presenting Igbo traditions, social organization, and oral culture, Achebe challenges colonial narratives that reduced African societies to silence and primitivism (Achebe, 1958; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986).

Similarly, Khadra explores the consequences of colonialism through the life of Younes, an Algerian character whose identity becomes divided between his cultural origins and the French colonial environment in which he grows up. *What the Day Owes the Night* illustrates how colonial influence produces a lasting sense of alienation, where displacement becomes both physical and psychological (Khadra, 2008). Through Younes's experience, the novel highlights the complexity of colonial assimilation and the difficulty of belonging to two conflicting worlds.

By placing these novels in dialogue, this article argues that both Achebe and Khadra represent colonialism as a force that damages cultural continuity and destabilizes individual identities. However, both writers also present memory as a form of resistance. Achebe relies on oral traditions and collective memory to preserve Igbo identity, while Khadra uses nostalgia and personal remembrance to reflect on the persistence of cultural belonging. Drawing on postcolonial perspectives, particularly the works of Fanon, Bhabha, and Said, this study explores how both novels transform literature into a space for confronting colonial trauma and preserving cultural memory.

The study addresses the following questions:

1. How do Achebe and Khadra represent colonial rupture and its effects on cultural identity?
2. How do both novels portray displacement and alienation as consequences of colonial domination?
3. In what ways does memory function as a form of resistance and identity

preservation?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Postcolonial Theoretical Framework

Postcolonial theory provides a critical framework for examining the cultural, political, and psychological consequences of colonialism and its continuing influence on formerly colonized societies. Emerging in the second half of the twentieth century, postcolonial studies investigate how colonial power shaped representations of identity, history, culture, and knowledge. The field is concerned with the historical realities of colonial domination alongside the ways colonial ideologies continue to affect social relations, cultural perceptions, and literary production after formal independence.

One of the central concerns of postcolonial theory is the relationship between power and representation. In *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said argues that colonial discourse constructed non-Western peoples as inferior, exotic, irrational, and uncivilized in order to justify European domination. According to Said, these representations operated as forms of knowledge closely linked to political power and colonial authority. Colonial discourse created simplified images of colonized societies that reinforced the superiority of the colonizer while marginalizing indigenous cultures and histories. Consequently, postcolonial literature often seeks to challenge these representations by reclaiming local perspectives and recovering voices that have been excluded from dominant historical narratives.

Another significant contribution to postcolonial theory comes from Frantz Fanon, whose works focus on the psychological effects of colonialism. In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Fanon examines how colonial domination influences the self-perception of colonized individuals. He argues that colonialism frequently creates feelings of inferiority and alienation by imposing the cultural values of the colonizer upon the colonized. This process often leads to a fragmented sense of identity, as individuals struggle to negotiate

between their indigenous heritage and the culture imposed by colonial rule. In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Fanon further explains that colonialism disrupts traditional social and cultural structures, producing long-lasting psychological and cultural consequences that continue beyond the colonial period.

The concepts of displacement and identity fragmentation are particularly relevant to postcolonial studies. Displacement refers to physical movement from one place to another as well as the loss of cultural, social, and psychological belonging. Colonial rule frequently forces individuals and communities into unfamiliar social environments where traditional identities become destabilized. As a result, many postcolonial literary texts portray characters who experience alienation, uncertainty, and divided loyalties. Identity fragmentation emerges when individuals struggle to reconcile competing cultural influences, resulting in a fractured or unstable sense of self.

Homi Bhabha (1994) offers another important perspective through his concepts of hybridity and the “third space.” Hybridity refers to the emergence of new cultural identities formed through interactions between colonizer and colonized cultures. Rather than viewing colonial encounters as producing fixed categories of dominance and resistance, Bhabha emphasizes the complexity and ambiguity of cultural exchange. The “third space” represents an in-between cultural location where identities are continuously negotiated and redefined. This concept is particularly useful for understanding characters who exist between different cultural worlds and who cannot be fully identified with a single cultural tradition.

