

On the cohesion of the historical and fictional world in "The virtuous" by Yasmina Khadra.

De la cohésion du monde historique et fictionnel dans le roman

« Les vertueux », de Yasmina Khadra

TEBANI Ibtissam*

Mohamed BOUDIAF
M 'sila University, (ALGERIA)
Ibtissam.tabani@univ-msila.dz

Abstract :

Yasmina Khadra, is among the Algerian writers of the post-colonial Period who have strived to fulfill the true mission of a writer: to transform his pen into a means to tell the evils of the current world by seeking to understand and present the reality that surrounds him and the time in which he lives. Khadra is always interested in what is happening in the world and feels concerned about all conflicts that cause problems and misunderstandings among people, attempting find solutions. His writings, as a whole, attempt to retrace history by focusing on the question of social integration, the meeting between cultures and the relationship to the other.

In this article we will attempt to understand how History and fiction intermingle and fulfil themselves in Ysmina Khadra's narrative, by ensuring a remarkable cohesion and how they manifest in his novel "The Virtuous",

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* Corresponding author

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a realistic reference tied to the suffering of the Algerian people at the beginning of the 20th century. This novel offers readers several reflections on the interaction between History and fiction, the mechanisms used by the author to move from history to imagination and the impact that the writer seeks to have on the reader by moving from history to fiction.

Résumé::

Yasmina Khadra, fait partie des écrivains algériens de la période post-coloniale qui ont tenté d'accomplir la vraie mission d'un écrivain, celle de transformer sa plume en un moyen pour dire les maux du monde actuel en cherchant à comprendre et à présenter la réalité qui l'entoure et l'époque pendant laquelle il vit. Khadra s'intéresse toujours à ce qui se passe dans le monde et se sent concerné par tous les conflits qui causent des problèmes et des malentendus entre les hommes et essaye d'en trouver des solutions. Ses écrits, dans leurs ensembles, tentent de retracer l'Histoire en mettant l'accent sur la question de l'intégration sociale, la rencontre entre les cultures et le rapport à l'autre.

Dans le cadre de cet article nous essaierons de comprendre comment l'Histoire et la fiction se mêlent et s'accomplissent dans le récit de Yasmina Khadra en assurant une cohésion remarquable et comment elles se manifestent dans son roman « Les vertueux », référence réaliste liée à la souffrance du peuple algérien au début du XX^e siècle. Ce roman offre aux lecteurs plusieurs réflexions sur l'interaction entre l'Histoire et le romanesque, les mécanismes utilisés par l'auteur pour passer de l'histoire à l'imaginaire et sur l'impact que cherche l'écrivain à avoir sur le lecteur en passant de l'histoire à la fiction.

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1.

INTRODUCTION

Yasmina Khadra is the pen name of the Algerian writer Mohammed Moulessehouli. Born on January 10, 1955 in Kenadsa, in the province of Bechar. He is known for his narration of the events that have marked Algeria. Yasmina Khadra is an Algerian author of the new generation in Algeria. His novels highlight the political and social life of a wounded Algeria, portraying its reality and describing the rise of violence that marked the black decade. Moreover, he approaches international problems and conflicts from a tragically real perspective.

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For twenty-five years, he was a senior officer in the Algerian army, eventually reaching the rank of commander. He then left the army after his retirement to devote himself to writing. He adopted his wife's first names in order to escape censorship in Algeria. A the author of the famous trilogy "*The Swallows of Kabul*", "*The Attack*" and "*The Sirens of Baghdad*", many of his novels have been translated into more than 50 languages and adapted into films.

Yasmina Khadra is renowned for his ease at tackling genre differences. Thanks to his remarkable writing, metaphors and mastery of the language, this writer arouses the admiration of his audience. He is known around the world thanks to the black novels of Comissioner "*Brahim L lob*" which were released in cinemas in 2007. He has distinguished himself in multiple genres, such as short story, autobiographies and postcolonial novels.

The writer made it known to the press and the general public that he was a man in 2001, with the publication of his autobiographical book entitled "*The Writer*", in which he recalls his past and his family. It is the sweetness of a nomadic mother who learns through life, the image of a father who is also in the Algerian army. His participation in cadet school was a memorable event in his life. He highlights his fears and anxieties, his resistance and commitment, and especially his early days in the field of literature and his commitment, and above all his beginnings in the field of literature and writing.

This writer has developed a trajectory that brings him closer to the audience and the reader. The works he writes are very romantic and deal with the complex issues of violence and fundamentalism through storytelling. This invites the reader to delve deeper into the history of contemporary Algeria while exploring different literary genres. In addition, it ensures a certain complementarity between History and fiction, by engaging the reader from the beginning in a literary journey around a real story that generates an inscription of history in the story.

