Manel Ziani

# Kateb Yacine's Popular Theatre: A Journey of Democracy and Cultural Liberation in Modern Algeria

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**Abstract**

This thesis explores the distinctive characteristics of Kateb Yacine's popular theatre as a form separate from the francophone literary repertoire. By situating Kateb's theatrical works within a philosophical framework informed by theories of praxis, dialogue, open-endedness, and multivocality, this study offers an analysis of his role as a postcolonial intellectual and his intellectual approach in creating a theatrical foundation for democracy and education. These theories diverge from the literary norms by emphasizing practicality, dynamic interaction, and diverse perspectives and meanings. Through an examination of the relationship between Kateb's aesthetic techniques and the complex voices and meanings they generate across three case studies, the thesis argues that his theatre emerged organically from the social, cultural, and political circumstances in which it originated. The research demonstrates that Kateb's deliberate theatrical choices, such as using dialect and other vernacular techniques rooted in tradition, were effective in engaging audiences and maintaining ongoing educational situations on various levels, encompassing the political, cultural, and social spheres. By engaging with international theatrical approaches and practices, including those of Brecht, the thesis situates Kateb within the global theatre of education, oppression, and political activism, while also highlighting his theatre's autonomy from mere experimentation with Western techniques. In conclusion, this thesis asserts that Kateb Yacine, by delving into the traditional roots of popular culture, established a modern theatre that deserves recognition for its ability to provide an encompassing education within contemporary Algeria. His theatrical repertoire not only reflects the sociopolitical background of his time but also serves as a potent tool for reclaiming critical thinking, cultural dialogue, and democratic ideals in Algerian society.

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I declare that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature……

Manel Ziani

## The Introduction

This thesis offers a critical analysis of three popular plays by Kateb Yacine, *La Poudre d'intelligence (Intelligence Powder)* 1959, *Mohamed, prends ta valise (Mohamed, pack your Bag)* 1971 and *Palestine trahie*[1]*(Palestine Betrayed)* 1977. The aim is to explore the characteristics of his theatre from 1959 to 1989 in which he embarked on a new journey of producing popular performances which are politically and pedagogically oriented. The theoretical background provided for this research serves as a guiding framework to address the questions that the research attempts to answer. The central research question focuses on understanding how Kateb Yacine established a pedagogical theatre that contributed to the decolonization of history and the "reterritorialization of the nation." As the research progressed, several sub-questions emerged, encompassing the effectiveness of Kateb's techniques in tackling social, cultural, and political issues of post-independent Algeria. Another question to explore is the significance of Kateb's popular theatre as a revolutionary force that played a crucial role in nurturing a genuine theatre culture in Algeria. Moreover, the inquiry delves into why Kateb's theatre warrants revival as a model of implementing a democratic approach to education. These interconnected questions form the foundation for investigating the transformative nature and impact of Kateb's pedagogical theatre, shedding light on its relevance to decolonization, cultural revitalization, and the promotion of democratic education. This introduction briefly explores Kateb's transformative journey from a francophone writer to a theatre practitioner, highlighting his commitment to theatre as a powerful avenue for meaningful change. Kateb Yacine's popular theatre is a pedagogical project designed to teach politics and culture within and beyond Algeria. It was established to reconstruct national consciousness and contributed to the decolonization of history and the deconstruction of the culture of alienation.

Kateb Yacine is less known as a playwright and director, and more acclaimed as an iconic Francophone author and poet whose status resembles that of Faulkner or

[1] These two performances are unpublished.

Rimbaud as the French theatre director Antoine Vitez states (Vitez cited in Corpet et al, 1990, p.11). However, this international acclaim as a francophone author contributed to his alienation more than it did to brighten his career. Although he was born to an Arabic-speaking family, Kateb mastered the French language thanks to his father's decision to send him to the French school, Lafayette in Setif city, at an early age. Lafayette marked the beginning of his alienation, and he describes his transfer from El-Medrasa (the Koranic school) to a French school as having been thrown into "la gueule du loup" (the wolf's den) (Kateb interviewed by Tazi, 1994, p.13). Kateb spent many years in exile writing poetry, novels, and drama in the French language, but he often declares that he writes in the French language to tell the French that he is not French. The language of the colonizer was imposed on Kateb Yacine who used it as a "butin de guerre" to condemn the French colonization (Kateb cited in Soukehal, 2011, p.50).

Kateb Yacine found himself excluded from Lafayette High School following his participation in the national uprising of May 8, 1945, which took place in many regions across Algeria, notably in Setif, Guelma, and Kherrata. The uprising occurred as Algerians rejoiced in the fall of the dictatorship and the collapse of Nazism, rallying in peaceful demonstrations throughout the streets. However, the French army responded forcefully, resulting in unforgettable atrocities. Thousands of civilians lost their lives as the French military cracked down on the uprisings, breaking its promise to grant independence to Algeria. This tragic event marked a significant turning point in Algerian history, fuelling further resistance against colonial rule and shaping the trajectory of the Algerian independence movement. The deadly events of 1945 and the experience of jail made Kateb Yacine realize the tragedy Algerian people were living and shaped his passion for creating a democratic theatre that actively works against oppression, promotes resistance against injustice, and seeks to reshape the concept of national identity. His poetry skills, the shock of love he experienced with his cousin Nedjma and above all the fact that he was imprisoned culminated in the writing of his masterpiece *Nedjma* in 1945 (published in1956), a poetic novel which is about war and the love of the nation. In 1966, he published his second autobiographical novel, *Le polygone étoilé* (*The Starry Polygon*). While he was drafting *Nedjma*, Kateb was working on his first tragedy L*e Cadavre Encerclè* (*the Encircled Corpse*)[2], and the satire, *La poudre d'intelligence* along with

[2] Jean Marie Serreau suggested to stage in Paris, but unfortunately, the French authorities refused due to the 1945 manifestations. However, Jean-Marie Serreau found in Théatre Molière de Bruxelles a refuge to present two performances in 1958 and was obliged to stage it secretly in the remote Theatre Lutèce in Paris.

another tragedy, *Les ancètres redoublent de Férocité* (*Ancestors Redouble their Fury*). *La poudre d'intelligence, le cadavre encerclè*, and a short poem *Le vautour* (*The Vulture*), were published as part of the trilogy *Le cercle des reprèsailles* (*The Circle of Reprisals)*.

*The Circle of Reprisals* is significant in our understanding of Kateb's theatre endeavor because it breaks the linearity of time and dramatizes a cyclical movement of history which continues to evolve in his popular performances. In 1949, when Kateb was a journalist, he started drafting the first scenes *of L'homme aux sandales de caoutchouc* (*The Man with Rubber Sandals*) which was published in 1971.[3] The presentation of this play marks the first conflict between a theatre director and Kateb Yacine because while Mustapha Kateb was faithful to literary Arabic, Kateb Yacine insisted that *The Man with Rubber Sandales* should be performed in popular Arabic. For Kateb Yacine, speaking the popular language is the key to transcending the label of being a writer. Kateb's return from exile in 1970 marked his breakup with the literary canon and the beginning of a passionate endeavour to produce popular plays in Algerian dialects. These plays which were performed between Algeria and France are, *Mohamed, prends ta valise* (1971), *Saout Ennissa 1972 (The Voice of Women), La guerre de deux milles ans* 1974 (*The 2000 Years' War*), *Palestine trahie* (1977), *Le roi de l'ouest* 1975 (*The King of the West*). The last play Kateb Yacine drafted was *Le bourgeois sans-culotte ou le spectre du parc Monceau (The Bourgeois Sans-Culotte or The Specter of Parc Monceau) (1988)*[4] written in the French language and performed in different avenues in France.

It is worth clarifying that Kateb Yacine's literary and theatrical productions are interconnected by the engine of history and should therefore be thematically approached as a whole body of work. Tahar Djaout clarifies that "there is no rupture, especially at the thematic level, between the one who wrote *Nedjma* and the one who presented *La guerre de deux mille ans*"[5] (Djaout cited in Corpet et al, 1990, p.7). We also find that each part in each performance owes to other parts in other dramatic texts and performances[6].

[3] It was published in 1978 by Seuil and was staged by Mustapha Kateb at Theatre National Algerien (TNA). It is a play about the Vietnamese war and a tribute to the Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh.
[4] staged at Calvet museum in Avignon from the 12th to the 31st of July 1988.
[5] My translation of Tahar Djaout. All translation in this thesis is mine unless indicated.
[6] Slimane Benaissa, who had been translating Kateb's dialogues in his troupe Action Culturelle des Travailleurs, clarifies that *Intelligence Powde*r, *Mohamed, pack your Bag*, and *Palestine Betrayed* are not separate texts but are part of a larger 1000-page volume called l'Anafrasie, which serves as the source for all of Kateb's productions (Benaissa, 2013). In 1969, Kateb published *Le Livre Noir d'Anafrasie,* wherein he explores a symbolic world called Anafrasie inhabited by donkeys representing oppressed and illiterate populations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The donkeys—Red, Black, and White—symbolize the

However, Kateb's willingness to break up with the canonized oeuvre and his shift to the collaborative experience of theatre make his theatre practice stand out. Kateb Yacine is the first Algerian writer who despite perpetual censorship by conservatives, was able to establish a theatre according to his own aspirations and motivations. Kateb Yacine declares, "censorship creates conformity [….] Therefore, one has to do everything to please. One has to lie or to speak for no purpose, or else it is silence, the last refuge of those who refuse to be censored because their job is to shout what others do not even say" (Kateb cited in Salhi, 1998, p. 79). Kateb Yacine continued to make theatre in the face of censorship and other obstacles, paradoxically stemming from the very resources that were essential for his theatre's growth and survival.

As my research developed, I became increasingly fascinated by this significant shift Kateb Yacine made in his artistic career. This transition triggered my interest in his style of theatre making and the way he pushed boundaries and challenged conventional modes of artistic expression. As I became more aware of Kateb's transition, I wondered why he chose to shift from writing literary texts to making performances and what it would feel like to experience his theatrical events as opposed to his literature. Reda Bensmaia describes Kateb's shift to theatre as an attempt to find an audience that did not exist for literature. Although Bensmaia considers the theatre of Kateb Yacine as another form of literature, which might be called popular or Maghrebi literature, he argues that postcolonial literature written in the French language was not the appropriate medium that postcolonial Maghrebi writers would use to reconstruct the nation, and he distinguishes it from the language of theatre which tends to be more flexible (Bensmaia, 2003, p.117).

Despite Kateb's initial intention to distance himself from the cycle of writing and becoming part of the francophone intellectual circle, he found himself inevitably drawn to poetry and novels. Reflecting on his experience, he recounts that even during his time

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proletarians, while other donkeys embody the complicity of the bourgeois classes responsible for their displacement (Kateb cited in Amazigh Kateb, 1999, p.328). *Anafrasie*, an unpublished and expansive archival manuscript by Kateb, serves as a tragicomedy that offers a broad perspective on theater. In his satirical play *Les Freres Monuments*, Kateb alludes to the exploitation of proletarians and betrayal by "Muftis" (religious men) who disguise themselves as conservatives. Kateb criticizes their lack of true knowledge and understanding of the sacred book. The satirical manuscript envisions a continent with countries like Anafrasie, Gandourie, and Boudallahie, featuring characters and themes that reappear in subsequent chapters such as The Mufti, Boudinar, Visage de Prison, and Face de Ramadan (Kateb Yacine, p.37).

in France in 1945, he was not seen frequenting the cultural hubs of Saint-Michel or Sain-Germin-des-*Prés.* Instead, he immersed himself in the company of immigrant workers and the unemployed, connecting with the marginalized (Kateb cited in Corpet et al, 1994, p.58). Despite his resistance to being pigeonholed within a particular intellectual elite, Kateb's literary output ultimately became a testament to his struggles and aspiration for the oppressed communities he encountered throughout his journey. Kateb clarifies that the colonial socio-political situation had pushed Algerian writers, including himself, to write in the French language, and as an alienated poet fascinated by Baudelaire, Musset, and Rimbaud, he had found himself naturally writing in French. Kateb Yacine could not avoid writing yet he believes that verbal language is as valuable as writing. When he decided to change the medium of expression from writing literature in the French language to producing plays spoken language, he started by looking for, "un public qui ne soit pas un public d' écrivain" (an audience that is not a writer's audience) (Kateb cited in Corpet et al, 1990, p.57).

One of the goals of my research is to liberate Kateb Yacine's theatre performances from the literary canon. Although Kateb Yacine may have been celebrated primarily as a literary figure, his contributions to the world of theatre were just as valuable and significant. While previous studies, notably Jacqueline Arnaud's extensive study, *Le Cas de Kateb Yacine,* 2 volumes (Lille: Atelier national reproduction des thèses, Université de Lille III, 1982), have explored aspects of Kateb Yacine's popular theatre-making, my research offers originality through its focus on the examination of the staging dynamics. The originality of the research lies in the analysis of archival footage both in Arabic and French that attempt to re-imagine the original stagings of the prominent popular plays of Kateb Yacine. Through a careful examination of archival materials aimed at reviving and reinterpreting Kateb's theatrical productions, this study seeks to offer a novel perspective on the performance aspects of his plays. My research introduces an original argument by positioning Kateb Yacine's popular theatre within a transnational intellectual, artistic, and activist struggle against class and colonial oppression.

By investigating the staging of Kateb Yacine's works, I hope to challenge the tendency to read Kateb through a literary studies lens. I also hope that my work will encourage a more nuanced and holistic understanding of this playwright's contribution to theatre and consider the different ways in which his performances may have challenged societal norms and expectations. Literature cannot make a revolution and mobilize people

because, as Kateb Yacine neatly declares “if one wants to make a revolution, the writer must not only express themselves, but also help others express themselves because the true writer expresses themselves for others as well” (Kateb cited in Corpet et al, 1994, p.70). Kateb recognizes that genuine writers serve as conduits for collective expression and that genuine artistic impact resonates through communal engagement. The following chapter presents a literature review, focusing on the ongoing debate regarding the relationship between Kateb's theatrical works and the influential techniques of Bertolt Brecht, along with an exploration of the diverse theories and methodologies used in the analysis of Kateb's theatrical contributions. Subsequently, the research and methodology section outlines the specific research methods employed in this study and provides an overview of the chapter structure for further examination of these elements.

## Literature Review and Research Methods

### On the Question of Brecht’s Influence on Kateb’s Theatre

I find the existing scholarship on Kateb's theatre valuable as I endeavor to offer a distinct counter-reading of his theatrical works, one that diverges from the conventional literary perspective, focusing instead on the practical and performance aspects of his work. While many critics provide a comprehensive understanding of Kateb’s theatrical approach, there are several aspects that they overlook when evaluating the specific characteristics of Kateb Yacine’s theatre. Primarily, I find that critics tend to focus on the dramas/texts more than the live performance, a major gap that this research attempts to fill through archival research. However, throughout my subsequent work, I became aware of the challenges that any scholar or researcher would encounter when attempting to approach the live performances of Kateb Yacine since censorship and the lack of sufficient means to document and keep those performances alive played a major role in creating obstacles that have made the performances inaccessible.

Critics also tend to overlook the pedagogical dimension of Kateb’s theatre; instead, they show a tendency to limit his theatre practice to politics or didacticism. The relationship between Kateb Yacine and Brecht, whose approaches are often believed to be didactically and politically motivated, is one of the main questions that have interested

many critics and researchers. Neil Doshi suggests that Brecht's theatrical forms have been interpreted by critics in different ways. He questions the established assumptions that attribute the shaping of political theatre forms in Algeria to Brecht. He boldly asserts that such an interpretation conceals the distinct "trajectory" of Kateb's remarkable body of work. Doshi criticizes Ahmed Cheniki's insistence on the presence of the defamiliarization techniques in Kateb's theatre despite Cheniki's acknowledgment of Kateb's resistance to its "utility for an Algerian public" (Doshi, 2013, p.74). According to Doshi, Cheniki's interpretation is a fallacy and falls within common misconceptions that consider Brecht's theatre forms as universal techniques that can be applied to other contexts. In his book, *Le Théâtre en Algérie : Histoire et Enjeux,* Cheniki claims that,

> The actors frequently take a certain distance with regard to the characters they play they take on different roles, communicate directly with the public, halt the narrative, and restart, thereby creating gaps, which are the fundamental spaces of the "V-effect." We are not at all convinced by the negative judgment of the technique which is still strongly present in the narrative space of the popular storyteller." (Cheniki translated by Doshi, 2013, 74).

There is a debate between those who hold a negative view of applying Brechtian techniques outside their original context like Doshi and Cheniki's perspective that supports the use of these techniques in the realm of popular Algerian theatre. Cheniki is challenging the notion that the defamiliarization technique is incompatible with the narrative style of the popular storyteller, and he is countering the negative judgment that has been directed toward its application. He believes that this technique, despite its association with Brecht's theatre, is effective and can enhance the theatrical experience in the Algerian context.

Cheniki highlights the efforts made by Algerian theatre troupes to incorporate the works of Bertolt Brecht into their performances. He suggests that while Algerian theatre groups embraced Brecht's texts and attempted to adopt his techniques, their staging and presentation were not yet fully capable of effectively conveying the thematic and aesthetic substance of Brecht's work. Cheniki describes the staging of Brecht's work as "embryonic" implying that the theatrical productions were still in their early stages of development, lacking the maturity and sophistication necessary to capture the essence of Brechtian theatre. The challenge lay in successfully translating and realizing Brecht's

vision on stage while maintaining the thematic and aesthetic integrity of his work (Cheniki, 2002, p.68).

In order to decontextualize Kateb Yacine's political theatre practice from that of Brecht, Doshi suggests that Kateb's visit to Vietnam, his admiration of the leadership of his friend Ho Chi Minh, and his exposure to the Vietnamese popular genre, *Chèo* theatre shaped his artistic vision of popular theatre. *Chèo* theatre is a "form of popular dance and parody" rooted in traditional Vietnamese folklore (Su, 1994, p.147). It falls under the genre of storytelling theatre and is deeply rooted in oral traditions, much like Kateb's theatre. Cheo theatre highlights the essential role of narrative in shaping performances, where intricate plots and popular characters not only entertain but also transmit cultural values, history, and societal insights. This emphasis on storytelling serves as a foundation for engaging and resonating performances that connect deeply with the audience. *Chèo* theatre and Brecht's theatre share distinct yet interconnected characteristics. While *Chèo* emphasizes music and symbolic gestures to convey moral lessons, Brecht's approach prioritizes defamiliarization effects and political critique, aiming to distance the audience emotionally and stimulate critical analysis.

It is worth emphasizing that Kateb Yacine also drew inspiration from the Spanish poet and playwright Federico García Lorca's collective troupe, La Baraca. He was captivated by Lorca's poems, popular songs, and the idea of forming a collective theatre group that aimed to revive ancient Spanish theatre styles. Kateb's skilful blend of love, revolution, tragedy, and optimism echoes Lorca's thematic fusion of violent death and love seen in Lorca's poems, showcasing how diverse international influences enriched Kateb Yacine's theatre while maintaining its distinct local essence. Within the array of international influences that shaped Kateb Yacine's theatre, the spotlight frequently falls on the question of Bertolt Brecht's influence. This singular emphasis on Brecht has at times diverted critics from delving into the other dimensions of his theatrical practice. While Kateb's theatre draws from a spectrum of inspirations, the predominant attention on Brecht tends to overshadow the exploration of his diverse artistic elements and the amalgamation of various cultural threads that contributed to his distinct theatrical vision.

There might be a kind of affinity between Brecht's *defamiliarization* and Kateb's storytelling technique *Al-halaqa* upon which critics developed a logical connection between them, but both theatre techniques emerged out of different historical

backgrounds. Algerian theatre never went through a phase of Naturalist drama, which is Brecht's point of departure. We can argue that the defamiliarization effect, which Brecht discovers through his engagement with non-Western theatrical forms pre-exists in Algeria as an effect of its 'homegrown' popular storytelling theatre. Khaled Amine and Marvin Carlson clarify this triggering relationship,

> In many of the leading dramatists of modern North Africa, we find a similar connection, but also a distance between the experimental innovations of the Brechtian drama and the innovative actor/audience relationship suggested by the theatricalization of the storyteller and the halaqa, both widely familiar to the culture of the region (Carlson &Amine, 2008, p.84).

The quote highlights a dynamic seen in the works of prominent modern North African dramatists like Abdelkader Alloula and Kateb Yacine. On the one hand, there is a noticeable connection between their plays and the experimental concepts introduced by Brechtian drama. These concepts often involve disrupting traditional narrative structures and involving the audience in a more active way. On the other hand, there is also a distinct connection between these dramatists' innovations and the innovative actor-audience dynamic present in local North African theatrical traditions like the storyteller and the halaqa. Carlson highlights the tension between Western dramatic influences, represented by Brecht's ideas, and the region's indigenous performance traditions. While influenced by Brecht, North African dramatists also strive to maintain the cultural authenticity and familiarity offered by their own storytelling traditions. In essence, this tension between global experimentalism and local cultural rootedness reflects the complex negotiation between tradition and innovation within the context of North African theatre.

Al-halaqa[7] translates to "the swing of chain" or "the circle," is a traditional storytelling technique unique to North African culture. Derived from Arabic, it specifically refers to a gathering where people come together to engage in storytelling. These gatherings would often take place in public spaces like souks or markets, where

[7] For more information and illustration refer to Khalid Amine and Marvin Carlson (2014). *The Theatres of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia: Performance Traditions of the Maghreb.*

individuals would gather around a storyteller known as a Meddah or Goual. Using ordinary objects and simple yet captivating narratives, these skilled storytellers would entertain and captivate their audience, creating an immersive experience that transported listeners to different worlds through the power of storytelling.

The iconic Algerian playwright Abdelkader Ould Adberrahmane (known as Kaki), whom Kateb Yacine admires, is often called the Algerian Brecht although he draws on a very rich repertoire of the national cultural heritage, mainly in oral forms. (Khelfaoui, 2018, p.75). Meanwhile, Kateb's contemporary dramaturg, Abdelkader Alloula realized that for a long time he has been experimenting with what Brecht introduced to the European stage in terms of a rupture with the fourth wall (Ziani, 2022, p.235). Even to other pedagogical theatre makers like Augusto Boal, who is influenced by Brecht, the latter's defamiliarization was not intentionally appropriated to his popular theatre. Boal clarifies, "Brecht had influenced us, but more in the sense of freeing ourselves from naturalism than any sense of imitating him: the alienation effect, for us already existed in the performance style of our clowns" (Boal, 2001, p.185).

In his "Bertolt Brecht et Kateb Yacine: de opposition a la convergence," Aouadi reviews the influence of Brecht on the theatre of Kateb Yacine which might have appeared after an encounter between the two playwrights organized by Jean Marie Serreau. Kateb's encounter with Brecht was short but they had the opportunity to share their different points of view with regard to the question of tragedy. While Brecht declared that tragedy is obsolete, Kateb argued that a tragic situation is not bound to a specific point of history describing it as a spiral evolution in which it dissolves and then evolves again in a perpetual transformation. Saddek Aouadi offers an overview of the elements which make a comparison between the two writers possible. Aouadi describes the relationship between Kateb Yacine and Brecht as coming from two different paths but having ended up turning around the same ideas because they both abandoned the world of tragedy and turned to the world of didacticism. Laughter, irony, song, and music are found in both Brecht's "Distanciation" (defamiliarization) and Kateb's popular theatre. Aouadi clarifies that the influence of Brecht on Kateb Yacine is indirect and like Doshi he acknowledges the influence of the Vietnamese *Chèo* theatre on Kateb Yacine in which Kateb discovered the singing (Aouadi, 2005, p.12). However, Aouadi emphasizes a crucial distinction in Kateb's oeuvre that diverges from Brecht's approach, specifically the role of poetry. While

both Brecht and Kateb incorporate elements like laughter, irony, chorus, and music, Aouadi's observation highlights the unique function of poetry within Kateb's works.

Kateb Yacine follows a poetic style of writing which gives him the freedom to challenge conventional modes of artistic expression and to reconcile aesthetics and politics. Kateb values the integration of poetry within the theatrical experiences, and he declares in an interview by *L'action*, "What I refuse in Brecht is the way he has, he who is a poet, of continually putting poetry in check in order to inculcate a doctrine" (Kateb interviewed by L'Action, 1994, p.38)."[8] Although Kateb rejects Brecht's full commitment to the so-called "didacticism" and his interruption of poetry, he admits that "once one becomes familiar with Brecht's theatre, it is inevitable to be influenced by its impact." Ironically, Kateb clarifies that Brecht's theatre confirmed the path of political theatre he was already following before encountering Brecht, emphasizing that it was not Brecht who influenced him (Kateb interviewed by Alessandra, 1994, 81-82). In "Brecht et le théâtre algérien," Benaoumeur Khelfaoui argues that Algerian theatre aligns with European theatre, akin to Sartre and Brecht's use of the stage for socio-political critique. This perspective implies that, like their European counterparts, Algerian playwrights used the power of theatre to address colonial oppression and actively champion liberation within their own circumstances. The shared commitment to raising awareness, provoking thought, and inciting social change underscores the universal nature of the struggle against justice, making political theatre during colonial and postcolonial Algeria an integral part of the global activity of protest. However, Khelfaoui reminds us to recognize and appreciate the uniqueness of Algerian political theatre as it exhibits a pronounced "aesthetic and ideological differentiation" from European works like Brecht's (Khelfaoui, 2018, p.73).

While Brecht undoubtedly made significant contributions to political or engaged theatre, the Algerian context necessitated a unique approach that reflected the specific

[8] Kateb translated by Pamela Pears (Pears, 2003, p.109). Although Bertolt Brecht's theatre is often characterized as didactic, some of his plays can be incredibly poetic, especially *Threepenny Opera.* This misconception arises because Kateb Yacine, Aouadi, or other critics might have only had access to a limited selection of Brecht's works in translation or are unfamiliar with his broader body of work. Brecht was known for his use of poetic language and innovative theatrical techniques, however, many of Brecht's poetic plays may not be widely known to non-German speaking audiences due to limited availability in translations. Hans-Thies Lehman has written on "The other Brecht" unfortunately only in German, but even in relation to Kateb Yacine, there is another Brecht to discover. Refer to Lehmann's book, Lehmann, Hans-Thies (2016), *Brecht Lesen, Recherchen* #123, Berlin: Verlag Theater der Zeit.

historical, cultural, and socio-political circumstances of the nation. Kateb Yacine's popular theatre used the voice of the people longing for self-determination exhibiting an infatuation with elements of the original popular culture of the Algerian society such as orality, el-halaqa, el-gouwal, el-meddah[9], folk tales, folk songs, and the legendary character J'ha which will be examined through the analysis of the performances. Khelfaoui raises a crucial point that highlights a significant divergence between Kateb Yacine and Bertolt Brecht. He astutely notes that while Brecht and Sartre's oppressed characters often find solutions or a path toward resolution, the characters in Kateb's work do not encounter such solutions (Khelfaoui, 2018, p.79). Brecht and Sartre, influenced by Marxist and existentialist ideologies often present a sense of agency and potential transformation for their characters, reflecting a belief in the capacity of the oppressed to shape their own destiny. In contrast, Kateb's work tends to portray a bleaker reality, where solutions may remain elusive or unattainable for the marginalized. Referring to Brecht and Sartre, Clare Finburgh states that "Kateb draws inspiration from Sartre and Brecht's existentialist principles, but he modifies them to avoid the didactic potential often associated to political theatre" (Finburgh, 2004, p.87). She adds that "unlike Brecht's characters, the characters in *Mohamed, pack your Bag* are consistently subjected to encounter failure" (Finburgh, 2004, p.88). Kateb's approach lessens the didactic aspects of theatre by introducing a more nuanced portrayal of the marginalized. Rather than solely presenting characters as agents of change, Kateb's approach introduces a sense of realism, illustrating that solutions aren't always attainable, thereby enriching the audience's understanding of complex social issues without overly dictating a specific message.

We can appreciate the convergence of Kateb's theatre with Brecht's methodology through a pedagogical lens, an approach that accentuates learning by adopting certain historical moments, attitudes, and behaviours and observing the process of their becoming.[10] As my analysis progressed, I was motivated to look at the techniques Kateb Yacine and Brecht used in their theatres to challenge the audience's preconceived notions

[9] Goual and Meddah were storytellers who often performed within the al-halaqa. They engaged the audience through their dramatic storytelling techniques, incorporating impersonation, singing, and dancing. The interactive nature of their performances allowed for audience participation and commentary, while also providing opportunities for the performers to collect donations from the spectators.
For more details refer to *Theatre of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia: Performance Traditions of the Maghreb* (Amine and Carlson, 2014, p.18)

[10] In my article, "Dramaturgy of the Actor-Spectator in Bertolt Brecht's *Lehrstuck* and Kateb Yacine's use of Al-halaqa," I have explored Brecht's *Lehrstück* (learning plays) in relation to Kateb's theater.

and enable them to critically engage with the world, question, prevailing norms and develop a deep understanding of the contradictions inherent in the human experience. By exploring the techniques employed by Brecht and Kateb Yacine in their theatrical endeavours, it is important to clarify that the intention is not to perpetuate the prevailing tendency to solely attribute the forms of Kateb Yacine's theatre to Brecht's influence. Rather I intend to examine Kateb's use of traditional and modern techniques (storytelling, episodic scenes, music, chorus, the presence of Brecht's "Gestus") with an open and discerning lens to recognize and appreciate the unique trajectory of Kateb's work.

Kateb's use of such theatre techniques offers a multi-faceted experience that can be appreciated both in its own right and in relation to Bertolt Brecht's theatre. Kateb's incorporation of these techniques carries its own distinct artistic intention and cultural context. The use of musical instruments, for example, the flute and tambourine accompanied by different folkloric dances, songs, and poems serve to evoke multiple emotions from joy to sadness; they reinforce the audience's connectedness to the narrative. Storytelling, with its oral tradition rooted in the pre-colonial Algerian genre of entertainment with the storyteller, *Goual* or *Meddah,* and the traditional space Al-halaqa, becomes a powerful means of transmitting history and collective memory. The chorus, a collective voice, amplifies the sociopolitical message of the play and serves to represent different attitudes and types of characters. When considering these techniques, alongside Brecht's theatre one can appreciate the dialogue between their approaches, the shared emphasis on audience engagement and critical reflection.

Shifting the focus to Brecht, whose theatre is also pedagogically driven like Kateb Yacine's, I chose to delve into how the open and pedagogical nature of their theatres might enrich my understanding of the pedagogical pursuit seen in Kateb's popular theatre. This exploration led me to acknowledge that Kateb Yacine's popular theatre is an integral component of the broader global theatre of the oppressed which importantly includes Augusto Boal. Through an examination of the spatial dynamic between actors and the audience, I was prompted to investigate how Kateb Yacine's theatre, which aims to bring about social and political change, upholds a deliberate distance between performers and spectators. This intentional separation is preserved as actors and spectators engage in a critical transition between reality and the space of imagination, thereby maintaining an equitable relationship.

**Exploring Theories of Praxis**

I find that the most insightful way to approach Kateb's design of the relationship between space, actors, and spectators is to argue that he attempts to set up a liminal space that exists outside conventional boundaries and categories. In a transitional space, actors and spectators can challenge established norms, engage in self-reflection, and navigate new possibilities. Like participants in Brecht's *Lehrstück*, the audiences, and participants of Kateb Yacine are invited to explore alternative perspectives, challenge fixed identities, and engage in a process of meaning-making and social change. To support this idea of the in-between space that lies at the heart of revolutionary praxis, I drew from various theories including the emancipatory ideas of Frantz Fanon, Antonio Gramsci, and Paulo Freire, who advocate for a theory of praxis, a concept that combines theory and practice (philosophy and politics) or in other terms brings thought and action together. These theories provide a theoretical basis for understanding how revolutionary praxis operates and why it is significant in theatre. Gramsci used the 'philosophy of praxis', which first appeared in Antonio Labriola's essay, "Socialism and Philosophy," to substitute historical materialism. *Gramsci's Marxism and the philosophy of Praxis* enlighten us that the philosophy of praxis can be interpreted as both Gramsci's attempt to translate Marxist thought and as a totally new approach that provides "an integral conception of the world" (Thomas, 2015, p.9). I argue further that Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia is relevant in the study of the performance text as a space that promotes openness and "dehierarchization" (Lachmann, p.116-117). Bakhtin advocates for an inclusive realm of engagement and imagination, aspiring towards a "popular deconstruction" of established discourses and ideologies. According to him, cultural entities are dynamic and evolving, not rigidly defined systems. He opposes theories and actions that inhibit the exploration of uncertainty and seek to label and categorize the world (Bakhtin, 1986 p,13).

In the complex terrain of the postcolonial struggle for liberation and emancipation, the intersecting ideas of Gramsci, Freire, and Fanon created a unified framework that addresses multifaceted challenges. Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony resonates with the ongoing power dynamics, where dominant classes perpetuate control through cultural influence. In this context, Freire's notion of critical pedagogy gains significance as it advocates for an education that empowers marginalized populations to critically deconstruct oppressive realities and engage in dialogical learning. Additionally, Fanon's

exploration of the psychological aftermath of colonization becomes integral, highlighting the need to decolonize not only systems but also the collective mindset. When these concepts are interwoven, they offer a thorough approach to liberation. This approach involves acknowledging the importance of questioning prevailing narratives, cultivating critical awareness through education, and promoting socio-cultural empowerment. Through this integrative framework, postcolonial societies can navigate a comprehensive path toward dismantling oppressive structures, restoring cultural dignity, and forging a truly emancipated future.

Throughout my analysis of the aesthetics of Kateb Yacine's popular theatre in the light of these theoretical considerations, I became more convinced that it is the philosophy that informs the theatre of Kateb Yacine. I believe that this is another major aspect that many scholars who show interest in the theatre of Kateb Yacine fail to recognize or bring to light. The concepts of philosophy of praxis and the liminal space enlightened my insights into the role of Kateb Yacine as a postcolonial intellectual in the community of collective practice and guided me to answer the main question of my research which is: how did Kateb Yacine establish a pedagogical theatre which operates as a process of decolonizing history? Fanon and Gramsci argue for a thoughtful revisiting of traditions, folklore, and popular aesthetics that should be used to promote an open critique of history. The function of the intellectual committed to organizing a social group or an audience to fight for justice and resist 'hegemony' occupied much of the thinking of Gramsci and Fanon. Each of them uses their own title for the Marxist intellectual; while Gramsci calls them the organic intellectuals and distinguishes them from traditional intellectuals, Fanon gives them the name of the decolonized intellectual. Edward Said describes Gramsci's organic intellectuals as follows: "Gramsci believed that organic intellectuals are actively involved in society, that is, they constantly struggle to change minds and expand markets; unlike teachers and priests, who seem more or less to remain in place, doing the same kind of work year in year out, organic intellectuals are always on the move, on the make" (Said, 1994, p.4).

Fanon offers a detailed account of the transformation of the postcolonial intellectual from a colonized intellectual completely consumed in colonial thinking to a revolutionary intellectual who engages in a humanist movement that not only decolonizes

the nation but also the mind. In his book*, Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination*, Gibson comments that the intellectual seeks to join the people in developing a new culture within the context of the revolutionary movement. This is what Fanon calls "a fighting phase". It is a stage during which intellectuals, instead of merely losing themselves in an abstraction of the people, act as catalysts in the people's 'awakening' (Gibson, 2003, p.169). The most promising theory that guides me to understand Kateb Yacine's foundation of a popular aesthetic praxis is Fanon's national consciousness and 'new humanism' which he believes would challenge Manichaeism and counter many levels of oppression and alienation. National consciousness is the root of national culture and social consciousness, and it is the engine of decolonization. Fanon suggests "new humanism" as the intellectuals' approach which is different from "a nationalism that wanted to take power but remain virtually subordinate to external powers; and, on the other hand, a nationalism that wanted a genuine independence represented by such groups as the FLN." (Gibson, 2003, p.179). New Humanism works against all that European humanity with its civilizing mission strives for; instead, it works as a self-liberating form of nationalism that dwells on reciprocal recognition.

In light of my research question which is how we can receive Kateb's popular theatre from a pedagogical point of view, I was triggered to push this Fanonian fascinating idea of reciprocal recognition further by positioning it in the pedagogical context. I find that a pedagogy of oppression derives from a psychology of oppression which makes Fanon's theory intersect with Freire's theory of a humanizing education initiated in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* Both Fanon and Freire agree that the oppressed should locate themselves and understand their situation in relation to themselves not in relation to the oppressor. A political movement of decolonization is necessarily a pedagogical movement of decolonization based on dialogue and mutual understanding. Freire and Fanon believe in the power of the knowledge of the people, a knowledge which is not organized, but a spontaneous knowledge that Gramsci considers the philosophy of the people. Philosophy and knowledge are not science-based facts and ideas that are preserved for the educated elite but are a conception of the world that everybody can possess. In a recent paper entitled: "Movements of epistemological decolonization in Paulo Freire and Frantz Fanon" at the Decolonization conference hosted at King's College London, Diego Morollón Del Río makes an argument about the relationship between politics and education by exploring the influence of Fanon on Freire after the latter had read *The*

*Wretched of the Earth.* Freire concluded that consciousness is "a learning process" that is at once "political and educational." When the oppressed become aware of their situation by completely overthrowing the 'adherence' to the role of the oppressed, they become the subject of recognition and have the power to liberate themselves and others. The construction of a community of praxis free of hierarchies and leadership and adherent to communication makes the oppressed chase away the colonizer/oppressor from their minds. (Del Río, 2019, p.6)

Augusto Boal was influenced by Freire's theory of dialogue and "concientização" (conscientization) and he used it to create methods of theatre practice, known as *Theatre of the Oppressed,* that paved the way for a new relationship between the actor and the spectator. Boal adopts the idea that any contact between the educator and the educated (in Fanon's case the intellectual and the masses) must comply with an equal relationship. The resonance of Kateb Yacine's theatre approach with Freire's ideas on pedagogy and dialogue is striking, given the profound influence Freire had on theatre practitioners like Boal. The core principles of dialogue, conscientization, and equal participation inherent in Freire's philosophy find echoes in Kateb Yacine's popular theatre, where he seeks to develop a similar sense of shared learning and empowerment among the audience. Just as Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed aimed to break down traditional hierarchical structures in theatre, Kateb Yacine's work aspired to dismantle societal oppression through a pedagogical approach rooted in dialogue and collective understanding.

**Research and Methodology**

The nature of my research on Kateb Yacine which aims to specifically explore his popular performance texts and evaluate his place in the global theatre of the oppressed for the purpose of decolonization demands the use of different sources, traditional references, online and archival materials. The philosophical background underpinning my analysis is crucial for a thorough understanding of Kateb's work. Engaging with philosophical literature has broadened my insight into the intricacies of oppression dynamics, the power of popular forms of theatre, and the potential of liberation. In studying the intellectual framework laid out by Fanon, Gramsci and Freire, I have come to recognize Kateb Yacine as an embodiment of the revolutionary intellectual who was ahead of his time because, through his commitment to political pedagogy, he aimed to

establish a democratic foundation for an educational and cultural institution. Recognizing the transformative power of education, he sought to create an environment where individuals from all backgrounds could engage in critical thinking, cultural exchange, and artistic exploration. My research methodology involves primary sources, a collection of all the popular plays by Kateb Yacine, collected and translated into the French language by his wife under the title, *Boucherie de l'espérance.* I also rely on an English translation of *Intelligence Powder* obtained from the U.S. and study a YouTube video of Hacene Assous's staging of *Intelligence Powder* in the Arabic language. Additionally, I examine the original script of *Palestine Betrayed* sourced from IMEC.

My research journey led me to France, where I embarked on an archival research experience at L'Institut mémoires de l'édition contemporaine (IMEC) located in Normandy. Engaging with the accessible materials, I navigated guidelines and regulations tied to archive access. Despite the challenge of a tight timeframe, I maximized my time to transcribe notes from the documents and take pictures. Photography was generally prohibited, except for press articles, requiring a specific procedure involving a secure locker and designated booth. Flexibility from some staff allowed me to photograph the original script of *Palestine Betrayed*, a valuable resource for my study, although not directly usable in my thesis. Archival institutions like IMEC provide access to research but limit direct thesis inclusion due to factors like copyright and preservation considerations. The archive includes significant daily newspaper articles and weekly magazine articles written by Kateb Yacine and other authors who write about Kateb Yacine, and a number of images of Kateb Yacine and caricatures of the popular figure and the stage protagonist, J'ha. Some examples of the magazines and newspapers are *Afrique Action*, the communist-led newspaper *Alger-Republicain* that was often censored by the French authorities, the weekly French-language magazine *l'Humanité Dimanche* which is also associated with the Communist party, *Liberation* founded by Sartre and Serge in 1973.

Other journalistic writings (1947-1989) from the archive *Fonds Kateb Yacine* which belongs to IMEC are reunited by his son Amazigh Kateb and published by Seuil in 1999 under the title, *Kateb Yacine: Minuit passé de douze heures.* These collections of Kateb's journalistic writings serve as a captivating lens through which we gain insight into his life and experiences. From his adventures spanning Egypt, Lebanon, Sudan, Milan, Vietnam, Mecca, Yugoslavia, and other countries, Kateb's writing offers a vivid

portrayal of his encounters with different cultures and people who marked his adventures. He transparently addresses themes of censorship and the intimidation of democratic expression (which manifest in cutting headlines from the publications of *Alger Republicain*)[11], documenting the challenges faced by artists and intellectuals in oppressive societies. Furthermore, his writings transparently confront issues of racism (experienced by Muslims and blacks), persecution, and discrimination. Interspersed with these writings are the anecdotal tales of the legendary J'ha and his shaping into a political spokesman, a philosopher, and a theatre character. Kateb's journalistic writings also reveal his source of inspiration for his plays and poems, unveiling the creative process behind his iconic work. Additionally, his commitment to fighting against illiteracy is evident as he champions the importance of education and empowerment.

Another significant source is *Kateb Yacine: Éclats de memoire*, a collection of unpublished letters and iconographic documents and other texts and interviews co-produced by L'IMEC and l'Institut du Monde Arabe (L'IAM) and presented from April 19 to June 26, 1994, at L'IAM. These primary sources offer glimpses into the complexities and challenges he faced as an artist living in exile. Through his letters, we gain insight into the intellectual camaraderie and friendship with editors and writers like Jacqueline Arnaud and Sartre and we learn about his commitment to the emancipation of women who were subordinate to men and suppressed by fanatics. Interviews shed light on his artistic vision, providing firsthand accounts of his motivations, inspirations, and the evolution of his theatrical practice. Photographs capture pivotal moments of Kateb's connection with work, family, and friends and offer a visual documentation of the setting of his performances through which we can gain insight into the dynamic relationship between the performances and the space in which they unfolded. As the collection chronicles his journey from exile back to his motherland, we witness Kateb's pursuit of a new theatrical experience, marked by a reconnection with the cultural and political landscape of Algeria.

*Kateb Yacine: une vie et trois langues* is a rich booklet that contains interviews with Kateb Yacine himself, providing an invaluable first-hand account of his life and career. Kateb recounts his journey as a student, journalist, and writer, offering personal insights and reflections on his engagement with the world of politics and art. This booklet

[11] Kateb worked as journalist of *Alger Républicain* and a collaborator of *liberté* from 1949-1951

also includes excerpts of poems from his renowned works such as *Le polygone étoilé* and *L'oeuvre en fragments*, allowing for a deeper understanding of the political orientation of his poems. Accompanied by the interviews are photographs of Kateb's handwritten notes, capturing the intimate process of his creative writing. Some texts reproduce these notes, providing a glimpse into his thoughts and aspirations. Additionally, notebook extracts feature Kateb's observations on various aspects pf playwriting, including casting, characters, music, audience and space. The booklet is enriched with some extracts from *Mohamed, pack your Bag* dialogue and photographs showcasing scenes from *Mohamed, pack your Bag*, *Palestine Betrayed,* and *The 2000 years' War*.

Many significant interviews that we find in *Kateb Yacine éclats de memoire and Kateb Yacine: une vie et trois langue*, are extracted from *Le poète comme un boxeur*, a major source that contains a collection of interviews with Kateb Yacine from 1958 to 1989. This collection provides a rich and illuminating insight into his theatrical experience. Through these interviews, we gain direct access to Kateb's thoughts and his vision of the practice of theatre. He shares invaluable insights into his creative process, his collaboration with theatre directors, Jean-Marie Serreau and Kadour Naimi, the motivation behind his plays, and the social and political context in which his theatre emerged. We can delve deeper into the themes and ideas that shaped his work, providing a thorough understanding of his artistic choices and the message he sought to convey. Moreover, Kateb's reflections on his shift to the live performance offer glimpses into the challenges he faced and the influences that shaped his approach.

The free radio live stream, "France Culture" is a valuable asset for my research. As a prominent French public radio channel operating under Radio France, it offers an array of cultural programs. This platform provides access to podcasts, interviews, episodes, and texts focused on Kateb Yacine. Various guests including historians, playwrights, literary authors and critics, and poets share insights on Kateb's history, orientations, writing styles, and experiences in theatre and poetry. Notable figures such as the dramaturgs and directors Armand Gatti, and Marie Serreau, and Algerian playwrights and writers like Slimane Benaissa contribute their perspectives on Kateb's dramaturgy and his tragic theatre. Notably, Kateb Yacine and Serreau offer valuable reflections on Kateb's choice of language (Arabic and French), his revolutionary ideas, and where he stands in the realm of dramaturgy. Interviews delve into the complexities

of Kateb's theatre which draws inspiration from a variety of sources including, documentaries, and traditional and historical references.

I had planned another research journey to France, specifically to the esteemed Bibliotheque nationale de France (BNF). I reached out to the library seeking guidance, the library advised me to visit in person for the specified dates and follow the designated procedures for requesting a guide, using the available computers, and using printing and other means to acquire the necessary data. With great anticipation, my intention was to uncover and gain access to the invaluable traces of the performances of Kateb Yacine. However, despite completing all the necessary procedures and submitting all required official documents for the visa application, I, unfortunately, did not obtain the visa. This unexpected setback prevented me from physically exploring the archives and materials at the Bibliothèque nationale de France related to Kateb Yacine's performances, which could have significantly enhanced the depth and authenticity of my research findings. Faced with the unforeseen visa denial, I expanded my analysis to include a review of existing primary and secondary sources, interviews, and archives, ensuring that the core thesis remained robust and well-supported despite the physical limitations imposed by the visa setback.

**Outline of Chapters**

My thesis will be divided into six chapters which vary in length and method of analysis. Chapter one entitled "The Philosophy of Praxis in Postcolonial Theatre" will attempt to give a philosophical background to the theatre of Kateb Yacine and locate it in the context of the postcolonial hybrid discourse. Examining the theories of Fanon, Gramsci, and Freire, the chapter gives an outlook on the position of Kateb Yacine in the history of decolonization and his open approach in the theatre of decolonization which opts for dialogue, ambivalence, and collective creation.

Chapter two, entitled "*Intelligence Powder*: J'ha, the Philosopher Acting in the Liminal Space," attempts to assess Kateb's first satirical play, *Intelligence Powder* as a model of Fanon's imagination of the character designed by the humanist decolonized intellectuals. The role of the main character of the play, J'ha is the central point of analysis as he reflects the mindset of the philosopher/the intellectual who acts between the language of the playwright/actors and that of the spectators. In this chapter, J'ha will be

located in the liminal space in which he works with different aesthetic methods to keep dialogue and uncertainty open. Thematically speaking, *Intelligence Powder* exposes the confrontation between religion and a Marxist-oriented philosophy, highlighting the implications of a society susceptible to "hegemony" and stagnation in the absence of national consciousness.

Unlike *Intelligence Powder*, which was written in French language and staged later in France, *Mohamed, pack your Bag* was the output of a collective work based in Algeria, between Kateb Yacine and Kadour Naimi and other theatre members who will be acknowledged when the chapter unfolds. Subsequently, chapter three, "Dramaturgy and Collective Creation, On the Role of Naimi in the Production of *Mohamed Pack your Bag*" addresses an overlooked area in the study of Kate's popular theatre which is the eclipsed role of Kadour Naimi in the production of *Mohamed, pack your Bag*. This chapter will explore the principles and conditions of the collaboration between Naimi and Kateb Yacine which took place after Kateb was invited to join Naimi's company, *Théâtre de la Mer (*Theatre of the Sea). Based on the evidence of Kadour Naimi which is grounded in his essay, *Ethique et esthétique au théâtre et alentour*, the chapter sheds light on two points of divergence between these two theatre directors, the first one is Naimi's persistent perception of Kateb Yacine as a literary man who is not qualified enough to manage a theatre project. The second point is Naimi's suggested idea of making the audience participate in the events of the performance which according to Naimi was not welcomed by Kateb Yacine.

Chapter four, "A Socio-semiotic Approach to the Analysis of Heteroglossia in *Mohamed, Pack your Bag*" undertakes a detailed examination of the play through socio-semiotic analysis, focusing on Bakhtin's heteroglossia. This chapter merges theoretical frameworks with existing scholarship, notably influenced by Marvin Carlson, to explore the interconnectedness between the play's aesthetics and thematic threads. The decision to consolidate the discussion into a single chapter reflects the complexity of analyzing *Mohamed, pack your Bag's* heteroglossic dimensions. By integrating Bakhtin's theory into the examination of Kateb's popular performance, this chapter delves into the play's metalinguistic elements and ideological underpinnings. This approach provides readers with a nuanced understanding of how Kateb's work surpasses traditional literary boundaries, embodying a unique theatricality worthy of independent examination.