Memory serves as an essential tool for understanding how colonized societies preserve and reconstruct their histories in the aftermath of colonial rule. Colonialism often involves the suppression, distortion, or erasure of indigenous histories and cultural experiences. Consequently, postcolonial

writers frequently employ memory and storytelling as strategies for recovering marginalized histories and preserving collective identity. Through narrative, literature becomes a space where forgotten experiences can be remembered, cultural traditions can be preserved, and alternative versions of history can be articulated. Memory therefore functions not only as a record of the past but also as a form of resistance against cultural erasure and historical silencing.

The present study draws upon the theoretical contributions of Said, Fanon, and Bhabha to examine the representation of colonialism in Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and Yasmina Khadra’s *What the Day Owes the Night*. These theoretical perspectives provide a framework for analysing how colonial domination produces cultural rupture, displacement, alienation, and fragmented identities while also demonstrating how memory and storytelling serve as important forms of resistance and cultural preservation.

2.2 Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and Colonial Disruption

Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1958) stands as a foundational text in African postcolonial literature. Written in response to colonial misrepresentations such as Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899), Achebe re-centers African voices and portrays the Igbo world with depth and dignity. As critics note, the novel dramatizes the intrusion of British colonialism into Igbo society, particularly its impact on cultural traditions, kinship structures, and spiritual practices (Gikandi, 1991). The protagonist, Okonkwo, embodies both the strength and vulnerability of his society. His downfall parallels the disintegration of Igbo institutions under the weight of missionary presence and colonial authority.

Achebe’s narrative strategy, interweaving Igbo proverbs, oral tales, and cultural idioms into English prose, creates a hybrid literary form that resists colonial erasure by preserving indigenous epistemologies within the language of the colonizer (Amadi, 2014).

Moreover, the novel raises critical questions about memory and cultural survival. As Simon Gikandi argues, Achebe's work reclaims history by presenting colonialism as destruction instead of discovery, compelling readers to confront the violence of cultural displacement. (Gikandi, 1991). In this sense, *Things Fall Apart* critiques colonial power while affirming the resilience of cultural memory as a counter-discourse.

2.3 Khadra's *What the Day Owes the Night* and Colonial Ambivalence

Yasmina Khadra's *What the Day Owes the Night* (2008) offers a refined exploration of colonial Algeria, where French rule permeated daily life and produced complex forms of cultural displacement. The novel follows Younes, later renamed Jonas, who struggles with a fractured sense of belonging as he is caught between his Algerian roots and the appeal of French assimilation. Unlike Achebe's depiction of direct rupture, Khadra emphasizes ambivalence: Younes's divided identity reflects the long-lasting psychological burden of colonialism, where assimilation promises opportunities yet simultaneously alienates him from his origins (Messaoudi, 2012). Writing in French, Khadra occupies an ambivalent position himself, recalling Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's critique in *Decolonising the Mind* (1986), where the use of the colonizer's language is seen as both an extension of colonial power and a potential weapon of resistance. For Khadra, French becomes a vehicle for memory, nostalgia, and testimony, allowing him to reach international audiences while embedding Algerian experience into French literary discourse.

The novel's elegiac tone transforms memory into a narrative strategy of survival: Younes's recollections of childhood, friendship, and loss resist the total erasure of colonial violence by keeping alive fragments of a disrupted past. Critics such as Zahia Smail Salhi argue that Khadra's novel demonstrates how colonialism creates subjects who are constantly "in-between," suspended between the memory of what was lost and the

impossibility of full assimilation (Salhi, 2015).