Yasmina Khadra wrote a universal novel called "*The Virtuous*" that explores Algeria between the wars. It offers a dive into the life and mentality of the Algerian people at the beginning of the 20th century. In this novel, the author deals with various topics such as fate, destiny, forgiveness and inner exile. This monumental novel, with a novelistic breath that seems obvious, takes the reader on an adventure where love, friendship and solidarity are paths to light in the violent and unjust world of colonial Algeria.

In this article we will try to answer the following questions:

- How do History and Fiction blend and fulfill in Yasmina Khadra's narrative while ensuring remarkable cohesion and how do they manifest?
- What are the mechanisms used by the author to move from history to imagination?
- What impact does the writer seek to have on the reader by moving from story to fiction?

The answer to these questions claims the following hypotheses: Khadra is an excellent narrator, he allowed us to explore an important period in the history of Algeria

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through the individual history of his main character while trying to ensure a kind of cohesion between history and fiction.

Yasmina Khadra, thanks to his magical power as a writer, tries to build an imaginary universe that resembles History. It deals with a complex real, thus ensuring a harmonious progression from the real to the fictional while trying to exert a significant impact on future generations, since they acquire a lot of knowledge about the history of Algeria at the beginning of the twentieth century.

2. The representation of reality between history and fiction:

In 1914, in Algeria, and through the story of an Algerian Shepherd, Yacine Chérage, only twenty years old, was chosen by the warlord, who runs the territory on which the family of Yacine, the boss of his douar, lives, to go fight in France against the "Boches", in place of his son suffering from heart condition. To ensure Yacine's submission and dedication to battle, he offers him land, a farm, to look after him on his return, as well as the safety of his family. The boss will not speak out, but instead will seek to kill him when he returns.

The bullies were assimilated to God within a race society. He was able to create a huge object from a scoundrel. Young Yacine is in the trenches. They fought against the Boches and tried to escape. Yacine believed that his return was insurance for better days. We waited for the usurper to disappear so that the light could be perceived. He was destined to be killed so that Hamza, the son of the kingpin, would be born with battle medals. At the end of the First World War, Yacine returns home asking for a farm to prevent his parents from feeling sick. Four years after the horror and death, he finally returns, but he still remains haunted by the atrocities of war:

Nothing is worse than war. Nothing is quite finished with war, nothing is defeated, nothing is conjured or avenged, nothing is really saved. When the guns are silent and the mass graves repel the meadows, the war will always be there, in the head, in the flesh, in the air of time falsely soothed, stuck to the skin, bruising the memories, drowning each of our thoughts, whole, full, total, as unstoppable as second nature. (Yasmina Khadra, 2022 :90)

His destiny is not easy to achieve, he who wanted to leave feudal slavery to serve as cannon fodder for a few years. Excluded from his past life and deprived of his experience as a soldier, he needs the unwavering solidarity of his former comrades-in-arms, as well as his will to progress, while the trials and injustices are far from over. Yacine's life sinks ceaselessly into the swirls of an irrepressible torrent, with an epic breath that carries the story in a succession of adventures all more frightening than the others. Yacine's resilience is based on this instinctive wisdom that pushes him to bend to the whims of the mektoub, while remaining true to himself, his human values and his emotional attachments:

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Life is a journey and you are a simple pilgrim. The past is your baggage. The future, your destination. We are the present If your luggage is cluttering up, drop it off at the locker. If your destination is hazardous, know that it is for everyone. Live deeply in the present moment, because nothing is as concretely acquired as this manifest reality that you carry within you.
(Yasmina Khadra, 2022 :462-463)

At the end of the day, he will be one of those who will commit to cultivating love and happiness to the depths of difficulties, facing the inevitable in order to better enjoy the little enlightenments offered by the road. Yasmina Khadra's powerful and tumultuous fresco will take three years to complete: anthology scenes celebrating upright souls, able, despite their misfortunes and the barbarity of the world, to maintain their faith in themselves and in humanity, to defend love.

Yacine returned to Algeria. He returns with Turks and Algerians who served in the French army. He participates in a sad rebellion with Zorg. He meets Sid, a kind man, and takes the name Raho in order to find happiness. Yacine encounters obstacles and is there. Difficult repetition quickly makes you feel unhappy.