Chapter five, “Transnational Politics and Aesthetic Affinities: Exploring Kateb's Aesthetic Trajectory in Palestine Betrayed through the Lens of his Dialogue with Brecht” delves into Kateb’s exploration of alternative avenues for envisioning and reconstructing a decolonized nation, and into Bensmaia’s concept of a “reterritorialized” nation, by venturing beyond the Maghrebi borders and integrating the Palestinian issue in his theatrical work. Within this chapter, I aim to examine the trajectory of Kateb’s artistic journey, engaging in a dialogue between his aesthetics and those of Bertolt Brecht. The chapter highlights how Kateb Yacine skilfully employs a range of traditional and avant-garde techniques, demonstrating a strong affinity with Brecht’s aesthetics and politics, to unveil the inherent contradictions within relationships and to create a space for uncertainty. By employing Brechtian and vernacular techniques such as storytelling, folksongs, chorus, and gesture (drawing upon Brecht’s concept of Gestus), Kateb Yacine challenges the audiences’ expectations and prompts a sense of unfamiliarity with the presented situations, effectively defamiliarizing the familiar. This chapter examines the importance of his artistic contributions in reflecting national and transnational issues and highlights the ways the artistic contributions shaped modern Algerian theatre.

## Chapter One

## The Philosophy of Praxis in Postcolonial Theatre

### 1.1 Introduction

The term post-colonial cannot simply be defined as the time after a nation has achieved its independence or what comes after colonialism. Instead, it is more accurate to define postcolonialism as a process that continues to revise, reject, and create strategies of resistance and negotiations. The term postcolonialism should be defined in conjunction with the culture that uses it, and therefore not every culture is post-colonial. McClintock explains that postcolonialism is hardly described "to denote multiplicity" and very often appears under unnuanced terms like "post-colonial space," "post-colonial situation" and "post-colonial other" (McClintock, 1992, p.86). Postcolonial discourse is "an engagement with and contestation of colonialism's discourses, power structures, and social hierarchies" (Tompkins and Gilbert, 1996, 2). The postcolonial, according to Gilbert, is "a portmanteau term to describe any kind of resistance, particularly against class, race and gender oppression". (Gilbert, 2001, p1). Meanwhile, "Postcolonial Theatre and Ethics of Emancipatory Becoming" describes the postcolonial as "moments and activities produced when colonial oppressions were understood and strategies for resisting them were demonstrably articulated" (Ampka, 2007, p.28). Given this perspective, a postcolonial play can be defined as a form of cultural practice that reveals strategies of resistance against imperialism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism. Beyond this, it also delves into the complexities of cultural identity, historical narratives, gender inequalities, economic exploitation, nationalism, migration, and ecological concerns, offering a multifaceted exploration of the aftermath of colonial rule and its far-reaching impacts. Kateb's postcolonial performances, which emerge from the backdrop of Algerian culture and politics, can best be defined as an intricate discourse that transcends universal historicism and the clichéd categorization between the colonial world and colonized world.

This chapter provides a philosophical background to Kateb's theatre and positions him as a postcolonial intellectual whose popular theatre engages with and resists imperialist discourses that homogenize the non-Western world into one racial, cultural, and geographical block. McClintock indicates that "the world's multitudinous cultures are marked, not positively by what distinguishes them, but by a subordinate, retrospective

relation to linear, European time" (McClintock, 1992, p.86). Colonial discourse is set to establish a stereotyped knowledge about the colonized as a "degenerate type" of people who are subject to domination and manipulation (Bhabha, 1994, p.70). I argue that challenging singular narratives prompts postcolonial intellectuals to reexamine their role as authors in connection with their audience and the political background that shapes their creations. To understand the role of the postcolonial intellectual in relation to a particular ideology and develop a thorough critique of the validity of their cultural practice, I find it more informative to draw on a diversity of theoretical approaches that all meet at a communal ground. I consider different ways in which Fanon, Gramsci, and Freire, account for creating an ambivalent space that rejects unitary truth and develops strategies to continue to question oppressive relationships, dominant authorities, rigid systems, and official hegemonic discourse.

The chapter begins with Fanon and Gramsci's strong adherence to the intellectuals' commitment to their oppressed/subaltern audiences through their aesthetic production. They both question to what extent the intellectual's practice is politicized and whether it is effective in designing pragmatic strategies that substitute dominant systems. This exploration of intellectual dedication and strategic intervention finds greater clarity through the lens of Bertolt Brecht's theatrical methods. Brecht's approach not only provides additional insights into Kateb's theatre but also enhances the discourse on challenging established norms and instigating critical engagement with oppressive structures. The aesthetic tools must not adhere to bourgeois stylistics; instead, their purpose should be to actively engage the audience in a forum of praxis through the principles of multivocality, participation, emancipation, and equality. Bakhtin's perspective on language and heteroglossia, emphasizing language as a complex, socially determined system, aligns with Gramsci and Fanon's theories of cultural politics. It enriches these theories by highlighting the dynamic interaction of language, culture, and ideology within the context of cultural hegemony and postcolonial experiences, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and challenging dominant narratives and understanding the nature of linguistic and cultural forces in the pursuit of cultural and political liberation. The chapter then takes a turn to focus on Freire's dedication to pedagogy and dialogue. Freire's insights resonate with the principles advocated by Fanon and Gramsci, particularly in his emphasis on education as a tool for empowerment and liberation. His pedagogic approach promotes critical consciousness and encourages

participants to analyse and transform their social realities. This approach aligns with the central argument of the chapter regarding the engagement of artists and intellectuals in generating meaningful interactions between their works and audiences.

I argue that the ambivalent space of praxis is open to dialogue in which actors bring about different versions of human behaviour and shape characters' and audiences' consciousness at different levels in the narrative. These theories contribute to our understanding of Kateb's popular theatre as a heterogenous postcolonial discourse that remains unfinished in both its political and aesthetic dimensions. Kateb's popular theatre embodies a pedagogic and dialogic approach, as its aesthetics actively encourage the audience to confront their morals and values and critically examine their dedication to particular ideologies and beliefs. By exploring these connections, we can enhance our understanding of his dramaturgy and the insights it offers.

### 1.2. Gramsci and Fanon on Marxist Aesthetics

Christopher Balme indicates that postcolonial studies were inherited from what Robert Young named the 'holy trinity' of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak (Young, 1995, p.163). However, it is crucial to distinguish between two main categories within postcolonial studies: the anti-colonial discourse and the decolonization of history. The former draws inspiration from thinkers such as Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire, focusing on resistance against colonial powers. Meanwhile, the latter, shaped by intellectuals like Gramsci, Lukács, Foucault, Bakhtin, and Marx, engage in critiquing Western traditions of language, culture, and ideology. Brecht, influenced by Marxist thought, shares common ground with intellectuals like Gramsci, Lukács, and Marx. His theatrical methods, which seek to unveil the social and economic conditions shaping historical events, aim at critiquing Western traditions. These two categories are interconnected, creating a dynamic arena for discourse within postcolonial theatre. This space becomes a platform for debating dominant ideologies and issues related to subordination. The reference to Said, Bhabha, and Spivak highlight their place within the broader context of the anti-colonial discourse while acknowledging the intricate interplay between the two identified categories of postcolonial studies.

Frantz Fanon is the prominent philosopher of the 'Wretched' in Africa, but his philosophy of praxis draws from the Hegelian Marxist school. In return, while Gramsci initially embraced a Western model that emphasized relations of hegemony and power, his later shift toward cultural studies and the development of a social theory of praxis resonates with Spivak's subsequent question about subalternity: *Can the subaltern speak*? Although Spivak's work emerged after Gramsci's time, this argument suggests a conceptual progression in Gramsci's thinking that aligns with ideas later articulated by Spivak. Regardless of Fanon's prominence in postcolonial discourses, the application of Gramsci's theory of praxis proves valuable when studying the function of post-colonial theatre in social resistance. Gramsci emphatically calls on intellectuals to refrain from postulating theories about revolution and start collaborating with the oppressed, on realistic ground, to help them push the process of decolonization. Both Fanon and Gramsci agree that the revolutionary intellectual is not someone who dwells on nostalgic history and is never someone who is privileged for their literary or professional skills. The intellectual Fanon and Gramsci refer to is able to make subaltern people visualize the future and is someone whose language and aesthetics aim at initiating a stream of democratic communication between national elites and subaltern groups.

### 1.2.1. Frantz Fanon: A Psychoanalytical Approach

#### 1.2.1.1 Problems of Identity and Mimicry

Brian Crow refers to Fanon's 'certainty of oneself' which is inspired by Hegel's recognition of the self in a reciprocal relationship; he explains that there is no reciprocal recognition between the white and the non-white race due to the Western assertion of superiority. To assert themselves, the colonized seek validation in 'mimicry of white language' (Crow and Banfield, 1996, p.6). In *Black Skin White Masks*, Fanon makes it clear that his psychoanalytical observation of the reciprocal nature of the human relationship is based on his own experience and is 'valid only for the Antilles,' but later he maintained that the same case applies to races which underwent subjugation (Fanon, 2008, p.15).

Following Fanon's psychoanalytical insight which proves adequate after his experience in *Joinville* psychiatry in Algeria, Bhabha identifies mimicry as one of the strategies that the colonized uses to dismantle the colonial assertive power. Because

settlers impose their languages and cultures on the other race, the latter turns into the strategy of 'writing back' in which they use the Western language to subvert their dominant colonial discourse. Simultaneously, another strategy arises, that generates scepticism among critics due to its potentially ambiguous nature within the postcolonial cultural discourse. Echoing Wole Soyinka, Crow describes this postcolonial strategy as a 'recovery' of "an authentic cultural existence" and the "quest for racial self-retrieval" (Soyinka cited in Crow, 1996, 6). This means attempts carried out by postcolonial artists, intellectuals, and writers to reclaim pride in their history, heritage, and traditional forms of culture to condemn European authoritarian historicity. Despite Fanon's scepticism towards a superficial embrace of traditions, recovery of cultural and traditional paradigms is crucial in legitimatizing their historical position since they are categorized by Western culture as pre-historical forms.

The concept of tradition is taken for granted by postcolonial intellectuals as subject to preservation, re-enactment, reconstruction, and 'subversion.' There are different ways through which tradition can be 'invented' as the Indian scholar Bharucha puts it. By referring specifically to Indian theatre, Bharucha argues that inventions are about making something that already exists 'new' via "a mediation of new technology and machinery that precipitate an alteration of forms" (Bharucha, 1990, p.193). The misconception of the tradition as a culminated approach used to subvert the Manichean relationships and reverse subject/object hierarchy is questioned by thinkers like Fanon and Gramsci because it must dwell on a dialogue between past and present consciousness as well as a premise of consistent evaluation and transformation. Fanon and Gramsci designed their critical approach based on cultural politics which is defined as "the processes through which relations of power are asserted, accepted, contested, or subverted through ideas, values, symbols, and daily practice" (Schiller, 1997, p.2). Accordingly, cultural genres (literature, drama, poetry, folklore....) that display ideas and values should be approached critically because they are responsible for transmitting national ethics and politics that influence national consciousness. In the Western tradition, Brecht contributes to the idea of critically approaching cultural genres by examining theatre as a platform for social critique. His political plays interrogate prevailing ideologies using disruptive techniques like Verfremdungseffekt, prompting the audience to question values presented in theatrical productions.

#### 1.2.1.2. National Culture and National Consciousness

This section explores Frantz Fanon's insights into the pivotal role of national culture, the pitfalls of neo-colonialism and detached nationalist leadership, and the dangers of economic dependence, revealing the complex challenges post-colonial societies face in pursuing true liberation and progress. Frantz Fanon carefully argues about the role of cultural politics, and we can therefore locate him in with "Gramsci's Marxist aesthetics." Given that the dissemination of political and ethical values, which must be substituted with anti-hegemony, is rooted in a specific cultural form, it becomes essential to address cultural issues as a primary step in their cultural resolution. This is what Fanon alludes to in *The Wretched of the Earth* when he emphasizes that national culture is a prerequisite for national liberation (Fanon, 1967, p.187). Fanon points out that only national consciousness could dismantle the barriers of Manichean differences established by colonizers and by the same token it could disrupt the polarities created by bourgeois elites who had adopted a neo-colonial system that subsequently supplanted colonialism.

The development of the nation is crippled by the internal problems caused by the neo-colonial system of national leaders which marginalize peoples from the suburbs. Speaking about nationalist parties in his chapter, *Spontaneity: its Strength and Weakness,* Fanon declares, "They don't send leaders into the countryside to educate people politically or to increase their awareness to the countryside or put the struggle onto a higher level" (Fanon, 1967, p.94). Like Brecht who values the collective intelligence of the audience, Fanon insists on a scheme of political collective education that liberates the human mind and releases the intelligence of the masses. He clarifies that industrial and technical invention must emerge from the internal models in which technical constructions are made by the competencies of the citizens. Fanon criticizes national leaders who remain detached from the everyday realities of their people. They embrace external capitalist models and impose them on citizens who are not familiar with those models of construction. (Fanon, 1967, p.160).

In 1961, Fanon warned against the implementation of a single party that would not hesitate to praise its heroic deeds in front of the people and which would fight against the emergence of democratic parties. Fanon's warning was a prophecy to Algeria because in 1989, Algeria witnessed another war when the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) emerged as a strong competing party which used violence to prevent any chance for people to create democratic parties. In 1999, in an attempt to legitimize their claim to leadership, a

single nationalist party resorted to the use of praise rhetoric promising an end to a decade of atrocities by employing soft language, the party sought to create an illusion of redemption and progress, stability and relief from past suffering. Fanon's critique lies in the recognition that such tactics exploit the hopes and aspirations of the people, while ultimately serving the interest of the ruling elite, thereby hindering genuine progress. National political leaders were preaching to protect their positions because they are perpetuating an entanglement with capitalist systems to secure their own interests. In her analysis of *The Wretched of the Earth*, Alice Cherki states that the book is a "warning to alert African nations to the inherent problems of their relationship to the developed nations of Europe" (Cherki, 2000, p.171). Fanon criticizes economic dependence which serves as an intermedium between capitalism and the nation. He believes that keeping economic interests with foreign powers threatens peoples' common interests leading to hierarchies and civil conflicts.

#### 1.2.1.3 National Culture and Decolonization

This section delves into Fanon's nuanced exploration of the significance of national culture in the decolonization process, examining its role in countering colonial legacies, critiquing race-based movements, and emphasizing the need for a dynamic and collaborative approach to national identity formation. Christopher Lee points out that Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* raises an important question about the "definition and purpose of anticolonial thought and the endpoints of decolonization" (Lee, 2015, p.177). First, to understand Fanon's anticolonial premise we should note that national struggle or violence, which is often described as Fanon's most advocating point, was a prerequisite and an inevitable process towards liberation. Authentic struggle begins with a national culture that aims at an 'intellectual' as well as 'political' progress. Fanon suggests that national culture marks a departure from 'heterogeneity' which characterizes the relationship between colonizer and colonized. Thus, Decolonization is summarized by Fanon as 'the last shall be the first and the first last' (Fanon, 1967, p.28). If decolonization is meant to homogenize two different economic 'compartments' which means to make colonizer/colonized economic systems co-exist, independence would not have taken place in the first place. National culture works against Manichaeism and neo-colonial relationships.

The revitalization of national culture by retrieving cultural forms is important in rehabilitating the psyche of the colonized because the colonizer's mission was motivated by a complete distortion of the native's history. However, Fanon enlightens us that the native's re-examination of their traditions must not be considered as a 'luxury' or a final objective. Instead, revisiting traditions is only a part of the dynamic and ongoing endeavour and a necessary phase among other phases that constitute a collective project (Fanon, 1967, p.170). The native whom Fanon refers to is the black man, and he is blatantly alluding to the Negritude movement, which is not an end in the history of decolonization. Fanon states, "In Africa, the native literature of the last twenty years is not a national literature but a Negro literature" (Fanon, 1967, p.172). Cultural movements that chant unity based on race such as Negritude, and nationalism, which was criticized by De Bois, must be approached "as critical stages to be worked through to reach a telos of the universe" (Srivastava & Fancesca, 2012, p.55).

The "Awakening of Islam" is another phenomenon that took place in the Arab world as a cultural movement destined towards national liberation. Fanon insists on the fact that neither Negritude in the black African continent nor the Awakening of Islam in the Arab world was enough to construct the nation. Arab-Muslim societies are different, problems in the Middle East, for example, are not the same as those in Algeria and the Maghreb region in general. Maghreb states, Fanon declares in his chapter *On National Culture,* are under modern pressure via trade channels; their political regimes are distinguished from other states and consequently "a cultural meeting between these states is meaningless" (Fanon, 1967, p.174). Similarly, the problems and challenges of African people are different from those of Black Americans.

Fanon insists that by praising blackness in Negritude literature, African societies become the cultural site for black people including black Americans. People, Fanon suggests, are to be unified on a 'national' and not on a 'continental' level; otherwise, African culture becomes racial instead of national because it simply extends to other continents where black people live. Except for being identified by the same white gaze, blacks do not share culture, and therefore Negritude becomes a stumbling route for the development of African identity since it proclaims race instead of nationhood. The same criticism applies to Arab nations which have different identities and different economic and cultural issues. In her chapter "Kateb Yacine; Poetry and Revolution," Jane Hiddleston argues that "Fanon's national culture at the same time overlooks the specific

ethnic and cultural diversity alluded to by Kateb and privileges a form of unity learned from the European model and inappropriate to the diverse cultural practices of multiple Algerian groups." (Hiddleston, 2014, p.133). However, despite its diverse ethnicities, dialects, and the different ways and forms in which culture manifests, there exists an underlying common cultural thread that binds the Algerian people together. This shared culture emerges from a collective history, traditions, and values that have developed over time, transcending the boundaries of specific ethnic groups or dialects. National culture exists by dint of a committed relationship between the intellectual and the people of their nation in which together, as a praxis community, they work on finding strategies to push the process of decolonization further.

#### 1.2.1.4 Fanon's Humanistic Approach and the Role of the Decolonized Intellectual

This section explores how Frantz Fanon's call for a "literature of combat" and emphasis on the pedagogical value of art are intertwined to cultivate a national culture deeply engaged in decolonization struggles and the challenges of producing authentic national literature within a colonial context. Fanon called for a "literature of combat," and Kateb Yacine aimed to establish a theatre of combat in which the intellectual takes their stand in the 'field of history' to express the realities of his people. Critics tend to place less emphasis on Frantz Fanon's pedagogical goals, instead highlighting his perceived inclination towards advocating violence and his potential unfamiliarity with certain aspects of Algerian society. These perspectives might stem from a range of factors, including the complex nature of Fanon's revolutionary ideas of decolonization he delves into in *The Wretched of the Earth,* the prominence of his discussions on violence, and the nuances of the historical and cultural contexts in which his ideas were developed. In his forward to *The Wretched of the Earth,* Homi Bhabha portrays Fanon as "the phantom of terror… the most intimate, if intimidating, poet of the vicissitudes of violence" (Bhabha, 2004, p. xl). Bhabha examines how Fanon's work explores the psychological impact of violence on both the colonizer and the colonized. However, his engagement with Fanon's ideas often revolves around the tension between violence as a means of liberation and the ethical complexities it raises.

I shall reiterate that Fanon is among thinkers who, based on his experience with patients in *Joinville*, emphatically define identity as a reciprocal relationship because "the self can understand its identity only in relation to the other" (K. Nayar, 2013, p.56). Fanon urges African and Algerian intellectuals to actively contribute to the emergence of a new kind of humanity – one that the European intellectual merely articulates in their discourse. Instead of following the same European tendency of valuing one side and excluding the other side, Fanon calls for a humanistic 'triumphant birth' for both the colonized and colonizer. He criticized Algerian intellectuals because they were following the Western model and eventually failed to establish a national culture and authentic national literature. While Fanon specifically mentions Keita Fodeba's poem as an exemplar of a "literature of combat," Macey's commentaries on Fanon suggest that there may be Algerian writers who have been included in Fanon's notion of a "literature of combat" (Srivastava and Bhattacharya, 2012, p.76). Macey identifies Assia Djebar, Moloud Feraoun, and Kateb Yacine who potentially align with Fanon's concept, representing a literary movement characterized by a resolute engagement with the struggle and resistance against colonial domination (Macey, 2000, p.382).

Referring to Macey's notes, Srivastava and Bhattacharya argue that these writers "began to represent Algerian war in fiction and poetry in a new and experimental way." However, "the use of vernacular languages or popular theatre may also have been a way for colonized writers to reach a wider audience, as colonialism had tended to define the potential linguistic audience for culture through its exclusive focus on literature in French, often consigning Algerian production to 'folklore'" (Srivastava and Bhattacharya, 2012, p.76). I should clarify that what Fanon considers problematic is the creation of Algerian literature which contributes to the alienation between the intellectual and the people. I suggest that Kateb Yacine, like Ngugi, was influenced by Fanon's concepts of decolonization and national culture because he realized that the literature which is produced in a foreign language does not benefit the cause of liberation.[12] Ngũgĩ shifted to writing in Kikuyu to empower the masses and break colonial language ties, while Kateb

[12] Kateb Yacine evokes Fanon, in *L'oeuvre en Fragment,* in which he eloquently writes a memory verse dedicated to his mother and Frantz Fanon. "In memory of she who gave me life, the black rose of the hospital, where Frantz Fanon received his star on his forehead, for him and my mother the black rose of the hospital" (Kateb cited in Arnaud, 1999, p.242) (Fanon worked as a psychiatric in Blida's hospital where Kateb's mother might have been treated for her madness.) Kateb dedicates a poem, *C'est vivre,* to Fanon, Amrouche and Molouud Feraoun describing them as the "three living sources that have not seen the light of the day..." and "three broken voices that surprise us, closer than ever... "(Kateb cited in Corpet and Dichy, 1994, p.24)

Yacine, writing in the vernacular, aimed to capture Algerian struggles. Both authors sought to bridge the gap between intellectuals and the people, aligning with Fanon's vision for culturally empowering literature amidst decolonization. Kateb Yacine decided to detach himself from the French culture and return to Algeria as a determined revolutionary intellectual filled with hope in the will of the Algerian people.

The truth of national culture does not exist in the 'cast-offs of thought;' instead, it lies in its moments of living. Fanon wants the native intellectual to opt for a work of art that is straightforward and which, as he describes Keita Fodeba's long poem, is valued 'on account of its unquestioned pedagogical value' (Fanon, 1967, p.186). He appreciates the clarity of the poem that any colonized could make sense of in terms of its 'political advance.' Because the French secret service was attempting to make use of ex-servicemen as anti-nationalist elements to disrupt Guinea's independence, Fodeba intended to 'train' the Minister for Internal Affairs to dismantle French plots. Again, Fanon reminds us that any use of the tradition must be carried out to open a new thought of action for the future (Fanon, 1967, p.187). National culture should go hand in hand with the struggle for freedom because fighting for national culture is fighting for national liberty in the first place. Contextualizing the national struggle in Algeria, Fanon claims that "the national Algerian culture is taking on form and content as the battles are being fought out and, in prisons, under the guillotine and in every French outpost which is captured or destroyed" (Fanon, 1967, 187). Fanon invites intellectuals to continue to fight against the new forms of colonialism and give up shallow speeches of unity and praise.

#### 1.2.1.5. Stages of the Development of the Native Intellectual

In order to understand the role of the intellectual in postcolonial theatre and identify the history of Kateb's intellect, I shall introduce Fanon's concept of Manichean psychology that originated in *The Wretched of the Earth.* Fanon's Manicheanism divides the world into two distinct blocks and individuals into separate "species." Within this dichotomy, not only does the colonizer have a negative gaze on the colonized but the colonized also develops an inferior perception about himself. Fanon pinpoints that "colonialism is fighting also to maintain the identity of the image it has of the Algerian and the depreciated image that the Algerian had of himself" (Fanon, 1967, p.8). Liberating people from the French gaze entails self-consciousness and the latter cannot be achieved if the colonized intellectual is alienated in the first place. Following his career as a

psychiatrist in Algeria, Fanon confirmed his hypothesis which claims that human psychology is determined by a social structure that needs to be altered and replaced by another structure that protects the rights of its citizens and serve their interests.

In his chapter "On National Culture" in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon identifies three stages that the native writer undergoes throughout his postcolonial journey. Fanon's stages of postcolonial development align with Kateb Yacine's journey. The first phase is called the "mimic native" and, in Fanon's words, the time of 'unqualified assimilation.' The intellectual draws from the European culture to end up imitating its writing styles which follow for example surrealist and symbolist styles. Initially, Kateb is a "mimic native," influenced deeply by European styles due to his early exposure to French education. This phase had a profound impact on Kateb Yacine, as he described his experience of entering a French school at a young age as being thrown into a perilous and overwhelming situation, akin to being thrust into the midst of a lion's den. The metaphor emphasizes the challenging and potentially dangerous nature of his encounter with the French education system, highlighting the sense of vulnerability and unease he felt during that time.

Fanon names the second stage "the native in transition" which means that the writer begins to detach themselves from the colonizer's culture, but they are not yet mature intellectuals since they do not completely return to their own culture. Since they are physically detached from people, they develop 'external relations' and satisfy their thoughts by reminiscing about childhood memories and 'old legends' which they re-interpret using other 'conceptions of the world' and appropriating external approaches. Fanon describes this phase as the 'just-before-the-battle' period characterized by confusion and disturbance. As a native in transition, Kateb detaches from colonial culture, yet remains between two worlds. As reflected in his masterpiece, *Nedjma,* he revisits memories and legends of his Keblouti tribe, reinterpreting them using external symbolism and mythology, avant-garde devices like fragmentary narrative, and dreamlike sequences, mirroring Fanon's concept of confusion and disturbance.

This can be seen in his treatment of the character Nedjma herself. Nedjma is both a symbol of Algerian identity and a complex individual. Kateb draws from both traditional tribal perspectives and external influences to shape her character. For instance, in the novel, Nedjma is often associated with mythical and ancestral qualities, embodying the

spirit of Algeria's history and culture. Yet, Kateb also presents her as a modern, multifaceted woman who struggles with personal desires and contemporary challenges. By depicting Nedjma in this way, Kateb illustrates his position between two worlds, weaving together indigenous traditions with external influences, and showcasing the tension between the native and colonial contexts.

Finally, Fanon defines the "fighting stage" and in other contexts the time of "the decolonized native" which is the most significant stage that leads us to explain Kateb's project of decolonization in theatre. Throughout this stage, the intellectual becomes a shaker and an 'awakener' of their people. The decolonized writer is an intellectual who is fully connected to their own culture and who can make connections across different social contexts as they become both creative and attentive in the process of decolonization. Colonization created a wide gap between the intellectual and the masses and it is the role of the intellectual to bridge this gap by revisiting "traditional and cultural practices and beliefs" carefully (K. Nayar, 2013, 105). Fanon enlightens us that the native intellectual would eventually realize that "you will never make colonialism blush for shame by spreading out little-known cultural treasures under its eyes." (Fanon, 1967, p.180). In the fighting stage, Kateb emerges as a "decolonized native." He bridges the gap between intellect and the masses, creating connections within his culture. Kateb becomes an 'awakener,' actively engaged in decolonization through a thoughtful elaboration of native traditions intertwined with a socio-political commentary. Kateb's intellectual trajectory coincides with Brecht's socio-political critique, which informs his theatre rooted in the German tradition. National literature begins when the intellectual shifts from the habit of writing to address or condemn the oppressor to the habit of writing with and for their people, showing 'responsibility' and "the will to liberty expressed in terms of time and space" (Fanon, 1967, p.193). Fanon insists that we must fight to achieve national existence only then can national existence bring about national culture. All cultural forms and activities including drama, novels, storytelling, and the visual arts could only contribute to the development of national consciousness and not to the construction of the nation. The decolonized intellectual whom Fanon imagined is a revolutionary individual who educates and allows themselves to be educated by the people towards a new form of 'humanism.' Fanon's psychoanalytical-led theory lines up with Freire's pedagogical approach which agrees that when education takes place through dialogue and praxis, new possibilities of liberation emerge.

Kateb produced a literary anti-colonial discourse with French intellectuals in mind to write back and denounce France's unjustifiable mission to mutilate Algerian history and culture. Later, Kateb showed his indifference to literary discourse and the definition of French literature "as the tabernacle of an awe-inspiring mystery" when he turned to the spoken language of theatre (Kaye and Zoubir, 2002, 510). Although he declared that he was writing in the French language to assert his Algerian background, Kateb wanted to give up writing for intellectual audiences and invite common people to be his audience. He realized that Francophone literature was not the right means to redeem issues beyond colonialism and that writing in the French language validates the narcissism of French culture and shatters the rise of minor voices and ethnic groups. He both reversed and deconstructed the Manichean view of official/ unofficial discourse when he prioritized popular theatre over literary works. Kateb sought to develop popular theatre as a revolutionary and renovative genre in Algeria. His popular theatre exhibits both Arab/ Maghrebi traditional forms of theatre, and modern forms drawing from the tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles, Chinese popular theatre (circus and opera), the history of Vietnamese theatre, and the contemporary theatres of Brecht and Beckett.

Frantz Fanon's transformative theories have profoundly influenced the realm of postcolonial theatre, offering a multifaceted lens through which to explore the dynamics of cultural identity, resistance, and liberation. Awam Ampka elucidates that Osofisan's *Once Upon Four Robbers* draws upon Frantz Fanon's insights to illuminate the neo-colonial nature of the Nigerian nation and its complex relationship with European modernity. Similar to Fanon's view that colonialism and modernity are intertwined, Osofisan suggests that Nigeria's emergence within European modernity lacks a subjective sense of agency, leaving it on the periphery of this modernity. Osofisan's dramaturgy becomes a form of "political activism," aiming to inspire the construction of an alternative modernity rooted in African resources. By incorporating Yoruba mythology and characters like Orunmila and Esu, Osofisan "invites his audience to reconfigure the social space" for proactive identity performances. *Once Upon Four Robbers* exemplifies Fanon's idea of "social reality" as an achievement born from action and intersubjective encounters. Osofisan's drama illustrates the aspirations of the "subaltern" to establish a sense of individual presence, as the "interactions" between individuals further materialize through the internal conflicts among the disenfranchised robbers and soldiers, creating a

theatrical narrative that resonates with Fanon's call for liberation and cultural revitalization (Ampka, 2004, 57-58).

Fanon's penetrating analysis of the psychological ramifications of colonialism is reflected in the characters like Puff of Smoke and Mohamed who encapsulate the intricate interplay between native cultural identity and the lasting vestiges of colonial influences, effectively embodying the inner conflicts and battles that Fanon observed. Puff of Smoke, for instance, serves as both an emblem of cultural agency, as he embodies the legendary figure J'ha, and an educator within his community. This role notably mirrors Fanon's conception of intellectuals as instrumental in cultivating an alternative national culture and organizing collective activism. Through Puff of Smoke's cunning actions and interactions with the Chorus and the characters of oppressive leaders in *Intelligence Powder*, Kateb Yacine illustrates the process of raising national awareness and facilitating dialogue, echoing Fanon's call for intellectuals to actively engage in such intersubjective and transformative roles. Puff of Smoke mirrors Schweyk in Brecht's adaptation of Jaroslav Hašek's novel *The Good Soldier Schweik*. Schweyk, while appearing accommodating, defies Hitler and the Nazi party through humour and cunningly disguised defeatist utterances. This clever approach evades arrest, as noted by Gestapo agent Brettschneider (Brecht, 2015, p.2). Kateb Yacine's commitment to postcolonial theatre as a tool for educating audiences about historical contexts and inspiring political mobilization resonates with Fanon's emphasis on the pedagogical potency of creative works.

Many facets of Kateb Yacine's popular theatre align with the concept of a "psychology of liberation" introduced by Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan in *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression*. Inspired by Fanon's psychoanalytical approach, Bulhan accentuates the empowerment of oppressed individuals through "socialized" action, "reorganized institutions" and "activity of the oppressed", reclaiming their "individual biographies and collective history" (1985, p.277-278). Kateb Yacine's theatre mirrors the struggles of the oppressed, particularly the Algerian populace, aiming to evoke a shared identity, history, and collective action. The socialized action and collective activity are reflected in performances that were organized in public spaces like village corners, school yards, and factories, creating a communal experience that enhanced solidarity and empowerment.

Central to this context is *Mohammed, Pack your Bag*, where Mohamed's journey encapsulates the psychology of liberation. His immigration trajectory not only reflects personal struggles but also sheds light on the challenges faced by individuals seeking liberation from the burdens of colonial and neo-colonial legacies. Within Mohamed's narrative, a prominent reflection of "collective liberty" emerges as a central theme. As Bulhan insists, "collective liberty" must take precedence over "individual liberty" because, as he asserts, "without it, any extension or refinement of individual rights is impossible" (Bulhan, 1985, p.258). Amidst the backdrop of prevailing inequality and social disparities, Mohamed's immigrant experience transcends the individual to encompass broader societal struggles. His journey is not merely personal; it resonates with the aspirations, hopes, and adversities faced by many Algerian immigrants who find themselves on the fringes of society due to historical injustices and ongoing power imbalances. In this sense, Mohamed becomes a conduit through which the interconnected struggles of the marginalized and oppressed are brought to the forefront.

Mohamed's character encapsulates a yearning for empowerment and autonomy, a yearning intertwined with his fundamental human necessities. In his pursuit of assimilation into a new society, while preserving his cultural identity, Mohamed's narrative mirrors the collective aspirations of individuals who strive for both personal growth and the preservation of their cultural heritage. The tensions he navigates, between the desire to belong and the impulse to maintain his roots, speak to the broader collective dilemma faced by those struggling with their identity in a world shaped by colonial histories and postcolonial complexities. Mohamed's narrative embodies Bulhan's concept of "collective victimization" illustrating how individuals, situated as societal "have-nots," confront their marginalization within an inherently inequitable social structure (1985, p.257). Through his character, the interconnected nature of struggles and aspirations becomes the focal point, offering a powerful illustration of how the quest for liberation is intricately woven into the collective fabric of societies where basic human needs are denied.

Building upon the discussion of Fanon's concept of postcolonial development, the focus now shifts to the exploration of Gramsci's relevance within the postcolonial discourse and his legacy in subaltern studies as highlighted by Srivastava, "the Subaltern

Studies collective of historians, founded by Ranajit Guha, is perhaps Gramsci's most visible legacy in the panorama of interdisciplinary postcolonial studies today" (Srivastava and Bhattacharya, 2012, p.9). Like Fanon, Gramsci offers a promising avenue to address the complexities of postcolonial politics and culture, with a shared emphasis on a cautious approach to authenticity, the critique of traditional intellectual roles, and the interconnectedness of pedagogy and ideology. Gramsci suggests that cultural forms like popular theatre act as a dissident instrument to challenge bourgeois norms, provided that it strives for originality and critical assessment.

### 1.2.2. Cultural Politics and Social Theory

#### 1.2.2.1. Intersections of Gramsci's Social Theory and Bakhtin's Heteroglossia: Exploring Language, Hegemony, and Discourse

Antonio Gramsci's social theory delves into the intricate dynamics of language and hegemony, highlighting the significance of language, dialect, and folklore in shaping the socio-cultural landscape, particularly among marginalized groups. As a theatre critic and linguist, Gramsci's reflections on dialects, orality, gestures, and cinema emphasize the cultural production of language, viewing it as a "cultural product" influenced by the social and historical interests of specific human groups. His exploration extends to various facets of Italian culture, the culture of subaltern classes, and the politics of education and teaching methods (Lacorte and Ives, 2010, p.33-39). In parallel, Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia resonates with Gramsci's ideas, emphasizing the dynamic and socially embedded nature of language. Heteroglossia involves diverse voices in communication, challenging static language and discourse. Both scholars advocate for a nuanced understanding of language's socio-cultural dimensions. Beyond linguistic constructs, heteroglossia encompasses various elements specific to theatre criticism, including textual and stage components. *Mohammed, Pack your Bag* exemplifies this diversity, incorporating a social language that undergoes shifts. It challenges the conventional idea of a singular truth, introducing multiple viewpoints. Genuine communication, according to Bakhtin, relies on active participation and engagement, characterized by "delayed action" rather than passive reception (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 96). In response to the observed subject, the audience engages in a form of

"sentimentalism," rejecting the notion of universal truth. According to Marvin Carlson, Heteroglossia further challenges traditional approaches by introducing the concept of multiple consciousnesses, disrupting "monolithic linguistic and cultural identities" (Carlson, 2006, p.108). It encourages a nuanced and engaged interaction with the performance text, facilitating a dynamic understanding of the stage language. Heteroglossia resonates with Frantz Fanon's exploration of postcolonial experiences and Paulo Freire's emphasis on dialogue and critical engagement. Fanon delves into the psychological complexities of postcolonial experiences, highlighting multiple consciousnesses within discourse, while Freire underscores the transformative potential of dialogue and critical engagement for social change. Heteroglossia thus provides a lens to analyse and critique dominant discourses, facilitating the emergence of alternative narratives and amplifying marginalized voices.

Gramsci's critical theory of cultural politics initiates a debate about what is called 'Marxist aesthetics' that emphasizes issues of culture in relation to politics. His university studies in philology triggered what is called a 'philological approach' which stresses social theory and politics as the combination of the philosophy of praxis. Although Gramsci's theories on culture and its role in social change might be responses to fascist culture, I intend to engage with his philosophy in the context of the struggle of subordinate people to overcome the oppression inherited from hegemonic power relations. The crisis that a postcolonial society undergoes is an economic, political as well as a cultural struggle because the evolution of culture is necessarily influenced by the economic and social circumstances of the space in which they unfold.

Like Fanon, he believes that literary and artistic fields "are related to the production and circulation of political, ethical and moral values and norms" (Holub, 1992, p.46). Gramsci's famous concept of "hegemony" refers to the dominant institutions that are responsible for disseminating cultural, political, and moral values. The concept emphasizes the role of cultural practices, ideas, and values in maintaining the dominance of the ruling class and shaping the collective consciousness of society. He calls for the formation of a collective project guided by the union of a shared language. The objective is to popularize culture under the name of a national-popular spirit which alone can guarantee the connection between common people (peasants) and bureaucratic elites. Gramsci criticized profit-driven theatre devoid of political engagement, viewing theatre as a subversive medium empowering people to challenge stereotypes imposed by those

in control. This perspective finds relevance in Brecht's philosophy, especially the concept of defamiliarization. Both Gramsci and Brecht opposed commercialized theatre that prioritized profits over political impact, advocating for theatre's subversive role in challenging entrenched values and power dynamics in society.

Gramsci emphasizes 'cultural intervention' against class domination as a counter-hegemony whereby the 'organic intellectual' plays the role of a national-popular leader. Organic intellectuals, according to Gramsci, are "the thinking and organizing element of a particular fundamental social class." Organic intellectuals are defined more by "their role in directing the ideas and aspirations of their class" than by their specific profession, which can vary within their social group (Gramsci trans by Hore and Smith, 1971, p.3) The concept can be applied to Kateb Yacine who used his artistic skills to represent and advocate for the struggles and aspirations of the Algerian people. Kateb provided a platform to express the experiences and the challenges faced by workers, peasants, women and young individuals, contributing to the cultural and intellectual development of his community. He is an exemplar of Gramsci's concept of organic intellectuals, who are defined by their social function rather than their literary profession despite being acclaimed as a competent francophone author.

Gramsci emphatically calls for the creation of a dialogical relationship between the intellectual and the people who are culturally, politically, and economically subordinate in society. Like Fanon who believes the intellectual is someone whose cultural practice is fully liberated from the status of the privileged intellectual, Gramsci believes that the intellectual is someone "whose duty is to act socially by questioning how dominant forms of social relations inhibit peoples' role as thinking actors" (Kilcoyne, 2018, p.12). Gramsci's theory extends beyond the Marxist tradition of history and incorporates the "history from below" approach which includes the experience and contributions of ordinary people, grassroots movements, and cultural expressions that emerge from below, outside the traditional institutions of power. While Marxist analysis of history primarily emphasizes the organization of labour groups, Gramsci's perspective broadens the scope to include the formation of popular and cultural movements that involve disenfranchised individuals. Gramsci recognizes that social transformation is not solely determined by economic factors but also influenced by cultural, ideological, and intellectual dimensions.

According to Gramsci, organic intellectuals can effectively bring about social and political change by critically substituting existing cultural activities. He proposes a strategy that connects popular beliefs to the concept of "counter-hegemony." Counter-hegemony is at the core of the philosophy of praxis, which asserts that reality is not an independent entity but is shaped through historical relationships with individuals who actively transform it. (Gramsci trans by Martin 2002, p.368). The philosophy of praxis is a critique of common sense, but it also recognizes that everyone already possesses a philosophical capacity. It aims to transform and enhance a pre-existing intellectual activity, rather than introducing an entirely new scientific mode of thinking. The philosophy of praxis emphasizes the need to critically examine and renew our existing ways of understanding the world, acknowledging that everyone has the potential to engage in philosophical reflection. Gramsci's philosophy of praxis emphasizes the importance of thoughtful engagement between intellectuals and the people. Through this engagement, they share a common objective of creating their reality and striving for justice and equality. To challenge existing powers, Brecht developed a praxis-oriented approach by breaking the illusionary nature of traditional theatre. For example, his use of songs and musical segments in *Threepenny Opera* encourages the audience to analyze the reality embedded in the narrative. Gramsci stresses "the democratic character of the intellectual function," in which praxis involves a dynamic and reciprocal relationship between intellectuals and the masses, where knowledge, ideas, and actions are exchanged and developed in a collective effort to transform society (Gramsci, 1971, p.3). Gramsci's vision of praxis emphasizes the transformative power of collective action and the co-creation of reality. It highlights the significance of dialogue, critical thinking, and mobilization in the pursuit of social change. By bringing intellectuals and the people together, the philosophy of praxis seeks to empower individuals and communities to challenge existing norms, institutions, and power dynamics and actively shape their destinies based on principles of justice and equality.

#### 1.2.2.2. Organic Intellectuals and Folklore's Role in the Philosophy of Praxis

Gramsci's concept of organic intellectuals refers to a category of committed intellectuals whose cultural work has the potential to exert significant influence on society. According to Gramsci, these intellectuals can have a transformative impact if they take 'spontaneous' elements, such as traditions and folklore, seriously and actively incorporate them into their creative practice. It is important to note that when Gramsci

speaks of spontaneity[13], he does not imply a lower or less valuable category of culture. Instead, he carefully designates the term to highlight the potential of these spontaneous elements in cultural transformation. Spontaneous elements encompass a range of cultural strategies, themes, and styles that enable intellectuals to establish a network of negotiations and collaborate with the common people on projects of challenge and social transformation. Gramsci emphasizes that "the unity between "spontaneity" and "conscious leadership" or "discipline" is precisely the real political action of the subaltern classes, in so far as this is mass politics and not merely an adventure by groups claiming to represent the masses" (Gramsci trans by Hoare and Smith, 1971, p.198).

By treating spontaneous elements seriously and engaging with them creatively, organic intellectuals can bridge the gap between the intellectual sphere and the popular culture of the masses. They can tap into the rich traditions, folklore, and cultural expressions of ordinary people, acknowledging their significance and incorporating them into their work. This process of engagement creates a sense of shared ownership and empowerment among the common people, as their cultural heritage and experiences are validated and used in the pursuit of social change. Through this collaboration and negotiation with spontaneous elements, intellectuals, and the common people can create a collective project aimed at challenging existing power structures and achieving social transformation. The network of negotiations allows for the exchange of ideas, experiences, and perspectives, enhancing a dynamic and inclusive process of cultural production.

Gramsci directs our attention to the basic critical thinking that individuals possess, irrespective of their educational background. He develops a conception of philosophy that transcends specialization and aims for universality. Gramsci's notion of philosophy, known as "spontaneous philosophy," encompasses common sense and good sense, popular religion and language, and "ways of seeing things and acting" which all together fall under the category of "folklore" (Gramsci trans, 1971, p.323). What particularly intrigues me about Gramsci's categorization is the significance of folklore in the organization of subaltern groups. According to Gramsci, folklore encompasses the

[13] According to Gramsci, the history of the subaltern class and its marginalized and peripheral elements is marked by spontaneity. These individuals lack a collective consciousness of their class and do not perceive the significance or value of documenting their own history. As a result, they may not recognize the importance of their experiences or consider preserving evidence of their struggles. In concise terms, Gramsci suggests that the subaltern class often remains unaware of the potential importance of their own history and may not see the value in recording it (Gramsci trans by Hoare and Smith, 1971, p.196).

essence of the popular and serves a functional role in driving social change. It involves the forging of new collective identities, necessitating a close relationship between intellectuals and the people they represent, as well as the integration of popular movements (Gencarella, 2010, p.238).

The purpose of creating this proximity is to enable an integrated criticism of existing cultural forms, both elitist and popular. In the creation of folklore, people do not passively receive but actively contribute to its development, imposing their own "good sense" upon it. This "good sense" represents people's unique philosophies and logic, which are often overshadowed by the widely accepted common sense that serves as the standard for philosophy and science. Gramsci identifies "good sense" as the nucleus of social actions, functioning as a popular power that resists hegemony embedded within common sense[14]. Gramsci clarifies,

> Every social stratum has its own common sense and its own good sense, which are basically the most widespread conception of life and of man […] common sense is not something rigid and immobile, but is continually transforming itself, enriching itself with scientific ideas and with philosophical opinions that have entered ordinary life (Gramsci, 1971, p.326)

Gramsci's perception of how a work of art should be valued is salient and informs us about Kateb's authorship because Gramsci argues that the aesthetic work does not exist on its own and for its sake and he emphasizes that the author and the audience are co-producers of the text. Kateb's productions are characterized by a Brechtian approach, emphasizing the essential role of audience engagement and interpretation in shaping the overall impact of the stage experience. According to Gramsci, what matters is not the production of a play but its 'historical reception', that is the extent to which it is successful and the influence it has on its audience in its political and cultural dimension. Gramsci points out the fact that when a play is produced it is no longer a unity of themes, but it becomes a social body received with different tastes and 'sensibilities.' These differences which involve the input of the audience are what make it effective and successful. Gramsci examines the work of art from the bottom to the top, in other words, it is a work that builds on "peoples' history" and involves in its core the perceptions of the people

[14] Gramsci defines common sense as the prevailing, "uncritical," and "largely unconscious" mode of perceiving and comprehending the world that has become widely accepted within a specific historical period (Gramsci trans by Hoare and Smith, 1971, p.322).

who determine the success of the work and the impact it has on their history. This shows how popular theatre has the power to engage the audience in a critical dialogue with the producers which is the kind of engagement that can emancipate them and debunk conventional orders of elitist philosophy. Rather than speculating about the reality of the people, the organic intellectual is entitled to involve them in a collective practice that allows them to bear witness to their realities and manifest their good sense.

In the context of Kateb Yacine's popular theatre, Gramsci's concept of organic intellectuals and their engagement with spontaneous elements holds significant relevance. Kateb's popular theatre actively incorporates the essence of Algerian folklore and traditions, resonating with Gramsci's notion of "spontaneous philosophy." Kateb's theatre bridges the gap between intellectuals and the common people by drawing from spontaneous elements including local dialects, storytelling, folkloric characters like J'ha, and traditional Algerian dance and music. By taking these elements seriously and creatively integrating them into his work, Kateb empowers the subaltern and validates their cultural expressions. This collaborative process develops a shared sense of ownership and agency, echoing Gramsci's vision of a dynamic exchange between intellectuals and the people they represent. It also affirms Brecht's commitment to integrating social critique into the fabric of theatrical engagement.

Kateb's theatre aligns with Gramsci's emphasis on "good sense" which is the unique philosophies and perspectives that people possess based on their lived experience and cultural heritage. Kateb Yacine's folkloric character, J'ha, serves as a major embodiment of the wit and resilience inherent in the Algerian people. Through J'ha, Kateb brings to life the concept of spontaneous philosophy, capturing the essence of collective wisdom and cultural insight. J'ha's character goes beyond mere representation; it becomes a vehicle for praxis, challenging hegemonic social norms and transcending conventional thought patterns. In his witty and often unorthodox actions, J'ha disrupts established institutions, reflecting the subversion of common narratives. This symbolizes a form of active resistance that empowers the Algerian people to reclaim their agency and challenge oppressive structures. By incorporating the character of J'ha into the narrative, Kateb showcases the potential of folklore to subvert dominant ideologies and enact change, emphasizing the dynamic relationship between cultural expression and social transformation. By embracing "good sense," Kateb's theatre becomes a platform for the

subaltern's voices to resist hegemony and transform common sense into a more nuanced and empowered understanding of Algerian identity.

The theory of praxis encompasses Gramsci's anti-hegemonic philosophy, Fanon's humanist perspective, and Freire's conscientization theory, all converging towards the goal of decolonizing thought. The next section delves into the intersection of conscientization and the transformative potential of Paulo Freire's pedagogical philosophy with postcolonial discourse. This finds resonance with Kateb Yacine's plays, highlighting how critical awareness, empowerment, and decolonization intertwine to challenge oppressive structures and propel societal transformation.