2.4 Comparative Insights and Gaps

Placed in dialogue, Achebe and Khadra's novels illuminate both convergences and divergences in colonial experience across different geographies. Achebe highlights the abrupt disintegration of Igbo traditions under British indirect rule, where cultural and spiritual systems collapse in the face of external imposition. Khadra, by contrast, depicts the intimate, long-lasting wounds of settler colonialism in Algeria, where identity fracture is internalized across generations. Both, however, converge in presenting displacement as physical uprooting as well as existential dislocation. Achebe's challenging use of oral tradition and Khadra's elegiac recovery of memory reveal literature as a site of resistance where identity is reimagined against the erasures of empire.

Despite the richness of existing postcolonial scholarship, sustained comparative work between Anglophone and Francophone contexts remains limited. While Achebe has been widely studied as the father of African literature and Khadra as a major voice of contemporary Algerian fiction, little scholarship examines how their narratives jointly construct a literary testimony of colonial disruption.

Furthermore, the role of memory and storytelling as active forms of cultural resistance remains underexplored in comparative frameworks. This study seeks to fill that gap by situating *Things Fall Apart* and *What the Day Owes the Night* within a shared postcolonial lens, asking how both texts engage with colonial rupture, displacement, and memory to resist erasure and preserve fractured identities.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative, comparative, and interpretive methodology grounded in postcolonial theory. By placing Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Yasmina Khadra's *What the Day Owes the Night* in conversation, the research seeks to examine the multiple ways in which colonial domination reshapes culture, identity, and

memory. Rather than approaching the novels as isolated literary works, this methodology situates them within their broader socio-historical contexts, Nigeria under British rule and Algeria under French colonization, while also recognizing their role as imaginative spaces where the silences, ruptures, and contradictions of colonialism are narrated and reimagined.

The emphasis on qualitative analysis stems from the understanding that colonial legacies are not merely abstract political or economic realities but deeply lived experiences. The colonial encounter transformed subjectivities, disrupted traditions, and fractured cultural continuities. These dimensions cannot be captured through quantifiable measures; they require interpretive engagement with narrative form, symbolism, and voice. Literature, therefore, becomes a vital site for expressing the wounds of empire, preserving cultural memory against erasure, and giving voice to suppressed identities. A qualitative methodology allows for attention to these subtle dynamics, privileging the nuanced and layered meanings within the texts.

A comparative design further strengthens the analysis by highlighting how different colonial contexts generate both shared and divergent experiences of rupture and resistance. Achebe's portrayal of Igbo society at the onset of British invasion provides insight into the violence of cultural disintegration caused by missionary influence, colonial law, and economic restructuring. Khadra, on the other hand, writes from the shadow of French imperialism, capturing both the external pressures of domination and the internal fractures of displacement, exile, and divided belonging.

Reading these texts side by side highlights the transnational dimensions of colonialism while also attending to the specificities of Nigerian and Algerian experiences. Such a comparative approach presents literature as a space where histories of empire are both localized and connected.

Close reading constitutes the core method of analysis. Attention is given to the textures of language, the deployment of symbolism, the use of narrative voice, and how silence and memory function within the texts. Achebe's integration of Igbo proverbs and oral storytelling traditions serves as a literary strategy of cultural recovery, resisting colonial representations that sought to depict Africa as "without history" (Said, 1978). Khadra's use of lyrical and nostalgic prose foregrounds the affective dimensions of colonial memory, where longing and estrangement coexist. Both authors engage narrative as more than storytelling: it becomes an act of survival, a form of cultural resistance against the assimilating and erasing tendencies of empire.

The theoretical foundation of the study draws upon the central contributions of postcolonial thinkers. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) provides a critical lens for examining how colonial discourse represented colonized peoples as inferior, primitive, or dependent, thereby legitimizing imperial domination. Homi Bhabha's concepts of hybridity, ambivalence, and mimicry are used to understand how colonized subjects negotiate fractured identities, often caught between assimilation and resistance.

Frantz Fanon's writings, particularly in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) and *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), offer insights into the psychological dimensions of colonization, emphasizing the ways violence and dispossession create alienation and internalized oppression. These theoretical frameworks are not applied rigidly or mechanically; instead, they are placed in dialogue with the novels, ensuring that the analysis remains attentive to the historical and cultural specificity of the texts.