Yacine refuses to restrict his identity to his suffering.:

Incredible things fall on you, divert the course of your life and upset it from top to bottom. You may flee to the end of the world, take refuge where no one is likely to find you, they follow you like a pack of stray dogs and make you someone who looks nothing like you and who becomes the only story that will be remembered of you. Some call these things mektoub. Others, less unreasonable, say that this is life. (Yasmina Khadra, 2022 :9)

Yasmina Khadra takes us on an enlightened journey with Yacine and teaches us how to forgive.

Yacine's story is told in the first person. The characters meet in the 7th RTA (Algerian Riflemen Regiment, known as "turcos" in the trenches of Verdun or Louvemont) in the readable scenario from 1914 to 1925. The chapters devoted to the hell of the trenches evoke the evocation of a Dorgelès or a Genevoix, and are the heart of the story from which the author builds branches, reunions and picaresque digressions that accompany the pursuit of Yacine's tragic destiny. By closing the work, the construction and the romantic device are visible in a virtual way.

His writing style is beautiful and refined in order to arouse the empathy of the reader. Yacine is spared by his ability to continue the adventures of the absent without ever abandoning his honest and valiant conduct.

The characters are both benevolent and cruel. This book deals with the subject of man. The secondary characters serve as challenges to overcome and indications for progress. Best friend Sid, a very sad and angry Turk, is hard to forget, who triggers the war against the Blackfoot. Abla, his cousin, is an Amazon loyal to her family.

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The narrative is dominated by Algerian characters, which allows Yasmina Khadra to further explore human nature: like all human societies, Algerian society is divided by very strong lines of tension, between the submissives or profiteers of colonization and the rebels who announce the FLN and the Algerian war; between the rich and the poor. This is the best seller. In writings on the First World War, they appear as officers supervising indigenous soldiers, highlighting the injustice and contempt with which they were treated. In the same way when visiting Biribi's ship. Indeed, the story only keeps the characters who organize it. Yasmina Khadra tells a story of Algerians in a colonial context, which gives her the opportunity to tell an Algerian story.

This book is full of brutality, suffering, friendship, love, forgiveness and hope. After a long epic period at peace with himself, his friends and his absences, Yacine was given a lesson in wisdom. You feel distant, both geographically and emotionally, you just feel human when you look at the book. This book was concise and succinct, but it was sometimes very long. There are various themes, but there are many essential elements such as love, friendship and relationships between brothers in arms. There is great solidarity between individuals, be they soldiers or natives, French and Algerians, in this novel.

Yasmina Khadra's most recent novel is a real success. Despite a few moments of respite, Yacine will live an extremely difficult life, avoiding misery, constantly moving, in a frantic race, to try to escape his destiny. The portraits of Yacine's comrades in the army and of all those he will meet during his cavalry are very well done, moving, revolting and full of truth. The writer presents this period with great realism. The characters who suffocate in the trenches of the French countryside, the arid and desert Algerian landscapes, the Oran slums, drag the reader into a whirlwind of feelings and he cannot help but shed a few tears in the face of the torments. Yasmina Khadra is exhausted. A fresco of Algeria in the early twentieth century, on the eve of the First World War, is needed. Breath and creativity. In an interview with Radio France, Yasmina Khadra, Mohammed Moulessehouel for civil status, confirms that he is an excellent storyteller by stating that he wanted to give his reader a better text: "I wanted to offer my readers who have never abandoned me the best I could give. This is my most beautiful text. »

This article examines three main questions using Yasmina Khadra's "The Virtuous" and the double reading he proposes: on the one hand, an imaginary/fictitious reading and on the other hand a real/factual reading. We first wonder about this remarkable complementarity between History and fiction in this work, then about the methods used by the author to ensure a coherent passage between History and fiction, and finally about the desired effect on the reader.

We will therefore try, from the texts of Gérard Genette, Jean Searle and Philippe Lejeune, to understand how History and fiction mix and become concrete in Khadra's story and how they manifest themselves through the personal history of Yacine Chérage [...].

3. "The Virtuous": The Story at the Origin of a Fiction

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Before beginning our analysis, it is important to understand what the notion of fiction means in its epistemological sense and in its distant approach to reality, in order to become aware of the importance of the fictional component in the works of Yasmina Khadra.

Robert considers that "reality" corresponds to what is real, to what really exists, contrary to what is imaginary, dreamed or imaginary. Because of its origin in Latin "fictum", fiction can be defined as creation in the sense of pretending. According to this dictionary, fiction is defined as the creation of imaginary and erroneous things.

In order for the fictional story to be truly grounded, the original instance must select narrative elements that are real, such as the spatial referent of the narrative who must find his or her correspondent in the real world.