### 1.3. Oppression and Conscientisation: Towards a Theory of Humanization

Conscientization is the process of awakening people to their social and political reality, helping them recognize and analyze the oppressive structures that exist in their society, and empowering them to take action to transform these structures. Paulo Freire's concept of conscientization, rooted in his Brazilian context, intersects with postcolonial discourse through its emphasis on critical consciousness, dialogue, and transformative action. Despite its origins, conscientization resonates with postcolonial concerns by addressing the lasting impacts of colonialism, promoting the decolonization of education, empowering marginalized communities, reinforcing cultural identity and resistance, and facilitating global solidarity. By enabling individuals to recognize oppressive structures, reclaim agency, and engage in collective efforts, conscientization aligns with postcolonial aspirations for justice, equality, and self-determination in the face of historical and ongoing injustices.

Freire’s conscientization does not only involve the individual who is subordinate to dominant thought but also the one who dominates thought. He rejects the epistemology which views education as a mere collection of rules and an accumulation of knowledge and instead highlights the capacity of individuals to cultivate a critical consciousness, empowering them to become active agents who engage in both action and reflection. Freire insists that dialogue is a necessity for the individual to exist, “dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world…the dialogical man believes in others even before he meets them face to face” (Freire, 1996, p.72). Freire introduced his pedagogical philosophy following a study he carried out based on the struggle of the Brazilian people to achieve “national development” and to

be recognized as fully human. He describes this phenomenon as a “culture of silence” which originally stems from the foundations of the Brazilian system of education.

Paulo Freire strongly emphasizes the fact that every human being who is born in the “culture of silence,” has the power to look at the world with a critical eye, irrespective of his social or educational status. The characters in Kateb’s play such as Puff of Smoke, neatly demonstrate Freire’s concept of humanizing individuals by using his critical awareness to challenge hierarchies and oppressive systems inherent in religious, political, and economic institutions. Through a grassroots approach, he reverses power dynamics, undermining the power of authoritative leaders, reclaiming peoples’ voices, and shaping their history. Freire’s theory exemplified in Kateb’s narratives highlights the transformative potential of critical consciousness in overcoming silence and subjugation.

In the Freirean context, oppression is a multifaceted concept that cannot be simply defined as the exertion of power by privileged individuals over the underprivileged and vulnerable. It highlights the complexity that even the oppressed can become oppressors themselves. This recalls a particular scene from *Mohamed, Pack your Bag.* The scene portrays Mohamed, who is facing financial struggles, deciding to sell his dilapidated house. While painting the house on a ladder, a beggar approaches Mohamed and asks him to come down. However, Mohamed becomes irritated by the man's request. The beggar is seeking charity from Mohamed, who gives him the impression that he will offer something by asking him to climb up the ladder. Yet, Mohamed's intention was merely to distract the beggar. Eventually, Mohamed confesses that he has nothing to give, leaving the beggar feeling dejected. In a sorrowful tone, the beggar questions Mohamed why he made him ascend when he had nothing to offer. Mohamed responds, “You also made me descend.” This scene exemplifies oppression and reinforces Freire's emphasis on critical awareness when confronting oppressive systems. It highlights how different social classes can wield power over one another, even if one class possesses less power.

Similar to Fanon's advocacy for humanism, Freire also advocates for a theory of humanization in which the power of liberation rests in the hands of the oppressed. As previously discussed, Fanon highlights the potential of the postcolonial intellectual and the people to confront the burdensome weight of history for both the colonized and the colonizer. Freire also believes that the oppressed have the potential not only to free themselves but also to liberate their oppressors. Kateb Yacine embodies the role of an

educator with the power to liberate both the oppressed and the oppressor. His main characters, Mohamed and J'ha, similarly assume this role by not only seeking personal growth but also catalysing a broader societal transformation. As discussed earlier, this "collective freedom" safeguards the oppressors' rights and releases them from the manipulations imposed by their oppressors. Freire declares,

> This, then, is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well. The oppressors, who oppress, exploit, and rape by virtue of their power, cannot find in this power the strength to liberate either the oppressed or themselves. Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficient (Freire, 1968, p.26).

Both Fanon and Freire emphasize the need for a social education, encapsulated in O'Neill's description of their theory of praxis as a Marxist-Hegelian approach. Fanon and Freire advocate an "exchange of circumstances," signifying that a "socialist education" is achieved through "educating the socialist educators" (O'Neill, 1974, p.57). The essence of this concept lies in the reciprocal exchange of learning between educators and learners, serving as a cornerstone for achieving a well-balanced distribution of roles and preventing the passive reception of knowledge. This dynamic interaction seamlessly extends to the stage, where it cultivates an equitable actor/audience relationship, effectively countering passive engagement. Freire suggests that true consciousness emerges when oppressed individuals break free from learning within rigid institutional frameworks. By identifying those trapped within the "culture of silence," Freire emphasizes how these individuals are not only denied a voice but are also hindered from actively participating in reshaping their society. Even if they have basic literacy skills from humanitarian literacy campaigns, their connection to the power responsible for perpetuating their silence remains broken. Freire's paradigm in education expands its scope beyond traditional institutions, highlighting that learning is nurtured whenever individuals directly engage, driven by a mutual desire to exchange critical insights and generate innovative solutions to their shared challenges (Freire, 1972, p. 21).

Paulo Freire's pedagogical philosophy contributes heavily to postcolonial discourse, and it can be thoughtfully contextualized in postcolonial theatre. The pedagogical philosophy shares a common focus on challenging deep-rooted power dynamics and contributing to the empowerment of marginalized communities and the

decolonization of Manichean history. Peter Mclaren highlights the “postcolonial” nature of Freire’s “task” which is to challenge and disrupt existing forms of authority. He clarifies his intention for using the postcolonial concept in relation to Freire, “I see postcolonial pedagogy as a temporary suspension of the colonial moment, a liminal space that, while still containing traces of colonial and neocolonial discourses, effectively allows for their suspension and for the development of a community of resistance” (1992, p.25).

Freire’s postcolonial pedagogy seeks to “de-centre” and question hegemonic structures and amplify marginalized voices. (Mclaren, 1992, p.23). Postcolonial theatre involves dismantling traditional colonial representations and replacing them with narratives that challenge normative cultural perspectives. Kateb Yacine's plays critiqued the effects of colonialism on Algerian society and identity advocating for cultural independence. By employing local languages and incorporating elements of oral traditions, he aimed to reclaim the narrative space from colonial influences and empower his audience with alternative viewpoints. This reflects the essence of postcolonial theatre in actively countering colonial legacies and presenting narratives that resonate with the voices and experiences of the colonized.

Gramsci, Fanon, and Freire converge in their shared emphasis on liberation and social transformation. Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony finds resonance with Fanon's analysis of colonial oppression, highlighting the importance of challenging dominant narratives. Freire's pedagogical approach intersects with Fanon's call for decolonizing education, as both stress the role of critical consciousness in empowerment. Freire's emphasis on dialogue and participatory learning resonates with Gramsci's concept of organic intellectuals, as all three advocate for active engagement to dismantle systems of control and nurture collective agency. Together, their ideas coalesce to form a comprehensive framework for understanding and addressing the complex dynamics of power, culture, education, and liberation.

This chapter has discussed postcolonial theatre as an ambivalent space of contradiction and action that allows individuals to subvert extreme perceptions of knowledge and bring about flexible strategies appropriate for challenging ethics, morals, and laws. Ambivalence can be summarized as the attitude adopted by theorists and

intellectuals who strive for social transformation and the establishment of a social critique that never ceases to question Manichean ‘tendencies’ which are all encompassed in one assertive side and its negating side. Following a Fanonian psychoanalytical analysis of identity, ambivalence emerges as an alternative state of awareness that transcends the fallacy of dichotomic orders inherited in dogmatic theories. Popular theatre, as a medium of praxis, uses ambivalent identification to subvert the colonial model of identification which fails to push the process of decolonization forward. Kateb’s theatre foregrounds many ways of “inclusions” and “exclusions” starting from its traditional structure, which prevents the emergence of the performance as a community of culture and politics, to its language, themes, and forms of representation. Kateb's organic intellectualism hints at Brecht's ethos, emphasizing the transformative potential of engaging with the socio-political realities through aesthetic expression.

The next chapter portrays Kateb as an organic and decolonized intellectual akin to Gramsci, Freire, and Fanon’s conception of the intellectual, illustrating his aesthetic praxis' resonance with the philosophy of praxis. This philosophy draws on the concept of deferred truth and continual dialogue regeneration. Kateb's depiction of J'ha in *Intelligence Powder* functions as a catalyst, awakening spectators' imagination and dismantling their passivity. Acting as a narrator and guide, J'ha strategically disrupts audience complacency, reinstating their agency in society. He holds a remarkable awareness of his role within a praxis-based realm, where mind and body unite to shape and critically assess reality. His performances aim to bridge the gap between the space of imagination and tangible reality, prompting active audience engagement in the transformative process.

## Chapter Two

## *Intelligence Powder*: J'ha, the Philosopher Acting in the Liminal Space

### 1.1. Introduction

*Intelligence Powder*, a satirical play written by Kateb Yacine, holds significance in the development of Kateb's popular theatre due to the significance of its main character, Nuage de Fumée (Puff of Smoke), who embodies the persona of the popular Arabic figure Djoha/J'ha. Cheniki asserts that Kateb Yacine's popular performances mimic the structure of *Intelligence Powder* through his experimentation with vernacular Arabic, following his previous works in French (*The Circle of Reprisals* and *The Man with the Rubber Sandals*) (Cheniki, n.d). The play was first published in 1959 as part of Kateb's theatre collection *The Circle of Reprisals*. *Intelligence Powder* was staged many times in France. On June 11, 1967, it was performed in the city of Arras at the Palais Saint-Vaast by Alain Ollivier's Company. The director, Alain Ollivier, was awarded the ninth grand prize of the "Jeux Dramatiques of Arras" for his presentation of the play during the Festival Concours du Jeune Théâtre. In 1967*, Intelligence Powder* was restaged by the Egyptian theatre troupe "Masrah Al-jib" (The Pocket Theatre) in Egypt; directed by Karam Mutawaa. On March 1, 1979, the play was staged by the Tournemire Theatre company under the direction of Louis Beyler, with design and costumes by Allain Cunillera. On January 26, 1986, the theatre company Hypokrites presented the play, directed by Laurent Mantel, in Clichy (listed in the Catalogue Général)[15]. In 1989, Kateb Yacine visited New York City to audit the staging of the play by Francoise Kourilsky at UBU Theatre.

Although written independently from Kateb's later popular plays, *Intelligence Powder* serves as a reflection of the initial implementation of his theatrical ideas outlined in L'*Anafrasie. Intelligence Powder* was adapted by Youcef Mila and staged by Hacene Assous in 2007, at Algerian National Theatre Mahieddine Bachtarzi. Along with the scenographer Abderrahmane Zaâboubi, the choreographer Sliman Habess, and the musician Omar Assou, Assous introduced Kateb's dramaturgy to the Algerian audience

[15] Notice bibliographique La Poudre d'intelligence (Reprise) Kateb Yacine ; spectacle de Compagnie Hypokrites ; mise en scène de Laurent Mantel | BnF Catalogue général - Bibliothèque nationale de France

with new aesthetic dimensions. The delayed arrival of *Intelligence Powder* in Algeria should be understood as a result of the historical circumstances. This delay is more a result of complex factors such as censorship and distribution, rather than a lack of thematic dialogue between the decolonized intellectual and the people. The eventual arrival of the play symbolizes a pivotal moment in the cultural environment, indicating a more open space for complex narratives. The play's evolution over time in response to changing cultural contexts initiates discussions about ongoing colonial legacies and the struggle for genuine decolonization, reinforcing the argument of the intellectual's enduring work which continues to generate dialogue with the people. For example, Puff of Smoke, the philosopher in the play, serves as a symbol representing the educated generation confronted with the persistent issue of unemployment, despite competence. This portrayal resonates with the ongoing challenges faced by post-colonial Algeria. By embodying the struggles of educated individuals struggling with unemployment and marginalization, the philosopher's character emphasizes the enduring relevance of the play's themes. This relevance demonstrates that the play's insights transcend its historical context and remain pertinent to contemporary social issues, contributing to a meaningful dialogue between the decolonized individual's perspective and the challenges confronted by the people.

In order to have a clear perspective on the performance of *Intelligence Powder* and maintain a balance between the analysis of the text and its spatial-temporal aspects, I chose to explore Mila's adaptation of *Intelligence Powder*. The reason why I find this interesting version strong enough to help me comment on the mise-en-scène of the satire and Kateb's vision of staging such a genre is that it was directed by the professional comedian and director Hacene Assouss[16], Kateb Yacine's dear friend and collaborator in Kateb's theatre troupe Action Culturelle des Travailleurs (The workers' Cultural Action, also called ACT). This chapter provides a contextual analysis of *Intelligence Powder* which benefits from Fanon, Gramsci, and Freire's Marxist pedagogy. The central point of this case study revolves around the argument that Kateb Yacine is one of Fanon's envisioned decolonized intellectuals whose political, cultural, and philosophical views manifest in the character of J'ha/Puff of Smoke. Throughout this examination, I will intermittently touch upon the intriguing affinity between Kateb's work and Brechtian

[16] The director of the Regional Theatre of Sidi-Bel-Abess which was formerly directed by Kateb Yacine.

theatre techniques. Elements such as the use of direct address to the audience and the art of storytelling, while not fully explored in this chapter, contribute to the nuanced exploration of the play's socio-political and cultural dimensions. J'ha represents the national consciousness which is distorted by the dominant ideology of religious and political authorities. J'ha's role within the narrative of *Intelligence Powder* is remarkably distinct, as it transcends conventional demarcations between performer and audience. This positioning grants J'ha the ability to navigate the intriguing space of liminality, a state characterized by its inherent state of in-betweenness or as Schechner puts it "a fluid mid-point between two fixed structures" (Schechner, 1988, p.118). Schechner describes the performance as "liminal" which means that during the actual performance, the performers exist in a state of transition or liminality. In this phase, they have temporarily shed their regular identities and are in a state of ambiguity, taking on different roles or personas. This liminal state is characterized by a suspension of the performers' everyday identities and a temporary immersion in the world of the performance, where they undergo a transformation or change, much like individuals in traditional rites of passage. (Schechner and Turner, 1985, p.20-21). Within this liminal space, J'ha undertakes a pivotal role as a mediator, adopting a neutral position that enables him to facilitate the understanding and assessment of unfolding events for both the actors involved and the observing spectators. By doing this, J'ha directly engages with the audience, providing them with direct insight into his actions while simultaneously maintaining a certain detachment. He takes on the persona of a storyteller, effectively closing the distance between those actively involved in the events and those witnessing them and revealing the subtleties that might escape casual observation.

### 1.2. Analysis (Kateb Yacine's Text and Assous's Mise-en- scène)

*Intelligence Powder* reveals that Kateb Yacine had been influenced by Fanon's concept of national culture because he portrayed Algerian culture in the late 50s, when the war of liberation was at its peak, as it was deteriorating because of the rise of a totalitarian system. Kateb Yacine established an interdiscursive relationship between philosophy and ideology which proves to what extent we can read his play through Fanon's lenses. He creates a character who shares the features of Fanon's imagined humanist intellectual and on different occasions, his style of writing gives us a blueprint of Kateb's biography, a fact that triggers the reader to read him as Fanon's humanist intellectual. The protagonist's dialogue and actions do not depict a person driven by

knowledge but rather stem from a place of intellectual maturity and a heightened awareness of their identity. The story is built around the unprivileged character Puff of Smoke/J'ha whose philosophy is determined by good sense rather than scientific knowledge, which is Gramsci's universal philosophy.

This deliberate departure from conventional academic wisdom highlights the accessibility and relatability of J'ha's worldview, inviting a broader spectrum of the population to engage with and reflect upon the play's themes, thereby exemplifying Kateb Yacine's establishment of a pedagogical theatre that operates as a transformative process of decolonizing history. This approach allows Kateb Yacine to bridge the gap between formal education and lived experiences, enabling a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of history and its colonial legacies. This approach positions theatre as a conduit for conscientization, stimulating individuals' critical consciousness to analyze their problems and contribute to the collective struggle for genuine decolonisation.

In *Intelligence Powder*, J'ha is an independent character who is detached from one collective character, The Chorus. The Chorus represents the working class; at the same time, they bear the mindset of a certain category of people which Kateb firmly criticizes. Kateb opts for a realistic and objective representation of the relationship between the intellectual and the people and between the intellectual and the hegemonic power. The Chorus plays a major role in the play because they showcase a clash of different identities making events and attitudes unpredictable and therefore interrupting the linearity of history. For the sake of clarity, the protagonist Puff of Smoke and J'ha is one persona which is the humble philosopher who echoes the intellectual. J'ha manifests as a personality with different attitudes that appear when Puff of smoke reaches a point of conflict with a contradictory mindset. In the line of suggesting a non-Manichean approach to decolonization, J'ha is the stage monitor in charge of bringing contradictions to the surface and "problematizing knowledge".

I find it a bit challenging to argue how Kateb's audience experiences liminality and praxis because of the lack of evidence on the spectator's involvement in his performances. However, one could make the argument that Kateb Yacine adopts a kinaesthetic approach, where the spectator's experience of an ambivalent state is maintained through heightened bodily awareness. Kateb endeavours to immerse the audience in a physical and sensory experience, encouraging them to become more aware

of their bodies and their presence within the theatrical space. This kinaesthetic approach allows for a deeper engagement in the performance and forges a shared embodiment between the actors and the spectators. By experiencing liminality in this manner, the audience is motivated to actively participate in the performance. For instance, group movements and interactions involving the Chorus cultivate a shared bodily experience, evoking a sense of unity between the performers and the audience. Within Assouss's mise-en-scène, the amalgamation of a hysteric dance, physical interactions, and loud music coalesces to enhance bodily awareness. The hysteric dance, known for its intense and evocative movements, captures the audience's attention, establishing an emotional connection with the characters' inner conflicts. This emotional resonance is further reinforced by the powerful physical gestures among the chorus, Puff of Smoke, and his wife. These interactions lend authenticity to relationships, portraying emotional nuances and conflicts through visceral actions. Accompanied by the presence of loud music and the resonating gong, the sensory stimulation is heightened, creating a dynamic atmosphere in alignment with the themes of class conflict and the absence of critical consciousness. This collective use of elements vividly exemplifies Kateb Yacine's intent to evoke powerful emotions and provoke thought, effectively transforming the audience's passive observation into active engagement with the play's social and philosophical motifs.

I am going to touch upon some aspects of the adaptation of *Intelligence Powder* which reflect Kateb Yacine's ambivalent nature of his theatrical discourse and his complex negotiation between diverse cultural influences and perspectives. By delving into these aspects of the adaptation, I am shedding light on how Kateb's creative choices challenge the monolithic narratives imposed by colonial powers, contributing to the process of decolonization. His syncretic approach signifies a departure from the singular colonial narrative, embracing multiple cultural elements, and creating a space for marginalized voices. His ambivalence reflects the complex relationship between colonial legacies and linguistic dominance, further emphasizing the need to critically engage with history from different angles.

Youcef Mila's adaptation of *Intelligence Powder* into an amalgamation of the Arabic language and Algerian dialect enhanced the comedic elements which, in my view,

might not be effectively conveyed in the French language version. Although written in French, the play draws extensively from a culturally diverse linguistic background. It adheres to a distinct local rhythm, giving the impression that while the writing is in French, the thought process resonates with the vernacular essence. Hacene Assous comments that the question was not about renovating cultural heritage, but it was more about how to present it (echorouk, 2007). What made the production appealing was its openness to different interpretations in addition to the professional scenography by Zaaboubi. Meanwhile, J'ha, who is often stereotyped as a dumb character, is transformed into a knowledgeable man who is well-informed in the field of philosophy (echorouk, 2007). Although Kateb Yacine presented J'ha as a cunning and foolish figure, he did not intend to detach him completely from the domain of philosophical knowledge because he possesses wisdom, intelligence, and "good sense." Hacene Assous comments

> it occurred to me that the character of Djoha represented by Kateb Yacine with an Arab, Islamic, and Eastern dimension in general is worth revisiting. What is different here is the introduction of this comic character from the point of view of a philosopher. We had to work on the theatrical show by employing various theatre elements such as body, ear, eye, and others (Assous cited in Anon, n.d).

In terms of the dialogue, what I find impressive in this original adaptation is the interplay between classical Arabic and Algerian dialect, a new dimension that breaks the conventions that set standard Arabic as the main language of professional theatre in Algeria. This mixture maintains a rhythmic balance between the time and the space of the narrative. Classical Arabic drives us back to the traditions of the Arabic kingdom and adds a serious feature to the characters which makes the audience engage exclusively with the performed story. The dialect adapts more than the standard Arabic to modern times and the culture of Algerian society in that it has the power to promptly involve the audience in the mood of mockery, and social and cultural criticism. By using vernacular language, he creates a connection to the audience's cultural and emotional roots, making them more intellectually and emotionally invested in the narrative. The emotional impact prompts the audience to confront the underlined implications of the performance, rather than achieving a traditional cathartic resolution.

What caught my attention while watching Assous's production was the captivating and powerful movement displayed by the members of The Chorus. Their ability to convey

various emotional stages and perform different styles of dance was truly remarkable. As the picture below illustrates, the choreography was executed with precision and intensity, enhancing the communication of emotions and adding depth to the performance. The dancers' skillful movements added an extra layer of expression and engagement, making their presence on stage exceptional. Between jumping, swaying, fighting, and performing labour tasks, The Chorus interweaves a modernized picture of Algerian theatre with an Arabic feature of storytelling. In highly stylized and harmonious gestures that are characterized by buffoonery, they perform the habits of both human beings and animals; they dramatize the chaotic reality that Kateb Yacine reimagines as an overlap between two worlds, that of the donkeys and that of human beings. The donkey is a symbol that prevails in *Intelligence Powder* and Kateb's late satirical plays, and it represents the reality of toiling, being oppressed, and subjugated. In *The World Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Theatre: The Arab World,* Rubin comments "Yacine's plays are all structurally tight and strong in characterization exhibiting a mixture of realism and symbolism in their portrayal of a people" (Don Rubin, 1994, p.64).

Figure 1. The Chorus performs rhythmic gestures with broomsticks.

Kateb wrote *Intelligence Powder* to criticize colonial power and the established neo-colonial hegemony, yet he was keen to expose cultural differences and open to intercultural negotiations. He strongly defends theatre and poetry which draw on both Arabic and non-Arabic cultures. Kateb Yacine resists Arabization but accepts its cultural conventions; at the same time, he repulses the French colonizer but endures colonial language and its literary forms. Kateb adopts a postcolonial "ambivalence" which "describes this fluctuating relationship between mimicry and mockery, an ambivalence that is fundamentally unsettling to colonial dominance" (Ashcroft et al, 2013, p.14). Aresu writes about the influence of Arab-Islamist traditions on Kateb's artistic work, clarifying its precedence over modern aesthetics in what constitutes his pluralistic narrative

repertoire. He comments, "... Arabo-Islamic aesthetics undoubtedly played a critical role in the shaping of his poetic vision" (Aresu, 1993, p.100). The mystic poet and philosopher Ibn Arabi undoubtedly influenced Kateb Yacine. Aresu argues further that Kateb engages with Western aesthetic traditions and subverts them, his "carnivalesque satire celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and the established order" (Aresu, 19, p.7). He adds,

> The discussion of the carnivalesque elements in *La Poudre d'intelligence* has pointed out the centrality of zoomorphic representations and, through Bakhtin's study of popular laughter, their ambivalent function. Bakhtin's insistence on the mythic, regenerative function of comic rituals aptly elucidates the striking intrusion of the grotesque and its zoomorphic representation in so many of Kateb's texts (Aresu, 1993, p.201).

I find the grotesque style and buffoonery notable in Assous's production of *Intelligence Powder* where the actors embody different grotesque and zoomorphic imagery. The picture below portrays one of the chorus members jumps around Puff of smoke trying to touch the donkey machine that J'ha discovered performing monkey-like gestures. Other members are holding tight onto the scaffold-like platforms on stage like monkeys do on trees. Before I proceed with the analysis of *Intelligence Powder,* I shall give a brief history of the emergence of J'ha in Kateb's writings.

Figure 2. One of the Chorus members jumping around Puff's invented machine (taken from YouTube)

Kateb Yacine appropriated his popular joker from the narrative adventures of the traditional folk hero Djeha, J'ha, or Djoha, as the pronunciation varies from vernacular to standard Arabic. This folkloric character is born in Middle Eastern folk literature and in the ancient stories of North Africa as J'ha. We find him with different names in other

regions such as Nasreddine Hodja in Turkey and Goha in Egypt. Djoha is also the name of the first popular comic play to be co-authored by the founder of Algerian modern theatre Allalou (Kaki), and Brahim Dahmoune. Performed in Algiers in 1926, *Djoha* revolves around the adventures of a trickster figure and ridiculous hero who embodies both wisdom and naivety. It became the most famous popular play because it attracted a large number of audiences that theatre in literary Arabic had never reached. It is also an example of syncretic performance as the play "skilfully wove together material from a variety of sources: Molière's *le Malade Imaginaire* and *le Médecin Malgré lui;* a traditional folktale*, le villain mire;* themes and characters from *Thousand and One Night*…" (Amine and Carlson, 2011, p.90).

Looking at IMEC's archives and Kateb's journalistic writings, it occurs to me that J'ha is the revolutionary persona that Kateb Yacine embodies because he evokes J'ha as an engaged writer. In the section *Ils L'auront voulu. Par J'ha* (They have wanted it. By J'ha), Kateb writes "Afrique Action a engagé un nouveau collaborateur : le légendaire J'ha. Il se present lui-meme ci-dessus" (*Afrique Action* have engaged a new collaborator: the legendary J'ha. He introduces himself below). *Afrique Action* is a periodical in which Kateb writes about world politics at the time; by introducing J'ha, he makes it clear that J'ha becomes the main communicator between the audience and the outside world where he circulates events and figures, in the form of texts and sketches, the way they are and without censure. Kateb introduces J'ha as the humourist journalist who uses his wit and philosophy in political debates (Kateb, 1961, from IMEC archives).

At the outset, we encounter him participating in a press conference regarding the Evian Accords, where he assumes the role of an "occult negotiator" with the mission of preserving peace. The urgency to safeguard peace arises from the fact that while these accords proclaimed independence, the question remains: Where does independence truly lie? France merely signed a decree of economic dependence with the Republic of Algeria due to its need for African gas. Kateb's statement, "la negotiation n'est qu'un massacre de francs Suisses" (the negotiation is nothing but a massacre of Swiss francs), highlights the cynicism and disillusionment surrounding the negotiation process, suggesting, like Fanon, that financial interests and economic dependencies undermine the true essence of independence (Kateb cited in Kateb, 1999, p.132). Disguised in a Gandoura uniform which gives the conference audience the impression that he is a royal Arab diplomat, J'ha

is advised to undress before the conference starts because, as Kateb writes, the Gandoura looks “like a parachute of a Tunisian type,” but, as he declares, J’ha had no time to waste (Kateb cited in Kateb Amazigh, 1999, p.139). He continues to negotiate in other debates including conflicts in the Middle East, the issue of Western Sahara, and the Arab Union until he decides to give up journalism; he returns to where he belongs to become a watermelon seller. This transformation alludes to Kateb’s return from exile after independence; this also means a shift in his creative focus from newspaper writing to theatre practice.


Figure 3. A portrait of J’ha extracted from IMEC, Fond Kateb Yacine (Kateb, Afrique Action, *1961*)

J'ha is a paradoxical character, embodying both foolishness and cleverness, naivety and wisdom. Despite his absurd actions, he manages to deceive muftis, sultans, qadis, and merchants, while gaining the support of the proletariat. J'ha's universal philosophy or “good sense” resonates with the common people. Kateb Yacine extensively used J'ha in his plays to reveal hidden stories and expose the reality of hypocritical individuals exploiting religion and business for personal gain. He criticizes muftis, qadis, and businessmen for their role in oppressing and stagnating society. Kateb Yacine's portrayal of J'ha reveals the manipulation of religion for personal interests and the misuse of religious authority by those in power. J'ha assumes various disguises to challenge social contradictions and remains a revolutionary proletarian who refuses to conform. This prompts critical thinking about how individuals in power exploit beliefs and values to maintain control and advance their agendas. J'ha's poverty and humor create a paradoxical yet triumphant character, offering laughter and insight despite his challenging circumstances. Kateb Yacine's work questions the exploitation of religion and business for personal gain, shedding light on the suffering and oppression endured by the people. Jean Dejeux writes “in Rashid Bujedra's work, as well as in that of Kateb, Djoha has

assimilated Marxist ideology and pursues a revolutionary goal. Formerly a hero of the oral tradition of times past, Djoha is now indeed a man of the moment: the non-conformist" (Dejeux, 1976, p.26). Salhi clarifies that by using Djeha, Kateb Yacine "accomplished his task" to bring about a Marxist thought that correlates with "egalitarian traditions of North Africa." Nevertheless, Salhi explains that Marxist ideology alone is insufficient in addressing the complex cultural challenges within Algerian communities and achieving essential objectives like "freedom of speech." He emphasizes that Marxism while offering valuable insights into social and economic structures, may not adequately address the intricacies of cultural issues specific to Algeria (Salhi, 1999, p.339). Kateb Yacine realized that he should resort to collective action hoping that with the revelation of Djeha, he could unveil social contradictions and help people re-consider their status as free citizens. Kamel Salhi asserts, "Djeha helped Yacine to forge a strong relationship with the people, enabling him to create an authentic popular form of theatre…" (Salhi, 1999, p.340). The illustration of the traditional figure Djoha is significant because he represents the collective memory of the Algerian population; he is the hero whose voice is the echo of all people who have been exploited and subjugated. Zahia Salhi's insights shed light on a remarkable phenomenon: when J'ha takes the stage, Algerian spectators spontaneously engage themselves with the stage action. This engagement springs from an inherent recognition of this character, a familiarity that runs deep within their collective consciousness. (Salhi Zahia interviewed by Ziani, 2020).

### 1.2.1. J'ha between an Established Ideology of Religion and a New Consciousness of Philosophy

Kateb Yacine employs notable implications as a means of addressing socio-cultural and ideological issues prevalent in Algeria. Through this approach, he unveils the underlying pedagogical principles and the inherently decolonizing essence embedded within his theatrical works. We can grasp Puff of Smoke's philosophy when he says, "I am cold therefore I am dead," an ideological expression that alludes to Descartes' philosophical statement "I think, therefore I exist." Kateb Yacine appropriates Descartes' philosophical statement again in his journalistic article "Ils l'auront voulu" when J'ha introduces himself to the reader "Mortelle angoisse, J'existe donc je suis" (mortal anxiety, I exist therefore I am" (Kateb, from IMEC, *Fond Kateb Yacine*). By modifying Descartes' statement, Kateb challenges conventional Western philosophical discourse. He reframes

it in a way that adapts to his cultural perspective and his interpretation of philosophy which emanates from popular culture. By the same token, he engages his audience in a critical examination of established philosophical paradigms. Through these variations, Kateb bridges the gap between abstract philosophical concepts and the lived experience of Algerian society. The original statement by Descartes, “I think, therefore, I exist,” reflects an individualistic perspective on existence and self-awareness. It emphasizes the individual’s capacity for rational thought as the basis for their existence. Kateb Yacine’s adaptation, such as “I exist, therefore I am” and “I am cold therefore I am dead” takes on a more collective dimension and shifts focus from individual thought to collective experience. This modification reflects the Algerian struggle for collective freedom and liberation reminiscent of Bulhan’s emphasis on “collective freedom” which emphasizes the liberation of marginalized and oppressed groups not as individuals, but as a collective identity.

Puff of Smoke does not belong to the class of elites and recognized intellectuals who are well-read in philosophy and science, but he belongs to the category of common people. He represents popular philosophy and serves as Kateb’s spokesman for national culture. Kateb Yacine highlights the philosophy of the common people, who vastly outnumber the intellectuals, as a subversive force against the colonizer's efforts to eradicate native language and culture. This mirrors Gramsci’s idea of intellectuals emerging from the masses rather than traditional elite circles, disseminating critical thought within their own communities. By foregrounding the wisdom and perspectives of the common people, Kateb Yacine challenges the acculturation imposed by the colonizers, which seeks to undermine the indigenous heritage. This emphasis on the philosophy of the masses serves as a form of resistance and counters the destructive impact of colonial assimilation. Meanwhile, Kateb brings a cunning philosopher among the illiterate people because they need critical philosophy and national consciousness more than elitist values.

Kateb Yacine presents a utopian philosophy in which an average person, despite economic and social subordination, can challenge hegemonic values and contribute to saving society from stagnation. This concept is grounded in Gramsci's theory of intellectuals being physically and intellectually connected to organized collective action.

Kateb carefully formulates a philosophical discourse that resonates with his audience, avoiding misinterpretation and alienation. He employs a theatrical style rooted in storytelling to reverse historical and power dynamics. He confronts intellectuals who have contributed to the erosion of history and tradition while legitimizing the value of popular culture. He breaks the prevailing "culture of silence," as described by Freire. J'ha takes center stage not to preach or disseminate knowledge but to create problematic situations without definitive solutions.

Kateb's approach aligns with Freire's Conscientization, promoting critical dialogue between intellectuals and the people. Both the educated and the educator acknowledge their incomplete knowledge, emphasizing the dynamic interplay of action, reflection, and reaction. Freire's "liberating pedagogy" encourages understanding the perspectives of both the oppressed and the oppressors. Similarly, Kateb's characters challenge the binary of oppressed and oppressor, inviting the audience to reconsider established cultural and historical contexts. To illustrate the connection between people's knowledge and J'ha's philosophy, Kateb portrays J'ha as an unemployed man who relies on his discovery of tricking powder to end his misfortune. This metaphorical powder, made of sand, symbolizes the demystification of authorities' secrets and a condemnation of societal delusions that rival science and reasoning.

The play opens with Nuage de fumée insisting on his wife Attika switching off the light because he desperately wants to rest, but his wife is annoyed by his lack of care and complacency. The scene suggests a sparse and contemplative atmosphere reflecting themes of solitude, desertion, or isolation within *Intelligence Powder* (Kateb and Glissant, 1998, p.73). Instead of thinking about a way to get a living, all that Puff of Smoke cares about is sleep. Puff of Smoke also counts on the revolution, and he wants her to trust the power of revolution which he believes will put an end to their misery. He does not only refer to the military revolution which aims to overthrow the colonial power but also to the social revolution which is a utopian demand. His socialist commitment is evident in his attitude towards Attika's restlessness. While she spends all day waiting for him to find a job, all that he wants to do is to sleep reassuring Attika "Don't you trust the revolution?" (Kateb translated by Vogel Stephen, 1985, p.1). Puff's attitude justifies the political theory inherent in the play which is the Marxist philosophy of praxis. When Puff asks his wife "Don't you believe in the revolution?" Kateb puts forward the notion that action is crucial for understanding socialist philosophy and for the people to fully embrace its principles.

Through action, the oppressed class gains awareness of their social position and recognizes the exploitation that accompanies it. (Squiers, 2014, p.41)

Kateb's strict condemnation of bureaucratic mechanisms and of the national elite that promotes one truth and disseminates a single direction of thought is similar to Gramsci and Brecht's repudiation of the bourgeoisie system. Anthony Squiers argues "Gramsci's 'common sense' understanding is quite like Brecht's notion of the working-class *Weltanschauung*. Both are meant to imply an uncritical acceptance of mechanisms of truth production which are dominated by the bourgeoisie" (Squiers, 2014, p.41). This notion of uncritical acceptance of a singular truth, operating unilaterally and excluding opposing viewpoints, stands in sharp contrast to Fanon and Freire's emphasis on non-binary learning that seeks to transcend fixed perspectives and engage with diverse viewpoints for a more comprehensive understanding. Kateb Yacine debunks this mythical perception of truth, which appears at many stages in the narrative, by suggesting alternative views and juxtaposing theories.

Coming across the Sultan's parade in the early morning, Puff finds himself jailed afterward just because the Sultan believes that seeing Puff early in the morning will bring him bad luck when he expects a successful hunting day. Unexpectedly, the morning hunt was successful, and the Sultan and his royal companions could eventually make a fortune. The Sultan commanded his officer to set Puff free, but Puff refused to be released unless he had a conversation with the Sultan. It is the first confrontation between the Sultan and J'ha/Puff which gives him the chance to speculate about his philosophy and deconstruct the Sultan's superstitious hypothesis of having a misfortune after seeing Puff in the early morning. To redeem his judgmental attitude, the Sultan offers Puff a purse of gold. Puff makes it explicit that Sultan's behaviour is oppressive, and he exposes this to the audience by making him admit his misdeeds. The Sultan says, "Well then, have him brought to me. Today I am in the mood to rectify my injustices" (Kateb, 1985, p.4).

Kateb's Marxist philosophy, which juxtaposes the Sultan's speculations manifests when J'ha/Puff claims that misfortune is highly likely to bring about fortune. J'ha enlightens us that it is the fortune that must be feared because it is the source of every misfortune, not the other way round. He proceeds with his wisdom giving a realistic example, "If a robber seizes my purse, my theory, Alas, would be confirmed" (Kateb, 1985, p.4). His philosophical speech is a subtle warning to the Sultan and an imagined scenario for the collapse of his wealth and kingdom. While Kateb resisted dramatizing a

narrative end with optimistic scenarios, in his production of the play, Hacene Assouss was willing to imprint dramatic symbols that suggest the fragility of dominant thought and portray the demise of wealth and power. In the final scene of the adaptation, dance and music pervade the stage and we find performers dancing in pairs. Gathering around the stage in colourful royal dresses, women perform both elegant and ridiculous gestures which present an atmosphere of joy and laughter. The philosopher/Puff enters the dance floor, kisses the hands of two women who are looking into the mirrors then exits the stage as if he is giving them a touch of power and intelligence. Soon, the women gathered in the centre of the stage with Attika, who whispered in their ears some words which made them burst into laughter. They spread on the stage and continued dancing. Each time they dance around one of the oppressors, these figures end up being undressed. The Sultan, Mufti, Merchant, and other oppressive characters are transformed into drunk people who are no longer able to control the people around them, they become like shadow puppets controlled by the female chorus.

Figure 4. Female Chorus dancing and undressing the Sultan and his fellows (taken from YouTube).

Puff takes the purse of coins accompanied by a letter from the Sultan which labelled him “the great philosopher.” He informs us that the economic and social status of the Sultan will bring him trouble because, at a certain stage, a new consciousness will arise that uplifts the proletariat and undermines the elite. Later, Puff informs the Chorus leader that the Sultan’s gold will turn against him because this is what he calls the “law of the internal contradiction of the capital” (Kateb, 1985, p.13). Puff states that his knowledge is grounded in three principles (Kateb, 1985, p.13). Kateb Yacine incorporates the Marxist theory of praxis into his work, where he educates the audience on dialectical materialism. He embraces it as a philosophy that explains the dynamics of historical change. In the dialectics approach, no situation remains fixed, and when fortune turns

against those in power, change becomes inevitable. He aims to make people realize that their environment is mutable and that they have the power to bring about new conditions in life.

Kateb's Marxist philosophy manifests again when the Chorus Leader asks Puff what he intends to do with the gold he received from the Sultan. Puff plans to buy a donkey, a fact that makes him subject to mockery by the Chorus Leader who ironically wishes him to find an "animal that has a better disposition" than Puff of Smoke (Kateb, 1985, p.8). The attitude of the Chorus Leader indicates that the manipulative and oppressive system of the national elite transcends humanism where they do not separate between animals and human beings. Metaphorically, animals and human beings live in the same world and are treated equally. When J'ha buys the donkey, he sits under an orange tree "contemplating" and trying to figure out his relationship to the animal, "who is the master, and who is the slave." He tells the Chorus Leader that he wishes "to live in a world where people and donkeys live apart" (Kateb, 1985, p.10). Later, the Chorus Leader convinces J'ha that he can leave his donkey and go for a walk. It seems that Chorus Leader intends to fulfil Puff's wish when he orders The Chorus to take the donkey away and leave the bridle that he put around his neck.

Turning himself into a donkey, the Chorus leader has no intention to give up his arrogance and impress Puff that he could be the slave while Puff could act like the master. On the contrary, it is a gesture that subtly communicates his willingness to reinforce his power over J'ha. In the beginning, we get the impression that he has succeeded in confusing Puff who will believe that he is no more than an animal and that his subordination is real. After returning from his walk, Puff wonders where his donkey has vanished, but the Chorus Leader approaches him insisting, "At your service". Kateb Yacine creates what Puff describes as a "double illusion." What Puff is looking at is a real man who claims to be a donkey when he believes he is a human being. The astonishing transformation of the Chorus Leader from an arrogant man to a donkey is an illusion that makes the protagonist question whether he is a real human being as he believes or an animal, which is the reality he could not see. This temporary transformation highlights the nature of reality and the fluidity of human identity in a way that mirrors the liminal experience often seen in traditional rites of passage.

Schechner's description of the Deer Dance of the Arizona Yaqui raises intriguing questions about the nature of the performance and the identity of the dancer. It suggests that during the dance, the dancer occupies a liminal space between being a man and a deer simultaneously. The upper part of the dancer's head, with its deer mask and antlers, embodies the deer, while the lower part, below the white cloth, reveals the human features of eyes, nose, and mouth. This division symbolizes the inherent challenge of achieving a complete transformation into the deer character. The white cloth, constantly adjusted by the dancer, represents the impossibility of a total transformation. In these moments of transformation, the dancer exists in a state of being "not himself" yet "not not himself," blurring the lines between identity and representation. This liminality is expressed through terms like "characterization," "representation," "imitation," "transportation," and "transformation," all of which highlight the complexity of the performer's identity (Schechner and Turner, 1985, p.4). It emphasizes the unique capacity of humans to simultaneously embody and express multiple and ambivalent identities, a characteristic that sets them apart from other animals. This analysis showcases the nuanced nature of the performance and its reflection of the intricate relationship between identity and theatrical representation. Liminality in the context of Kateb's scene can be expressed through terms like imitation "transformation" and "ambiguity." The Chorus Leader's ability to shift between human and donkey identities blurs the boundaries between these two states, leaving Puff and the audience in a state of uncertainty.

The situation of experiencing a double illusion portrays Gramsci's distinction between "common sense" and "good sense." The initial impression of the Chorus Leaders' transformation serves as a manifestation of common sense, disrupting the expected power dynamics. However, the subsequent realization of the Chorus Leader's true motives unveils the underlying good sense, which recognizes the power play beneath the surface illusion. In Marxist terms, this transition from common sense to good sense can be seen as a metaphor for the process of moving from false consciousness to class consciousness. The illusionistic scene within the play serves as a powerful reflection of the reality of class division. It illustrates how people, conditioned by the dominant ideology, often adhere to illusions that obscure the truth. These illusions are the product of the ruling class's manipulation and serve to maintain the status quo. In Marxist theory, this is known as false consciousness, where individuals hold beliefs and values that run

counter to their own class interests because they have been misled by the ruling class's ideology. The Chorus Leader's double illusion mirrors the broader societal condition where individuals are conditioned to accept false consciousness through the perpetuation of ideological illusions. It is a vivid depiction of how power and class dynamics operate beneath the surface, perpetuating the dominant ideology even when the illusion is shattered momentarily.

The Chorus Leader has created an identity for Puff, which is the fact of doubting his rationale and being intrigued by an illusion, suspending the characteristic of good sense, wit, and philosophy that are attributed to him. However, Puff's perplexing state is interrupted, and he soon realizes what his counterpart is aiming at and that he should not confuse illusion and reality,

**Chorus Leader** that's all right. act as though I were your donkey.

**Puff of smoke** (to the donkey) you are a donkey, and you're going to stay a donkey.

**Chorus Leader** don't torment him he is only a donkey.

**Puff of Smoke** (to the Chorus Leader) you're acting like a donkey so you can get a donkey (Kateb, 1985, p.12).

While the Chorus Leader persistently asks Puff to treat him as a donkey of his own, the latter continues to deny this unrealistic behaviour reminding us that the Chorus Leader is just an example of manipulative classes who act softly to mislead the people. The Chorus Leader mocks Puff's determined attitude to get a donkey as soon as he gets gold reminding him to say "inshallah" (by God's will). However, religious preaching annoys Puff who scandalously responds to the Chorus Leader that whether God wishes or not he will eventually have his donkey brought to his home. Outraged by Puff's blasphemy, the Chorus utters "Sacrilege! Sacrilege!" Kateb's nonconventional philosophy which is at odds with religion is embedded in this religious antagonism between Puff and the Chorus Leader.

Puff attempts to prove that he would get the money by the law of intelligence (wit and trickery) and religion has nothing to do with his method. He negotiates with the Sultan and succeeds in proving his point arguing that "there are some who built a whole philosophy on the premise that individuals should be afraid of good luck which one day will turn into bad luck" (Kateb, 1985, p.8). Praxis is the only premise that will reinforce

J'ha's identity and validate his postulations but the process of becoming human and humanist, in Fanonian terms, exists in the in-betweenness, the threshold of reinventing and becoming. The liminal space holds significant value to Kateb Yacine's play *Intelligence Powder* in terms of identity formation, praxis, and decolonization. By engaging in a dialogue between these concepts, we can explore how individuals navigate and transcend the spaces between different identities, ultimately working towards a process of self-realization and liberation from colonial influences.

### 1.2.2. J'ha Acts in the Liminal Space and Makes the Narrative Strange.

The process of creating a temporary identity that degrades the human to an animal serves as a transitional phase for the audience of *Intelligence Powder* and can be interpreted as a form of ambivalence. This phase exposes the crisis of identity that exists between the audience's previous consciousness and the potential for a new consciousness. It prompts both the audience and actors to reflect upon their physical and mental power, leading them to a critical moment of resolution. Knowing occurs through embodiment which means that our bodies carry meanings and only the body can secure room for possibilities to emerge. J'ha's character serves the purpose of sustaining praxis and ensuring that actions are subject to ongoing scrutiny and evaluation. By refusing to adhere to validated tests, Puff encourages audiences to question, and challenge established norms, activating an environment of ongoing examination and critical engagement. His deliberate use of delayed reactions not only functions as a narrative device but also strategically provides the audience with a contemplative space. The temporal gap becomes a functional ground for the cultivation of critical thinking as well as the imaginative exploration of diverse decision-making scenarios and corresponding reactions. Puff's deliberate narrative creates a dissonance in the audience's perceptions of what is considered normal or acceptable, encouraging them to reevaluate their own assumptions and biases.

Puff of Smoke undergoes a reflective transformation, shedding the dual illusion that once confined him. He now embodies an attentive persona, embracing his role as a social activist. This newfound understanding enables him to define his identity through his thoughts and actions, granting him clarity of purpose and the empowerment to engage actively in the social sphere. No longer subject to illusions or external expectations, Puff has seized his agency and taken on the responsibility of advocating for social change. His

identity is no longer dictated by external influences but is firmly rooted in his role as a critical thinker and an agent of transformation.

In a thought-provoking speech, J'ha emerges as a character speculating on the potential reversal of circumstances and reshaping power dynamics and character portrayals. Caught between the initial illusion that enveloped both the audience and himself and a new stage of self-realization, J'ha addresses the Chorus Leader, declaring his intentions. This moment encapsulates the exploration of liminality, as J'ha navigates the transitional space between illusion and transformation, suggesting a reordering of established power relationships and challenging the status quo. This scene embodies the essence of liminality, where the distinction between reality and fiction blurs, allowing characters to actively shape their narratives.

> It was a curse that changed you into a donkey, you will get your old shape back one of these days. I am also going back to the way I was before, and I admit that up to now, I've been acting like a donkey myself. I let myself be taken in by the sultan's golden straw. I was really sick with it. A real poison. But I am starting to catch on. Now, I know that the sultan's gold has got to be turned against him: it is the law of the internal contradiction of capital. Sh... yes, I've decided on alchemy (Kateb, 1985, p.13).

J'ha makes himself, the Chorus Leader and the events strange before the spectators; he drives us into a state of ambivalence that occurs at an interrupted moment of transition. He sounds more like the "Chinese performer, who may intend to use the alienation effect to make the events on stage mysterious, incomprehensible, and uncontrollable to the audience. And yet this effect can be used to make the events mundane, comprehensible, and controllable" (Brecht, 1961, p.134). In the tradition of the Brechtian style, J'ha is the philosopher who directly informs the audience about the actions he will undertake to show them what they do not know. This regulated dialogue facilitates for the spectator how J'ha is proceeding with actions that tell them the story of politics. First, he clearly explains to the people that he is not as foolish as the Sultan and others believe, "But the one who is insane is the one who believes he is insane" (Kateb, 1985, p.13). By explicitly recognizing his wisdom, J'ha emphasizes his self-awareness and the authority he possesses.