Equally important is the recognition that literary interpretation does not occur in a vacuum. The study engages with existing critical scholarship on Achebe and Khadra, drawing on it to situate the analysis within broader academic debates while avoiding overreliance on secondary readings. For

Achebe, critical attention has often shed light on his role in reclaiming African narratives from colonial misrepresentation, while Khadra has been examined in relation to themes of memory, exile, and fractured identity in postcolonial Algeria. By engaging selectively with this body of criticism, the study acknowledges the scholarly conversations that precede it while carving out space for a comparative, postcolonial reading that brings the two authors together.

The choice of postcolonial theory as the methodological framework arises from the nature of the texts themselves. While psychoanalysis, feminist theory, or purely historical approaches might illuminate certain dimensions, postcolonialism provides the most comprehensive framework for analysing the cultural, political, and psychological legacies of colonial domination.

Achebe and Khadra are more than novelists; they are cultural critics who write against the grain of empire. Their works resist colonial narratives of erasure, reconstruct suppressed histories, and reimagine identities fractured by domination. Postcolonial theory, therefore, allows the methodology to address the core concerns of both novels, displacement, cultural survival, memory, and resistance, without reducing them to purely psychological or historical case studies.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The comparative analysis of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and Yasmina Khadra's *What the Day Owes the Night* (2008) reveals that colonialism functions as a historical process of political domination and also as a force that

transforms cultural systems, personal identities, and collective memories. The findings demonstrate that both novels represent colonial experience through three interconnected dimensions: cultural rupture, identity displacement, and memory as a form of resistance. Although Achebe and Khadra write from different geographical and historical contexts, British colonial expansion in Nigeria and French colonial rule in Algeria, their works converge in showing

that colonial domination produces lasting psychological and cultural consequences that continue beyond the end of colonial rule.

Drawing on postcolonial perspectives, particularly the works of Fanon (1961, 1952), Bhabha (1994), and Said (1978, 1993), the analysis shows that colonialism disrupts both external structures, such as social institutions and traditions, and internal structures, including belonging and self-perception. The novels present colonized subjects as individuals shaped by historical violence while emphasizing the role of storytelling, memory, and literary representation in recovering suppressed histories and resisting cultural erasure.

4.1 Colonial Rupture and Cultural Disintegration

One of the major findings of this study is that both novels portray colonialism as a disruptive force that weakens traditional systems of meaning and social organization. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe presents the Igbo community before and during the arrival of British colonial power. The novel presents Igbo society as a complex and dynamic cultural system shaped by religious beliefs, communal relationships, oral traditions, and social institutions. Through this representation, Achebe challenges colonial narratives that historically described African societies as lacking civilization or historical consciousness (Achebe, 1978).

The arrival of British missionaries and colonial authorities gradually destabilizes this social order. The introduction of Christianity creates divisions within the community, particularly when some members of the clan adopt the new religion and distance themselves from traditional practices. This division affects not only religious beliefs but also family relationships, authority structures, and communal unity. Obierika's statement that "the white man has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart" (Achebe, 1958, p. 176) symbolizes the deeper cultural fragmentation caused by colonial intervention.

This rupture reflects Fanon's argument

that colonialism attacks the cultural foundations of colonized societies. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon (1961) explains that colonial domination seeks to undermine indigenous values and replace them with the cultural systems of the colonizer. Therefore, the destruction represented in Achebe's novel is not simply political; it is also psychological and cultural. Okonkwo's personal tragedy becomes a reflection of the wider collapse of a world unable to maintain its previous structures under colonial pressure.