Through precise dates, the author places the story in the real world and highlights the importance and meaning of the events that occur in the lives of his characters. Gérard Genette asserts that these dates are immutable data that make it possible to locate oneself in the absolute and do not serve as anchoring points for the indices of fiction: "The precise dates refer to immutable entities that set up a location in the absolute and do not become anchoring points to which the indices of fiction refer. (Gérard Genette, 1970 : 80).

Gérard Genette suggests distancing oneself from fiction in order to spot the clues of deception that manifest themselves in the paratext: By accepting the pre-attentional deceptions of the plane of reality, the reader will be forced to enter the world of fiction without considering this space as a space of reality. According to this theorist of narratology, paratextual marks of a fictional text warn the reader of misinterpretation, and the generic indication is an example of this. "If the reader considers the plane of reality accepts pre-attentional lures, he will be led to enter the world of fiction, without making this space a space of the real" (Gérard Genette, 1970 : 80).

It is important to emphasize that Yasmina Khadra's literary work does not seek to distract the reader, as her text always offers the reader a real connection with the individual story of the character, which lends importance to her life and credibility to the events of the narrative. Gérard Genette asserts that fiction is not intended to sleep the reader. She makes sure to offer him a common playful illusion that represents the real universe. The literary work, considered as such, is only the result of the elastic omniscience of the writer who seeks to convey significant messages.

We can define the novel-or historical fiction as the fusion of a historical element, the past in any form, and a fiction that is inspired by this fact. The lighting of the present therefore allows the reader to understand the past. The novel can replace History when it fails to account for the past. He may also have an interest in distracting her, entertaining her, or even time travel. Sometimes he can also understand, understand a historical period, an event... It probably has everything the novel has... To define the historical novel, it is necessary to

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observe and list the epochs, characters and narrative modalities, which allows to see the diversity and variety.

Thus, Yasmina Khadra's work can be considered as a historical work, his novel as a historical novel and his fiction as a fiction of historical origin, because he never ceases to use elements from reality, from true History.

4. Historical and fictional complementarity

Literary critics have always tried to interrogate the relationship between the novel and reality. In his book "Précis de la littérature française", Bergez shows that there are two types of real dimensions for this concept. According to him, the real is divided into two sets: the objective and historical one, in which the text occurs at the moment of its birth – historical reality – and the imaginary one, suggested by the meaning of the words – reference real. In reality, the writer and the reader must take into account two concepts, namely a true reference and a true history within the same text.

The first, by rewriting the real, is perceived as a stimulant that encourages members of society to get involved in this reality by rewriting the real in their discourse. The second is a motivation that encourages members to get closer to a society that interested in its contribution in order to help people and ensure optimal healing and progression.

Throughout history, the reality has always served as a foundation for creating imaginary events from the real. For instance, we can mention Plato and Aristotle who have always considered that literature is based on the reality and the truth. Over time, Western literature has also told how this plays out, such as authenticity for classical writers, the distinction between the material and spiritual worlds in Symbolist novels, and many more. For some time now, many books have been influenced by history. It is an authentic writing that seems to be an adventure where the author seeks to use a literary style to represent the reality in which he finds himself. This is why the novel gives a better picture of the History of the present or that of the past. This literary experience was narrated by Pierre Barbéris:

[...] writing the real means reading it and making it readable, with all the associated risks .It is not about replacing one ideological unity and coherence with a new one ,equally ideological, rather. it involves inscribing within the representation of empirical reality the various possibilities of its fragmentation, its evolutions, its re-reading, and, in a word, the potential for new, yet-to-be-classified actions. (Barbéris, 1980 :346)

This is an easy explanation given to Barbéris' quote: rewriting history simply means offering his point of view on a lived reality, to help the reader to review it in his own way, which makes him become a critic, a sociologist, a psychologist or simply a living social being capable of contributing to the progression and development of his society.

Shortly after the 1990s, in Algeria and in reaction to the tragic events that marked this period, a new literature, known as "emergency literature" or "emergency writing", began to develop

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and to upset the Algerian and even Maghrebian literary universe of French expression, despite the difficult context in which it was born. Among the writers of this time, we can mention Yasmina Khadra, who engaged in the field of drama by addressing themes drawn from reality and who had a clear objective, that of restoring balance in an Algerian society affected by very significant violence. Several rebellious feathers emerged at this time, denouncing certain ideologies and social values by offering writing.