The protagonist is aware that it is difficult to teach the people the nature of their relationship with the ruling class, but he intentionally invents riddle-like words, images, events, and symbolic dialogues to elevate them to the same level of his awareness. J'ha's role in mediating between the people and their oppressors can be analyzed through the lens of conscientization, as advocated by Freire. By engaging in dialogic negotiations, J'ha creates a platform for critical awareness and reflection among both the oppressed and the oppressors. This process prompts the emergence of new perspectives that challenge established power dynamics and encourage a more inclusive and equitable understanding of their relationships. He acts like a real philosopher with a pipe in his mouth sitting under an orange tree and contemplating his situation as a penniless intellectual who needs money to nurture his philosophical thoughts. In the meantime, he thinks about the situation of the oppressed people who wipe the dust in the streets using brooms on stage.

The Chorus spread around him in a moment of deep silence when the philosopher has been trying to get a sense of a realistic incident. In this scene, a man with his donkey passes by and the donkey suddenly drops a load of sand in front of J'ha. His contemplation of this incident inspires him to create a new image that will reverse power relationships. He thinks that by claiming that he discovered a powder that turns its inhaler into a genius, he can trick the Sultan, become more popular, and earn gold. Meanwhile, The Chorus observes him inciting them to support his discovery, a machine-like donkey that produces gold, "come closer to him [the donkey]. I have not been using my imagination for nothing" (Kateb, 1985, p.20). He is inviting them to use their imagination and figure out what he intends to do. As a result, he convinces the Sultan that the powder is a great discovery that will make him the Sultan of Sultans and makes him inhale it.

To demonstrate to what extent the Sultan is foolish, J'ha puts him in a confused state of mind. While the touch, colour, and smell of the powder clearly tells the Sultan that it is sand, he still believes that it is a magic powder, "I feel very strange. Maybe it is intelligence" (Kateb, 1985, p.23). J'ha plays a psychological trick on the Sultan, which is analogous to the double illusion created by the Chorus Leader and, succeeds in creating the image which restores his previous status and gives his opponent a different identity that puts his mental and social status into question. By inhaling the sand, the Sultan's status transforms, reducing him from a wealthy and influential figure to a state of foolishness or stupidity. Although this status is temporary, the audience learns about a

new possibility and comes to realize that knowing, as Warren Linds puts it, “is enacted in each moment of the present, not as something which already exists” (Linds, 2001, p.7).

In *Intelligence Powder*, the Chorus aims to convey the essence of a story through visual representation rather than relying solely on verbal communication. The participants re-present a collective embodiment that clusters a plethora of realistic and unrealistic images which together deliver different twists and turns in the flow of the story that unfolds in a back-and-forth movement in time and space. Looking at the flow of The Chorus movements in Assous’s mise-en-scène different meanings that encompass a whole story are inscribed on their bodies. The Chorus members bear metaphors of power, insecurity, and uncertainty. The characters embodied by Kateb Yacine and Assous's chorus represent a group of passive and oppressed individuals. Their encounter with J'ha initially leads to confusion and misunderstanding. However, they undergo a state of transformative consciousness, by expressing their inner thoughts and emotions through physical movements. It is through the interpretation of their consciousness into movements that they can reach a deeper understanding of themselves and their situation.

In this collaborative process of meaning-making, the involvement of the audience or observer is crucial. The story embedded in gestures remains incomplete without the audience, who interprets the characters' movements through their bodies. While the physical involvement of Kateb's spectators may not have been direct in the creation of embodied experiences and emotions, their reception of meaning is just as significant as the process of meaning-making itself. David Grant argues for the contribution of the audience, stating that stage images can transcend verbal language and allow the image-viewer to engage directly with the embodied presence of the image-maker. The relationship between the spectators and the characters or actors can be characterized by a “kinaesthetic empathy,” as described by Grant. This kinaesthetic empathy enables the audience to envision a liminal relationship between the observer and the observed, engaging not only intellectually and semiotically through the interpretation of signs but also intuitively and phenomenologically. (Grant, 2017, p.15).

Even without physical participation, the audience is actively engaged in the process of interpreting and making sense of the performance. As they witness the unfolding narrative, their minds are processing the visual, auditory, and emotional cues presented on stage. This mental engagement involves the audience constructing a

complex web of connections between characters, events, symbols, and themes. Because the performance is open to embrace a "feedback loop," Spectators engage in a reflective contemplation even after the performance concludes. This concept, as articulated by Erika Fischer Lichte, describes the audience's ever-evolving responses to the participants' actions, contributing to an "unpredictable" and fluid performance. Fischer Lichte highlights that the corporal meeting between actors and spectators which forms a performance community is vital to bring about the feedback loop. (Lichte, 2008, p.38). The dialogue between the actors and the performers extends beyond immediate interaction echoing Freire's suggestion of an open dialogue between the educator and the learner as a means of conscientization and collective transformation.

Up until this point, The Chorus, symbolizing the working class, are not cooperating with Puff of Smoke, they are caught in the middle, positioned between two opposing extremes. On one side, The Chorus confronts the religious and political class led by the Sultan, Ulemas, Mufti, and the Merchant. On the other side, they encounter a class of philosophers and intellectuals who strive for justice and change. Feeling threatened by the power of intellect, the Sultan gathers people around and preaches to The Chorus that theories and philosophies are useless and that what they need is foreign investments. He begs God to protect them from "agitators, philosophers, poets, orators, madmen, and wise men" (Kateb, 1985, p.34). However, the Sultan's preaching carries a hegemonic agenda that is subtly communicated using the promising rhetoric of business and religion. The Sultan and his followers are aware of the power of philosophy which can unveil their clandestine bargains and turn the people against them.

J'ha addresses the audience, "We are going to see what we are going to see." His introductory speech indicates that together with the audience, J'ha is about to discover facts and witness actions that people should be wary of; he adds "I am going to demonstrate to the people our Sultan's concept of political economy" (Kateb, 1985, p.14). J'ha is telling a story by acting and pausing in order to guide the spectator's flow of reflection and give them space to think about what comes up after each action. By placing himself as the main narrator of a story and describing his actions to the spectators, J'ha monitors the spectators' potential empathy with the events, and at the same time, he observes himself, his movements, and their compliance with his words and his facial expressions. This is how the Chinese theatre, to which both Brecht with his *Verfremdung*

and Kateb Yacine owe, established a new mode of communication between the actor and the spectator. Describing the actor as the cloud in the Chinese theatre, Brecht states,

> In this way, the performer separates mimicry (presenting the act of observation) from gesture (presenting the cloud), but the latter loses nothing thereby, for the attitude of the body reacts back upon the face, gives to the face, as it were its expression. An expression now of complete reservation, now of utter triumph. The performer has used his face as an empty sheet of paper that can be written on by bodily movement" (Brecht, 1961, p.131).

J'ha approaches the Sultan to describe to him his binary situation, what he possesses, and what he lacks, and the audience will discover that the Sultan possesses wealth but lacks wisdom. Again, he gives the audience the impression of deferred action, a feeling of estrangement. After having received the gold from the Sultan, J'ha ironically addresses him "O Sultan, I see you are sad, and I know what is it that you need. You are deprived of three things that make a man happy, whether he be great or small: gold, intelligence, and love. As far as love and intelligence are concerned, we will see about that later (Kateb, 1985, p.14).

J'ha is aware of the Sultan's impoverished state of mind and heart, but the audience has yet to realize this truth. By delaying his intended action, J'ha detaches himself from them to reactivate their imagination and bring them to a deep level of consciousness where they are free to re-organize relationships and reconsider prevailing perceptions of truth such as that of the Sultan whose intelligence and reputation are never questioned by his people. J'ha makes the Sultan and Mufti believe that a donkey can miraculously produce gold convincing them that this miraculous act has nothing to do with magic. Ironically, he believes that if a donkey "is royally fed," he will be able to produce a considerable amount of gold and this is the knowledge that Sultan lacks (Kateb, 1985, p.14). Figuratively, the Sultan cannot recognize the fact that the people who are treated as animals could bring about welfare and prosperity to society if they were treated as human beings who possess physical and mental power.

Religious and authoritarian agents underestimate the power of intellectuals and philosophers and downplay the potential of common people who strive for knowledge. Kateb believes that they are the enemies of science and philosophy, the reason Puff of Smoke declares "I am a great disbeliever. My knowledge is based on three scientific

principles." His first principle lies in searching his pocket and giving the last remaining coins to his donkey as suppositories. His second principle lies in the test he is going to witness with the people "We shall see what we shall see." The third principle lies in the result which is ironically fooling the Sultan, ulemas, and muftis who are accused of bewitching his animal. The three principles justify the design of political economy (Kateb, 1985, p.13-14-15). Puff's principles align closely with the fundamentals of Marxist philosophy, as Kateb believes that national consciousness is shaped by the material conditions in which people exist. If people believe in magic and other superstitions, as symbolically demonstrated by Puff and his mechanical donkey that produces gold, Kateb argues that it is the circumstances and conditions of their lives that lead them to hold such beliefs. By making the Sultan believe that the donkey will eventually release gold, Puff also proves the Marxist postulation that the philosophy of an ordinary man can defy the philosophy of the dominant class.

Puff of Smoke has brought his donkey to the Sultan and asked him to honour the donkey by placing it on a valuable carpet. The leader of the chorus brings the carpet, and Puff places the donkey on it. He then asks everyone to wait until nightfall, pretending that something magical will happen. Interestingly, Puff wants them to think he is a "charlatan" by making them wait until nighttime. Surprisingly, when night fell, the donkey actually released three coins, leaving the Sultan amazed and believing that it was a miraculous act. Puff of Smoke proceeds with his actions to expose the relationship between the oppressor and the subaltern in a scene that exposes the hypocrisy of religious figures. The spectator is meant to witness how, when the Mufti intervenes in a social situation, people are rendered incapable of productive action. The muftis preach wisdom to the people while secretly exploiting them and accumulating their wealth, much like other oppressive agents. This scene aims to scandalize and unveil the hidden truths behind the actions of these religious men. J'ha plays a trick to prove the trickery of religious men by calling Ulemas, the Mufti, and Cadi to gather around the divine donkey which is royally presented on a red carpet. J'ha addresses them: "When you hear the appropriate noise, then, oh great mufti, and you oh wise Ulemas, extend your hands towards the carpet, all at the same time, and you shall reap the rewards of your faith" (Kateb, 1985, p.16). Unfortunately, Ulema and the Mufti's wisdom, which is embodied in the gesture of laying their hands towards the carpet, results in the donkey releasing dung instead of gold onto them.

J'ha declares to the Sultan, who is astonished, that this is "an evil act" conducted by ulemas who, he believes bewitched his animal that no longer produces gold and thus prevented it from bringing prosperity to the kingdom. Kateb figuratively presents religious wit as an obstacle that destroys peoples' 'good sense.' Kateb involves his spectators in a testifying scene to make them realize that there is no magic or witchcraft but there is a trick, and they could either be the tricksters or the tricked. Just like Brecht's dialectical theatre in which he, "sought to confront his spectators with real alternatives and show that their decisions would shape the future" (Bradley, 2006, p.4), Kateb sets out a deferred action to demonstrate that the spectators could interfere in any problematic situation and make a difference. Puff of Smoke proceeds,

> Sultan, I must have justice done to me. I shall demonstrate publicly that these demons_ never thinking that in ruining me they were ruining you, and never thinking of all the good the magical donkey would do for the kingdom_ these demons played us a nasty trick, so they could make gold in secret, their usual way, I might add. Yes, I can prove it. Just stuff these Ulemas with food, and the mufti first and foremost, then put them on the carpet. You will see with your own eyes and the people will discover it for themselves so there will be no more doubts (Kateb, 1985, p.17)

Kateb presents a conflict between two opposing ideologies: fundamentalism within the community and the more liberal realm of philosophy, literature, and art. This clash emphasizes the tension between rigid religious beliefs and the open-minded intellectual pursuits in these fields. The conflict delves into the struggle between tradition and modernity, orthodoxy, and the freedom of thought, revealing the power dynamics at play. Kateb portrays the suppression and censorship experienced by intellectuals through a monologue delivered by Puff beneath the orange tree. Puff's reflections express the challenges and limitations faced by intellectuals in freely expressing their thoughts and ideas. This highlights the suffocating environment in which intellectuals operate, where their voices are silenced, their ideas censored, and their freedom of expression curtailed. The depiction sheds light on the struggles faced by intellectuals in oppressive societies pursuing decolonization, where their critical thinking and intellectual pursuits are often viewed as threats to those in power, whom Kateb refers to as the "enemies of philosophy."

Through the use of the following monologue, Kateb compels the audience to picture the implicit message conveyed by Puff of Smoke. This technique prompts introspection and critical examination of prevailing social relations and historical circumstances. He emphasizes that an individual's consciousness is shaped by their social environment, and if those circumstances change, it can lead to a transformation in their thinking. By highlighting the interdependence between thought and social life, Kateb underscores the notion that individual perspectives are influenced by broader social and historical contexts. This perspective resonates with the understanding that thought cannot develop independently of the society in which it emerges. Despite his genius and philosophical insights, Puff experiences marginalization and is unable to escape a state of wretchedness. His intellectual potential and ideas do not bring him the recognition or support he deserves. This highlights a reality in which societal structures often fail to value and uplift individuals who possess unique talents or alternative perspectives. Puff contemplates,

[...] Neither the people nor the sultan

Are willing to recognize that a philosopher

Needs a lot of money.

And even a secretary

To have a mind really free.

What's more, I am starting to lose

All my wit

Having to deal with these blockheads [...]

Here I'm in the prime of life

without a purse, without a pension.

And I, who was called the father of the people.

Am now the least of its orphans. (Kateb, 1985, p.18).

Kateb Yacine brings us to a conflictual situation between The Chorus and Puff, initiated by the Mufti and the Sultan's desire to turn the people against him. Puff, a character sceptical of the dominant class, is aware of the conspiracy against him. During

the debate surrounding the timing of breaking the fast, the Mufti suggests that he would hire Puff to do this job because he is highly likely to commit an error leading to peoples' displeasure. Puff realizes the Mufti's ulterior motives as a vice mufti and must act prudently. As The Chorus gathers on stage, they threaten to use insults and brooms against Puff unless he informs them when to break their fast. Rather than falling into their trap, Puff reclaims his role as a trickster. When The Chorus seeks his guidance, he deliberately evades their questions and avoids giving a definitive answer. In this act of defiance, Puff asserts his agency and resists external control, challenging The Chorus's authority. This situation underscores Puff's refusal to conform to societal norms, showcasing his rebellious and unpredictable nature and frustrating The Chorus, leaving them uncertain and without clear direction. This act of resistance enlightens the audience about the principles of decolonization, emphasizing the importance of individuals and communities reclaiming their agency and challenging dominant narratives. Kateb employs this scene to explore themes of resistance, autonomy, and the complexities of power dynamics. It emphasizes the notion that individuals can disrupt established systems and challenge the authority of those seeking to control them.

**Puff of smoke** oh true believers, do you know what I am about to tell you?

**The chorus** No, no, no.

**Puff of smoke** because you are all ignorant, I refuse to enlighten you. Come back tomorrow.

**The chorus**, he thinks we are fools...tomorrow when we come back, he will have to answer us.

**Puff of smoke** oh true believers do you know what I am about to tell you?

**The chorus** Yes, yes.

**Puff of smoke** because you are all wise, I have nothing to tell you.

**The chorus**, tricky, tricky, tricky. Tomorrow when we come back some of us say yes, the others no! He won't know what to do then.

**Puff of smoke**, oh true believers do you know what I am about to say to you?

**Chorus**, yes, no, yes, no, yes, no.

**Puff of smoke**, good! Some of you know, some of you don't know. I want those of you who know to teach those of you who don't! (Kateb, 1985, p.33).

The ambivalent dialogue between The Chorus and the philosopher J'ha is a dialectical game aimed at stimulating critical thinking among the people. J'ha encourages them to pause and reflect before resorting to physical violence or hurling scornful words at him. By engaging in this dialectical game, J'ha prompts The Chorus and the audience to question their initial reactions and assumptions, challenging them to consider alternative perspectives and examine the underlying motives behind their actions. Through this process, J'ha seeks to activate their critical thinking and encourage a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics at play. This exchange of ideas and conflicting viewpoints serves as a catalyst for intellectual engagement and reflection, inviting participants to move beyond superficial judgments and delve into the underlying issues, thus prompting them to analyze their prejudices and preconceptions. Kateb emphasizes the importance of critical thinking and self-awareness, underlining the potential consequences of impulsive actions driven by anger or prejudice.

Puff of Smoke is protecting people against manipulation and misleading truth. How come a non-religious idiot knows about the specific time of breaking fast when the experts could not reach an agreement? Puff rejects the identity of a vice mufti because it is the opposite extreme of J'ha, yet he does not claim that the truth lies on either side. His response to The Chorus is negotiable because his words are ambiguous and engage the audience in a liminal state in which they continue to seek the truth. It would be easier if Puff either declared 'I know' or 'I have no idea' when people should break their fast, but Kateb Yacine avoids binary attitudes, and he locates the truth in a liminal situation. While people assume that J'ha has the answer, he continues to engage in philosophical discourse about knowledge. The problem that Kateb Yacine dramatizes in this situation is that people embrace wise words, but they never grasp J'ha's philosophy. He states, "Power has no need for subversive minds, and the people, though they like a good speech, can't understand me" (Kateb, 1985, p.34).

The transformation of national consciousness occurs at a late stage in the play where Kateb Yacine persists in maintaining a clash between two schools of education, religious thought and philosophy. Pipe and wine are two stage signs which connotate the compartment of the philosopher. Pointing at Puff, The Chorus Leader describes J'ha's

personality “By God, he is a true philosopher, in full possession of his faculties: he always keeps his pipe around, but he doesn't forget his jug of cool wine, either...” (Kateb, 1985, p.36). Ironically, The Chorus shifts from the state of a group of workers to the state of drunk dancers shouting, “sacrileges of sacrileges of sacrileges of sacrileges” (Kateb, 1985, p36). They are accusing Puff of blasphemy after he declares publicly “Oh Arabs, why should you die of thirst since alcohol has been invented” (Kateb, 1985, p.36).

While wine is attributed to the group of philosophers, revolutionaries, and liberals, Kateb uses it as a symbol for the new consciousness of the people who are no longer on the side of the dominating class. The transformation of workers into a euphoric group is notable in Assous’s production, and it adds a Westernized atmosphere to the scene. After the gong strikes several times, probably an alert to the change that will occur, the stage transforms from a royal palace into a nightclub with a dancing floor, lights, fog, and beats. The Chorus is dancing hysterically and shouting with Attika and J’ha who have been inflaming them. The workers continue dancing, screaming, and jumping until they lose energy and lie on the floor. J’ha checks on them as if to make sure that his powder has done the magic and that workers are in the process of transforming into another state of consciousness.

The incorporation of a Western environment reflects the complex interplay that emerges between France and Algeria. Instead of conforming to Western traditions, this scene serves as a symbolic action subverting and demonstrating to the audience that decolonization does not mean necessarily a rejection of all Western influences but a strategic use of them. The transformation scene could represent a reclaiming of agency. By placing historically marginalised characters such as workers, Puff of Smoke, and his wife in a Western setting where they typically would not be depicted, Kateb might be empowering them to rewrite their narrative on their own terms. In Assous’s mise en scene with a different audience and setting, the scene serves multiple purposes that adapt to Kateb’s themes. Decolonization encompasses an educational approach that encourages liberation for both the oppressed and the oppressor, as elucidated in the initial chapter through the lens of Fanon and Freire's approach of an “exchange of circumstances.” The elements within the scene, in this context, act as a catalyst for initiating transcultural dialogue, prompting conversations concerning the far-reaching consequences of globalization, the legacy of colonialism, and the interaction between local and global cultures.

Kateb highlights the complex dynamics between the philosopher Puff, the Chorus, and the other characters in the play. The audience explores the power dynamics at play and the Chorus' stance of neutrality in the ongoing conflict between Puff and Sultan's allies. The Chorus, while possessing some power to determine what justice is and to reflect on the control dynamics between individuals, remains in an ambiguous position. They neither fully support Puff nor openly declare opposition to his adversaries. However, there are instances where they show support for Puff's ideas. For example, when J'ha argues that justice is only achieved when men appear equal, The Chorus aligns itself with this notion. They refuse to witness Puff's supposed blasphemy and declare that they are not there to deliver justice.

The Merchant, seeking to trap Puff, accuses him of robbery and blasphemy. The trap is set when the Merchant drops ninety-nine coins instead of the requested hundred while Puff, on his knees, begs God for precisely that amount. The Merchant had observed Puff's plea, emphasizing his desire for a specific number, neither ninety-nine nor a hundred and one. The Chorus remains indifferent, claiming they saw and heard nothing and that it is not their responsibility to deliver justice. This lack of involvement is reiterated when the case is brought to the Sultan's headquarters and the Merchant slaps Puff. The Chorus expresses outrage, but their role is merely to observe and comment. In a surprising turn of events, Puff acts by approaching the Sultan and slapping him, suggesting that the Sultan should deliver a just verdict by reciprocating the slap when Puff's opponent returns (Kateb trans, 1958, p.46). This act of courage amuses the Chorus, who witness Puff's escape. This scene emphasizes the complexities of power dynamics, the Chorus' neutral position, and Jha's newfound agency in challenging authority figures. It highlights the shifting dynamics and the role of justice in the narrative.

In *Intelligence Powder*, Kateb Yacine weaves a narrative that defies conventional happy endings, aligning more with Bertolt Brecht's political theatre. However, Kateb's perspective on tragedy diverges from Brecht's, as he believes that tragedy serves to reveal the struggle against established norms and appearances, shedding light on the reality of colonial Algeria and its enduring cycle of suffering. Kateb's approach merges classical tragedy and Brecht's political theatre, using drama as a tool to challenge conventions and emphasize the unpredictable nature of the path to humanism and emancipation. He does this to draw attention to the "unexpected" twists in the spiral where humanism emerges within the circle of postcolonial Algeria's suffering (Finburgh, 2005, p.4).

The narrative continues with the Sultan recognizing Puff's intellect, leading to Puff's appointment as a tutor for the newborn prince. Ironically, this appointment signifies the undermining of Puff's own intelligence, trapping him in a seemingly ridiculous role. Puff of Smoke declares the undermining of his intelligence "[..] here I am, a nursemaid. From now on condemned to live day and night at the prince's bedside. I can't leave for any reason. And I'm caught in my own trap because I've got the ridiculous job of trying to discover signs of intelligence in the puny brat who's still at the thumb-sucking stage" (Kateb,1985, p.48-49).

Visual symbolism plays a crucial role in the narrative, with a vulture projected onto the stage, symbolizing the Kablout tribe's totem and the orphan's soul. The wandering orphan, Ali[17] who appears in the desert is the representative of the vulture that foreshadows the tragic consequences of rejecting Puff/J'ha's wisdom. Ali's choice to consume the poisonous sweets despite Puff's warnings symbolizes the ultimate failure of national consciousness and the inability to guide people toward national culture and decolonization. The haunting presence of the vulture represents the perpetual cycle of death and rebirth, marking the death of Puff's philosophy. Ali's declaration, "Not everyone is a follower of Socrates," and Puff's reaction upon discovering the empty tray, "He is one of those students who just can't wait for the end of the lesson," symbolize the tragic twist in the narrative, marking the decline of national consciousness and good sense (Kateb, 1985, p.56-57). The destruction of the kingdom is portrayed through the shattering of the crystal cupola where the prince resides, highlighting the ultimate downfall. A dream-like encounter between Ali and the prince culminates in Ali breaking the crystal wall, causing the cupola to disappear. The death that haunted the prince serves as a symbol of the failure to bring enlightenment to the kingdom. Ali's remorseful confession, "I've smeared my slate, and I've forgotten everything you taught me, knowing how harsh your mockery can be, I wanted to die, and I ate those poisoned sweets, despite your warnings," captures the tragic outcome of the attempt to impart wisdom and the dire consequences of disregarding it within the narrative (Kateb. 1985, p.57).

*Intelligence Powder* stands as a testament to Kateb's evolution into a decolonized intellectual, guided by an aesthetic of progressive action. Within this theatrical

[17] Son of Nedjma and Lakhdar in *The Encircled Coprse.*

masterpiece, Kateb synthesizes diverse influences, drawing from Marxist theory and reflecting Fanonian, Gramscian, and Freirean insights, while also embracing the spirit of Brecht's theatre. This fusion of ideas and forms results in a complex cultural praxis. The play not only reflects Kateb's nuanced understanding of decolonization as an ongoing process entailing a reconciliation with history but also serves as a resounding critique of political and cultural hegemony, exposing the dynamics of power and social oppression. By employing popular theatre, Kateb merges inherited artistic traditions with nationalist content, creating a cultural praxis deeply rooted in the specific context of the ongoing decolonization struggle.

The play's engagement with liminality and its exploration of the boundary between reality and imagination actively involve the audience, encouraging them to challenge established norms. Symbolic elements such as the orange tree and the vulture deepen the thematic exploration, touching on knowledge, sin, and the cyclical nature of life and death. Most notably, the tragic destiny of national consciousness portrayed in *Intelligence Powder* marks the urgent need for cultural reawakening and decolonization. The play consistently emphasizes collective action and amplifies the voices of marginalized and oppressed groups, with the Chorus symbolizing the working class and subordinate segments of society. Through their interactions with J'ha/Puff, the narrative emphasizes the potential for unity and resistance against oppressive forces, reflecting the possible influence of Gramsci, Fanon, and Freire in Kateb's theatre.

Before delving into the analysis of the second play, it is important to examine the concept of collective creation, specifically in the context of Kateb's collaboration with Kadour Naimi on *Mohamed prends ta valise*. The chapter that follows will delve into the foundations of collective creation, addressing questions of authorship and the role of dramaturgy in this process. It will also explore a significant point of disagreement between Kateb and Naimi regarding the involvement of spectators in the dramaturgical process of community theatre, highlighting the notion of "kinaesthetic empathy" as an approach that may have been applied in Kateb Yacine's theatre. Through the comprehensive analysis of Kateb's work and his theatrical evolution, we gain deeper insights into the complexity of his style, ideological pursuits, and his contributions to the broader discourse on decolonization and cultural praxis.

## Chapter Three

## Dramaturgy and Collective Creation: On the Role of Kadour Naimi in the Production of *Mohamed Pack your Bag*

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide both historical context and a critical analysis of Kateb's approach to dramaturgy, particularly within the framework of collective creation. In this context, dramaturgy takes on a distinctive role, encompassing the practices of analysing, interpreting, and shaping various elements within a play or performance to enhance its overall quality and effectiveness. A dramaturg, a specialist in dramaturgy, serves as a crucial collaborator in the theatrical production process. Their role may vary depending on the theatrical tradition and context, but they generally work closely with directors, playwrights, and actors. They provide historical, cultural, and literary context, conduct research, and offer, advice, comment and analysis that informs the production. (Turner and Behrndt, 2008, p.7). Dramaturgy encompasses a wide range of activities in theatre, including composition, analysis, interpretation, research, playwriting, structural design, critique, and engagement with cultural contexts. Its overarching goal is to enrich the quality and depth of theatrical productions by offering creative guidance throughout the entire process.

Cathy Turner and Synne Behrndt provide an insightful definition of dramaturgy, emphasizing its role in shaping the entire composition of a theatrical work, from script to performance. They highlight the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of a performance, rejecting a predetermined outlook. This emphasizes the political dimension of dramaturgy, adaptable to diverse contexts and audiences. Such adaptability mirrors the praxis principle, where the interplay of time and space influences various approaches. This idea resonates with the theory of praxis, promoting a responsive engagement, uniting intellectuals and the audience to consider practical strategies instead of adhering to

predetermined norms. Turner and Behrndt argue that Patrice Pavis reinforces this idea by cautioning against assuming that the script directly dictates the performance; instead, each performance should be seen as an "independent occurrence," influenced by its specific time and place. The dramaturgy of a play text differs significantly from the dramaturgy of a play in performance, as the latter is inherently situated within a particular context (Turner and Behrndt, 2008, p.6).

The text is original because it results from an open dialogic and scripting process that continues to affect its development and interpretation. It is crucial to recognize that the presence of a pre-established text or script does not guarantee the success of a play. In fact, embracing improvisation can often lead to more gratifying outcomes as it allows each participant to exercise their autonomy. As Ganguly aptly states, "If we give all the credit only to the director, calling theatre a single person's production, then the composite nature of theatre remains hidden. Theatre is a composite art, composed by a collective" (2010, p.128). This quote encapsulates the overall objective of this chapter, which seeks to uncover the essence of collective theatrical composition and challenges the notion of attributing the entire production to a single author or director. In the discussions between Anne-Françoise Benhamou and Clare Finburgh regarding the essence of dramaturgy in France and the association between the role and practice of dramaturgy, an intriguing perspective emerges. Benhamou sheds light on the idea that a production can inherently possess a dramaturgical quality without explicitly designating a dramaturg to the role. She offers the example of Antoine Vitez, whose productions exemplified a dramaturgical approach even though he hesitated to associate with dramaturgs. This perspective emphasizes that effective dramaturgy hinges on the active involvement of every member of the creative team, including directors, actors, and designers. Each team member contributes their insights and interpretations, collectively shaping a dramaturgical understanding of the production (Benhamou cited in Finburgh, 2011, p.71).

Kadour Naimi, the founder of Théâtre de la Mer[18], emphasizes the significance of dramaturgy as a crucial theatrical task that requires competence. Naimi distinguishes between Kateb's abilities as an author and his role as a dramaturg. According to Naimi's perspective, Kateb Yacine may possess talent and skill in writing, but he may not fulfil

[18] will be referred to as T.M. throughout the analysis.

the specific requirements of a dramaturg. For Naimi, it is a prerequisite to the dramaturg's work that he can work with a pre-established dialogue, but Kateb did not have an initial script when he joined T.M. (Naimi, 2017, p.199). This differentiation sheds light on the varying expectations and responsibilities associated with the role of a dramaturg. While some dramaturgs primarily engage in production dramaturgy, contributing to character creation, thematic exploration, and the overall interpretation of performance, others may focus on textual dramaturgy, which involves shaping the text itself for performance. In contrast to the idea that each performance should be seen as an "independent occurrence," Naimi's preference for a script could indicate a desire for a more structured and predetermined approach to the production. He might have believed that a script provided a solid foundation upon which the director, actors, and other collaborators could build and execute the performance according to the author's intentions. It is crucial to emphasize, however, that a decolonized or organic intellectual, as per the perspectives of Fanon and Gramsci, is never someone whose intention is separate from the collective. This difference in perspective between Naimi and Kateb Yacine highlights the diversity of approaches within theatre and the ongoing debates about the significance of the script in relation to the live performance. While Naimi valued the script as a guiding element, Kateb Yacine might have been more open to allowing the performance to evolve dynamically, as influenced by the context and the contributions of the ensemble.

This notion of collective engagement and collaborative dramaturgy is particularly relevant when exploring Kateb's dramaturgy as a process of collective creation. It not only underscores the historical context but also allows for a critical examination of the challenges and complexities associated with authorship, control, and the conventional role of the dramaturg in such a setting. *Mohamed prends ta valise* exemplifies the collaborative nature of theatre-making, where diverse perspectives within the creative team contribute to the development of a rich and multifaceted dramaturgical interpretation, emphasizing the dynamic interplay between individual creativity and collective understanding. Kateb Yacine's theatre serves as a pedagogical tool for decolonization, not only through the content of his plays but also through the very process of theatre-making, which encourages critical thinking, dialogue and the recognition of diverse points of view. Rooted in the philosophy of praxis, the aim is to deconstruct rigid, unilaterally operating traditional structures, reminiscent of the bourgeois theatre criticized by Brecht. In embracing a participatory approach to performance production, Yacine's

theatre becomes a political act in itself, challenging established norms and creating a more inclusive creative process. This demonstrates his broader mission of using theatre as a means to educate and engage with the community to counter established narratives and challenge the limited perception of theatre's role in Algeria.

Amateur theatre in Algeria during the 1960s and 1970s serves as a concrete example of the central role of collective dramaturgy, highlighting how theatre can function as a pedagogical tool in the context of decolonization. This form of theatre serves as an experimental platform where innovative dramaturgy is employed to challenge established power dynamics, especially those related to labour issues. By actively engaging in collective action through their theatrical productions, participants in amateur theatre initiatives aim to reconfigure power relationships, evoke vital discussions on social, political, and economic matters, and explore effective techniques for addressing these complex issues. Gaining a nuanced insight into the dramaturgy of collective creation is crucial in understanding Kateb Yacine's establishment of a pedagogical theatre of decolonization. The amateur theatre movement in Algeria illustrates how theatre can be used as a means of education and empowerment, promoting critical dialogues about post-colonial realities. Kateb Yacine's emphasis on collaboration and education in theatre resonates with this experimental approach, highlighting the transformative potential of theatre in addressing the complexities of decolonization and power dynamics in society.

### 1.2. An Introduction to Amateur Theatre as a Pedagogical Foundation, Théâtre de la Mer (Theatre of the Sea): The Fundamentals of Collective Creation

*The Ecologies of Amateur Theatre* offers valuable insights on the role of amateur theatre in the 21st century, emphasizing its cultural significance. It can be defined as the collaborative effort of individuals and groups who engage in theatre within their local communities, with the primary motivation being the love for the art itself. This perspective highlights that the essence of amateur theatre lies in the process of "making theatre" rather than focusing solely on the result of the production. In this context, craft and creative exploration take precedence, contributing to the concept of "place-making" and the enhancement of communities (Nicholson et al, 2018, p.293). Amateur theatre-making is described as "a social and relational practice," emphasizing cooperation, collaboration, and active participation within a shared space. These creative endeavours have the potential to boost the construction and sculpting of vibrant and dynamic

communities (Nicholson et al, 2018, 194). Nicholson et al draw our attention to the transformative potential for oppressed individuals through 'socialized' action and organised institutions reminiscing Gramsci, Fanon, and Freire's emphasis on the importance of practical engagement in effecting change.

Amateur theatre in Algeria underwent significant evolution during a period of critical social and economic reforms, particularly following the nation's official declaration of independence in 1962. This independence was achieved after a long and bloody struggle led by the National Liberation Front (FLN), which launched the Algerian War of Independence in 1954 against French occupation. The FLN emerged as the symbol of Algerian resistance and gradually became the sole nationalist party governing Algeria until 1989 when multiparty politics were introduced. One of the key initiatives undertaken by the Algerian authority post-independence was the implementation of social and economic reforms aimed at revitalizing the nation's economy. This included the launch of the "Agrarian Revolution," a national project aimed at achieving both economic recovery and national unity. The Agrarian Revolution was rooted in the belief that peasants had played a crucial role in the struggle against colonial powers. Under the leadership of President Ahmed Ben Bella (1963-1965), the Algerian government expropriated farms previously owned by French settlers and redistributed them among landless peasants. Additionally, non-used lands were nationalized and placed under a system of worker's self-management. These reforms were aimed at empowering rural communities and ensuring equitable access to land and resources. The period following independence saw a surge in cultural and artistic expressions, including amateur theatre, which served as a platform for reflecting the aspirations and struggles of the Algerian people. Amateur theatre groups played a crucial role in disseminating nationalist ideals, raising a sense of collective identity, and challenging social injustices. Amateur theatre became an integral part of the socialist system operating on account of the self-management system which resists the right-wing bourgeoisie who were in favour of privatization and foreign investments.

The first seminar on amateur theatre which was held between March 31 and April 11, 1973, in Saida city, defined the nature, role, and objectives of amateur theatre. Its members agreed to define it as "L'expression démocratique d'une jeune génération consciente des problèmes qui se posent à tous les niveaux de la progression de la

revolution socialiste en ses différentes étapes" (the democratic voice of a generation that is conscious of the problems encountered at all levels of the development of the socialist revolution throughout its different stages). (Mrah, 1976, p.176). The seminar highlights the pedagogical role of amateur theatre which is indispensable for the people's fight to achieve social progressivism; it was emphatic on the practice of the collective creation to achieve such goals. Collective creation serves as a training activity in dramaturgy, engaging both actors and the audience in intellectual and physical participation.

The Théâtre de la Mer, also known as the "Compagnie de recherches et de réalisations théâtrales," is an experimental theatrical company that was founded in 1968. Its establishment aimed to complement the activities of the National Algerian Theatre, despite facing significant challenges related to workspace and finances (Naimi, 2017, p.98). Unable to hire professional actors and technicians, the company embraced young enthusiasts and provided them with training focused directly on the productions to be presented. T.M. welcomed individuals from diverse backgrounds, granting them the right to actively participate, intervene, and offer critiques in the creative process. The concept of collective creation extended beyond the troupe members to include external participants interested in engaging with the creative activities. This inclusive approach was facilitated through discussions, exhibitions, screenings, and theatre initiation weekends, creating a rich cultural exchange (Naimi, 2017, p.105-106). This practice persisted from the initial three members who formed the company at its inception to eventually more than a dozen members by its conclusion.[19] Under the direction of Kadour Naimi, T.M. rejects the "Proletkultur" mindset and instead calls for a revolutionary theatre of the people, "pour s'éduquer en leur sein et les éduquer, établissant ainsi un dialogue vivant, sincère et permanent avec la population" (Naimi in Théâtre de la mer charte, 1968). (To educate oneself within them and to educate them, thus establishing a lively, sincere, and ongoing dialogue with the population.). The objectives of T.M. adheres to Gramsci's definition of the work of art, insisting that a play, once produced, transforms into a social entity. As argued in the first chapter, a successful work builds on peoples' history rooted in the perceptions of the audience, determining its impact on their collective history. This perspective shared by both Naimi and Kateb highlight their agreement on the pivotal role of theatre in promoting education and engaging with the

[19] kadour-naimi.com/f-theatre-mer-formation-acteurs.htm

community, emphasizing a reciprocal exchange of knowledge and learning which resonates strongly with the principles of Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed. Describing Kateb's close ties with the people, Kamal Salhi states, "Only by speaking for the masses can he educate them, and only by being their pupil can he be their teacher" (Salhi, 1998, p.72).

I shall argue further that collective creation is a form of "Marxist aesthetics" and praxis because it is one of the postcolonial open debates that attempt to answer questions related to politics and culture. Collective creation develops as a critical alternative to existing cultural forms that have perpetuated divisions between the people and intellectual elites, as well as bureaucratic institutions. In this context, the playwright, director, and other artists do not position themselves as the sole creators of the theatrical performance but rather engage in a collaborative approach guided by praxis principles. Building upon the earlier discussion on praxis, Gramsci's perspective reminds us to view a play as a social production that encompasses diverse psyches and tastes, with the audience playing a crucial role as a subject-producer whose viewpoint is equally significant and shapes the production of the performance. Collective creation, as a praxis-based endeavour aims to address cultural and political challenges that extend beyond the revolutions of the 1970s and persist in contemporary times, where ongoing cultural and political conflicts manifest in various ways. It seeks to both challenge and nurture cultural norms over the long term, offering a platform to critically engage with and evolve societal dynamics.

The T.M. charter, as articulated by Naimi, provided a clear and comprehensive framework for their innovative theatrical practice. The company's primary objective was to cultivate a revolutionary popular theatre that could genuinely depict the post-independence realities of Algeria. Furthermore, this theatre aimed to play an instrumental role in the ongoing struggle for justice and democracy within the nation. By adhering to these principles, T.M. sought to contribute to the broader decolonization process, helping raise national consciousness and freeing Algerian culture from the clutches of capitalist dependency (Naimi, 1968, La charte). Operating within the self-management system, T.M. emphasized that artistic creation should serve the interests of various segments of society, including laborers, peasants, soldiers (djounoud), and revolutionary intellectuals. To ensure the alignment of their creative activities with these principles, T.M. established three crucial questions: Does the activity benefit the people? Does it advance the cause

of the revolution? Does it offer a realistic, socially relevant, and universally relatable perspective? These questions served as a guiding framework for T.M.'s dramaturgical actions, vitalizing critical thinking and a continuous examination of why certain approaches were chosen over others. In concert with other amateur theatres guided by the principles of collective work, T.M. actively critiqued social contradictions and oppressive forces while working to dismantle bureaucratic narcissism within the Algerian cultural context (Naimi, 1968, La charte).

### 1.3. Breaking Biases: Embracing the Collaborative Spirit of Theatre

It is important to acknowledge the different roles which contribute to interweaving the textual elements of *Mohamed prends ta valise* into one original piece of work. In exploring the collaborative nature of theatre, I aim to illuminate the intricate dynamics and contributions of the collective in crafting a theatrical piece. This examination extends to addressing the biased perceptions and receptions faced by independent theatre practitioners. Theatre's collaborative essence serves as a compelling example of artists, whether associated with established institutions or independent groups, coming together to create impactful theatrical experiences. The biased perceptions directed at independent practitioners highlight the necessity to challenge these biases and acknowledge the valuable contributions of all artists, regardless of their institutional affiliations, within the theatre practice. Collectively, these points shed light on the importance of initiating a more inclusive and equitable assessment of the theatre-making process and its participants.

Because of his literary and poetic skills, and his mastery of the French language, Kateb Yacine enjoyed an outstanding career, especially at the international level. Nationally, he is acknowledged as an anarchist, a “perturbateur” (troublemaker), militant author, French poet, and other clichés, none of which do him justice. The significance of the contributions of T.M. members particularly in relation to the successful production of *Mohammed, Pack your Bag* has often been overshadowed by Kateb’s personal fame. Not only does the role of T.M. artists remain overlooked in the context of *Mohammed, pack your Bag,* but both the practice of T.M. and Kateb's popular theatre practice is generally overshadowed in Algeria. Several reasons are contributing to this overshadowing. Kateb’s literary fame has overshadowed his reputation as a theatre maker because

literature is typically associated with the individual writer, whereas theatre is inherently a collaborative art form. T.M. and even other amateur troupes such as Theatre et Culture (Theatre and Culture) are overlooked mainly because they operate outside national theatres, although they have a recognizable professional standard. In 2012, Kadour Naimi produced H*nana, Ya Ouled*! (*Tenderness, Guys!*) but this play had only one performance at an Algerian festival, and then it was banned from being presented in regional theatres (Naimi, 2020, Algerie-patriotique). According to Naimi, the journalist and playwright Hmida Layachi described the play as a "literal catastrophe!" This harsh judgment reflects the biased perception of independent artistic organisations in Algeria, which are often seen as non-elite because they do not conform to the luxurious standards of state theatre (Layachin cited in Naimi, 2022, Algerie-patriotique). Layachi states, "I would have liked Kadour Naimi to remain in the status of a "myth," implying that Naimi lacks understanding of the evolution of Algerian society since he left the country for 40 years and returned in 2012 primarily for financial gain (Layachi cited in *El-Watan*, 2015). Furthermore, Naimi shares in *Le Matin* newspaper that he was criticized by critic Abdellali Merdaci, who accused him of betraying his origins in favour of Italian nationality (Naimi, 2018). Naimi highlights a common phenomenon in Algeria where intellectuals are either glorified as mythical figures, giants, or icons, like Kateb Yacine, or dismissed as catastrophes. This dichotomy illustrates the polarized reception of intellectuals and independent artistic endeavours in the country (Naimi, 2020, *Algerie patriotique*). This perception of mediocrity unjustly deprives competent artists of ethical and realistic recognition.

Layachi is encouraging readers or scholars to reevaluate their understanding of Kateb Yacine emphasizing that Kateb Yacine should not be solely seen as an artist who created works of literature, but rather as a person whose life and experiences are integral to understanding his art and its significance. In this context, Fanon's description of the intellectual's progression from an alienated state to a decolonized one becomes pivotal for understanding the concept of praxis in Kateb's theatre. Layachi dedicates a book to Kateb Yacine titled Nabiyou Al-isyan (*The Prophet of Disobedience*). Understanding Kateb Yacine as a person is crucial to evaluating him as a skilled playwright. However, it is important to recognize Kadour Naimi as a competent playwright and director who has gained extensive international experience and artistic expertise, enabling him to establish and lead his independent troupe, T.M. While offering criticism, he is an artist

who prioritizes solidarity on both aesthetic and social levels over individualism. He advocates for unrestricted artistic expression and non-censored theatrical practices within national structures.

## 1.4. Kateb Yacine's Dramaturgical Role in Collective Creation

### 1.4.1. Shared Objectives, Diverse Perspectives

Before he was introduced to T.M. in 1971 by the Minister of labour, Ali Zamoum, Kateb Yacine expressed his sincere desire to communicate to the people through the medium of popular theatre. According to Kateb Yacine, a revolutionary playwright should establish an interactive relationship with the audience by communicating in the language that resonates with them. He shares Gramsci's emphasis on popularising culture and establishing a collective project guided by a shared language. Kateb strongly believed that every individual, regardless of their level of literacy, possesses a creative essence that should be recognized and explored. Kateb Yacine recognized that even the least educated individuals possess a profound awareness of their ignorance and, in turn, the potential for growth and discovery (Kateb interviewed by Amrani, 1994, p.66). Kateb's perspective reflects Freire's thought that only the empowerment originating from the least educated can liberate the oppressed. Kateb Yacine had never produced a play in Arabic, and his eagerness to express his ideas in Algerian dialect was met when he started to collaborate with T.M. Kateb declares, "With T.M, I realized that I could express myself in the language of popular Arabic. It was a significant turning point for me. While I could certainly speak Arabic, I wasn't sure if I could create a play in this language" (Kateb interviewed by Tazi Nadia, 1994, p.28).

Due to their shared objective of creating authentic popular theatre, Kateb Yacine collaborated with T.M. members to produce a play revolved around immigration, *Mohamed prends ta valise*. Kadour Naimi asserts that this play follows the same mise-en-scène as his previous productions, such as *La valeur de l'accord 1969* (*The Value of the Agreement,* an adaptation of Brecht) and *La foumis* et *l'éléphant* 1971 (*The Ant and the Elephant*) (Naimi, 2017, p.222) which is the secret for the play's success. Naimi emphasizes that Kateb's approach to "l'écriture dramaturgique" differs from his own and that *Mohamed prends ta valise* aligns with Naimi's own dramaturgical method. At the

level of the mise-en-scène, one key stage element that distinguishes between Kateb and Naimi's techniques is making characters typical. Naimi's emphasis on typifying characters aligns with a more traditional approach to theatre where characters are easily recognizable through distinctive physical and behavioural traits. This approach relies on clear visual and behavioural cues, such as specific costumes[20], gestures, and speech patterns, to help the audience quickly identify and understand the characters. Naimi's perspective prioritizes clarity and immediate recognition, making it easier for the audience to engage with the narrative (Naimi, 2017, p.204). In contrast, based on a note on "dramatic writing" (1973), Kateb suggests a departure from traditional conventions. He aimed to create characters with multifaceted and contradictory dimensions, challenging the audience to explore and understand the complexities of each character's humanity. By avoiding stereotypical traits and emphasizing the contradictions within characters, Kateb sought to present a more realistic and thought-provoking representation of individuals (Kateb cited in Chergui and Kateb, 2003, p.38).

Naimi and Kateb's different viewpoints stem from their different conceptions of the nature of theatre which was the starting point of tension between Naimi and Kateb. Kateb Yacine frequently expressed the idea that "theatre is life," implying a direct and unfiltered connection between the two. In Kateb's view, theatre should reflect the raw and unmediated essence of life. On the other hand, Naimi challenges this notion, considering it confusing and impractical in the context of theatrical practice. He argues that a more accurate way to conceptualize theatre is to view it as a reproduction or representation of the ideas and perceptions one holds in their mind about life. According to Naimi, theatre is a medium for condensing and concentrating life into a specific artistic form, akin to a distillation of life's essence (Naimi, 2017, 204). This fundamental disagreement revolves around the extent to which theatre should directly mirror life or serve as a selective and artistic interpretation of life. Naimi's perspective suggests a more deliberate and constructed approach to theatre, emphasizing the role of artistic choices and creative representation, while Kateb's viewpoint leans toward a more unfiltered reflection of life's spontaneity and complexity. It is essential to evaluate the extent to which Kateb Yacine adheres to Naimi's dramaturgical principles in the production of *Mohamed prends ta*

[20] For more details on characters' costumes visit Livre 1 in (Naimi, 2017, p.215).

*valise* and explore whether Naimi's role as a director is overshadowed by Kateb Yacine's success.

In his book *Ethique et esthétique au théâtre et alentours* (*Ethics and Aesthetics in Theatre and Beyond*) from 2017, Naimi provides compelling evidence that highlights the substantial contributions made during the pre-performance discussions and debates. These discussions serve as a platform for a rich exchange of ideas, where diverse perspectives are shared and critically analyzed. Naimi emphasizes the importance of this process, clarifying how it shapes the ethical and aesthetic dimensions of theatrical production. The process of crafting the performance dialogue at Théâtre de la Mer entails engaging in a meticulous collaborative exchange that evolves through suggestions, revisions, translations, and interpretations. The playwright, director, and collaborators actively participate in these deliberations, offering input and making adjustments to ensure the dialogue resonates effectively with the intended message and audience (Naimi, 2017, p.202). The flexibility of the vernacular language allows for active participation and contributions from all members involved, drawing upon their unique skills and backgrounds. Each expression undergoes a collaborative process where it is subject to scrutiny, intervention, and input from the team before being validated. This inclusive approach ensures that multiple perspectives are considered and integrated, enriching the creative process and creating a sense of ownership among the collaborators. By actively involving all members and valuing their contributions, T. M's collective work benefits from the diverse range of knowledge and expertise, resulting in a more nuanced and authentic expression in the vernacular language.