Similarly, Khadra's *What the Day Owes the Night* portrays colonial rupture within the Algerian context. However, unlike Achebe's representation of an immediate cultural breakdown, Khadra focuses on the gradual internal consequences of colonial domination. Younes's life illustrates how colonialism creates divided identities through processes of assimilation and cultural displacement. After being removed from his original environment and raised within a French-influenced social world, Younes becomes caught between his Algerian heritage and the values associated with French colonial society. The difficult conditions experienced by Younes and his family under colonial rule are reflected in the statement, "This was not life; we merely existed" (Khadra, 2008, p. 5). This observation emphasizes the social and economic hardships produced by colonial domination and suggests a condition in which survival replaces meaningful existence. The quote highlights the disruptive effects of colonial rule on the everyday lives of colonized Algerians and reinforces the broader theme of cultural rupture.

Younes's transformation into "Jonas" represents more than a change of name; it symbolizes the colonial pressure to reshape the identity of the colonized subject. His experience reflects Bhabha's (1994) concept of hybridity, in which colonial subjects occupy an uncertain position between cultures. Rather than belonging completely to either side, Younes exists in an ambiguous space where identity becomes unstable. His experience demonstrates that colonial

domination does not only control territory but also influences how individuals understand themselves and their relationship to others.

The comparison between Okonkwo and Younes reveals two different forms of colonial rupture. Achebe emphasizes the collective destruction of a cultural system confronted by direct colonial intrusion, whereas Khadra highlights the psychological consequences of prolonged colonial influence. In both cases, however, colonialism produces a fracture between the individual and the cultural environment that once provided meaning and belonging.

4.2 Displacement, Alienation, and Fragmented Identity

The analysis further demonstrates that displacement in both novels extends beyond physical movement; it becomes a psychological condition marked by alienation and uncertainty. In *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo's exile from Umuofia after accidentally killing a clansman represents an early form of personal displacement. Although his exile follows Igbo cultural law, it also foreshadows the broader displacement experienced by the entire community after colonial intervention. The world to which Okonkwo returns is no longer the same, as foreign institutions have altered the structures that previously defined social identity.

Okonkwo's inability to adapt to the changing reality reflects the psychological impact of colonial disruption. His resistance is not only against the colonizers but also against the loss of a cultural order that shaped his understanding of masculinity, authority, and success. His final isolation reveals the emotional consequences of living in a world where familiar systems of meaning have collapsed. This sense of alienation is reflected in the observation that "He mourned for the clan, which he saw breaking up and falling apart" (Achebe, 1958, p. 183). The quote illustrates Okonkwo's awareness of the growing separation between himself and the community he once knew, emphasizing the emotional and cultural displacement produced by colonial transformation.

Said's (1993) discussion of exile and

imperialism helps explain this condition of displacement. According to Said, colonial experiences often create forms of separation in which individuals lose their connection to place, history, and cultural continuity. In Achebe's novel, the displacement of Okonkwo represents a wider cultural alienation affecting the Igbo community as a whole.

In Khadra's novel, displacement becomes even more central to the construction of identity. Younes's movement from Jenane Jato to Oran places him physically and culturally between two different worlds. Although he gains access to a privileged environment, he remains separated from full acceptance in either Algerian or French society. His experience reflects Fanon's (1952) argument that colonial subjects often experience an internal division created by the unequal relationship between colonizer and colonized. This condition is expressed when Younes reflects that "Somewhere it was written that I was born to leave my home, to constantly leave, each time leaving a part of me behind" (Khadra, 2008, p. 77). The statement captures the emotional burden of repeated displacement and suggests that each movement away from home results in a gradual fragmentation of identity. Through Younes's experience, the novel demonstrates how colonial conditions generate feelings of alienation, instability, and divided belonging.

4.3 Memory, Storytelling, and Resistance

The findings further reveal that both novels present memory and storytelling as forms of resistance against colonial erasure. Rather than accepting colonial representations of history, Achebe and Khadra use narrative to preserve cultural memory and recover experiences that have often been marginalized within colonial discourse. Through storytelling, both authors challenge dominant historical narratives and give voice to perspectives that colonial systems attempted to silence.