According to the relationship between History and fiction, fiction views history as a resource to meet the needs of the imagination, which implies an exploitation and aestheticization of these. However, the traces of history that are found in the novel are the signs of referentiality that confer certain works a note and a designation credit. Thus, between the two disciplines, there is a relationship of interaction and interconnection and, therefore, the action of fiction is not only distortion. Paul Ricoeur's decision on the relationship between History and fiction was probably difficult, because he does not know how the relationship between stories and fiction is articulated. He frequently and constantly evokes the notion of "functionalization of history" and "historicization of fiction". The objective is therefore to facilitate the understanding of history and to make it known to new generations in libraries through artistic contributions. Yasmina Khadra seeks to accomplish this by awakening the memory of history and creating an interdisciplinary world.

The question of identity is also one of the main characteristics of Yasmina Khadra's writing. The author clearly expresses in his work the Maghreb cultural identity in general and Algerian in particular, by integrating Algerian cultural elements. The presence of these elements in the texts undoubtedly constitutes a return to the origins for the author. Our writer uses a particular language of his own. According to him, the fictitious use of history is a form of bleeding that facilitates and simplifies writing, giving it the appearance of a sacrifice. He exploited the great transformations of history, especially in Algeria, in order to stage conflicts, wars and the physical and moral suffering of peoples in his fiction.

In his book entitled "The Virtuous", Yasmina Khadra recounts the events that were taking place at that time in the country by describing the events related to the family and love life of her hero. In a television interview, he says that "it is a destiny that evokes a little bit of an era, what I wanted to tell through this is the Algeria of the 1920s-1930s". By focusing on the diversity and pride of Algeria, it offers us a new perspective on the Algerian past by offering a discourse on the relations between the past and the present, which allows us to grasp the history of our country.

The memory of Yacine Chéraga, narrator-character of the story, is perceived as a collective memory, because all his recollections strive to restore Algeria of 1910s-1920s with its sufferings, its miseries and its places where the reader can bring out his own memories. In reality, these adventures are linked to the environment of colonial Algeria that the writer recounts with great lyricism through a very endearing and naive personality that reflects the image of his country. In this novel, fiction and history complement each other by exposing

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the dreams, tensions and anxieties of the Algerian people of that time, while arousing interest and integrating real and historical events into a fictional universe. This helps to make the text more credible and to revive the history of his country.

In other words, Yasmina Khadra seeks to authenticate her fictional narrative by giving a shocking reality and focusing on the suffering of human beings. He seeks to write in order to denounce and reflect on the testing of everyone.

This implies that the conscious use of History as the setting of the novel in Khadra's narratives aims to create fiction. This is what Jean-Marie Schaeffer calls "the contamination of the historical world by the fictional world". (SCHAEFFER Jean-Marie, 1999 : 103). Indeed, it is the fictional world that uses the historical world to design this fiction similar and similar to the real world.

"The virtuous" does not only concern the Algerian history of the years 1910-1920, nor the socio-political reality of Algeria at that time. He offers us a combination of history and romance in order to represent an Algerian society confronted with violence, while creating a harmony between a complex reality and a captivating fiction. Yasmina Khadra thus engages with a group of authors who take us, through their writings, to the very heart of aggression. Thus, "The Virtuous" embodies both the Algerian society of that time and the fiction of Yasmina Khadra who reproduces a collective memory by associating the events of the narrative with the social structure and the Algerian drama. However, the discourse of violence is not limited to a concrete fact. Consequently, Khadra's texts constantly oppose the reader to two different perspectives and make him reflect, on the one hand on the study of a real and authentic world, on the other hand on an irresistible fictional creation.

5. Conclusion

In summary, we affirm that the analysis of this novel gave us the opportunity to explore a crucial period in the history of Algeria through its various pages. In this novel, Yasmina Khadra, one of the pioneers of urgent literature, has offered us a scene of where reality incorporated into fiction showcasing a remarkable complementarity between these two entirely disciplines.

In this work, Yasmina Khadra declares that he is perceived as one of the writers who, through their writings, are perceived as revolutionaries of humanity. They do not interpret the world; on the contrary, they humanize it. Over the course of the book, he recounts an Algeria that suffers but retains hope and becomes optimistic at the end.

In reality, the extra-literary life of the writer, a former senior officer, gave his pen a peculiarity that other writers do not possess: to make events real as they unfolded. A book with a higher historical load and a remarkable fusion between two totally different disciplines, History and Fiction.

Yasmina Khadra uses his creativity to develop a fictional world similar to that of history, while providing a kind of "testimony" about the life of his character and that of Algerians of that time. he addresses a complex reality, thus guaranteeing a coherent transition

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from the real to the fictional. his impact on the new generations is very important, as they learn a lot about the history of Algeria at the beginning of the 20th century.

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