When Kateb Yacine agreed to collaborate with T.M, he presented a general concept for an exploratory project focused on the theme of immigration. The troupe collectively decided that Kateb Yacine would take on the responsibility of crafting the dialogue. Initially, he would draft the dialogue in French, which would later be translated into the Algerian dialect by Abdoullah Bouzida. Kadour Naimi and one of Kateb's childhood friends, Hrikes, alternatively intervened to amend the dialogue. Naimi expresses his deep admiration for Hrikes's talent and humility, acknowledging him as a co-author of *Mohamed prends ta valise* because his suggestions were rarely rejected. Naimi declares, "Par conséquent, concernant *Mohamed, prend ta valise,* parler de l'adoption de la langue arabe dialectale par Kateb, en occultant la part décisive assumée

par Bouzida, est un abus." (Naimi, 2017, p.222) (Therefore, when discussing *Mohamed, prend ta valise*, attributing the adoption of the Algerian dialect solely to Kateb and overlooking the significant contribution of Bouzida is an oversight.). The dialogue went through a series of repeated iterations, during which all members took notes, offered comments, and provided observations on characters, acts, and speech. They then put into action the most satisfactory outcomes based on this collaborative process.

Naimi expressed reservations about Kateb's involvement in the theatre troupe due to his arrival without a pre-established script for *Mohamed prends ta valise*. He believed that his own dramaturgical writing and staging techniques played a significant role in shaping the performance text, and he re-emphasized that these contributions were essential for the play's success (Naimi, 2017, p202). However, when Kateb made the decision to join T.M. he wished for the play to be co-authored and improvised, as he believed that improvisation leaves the play unfinished. He emphasizes that political theatre is deeply intertwined with the ongoing and evolving issues of the day. Kateb suggests that it is impossible to predict precisely how and when the theatre will have an impact because the political climate is continuously in flux. The essence of praxis is that as artists engage with and study the current situation, their understanding becomes more refined, and they gain novel insights into the issues at hand. This ongoing learning process leads to a constant revaluation of their artistic approach and the need to revise the language and methods they use. Kateb maintains that once a text is written, it assumes a definitive status and halts (Kateb interviewed by Alessandra, 1994, p.81). Kateb's deliberate choice approach T.M. with a sketch rather than a completed script reflects his strategy to allow space for collaborative script development pushing further the idea that the creative process thrives on openness and shared exploration. In the context of praxis, this approach acknowledges the dynamic interaction between theory and practice, emphasizing the active engagement and collaborative efforts that contribute to the development of a collective and evolving artistic expression.

Naimi not only criticized Kateb for arriving without a completed script but also highlighted two significant points of disagreement between them that justify more the divergence in their theatre approaches. First, Naimi noted that Kateb Yacine rejected his proposal to depict labour in the play as a global phenomenon involving both Algerian and French workers. This rejection was surprising to him given Kateb's established

internationalist perspective, where he championed the notion of shared oppression on a global scale. Naimi notes “Although surprised (Yacine defined himself as an “internationalist”), I did not insist. It was enough for me that the play emphasized the responsibility of the Algerian state in exacerbating the drama of the emigration of workers” (2017, p. 200). Kateb Yacine's work aimed to highlight the hardship faced by immigrants living in the diaspora and their families in Algeria. He also attributed this suffering to the exploitative collusion between the Algerian and French bourgeoisie that pushed people to leave their homeland. His intended audience encompassed Algerian youth, immigrants already living abroad, and those contemplating immigration from Algeria to France. Kateb's message conveyed that instead of receiving government support, these individuals were essentially forced into exile, where they often had to accept compromises for cheap labour as a means of survival.

By making the theme of immigrants' labour generic and including French labour, the truth of the misery experienced by Algerian peasants, women, children, and adults due to French colonization and the inherited bourgeois class in Algeria would have been diminished. In a context where there are deep-rooted historical tensions and conflicts between the two groups, advocating for solidarity between them might be seen as controversial or even unacceptable by some. Critics may argue that prioritizing solidarity with French laborers could be perceived as disregarding or downplaying the specific struggles and injustices faced by Algerian workers. Frantz Fanon's perspective on decolonization and economic heterogeneity suggests that the process of decolonization should challenge and disrupt existing economic structures rather than reinforce them. Fanon argues that maintaining incongruity or embracing the contradictions and complexities within society, is crucial for a successful decolonization process. Fanon emphasizes the need for decolonization movements to challenge and dismantle these structures of exploitation rather than forming alliances that could inadvertently sustain them. In this view, Fanon's stance questions the notion of solidarity that transcends national boundaries and emphasizes the importance of understanding the underlying power dynamics and economic interests at play. It encourages intellectuals and activists to critically examine their actions and engage in a “complete questioning of the colonial situation” to ensure they are aligned with the goals of true liberation and the dismantling of colonial structures (Fanon, 1963, p.28).

Another aspect of disagreement that I find surprising when reviewing Naimi's reflections on his collaboration with Kateb Yacine is Kateb's reluctance to incorporate audience interference. Naimi explains that he proposed the idea of the audience interfering simultaneously during the actors' performances, but he ultimately accepted Kateb Yacine's opinion and did not press the matter further. This declaration seems to contradict Kateb's beliefs about the spectator as an active participant and raises doubts about the principles of collective work, which reject the subject-object relationship in dramaturgy. Naimi's intention was not to promote a free audience intervention but rather to facilitate a structured and purposeful engagement that aligns with the performance's themes and objectives. Kateb's rejection of structured intervention could stem from his desire to maintain the authenticity and spontaneity of the theatrical experience, ensuring that the audience's responses were genuine and unscripted, thus preserving the essence of live performance.

Kadour Naimi expresses his frustration over the decision to exclude audience participation in *Mohamed prends ta valise* and emphasizes the different dramaturgical approaches between this production and Kateb's previous tragic plays, such as *The Man with Rubber Sandals*. He declares that while Kateb Yacine was undoubtedly a talented writer and poet, he did not possess the skill set or sensibilities of a playwright or a person engaged in the world of theatre. Naimi argues that crafting beautiful lines or witty rejoinders, which Kateb was known for, is different from creating an effective theatrical dialogue, which has its own set of demands and requirements (Naimi, 2017, 205.) In theatre, dialogue serves a specific purpose beyond mere eloquence or literary aesthetics. It must drive the narrative forward, reveal character traits and motivations, and engage the audience emotionally and intellectually. Effective theatrical dialogue is essential for conveying the themes, conflicts, and subtext of a play.

While Kateb provided the dialogue in French, Bouzida translated it into popular Arabic, and Hrikes handled the music and songs, Naimi claims that he made significant contributions to the dramaturgy, casting of characters, rhythm of action, stage directions, and costumes. Naimi further adds that he has not seen Kateb's plays subsequent to *Mohamed prends ta valise* and suggests it is possible that they imitated the writing style he developed while collaborating with him. He notes that these subsequent plays did not achieve the same success as *Mohamed prends ta valise* leaving room for further analysis

and discussion. (Naimi, 2017, p.221). However, in his production of *Mohammed, prends ta valise* with the Action Culturelle des Travailleurs troupe, Kateb Yacine demonstrates his unique approach to staging, particularly his emphasis on presenting atypical characters as I have mentioned earlier. This technique reflects Kateb's distinctive perspective on theatrical presentation. Although they do not share the same perception of audience participation, Al-halaqa technique which is a key element in both Naimi and Kateb's theatrical productions facilitates the inclusion of spectators in the space of acting giving them a sense of agency.

### 1.4.2. Al-Halaqa's Role in Audience Engagement

Al-halaqa, a key element in T.M.'s approach, serves as an intentionally designed space for specific audience interactions while allowing spontaneity. Functioning as a form of praxis, it dismantles hierarchies, triggering “a learning process” for the audience that is both political and educational as Freire asserts. This setup effectively bridges the gap between actors and spectators, maintaining direct communication and an intimate atmosphere. T.M. uses Al-halaqa to create an immersive experience that encourages close observation and engagement with performance intricacies, striking a balance between structure and spontaneity. In T.M. performances, spectators form a circular row around the actors, who perform in close proximity, blurring the line between performer and audience. Actors seamlessly transition into the audience, emphasizing unity and a shared journey. Costume changes on stage, visible to the audience, enhance transparency and direct communication. Naimi's goal is to facilitate a direct and complementary interaction between actors and the audience, enriching the performance experience (Naimi, 2017, p.75).

To evaluate the performance's impact on the audience and gather valuable feedback for improvement, T.M. encourages post-performance debates between the audience and the actors, a technique used in Naimi's performances, such as *Mon corps, ta voix et sa pensée* and *La valeur de l'accord Kadour.* Naimi engages the audience in his performances by inviting them to actively participate as characters in the play, encouraging discussions and debates in which people give their opinions and listen to others (Naimi, 2017, 119-120). This approach transforms the audience from passive spectators into active contributors to the theatrical experience, creating a more interactive performance. This dialogic interaction is considered an essential component of the

dramaturgical process, maintaining a continuous feedback loop that contributes to the performance's growth and development (Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p.38). By engaging the audience in this dialogue, T.M. aims to create a collaborative environment where suggestions and insights can shape and enrich the overall theatrical experience.

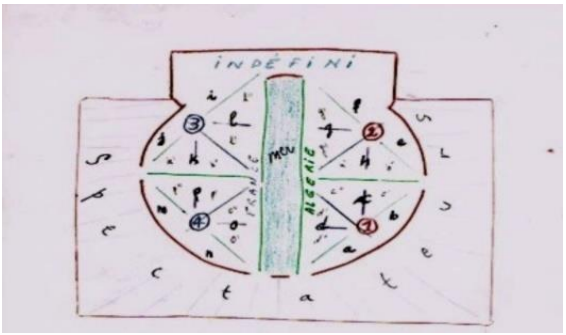


Figure 5. design of Al halaqa space taken from Naimi's notes
Portraying a division between two spaces, France and Algeria (Naimi, 2017, p. 2013).

Naimi's insistence that Kateb might have imitated his writing style, despite Naimi's assertion that he had not watched Kateb's performances, can be seen as a speculative argument that lacks substantial evidence. It should be acknowledged that Kateb brought with him a professional background in dramaturgy, gained through previous successful collaboration with Jean-Marie Serreau between the lates 50s and early 60s. Hence, it is plausible that Naimi also acquired some skills from Kateb's writing and direction? as the production of a performance is akin to a patchwork quilt, composed of diverse pieces, colours, shapes, and styles. Evaluating Kateb's performances, such as *Mohamed prends ta valise* and *Palestine trahie* proves challenging in the absence of visual evidence. Nevertheless, it remains undeniable that Kateb Yacine is independently experienced in dramaturgy and joined T.M. with a reputable experience in experimental theatre, a theatre form that challenges the notions of what theatre can be and explores new and innovative approaches to writing, staging, and audience engagement. In her preface to *Boucherie de l' espérance,* Zbeida Cherghi states,

> If M. Mammeri's theater, like later that of Mohamed Dib, succumbs to a certain classicism, it is Kateb Yacine who will bring it its nobility in French with *Le Cercle des représailles*, and then in Arabic with *Mohamed prends ta valise* (1971). These are two different ways of writing theater: one driven by a poetic tragic breath, the other from a satirical and burlesque vein, already announced in *La*

*poudre d'intelligence*, inspired by the popular tales of J'ha. (Chergui Zbeida, 1999).

I believe that Kateb's burlesque style is indebted to his poetic-tragic writing style because, in the latter, he successfully contextualized the theatrical text and liberated it from rigid formalistic criticism. He then embraced a popular style, drawing from a variety of traditional and modern materials, while maintaining consistency with the historicization of theatre. In other words, Kateb Yacine was aware that different behaviours, themes, and stylistics are the product of different times and spaces. Kateb Yacine was warmly received in Europe as a creative playwright who demonstrated a deep understanding of modern theatre, particularly after his encounter with Jean-Marie Serreau, which confirmed his mastery of the art of theatre. Jean-Marie Serreau affirms that Kateb is a playwright within the historical context (Serreau interviewed by Abadi, 1967)

### 1.5. Kateb Yacine as a Dramatist in the Historical Context

Learning about the culture of theatre occurs the moment an intellectual connects with actors, directors, live performances, and visual elements. In 1962, Kateb audited an improvised play in his city, Constantine entitled *Le Mort Vivant* (*The Living Dead*) that he describes as an exceptional performance because the stage was invaded by the audience (Kateb, 1994, p. 59). The possibility of learning from direct contact with other artists can be exemplified by an earlier significant collaboration Kateb engaged in; a new path towards the world of theatre opened for Kateb thanks to the French director Jean-Marie Serreau. Kateb Yacine learned from Serreau that theatre can be approached with ease and openness, dispelling the notion of being a daunting endeavour. Kateb's transformative learning from direct contact with notable directors like Serreau exemplifies Gramsci's philosophy that organic intellectuals are dynamic figures, constantly learning and adapting.

Jean-Marie Serreau's quest in theatre was historically oriented because he was interested in new forms of postcolonial theatre which are cross-cultural. He had a particular interest in postcolonial writers such as Kateb Yacine and Aimé Césaire because

their style of theatre skilfully intertwines poetry and politics. According to Serreau, theatre is political because it helps people to transform the world and poetic because the poet is consistently willing to question sacred norms (Serreau interviewed by Ayouch, 1969, p3). Kateb Yacine and Serreau met at a common route of interest which is to revive the ancient Greek genre of Aeschylus and Sophocles and put into question the egocentrism of Bourgois theatre which is linear and "unilateral." In 1954, Kateb's first tragedy *Le cadavre encerclé* was published in the French magazine "Esprit" and fascinated Serreau when he read its first part. Serreau recalls that during a time when his perspective on theatre was confined to Brecht, Beckett, and Ionesco, Kateb introduced him to a new world and a fresh perspective on history.

It is an interesting fact that Kateb Yacine and Serreau met at a time when the French-Algerian war was at its peak. Kateb was frightened to see Serreau at his door in the centre of Paris because the French Secret Armed Organization was dedicated to carrying out attacks, arrest, and assassinations as a counter-defence against the Algerian revolutionary war of liberation launched first of November 1954. However, soon Kateb's panic turned into joy when Serreau expressed his desire to stage *Le cadavre encerclé* . Based on Kateb's account, Serreau invested a tremendous amount of effort in working on Kateb's text. He tirelessly approached various Parisian theatres, but unfortunately, all the theatre directors turned him down. (Kateb interviewed by Tazi, 1994, p.26)

When Kateb Yacine drafted *Le cadavre encerclé,* he initially had no awareness of its alignment with ancient Greek tragedy. However, he later discovered that his text remarkably conformed to the conventions of Greek tragedy. Through the collaborative efforts of Serreau and Kateb Yacine, they resurrected the spirit of ancient Greek tragedy on the French stage, modernizing the play by granting the audience the agency to shape their own destinies and engage critically with the performance. Greek tragedies traditionally delve into themes of fate and destiny, which are also evident in *Le cadavre encerclé*, where the protagonist, Lakhdar, struggles with his preordained roles within the context of colonial oppression portraying the destiny of Algeria. Serreau, who portrayed Lakhdar, described him as an immovable figure, whose actions and words are cast in the shadow of the tumultuous cycle of chaos and order surrounding him (Serreau interviewed by L'Action, 1994, p.41).

Serreau's approach to staging *Le cadavre encerclé* is elucidated by his statement: “Je dois m’introduire et introduire le spectateur- au coeur d’une machine en pleine explosion : la révolution Algérienne présentée par Lakhdar. Mais je dois également faire en sorte que soient préservés la liberté du spectateur en face du spectacle, sa liberté et son esprit critique” (I have to immerse myself and immerse the spectator in the heart of an exploding machine : the Algerian revolution presented by Lakhdar. But I also have to ensure that the spectator's freedom in front of the show, their freedom and critical mind, are preserved.) (Serreau, 1958, p.40). This approach highlights the fusion of ancient and modern elements within the production, encouraging audience engagement and critical reflection. Due to the life-threatening events in France, Serreau and Kateb found refuge in Belgium, between 25 and 26 November 1958, where two performances of Le *Cadavre Encercle* secretly took place at le Théâtre Molière de Bruxelle. Serreau recounts that they staged it for 3000 people and 600 came the first time (Serreau interviewed by Ayouch, 1969, p.3). Two years later, the play was staged clandestinely at Theatre de Lutèce in Paris. There had been no public announcements for the spectators, some experts were put in charge of secretly circulating times and dates for the performance. In 1962, *Le Cercle de Represailles* was staged at Théâtre Récamier in Paris.

In 1967, Serreau declared that Kateb is a dramatist in the historical context, stating, “I believe that in the theatre we have been performing for twenty years, he is certainly one who opens, all at once, a new door both on the problematic of theatre and on history” (Serreau interviewed by Abadi, 2022, radio podcast). Following this declaration, Serreau refused to position Kateb Yacine within the usual universal classification, recognizing that Kateb brought something innovative and exploratory to the theatre. Serreau hesitated to compare Kateb to other writers, but he suggested that Kateb may share similar tendencies with Césaire, stating, “He is not Rimbaud, he is not Claudel, he is Kateb” (Serreau interviewed by Abadi, 2022, radio podcast). Meanwhile, Gilles Carpentier states,

> L’année 1963 constitue un tournant décisif dans la vie et l’oeuvre de Kateb Yacine. Pour la première fois, il anime et dirige, en étroite collaboration avec Jean- Marie Serreau, une troupe de théâtre, et expérimente en français, la méthode de travail qui lui permettra plus tard de présenter en Algérie des pièces en Arabe populaire : élaboration collective de la mise en scène, permanente remise en cause

> du contenu mêmes des pièces afin d'adapter celles-ci aux nécessités du moment et aux public concernés (Carpentier, 1994, p.63).
>
> The year 1963 marks a decisive turning point in the life and work of Kateb Yacine. For the first time, he leads and directs, in close collaboration with Jean-Marie Serreau, a theatre troupe, and experiments with the French language, using a working method that will later allow him to present plays in popular Arabic in Algeria. This method involves the collective development of the staging and constant questioning of the content of the plays in order to adapt them to the needs of the moment and the target audience.

Carpentier's statement shows that Kateb Yacine gained a significant experience in theatre-making thanks to his collaboration with Serreau who introduced him to Brecht. Kateb affirms that his collaboration with Serreau transformed *L'homme aux Sandales de Caoutchouc,* which was staged by Marcel Louis Noël Maréchal in 1970, into a play with popular appeal, making it accessible to a wider audience. Kateb felt privileged after he met Serreau because he taught him that there is nothing extraordinary about the practice of theatre; Kateb learned that theatre is not "sorcery" (Kateb, 1978, p.79). Serreau also offered his Brechtian approach which makes the spectators think for themselves, and distance themselves from the ancient tragic hero. Serreau encouraged the audience to view Lakhdar as the author of his own fate, emphasizing that he was not a traditional tragic hero with a predetermined destiny but rather a character who intentionally fluctuates and evolves throughout the play. He invited Maghrebi audiences and theatre makers to engage with Kateb as a notable dramaturg, "Il faut que les Algériens montent Kateb, que les marocains traduisent Kateb en arabe et qui'ils le montent et qui'il le jouent intégralement". (Algerians must stage Kateb, and Moroccans must translate his works into Arabic, stage and perform them in their entirety) (Serreau interviewed by Abadi, 2022, radio podcast).

The collaborative experience with Serreau marked Kateb's departure towards a more engaged theatre which becomes concrete with the staging of *Mohamed prends ta valise.* Ahmed Cheniki reinforces this argument, "Son expérience de l'écriture dramatique et sa rencontre capitale avec Jean-Marie Serreau lui donnèrent la possibilité de réfléchir à la transformation radicale de l'espace scénique" (his experience of dramatic

writing and his major encounter with Jean-Marie Serreau gave him the possibility to think about the radical transformation of the scenic space) (Cheniki, 2020, p.2). However, Naimi considers Cheniki as one of the critics whose critiques do not fairly acknowledge Naimi's substantial contributions to the dramaturgy of *Mohamed prends ta valsie* which played a pivotal role in the performance's success among the audience. Kateb's involvement with Naimi's theatre troupe is undeniably a significant milestone in the history of Kateb's dramaturgy. However, unlike Serreau, Naimi takes a position of authority based on his contributions to dramaturgical writing and the scenography aspect of the performance. Describing Serreau's integrity, Ayouch Noured writes,

> On ne l'a jamais vu élever la voix pour se faire entendre. Par contre, il a ajusté les projecteurs avec les éclairagistes, il a aidé à construire le décor et les mettre en place. Il écoute toutes les suggestions, il en tient compte pour la solution finale. Son autorité vient de cette camaraderie dans les rapports, cette intransigeance dans le travail et de son intégrité partout et avec tous. Paradoxalement, il ne se prend jamais au sérieux (Ayouch, 1969, p.16).

> We have never seen him raise his voice to make himself heard. On the contrary, he adjusts the spotlights with the lighting technicians, he helps build and set up the stage. He listens to all suggestions and takes them into account for the final solution. His authority comes from the camaraderie in relationships, his uncompromising work ethic, and his integrity with everyone, everywhere. Paradoxically, he never takes himself too seriously. (Ayouch, 1969, p.16).

Cheniki, in his assessment, strongly asserts Kateb's skills as a remarkable playwright (Cheniki, 2019). I align with Cheniki's viewpoint, particularly when considering the factors discussed earlier and taking into account Kateb's significant collaboration with Serreau. I am also convinced by other reasons which highlight Kateb's multidisciplinary spirit of art which champions poetry, music, and theatre at once. Kateb Yacine considers poetry the engine of his whole aesthetic production because he clearly states in an interview with *l'action* that poetry is the source of theatre (Kateb interviewed by L'Action, 1994, p.39). Echoing Kateb, Serreau states "Poets, like kids, are able to see things others cannot" (Serreau interviewed by Abadi, 2022, radio podcast). Theatre is not a sacred art form that abides by universal standards that the director or the playwright

must adhere to. Theatre is a rich artform where we can encounter distinct sub-genres created by the dramaturg's openness to research, experimentation, and observation. A skilled dramaturg is persistently willing to bring politics, languages, dialects, music, dance, poetry, and cultural heritage to the theatre.

Exploring Kateb's insights into theatre through his newspaper writings and related childhood anecdotes offers a profound understanding of his theatrical philosophy. One compelling childhood anecdote recounts the optimism and confidence of a peculiar person who foresaw Kateb's future as an intellectual writer in Arabic, influenced by his family's rich literary tradition. Particularly, Kateb's mother, described as a theatrical talent herself, left an indelible mark on his perception of theatre. Her ability to transform their home into a captivating train station performance, complete with sound effects and physical gestures, impressed Kateb and highlighted the theatrical potential within him. This anecdote highlights the pivotal role of Kateb's family and early experiences in shaping his theatrical sensibilities. (Kateb, 1962, p.771).

### 1. 6. Kateb Yacine's Philosophy on Audience Participation

Working towards establishing an interactive relationship with the audience was certainly one of the key aspects that attracted Kateb Yacine to T.M. despite his decline of a programmed interference of the audience. It is possible that Kateb Yacine was not in favour of physically or verbally involving the audience in the same way that Naimi proposed, but he may have been open to the idea of engaging the audience mentally or emotionally. While Naimi emphasized interactive participation, such as spectators becoming part of the performance, Kateb might have believed in a more indirect or intellectual engagement, where the audience is encouraged to think critically or emotionally connect with the themes and messages of the play. This difference in approach could reflect varying perspectives on how best to involve the audience in the theatrical experience. According to Hadj Dahmane, T.M. had been experimenting with the idea of actively involving the audience in the development of the play since the late 1960s. This experimental approach resonated with the principles that Kateb Yacine was striving to implement, which aimed at making the spectator an active participant in the theatrical experience. By actively involving the audience, T.M., and Kateb Yacine sought

to break the traditional barrier between performers and spectators, creating a more interactive form of theatre (Hadj, 2009, p.272).

T.M. aimed to put into practice the concept introduced by Kaki, which involved creating a sense of involvement and belonging for the audience within the theatrical environment (Al-halaqa). Naimi, in particular, desired that spectators not only feel like a part of the stage, but also actively participate in the events, either verbally or physically. In the play *Mon corps, ta voix et sa pensée*, the actor portraying the philosopher Diogenes directly addressed the audience, prompting their responses. Additionally, in *The Value of the Accord*, where characters represented members of an African tribe, spectators were integrated into the performance to judge the astronaut character, as described by Naimi (Naimi, 2017, p.27).

Kateb Yacine aspired to empower the audience, transforming them into authors and revolutionary subjects. He found a suitable method to achieve this through T.M.'s staging approach. Kateb Yacine acknowledges the positive experience of working with the young and enthusiastic troupe and notes that the audience responded very positively to these efforts. "Comme j'ai pu travailler avec cette jeune troupe pleine de bonne volonté […] j'ai pu continuer l'expérience de l'arabe populaire à un plus haut niveau. Le public l'a très bien reçu" (As I was able to work with this young troupe full of good intentions [...] I was able to continue the experience of popular Arabic at a higher level. The audience received it very well) (Interview in: *L'Algérien en Europe*, 1972). Kateb Yacine recognized the significance of Naimi's contributions, even if they may be overlooked by some critics. He believes that Naimi's troupe provided him with the opportunity to expand his artistic vision and establish a vibrant and engaging popular theatre. This culminated in the creation of his troupe Action Culturelle des Travailleurs, which can be seen as a continuation of T. M's goals but on a larger scale.

It is challenging to determine the specific reasons for Kateb's reluctance to embrace audience participation in the production of *Mohamed Prends ta valise*. However, it is possible to understand that for Kateb Yacine involving the audience as a fundamental participant in the creation of the performance was a crucial aspect. This may be one of the reasons why he was indifferent to Western conventional theatre, as he felt that it

excluded the audience and contributed to their alienation in space and time. Recalling Gramsci's perspective on common sense, it becomes evident that Kateb's primary objective was to disrupt common sense by raising awareness about the significance of people's history. While Naimi defines audience interference in terms of active verbal and physical responses and reactions, for Kateb Yacine, to be present as a critical observer is enough; even a burst of spontaneous laughter or applause is considered a co-creation. Kateb's belief that the audience is an active creator in theatre stems from his understanding that all elements that encompass theatre, such as dramatic action, gesture, and concrete music, are also creations of the audience. According to Kateb Yacine, theatre signifies action, in the sense that an actor translates the universe they need to convey to the audience into tangible acts. He further emphasizes that people are born to act, suggesting that the audience, as part of the collective body of people, has a vital role to play in the theatrical experience. This viewpoint highlights the importance of the audience's active engagement and participation in the creation and interpretation of theatrical works. (Kateb interviewed by Amrani, 1994, p.65-66).

The presence and critical commitment of the spectator contribute to their active engagement and participation in the performance. A spectator who is fully present and actively involved in the theatrical experience becomes more than a passive observer. They become an engaged participant who interacts with the performance, interpret its meanings, and critically reflect on its messages. The spectator's emotional and intellectual response to the performance adds depth to the overall theatrical experience. Their presence and engagement create a reciprocal relationship with the actors and the performance itself, shaping the dynamic and interactive nature of theatre.

Kateb Yacine sees theatre as a reflection of life in motion, where the audience members are active participants who bring their perspectives and experiences to the performance. The reflection of the idea that we have in our minds about life may be idealized or perfect, but theatre is not meant to create ideal images. Instead, it should confront and examine the circumstances and barriers that hinder change, offering new possibilities and means to make change achievable. In this context, Kateb Yacine believes that the spectators have the power to represent their own worlds and challenge the world presented to them through theatre. Their critical engagement and interpretation of the performance contribute to a dynamic theatrical experience. While Naimi's interpretation differs from Kateb Yacine's, highlighting the idea of theatre as a reproduction of the reflection of the idea in our minds (Naimi, 2017, p.204), Kateb Yacine emphasizes the

transformative potential of theatre and its ability to inspire reflection, dialogue, and social change. His pedagogical strategy was designed to engage the audience through observation, emotional and intellectual connection, and physical presence, enabling them to grasp the socio-political conflicts and cultural dilemmas embedded in the Algerian context.

It is important to acknowledge the significant contribution of Kadour Naimi to the production and success of the first version of *Mohamed prends ta valise*. Naimi's academic training at the Dramatic School of Art in Strasbourg between 1966 and 1986, as the first Algerian theatre director to engage in such training, played a crucial role in shaping Kateb's popular theatre aesthetic. Unfortunately, the role of Naimi and other collaborators of Kateb Yacine is often overlooked in the discussions and debates surrounding the production of the play. Mohamed Kali highlights the lack of recognition and acknowledgement of Naimi's contributions in many university dissertations. “La plupart d’entre elles ont minoré sinon fait l’impasse sur l’apport des compagnons de Kateb à son travail de création, un apport que l’auteur de Nedjma a pourtant lui-même attesté de son vivant. Puis, l’omission est d’autant condamnable que la contribution, dans le cas de Naïmi, a été fondamentale” (Most of them have downplayed or even omitted the contributions of Kateb's companions to his creative work, a contribution that the author of *Nedjma* himself acknowledged during his lifetime. Moreover, the omission is all the more reprehensible considering that Naïmi's contribution was fundamental) (Kali in *El Watan,* 2013).

After facing frequent tensions and disagreements with members of T.M. particularly with Naimi regarding the involvement of spectators in stage events, the universalization of the theme of labour, and the explicit portrayal of the government as the primary responsible party for people's immigration to France, Kateb Yacine reached a point where he found it impossible to continue working under such conditions. He expressed his decision to the Minister, stating that he could no longer work in those circumstances. Ali Zamoum, who had always been supportive of Kateb, also felt uneasy about the situation. As a result, he decided to dissolve the troupe, hoping to create a new organized amateur group. In 1972, Ali Zamoum provided a specific budget to Kateb, enabling him to establish his troupe ACT which was based in the popular Quarter of Bab El-Ouad in Algiers.

ACT was co-founded by Ali Zamoum, Kateb Yacine, and the comedian Youcef Ait Moloud.[21] The name of the troupe was changed from Théâtre de la mer to Action Culturelle des Travailleurs to highlight the issues and experiences of the working class. In addition to Ait Mouloud, there were other collaborators in ACT who are often overlooked in Katebian theatre scholarship. These include Saïm El Hadj, Saïm Lakhdar, Mohamed Hbeib, Mahfoud Lakroun, Issad Abdelkader (nicknamed Chipa), Ismaïl Habbar, M'hamed Benguettaf, Hacene Assous and his wife Fadhila Assouss, Boudiaf Tahar, Gherzoul Rachid, Nedjar Mustapha, Nechar Houcine, Djegdou Rezki, Djouzi Ahcene, Abid Nadjia, Slim Mohamed, Lemir Bensaiid Nasredine, and Kadri Mohamed. Their contributions to Kateb's theatre practice were significant, and their involvement highlights the collaborative nature of his work.

Fadela Assouss, a highly talented and enduring artist in Algeria, acknowledges that she was privileged to collaborate with Kateb Yacine, as he was one of the few writers who valued women artists in a theatrical landscape that was predominantly male-centric (Fadela cited in Ferrero, p.105). Recognizing the gender imbalance in Algerian theatre, she took the initiative to continue Kateb's theatre practice by establishing her own troupe, Lamalif, in Sidi Bel-Abbes. Drawing on Kateb's poetic texts, she produced a monologue titled "The Tears of the Moon," directed by Hacene Assous and performed by a group of students. The production earned her the prize for the best mise-en-scène. However, the challenging political climate in Algeria, marked by extremist violence targeting artists, led Fadela to fear for her safety following the assassination of her colleague Abdelkader Alloula in 1994. In 1995, she made the difficult decision to flee Algeria. Despite the challenges she faced, she managed to adapt and translate Omar Fetmouche's "Basmat Lmajrouh" (The Wounded Smile), a politically charged performance that explores the hardships and madness experienced by women. Fadela's resilience and dedication to theatre demonstrate the lasting impact of Kateb Yacine's influence on fellow artists and the continued struggle to create meaningful and politically engaged theatre in Algeria. Kateb Yacine's impact on gender roles in Algerian theatre signifies a transformative force

[21] Ait Moloud, who was invited by Kateb Yacine, took on the role of a T.M member in charge of directing and translating *Mohamed prends ta valise* into the Tamazight language. The play would be performed by a group of students in Ben-Aknoun, emphasizing T. M's commitment to promoting cultural activities among different communities.

challenging traditional norms. Kateb Yacine's recognition and support for women artists not only encourage the decolonization of gendered aspects but also exemplify organic intellectualism, creating an inclusive and liberating theatrical environment. His influence serves as evidence to a commitment to conscientization, actively breaking down oppressive structures, and promoting a socially just theatrical landscape in Algeria.

Kateb Yacine and his ACT collaborators dedicated themselves to the reproduction of *Mohammed prends ta valise*, and other popular performances, *The 2000 Years War, Palestine Betrayed,* and *The King of the Ouest.* Kateb recounts, "For eight months, we worked diligently to stage a play titled *Mohammed, Pack your Bag*, which found success in Algeria and was also performed here in France for immigrant workers in Renault factories and other urban industries. We reached an audience of 60,000 people in just five months. In Nanterre, for instance, people were dancing in the hall, as if we had truly brought Algeria to them in a suitcase." (Kateb interviewed by Tazi, 1994, p.28). From January to June 1972, *Mohamed prends ta valise* was staged across various regions of France, including the East, North, Rhone-Alpes, and Mediterranean regions. ACT also presented a new version of *Mohamed prends ta valise* in Algeria, performing in villages, factories, schools, ancient Roman theatres, and professional training centres from 1972 to 1974. However, the troupe faced challenges when a new Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Mohamed Amir, took office in 1977 and did not support ACT, leading to its suspension.

Figure 6. Scene extracted from the performance of *Mohammed, Pack your bag* in a village in Algeria. Picture non-dated (Kateb and Chergui, 2003, p.52)

In 1978, Kateb Yacine became the director of the Regional Theatre of Sidi Bel-Abbes, where the troupe was eventually able to reactivate. However, Kateb's vision of a revolutionary theatre faced several obstacles, including media neglect and opposition from Salafist groups. Hmida Layachi recounts their meeting in 1987, in his captivating

title “Theatre, the Story of an Aborted Dream,” where Kateb Yacine expressed his despair over the tragic end of his 15-year theatre project. Censorship played a significant role in undermining Kateb's dreams, but he also faced disappointment from his collaborators who abandoned his efforts to join the National Theatre. When Kateb proposed a text about African leader Nelson Mandela, his fellow workers rejected it, claiming that revolutionary texts like Mandela’s were no longer of interest in the changing world (Layachi, 2009). Despite the challenges and setbacks, Kateb’s legacy as a revolutionary playwright and director endures, leaving an indelible mark on Algerian Theatre and inspiring future generations.

Thanks to his unwavering commitment and passion for theatre practice, Kateb Yacine transcended as a remarkable dramaturg in the face of negative criticism and relentless censorship, His success as a dramaturg, achieved even before gaining substantial experience, attests to the skills he possessed in theatre (Salhi, 1998, p. 73). Undoubtedly, Kateb Yacine was a devoted visionary who believed in the flexibility of theatre. However, it is crucial for critics not to overlook the invaluable experience he gained through his collaboration with the T.M. collective, a creative endeavour that aimed not only to elevate the consciousness of the audience but also to enhance the artistic abilities and skills of all its members. In the blog “Cultures Algérie et Médias,” Cheniki briefly acknowledges the profound impact of Kadour Naimi's expertise in mise en scène, which relied on the power of gesture and physical expression. Additionally, the instructive friendship between Kateb Yacine and Serreau exposed him to fundamental elements of dramaturgy, further enriching his artistic journey.

In contrast to Naimi's perspective on Kateb's position regarding audience participation, Cheniki highlights active participation as the option most encouraged in Kateb Yacine's theatrical practice. Cheniki emphasizes that the conditions of enunciation and production of the theatrical discourse favoured the active involvement of spectators, who were not only allowed to move freely but also encouraged to engage in conversation with one another (Cheniki, 2020, p.3). The aesthetic and material conditions created a welcoming atmosphere where spectators were expected to respond spontaneously, whether through a word, a nod, or a movement. In the realm of collective creation, each participant was regarded as an independent professional, erasing the distinctions between major and minor actors and rejecting the subject-object dynamic between actor and spectator. Naimi explained his collective method to his fellow members, using the

metaphor of an engine that can only function properly if all its parts work harmoniously (Naimi, 2017, p.203). Dramaturgy goes beyond limits and embraces a collective ethos, where actors and spectators are equally valued alongside the dramaturg, director, and playwright. It establishes a space for dialogue and mediation between the audience and the performing body, free from the constraints of professional hierarchies, and instead cultivating a welcoming and inclusive environment.

This chapter delved into the pivotal role of the dramaturg in the process of collective creation, aiming to bridge the gap between Kadour Naimi and Kateb's experiences in the production of *Mohammed, Pack your Bag.* Regardless of holding different perspectives, particularly regarding the involvement of the spectator in *Mohamed prends ta valise*, both Naimi and Kateb made significant contributions to popular Theatre, culminating in the creation of a masterpiece that reverberated deeply with the audience. I have argued that Kateb's reluctance to prioritize audience participation in *Mohamed prends ta valise* does not imply a general aversion to involving the audience at various levels. On the contrary, Kateb vehemently advocates for audience participation in a manner that aligns with his own philosophy of collective creation. Drawing upon the evidence presented in this analysis, it becomes evident that Kateb is a theatre practitioner and dramaturg in his own right, regardless of his indifference towards certain European playwrights and irrespective of Naimi's greater experience with classical and Brechtian styles. Without delving into this history of collective creation, a critical gap in understanding the significance of the theatre of decolonization would remain unaddressed. By examining the history of collective creation in this context, we uncover the roots of Kateb's pedagogical approach and its evolution over time. This historical perspective illuminates our understanding of how Kateb's theatre of decolonization was shaped, highlighting the continuity and innovation in his pedagogical methods and the transformative dimensions of his theatre. The next chapter examines the ways in which heteroglossia shapes Kateb's production, *Mohamed Pack your Bag* focusing on the plurality of signs that contribute to the plurality of meanings and voices.

## Chapter Four

## A Socio-semiotic Approach to the Analysis of Heteroglossia in *Mohamed, Pack your Bag*

### 1.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I delve into heteroglossia within the theatrical production of *Mohamed, Pack your Bag*, where theatrical language incorporates semiotic elements, dialogue, and gestures distinct from natural language. Through this exploration, I aim to unravel the intricate relationship between individuals and society within a specific social and political context. By examining stage languages, bodies, and dialogues, we gain valuable insight into their contribution to our understanding of this relationship. The performance text serves as a social event, integrating concrete and metaphoric cultural signs within a specific site, providing a unique perspective on the interplay between individuals and their society. Drawing inspiration from Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism, I focus on exploring the intersection between semiotics and heteroglossia in the analysis of *Mohamed, Pack your Bag*. My objective is to offer a fresh perspective on the production, liberating it from the constraints of formalist criticism that often overlooks its popular features. It is essential to acknowledge that Kateb's plays transcend simple categorization as monologic texts; instead, they serve as platforms for intertextual and heteroglossic discourses, inviting critical engagement from the audience. The audience is encouraged to interpret and evaluate the multifaceted voices and perspectives within the performance text, creating a participatory relationship between the audience and the play.

In his research titled *L'hétérogène et la polyphonie dans le Théâtre de Kateb Yacine*, Mohamed Akrimi explores the emergence of a polyphonic dramatic text resulting from the encounter between the French language and Algerian content. Akrimi specifically focuses on Kateb Yacine's trilogy, *The Circle of Reprisals*, where Kateb Yacine employed French as a means to convey to the French audience that Algeria, while

francophone, is no longer French. The research highlights Kateb's intention to denounce colonial barbarism and revive the ancestral heritage of the Kebloutis in a French style (Akrimi, 2019, p.7-8). While Akrimi focuses on the relationship between vernacular content and a foreign language, my approach via the concept of heteroglossia highlights Kateb's shift from using French to incorporating vernacular Arabic. This change reflects an engagement with Algeria's cultural heritage, moving towards an authentic expression and exploring the complexities of Algerian society's relationship with its heritage and foreign influences. The presence of traces of French within the vernacular Arabic, in *Mohamed, Pack your Bag*, serves to emphasize the complex nature of this relationship or what Akrimi calls "linguistic schizophrenia" (Akrimi, 2019, p.8). Even without any contact with the French language, the language in Kateb's theatre is complex and "hybridized." Carlson argues that "this quality of dialogue or difference within syncretic theatre means that languages within the syncretic tradition can be considered as heteroglossic within themselves, even before they interact in the theatre with other languages, making the operations of heteroglossia within postcolonial theatre particularly complex" (Carlson, 2006, p.110).[22]

It is worth noting that the study of heteroglossic discourse in theatre has been relatively overshadowed when compared to its examination in the novel. This disparity can be attributed to the prevailing attitude in literary studies that has evolved over time, where the novel has been prioritized as the primary subject of study in the exploration of multivocality. Even the semiotic approach, or what Carlson refers to as "post-war semiotic theory" was initially employed in the analysis of literature. It subsequently expanded to encompass other artistic forms such as painting, music, and cinema. However, it wasn't until the 1960s that French and German theorists began to explore its application within the context of theatre (Carlson, 2014, p.455). Bakhtin introduces the concept of "novelization" as an approach that fundamentally opposes canonical categorizations and genre frameworks that are commonly found in literature (Bakhtin,

[22] Theatre syncretism is defined as a discursive strategy of decolonisation whereby the stage is the joint space to integrate a variety of 'aesthetic and cultural codes' that aim to generate a new form of identity and culture. The term syncretic which Balme borrows from comparative religion is built on "mutual respect and reciprocal exchange of values and beliefs," thus syncretic elements in theatre is what makes postcolonial theatre unravel cultural differences (Balme, 1999, 9).

1981, p.41). Bakhtin's concept of “novelization” challenges the supposedly monolithic nature of dramatic texts, which typically emphasizes holding the audience’s complete attention. However, it is essential to remember that drama is fundamentally defined by its use of dialogue between characters. In this context, “novelization” does not reject the essential role of dialogue in drama. Instead, it suggests enhancing the dimensions of dialogue by incorporating multiple conversations and diverse languages, making dramatic works more dynamic without altering the fundamental nature of dialogue in theatre. The novelization of other genres means that,

> They become more free and flexible, their language renews itself by incorporating extraliterary heteroglossia and the “novelistic” layers of literary language, they become dialogized, permeated with laughter, irony humour, elements of self-parody and finally-this is the most important thing the novel inserts into these other genres an indeterminacy, a certain semantic open-endedness, a living contact with unfinished, still evolving contemporary reality (the open-ended present) (Bakhtin, 1981, p.7).

According to Marvin Carlson, only a few theatre historians have shown interest in theatre dialects since the 18th century. This lack of attention could be attributed to personal choice or a matter of taste, as dialects are often marginalized in comparison to standard languages. This stereotypical perception reflects a social hierarchy where those who speak a particular dialect are considered to belong to “a subordinate social class and an inferior geographical area” (Carlson, 2006, p.9). However, it is important to clarify that any standard language originates as a dialect before it attains official status, and every standard language is a culmination of distinct dialects. In the historical context of Algeria, Tamazight, a Berber language that is commonly spoken along Arabic, has been regarded as a minor language. Algeria exhibits linguistic diversity with various Berber language varieties spoken across different regions. Among these, the Chaoui dialect thrives primarily in the Aurès Mountains in the northeast, characterized by its unique linguistic features. In the southern regions, the Mzabi dialect has its roots, representing another facet of Berber linguistic richness. Additionally, Tuareg communities in southern Algeria communicate through various Tuareg languages, such as Tamahaq, adding to the mixture of dialects and languages within the country. These distinct dialects and languages not

only reflect Algeria's cultural diversity but also signify the resilience of its linguistic heritage.

While Amazigh people are taught Arabic in schools, Arabic speakers are not commonly taught Tamazight. Kateb Yacine sought to reclaim the Berber identity by blending Tamazight with the common Arabic dialect in theatre, aiming to challenge the notion that it is any less official or historically significant than the Arabic language. In echoing Reda Bensmaia's perspective, it is worth noting that the language of the stage, “unlike rigid and printed language,” possesses greater “flexibility.” It more accurately reflects the intricacies of everyday language and the “plurality of tongues that coexist in Algeria” (Bensmaia, 2003, p.15). By incorporating dialects into theatre, Kateb Yacine aimed to emphasize the linguistic diversity and the complexity of language in Algerian society. This challenges the dominant narrative that privileges certain languages while marginalizing others, thus allowing for a more inclusive and representative portrayal of linguistic diversity on stage.

### 1.2. Exploring Heteroglossia in Performance Texts

Marvin Carlson is widely recognized for his pioneering work on the significance of heteroglossia in theatre, building upon Bakhtin's dialogism. From this perspective, I aim to explore the elements that contribute to a postcolonial performance text being characterized as heteroglossic, particularly in relation to metalinguistic features. Patrice Pavis introduces the concept of “languages of the stage,” encompassing visual languages such as gesture, costume, colour, and light. Semiotic analysis delves into these stage languages as signs that convey multiple meanings and invite psycho-political interpretations. In this context, the theatrical text goes beyond its structural attributes and encompasses the entirety of culture, forming an “infinite corpus.” This perspective, as articulated by Scott Taylor, highlights the expansive nature of theatrical interpretation, where heteroglossia is not limited to linguistic aspects but embraces all facets of cultural expression embedded within the performance. (Scott Taylor, 2005, p.87).

Semiotic studies focus on analyzing the “artistic language” inherent in production or mise en scène. Semioticians perceive the text or stage as comprising multiple messages interpreted as sign systems. Essentially, the stage consists of a polyphony of signs, and semioticians study how meaning is produced in theatre through signification. The Prague school pioneered the study of theatre as a sign system, emphasizing the intertextual

relationship between the written text and the performance. They examine both the dramatic text, with its linguistic features, and the performance text, encompassing all signifying elements within the performance, including speech derived from the dramatic text or otherwise. In some interpretations, the performance text extends to encompass the entirety of the theatrical situation, encompassing interactions with the audience. This broader perspective recognizes that the performance text involves all the elements that convey meaning during a theatrical presentation. In the field of performance studies, scholars have recognized that understanding theatre goes beyond analyzing individual elements like scripts, actors, or stage design. Instead, it is crucial to consider the entire performance as a cohesive unit. The "performance text" encompasses various aspects, including how the performance engages with the audience, the specific time and space in which it occurs, and its broader role within society. All these elements collectively shape the meaning and significance of the performance. Therefore, the context and conditions in which a play or performance takes place will have a significant impact on how the other elements, such as dialogue, acting, and staging, are perceived and interpreted (Lehman, 2006, p.85).

Carlson highlights how semiotics played a pivotal role in reshaping the study and practice of theatre, particularly in terms of visual elements and cultural engagement. His argument traces the evolution of semiotics within the context of theatre, highlighting a significant transformation in the study of this art form. Initially, semiotic theory enabled a more complex exploration of the visual and other facets of the theatrical experience, moving beyond mere physical descriptions of productions. Instead, attention shifted towards understanding how audiences receive and interpret performances and the broader cultural implications of the semiotic process. Concurrently, the theatre itself was undergoing a divergence in two opposing directions, challenging conventional Western theatrical traditions while simultaneously elevating the importance and complexity of the visual elements in performances. This evolution suggests that semiotics not only enriched the understanding of theatre but also influenced a broader shift toward examining the dynamics of reception and the cultural significance of theatrical semiotics (Carlson, 2014, p.456). Kateb's theatre, with its rich intercultural dialogue and complex linguistic dynamics, exemplifies the evolving landscape of theatre that embraces visual and cultural dimensions while challenging traditional norms.

According to Carlson, A greater emphasis on visual elements in theatre can be observed through a shift from traditional closed environments to alternative spaces such

as outdoor settings or site-specific performances. In these contexts, the visual field expands to include the surrounding environment, using it as a signifier that contributes to the overall theatrical experience. This shift not only broadens the visual aspects but also redirects the focus toward the audience, encouraging a closer engagement with the performance and its cultural context. While site-specific performances are typically designed for unique sites and often draw inspiration from those sites and their histories, Kateb's theatre does not fit this definition precisely. Carlson maintains that even though audiences in classical Greek theatre were certainly immersed in a physical space, that space was not necessarily "a deliberate and specific bearer of visual information as the term "site-specific" implies (Carlson, 2014, p.457). However, considering Carlson's broader perspective, we can see that Kateb's choice of performance spaces, such as villages, and factories, and immigrant corners, aligns with the trend of expanding the visual field beyond the traditional theatre space.