In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe reconstructs precolonial Igbo society through detailed descriptions of customs, rituals, social institutions, and oral traditions. This narrative

strategy challenges colonial stereotypes that portrayed African societies as lacking history or cultural complexity. The importance of cultural memory is reflected in the statement that "Among the Ibo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten" (Achebe, 1958, p. 7). The quote highlights the central role of oral tradition in preserving communal knowledge and cultural identity. By incorporating proverbs, folktales, and indigenous perspectives into the narrative, Achebe transforms the novel into an act of cultural preservation and resistance against colonial misrepresentation.

Similarly, *What the Day Owes the Night* employs memory as a means of revisiting Algeria's colonial past and preserving experiences threatened by historical forgetting. Through Younes's reflections on his life, the novel reconstructs the emotional consequences of colonialism, including displacement, separation, and loss. This connection between memory and collective suffering is expressed when Younes recalls that "The winter of 1960 was so harsh that even our prayers froze" (Khadra, 2008, p. 239). The statement evokes the hardships endured during a turbulent period of Algerian history and illustrates how personal memories become inseparable from broader historical realities.

By recalling moments of suffering and endurance, the narrative preserves experiences that might otherwise be forgotten and highlights the lasting impact of colonial conflict on individual lives. Through this act of remembrance, Khadra resists the erasure of individual and collective histories. These findings support Said's (1993) argument that postcolonial literature reclaims history from the perspective of the colonized and challenges dominant colonial narratives. They also reflect Fanon's (1961) view that recovering cultural memory is an important step in resisting colonial domination. The comparison demonstrates that both Achebe and Khadra use storytelling not only to remember the past but also to preserve identities, experiences, and histories that

colonial discourse sought to marginalize. In both novels, memory functions as a powerful form of resistance and a means of safeguarding cultural continuity.

5. CONCLUSION

This study of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Yasmina Khadra's *What the Day Owes the Night* highlights the profound and multifaceted impact of colonialism on both individual and collective identity. Across different historical and geographical contexts, these novels reveal how colonial powers disrupt traditional cultural systems, reshape social norms, and create enduring fractures in the sense of self and belonging. Achebe's work illustrates the ways in which British colonial invasion destabilizes the social, religious, and political structure of Igbo society, showing that imperial power does not merely impose external control but delves into communal life.

Khadra similarly explores the subtle and lasting effects of French colonialism on Algeria, focusing on how assimilation, hybridity, and cultural displacement produce alienation and ambivalence in the colonized subject. Both authors demonstrate that colonial rupture undermines the stability of cultural structures while simultaneously generating profound challenges to personal identity, whether through social disruption or psychological dislocation. In this sense, the novels illuminate the inseparability of the social and the personal: the breakdown of community systems resonates within the individual, and the struggles of characters to reconcile their sense of self reflect broader cultural fragmentation.

The novels also highlight the centrality of displacement and alienation as consequences of colonial domination. In Achebe, the displacement of individuals from their communities reflects a broader fracture of cultural cohesion, revealing how colonial power uproots physical lives and erodes shared traditions, values, and collective purpose. The dislocation experienced by characters is not simply geographic; it is deeply cultural and symbolic, illustrating how the imposition of foreign authority

creates a rupture in continuity, belonging, and identity that is felt across generations. Khadra portrays displacement more as an internalized experience, emphasizing the tension and uncertainty of belonging in a hybridized, colonial world. Younes's internal conflict embodies the psychological conflict experienced by many colonized subjects, forced to navigate competing loyalties and values.

In both cases, alienation emerges as a persistent feature of life under colonial rule, affecting relationships, social integration, and the development of selfhood. These representations affirm postcolonial theoretical insights, particularly those of Frantz Fanon and Homi Bhabha, regarding the psychological and social consequences of imperialism on colonized societies. The novels suggest that displacement and alienation are not merely incidental outcomes of colonial domination but are central mechanisms through which imperial control maintains its influence, shaping identity, thought, and social cohesion in subtle yet enduring ways.