In Kateb's case, these performance spaces are not just random choices but deliberate selections that resonate with the political and social circumstances and issues addressed in his plays. The choice was motivated by the very need to expand the space and attract a large number of spectators in the first place. The use of such spaces can enhance the visual and cultural dimensions of the performance, influencing the audience's reception. Villages and factories, being integral parts of the social fabric, offer a unique context for Kateb's theatre, reinforcing the audience's connection to the site and transmitting to them his conception of theatre as life in motion. Therefore, while not strictly site-specific in the traditional sense, Kateb's theatre does expand the visual side and influences the audience's engagement and reception by choosing environments that are significant to the narratives and themes explored in his works. In the pursuit of decolonization, Kateb's choice of presenting performance in open spaces resonates with Frantz Fanon's emphasis on the importance of reconnecting with practical cultural and social contexts. It serves as an example of Fanon's call to explore and reinstate the indigenous cultures and environments to advance genuine liberation and reconnection with the social fabric disrupted by colonialism. Kateb's choice of open performance spaces resonates with Antonio Gramsci's philosophy of praxis, particularly his call for intellectuals to establish connections with the people and reject bourgeois systems and structures. By intentionally selecting settings like villages and factories, Kateb's theatre not only recognizes the imperative of meaningful interaction between intellectuals and the working class but also embodies Gramsci's concept of organic intellectuals,

acknowledging the philosophical potential within the people themselves. This deliberate choice signifies a rejection of conventional, often bourgeois, theatre settings, opting instead to align with the genuine experiences of the working class, liberating the performance from the constraints of established structures and cultivating an authentic grassroots form of cultural expression.

A semiotic approach to theatre highlights the presence of a wide array of signs that operate individually and interact with other signs at different levels of the system. Roland Barthes emphasizes the "polysemic" nature of theatre, where sign systems do not adhere to a linear convention but instead function in a complex and simultaneous manner, "unfolding in time and space" (Barthes cited in Aston and Savona, 2013, p.99). Theatre inherently embodies intertextuality, creating a network of diverse meanings and a multi-layered system of codes. It serves as a space where complete "son et Lumiere" events occur, encompassing human bodies, artifacts, music, literary expressions, and other artistic forms that come together in a simultaneous moment (Eco, 1977, p.280). Theatre encompasses various subgenres, contributing to its richness as a speech genre in terms of both meaning and aesthetics. In Kateb Yacine's plays, we can find various subgenres and theatricalized elements, such as folk tales, storytelling, songs, idioms, hymns, symbolic sounds, gestures, objects, and expressions. These diverse elements are woven into the fabric of his performances, contributing to the intersection between meaning and aesthetics.

In *Mohammed, Pack your Bag,* Kateb Yacine uses a dynamic and contrastive approach to storytelling. He transitions the audience from a scene in France, where Mohamed and his friends, Visage de Prison and Napage Nocturne drink and dance at a bar, to a scene in Algeria set during the November 1954 military revolt against French occupation. This juxtaposition of two different settings and time periods serves to highlight the sharp differences and historical context of the characters' experiences. It is particularly significant when the chorus sings a hymn of resistance in both in Berber and Arabic, underlining the cultural and ideological diversity inherent in the struggle against colonial rule (Kateb, 1999, p.256). This shift in scenes and languages highlights the complex historical and cultural layers within the play. Kateb Yacine makes peculiar and effective choices of songs and music, using them as a powerful tool to convey specific attitudes and situations within the narrative. One notable musical shift in the play is the incorporation of Andalusian music, a genre with deep roots in the Andalusian region of

Spain, later brought to North Africa, including Algeria to emerge as a sophisticated classical Arabic genre. This musical style, characterized by its sophisticated melodies, complex rhythms, and emotionally rich themes, plays a significant role in the storytelling. It adds complex layers to the characters, as seen when the Mufti, who is expected to embody piety, sings an Andalusian love song while attempting to flirt with Mohamed's wife, “I can't forget you, O past night, if only you would come back to me” (Kateb, 1999, p.225). This musical choice not only enriches the portrayal of the Mufti but also highlights the contrast between appearance and reality in his character. Andalusian music, with its poetic and lyrical qualities, contributes to the emotional resonance of the narrative, exploring themes of love, longing, and nostalgia. Kateb Yacine's use of classical songs in the play enhances the audience's engagement with the characters and their complexities, making it a vital and impactful component of the overall theatrical experience. Kateb Yacine exemplifies how postcolonial theatre can effectively challenge and dismantle colonial narratives by embracing diverse cultural elements and reflecting the different facets of a decolonized identity.

### 1.3. Semiotics and the Theatrical Body

Semiotics, in contrast to confining a work of art to a single interpretation, seeks to stimulate “the creative process and encourage a pluralized understanding of the text,” whether written or performed (Scott, 2005, p. 89). However, it is important to note that semiotics, often treating the body as an iconic sign, may overlook the fact that the body is an ideological material that embodies a multitude of signs and can generate endless meanings. This critique emphasizes the potential limitations of semiotics in fully capturing the power of the body's symbolic and sensory dimensions within the theatrical context. The body's acquisition of materiality through dialogic encounters inherently involves a dual embodiment. On one hand, there is the body performing on stage, and on the other, the body observing, interpreting, and evaluating the performance. Within a heteroglossic stage, there is mutual recognition that both actors and spectators are inherently social bodies shaped by specific political and historical contexts, as emphasized by Chrysochou Panayiota, who states, “The act of viewing itself is a political act, shaping our specific response to the theatrical event” (Chrysochou Panayiota, 2014, p. 651).

This concept aligns with Paulo Freire's theory of dialogue in education, highlighting that dialogue is a transformative process where both educators and learners engage in a reciprocal exchange of ideas. It echoes his emphasis on the dialogical relationship between the teacher and the learner, where both parties bring their unique social and historical perspectives to the learning process. Furthermore, it reflects Bakhtin's evaluative consciousness, where the observing body, influenced by its unique socio-cultural background, shapes the interpretation and reception of the theatrical event. The social dimension of the body significantly shapes our perception and engagement with the theatrical experience. Performers bring their social backgrounds, identities, and experiences into their roles, influencing how they interpret and present the performance. Similarly, audience members, influenced by their personal backgrounds, cultural contexts, and individual identities, shape their understanding and interpretation of the theatrical event. Recognizing the social bodies involved in the performance and viewing process is crucial for a comprehensive analysis of the heteroglossic stage, allowing us to consider the diverse perspectives and socio-cultural contexts contributing to the creation and reception of theatrical work.

The embodiment of actors on stage, their physical presence, and the expressions they convey through their bodies play a significant role in theatrical performances. Unlike dramatic texts that lack corporeality, actors bring psyches to life on stage as Carlson maintains, manifesting various emotions and states of being. From joy to anger, frustration to optimism, and from negative to positive energy, these predicaments are portrayed through the actors' physicality. One of the remarkable aspects of the body's presence on stage is the power of gesture. Even without relying solely on linguistic cues, a simple gesture can convey meaning and be understood by the audience, regardless of their linguistic background. This “gesturality” serves as an alternative to ambiguous utterances and carries its valid function, akin to a natural language or dialect. Erika Fischer-Lichte's perspective on the acquisition of gestural signs through social learning aligns with the understanding that the number, shape, and combination of gestures, as well as their contextual creation of meaning, are culturally specific (Lichte, 2008, p.43). According to Lichte, gestures serve two primary functions: supporting speech in the process of communication and substituting speech by conveying information or indicating specific spatial contexts, such as pointing at objects. In exploring the performances of actors from Théâtre de la Mer and Action Culturelle des Travailleurs, we will see how these actors rely on their bodies and gestural language. They use gestures

to substitute spoken words, enhance and support verbal communication, and embody objects and spatial contexts within their performances. Umberto Eco clarifies that semiotics encompasses "verbal language", "visual images" and "body positions" in that, it "shows a wide range of 'languages' ruled by different conventions and laws" (Eco, 1977, p.280).

Performance, characterized by the present moment, showcases presence as a unique trait that brings both minor and major characters to equal visibility. The intrinsic corporeality of theatrical performances enhances their resistance to translation, moving beyond fixed meanings conveyed solely through verbal language. Meaning extends beyond words, manifesting in the physicality, gestures, and movements of the performers. These non-verbal elements enrich the performance, offering the audience a multi-dimensional experience. Unlike written texts, which can be translated between languages, theatrical performances are deeply rooted in specific cultural, social, and historical contexts. The co-presence of actors and audience members, along with their interactions and the blend of visual, auditory, and sensory elements, collectively shape the performance's meaning and impact. This multi-dimensional aspect of theatre presents challenges for translation, as the essence and subtleties of the live experience may prove difficult to convey in another language or cultural setting. Thus, the resistance to translation in theatrical performances stems from their transcendence of verbal language limitations, relying heavily on the corporeal presence and embodied communication of the actors. The complexity of theatre lies in its capacity to evoke emotions, stimulate thought, and engage the audience on a visceral level, establishing it as a unique form of artistic expression. Carlson argues, "An actor in a play brings an inevitable surplus to his role, simply by virtue of the fact that he is a living human being, even when the playwright has not been particularly conscious of this concern" (Carlson, 1992, p.319). Arguing about post-dramatic theatre, Lehmann enlightens us further,

> Even a striking physicality, a certain style of gesture, or a stage arrangement, simply by dint of the fact that they are present(ed) with a certain emphasis, are received as 'signs' in the sense of a manifestation or gesticulation obviously demanding attention, making sense through the heightening frame of the performance without being 'fixable' conceptually (Lehmann, 2006, p.82).

Marvin Carlson emphasizes the presence of a “psychic polyphony” on stage that invites the audience to engage in the interpretation and ordering of different layers of meaning according to their individual perspectives. This notion suggests that the combination of different psyches contributes to the complexity of the theatrical experience, offering a multitude of perceptions for the audience to consider (Carlson, 1998, 292). As spectators, we are prompted to navigate and make sense of the interplay and interactions between these individual psyches, thus shaping our own understanding and interpretation of the performance. It is crucial to acknowledge that the importance of these characters goes beyond their verbal expressions. Even when a stage character remains silent or has minimal dialogue, their embodied presence remains significant and engaging. Silent or less vocal characters still prompt the audience to interpret and attribute meaning to their actions and interactions on stage. Regardless of the size of their role, spectators are free to focus on the character that captures their attention the most. While the actor embodies a character and engages in the performance, their own individuality and physicality cannot be completely separated from the role they are portraying. Auslander suggests,

> In performance, physical presence, the body itself, is the locus at which the workings of ideological codes are perhaps the most insidious and also the most difficult to analyse, for the performing body is always both a vehicle for representation and, simply, itself. Even in the most conventionally mimetic forms of modern Western theatre, the actor's body never fully becomes the character's body (Auslander, 1997, p.90).

This means that, despite their transformation into a fictional persona, the actor's own identity and presence persist. Blau argues, “in a very strict sense, it is the actor’s morality which is the actual subject [of any performance], for he is right there dying in front of our eyes.... whatever he represents in the play, in the order of time he is representing nobody but himself. How could he? That's his body, doing time” (Blau, 1982, p.134). From this perspective, the actor's morality and personal essence remain inherent in their performance. They are not solely representing a character, but rather they are present as themselves, experiencing and expressing emotions in real time. The actor's body becomes a medium through which their own being and existence are visible, even while they take on the role of another. This acknowledgment of the actor's embodied

presence can create a unique tension and complexity within the performance, blurring the boundaries between reality and fiction. The body of the actor, as it manifests on stage, carries a natural language that goes beyond its utility as a mere vehicle for representation. It communicates something that transcends time, connecting with the audience on a visceral level. However, it is important to note that the body is not devoid of influences. It operates within specific ideological and cultural codes, reflecting societal norms, expectations, and contextual factors that shape the actor's physical expression.

### 1.4. Exploring Cultural and Ideological Signs

Socio-semioticians stress the interconnectedness of signs and ideologies, emphasizing their inseparable coexistence and function. According to Voloshinov, signs and ideologies are intertwined, as without signs, there would be no expression of ideology (Voloshinov, 1973, p.9). Signs, whether auditory, visual, or embodied in body movement, possess a materiality and physical embodiment for meaning transmission. This chain of signs operates as a continuous flow connecting different minds. When the audience and actors interact, a new cluster of signs emerges. Each sign produced prompts a response and understanding, leading to the creation of subsequent signs. This process involves what can be described as ideological creativity. Signs manifest concretely when socially organized individuals meet. They serve as stimuli that activate the cognitive processes of the audience, connecting each sign to its contextual surroundings and relating it to the community's social, moral, and ideological values. The audience and performers become part of the community in which these values are shared and understood. Thus, signs not only convey meaning but also reflect and contribute to the social, moral, and ideological fabric of the community in which they are produced and interpreted (Sahid Nur, 2013, p. 51).

Signs in theatre are influenced by the ideologies present within the sphere of communication, playing a significant role in shaping and evolving signs over time. Semioticians suggest that signs on stage do not refer to themselves but to what they are not. Nevertheless, they can still be appreciated for what they are because we experience not only the ideal space of the story but also the real space of the theatre. The actor representing a character outside the concrete space manifests a corporeal existence projecting its own sensibility (Alter, 1990, p.104). Auslander argues that "The body,

always already ideological, can never escape ideological encoding; it exists only insofar as it is structured through discourses" (Auslander, 1997, p. 105).

The actor's response and interpretation in a theatrical performance go beyond mere repetition or adherence to prescribed roles. Through their energetic creativity and improvisation, actors can generate entirely new signs and imbue them with fresh meanings on the stage. Jean Alter highlights this aspect by suggesting that performances can introduce original signs that associate new symbolic elements with new theatrical significances. Characters in theatre represent not only social bodies but also concrete personalities that gain acting power and agency throughout the performance process. Alter proposes the concept of "de-semiotization," where the mind transitions from focusing on the narrative space to the stage space. In this state, every sign on stage is perceived as unintentional, allowing for a more concrete experience of the performance (Alter, 1990, p. 80). This notion aligns with Bakhtin's idea of novelization, which detaches genres from specific stylistic conventions and instead emphasizes their connection to real space and the evolving reality of the performance.

According to Jean Alter, there are two categories of signs in theatre: primary signs and cultural signs. Primary signs, also known as iconic signs, are considered natural signs that directly refer to something else. They rely on resemblance or similarity to convey meaning. On the other hand, cultural signs are additional signs that are employed to interpret the events of a particular story. Cultural signs can be further classified into unintentional cultural signs, which are integrated into the normal signs of the performance such as costumes, colours, and lighting, and intentional cultural signs, which serve as commentary to the audience with prior knowledge of the specific culture being represented. It is the audience's task to discern between the different types of cultural signs, as they often function similarly to natural signs. Alter emphasizes that cultural signs are aimed at communicating with the audience, specifically through "performance-to-audience communication." Only those audience members who possess familiarity with the culture being portrayed can effectively distinguish the intended "causality and intentionality behind the cultural signs" (Alter, 1990, p.112).

Cultural signs in theatre serve the specific purpose of addressing the audience and prompting them to question the reasons behind their usage in a particular context. The presence of cultural signs within a performance elicits two types of understanding: a neutral understanding and an active understanding. The neutral understanding simply

observes the cultural signs without generating further questions or responses. However, the active understanding engages the audience's critical consciousness, leading to inquiries, reflections, and personal interpretations. By combining primary signs with cultural signs, the performance becomes more concrete and allows for the invocation of explanations, value judgments, and interpretations. While primary signs primarily operate among the characters on stage, cultural signs aim to engage the audience's awareness and critical thinking. In the context of heteroglossia, the focus shifts toward cultural signs and their role in targeting the audience's critical consciousness. The inclusion of cultural signs triggers a multi-dimensional and diverse dialogue within the theatrical experience, inviting the audience to actively engage with the performance and interpret its underlying messages and themes. The distinction between primary signs among characters and cultural signs directed at the audience is a key aspect of heteroglossia in theatre. Bakhtin's heteroglossia is evident in the incorporation of cultural signs, as they add various meanings and perspectives to the theatrical narrative. In Freire's context, cultural signs become a vehicle for dialogue and a powerful tool for challenging the audience's preconceived perceptions and stimulating their active participation in interpreting the performance's underlying messages and themes, promoting a more engaged and reflective theatrical experience.

In *Mohamed, pack your Bag*, the presence of cultural signs poses a significant challenge to translation, primarily due to its use of dialect, specific accents, tones, idioms, and figurative images. The play incorporates words like "Gandour," "Bagour," and "Afrique di Nord!" which resist direct translation due to their cultural and linguistic nuances. Zebeida Cherghi notes that "Bagour" is an untranslatable "Jeux de mot" borrowed from Cheikh Mohamed Lounissi, which means "cattle of North African cows" (Chergui, 1999, p.221). These linguistic choices exemplify Kateb's parodic style, where the use of "Bagour" instead of "Baqar" in Arabic creates a playful twist. Additionally, the use of "di" instead of "du" in "Afrique di Nord" reflects the historical entanglement between Algerian Arabic and the French language. While some members of the audience may not pay close attention to this subtle change in sound, it reveals the cultural burden imposed on the natives by a foreign culture that imposes its language, accent, and cultural codes. The effort of an Algerian to speak French with a local accent is embedded in the use of "di." These cultural signs and linguistic choices contextual depth to the play, highlighting the complexities of language, identity, and colonial legacy. Translating such

cultural signs becomes a challenge as they carry specific cultural references and implications that may not easily transfer to another language or cultural context.

Intentional cultural signs are those that require specific cultural knowledge or familiarity with the related ideology to be properly decoded. An example of such a sign can be found in *Mohamed Pack your Bag* when Mohamed finds himself in court for stealing onions from the Mufti's Garden. When the judge asks him why he did it, jobless Mohammed responds, “Parceque je n'ai pas d'épaules!” (Because I do not have shoulders). The judge, puzzled, asks for clarification, to which Mohamed adds, “Ce n'est pas que j'ai pas d'épaule, j'ai un frère, mais mon frère n'a pas de nez” (It is not that I don't have shoulders, I have a brother, but my brother does not have a nose). This dialogue carries a profound cultural meaning as it employs metonymy specific to Algerian culture. In this context, saying “I don't have shoulders” implies a lack of influence or power, while saying “My brother doesn't have a nose” signifies a lack of dignity and honour on his part. These expressions are idiomatic and bear symbolic significance within Algerian cultural codes. Understanding these intentional cultural signs necessitates knowledge of the cultural context and the underlying meanings associated with specific metaphors or metonymies. Without this cultural awareness, the full impact of such dialogues may be lost in translation, underscoring the challenge of conveying these nuanced cultural signs to audiences unfamiliar with the culture being depicted. Such cultural expressions and idioms cannot be communicated in another language other than the language in which they originate. Patrice Pavis argues that in multicultural theatre forms, the bilingual and multilingual competence of the audience members becomes vital as it helps the performer shifting from one language to another. He states that “a comedian performer and stand-up comedian like Fellag (from Algeria) constantly moves from French to Arabic, or Berber depending on the cultural illusions or untranslatable idiomatic expressions or puns” (Pavis, 2010, p. 8).

Carlson highlights that the introduction of any device, in contemporary theatre to translate languages on stage, contributes an additional voice to the performance. Put simply, when a human or mechanical “translator” stands between two languages, it generates a third speech that represents a compromise between the original content and the new form. Consequently, the tool employed to navigate heteroglossia introduces yet another “voice” to the blend of voices within the performance (Carlson, 2006, p.182).

Translation plays a crucial role in the syncretisation and intertextual nature of Kateb Yacine's theatrical works. In *Mohammed Pack your Bag*, Kateb Yacine includes an interpreter in one of the episodes to bridge the gap between the French and Arabic languages. During a formal speech by General Decoq, who addresses the Chorus representing soldiers, he explains that they have left their homeland to defend liberty. The speech is then translated into Arabic for both the native soldiers and the audience who do not understand French. Later in the play, the Chorus transforms into a group of unemployed protesters as they chant "du pain! du travail!" (Bread and Work). An officer intervenes and translates Decoq's firm speech to them, which informs them that the French authority no longer needs their services and urges them to return home. Through these instances of translation, Kateb Yacine highlights the linguistic and cultural dynamics at play within the context of post-colonialism. The use of an interpreter reflects the need for mediation between different languages and cultures, emphasizing the complexities and power dynamics involved. It also emphasizes the interplay between French and Arabic as symbolic languages of authority and resistance, and the ways in which translation can be both a means of communication and a tool for manipulation or control.

Kateb's approach to theatre is democratic in nature, emphasizing the responsibility of everyone involved, including actors, spectators, audience members, and intellectuals. He envisioned them as potential co-authors of his work, actively shaping and influencing the performance. Therefore, to thoroughly understand and analyze Kateb's performances as heteroglossic productions, it is essential to recognize the integral role played by both the creative aspects of the theatrical production and the critical reception and interpretation of the work in shaping the overall understanding of Kateb's theatre. It emphasizes the need to consider not only the intentions and innovations within the performance itself but also how these are perceived, analyzed, and contextualized by critics and researchers.

In the analysis of *Mohammed, Pack your Bag*, a diverse array of expressive forms blends to create an engaging experience, encompassing verbal and gestural signs, proxemic cues defining spatial relationships, engaging dialogues, songs, lyrical melodies, thought-provoking verse, evocative poetry, intricate narratives, dance, and enchanting storytelling. This amalgamation of artistic elements embodies the essence of heteroglossia in contemporary performance art. Carlson discusses the interplay between "inventive syncretism" and heteroglossia, highlighting how the amalgamation of diverse

cultural elements develops ongoing heteroglossia rather than a homogenous monologue (Carlson, 2006, p.111). Within this artistic discourse, distinct voices persist, illustrating the enduring diversity embedded in cultural and ideological signs within the ever-evolving landscape of contemporary performance art. *Mohammed, Pack your Bag* presents a sophisticated narrative unfolding dynamically across two distinct spaces: France and Algeria. Spectators embark on a captivating journey, deciphering intricate narrative elements including figures of speech, metaphors, and metonymies that thread through the story. What sets this experience apart is the dialectical and unstable nature of the characters, who undergo constant growth and transformation, defying fixed portrayals. Spectators navigate a nuanced landscape where easily sympathetic characterizations are rare, actively engaging with different dimensions of the performance and immersing themselves in the complexities of the narrative and evolving character identities. This dynamic engagement, shaped by the rich heteroglossia of the performance, transforms each viewing into a critical exploration of culture, identity, and human experience.

### 1.5. An Introduction to the Production of *Mohamed Pack your Bag*

*Mohammed, Pack your Bag* is a theatrical production that had a significant journey through various venues and dates. It was initially staged in France by Théâtre de la Mer, at Le Théâtre des Deux-Portes in Paris on March 7th, 1972. The troupe later toured Algeria, where they performed the play in the Grande Salle on May 5th and 6th, 1972. Subsequently, *Mohammed, pack your Bag* returned to Paris for the Autumn Festival, directed by Kateb Yacine and performed by members of Action Culturelle des Travailleurs at the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord on September 16th, 1975 (listed in Bibliotheque Nationale de France, catalogue general). The decision to stage the play in both Algeria and Paris highlights the immigrant experience, offering distinct perspectives influenced by the specific historical and cultural contexts of each location. By presenting the play in different locations, Kateb Yacine aimed to initiate conversations and provoke critical reflections on the issues raised by the play, transcending geographical boundaries and raising a cross-cultural dialogue. These staging dates and venues demonstrate the significance and impact of *Mohammed, Pack your Bag* as a theatrical work that not only entertained but also challenged oppression and promoted social change. It remains a notable contribution to Algerian theatre history, marking a pivotal moment in Kateb's

career and his commitment to using theatre as a platform for political and social transformation.

### 1.5.1. Stage Props:

In line with the minimalist approach of *Mohammed, pack your Bag*, the use of scenography tools is kept to a minimum, focusing only on the essential elements necessary for the performance. The aim is to avoid any unnecessary distractions that might divert the spectator's attention from the core themes and messages of the play. One example of minimalism can be seen in the use of a wooden chair, which serves as a symbol for the entire court. By using a single prop, the audience can understand the context and setting without the need for elaborate set pieces or detailed scenery. This minimalist approach allows the spectators to focus more on the actions and interactions of the characters, enhancing their engagement with the performance. Similarly, the choice of musical instruments in *Mohammed, pack your Bag* is kept straightforward and uncomplicated. A guitar, flute, and drum are selected, reflecting the cultural and musical traditions of the characters and the setting. The title of the play, *Mohamed Pack your Bag*, is represented through the use of a suitcase as the photograph below illustrates, which serves as both a concrete object and an abstract sign. The suitcase becomes a powerful symbol representing the pursuit of freedom, hope, social instability, and exile. Its presence on stage evokes the themes of migration, displacement, and the longing for a better future. This dual nature of the suitcase highlights its significance within the play and allows the audience to interpret its meaning based on their perspectives and experiences. Additionally, an oil barrel is used as a scenographic element to represent the economic relationship between Bou-dinars and French capitalists. This simple prop effectively conveys the complex dynamics of exploitation and power hierarchies inherent in the play's socio-political context.

*Figure* 7: The oil barrel represents monopoly accords between France and Algeria (Théâtre de la mer, 1972)


*Figure.* 8: Mohamed carries his suitcase (Théâtre de la mer, 1972)

### 1.5.2. Music and Choric Singing

Music plays a significant role and is often produced on stage, accompanied by choric singing. This integration of music and choric singing as equal components alongside dialogue serves multiple purposes and exemplifies the essence of heteroglossia. The chorus and dialogue work both interdependently and individually delivering commentaries and portraying different behaviours that sustain interaction. Firstly, the inclusion of these elements reinforces the oral tradition and orality in Algerian theatre. The performances draw heavily upon traditional lyrical poems and a variety of music styles. This connection to oral traditions creates a sense of genuine creativity, allowing the audience to engage with the performance in a familiar and captivating manner. The use of music aligns with Kateb's desire to make his theatre lyrical and poetic. By incorporating musical elements, the performance becomes more than just a dialogue-driven narrative. It transcends the boundaries of traditional theatre and evokes a poetic and transformative experience for both the performers and the spectators.

Individual and collective singing plays multiple roles in the performance, serving as a dynamic tool to bring various aspects of a performance to life. One of its significant functions is to enact different historical events, allowing the audience to engage smoothly with the past through music and lyrics. Furthermore, singing serves as a medium to comment on the state and identities of characters within the narrative making distinct voices more explicit. The choice of songs, their lyrics, and how they are performed can convey emotional nuances, character motivations, and thematic connotations. Whether it is a character expressing their innermost thoughts through a soliloquy or a collective chorus reflecting on the broader socio-political context, singing adds resonance to the

theatrical experience connecting the audience to the characters and helping them navigate through the historical segments of the overall narrative.

Kateb Yacine's inclusion of music and choric singing in his popular theatre draws a clear parallel with the traditional role of the Greek chorus in ancient Greek drama. Just as the Greek chorus functioned as a collective voice representing the community's values and emotions, Kateb's use of music and chorus serves a comparable purpose in building a collective identity. In Greek drama, the chorus's songs and odes effectively conveyed a range of emotions such as grief, joy, fear, or pity, intensifying the audience's emotional engagement with the play. Furthermore, the chorus acted as a collective voice, offering commentary on the unfolding plot and assisting the audience in navigating complex issues. In contemporary plays like those of Kateb Yacine, similar functions are often assigned to ensemble characters or a collective voice. While Kateb Yacine's theatrical elements may not strictly adhere to the traditional conventions of the ancient Greek chorus, they achieve similar effects. They enhance the audience's understanding of the narrative. The tradition of incorporating collective voices or characters for commentary and reflection is an enduring tool in Kateb Yacine's distinctive theatrical style, demonstrating his skilful use of this powerful narrative device.

### 1.5.3. Actors' Performance Style

Naimi's typecasting approach involves a style of acting characterized by minimal and necessary gestures, tonalities, movements, and utterances. This style allows for a cohesive performance, where all actors work together to create a harmonious theatrical experience. According to Naimi to make characters typical, there are moments when specific characters must pay attention to certain details to enhance their portrayal. For instance, the character of the Négrier may need to learn to speak Arabic in the manner of "pieds noirs," which refers to French settlers who are born in Algeria (Naimi, 2017, p. 204). By speaking Arabic with a "pied-noir" accent, the Négrier embodies a particular linguistic identity that is indicative of the colonial period. This linguistic adaptation gives the character a realistic feature, as it reflects the multilingual and multicultural nature of characters and society contributing to the overall heteroglossic nature of the performance. Another example is seen in a scene where an immigrant encounters a French woman and asks for help because he is lost. The woman dismisses him, expressing her indifference. In response, the immigrant asks, "qu'est-ce que ca vit dire" (what does this mean?), using

the word “vit” instead of “veut” in his French pronunciation (Kateb, 1999, p.309). This linguistic choice, with its slight alteration, serves as an ideological marker rather than a mere linguistic error. It signifies the immigrant's cultural background and highlights the contrast between the immigrant's experiences and the attitudes of the French woman. This attention to linguistic details, accents, and tones contributes to the complexity of the performance. They allow the actors to embody their characters faithfully, conveying not only their personalities but also the broader “linguistic schizophrenia” and the socio-political entanglements. In Kateb's theatre, we witness a deliberate embrace of heteroglossia, allowing diverse voices, styles, and perspectives to emerge. Each character emerges with unique qualities, mirroring the diversity of Algerian society. This creative space celebrates multiple voices, providing a nuanced representation of life and culture. Kateb values the use of necessary gestures but resists the tendency to assign roles to actors who are physically or culturally similar to the characters. Kateb's rejection of typecasting in favour of heteroglossia aligns with the pedagogical dimension of decolonization theatre, challenging colonial legacies and preconceived notions. His open approach empowers both actors and audiences encouraging the emergence of different identities.

### 1.5.4. Analyzing the Dialogic Relationship between the Actor and the Spectator

In *Mohammed Pack your Bag*, the protagonist, Mohamed Zitoune, embodies the spirit of J’ha, embarking on an immigration journey to France with hopeful expectations. However, his return, bearing the same empty suitcase, brings disappointment from his wife Aicha and subjects him to oppression from his brother Boudinar. Kateb Yacine, considering this play his “battle horse,” employs it as a platform for revolutionary social combat, condemning oppression and advocating for decolonization. Through complex characters, scenes, and dialogues, Kateb portrays an ongoing struggle for decolonization and social transformation. The heteroglossic performance’s open-ended nature avoids prescribing a single viewpoint, inviting viewers to critically reflect and form their conclusions, echoing Freire's call for active learning and critical consciousness. This Freirean approach challenges dominant narratives, encourages exploration of diverse perspectives, and engages audiences in the meaning-making process. The play’s style, blending humor and social commentary through satire, enables a critical examination of societal norms, power dynamics, and the lasting effects of colonization. It serves as a dynamic call to action, prompting audiences to question and challenge the prevailing status quo.

Mohamed finds himself trapped between two Mediterranean sides of the same world of oppression, injustice, and exploitation; between colonial France and a neo-colonial Algeria. He finds peace and hope in his symbolic empty bag which accompanies him in his quest for humanism. Kateb uses satirical words to describe the two main oppressive powers giving the name “Pomper-tout” (pump everything) to the French President and General Manager (PDG) and “Pomper-doux” (pump soft) to the Algerian PDG. The first is a capitalist state while the second is a bureaucratic state. They are allied by a third party called (Pomper-tout-doux (pump-everything-soft) and altogether consider themselves the noble parties who will protect Mohamed’s rights. Mohamed denies their hypocrisy, saying, “Even though their methods are different, it is always the same roaming wolves” (Kateb, 1999, p.298). the satirical portrayal of oppressive powers serves as one of the pedagogical tools to educate the audience about the continuities of oppression and exploitation even after colonialism has ended. The metaphor of the roaming wolves indicates the persisting presence of the narratives propagated by different powers that need to be questioned and challenged. Mufti, Caid, and Bou-dinar’s appearance on stage in costumes initially mirroring the French flag, later transitioning to the Algerian flag, serves as a metaphor for the shift from colonial to neo-colonial oppression. The symbolism of these colours representing the perpetrators of neo-colonialism highlights their adoption of roles reminiscent of the colonizers. The exchange of flags signifies a new phase where neo-colonialism dominates politics, economy, and culture, emphasizing that decolonization extends beyond dismantling colonial rule. This portrayal demonstrates praxis by transforming theoretical understandings of power perpetuation into practical actions. Decolonization is an ongoing struggle that invites us to revisit our approaches to encountering prevailing narratives.

In the given scenario, Mohamed1 and Mohamed2 represent Algeria and Palestine, while Ernest and Moche represent France and Israel alternately. They engage in a dispute over the “Douar” (village) where each group claims to belong to their territory, considering the other as mere guests. Ernest and Moche assert, “I am at my home!” (Referring to France and Israel), while Mohamed1 and Mohamed2 persistently respond, “It is my village!” (Representing Algeria and Palestine). When Ernest brings a rooster, symbolizing peasants and the native land, and invites Mohamed1 for a meal, the latter responds with a sarcastic and implicitly rebuking remark, “You can invite me when you are at your home!” (Kateb, 1999, p.213). This expression reflects the Algerian people's

disapproval of someone's disrespectful attitude, particularly when that person's behaviour seems to legitimize their actions. Similarly, France and Israel are accused of legitimizing their illegal occupation of Algeria and Palestine and wrongfully claiming ownership of what does not belong to them, paralleling the actions of Moche and Ernest on the stage. This offensive expression, "You can invite me when you are at your home," is inherently provocative and evokes anger and a sense of unwelcome. However, instead of feeling offended and unwanted, characters like Moche, who symbolizes the Israeli colonizer, respond defensively by asserting their role as hosts while relegating Mohammed 2 to the position of a guest. This rhetoric perpetuates a power dynamic that reinforces a long history of dispossession. The power imbalance continues to affect Palestinians, who have endured unimaginable crimes such as genocide, ethnic cleansing, and apartheid at the hands of Israel.

This scene reflects the perspectives of Fanon and Gramsci, highlighting the perpetuation of hegemonic structures in postcolonial contexts. Fanon's analysis of the psychological and cultural effects of colonization illuminates the impact of power imbalances on the psyche of the colonized, as seen in the defensive response of characters like Mohamed 1 and Mohamed 2, symbolizing the Palestinian and Algerian colonized. Meanwhile, Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony emphasizes how dominant powers legitimize their actions and assert ownership, reflecting the actions of Moche and Ernest. The dialogue between the two groups prompts critical reflection on the legacy of French colonialism in Algeria, emphasizing its enduring impact on politics and culture. It raises questions about Algeria's true independence and the extent of external influence, symbolized by terms like "Pomper-tout" and "Pomper-doux." Additionally, it invites consideration of power dynamics and resource allocation, encouraging audiences to engage with these crucial issues and their role in shaping the nation's future.

Ernest's false claim that the village is called France is likely to elicit strong outrage which urges Mohamed to defend his village. However, it is essential to note that Kateb did not intend to dismiss the tragic flaw of the character. In *The Encircled Corps*, Lakhdar embodies Mohamed, in *Mohamed, Pack your Bag;* he is neither a typical hero nor a fatalistic individual, but a socially engaged actor who strives to find a new way of life. Similar to a Boalian actor, he endeavours to maintain an ongoing dialogue, offering different interpretations of the situation and envisioning various social actions. Unwin argues that the "belief in the possibility of progress does not exclude the tragic but places

the individual's experience within a broader context and sets personal suffering (the deaths of Pavel in *The Mother*, the Young Comrade in *The Decision* or Katrinn in *Mother Courage*) against the individuality of a greater good" (Unwin, 2014, p.79). Kateb presents Mohamed as a vulnerable and underprivileged individual, constantly striving for freedom and the elevation of national consciousness which is, as Fanon's theory suggests, a collective process rather than an individual endeavour. Mohamed introduces himself directly to the audience, acknowledging his helplessness and the necessity of resorting to deceitful actions to meet his basic needs. Mohamed's direct address to the audience and his acknowledgment of his vulnerability reveal a process of identifying and recognizing the socio-political and economic forces that oppress him. This mirrors Freire's concept of conscientization, emphasizing the importance of becoming aware of one's oppression and taking action to challenge it.

I am Mohamed Zitoune,

In other words, Mohamed-the olives,

My elder brother has olive trees,

I am here to rob some olives (Kateb, 1999, p.216).

Mohamed's brother is referred to as "Bou-dinar," which carries a colloquial connotation associated with money and symbolizes materialism, while also serving as a critique of capitalism. Kateb employs wordplay and parody to highlight the exploitation of laborers by individuals driven by greed, labelling them as "Bou-Dinars." The term "Bou" is a contraction of the Arabic word "Abou," meaning father, and it is commonly used in Algerian colloquial language as a prefix to mock someone's specific traits or behaviours that are widely recognized. "Bou-Dinars" signifies the obsession with money and material possessions exhibited by the social class in power. It metaphorically portrays them as worshippers of money. While the land had been cultivated through the sweat of ancestors, it has now fallen under the control of "Bou-Dinars" and been sold off to foreigners. This portrayal highlights how money and self-interest dictate everything. Kateb Yacine skilfully exposes social contradictions in various manifestations throughout the play. He sheds light on the materialistic nature of those in power and the consequences of their actions on society.

When Mohamed tells his brother that the land belongs to their father asserting his claim to his portion of olives, Bou-dinar responds by slapping him. He pulls a dinar out of his pocket and asks Mohamed to memorize a speech that symbolizes the total subordination to capitalism, "Ce dinar, c'est ton père" (this dinar is your father), and he continues claiming that the dinar is the father of all people. It is interesting to note that this scene is re-enacted in the documentary "La troisième vie de Kateb Yacine."[23] In this re-enactment, Mahfoud Lakrouni, the actor who portrayed Mohamed, asks the actor playing Bou-dinar to rely less on words and instead express himself through action by slapping Mohamed. The forceful slap, accompanied by the words "this dinar is your father, my father, and the father of everyone," further highlights the violent control and influence of capitalism over society. This powerful and symbolic scene highlights the struggles faced by individuals like Mohamed as they resist and challenge the prevailing capitalist order.

In the original scene, Mohamed's compliance with Bou-dinar's command, kneeling and reciting his brother's speech, symbolizes the internalization of subordination to money. This act serves as a faithful representation of oppression, echoing Fanon's concept of non-reciprocal recognition of identity. It suggests the idea that under oppressive systems, individuals are often forced to mimic the values and behaviours of their oppressors, resulting in a loss of authentic selfhood and a perpetuation of power dynamics. The scene not only portrays the pervasive influence of capitalism but also subtly critiques the mimicry of the colonial narrative that perpetuates oppressive systems, contradicting the essence of true decolonization, which necessitates a reciprocal and critical evaluation of established power structures. In this context, the gesture of slapping, serving as an alternative to natural language, symbolically replaces the discourse of colonization and the hegemony of neocolonialism, which often operates by silencing voices. On the other hand, the submissive body in this scene serves as a significant embodiment of the character's identity and a manifestation of their inner psyche which is distorted by colonial structures. The position of the body serves as a praxis, engaging spectators in the identification of structures of advantage and disadvantage. It prompts them to reflect on their consciousness in relation to these structures and elicits responses that may challenge or reinforce existing power dynamics.

[23] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3KH7g33Ry4E

While he cannot negotiate with Boudinar, Mohamed exhibits dialogue with the audience who are expected to evaluate his perspective. The interaction between Mohamed and the audience creates a space for diverse viewpoints and interpretations, reflecting the heteroglossic nature of the theatrical performance. Once Bou-dinar leaves the stage, Mohamed addresses the audience once again, stating, “I am Mohamed who is left with no douar, and my brother cares only for the dinar” (Kateb, 1999, p.218). This shift from submissive behaviour to assertive speech signifies to the audience that Mohamed is oppressed in his fight for equal opportunities. The audience serves as Mohamed's interlocutor, and he acts as their representative and social educator. However, his passivity does not imply victimization as the oppressed character is not portrayed as a helpless victim in the theatre which aligns with the pedagogy of liberation. The oppressed character should evaluate his oppression in relation to himself not to his oppressor.

Mohamed’s degrading act of mimicking Bou-dinar’s speech illustrates his oppression and submission to the oppressor, echoing Gramsci’s concept of “common sense” within the post-independence context. In this context, “common sense” refers to the prevailing norms, beliefs, and values that uphold oppressive power structures. Mohamed’s actions exemplify how individuals, influenced by common sense, internalize and accept their oppression within the existing social and political order. In the theatrical context, this portrayal of Mohamed serves as a commentary on how common sense can hinder genuine liberation and self-determination, emphasizing the need to challenge and transform it for true decolonization and social change. Mohamed symbolizes other oppressed individuals who possess the intelligence and power to overcome their oppression. This implicit meaning becomes clearer when we apply Mohamed's case to Charles Sanders Peirce's example of the signification of a drunken man on stage.

According to semiotics, a drunken man on stage relinquishes his status as a real body and becomes a sign representing a particular social class. He becomes a sign of a sign, indicating drunkenness as a predicament experienced by many individuals outside the theatrical space. The status of drunkenness replaces the statement “there are many drunken men.” This expression accurately captures the intended meaning, as opposed to the first and second meanings proposed by Peirce, which are respectively “There is a drunken man in this precise place and at this precise moment” and “Once upon a time there was a drunken man” (Peirce cited in Eco, 1977, p.281). The physical representation of the man conveys drunkenness but suggests the opposite, encouraging people to reflect

on the phenomenon and act differently. The same interpretation can be applied to Mohamed's submissive status, which does not urge people to acquiesce to the dictates of more privileged social classes. On the one hand, there is Mohamed on stage who accepts his weakness and acts accordingly, and on the other hand, there is another Mohamed outside the stage who rejects offensive orders and resists submission to the laws of Father-dinars. The physical act of leaning on the ground adds a visual representation of Mohamed's submissive position, while echoing Bou-dinar's words through verbal utterance further reinforces the message. The philosophy of common sense and good sense underpins this scene, embodying Kateb Yacine's pedagogical approach that hinges on the audience's critical perception. The body, as a sign, effectively conveys a dual meaning, reflecting its materiality and contributing to the heteroglossic nature of the scene.

Mohamed, as a both symbolic figure and a social body on stage, represents history through his body, which embodies both labour and the potential for revolutionary change. Drawing on Bakhtin's concept of "delayed action" in the context of theatre, we can understand that the engagement of the audience's consciousness is not a passive reception of the message but an active and dynamic process. When the audience observes and interacts with a character like Mohamed on stage, they are not merely passive spectators. Instead, they engage actively with their senses and cognitive faculties. As they watch Mohamed's demeanour and actions, they process this information through their sensory experiences. They see his gestures, hear his words, and even sense the emotional tones conveyed through his performance. The concept of "delayed action" suggests that the impact of this engagement does not stop at the theatre's edge. Rather, it lingers in the minds of the audience members. They carry these sensory impressions and cognitive reflections with them even after they leave the theatre. These impressions become memories that may influence their thoughts, attitudes, and actions in other social situations. Rather than defining themselves solely as victims of oppression, Mohamed is encouraging individuals to explore and celebrate their own identity. By locating themselves in their narrative, individuals can resist external attempts to define them. This showcases that decolonization is a process rather than a single event in which individuals and communities need to adapt their strategies and approaches based on evolving circumstances and challenges. In this way, heteroglossic theatre, as a live and sensory-rich medium, has the distinctive power to engage the audience not only intellectually but

also emotionally and viscerally. This prompts the audience to establish connections, respond, and, in line with Bakhtin's idea of "evaluative understanding", critically evaluate each sign in relation to others, avoiding passive acceptance of initial understanding. The act of evaluation requires a willingness to embrace new perspectives and dismiss previous ones.

Just as the body serves as a powerful communicative tool to symbolize the dominance of a one-way narrative and reflect social hierarchies, the chorus plays a crucial role in highlighting the absence of negotiation and dialogue. The chorus serves as a bridge of communication between Mohamed and the audience, making social contradictions more explicit. When Mohamed sings to alleviate the offense caused by his brother, he explicitly exposes the existence of two contrasting social groups that are incompatible. The relationship between these social classes is Manichean; it is not governed by justice, negotiation, or open communication; instead, one group speaks while the other listens, and the first group issues orders while the second complies unquestionably. This dynamic highlights the notion that when money speaks, truth remains silent.

"Il [Bou-dinar] ne connait que le dinar

Et à moi, Mohammed,

Il a laissé des clous"

Bou-dinar cares only about the dinar,

And for me, Mohammed,

He has left nails (Kateb, 1999, p.218).

### 1.5.5. The Role of Laughter in Critical Thinking

*Mohammed Pack your Bag* can be described as a "farce burlesque" because it invokes laughter, mockery, and irony, engaging with Bakhtin's notion that laughter has the power to break free from despairing situations, challenging the rigidity of authoritative culture and break down the barriers of hierarchy. Laughter promotes inclusivity and diversity, transcending negative emotions like indignation or anger (Bakhtin, 1986, p.134-135). Kateb continues to draw inspiration from the popular folk hero J'ha who acts as a central cultural sign that generates a heteroglossia of

interconnected sub-signs. J'ha's actions promote negotiation, dialogue, and the inclusion of multiple voices, offering an alternative perspective to the prevailing narrative. This reinforces the core principles of decolonization and makes them explicit within the performance. Kateb Yacine brings us to a scene where Mohamed and his fellow, Visage de Prison, are aboard a train in Marseille. They encounter Tapage Nocturne, a man who invites them to join a game while he sings and plays the guitar. The music on the train creates an atmosphere of talent and festivity. As Bakhtin argues, "Everything that is truly great must include an element of laughter" (Bakhtin, 1987, p.135). This scene connects our imagination to the talented yet underprivileged individuals we often encounter on trains, in the streets, and in public places of entertainment. They sing, play games, and perform magical tricks to create joyful environments and captivate people's attention.

Upon hearing the music, Caiid, dressed in a vibrant red burnouse, joins the group. He is asked to close his eyes while the three actors hide a large suitcase from him. Fascinated by Tapage Nocturne's music known as "Aayay,"[24] Caiid naively keeps his eyes closed for a while, only to discover that he has been robbed. While Caiid's imagination is engrossed in the music, Mohamed and Visage de prison seize the suitcase and jump off the train, followed by Tapage Nocturne. They easily deceive the lawyer with music and a couple of repetitive words from a hide-and-seek game: "C'est ici! C'est pas ici!" (It is here, it is not here). Through these playful words, combined with the music and the presence of the red burnouse, an interactive relationship is established, juxtaposing joy and anger, triumph and failure, and benevolence and power. This encounter, occurring in a moment of mobility, begins with laughter and culminates in a daring heist, exasperation, and deception. Ironically, the roles of subject and object, as well as the dynamics of dominance and subordination, are subverted. This exemplifies the power of "good sense," or alternatively the existence of an alternative consciousness, and the skillful incorporation of folkloric elements advocated by Gramsci. Tapage Nocturne and his fellows present an image of a reflective action aimed at reshaping social hierarchies.

Within the captivating metatheatrical moment on the moving train, we witness a microcosm of Kateb's vision of theatre as a transformative force for the decolonization of history. Here, the characters themselves become actors within a performance, subtly

[24] a specific musical mode used as a prelude to prepare the audience for a musical performance (Chergui, 1999, p.253)

mirroring the complexities of life and power dynamics. The scene's theatricality serves as an effective reminder of the performative nature inherent in both theatre and history. Just as the characters momentarily subvert established power dynamics through their theatrical ploy, Kateb invites the audience to engage critically with the constructed narratives that shaped our consciousness. In this metatheatrical lens, Kateb implies that challenging established norms and power structures is, in essence, a form of performance—a performance of resistance and awakening. The audience, too, becomes active participants in the process of decolonizing history, navigating the intricate interplay of illusion and reality, much like the characters on stage. In this symbiotic relationship between theatre and life, Kateb's social work emerges as a powerful vehicle for both reflection and societal change, transcending the confines of the stage to become a catalyst for decolonization and critical consciousness.

The act of playing guitar and employing a childish game prove to be sufficient in ridiculing the lawyer and undermining his intelligence in front of the audience. The three marginalized men possess a certain power that allows them to strip the lawyer of his authority, symbolized by the red burnouse and the large suitcase containing confidential documents. The act of robbing the suitcase signifies the transformation of once-confidential information into public knowledge, as the secrets of corrupt individuals are exposed through their naivety. In line with Brecht's principles, the use of music in an instructive manner is paramount, avoiding self-indulgent effects that distract the audience. Kateb Yacine believes that music is an integral part of political theatre, and it is the responsibility of the producer to ensure that music serves its political purpose. Criticizing bourgeois theatre, Brecht asserts, "We see entire rows of human beings transported into a peculiar state of intoxication, wholly passive, self-absorbed, and according to all appearances, doped" (Brecht cited in Thomson and Sacks, 1994 p.220). By incorporating music as a powerful tool in the theatrical performance, the scene in *Mohamed, Pack your Bag* achieves its intended impact by exposing the manipulative tactics of the privileged class and allowing the audience to critically engage with the narrative.