Finally, both Achebe and Khadra demonstrate that memory and narrative function as critical tools for resistance and cultural preservation. In Achebe, the reconstruction and affirmation of traditional practices and collective history offer a means of cultural survival despite the pressures of colonial erasure. Through storytelling, the past is actively recovered, enabling communities to assert continuity and resilience in the face of disruption. Khadra similarly highlights the role of personal and collective memory in maintaining identity, allowing the colonized subject to navigate the challenges of hybridized existence and maintain continuity with their cultural heritage.

Memory becomes both a form of resistance and a repository of identity, ensuring that cultural knowledge, values, and experiences are preserved even when physical or political structures are deconstructed. Literature, in this sense, becomes a medium through which both the trauma and resilience of colonized

communities are recorded, interpreted, and transmitted to future generations. It is through narrative that Achebe and Khadra offer their readers a depiction of colonial impact, as well as a space for reflection, empathy, and critical engagement with historical and cultural legacies.

In summation, this comparative analysis confirms that Achebe and Khadra depict colonial rupture as a destabilizing force that undermines both communal and individual identity, explore displacement and alienation as enduring consequences of imperialism, and reveal memory and narrative as mechanisms of resistance and cultural preservation. While Achebe emphasizes the collapse of traditional structures and communal identity, Khadra accentuates the psychological and existential dimensions of colonial hybridity. Together, these works illuminate the persistent legacies of colonialism, demonstrating that literature bears witness to historical injustice while providing pathways for reclaiming identity, memory, and agency in the aftermath of disruption.

By highlighting these convergences and divergences, the study affirms the capacity of postcolonial literature to act as a lens for understanding the complexities of human experience under colonial domination, emphasizing that the scars of imperialism are neither abstract nor solely historical, but deeply lived, mediated, and narrated through the enduring power of storytelling.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations may be proposed for future research in postcolonial literary studies. Since the analysis has demonstrated that colonialism contributes to cultural rupture, identity displacement, and the reconstruction of memory, future studies should continue investigating the diverse ways colonial experiences are represented across different literary traditions and historical contexts.

First, researchers are encouraged to undertake further comparative studies of African literary texts produced under different colonial systems. The comparison

between British colonialism in *Things Fall Apart* and French colonialism in *What the Day Owes the Night* reveals both similarities and differences in the representation of colonial domination. Additional comparative research may provide a deeper understanding of how distinct colonial policies influenced cultural identities, social structures, and historical experiences throughout Africa.

Second, future research should explore the relationship between colonialism and identity formation in greater depth. The findings indicate that colonial rule often produces experiences of alienation, displacement, and fragmented identity. Further studies may examine how these themes are represented in contemporary postcolonial literature and how the effects of colonialism continue to shape individual and collective identities across generations.

Third, scholars should pay greater attention to the role of memory in postcolonial narratives. This study has shown that memory functions as a means of preserving cultural heritage and resisting historical erasure. Future investigations may analyze the ways in which personal memory, collective memory, and historical remembrance contribute to the recovery of marginalized voices and suppressed histories in postcolonial texts.

Fourth, researchers are encouraged to employ interdisciplinary approaches that combine postcolonial theory with psychoanalytic, cultural, historical, or sociological perspectives. Such approaches may offer a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological and cultural consequences of colonial domination and their lasting impact on both individuals and communities.

Finally, future studies should continue examining storytelling, oral traditions, and literary representation as forms of cultural resistance. The findings of this study demonstrate that literature serves not only as a reflection of historical realities but also as a powerful tool for preserving cultural identity, challenging colonial narratives, and reclaiming silenced histories. Further research in this area may contribute to a

richer understanding of the role of literature in resisting cultural erasure and promoting historical awareness.

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