### 1.5.6. Cultural Symbolism: Interpreting Ideology Through Storytelling

Cultural signs, including visual symbols and folk tales, can be a powerful medium to effectively convey dialogue, engage people in an ideology, and reveal social conventions and hierarchies. Kateb's commitment to socialism and his intolerance of capitalism becomes evident in the dispute between Mohamed and Bou-dinar, whose brotherhood is merely a result of their blood relation. One is wealthy and the other poor, one is the master and the other the servant. In one scene, Bou-dinar, who is eating and counting money, suddenly suffers from a severe stomach-ache caused by a meal prepared by Mohamed's wife, Aicha. Seizing the opportunity, Mohamed takes the money and distributes it among the chorus in the street, who act as witnesses to the theft. The chorus, representing the masses, shows their solidarity with Mohamed by declaring, "Rien vu, rien entendu!" (Nothing seen, nothing heard) (Kateb, 1999, p.271). Despite the chorus persistently denying any knowledge of the robbery, Bou-dinar decides to confront Mohamed before the judge, Cadi. However, the judge does not easily resolve the issue as J'ha interrupts the proceedings. Mohamed addresses the chorus, asking them, "Qu'en pensez-vous?"[25] (What do you think?). He raises the question of how Mohamed would have justice if he appeared before the judge dressed in worn clothing while Bou-dinar is dressed in a beautiful gandoura. The chorus understands that justice is often influenced by appearances, and Mohamed's worn clothing would not be in his favour. By asking the people about their opinions, Mohamed seeks a pluralized interpretation regarding the relationship between his physical appearance and the prevailing social system. This approach acknowledges that multiple voices and opinions exist within society, highlighting the complexity of the social system's impact on an individual's access to justice.

On the one hand, Mohamed employs his manipulative rhetoric to persuade Bou-dinar to give him a ride to the court in his luxurious car and to dress him up appropriately. On the other hand, the chorus reaffirms Mohamed's request and insists on fulfilling his demand. The collective voice of the chorus, along with Mohamed's persuasive speech, overwhelms Caiid, who then asks Aicha to bring one of his Gandouras (traditional robes) for Mohamed. This robe becomes not just a social disguise but a symbol of the power of multiple voices, which may potentially protect Mohamed from a severe sentence. It

[25] It is worth recalling that this same scene was incorporated in Kateb's play *Intelligence Powder,* emphasizing the recurring theme and social commentary on the influence of appearance and social status on justice.

reinforces his presence and his voice, which have been marginalized by the dominant influence of a manipulative voice. This moment foregrounds the heteroglossia nature of the scene, where various voices and perspectives clash and interact, ultimately shaping the course of events. Disguised as a wealthy man, Mohamed is transported to the court in his brother's car, wearing the luxurious burnouse. To everyone's surprise, Mohamed successfully convinces the judge that his brother is mentally unstable and falsely claims ownership of everything. This leaves the judge questioning how a normal man could bring a thief in his car and provide him with such decent clothes. The turn of events, driven by Mohamed's manipulations challenge the judge's assumptions and raise doubts about the validity of the accusations against Mohamed. The reversal of power dynamics and the challenge to dominant narratives in this context displays one facet of decolonization. It suggests that decolonization occurs at various levels and within different systems in society. From a Freirean perspective, critical consciousness embodied by Mohamed's good sense, is essential as it prompts the subject of action to challenge preconceived principles through dialogue and argumentation.

*Figure* 9: Cadi (judge) sitting on the wooden chair to represent the court (Théâtre de la Mer, 1972)

Kateb incorporates intersectionality to create a strong sense of solidarity, especially with black individuals who face racism. The chorus, representing immigrants, comments that even though their skin may not be labeled as "black," they lead a miserable life similar to what black people experience. They not only face physical hardship but also the shame of going hungry and being humiliated. The chorus includes voices from different backgrounds, and they use the terms "negro" and "bicot," which are racially

charged, to describe themselves. These words represent the experiences of black people and North African Arabs. They are not used to stereotype but to show that they share common stories of oppression and being pushed to the margins. In their collective sadness, they highlight the big difference between their tough lives and the privileged lives of others. They say, “I am the negro, I am the bicot. You are the one who lives, and I am the one who dies” (Kateb, 1999, p.293). Kateb Yacine's incorporation of intersectionality serves as a powerful tool in his narrative of decolonization. He strategically employs racially charged terms like “negro” and “bicot” to highlight the insidious ways in which oppressors employ language to assign demeaning identities to the oppressed, thereby perpetuating a hierarchy of power. These terms, rather than merely serving as labels, become part of a racist glossary, firmly anchoring individuals within a system of subordination. By confronting and deconstructing these racial names, Kateb initiates a crucial step in the process of decolonization. He exposes how the oppressors manipulate language to strip marginalized groups of their agency and dignity, relegating them to the margins of society. Through the chorus, which includes voices from diverse backgrounds, Kateb foregrounds the shared experiences of oppression and marginalization that unite different marginalized groups, transcending the boundaries of race and ethnicity. By doing so, he invites the audience to contemplate the intersections of privilege and oppression and encourages a more inclusive and compassionate perspective.

### 1.5.7. Exploring Gestus and Heteroglossia

Carlson’s concept of “psychic polyphony” becomes particularly relevant when examining Mohamed's return to his native land after enduring 14 years of deprivation in France (Carlson, 1998, p.294). This homecoming is imbued with a mixture of emotions that resonate with the idea of psychic polyphony. On one hand, Mohamed may feel a profound sense of sadness and loss as he leaves behind his mistress, Marseillaise, who symbolizes freedom, hope, and happiness. The connection he had with Marseillaise represents a form of escape or respite from the challenges he faced in France, evoking emotions of joy and delight. On the other hand, Mohamed can also experience happiness and relief as he reunites with his cherished wife, Aicha. Returning to his wife signifies a return to familiarity, love, and the comfort of his home, triggering emotions of comfort, contentment, and love. However, Aicha, who had high expectations of Mohamed's return,

feels disappointed if her hopes of him returning with a fortune are not met, leading to feelings of shock, disappointment, and embarrassment. The dynamics between Mohamed and Aicha create a complex web of emotions and reactions that can be seen as a form of "psychic interchange" within the theatrical context. In this scenario, the characters' emotions and responses are interconnected and influence one another, generating a rich emotional investment in the performance (Carlson, 1998, p.296).

Kateb Yacine portrays the conflicting emotions within Mohamed, creating a psychic polyphony that encapsulates the dichotomy of his immigrant experiences. Onstage, the juxtaposition of joy and sorrow reflects the contradictory nature of immigrant life, navigating between different worlds and relationships. This varied psychic landscape invites the audience to actively interpret and organize these layers of meaning, mirroring the complexity of the immigrant experience. Kateb's depiction extends beyond the individual to address broader themes of immigration's impact on national identities, challenging conventional notions of belonging and enriching the cultural background of both home and host countries. Mohamed's emotional journey embodies not only personal turmoil but also contributes to the evolution of national identities, triggering conversations about preservation, adaptation, and the transformative influence of migration on reshaping cultures and self-perceptions.

In alignment with Brecht's concept of gestus, which emphasizes the embodiment of social relations and systems within individuals, Kateb portrays his characters as living embodiments of the inherent contradictions in society. Through their emotional expressions, these characters become representatives of the complicated and often conflicting aspects of human existence. Brecht himself argued that the "contradictions inherent in society appear in the make-up of the individual" (Brecht cited in Unwin, 2014, p.67). A prime example of this portrayal can be seen in Aicha's rhythmic reactions, which accentuate the paradoxical interplay between tragic and comic attitudes. Kateb, drawing on the metalinguistic signs akin to Brecht's gestus, captures the complexity of human emotions, showcasing the oscillation between laughter and tears. Balme's insights further elucidate this: in oral performances, there is a rich array of paralinguistic signs that manifest as culturally specific vocalizations. These encompass voice quality, intonation, and vocal reflexes, including laughter and crying (Balme, 1999, p.147). Aicha's alternating cries of "Hi hi!" and laughter with "ha ha!" illustrate a binary attitude that

perplexes Mohamed. On the one hand, her sadness stems from her father's passing, while on the other, her joy arises from the unexpected inheritance of a donkey. In Kateb's cyclical narrative, the theme of survival often necessitates the sacrifice of another, echoing the chorus's lamentations over their underprivileged status, in which they die so that the others survive. This complex portrayal depicts the multifaceted nature of human existence within a society pervaded with contradictions and inequities. Caught up between two women (symbolically France and Algeria), Mohamed regrettably declares,

O Aicha, O Aicha,

You frequently visit the Mufti,

Who sells you his witchcraft

And me in exile, I have empty pockets.

You the roumia, you like soda

Between you both, my heart is broken (Kateb, 1999, p.296).

Mohamed's use of different names when addressing his wife Aicha and his French mistress reflects the contrasting depth of his emotions toward them. When speaking to Aicha, he addresses her by her name, signifying a genuine and intimate connection rooted in love for his native land. However, when referring to his French mistress, he uses the colloquial name "Roumia,"[26] which represents a shallow hope and the temptation of France. Mohamed's attraction to his French mistress stems from her free-spirited nature, and her ability to sing and dance, which momentarily lifts him from his state of despair and brings him joy. However, this connection is superficial and lacks the genuine connection that his relationship with Aicha holds. To restore Mohamed's connection to his homeland and draw him away from the charm of his French mistress, Aicha sings and dances. Through her performance, she calls on Mohamed to return to his roots, urging him to reestablish his connection with his homeland and find solace within their shared culture and heritage.

[26] In Algerian slang, Roumia refers to white women.

Oh, Mohammed what happens?

You forget gasba and bendir[27]

Come back to me, to the nation of goodness (Kateb, 1999, p.297).

Kateb Yacine's inclusion of traditional music and dances in the latter stage of Mohamed's journey in France serves multiple purposes. It symbolizes not only the physical transition from France to Algeria but also the psychological transformation, reminiscent of Fanon's concept of the decolonized intellectual, moving from alienation to reconciliation. Traditional instruments such as the Gasba and Bendir further emphasize Mohamed's detachment from exile and his return to his cultural roots. This exemplifies Fanon and Gramsci's call for a praxis of an effective and thoughtful connection with the past, underlining the significance of acknowledging and embracing one's cultural heritage as a vital component of the decolonization process. As Aicha performs festive gestures accompanied by the music, Mohamed is drawn to join other Algerian groups immersed in the collective atmosphere. Before Mohamed leaves France, his French mistress, Marseillaise, reminds him not to forget his suitcase, which holds his fortune box with the word "Huriya" (liberty) inscribed on it. This musical celebration becomes one of Kateb's preferred staging techniques, entertaining the spectators and creating a sense of shared community and solidarity. Music and dance play a pedagogical role by creating a space for the audience to contemplate their consciousness and make informed judgments about what to reject and what to revise.

The folkloric music and dance in the performance contribute to rehabilitating the audience by raising their national consciousness and pride in their origins and culture. They represent distinct cultural and artistic languages that coexist alongside spoken language. When characters engage in folkloric music and dance, they invite the audience to free their minds and engage in critical reflection on the changes of events, and distribution of roles portrayed on stage. Algerian audiences, particularly those in rural areas, are well attuned to music and dance, as these art forms have become autonomous and highly appealing in cultural performances. The use of "lyric-musical songs" adds nuance and heteroglossic elements to the stage, going beyond simple dialogue. As Brecht

[27] Gasba is a type of Algerian popular music and the name given to the flute used for this music style. Bendir is a drum used for the same music style.

and his music composer Weill argued, music was indispensable in communicating the fundamental gestus (attitude or stance) of a theatrical situation (Brecht cited in Kowalke, 1994, p.226). Aicha's popular dance gestures, amplified with the lyrical songs and the playing of Bendir, go beyond mere artistic movements. They serve as a means of socialist connectivity, reuniting Mohamed with the chorus and creating a sense of collective consciousness.

Kateb Yacine was a dedicated advocate for women's rights and believed in their ability to have roles beyond the socially imposed norms in a patriarchal society like Algeria. He welcomed the actress Fadela Assouss to his theatre and cast her as the leading female actor in all his performances[28]. However, it is important to question whether this alone was enough for her emancipation and for liberating other talented women who wished to follow her lead. The audience, conditioned to believe that women's primary role is raising children and not working outside the home, needed to witness the active side of women as equal citizens who had the right to earn a livelihood and not be relegated to menial tasks like cleaning floors for the wealthy, as Aicha did.

Kateb Yacine employs various means to make explicit the changes occurring and to ensure that the audience feels the shifts taking place. There is a difference between what is implied and what is shown in terms of gestures and dialogue. Women in Algeria had actively fought against the French army, and Aicha could have been explicitly rebellious against the society that denied her rights and subjected her to sexual harassment. Although Aicha and Roumia symbolize two cross-cultural spheres, it is important to consider how to convey to the audience that Aicha is not a typical depiction of the oppressed Algerian woman and that there are other sides to Aicha. In the beginning, Aicha is shown carrying a baby on her shoulders and cleaning the court of the Negrier, who lecherously contemplates her body and addresses her with vulgar words. Aicha uses water and a red towel as symbols of bleeding, turning the scene into a representation of sexual harassment. The Negrier's attempts to undress Aicha allude to the colonial power that forcefully takes over the native land. Aicha's body becomes a metaphor for the nation, which has experienced bloodshed and has been stripped of its wealth and cultural values.

[28] Although the archival photos depict Kateb's audience as predominantly male, a closer examination reveals a noticeable presence of female actors in Kateb's performance titled *Women's Voice*, as illustrated in Figure. 10 below.

The audience needs to develop an objective perspective on the story and understand that their critical consciousness and the decisions they make are determined by their collective destiny. I am skeptical about the presence of women among the spectators of Kateb's performances, and I believe that Kateb Yacine intended to confront the spectators with this absence, as the collective experience is incomplete without a female voice. The photograph below demonstrates the absence of women among the audience of Kateb Yacine. Kateb presents the audience with a critical situation to make them realize the absence of women in time and space. The absence of female voices and consciousness among the audience impacts the pedagogical project of decolonization in Kateb Yacine's works. It serves as a deliberate challenge to the spectators, urging them to recognize and rectify the gender constraints and patriarchal norms deeply ingrained in society. By highlighting this absence, Kateb aims to awaken collective awareness about the critical role of women in the struggle for emancipation and to emphasize the need for a more inclusive, egalitarian, and just society in the post-colonial context. Towards the end of the story, Kateb subtly empowers Aicha, making change about both women's situation and post-colonial Algeria more apparent and attainable.


Figure 10. Actresses of the play *Womens' Voice* performing in a high school in Telemcen City extracted from (Corpet and Dichy, 1994, p.49).

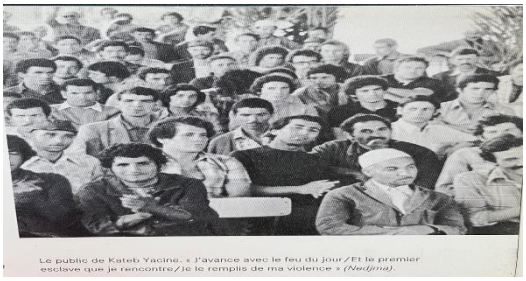

Figure 11. Photo extracted from archives (Kateb and Chergui, 2003, p.43)

Mohamed's return to his homeland initially brings relief to the audience, who have witnessed the prolonged hostility he faced in the diaspora. However, even at home, Mohamed encounters further oppression, represented by Boudinar, who serves as a reminder that the struggle is far from over. This intensifies Mohamed's anguish, reaching a climax where he becomes a seller of donkey meat, the only means of sustenance left by Aicha's father before his death. Kateb Yacine's writing style does not simply inflict suffering in our imagination; instead, it revitalizes our critical thinking by presenting optimistic expressions that continuously provoke us to question: Is there hope amidst this physical and psychological downfall? Can a destitute man name his shop "The Butcher of Hope"? And who would be willing to buy donkey meat?

Mohamed finds himself in the position of selling meat, while simultaneously being coerced into selling his own house to his brother. However, he persistently utters the phrase "The Butcher of Hope." Boudinar, possibly like the audience, also wonders about Mohamed's intentions and exclaims, "Poor idiot, what does he hope for?" It is easy to dismiss Mohamed as a fool, uttering nonsensical words. Yet, Kateb Yacine's use of the paradoxical phrase "The Butcher of Hope" serves as a powerful symbol of the open end in his narrative. This phrase not only suggests that there are more interpretations to the story yet to be revealed but also embodies the idea that the process of decolonization itself is evolving where multiple voices and perspectives are essential for the understanding of the struggle of transformation. By embodying the role of the "butcher of hope," Mohamed takes on an educational role, encouraging the audience to actively participate in the dialogue making judgments on how their race, gender, and social consciousness impact their privileges and disadvantages. Through the incorporation of the popular legend of Mesmar J'ha (J'ha's Nail), Kateb Yacine weaves a story within the larger narrative of Mohamed's immigration. Mesmar J'ha is a well-known tale that combines humor and wisdom, widely popular among adults and children in the Arab world. It tells the story of a cunning and poor man who owns nothing, but a large house inherited from his father. In his extreme poverty, the man becomes desperate and agrees to sell his house to a wealthy buyer but with one peculiar condition: the buyer must not remove a nail pinned to the wall, claiming it as a precious heirloom.

The buyer, considering the condition insignificant, agrees without questioning its significance. However, the following day, J'ha visits the house, expressing his desire to check on his pinned nail. Over time, J'ha becomes a regular visitor, using the excuse of checking the nail as a means to sustain himself by picking meals at lunch and dinner times. Eventually, J'ha decides to sleep near the nail, and his continuous presence becomes a nuisance to the homeowner. Frustrated, the homeowner beats J'ha and finally decides to abandon the house and flee. This tale carries a moral message within Arabic literary tradition, exposing the vices of those who exploit the hospitality and generosity of others to deceive them. J'ha's deceitful plan is often interpreted as a reflection of the unjustifiable occupation of colonizers who forcibly displaced natives from their homes. Kateb Yacine appropriates this story not to sympathize with the exploitative homeowner but to ridicule his naivety in the face of his great fortune and power. This message is directly conveyed to the audience through the figurative speech of Mohamed, highlighting the absurdity of those who abuse their wealth and authority.

This old nail,

is all what is left.

From my home.

But it is all about the nail.

The Butcher's hope (Kateb, 1999, p.107).

Mohamed, using his intelligence, manages to persuade Boudinar to sign a house lease that includes a provision protecting J'ha's right to visit the house and check on the nail. Boudinar initially mocks Mohamed, seeing him as someone who has lost his house but still clings to hope. However, as the story unfolds, it becomes clear that Boudinar will be the one who is ultimately deceived by the seemingly powerless immigrant. “The Butcher of Hope” symbolizes Mohamed's unwavering optimism that one day he will reclaim his house. Despite his material poverty, he remains mentally rich. The scene highlights Gramsci and Freire’s emphasis on the significance of everyday experiences as a valuable source of knowledge, providing marginalized individuals with a voice and activating their underrepresented power to examine problems and create new contexts. This reflects the core principles of a pedagogy of decolonization, wherein individuals are

encouraged to activate their philosophical insights and critical thinking to reclaim agency and prominence within society. It highlights the idea that decolonization is not a passive process but an active and intellectual endeavour, requiring individuals to challenge established power structures, question prevailing narratives, and contribute to reshaping their societal roles and positions. Like Brecht who uses open endings to actively involve the audience, Kateb's style of storytelling does not provide a definitive ending to his adaptation of the story, unlike the original Mesmar J'ha tale. This deliberate choice allows the spectators to contemplate the connections between the two versions of the story and the significance of the phrase "it is all about the nail." By leaving the ending open-ended, Kateb encourages the audience to unlock their imagination and either envision the same ending or create alternative endings that resonate with them. Mohamed does not provide a clear solution or a satisfying resolution to the spectators. Adhering to Freire's dialogue and Bakhtin's dialogism, Mohamed reinforces the idea that meaning is co-constructed through interactive engagement.

In the captivating scene featuring a group of immigrants debating their miserable situation and alienation in an immigrants' center, the character Premier Émigré lays on the ground assuming the role of a dead body after saying "Dans notre pays, il faut mourir pour vivre" (in our country, one must die in order to survive). The body, in this context, takes on a symbolic and metaphorical significance beyond its physical presence. It becomes a voice in itself, silently speaking to the audience through its positioning and role within the narrative. It highlights the harsh reality faced by the proletariat who work tirelessly without complaint (Kateb, 1999, p.320). By staging this tragic gesture of the dead body, Kateb Yacine aims to demonstrate to the audience that in order to survive and bring about change, they must revolt and speak out against oppression. The body, in this context, carries the weight of history, symbolizing the subjugation and exploitation experienced by an entire population. When words alone are insufficient, the body becomes a medium through which the tragedy and struggle of the people are communicated. The body's actions and gestures transcend simple imitation, encompassing the ideology and shared consciousness of a community or collective group. It is through the body's gestures and attitudes that the audience is invited to decipher a gestural discourse that reveals a part of the story. It is worth recalling Blau's quote that highlights the intimate link between an actor's physical presence, their morality, and the essence of their performance. The actor's morality is the central focus of any performance,

highlighting the deeply personal and moral nature of acting. By investing their beliefs, values, and emotions into their portrayal, actors not only represent characters but also themselves. Blau emphasizes the vulnerability and authenticity of an actor's performance, asserting that they are fully present and engaged, with their body serving as an integral part of their craft. This challenges audiences to recognize that the actor's body is inseparable from their identity, experiences, and morality, making each performance a unique and irreplaceable expression of the individual actor. This insight prompts a deeper appreciation of the profound connection between the actor, their body, and the moral dimensions of theatrical expression.

In portraying the complex and contradictory nature of the body, Kateb Yacine echoes the fragmented and unfinished nature of history. His characters serve as representations of the open narrative that encompasses the experiences of individuals within a colonial context. Through this approach, Kateb Yacine invites the audience to engage more flexibly with the complexities of colonialism and resistance emphasizing that history is not a linear and neatly resolved story but a continuous and evolving dialogue. The spectator observes a contradictory character who has no fixed attitude or action, in that their physical status, as well as their psyche, are shaken by circumstances. Kateb portrays the Mufti as a hypocritical character who outwardly professes piety yet submits to temptation when seduced by Aicha after accepting her invitation to visit her house. To reveal the extent of Mufti’s naivety and wickedness, Aicha dresses up in the most exhilarating clothes and goes on to decorate the table with candles. The presence of candles and Aicha's extravagant appearance create an intimate atmosphere that reveals the true nature of some religious men and other hypocrites. It becomes evident that they are not what they seem or claim to be, as their hidden character surfaces in clandestine moments. Aicha confronts the Mufti, questioning his piety as they drink together. She deliberately embarrasses him with her words:

Don't you feel ashamed,

You, the Mufti,

Drinking alcohol (Kateb, 1999, p.326)?

In the context of Brecht's theatre, Barnett indicates that change is a complex and intricate process, characterized by social challenges, conflicting powers, and contradictory behaviours. It is through these contradictions that the possibility of change arises, as individuals do not simply conform to a single mode of behaviour but adapt and act differently depending on their circumstances (Barnett, 2015, p.22). In the case of Aicha, her behaviour and the scene created for the secret meeting do not depict her as a weak woman; instead, her power lies in her contradictory character that challenges societal norms and cultural values. As a poor housewife, she appears to be in a disadvantaged position in terms of social status and economic power. However, her true power emerges through her ability to adapt and manipulate her behaviour to mock and challenge men of power. It is the woman, historically marginalized, who becomes the catalyst for change, implicitly showing solidarity with Mohamed and other immigrants as she transforms Mufti, Caiid, and Boudinar into mere shadows of statues. Through her praxis, Aicha symbolizes a path toward change and exposes the limitations and hypocrisy of those in positions of power. Akin to the state of the post-colonial nation, Aicha is both submissive and powerful. Her initial portrayal as a submissive housewife reflects the subjugation of Algeria under colonial rule. However, her transformation into a character who challenges men of power mirrors Algeria's journey toward asserting its independence and sovereignty. Playing the role of a social educator, Kateb highlights the fluidity and adaptability of individuals' behaviours to portray the ever-evolving nature of thought and perspective in a society struggling with the aftermath of colonialism.

Aicha surprises us by using a collection of arranged statues in her house to ridicule these oppressors. The statues symbolically reverse societal roles and convey the power of women in the face of neo-colonial men. As Aicha and Mufti share drinks, the door knocks, prompting Aicha to ask him to undress and hide in the shadow of one of the statues. Each time someone arrives, Aicha instructs Boudinar, Pomper-tout, and Caiid to do the same. The bodily movements in this episode highlight the explicit display of contradictory behaviour. For instance, Aicha asks the Mufti to kneel on the ground and mimic the posture of a praying mufti. The act of undressing, coupled with performing contradictory gestures, signifies the revelation of their secrets and the tarnishing of their reputations. Mufti's contradictory nature becomes even more apparent when he angrily accuses Caiid of having an affair with Aicha while he is the first to visit her house. The archival photograph below illustrates the depicted gesture that occurs when Boudinar hastily hides

between the statues and accidentally falls upon Mufti, resulting in a burlesque moment that undermines their social status.

When Aicha appears before Mohamed, he is astonished and sarcastically asks her "Qu'est- ce que c'est qu'ce cinéma, Ô Halima?" (What is this cinema, Ô Halima?).[29] Aicha cryptically informs him that the statues are her lovers. Kateb Yacine's incorporation of this scene into the narrative adds a surreal dimension to the story. It involves elements of surprise, absurdity, and the blurring of reality and fantasy. Aicha's ability to transform the entire scene into a fantasy world, where statues come to life and lovers turn into inanimate figures, introduces a surrealistic quality to the play. This surrealistic scene illustrates Kateb Yacine's creative approach. He weaves traditional Algerian elements with Western styles to engage the audience in a critical exploration of the boundaries between reality and imagination. Mohamed addresses Aicha, expressing a sense of betrayal and feeling tricked by the statues. Aicha confidently convinces Mohamed that he is her only true lover, and that the other men are mere figures. She insists that Caiid is a monster when Mohamed hears his noise among the statues. Mohamed approaches Caiid, who mimics the movements of a galloping horse. However, Mohamed remains unconvinced that Caiid is a monster since no monster has ever galloped in real life. He believes that the house is haunted by a genie that must be expelled. Kateb Yacine incorporates this figurative scene into the stage as a means to retrace the history of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Aicha and her decorated house symbolize Algeria, a nation figuratively haunted first by Pomper-tout's occupation and then corrupted by Caiid, Boudinar, and Mufti. Reduced to mere shadows, these four figures engage in a jealous battle to possess Aicha. They also represent shadows in the sense that they fade away, much like the four civilizations Algeria has endured—Arab conquest, Roman, Ottoman, and French colonization.

What deserves attention in this final sequence is the transformation of Aicha's power and the underlying meaning within the surface story of her affairs with the four men. In epic theatre, as Brecht notes, the character evolves and grows before the eyes of the audience through their behaviour (Brecht cited in Unwin, 2014, p.61). This dynamic nature of characters throughout the narrative reflects the idea that human behaviour is not

[29] is an Algerian expression, common in some regions, used to express astonishment when witnessing something that involves any features meant to captivate an audience, much like what one might expect in a carnival, show, or festival.

fixed in society. Mohamed, too, transforms his character, transitioning from the tragic Lakhdar in *The Encircled Corpse* to becoming a socially conscious individual constantly seeking justice, navigating between two worlds as a factory worker in France and a meat seller in Algeria. Kateb's social educational work presents concrete scenarios that demonstrate how social transformation evolves as we expand upon our existing consciousness, empowering ourselves to become liberated agents of reflective action.

*Figure* 12: Boudinar falling on the Mufti's back who is portraying the position of praying (Theatre de la mer, 1972)

This chapter delved into an exploration of heteroglossic elements in *Mohamed, Pack your Bag* showcasing that the language of the stage encompasses a diverse array of aesthetic signs and meanings. This theatrical language is explored through the lenses of semiotics/socio-semiotics approach including dialogue, visual signs, and gestures, which "reconnect the character to society through the actor's body" (Barnett, 2014, p.50). While this chapter provides an analysis of the specific performance text under examination, it sheds light on how stage languages, dialects, signs, and dialogues contribute to our understanding of the dynamic nature of social behaviour. The performance text itself is a situation that employs a combination of concrete and metaphoric cultural signs, existing within a space of communication. The last chapter will delve into Kateb's artistic development in relation to Brecht's approaches, highlighting the diverse range of styles and techniques he employs to confront issues of both national and international oppression. The chapter will shed light on Kateb's innovative approaches and methods in addressing societal and political challenges and decolonizing history.

## Chapter Five

## Transnational Politics and Aesthetic Affinities: Exploring Kateb's Aesthetic Trajectory in *Palestine Betrayed (1976)* through the Lens of his Dialogue with Brecht

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter delves into an analysis of Gestus and other innovative techniques employed in the pursuit of defamiliarization within the context of *Palestine Betrayed*. With a keen focus on Kateb's aesthetic journey, we embark on an examination of these artistic devices, exploring their impact and their ability to challenge familiar narratives and perceptions. I will examine the devices Kateb Yacine adopted to achieve the defamiliarization effect to address an intensive political content that transcends the phenomenon of immigration discussed in *Mohamed, Pack your Bag*. Kateb's style demonstrates an affinity with Brecht by employing a range of interruptive techniques, weaving together elements such as direct and indirect narration, storytelling infused with J'ha's captivating anecdotes in Kateb's case, social gestures that conveyed meaning beyond words (Gestus), a fragmented narrative structure akin to a montaged sequence of images and scenes, and the power of songs delivered by the chorus. These artistic tools converge to create an unfinished performance text that invites and encourages lively debate and interpretation. Each technique serves as an independent method, contributing to the complex dramaturgy of the theatrical experience, and leaving ample room for exploration and discussion.

Before proceeding with the analysis, it is essential to provide a brief historical context for *Palestine Betrayed*. After returning from Hanoi in 1970, where he had witnessed the resilience of the Vietnamese people, Kateb Yacine developed a desire to explore the situation of the Palestinians. He received an invitation from La Maison de la Culture in Lebanon and embarked on a journey to Beirut. Upon arriving in the evening, he experienced an unpleasant encounter at a party, where he met individuals who did not leave a favourable impression on him, including a communist accompanied by a blonde woman. This couple, however, offered him a ride to his hotel in a luxurious car. Along the way, they passed by a truck filled with Palestinian refugees, and Kateb overheard derogatory remarks: "Ah! These Palestinians, they think they own the place" (Kateb cited in Kateb Amazigh, 1999, p.348). Kateb recounts that the refugees seemed to have disturbed their gaze. This incident reminded Kateb of similar situations he had

experienced in France. The following day, Kateb had the opportunity to meet a compassionate man who welcomed him into his home and connected him with Palestinian organizations. Motivated by a desire to seek refuge in the countryside, Kateb was accompanied by Hassan to the heights of Saida, where he spent several months writing and contemplating. *Palestine Betrayed* had its initial performance in Algiers in 1976. From 1977 to 1978, the play embarked on a tour that encompassed both France and Algeria, captivating audiences in various venues. This extensive tour allowed the play to reach a broader audience, raising discussions and awareness about the Palestinian struggle and the complex political dynamics of the region. Kateb's journey proves to what extent we can locate him among Fanon's decolonized intellectuals who are on constant move and do not fail to connect with the oppressed in different contexts. His acute awareness emphasizes the practical nature of decolonization as a praxis.

Kateb Yacine's drafting of *Palestine Betrayed* as a non-linear text reflects his intention to intertwine various historical narratives of class struggle, immigration, racism, colonialism, and imperialism. Through this approach, he aims to create a form of theatre that mobilizes the revolution of Palestinian people, and that of workers and immigrants, and elevates it to a universal demand. To achieve this, Kateb appropriates the *Internationale*, a symbol of revolutionary solidarity, early in the play and recast it by the end, signaling a shift in the narrative's course. In Kateb's vision, individual stories become intertwined with one another, merging into a collective consciousness. The play invites spectators to engage critically with the interconnected narratives, such as those of Algerian and Palestinian people, encouraging them to question power structures and advocate for collective liberation as part of the decolonization movement. This highlights the transformative power of challenging the status quo and reimagining possibilities. Moreover, Kateb explores the uncertainty of relationships and how ideologies intersect to disrupt established power dynamics.

Kateb Yacine envisioned a Fanonion humanist model for the nation, transcending cultural and linguistic boundaries. In staging *Palestine Betrayed*, his intention extended beyond expressing mere sympathy for the tragedy of Palestine. The play became a platform to shed light on ongoing issues and engage audiences in present realities. By exposing the facets of imperialism and its manifestation in Israeli oppression, Kateb Yacine confronted the shadows cast by Western hegemonies. Lacheraf Mostefa, in his assessment of Kateb's plays *L'Homme aux Sandales de Caoutchouc* and *Palestine Trahie*,

acknowledges the playwright for exploring imperialism and its connection to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Lacheraf acclaims Kateb Yacine for daring to delve into these sensitive topics, revealing the underlying forces at play and highlighting the destructive consequences of Western dominance. Addressing these issues establishes Kateb Yacine as a prominent voice in the Arab world, particularly for his commitment to representing the struggles of the Third World (Lacheraf, 1987, p.22-27).

Kateb Yacine's endeavour to stage *Palestine Betrayed* becomes a manifestation of the philosophy of praxis. Despite the tragedy's significance to Algerian and Arab people, mainstream media's reluctance to showcase the play suggests the sensitive truths it brings to light. The play's courage in unveiling hidden facts, such as imperialist and Zionist tactics, about the Palestinian situation and critiquing leaders complies with the principles of the praxis philosophy. Kateb's goal extends beyond mere information; he seeks to engage the Algerian people actively. By encouraging them to observe and connect their struggles with those of others facing oppression, he invites participation in the ongoing struggle. Through the metaphorical staging of Palestine as a symbol for the Algerian struggle to decolonize culture and politics, Kateb transforms the act of decolonizing history into a universal issue (Harrison, 2016, p.3). In the discourse surrounding the influence of Western drama on prominent Arab writers like Tawfik Al-Hakim and Kateb Yacine, Barzanji specifically highlights Kateb as a writer capable of universalizing political themes beyond the boundaries of nationalism. According to Barzanji, Kateb achieves this by focusing on the individual's experience of colonization without succumbing to sentimentalism or clichéd portrayals (Barzanji, 1979, p.127).

Many factors make the analysis of *Palestine Betrayed* complicated. The first obstacle lies in the absence of audio-visual documentation which would help us portray the performance and comment on its different aspects. Furthermore, interpreting the content of the play requires a decent knowledge of the Bible, the Coran, history, popular culture, music, and poetry. Meanwhile, the incoherence of the events and the fragmented nature of the narrative imposes on the reader the challenging task of making appropriate linkages between the sketches and stories. Kateb borrows from previous plays and adds new scenes and excerpts. As we read through the text, we encounter some dialogues we find in *Mohamed, Pack your Bag*. *Palestine Betrayed* borrows from *Mohamed, Pack your Bag* and the latter borrows from *Intelligence Powder*. However, most of Kateb’s repetitive scenes share the unique feature of storytelling inherited from the popular

folktales of J'ha. Kateb politicized these popular tales transforming them into vehicles for conveying alternative perspectives on various historical incidents. This strategy disrupts the conventional linearity of historical narratives and reshapes their fragmented nature. There are many anecdotes of J'ha imbedded in *Palestine Betrayed* which make it more satirical and reconcile its humorous feature with its strenuous political themes[30]. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, Kateb proved a discernible affinity with the Brechtian techniques of alienation, but he skilfully shaped those techniques into a vernacular style of narrative which makes it distinctive.

Another reason that limits our scope of reading *Palestine Betrayed* is that there is limited literature on both the text and the mise-en-scène of *Palestine Betrayed,* as it is the case with the other plays that fall under the genre of popular theatre, and particularly a lack of interest in the theatre of Kateb Yacine. As I have explained in the introduction, I had the chance to take photographs of the original script of *Palestine Betrayed* archived in *IMEC,* written in dialects, although some pages are missing, and the words are hardly legible in many parts of the dialogue. Interestingly, the script was translated into English by Moussa Youcef Selmane as part of his thesis, *Modern Algerian Theatre: Translations and Critical Analysis of Three Plays by Kateb Yacine Abdelkader Alloula and Slimane Benaissa, published in 1989.* Although it is fundamental to have the Arabic version of the text, as it carries vernacular idioms, proverbs, songs, hymns, and religious citations, the translation helps me decipher some illegible parts in the original text. Selmane reports that he relied on a tape recording provided by an actor to decipher many parts of the script. Considering the documentation and guidance Selmane sought from Kateb Yacine, Abdelkader Alloula and Slimane Benaissa and his attendance of many rehearsals of the performance during his research process, I find his commentaries on the major scenography elements of the performance reliable. Together with Kadour Naimi's detailed description of the rules for the mise-en-scène he developed in collaboration with Kateb Yacine, Selmane's evidence is a useful source for the analysis to unfold.

[30]Joha and his donkey
Joha and the cooking pot
Joha and Sultan
Joha and the wall
Joha and his nail
Joha and his shoes

Before exploring the affinities between Kateb's and Brecht's methods of defamiliarization, we should recall the fact that both playwrights draw on Chinese and Greek theatre. We should also bear in mind Kateb's collaboration with Naimi who tends to draw critics' attention to the debts Kateb owes to him. I have previously devoted a whole chapter on this issue, but for the sake of this chapter suffice to state that Naimi and Kateb experimented with Western and non-Western techniques to develop a form of "théâtre total." It refers to a theatrical approach that incorporates a range of elements that include not only traditional elements like text and acting but also extends to incorporate song, music, dance, and potentially other forms of artistic expression (Naimi, 2017, p.13)[31]. The aim is to create a holistic and multi-sensory performance that engages the audience on multiple levels. Naimi developed a model of "théâtre total" out of his fascination with Asiatic traditional theatre forms (from China, Vietnam, and Japan) such as Noh and Kabuki in Japan. On his terms, Kateb Yacine, Selmane argues in his translation of *Palestine Betrayed*[32], aimed for a form of "total theatre" using a variety of performance tools (Selmane, 1989, p.90). Naimi outlined a total theatre where the defamiliarization effect is applied through the intervention of a narrator or chorus, who provides commentaries, the inclusion of music, songs, and dances, and cinematic techniques which consist of the projection of documentary images (at least this technique was used in Naimi's play *La Fourmi et l'Éléphant (Naimi, 2017, p.161).*

### 1.2. Synopsis of *Palestine Betrayed* Scenography

Performed in Algiers in 1976, Selmane confirms that each actor in *Palestine Betrayed* "plays up to 6 different characters," considering that Kateb Yacine involves 61 characters who are categorized as oppressed and oppressors. The oppressed actors wear plain garments jeans and t-shirts whereas costumes like robes and caftans are devoted to the oppressors who are a group of historical figures, presidents, sultans and kings, commissioners, and officers. For example, Roosevelt is dressed in a jacket, a pair of trousers, and a top hat with the U.S. flag colours made of cardboard whereas Abdel-Aziz, king of Saudi Arabia is dressed in a traditional gandoura with a turban and a rosary. Selmane describes the movement of the actors playing the oppressors who are trained to

[31] Livre 5.
[32] originally written as *Falastine Maghdura* in Arabic.

perform in a mechanical way like "puppets." Their speech level is powerful, tyrannic, and softened by a "hypocritical tone" at some points. On the other hand, the actors playing the oppressed move in a natural manner and speak with gentle voices[33] (Selmane, 1989, p.90). Bright and dim lights also serve as a visual contrast between actors portraying oppressors and the oppressed. The contrast in characters' speech and movements highlights the challenges of decolonization. It shows that we must not only change external structures but also the way the oppressed speak and behave, echoing insights from Fanon's analysis of the psychological impact of colonialism. The following list provides a breakdown of the roles, which I have categorized as oppressors and oppressed:

**Oppressive types**

Rabbi,

Rabbi's guard

Merchant

Merchant Guard

English Officer

Mufti

Father Dinard

Nazis

Moshe Dayan

The Fanatic

The Gandur People

Hitler

Roosevelt

Abd-Al-Aziz (king)

Herbert Samuel

Sultan (of Egypt)

[33] Refer to Selmane's thesis for other scenography details (*performance devices).*

Sultan Abdallah

Bunqiba (President of Tunisa)

Nassar (President of Egypt)

Wasila (Bunqiba's wife)

Kissinger

Asad (president of Syria)

Sadat (of Egypt)

Mrs. Sadat

Arab Presidents and Kings

Arab Sultans and Emirs

Policeman

Police officers

General

Courtiers

Two soldiers

France

America

England

Jewish Soldiers

**Oppressed Characters**

Muhammad

Moses

Man

Mad Man

Beggar

First Drunkard

Second Drunk

Aicha (Mammad's Wife)

Esther (Moses' Fiancée)

Arabs

Jews

Arabs of Palestine

Palestinians

Palestinian People

People (of Tunisia)

Palestinian Chorus

Egyptian Chorus

Chorus Leader

Chorus

workers

Students

First Man

Second Man

Third Man

Fourth Man

**1.3. Analysis of the performance text (storytelling, chorus, song, gestus)**

Mohamed and Moses are the two main characters of the play, representing the Arab and the Jewish communities respectively, but they do not represent rivalry rather they maintain a relationship of peace, respect, and trust. By means of characterization,

Kateb Yacine recounts how the People of Palestine (including Jews and Arabs) co-existed before religious and political conflicts were aroused by Zionists and Western states with the help of some Arab leaders who betrayed Palestine. In *Mohammed, Pack your Bag*, the characters of Mohamed and Ernest engage in a dispute over the ownership of a village, each claiming it to be Algerian or French. Kateb Yacine appropriates a similar scene in *Palestine Betrayed* where the characters of Mohamed and Moses find themselves in a heated argument over the Palestinian land. By incorporating this parallel scene into *Palestine Betrayed*, Kateb Yacine draws attention to the recurring theme of territorial disputes and the complexities of national identity. The dialogue between Mohamed and Moses reflects the larger conflict surrounding the Palestinian land, with each character representing different perspectives and claims to the territory. This perpetuated dialogue over territorial authority suggests the abstract nature of the history of decolonization which is not an end but a process of action in performance. This performance operates as both praxis and an educational platform, providing a space for dialogue among participants to engage with theories of emancipation and social progress. Unfiltered, it serves as a source of information and a catalyst for critical thought, challenging the dominant narrative perpetuated by today's manipulative media, which often obscures the truth. In line with Freire's pedagogical approach, the performance aims to disrupt oppressive systems by facilitating collective consciousness and action. Gramsci's concept of a shared language finds its place here, highlighting the importance of developing a common understanding that unites individuals and groups in the pursuit of social change.

While Mohamed claims that the village belongs to Palestine the other insists that it belongs to Israel. England intervenes to put an end to the conflict, to which Kateb ironically gives the name "cockfighting," asserting its dominance on the land which becomes an English territory. After shaking hands, a specific attitude I will emphasize later, Moses and the English officer agreed that the village belonged to both England and Israel asserting their dominance over Palestine. Consequently, Mohamed and Moses become victims of a Western conspiracy and they start suspecting each other. After having beaten the Rabbi and stolen his donkey, Moses fled and trapped Mohamed by leaving him the Rabbi's donkey. Two drunkards were chasing the thief and when they caught a glimpse of the donkey with Mohamed, they assumed that it was Mohamed who took hold of it. The following scenes represent the complexity of the relationship between the established state of Israel and Palestine.

**Scene 6**

(Enter the two drunkards)

**First Drunkard** Our prophet Moses has gone mad, he beat the rabbi and stole his donkey.

(Moses comes back running with the donkey)

**Moses** Everybody knows the rabbi's donkey. The Jews are after me-, I must disguise.

**Moses** (disguised) Hey, you! aren't you Moses' neighbour?

**Mohamed** Moses? Where is he? All the Jewish neighbours; are waiting for him at his doorstep. He must have messed it up.

**Moses** As you are his neighbour, what do you think of him?

**Mohamed,** I like him, but I suspect he is a Zionist.

**Moses,** Moses is not a Zionist, and he has done nothing wrong. He just went to the market and asked me to leave his donkey with you.

**Mohamed** Good old Moses, he still trusts me.

**Scene 7**

**First Drunkard** That's the rabbi's donkey.

**Second Drunkard** An that’s the Arab thief.

**Mohamed** Hurry up, run away. Oh! stupid donkey! Alright then, you'll have to deal with them on your own, I can run faster than you. (The two drunkards agree with each other.)

**First Drunkard** You take care of the donkey and I run after the thief.

**Second Drunkard** Alright

**Mohamed** Moses the road sweeper fooled me again. Just because they saw me with his donkey, they're accusing me of stealing. How am I to get home now? Well, I must disguise. (Kateb translated by Selmane, 1989, p.52)

Kateb is not simply displaying an incident of a Jew who fooled his Arab neighbour and made him subject to theft accusations. Moses and Mohamed are telling the bigger story which involves betrayal, as the title suggests. The question is who has betrayed Palestine? The indirect narrative is a technique frequently employed by Kateb Yacine to engage the audience and prompt them to speculate about the events unfolding like what will become of the people of Palestine when a small conflict between two wretched neighbours turns into a big conspiracy and then results in betrayal. Rather than directly presenting the narrative details or providing explicit explanations, Kateb often relies on subtle dialogue, allusions, and fragmented storytelling to invite the audience to actively participate in the analysis of the world around them. By employing an indirect narrative, Kateb encourages the audience to fill in the gaps and interpret the unfolding events based their understanding. Kateb Yacine's technique of indirect storytelling not only stimulates critical thinking but also allows for multiple interpretations and subjective engagement with the play, echoing Freire's pedagogy of participatory learning. Kateb applies the Freirean model in which education is an active process of inquiry and reflection, rather than a passive accumulation of knowledge.

There are other sub-stories embodied through the behaviour of Mohamed and Moses such as class struggle, bigotry, and exploitation of people by religious men and businessmen. It is the Rabbi's misdeeds in the name of religion that pushed Moses to beat him and rob his donkey. At the beginning of the narrative, the Rabbi claims that God sets fire to Moses' stick and spreads the myth that it is a miracle that brought the prophet back. By appointing Moses as the prophet of the synagogue, the Rabbi and his co-partner the merchant initiated an exploitative business. They agreed to receive people, who visit Moses to help solve their problems, at the synagogue and appoint two guards to charge them fees for each visit. Upon discovering that he is a victim of a nasty business scheme between the merchant and the Rabbi, Moses fled accompanied by the donkey that stands for the exploitation his relationship with the clergy entails. Kateb Yacine indicates that Moses fled religious and capitalist persecution which are two ubiquitous strata in both Jewish and Muslim communities. Moses implies that he is not a Zionist but a victim of Zionism because he attempted to trap his neighbour only after his encounter with England.

Other relationships are made predictable in the narrative, for example, the deals between the Arab leaders and capitalist states. The characters' language, tone variations,

and control over volume serve as distinctive tools that make their thoughts, emotions, and the dynamics of their relationships with one another tangible. When the chorus approaches Mufti to seek jobs and express their grievances, they assert that the "Zionists" are acquiring the most fertile land while leaving them devoid of basic needs such as bread, employment, and a homeland. The use of the term "Zionists" rather than "Jews" by Kateb Yacine reflects Gramsci's concept of universal philosophy, suggesting a collective awareness among the people of the gaps and misleading truths within history. The term Zionist indicates a deliberate choice to challenge hegemonic ideologies and highlights that displacement is a long term plan executed by an allied political movement. Mohamed introduces the Mufti to the audience, "This is the Chief Mufti of Palestine. He owns all the land in the region." The Mufti's response to the people's plea for assistance is characterized by a passive tone that reflects his attitude towards the Arab people, offering nothing more than sympathy. The Mufti addresses them in a soft and empathetic tone, "My children, I sympathize with you," trying to connect with the people on an emotional level. He carries on "... I am defending you before the Great Nations and the Arab Sultans have committed themselves to help you" (Kateb translated by Selmane, 1989, p.55). Mufti's soft tone serves as a tool of manipulation, allowing him to exert influence over the people while masking his true intentions by adopting a sympathetic demeanour, thereby gaining the trust and allegiance of the people. This manipulation is a manifestation of cultural hegemony, where the ruling elite uses cultural practices, such as rhetorical styles, to reinforce their authority and suppress opposition. Mufti claims to be defending the people before the Great Nations, but this defence is interpreted as a means to protect his interests and maintain connections with powerful nations such as France, England, and the United States. Kateb Yacine accuses Arab leaders of selling the lands of Palestinians to the capitalist nations who established the state of Israel.

Although we assume that the people are aware of some facts like the Zionist movement, they are "deafened by the noise of power" as Puff of Smoke declared in *Intelligence Powder*. To help them maintain the flow of critical thought, Mohamed clarifies to the chorus, who are shouting "long live our Mufti," that "the Mufti is defending his land not you," but they start shouting calling him a heretic, ignorant, a traitor and scoundrel echoing the Mufti's words. (Kateb translated by Selmane, 1989, p.56). Their vocal gestures, marked by the use of harsh and derogatory terms, emphasize their opposition to Mohamed's claim and their unquestionable obedience to Mufti's

authority. Kateb Yacine implies that two controversial mindsets interact at the level of the virtual and the actual. One character can deliver different attitudes via a simple word or a gesture. An actor like the Chorus must display to the audience that they carry a double consciousness, in that although they are deprived of their lands and left jobless, they have to deny that landowners like Mufti, Merchant, and Father-dinar are the source of their misfortune.

Actors like Mohamed and Chorus not only convey political and social ideas to the audience, but they also showcase their roles as both indirect and direct storytellers and how they prevent themselves from carrying the psychological burdens of their characters. I have previously mentioned Kateb's fascination with Chinese theatre, which he believes is close to the practice of Algerian popular theatre. The Chinese acting style embeds a kind of defamiliarization effect achieved by the actor's direct contact with the audience, the actor's self-observation, and the use of "minimal illusion." Kateb's actor borrows from the Chinese actor who instead of imitating the character "limits himself from the start to simply quoting the character played" (Willet, 1964, p.94) and who inspired Brecht's concept of *Verfremdung*. In addition to the acting style, which is based on storytelling, Kateb incorporates various elements such as popular songs, music, and mime to interrupt the action and create distinct moments within the play. These interruptions serve to separate different situations and maintain a festive atmosphere, adding layers of theatricality to the performance. Kateb Yacine employs an indirect narrative in scene 13, addressing themes of exploitation faced by laborers and immigrant workers. The narrative takes the form of a clever and humorous dialogue between Moses and Mohamed. This technique allows the audience to infer the situation through their witty exchange, encouraging active engagement and independent interpretation.

Kateb Yacine portrays friendship, revolution, and solidarity by using songs and a brief interaction between Mohammed and Moses. Mohamed and Moses enter the stage singing "Palestine is like a spinning top, here is a Jew with an Arab whop." This joyful interaction between the Jew and the Arab creates an atmosphere of excitement, triumph, and optimism. We can tell that the actors are planning for something when Moses says, "It's time for the meeting, it's a secret meeting" (Kateb translated by Selmane, 1989, p.58). We understand that the actors are bringing up the necessity of unifying workers who must stand up for their rights because no organization is willing to defend them. Mohamed and Moses's acts are guided by the philosophy of praxis; their meeting

highlights the significance of collective action and the empowerment of the working class in their quest for equal rights and justice. Like Brecht, Kateb gives agency to his actors and spectators, in that, "The actor's role is to function as a signpost for communicating social ideas in conjunction with storytelling, a practice which emphasizes the sociopolitical responsibility of his work and does not delve into the psychological complexities and motivations of the character" (Zazzali, 2019, p.40). Meanwhile, Fanon advocates for a style of art that has a clear pedagogical value and actively engages with sociopolitical issues. Mohamed and Moses act as agents of social change highlighting the struggles of the working class and aiming to educate both the characters within the play and the audience about the injustices they face.

In a moment of intrigue and secrecy, Moses raises a question: "What if we're caught in this secret meeting?" To which Mohammed offers a clever response: "We'll simply claim it was the donkeys who organized the trade union"[34] (Kateb, 1989, p.58). The idea of donkeys organizing a trade union is likely intended to highlight the absurdity or ineffectiveness of the actual leadership in the trade union. It suggests that the leaders are detached from the concerns of the workers that they might as well be replaced by donkeys, which is an exaggeration meant to provoke thought and criticism. It is at this point that the actors bring two donkeys along with them to the meeting, emphasizing the theme of exploitation and the harsh circumstances faced by the working class. Through this symbolic gesture, the actors shed light on the plight of those who toil tirelessly, often without recognition or fair treatment. Moses reflects on this idea and remarks, "When you think about it, the true worker is the donkey" (Kateb translated by Selmane, 1989, p.58). In this comment, Kateb Yacine encapsulates the notion that the true essence of labor and perseverance can be found in the humble and often overlooked figure of the donkey. This brief exchange not only adds a touch of humor to the scene but also serves as a commentary on the social and economic conditions experienced by marginalized individuals. The use of this metaphorical device showcases Kateb's ability to interweave social critique and humor, creating a thought-provoking moment that resonates with the audience. It sheds light on the inherent struggles and the potential for finding solidarity and strength in unexpected places. The use of indirect narrative in this passage not only showcases Kateb Yacine's skill in storytelling but also serves as a powerful tool for social

[34] Selmane argues that this is a harsh attack on the leaders of Algerian trade union (Selmane, 1989, p58).

critique and engagement. It prompts the audience to question societal norms and reflect on finding ways to change labour conditions.

In *Palestine Betrayed*, the physical relationships among characters, including their proximity or distance from one another on stage, serve as a nuanced reflection of the prevailing power dynamics within the narrative. In Scene 14, we encounter a brief but impactful physical interaction between Mohamed and a beggar. This scene unfolds with Mohamed positioned on a ladder painting his house that he was forced to sell due to economic pressures. The scene featuring Mohamed and Beggar exemplifies the concept of gestus in Brechtian theatre by using physical and gestural interactions to convey social commentary. At the outset, the physical arrangement of Mohamed on a ladder and the beggar below establishes a clear power dynamic, with Mohamed in an elevated position of authority. However, as the beggar persistently demands charity and insists on Mohamed coming down, the power dynamic shifts, highlighting the fluidity of social hierarchies. As previously discussed in Chapter 1, this scene serves as a key illustration of the complicated nature of oppression, highlighting how power dynamics can be cyclical, with the oppressed at times becoming the oppressors themselves. This reversal demonstrates the vulnerability of marginalized individuals and serves as a microcosm for the complexity of poverty and inequality. Mohamed's initial reluctance and eventual violent response to the beggar's persistence reflect the tensions and conflicts that can arise when people with varying degrees of deprivation interact. By questioning each other's motives and reflecting on their roles within these systems, the characters invite the audience to consider their complicity or involvement in oppression. This reflection echoes Paulo Freire's definition of oppression, which goes beyond the mere exertion of power. Freire defines oppression as a process that dehumanizes both the oppressors and the oppressed. In this sense, Mohamed's actions and the ensuing exchange highlight the complex dynamics of oppression and the need for critical reflection on one's position within oppressive systems.

One notable and effective feature of the physical interactions between actors in the performance is their use of brief physical gestures that act as seamless transitions, effectively connecting one sketch or episode to the next. Through actions like handshakes and leaning against the wall, as elucidated below, the actors maintain a sense of continuity and smooth progression within the play. These physical gestures not only serve to facilitate the flow between scenes but also emphasize the interconnectedness and mutual

reliance of the diverse narrative components within the performance. Both Kateb Yacine and Brecht employed techniques that challenged conventional notions of unity in action and time. They fragmented their scenes into concise sketches or episodes, enabling the exploration of specific interactions and scenarios. This approach, as described by Rouse in "Brecht and the Contradictory Actor," permits each sketch to be examined as a self-contained entity, featuring distinct moments of interaction and storytelling (Rouse, 2000, p. 251). Kateb's incorporation of gestures and transitions between scenes serves as a prime example of this technique. By employing straightforward gestures such as handshakes, he transports the audience from one context to another, effectively engaging them in a new narrative setting. These gestures function as powerful storytelling devices, encapsulating the essence of the characters' agreements, conflicts, and ever-evolving dynamics.

By analyzing each scene in Kateb's text as a distinct interaction, we can observe a fascinating relationship between them. Specifically, the situation in scene 18 can be seen as the outcome of the interaction that occurs in scene 17. To facilitate the transition from one situation to the next, Kateb employs a simple gesture that carries its narrative significance. As mentioned earlier, when Moses and England shake hands, they reach an agreement declaring the land is shared by England and Israel. This same gesture is inserted between scenes 17 and 18, effectively guiding the audience into a new situation. In scene 17, the interaction unfolds between the Mufti of Palestine and Hitler, who enter the stage accompanied by the chorus representing Nazis. Here, the Mufti's primary concerns lie with Arabism and Islam, while Hitler's focus is on combating communism. When the Mufti and Hitler shake hands, it symbolizes a union or alliance between their respective interests. Subsequently, in the second interaction portrayed in scene 18, a battle erupts between Arabs and Jews, highlighting the consequences of this union. Through the strategic use of symbols, storytelling, and gestures, Kateb Yacine conveys a message about the nature of theatre. He suggests that theatre does not merely "depict society or human nature directly;" instead, to borrow Rouse's words on Brecht, it "provides 'interpretive examples' that invite audiences to reflect and engage with complex social and political dynamics" (Rouse, 1984, p.28). This emphasizes the intellectual's clear and straightforward creative style, reminiscent of Fanon's description of Fodeba's poem, aiming to educate the audience without overwhelming them with an overload of information.

Kateb interweaves comedy and tragedy in the two following scenes to inform us about some historical facts; he is directing his audience's attention to the narrative instead of the characters. During the battle between Arabs and Jews, the Fanatic enters the stage looking for Mohamed, "Where is that son of a bitch who frequents Moses" (Kateb, 1989, p.61). The Chorus Leader strangely asks the Fanatic to hold a wall that might fall while he calls on Mohamed. Although it makes more sense to believe that the Fanatic is a Jew because he is chasing Mohamed, we cannot assume that he is a Jew. He plays more of a symbolic role embodying religion; he is therefore holding up religion, which many people believe is the source of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

**(Mohamed enters addressing the Fanatic)**

Why are you puffing and struggling?

And your back against the wall is breaking?

**The Fanatic** I am holding the wall because it may scumble, And I'm waiting for Moses' neighbor, that scoundrel.

**Mohamed** if you have to hold the wall, why don't you use your stick as a support?

**The Fanatic** do you think it's a good idea?

**Mohamed** let's see (he takes the stick and beats him.)

**The fanatic** screaming Oh! Oh! Oh!

**Mohamed,** you see, there is nothing wrong with the wall.

So, leave it for it doesn't need you at all.

And don't be afraid, your religion won't fall.

In the dialogue between Mohamed and The Fanatic Kateb diverges from Western dichotomies and conventions, as suggested by Fanon, showcasing his storytelling genius through figurative images that provide a multidimensional critique. Kateb uses religious and cultural motifs to critique history which is fraught with contradictions. To understand the significance of the dialogue, we can recall the anecdote of Jha's nail in which the merchant agreed to keep the nail fixed on the wall if J'ha signs the lease. This anecdote can be translated into the gesture of the fanatic, who leans his back against the wall while waiting for Mohamed to show up. In Algerian slang, if someone is told, "You are holding

the wall like J'ha" or "holding onto something like J'ha's nail," it means they are stuck to one place or one position and are reluctant to move. In this context, the fanatic is unwisely clinging to the wall because he dwells on one mindset rooted in religious thought that is believed to separate Jewish and Muslim communities. This committed devotion to a single mindset not only critiques historical divisions but also shows resistance to decolonization. The process of decolonization necessitates a flexible and evolving consciousness, one that can adapt to changing dynamics and embrace inclusivity. Leaning against the wall symbolizes the complexity of this transformative journey, highlighting that breaking free from ingrained ideologies requires a willingness to detach from fixed positions and embrace a more open and adaptive mindset. Thus, Kateb Yacine's use of this gesture offers a pluralist commentary on the challenges and imperatives of decolonization, advocating for a more flexible and inclusive approach to breaking down historical divisions.

The wall being referred to is the Western Wall in Jerusalem, a Muslim property that the Jewish people took over claiming it belonged to their ancestors and using it for lamentation and religious practices. By asking The Fanatic to let go of the wall and reassuring him that his "religion will not fall," Mohamed is calling the audience to relinquish the belief that religion is the source of the conflict and consider other ideological factors at play. Arguably, if we assume that The Fanatic is a Jew, then Kateb's message is that the wall is not Jewish property, and by holding onto it, The Fanatic asserts a historical position aligned with that of the colonizer. The wall as an ideological symbol can similarly stand for the established state of Israel. It challenges the notion of exclusive ownership and aligns with the broader context of decolonization by urging a reconsideration of historical narratives and a recognition of multiple perspectives. This symbolic exchange prompts critical reflection on issues of ownership, history, and the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, ultimately emphasizing the need for critical thinking in the decolonization process.

Kateb Yacine deploys beautiful figures through simple gestures like leaning against the wall to make the event strange and at the same time comprehensible to the audience. The actors do not engage in mimesis; they play a crucial role in exposing the contradictions of the character's behavior and the dynamics of social relationships. Instead of simply embodying a single consciousness, the actors become creators of characters with a multi-consciousness. Even though The Fanatic shows up chasing

Mohamed and insulting him, he ends up fooled and beaten by the latter. The Fanatic plays both the role of the colonizer and the religious persecutor and by making himself subject to trickery, he suggests a reversal of social attitudes and hierarchies and demonstrates a dynamic flow of consciousness. This reversal of power dynamic is a reminder of Fanon's insistence that decolonization means the last shall be first. Kateb's theatre challenges traditional notions of character portrayal and embraces a multi-conscious approach, where actors become agents of storytelling and social critique.

Mohamed takes on the role of the storyteller who not only engages with the characters on stage but also addresses the audience directly revealing the inconsistencies of characters' attitudes and disclosing to the audience the missing parts of the story. When Herbert Samuel enters the stage, he introduces himself to the Rabbi as the BRITISH HIGH COMMISIONER OF PALESTINE! After having introduced himself, Mohamed takes the opportunity to shed light on the Commissioner's dual identity. Mohamed addresses the audience by saying, "He is both English and Zionist. He was lamenting, now he has become high commissioner" (Kateb trans by Selmane, 1989, p.63). By highlighting Samuel's transformation from a lamenting figure to a position of power, Mohamed invites the audience to question established identities and to reflect on the Zionist alliances and the motivations behind them.

Mohamed is giving more facts about the history of Samuel as a Jewish governor in Britain who was appointed commissioner of Palestine in 1920 to support the establishment of an Israeli state in Palestine. This direct address to the audience creates a dialogue between Mohamed and the spectators, as he becomes a narrator who guides them through the unfolding narrative. Mohamed not only imparts information but also encourages interactive engagement emphasizing the pedagogical aspect of dialogue. Naimi clarifies how the space is instrumental for the narrator/ The Chorus to keep in direct contact with the spectator. He emphasizes its circular shape, Al-halaqa or Halga as he puts it, where the spectators are seated. The movement of the narrator or The Chorus is designed to align with the circular itinerary determined by the space, allowing for direct communication between the performance and the audience. In conjunction with the text or action they are meant to fulfill, the narrator/ The Chorus must stop at four successive positions where the audience members spread (Naimi, 2017, p.257).[35] In his discussion

[35] Refer to Naimi's diagram of the space.

of the influence of Western stylistics on Kateb's tragedy, *The Circle of Reprisals,* Zeyad Barazanj comments on the function of turning the actor's attention to the audience which he finds similar to the Spanish poet Lorca[36],

> Both poets demand the conscious participation of the audience [similar to the Brechtian demand, but through different techniques and for different ends], a kind of commitment to the poetic experience that transcends the mere audience identification with the character. In the works of both poets, the audience cannot sit back and detach themselves by sinking into their own reveries. They are addressed directly by the characters and are made intimate participants in the personal outpouring of the characters' feelings; Lakhdar does not have another character with whom he can communicate: the audience is the other character (Barazanji, 1979, p.150).

Even when he is not directly addressing the audience, Mohamed's tone in the presence of the commissioner, Herbert Samuel, is explicit, conveying the intention behind the commissioner's presence in Palestine. When Samuel orders Moses and Mohamed to leave the territory, Mohamed reacts by saying "So, this is it! You're colonizing me! (Kateb, 1989, p.63). This reaction exposes the Zionist ideology and the oppressive actions carried out by the commissioner. At the same time, the actor playing England transparently reveals their tactics and instigation policy to incite a conflict between Arabs and Jews, with the intention of portraying the Jews as victorious. This manipulation is meant to deceive both Moses and Mohamed, making them believe that they must leave Palestine. The actors focus on communicating these facts and social roles, highlighting the influence of the characters' behaviors on one another and the impact of social circumstances. Mohamed's defiant assertion of his belonging to Palestinian land serves as a powerful example of resilience in the face of Israeli colonization tactics. He declares, "Well they can deport me, they can put me in jail, but my roots are here and here I shall stay and die" (Kateb, 1989, p63). His tone in this scene carries a sense of unwavering resolve and determination. He embodies the spirit of Palestinian resistance, symbolizing

[36] In one of his archived press articles, "Espagne: Un Fantôme Andalous sur Les murs de Madrid," Kateb describes his fascination with Federico Garcia Locra's memorable poems and his tragedy *Yerma* which was advertised on the wall of a theatre in Madrid. Kateb denounces the assassination of Garcia and the fact that none of his plays were staged or performed in Spain. He expresses his frustration with censorship and admiration for the poet saying "On peut assassiner un poet. On ne peut pas tuer la poésie" (It is possible to assassinate a poet. One cannot kill poetry)

the courage of the revolutionary people who have endured displacement and colonization. Mohamed's refusal to yield to Samuel Herbert's arrest reflects the enduring spirit of Palestinians and their commitment to their land. This scene exposes the colonialist policies at play and the manipulation of religious and political factors within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The behavior and tone of the Chorus in the following dialogue exemplify a submissive attitude that echoes the impact of colonialist policies and religious manipulation. Their passive compliance with the statements made by the Rabbi shows how individuals can be influenced and indoctrinated by oppressive systems. This portrayal effectively comments on the extreme psychological effects of colonization, emphasizing the urgency of resistance and resilience in the face of such manipulation and oppression. It highlights the complex dynamics at play in societies under colonial rule, where conformity is often enforced through various means, including religious and authoritative figures.

**Rabbi** Every land you touch with your feet is yours![37]

**Chorus** Every land we touch with our feet is ours!

**Rabbi,** nobody can resist you![38]

**Chorus** Nobody can resist us!

Like the main characters, The Chorus acts as a commentator, either through direct statements or by singing and dancing. The Chorus acts as a collective entity, overseeing the major changes in events and highlighting the details of the story for the audience. This technique is reminiscent of Brecht's approach, aiming to interrupt the action and create a separation between the spectator and the characters. Brecht used various methods such as songs and "epic banners," and the use of songs in particular, David Barnett highlights, "does not exclusively serve the purpose of telling an audience more about the figures or an episode, but the songs comment and reflect on figures, events or themes, as in The Threepenny Opera" (Barnett, 2015, p.72).

[37] Deuteronomy Ch. 11, v.24 and Joshua Ch.1, v.3. The fifth book of the Old Testament.

[38] Deuteronomy Ch.11, v.25.

Brecht revolutionized the concept of the Greek chorus in his theatrical works. In traditional Greek drama, the chorus functioned as a collective voice representing the perspectives of the community, commenting on the events and moral implications of the play. Brecht took inspiration from this concept but transformed it into a powerful tool for political and social critique in his Epic Theatre. Brecht's chorus served a similar purpose as the Greek chorus by providing commentary on the action. However, Brecht's chorus went beyond mere observation and became an active participant in the storytelling, challenging the audience's perception and encouraging critical engagement. Unlike the unified and harmonious Greek chorus, Brecht's chorus comprises individual actors who present various perspectives, break the fourth wall to address the audience directly and expose the mechanics of the production. This approach interrupts emotional engagement, encouraging a more contemplative and analytical perspective among the audience. Brecht's choruses use songs, gestures, and direct communication to report crucial ideas, highlight social contradictions, and offer historical or political context, bridging the gap between the audience and the narrative while stimulating critical thinking. In his plays, for example in *The Threepenny Opera*, singers serve as reporters, not openly expressing personal emotions but conveying information, commentary, or scene essence to the audience, with a focus on storytelling and conveying the play's message rather than eliciting emotional empathy. These elements collectively define Brecht's concept of epic theater, aiming to engage audiences intellectually and politically, challenging conventional theatrical norms (Willet, 1988, p.133-134).

In Kateb's play, The Chorus plays a crucial role in providing the audience with essential information about the organization of the significant match between Mohamed Zitun and Moses the road sweeper. This informative function of The Chorus serves to contextualize the event and its broader significance within the narrative. By doing so, it helps the audience grasp the larger implications surrounding the match, including the involvement of external entities such as the Organization of the Big Nations. This use of The Chorus as a narrative device highlights its capacity to convey crucial details and shape the audience's perception of key events in the play. For instance, when England initiates conflict between Jews and Arabs, and America decides to referee a match organized by France and England, The Chorus ensures that the audience understands the complexities involved. It highlights how the Jews' victory, which concludes the story, is

not solely a matter of luck or divine blessing but is influenced by their access to weapons and external support. The Chorus serves as a means of engaging the audience in critical thinking and encourages them to question the underlying motivations and power dynamics within the narrative. The Chorus acts as a facilitator for critical reflection and dialogue among the audience members similar to how Freirean educators aim to stimulate critical thinking and analysis among their students. In scene 27, when the Sultan of Jordan declares his intention to pray for Palestine and explain the new policy, Palestinian People respond by singing,

And the treacherous leaders

Sold Palestine in the name

Of Arab unity! (Kateb translated by Selmane, 1989, p.71).

This commentary highlights the betrayal of the Palestinian cause by some Arab leaders who prioritize their own interests over the struggle for Palestinian liberation. The Sultan of Jordan, in a hypocritical act, engages in negotiations with Moshe Dayan to divide the lands of Palestinian peasants who have been forcibly departed from their homeland. While he feigns prayer for Palestine, the chorus interrupts his contradictory behavior and exposes the falsehood of Arab unity as a mere facade. The Arab Union exemplifies the superficial coalitions that Fanon criticized, as they frequently function as platforms for rhetorical posturing without undertaking substantive measures to dismantle colonial structures. Lacking genuine praxis and collective consciousness, such unions ultimately fail to achieve genuine liberation. Mohamed, driven by a desire to avenge the Palestinians and validate Jha's theory, intervenes in the scene. This scene draws inspiration from the hunting day anecdote in *Intelligence Powder,* where redemption is sought through money. Mohamed's ironic gratitude to the King of Jordan for the money he had received earlier in the day highlights the theme of manipulation and exposes the contradictions within the characters' actions. Amidst the chorus's glorification of the King of Jordan, Mohamed ironically addresses him, "Thank you King of Jordan for the money you gave me this morning. I like hunting too, so I bought a gun with your money" [39] (Kateb, 1989, p.71). Through this scene, Kateb Yacine sheds

[39] The text shows that Mohamed kills the Sultan and the Sultan Kills Mohamed. This act seems contradictory, but Selmane explains that Mohamed shows up later on the stage and that this act was not included in other versions of the play. (1989, p.71). Possibly the death of Mohamed is symbolic.
In 1951 the King of Jordan, Abdullah was assassinated.

light on betrayal and manipulation surrounding the Palestinian issue. The use of irony and appropriation serves as a means to expose the contradictions and unveil the true intentions of the characters involved.

Mohamed's act of buying a gun with the King's money serves as a powerful symbol of reversing power dynamics and resisting neo-colonial hegemony. It represents a form of empowerment in the face of oppression, as he uses resources provided by a figure of authority to challenge the status quo. This action embodies the essence of resistance and dismantling narratives that uphold neo-colonial narratives. Furthermore, it calls attention to the process of decolonization, where individuals and communities continue to reclaim their agency and challenge the structures of domination. Mohamed's act challenges the power imbalance and questions the legitimacy of those in authority, emphasizing the importance of self-determination in the liberation struggle. In the context of the pedagogy of liberation, this scene becomes a pivotal lesson in the potential for individual power and resistance against oppressive systems. It encourages critical thinking and inspires the audience to deconstruct existing narratives and consider alternative actions in the pursuit of decolonization and genuine liberation.

By including more songs between events, Kateb Yacine amplifies irony and sheds light on the deceitfulness of Arab leaders in the name of Arab unity and the hegemony of Western leaders. To cover its hegemonic policies, America acts as a peacemaker using manipulative and intriguing words such as “blue helmets.” Kateb brings us to the confrontation between Presidents of the Middle East and America which attempts to expand its imperialist plans over the region. America reassures Moshe Dayan “Don’t worry, I shall have a whole army on Arab territory under the cover of U.N...” (Kateb, 1989, p.76). Kateb Yacine criticizes the shallowness of Arab unity which brought more trouble in the Middle East because each President is chasing the U.S. dollar instead of genuinely resisting imperialism. I believe Kateb Yacine uses the character Nassar, President of Egypt as the emblem of Arab unity because he was praised in the Arab world to call for a unified Arab consciousness against the spread of Zionism. Kateb draws the audience’s attention towards the fragility of Arab unity and particularly to the oppressive regimes of the Arab states.

Because Nassar means the winner in Arabic, Mohamed addresses him by saying, “Yes you are Nassar the victorious and I am Mohamed the wretched” (Kateb translated

by Selmane,1989, p.73). Amid a fight between England, France, and Moshe Dayan to take over Sinai and other parts of Egyptian territories, America, in the name of peace, devises a plan for Moshe Dayan to defeat Nassar who ends up running bare feet. Each time Moshe Dayan gives Nassar a knock, Arabs of Palestine and Mohamed sing to make him subject to mockery and shame. Music allows the spectator to interpret events and characters, and for critical questions to arise. Arabs of Palestine and Mohamed comment on the defeat of Nassar and reflect on the factors that led to the victory of Moshe Dayan.

**Arabs of Palestine** (singing) backed by Russia and America

He Knocked him down treacherously.

Then looked at him disdainfully.

[…....]

**Mohamed,** he gave him the officer's defeat.

And left him run bare feet[40]

Oh, he knocked him down.

The narrative rapidly shifts in space and time and Kateb Yacine brings us to the Maghreb where he continues to denounce the regimes of Arab presidents. His revolutionist position against oppressive regimes becomes more explicit in scene 20 in which he exposes the revolutionary spirit of people and their national consciousness. The scene opens with People singing upon the entry of Bunqiba[41] which is the name given to the Tunisian president Bourguiba. The parody is implied in the song, suggesting that power and wealth often result in misery reminiscing Puff's philosophy in *Intelligence Powder*. Through this rhymical song, Kateb Yacine suggests that change is not only conceived but imminent, as the people have already embraced J'ha's philosophy,

[40] Kateb includes this gesture a few times to ridicule the characters such as the President, People, and officers later in scene 32. People react to the death of the King of Jordan by running barefoot to pick up their shoes (they are concerned about their shoes more than the assassination of the king). Kateb Yacine borrows from another tale of J'ha. One day J'ha and his father were invited for dinner, but when they were leaving the house, J'ha noticed that his shoes were missing. He started screaming and threatening people that if no one brought his shoes back he would do what his father had done. The people surprisingly asked him what his father had done. J'ha replied that he got home barefoot.

[41] Kateb names Tunisian President Bu-Nqiba instead of Bourguiba to imply that he brought chaos to the country with his oppressive power. Like Bou-dinar (Father dinar) Bou-nqiba is Father Nqiba which means father of crisis if not catastrophe because Nqiba is the miniature word for Nakba (catastrophe) which refers to Israel's ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, the destruction of the lands and the eviction of Palestinian people from their homes in 1948.

transforming themselves into demonstrators. Kateb Yacine suggests that genuine social change arises from not only theoretical understanding but also active engagement and reflection on one's actions. He reflects Gramsci's emphasis on the synthesis of theory and practice, where individuals critically reflect on their experiences and actively work towards transforming social structures.

**People** O Bunqiba, your fortune

Has brought us misfortune.

The couplet mentioned, with the word "Bunqiba," possesses a duality that interweaves comedy and tragedy. On one hand, it elicits laughter due to its humorous tone, but on the other hand, its literary meaning carries a cataclysmic weight that stirs a sense of suffering. This juxtaposition evokes a complex blend of emotions within the audience. Through this couplet, the people express a shared sense of determination and helplessness simultaneously. They acknowledge their wretched condition, which has driven them to become agitators in the face of their dilemma. This collective voice highlights the necessity of unity and collective mobilization to confront and dismantle oppressive systems. They encourage the audience to recognize that the fight against colonialism and its remnants extends beyond individual efforts and requires a collective revolution. In this sense, the songs serve as a pedagogical tool, imparting the lesson that genuine decolonization necessitates a broader societal transformation rooted in solidarity and shared struggle.

**Mohammed** (to a group of people) what are you doing?

**People** We are inflating the president.

**Mohamed** Is this your Job?

**People** we couldn't find another job, so we keep inflating the president day and night, nonstop.

**Mohamed** Aren't you afraid he will explode?

**People** Yes, we actually want him to explode.

**Mohamed** I don't think he will

**People** Good things take time

In this excerpt, there is a notable shift in the physical attitude and vocal characteristics of the characters, signifying an ideological shift and character development. Initially, the people seem to reflect a resigned acceptance of their situation, possibly implying compliance with the prevailing power structure. However, as the dialogue unfolds, there is a notable change in their tone. When Mohamed questions whether they are afraid the president will explode, their response reveals a significant shift in their attitude. The fact that they want the president to explode suggests a growing discontent and a desire for radical change. This shift in their vocal expressions and the underlying tone of rebellion highlights the evolving gestus within the scene. It represents a transformation from complacency to a willingness to challenge the oppressive regime. This moment serves as a powerful commentary on the potential for collective resistance and the dynamic nature of gestus in response to evolving political circumstances. It highlights how actors can use changes in physical demeanor and vocal characteristics to convey shifts in characters beliefs and motivations, contributing to the overall narrative and social commentary of the play.

The scene portrays an intensified confrontation between the oppressed and the oppressor, in which the oppressed assert their collective voice to unveil the truth. The events escalate when the Tunisian police resort to violence in an attempt to shatter peoples' consciousness. However, the momentum quickly shifts when Students intervene to bring up more facts. The students comment, "So, now we receive the friends of Israel!" (Kateb, 1989, p. 74). After people became aware of Bounqiba's soft policy against the acceptance of an established Israeli state or at least the policy of dividing Palestinian territory between Jews and Arabs, they decided that the president was a traitor who must be condemned to death.[42] The cycle of action and reaction continues as the students respond by burning the American Embassy, and in response, Bunqiba orders his officers to imprison them. The social action undertaken by the students and people is reinforced by an inflating song that resonates throughout the scene. It concludes with the people singing together, expressing their defiance and disdain towards Bunqiba, "O Bunqiba be damned. For you're not ashamed" (Kateb, 1989, p.56). The sequence reinforces the

[42] this applies to Bourguiba's relationship with France and his position against French colonization.

escalating tension, the collective resistance of the oppressed, and the growing determination to challenge the oppressor's authority.

Kateb Yacine targets students, like peasants and workers, as one of the social categories at the forefront of movements for change and liberation in his work. This choice likely accentuates the role of educated youth in challenging oppressive systems and contributing to decolonization efforts. In the scene described, the students embody this role by intervening in the confrontation between the oppressed people and the oppressive regime. Their comments and actions reflect a high level of awareness and a commitment to challenging the injustices they perceive. This portrayal highlights the significance of Freire's pedagogical philosophy, which positions critical consciousness and the transformative potential of education as vital components of decolonization and the struggle for justice. By empowering individuals and communities to resist oppression and advocate for their rights, education becomes a powerful tool in challenging oppressive systems.

Kateb's approach to storytelling and the portrayal of the individual's power to impact their circumstances demonstrates a balance between the inevitability of tragedy and the potential for change. While the action and reaction in his works often reflect a spiral of events that oscillate between tragedy and optimism, there is a recognition that the tragedy can be confronted and positively received. Unlike Brecht, who believes that tragedy "implies that we have no power of self-determination and robs us of the opportunity to change our situations for the better" (Unwin, 2014, p.55), Kateb believes that by confronting the tragic, individuals can bring about positive change in their situations. The final couplet of the scene signifies a continuous sense of enthusiasm and hope, despite the awareness that the students have been jailed for their interference. The people continue to sing and express their disdain towards the president, showing their unwavering spirit.

Although they are aware of the potential consequences they may face for their continued protests, they maintain the belief that "Good things take time," highlighting that the path of decolonization is a challenge. This reflects their understanding that change and improvement may not come immediately, but they remain determined to persevere and create a better future. The actors in Kateb's plays is conscious of their suffering, but they do not become consumed by it. Instead, they act in a way, that is like the epic actor's

behavior, allowing their character to grow before the eyes of the audience (Unwin, 2014, p.61). By blending tragedy and optimism, Kateb highlights the complexities of human existence and the potential for individuals to effect change even in the face of adversity. His approach encourages audiences to confront the tragedy and maintain a sense of hope and agency in their pursuit of a better human condition.

Selmane argues that the songs performed in *Palestine Betrayed* transmit multiple feelings and he points to the criticality of songs and music in engaging the audience in the lyrical performance; “music and song, on the other hand, contribute a great deal to the atmosphere of the play and constantly change - expressing lament, criticism, comment or joy and dancing. Because of the popularity of the songs and the tunes, the spectators often join in the singing, clapping their hands” (1989, p.90). This level of audience participation goes beyond mere observation and becomes a collaborative element in the aesthetic and thematic production of the play. Naget Khadda further emphasizes this collaborative aspect by stating that the meaning of the play is not solely determined by the author but evolves in collaboration with the audience as the spectacle unfolds (Khadda, 2020, p.90). This suggests that the audience's active engagement and interpretation play a significant role in shaping and developing the overall meaning and impact of the performance. While the extent of audience participation may vary, encompassing laughter, applause, singing, or even deeper involvement in the thematic exploration, it is evident that the audience’s response and interaction contribute to the overall experience and understanding of the play. This collaborative relationship between the audience and the performance reflects Kateb's intention to create an interactive theatrical experience that transcends the boundaries of traditional passive spectatorship.

Both Kateb Yacine and Bertolt Brecht sought to challenge traditional notions of passive spectatorship and engage their audiences in a more active and intellectually stimulating manner. While their theatrical approaches differ in style and cultural context, they share a common goal of encouraging audiences to think critically rather than becoming emotionally absorbed in the characters and plot. Bertolt Brecht's theatrical philosophy emphasized the importance of maintaining an awareness of the theatricality of the performance, much like spectators at a boxing match are conscious of the staged nature of the event. The audience would not passively identify with the characters but would critically analyze the social and political themes presented on stage. The conventional proscenium stage typically separates the actors from the audience,

maintaining a “fourth wall” that represents the invisible barrier between fiction and reality. The four-corner arrangement of the spectators in Kateb’s play is reminiscent of the boxing ring stage that Brecht conceptualized to remind the audience that they are watching a performance.

In scene 31, Kateb Yacine uses music and dance to depict the October 1973 Israeli-Palestinian war and the involvement of the United States in the Middle East, specifically highlighting the prioritization of Middle East economic wealth by the major powers. The chorus sets the tone by singing facts and criticizing Egyptian President Sadat, referring to him as a “womanizer.” This criticism serves as a commentary on his character and his willingness to engage with the big powers. The arrival of Kissinger, representing the United States, is portrayed through dance and song. The chorus sings lines that suggest Kissinger's role as a seducer who attracts and manipulates other powers with promises of dollars. Kissinger invites Sadat to join him on the dance floor, and Sadat eagerly accepts the invitation. From there, Kissinger attempts to convince other Arab leaders, such as Assad, to join in the dance as well.

**Kissinger** these are small steps.

Come along and dance.

Come along fathead.

Run away from hell.

We’ll cover you with dollars.

**Sadat** you President of Syria

No more talk, and no hysteria

If you want to understand

Come and dance with our friend.

**Kissinger** you Commander of the faithful

You king Hussain the joyful

Take a few steps to the right.

This ironic portrayal highlights Kissinger's focus on persuading Arab leaders that his offer, represented by the dollars, is irresistible. The use of music and dance in this scene not only adds a lively and dynamic element to the performance but also serves as a metaphor for the political maneuvering and seduction taking place behind the scenes. In scenes 31, 32, and 33, Kateb relies heavily on music, songs, and dance to condense many historical facts and convey major events to the audience. By relying on these artistic elements, the play enables the audience to absorb the narrative's complexities in a more engaging and accessible manner. The rapid montage of scenes with the use of music and dance reflects Kateb's method of engaging the audience by metaphorically "tormenting them and not letting them catch their breath" (Kateb cited in Chergui and Kateb, 2003, p.38). The audience is presented with a series of historical facts, contradictions, and critical moments and is encouraged to make connections between different scenes, characters, and events, piecing together the larger narrative and understanding the underlying messages. This active engagement allows them to delve into the play's socio-political commentary and reflect on the implications of the depicted situations.

In the analysis of *Intelligence Powder*, I discussed the significance of dance in Assous's adaptation of the play, where music and dance played a prominent role in the final scene. This scene depicted the undermining of the power held by the Sultan, Mufti, and Merchant, as they were portrayed dancing like puppets alongside a group of women attempting to undress them. Reflecting upon this performance, it becomes evident how music and dance are used in Kateb's scenes in *Palestine Betrayed*, such as the portrayal of the dancing of Kissinger and Sadat, to depict the oppressor actors as mere caricatures, further condemning their actions and positions of authority. The situation shifts rapidly from a festive to a tragic atmosphere and Kateb Yacine takes his audience to the Tel-Al-Zaatar massacre which took place in Lebanon in August 1976. Kateb Yacine indicates that the Palestinian refugees were massacred with the consent of Arab Sultans and Presidents. Dancing and singing no longer bring laughter but instead transmit a feeling of shame and grief. Allegorically, Arab leaders and Kissinger are depicted as "dancing on the bodies of the victims," and Palestinians sing,

In Tal-Azza'tar, we have seen.

Arab unity

In the blood of young men

Gushing and soaking the whole country.

Through their singing, Palestinians in the play condemn the notion of Arab unity, urging the audience to reflect on the political factors and social circumstances that led to the atrocities in the Tal-Azaatar camps. Instead of allowing themselves to be overwhelmed by tragic emotions, the intention is to engage the audience in thinking critically about the underlying causes. The chorus then interrupts the tragic atmosphere, aiming to detach the audience from the intense emotional flow that the preceding events may have evoked. Kadour Naimi argues that music can serve to dissociate the audience from emotions rather than evoke them directly, as there are various lyrical intervals that can achieve this effect (Naimi, 2017, p.44).

In the last scene, the Egyptian chorus opens with a somber song, "When the sun drowns in the ocean of mist,"[43] and concludes with the iconic socialist anthem, *The Internationale*. The lyrics by Negm and the music by Imam convey a sense of gloominess, with words like sun drowns, wave of darkness, and lost in a maze. However, the rhythm and tone of the song effectively convey a mood that can evoke feelings of frustration, anger, and a yearning for revolution. Kateb changed the lyrics of *The International* while preserving the same melody, emphasizing the enduring power of revolution and the global spread of socialism. By reappropriating *The Internationale*, Kateb invokes a universal consciousness that seeks to end the oppression of workers and promote social change. By using this iconic anthem of workers' and social rights, Kateb emphasizes the universal struggle against oppression, particularly within the context of those who have undergone colonialism. This choice of songs serves as a powerful tool to educate the audience about the broader theme of colonialism, oppression, class struggle,e and the collective fight for justice. In this way, Kateb's reappropriation of *The Internationale* contributes to a pedagogical theatre that aims to promote critical consciousness and collective action against colonialism and its lasting impact, making it a significant aspect of the decolonization process.

**Chorus** Deprived workers!

Chained workers

[43] Written by the Egyptian poet Ahmad Fouad Negm and composed and sung by the Egyptian iconic composer Sheikh Imam.

Enough! Enough!

Only grenades and bullets

Will bring an end.

This is a worker's fist.

Joining a peasant's fist

Only struggle will bring.

Socialism!

*Palestine Betrayed* exhibits a remarkable aesthetic trajectory that encompasses various techniques, including direct and indirect narrative, storytelling, fragmented montage, Gestus, music, chorus, and dance. These elements intersect to create a distinctive and engaging theatrical experience that invites the audience to actively participate and reflect on the play's objective. The interplay of direct and indirect narrative techniques in the play allows for a multi-dimensional engagement with the storytelling. Characters' dialogues provide direct insight into their experiences and perspectives, while symbolic gestures and allegorical representations add depth to the dimensions of the narrative. This fusion of narrative approaches encourages critical thinking and interpretation, prompting the audience to engage with the socio-political commentary embedded within the play.

The fragmented montage technique further enhances the aesthetic impact of *Palestine Betrayed*. By presenting scenes and episodes in a non-linear and disjointed manner, the play creates a collage of experiences and emotions. This fragmented narrative mirrors the fragmented nature of the facts surrounding the Palestinian struggle, urging the audience to actively make connections and piece together the larger narrative. The rapid transitions and juxtaposition of moments and perspectives evoke a sense of urgency and intensity, pushing the audience to engage and reflect. Gestus, a fundamental component of Brechtian theatre, prominently finds its place in *Palestine Betrayed*. Physical gestures play a pivotal role in expressing the nuances of characters' emotions, relationships, and the underlying socio-political themes of the narrative. These gestures serve as powerful tools for conveying characters' intentions, with each gesture carrying deep symbolic

significance. For instance, defiantly raised fists signify resistance to oppression and a commitment to fighting for rights, while bowing in submission symbolizes acquiescence to higher authority, highlighting the narrative's power dynamics."

Violence, when portrayed through physical gestures, serves as a manifestation of resilience and a call for revolution. It emphasizes the characters' willingness to confront their oppressors and challenge the status quo. These gestures also symbolize the fluidity of power, as characters shift between positions of submission and defiance depending on the circumstances. In terms of vocal gestures, the characters employ a range of tonal variations and changes in volume to effectively convey their psyches and attitudes. Anger, vulnerability, and authority are all channeled through these vocal expressions, allowing the audience to connect with the characters. Furthermore, submission and passivity are not only communicated through physical gestures but also through the imitation of certain expressions and behaviors such as insults thrown at Mohamed and the assertion of Jewish authority over Palestine. This suggests the manipulation and influence of external forces on the characters, highlighting the complexities of their relationships and the socio-political context in which they exist.

The use of music, chorus, and dance adds another layer to the play's aesthetic trajectory. Music serves as a powerful tool to evoke critical thinking, highlight the action, and condense historical facts, while the chorus acts as a narrative device, guiding the audience through the fragmented narrative and emphasizing the collective struggle against oppression. Dance, as a form of resistance, challenges power dynamics and empowers the oppressed characters, symbolizing the hope and resilience of the marginalized. Kateb Yacine synchronized all possible means, language and body, space and time, rhythm and light, farce, and parody to assert his solidarity with peasants, workers, and subjugated people, and to find a "new way of thinking," which makes it possible to retrace the path of decolonization and revisit its meaning.

In this chapter, I tried to avoid the burden of history which overwhelms the play and focused instead on how this record of history benefits from the aesthetic devices that Kateb's play dwells upon. I have approached the play from one angle which is the Brechtian style of performing politics as *Palestine Betrayed* builds up a sequence of separate and autonomous episodes linked by songs and poetic gestures. Through a critical

examination of Kateb's poetics in *Palestine Betrayed*, one can observe his deliberate choice of artistic techniques to serve as vehicles for educating the audience. He skillfully weaves together different narrative threads, incorporating both personal stories and collective histories. By doing so, he presents a nuanced understanding of the Palestinian struggle, its roots, and its impact on individuals and communities. Kateb's approach to theatre as a form of political and cultural education is evident in his exploration of various historical contexts. He draws upon historical events and figures to shed light on the themes of colonization, resistance, and liberation. By incorporating historical narratives into his plays, Kateb encourages the audience to reflect on the past and its relevance to the present. In the light of a critical examination of Kateb's poetics and its relationship with epic forms of theater, the chapter invites the reader to explore other varieties of gestures, lyrics, metaphors, narratives, and histories in *Palestine Betrayed* to understand Kateb's engagement with the cause of decolonization as well as political and cultural education.

## The Conclusion

In exploring the captivating transformation of Kateb Yacine's artistic journey, my research has embarked on an exploration of his theatrical practice—a practice that unabashedly defies the conventional boundaries of the theatrical landscape. In this research journey, a host of intriguing questions has emerged, beckoning me to unravel the very motivations that pushed Kateb Yacine to transcend the realm of literary texts and plunge into the experimental world of live performances. Kateb's decision to establish his theatre, despite facing constant censorship and resource limitations, sets him apart as a bold and dedicated playwright. His genuine dedication to the theatre in the face of adversity and incessant censorship serves as a testament to his commitment to artistic freedom and the power of challenging the very foundations of artistic self-expression.

By undertaking a nuanced analysis of Kateb's popular theatre performances, my research aimed to liberate his theatrical work and experience from the confines of the literary canon and detach him from the "fallacy" of a French literary tradition (Arnaud, 1986 p.143). By highlighting Kateb's commitment to popular theatre, I have emphasized that it is crucial to challenge the narrow vision to restrict Kateb's art to the clutches of the Francophone literary canon, and instead, trigger a more adaptable understanding of his significant impact on theatre. My research aimed to reveal how Kateb's performances bravely challenged societal norms and expectations. Through careful examination of his theatre using archival research and drawing inspiration from renowned theatrical styles like Bertolt Brecht, I endeavoured to reconstruct an image of the inaccessible theatrical experiences stifled by censorship and limited resources. This reconstruction, though challenging, offers valuable insights into how Kateb's theatre performances might have been experienced in the absence of democratic instruments for individual and collective expression and education.

Kateb's popular theatre goes beyond its commonly discussed political and didactic aspects, revealing an educational dimension rooted in his social experiences. These experiences intensely influenced his belief in the transformative power of education and awareness, shaping his commitment to grounding his plays in the lived realities of the Algerian people. Kateb emphasizes the power of theatre as a tool for both education and resistance in the context of decolonization, "We live in a society that is being created, where communication is fundamental, where people, to be motivated and aware, need all

sources of information and all forms of art. The pedagogical role of theatre is significant precisely because it is, above all, a means of resistance. Resistance serves to address the real issues" (Kateb et al, 2004, p.9). In tracing the trajectory of Kateb 's educational theatre, it is essential to revisit some of the significant social incidents that shaped his approach. These incidents underline the integral role of social encounters and relationships in Kateb's journey as a decolonized intellectual.

One pivotal moment occurred when Kateb encountered an old cobbler in a village near Setif city. Despite the cobbler's limited vision and worn-out glasses, Kateb engaged him in reading and translating passages from Marxist literature. This interaction demonstrated the power of connecting with individuals on a personal level, transcending societal barriers. The cobbler's eagerness to hear about Stalin's speeches in the anti-colonialist daily, *Alger Republican*, showcased the thirst for knowledge and the longing for political understanding that existed within Algerian society. Kateb recounts that the next day the cobbler handed him the newspaper and asked him, "What does Stalin say today?" But, that day, Kateb states, "There was nothing in the newspaper, and the old cobbler refused to believe me. He wanted a speech from Stalin every day" (Kateb interviewed by Gafaïti, 1994, p.148)

Another transformative encounter took place in the context of Kateb's early personal struggles and ambitions as a poet. He found himself in front of a blackboard, teaching illiterate individuals in a shop where the owner used his shop as a haven for the illiterate by offering them food in exchange for staying and learning. This experience challenged his preconceptions about the role of a writer and the significance of written texts. It emphasized the importance of verbal communication and the need to engage directly with people to raise their awareness. The linguistic dilemma that existed in Algeria proved to Kateb Yacine that the act of writing does not necessarily liberate individuals from illiteracy; instead, it can potentially confine them and further restrict their access to knowledge and understanding.

By immersing himself in the everyday spaces of Algerian society, such as diners, barbershops, and villages, Kateb sought to bridge the gap between the intellectual elite and the broader population. These encounters allowed him to reach diverse audiences and connect with them on a human level. Through conversations, debates, and shared experiences, he aimed to create a sense of agency, critical thinking, and collective action. By positioning himself as a "decolonized intellectual" within the fabric of society, he

sought to dismantle hierarchical divisions and empower individuals to actively participate in their liberation. Kateb's approach underlined the transformative potential of education as a tool for social change, placing a strong emphasis on eliciting dialogue, challenging oppressive systems, and nurturing a collective consciousness.

We often refer to Kateb Yacine as the revolutionary writer and to his theatre as revolutionary drama, but we forget that revolution must be understood not in its politicized terms but in its transformational nature. Revolutionary theatre means a continuous transformation of aesthetics and political consciousness. The following quote helps us gain an insight into Kateb's relation to politics and theatre.

> We very often forget that what makes art political is not that it addresses certain themes or uses certain procedures, but, rather, how certain forms, themes, and modes of production of art relate with a certain political, social, and economic conjuncture, as well as a certain conjuncture of feelings, and this occurs within history and is constantly changing (Boal Julian, 2019, p.290).

Comparisons between Kateb's theatre and Bertolt Brecht's political theatre often overshadow the distinctive path of Kateb's work. While Brecht's influence is frequently discussed, it is crucial to acknowledge the diverse range of influences that shaped Kateb's artistic vision. Greek and Chinese theatre, Vietnamese Chèo theatre, the works of Federico García Lorca, and the rich tradition of oral and lyrical poetry, as well as his mother's improvisational skills, all played significant roles in shaping Kateb's popular theatre. These transnational influences, combined with his commitment to the theatricalization of popular forms, contribute to the distinctive character and significance of his performances. It is important to consider these multiple dimensions when interpreting Kateb's work.

While there may be elements of compatibility between Brecht's defamiliarization techniques and Kateb's storytelling style, it is essential to contextualize their respective approaches. Kateb's theatre draws inspiration from the popular storytelling traditions of Algeria, establishing a unique foundation that predates Brecht's influence. Kateb's theatre strikes a delicate balance between aesthetics and politics, challenging conventions and evoking a sense of empathy and reflection. By situating Kateb's theatre within the specific historical, cultural, and socio-political context of Algeria, my research contributes to a nuanced understanding of his insightful contributions to theatre. It highlights the

divergences between his work and that of European theatre practitioners like Brecht, while also recognizing the universal pursuit of justice that underlies political theatre. Kateb's theatre, rooted in the popular culture and oral traditions of Algeria, presents a distinct aesthetic and ideological oeuvre that co-exists with the historical movement of decolonization.

I have addressed a set of important research questions that shed light on various aspects of Kateb's theatre and its impact on society. The main question was to approach Kateb's theatre through an educational lens, examining its pedagogical dimension and how it contributed to the dissemination of social, cultural, and political ideas in post-independent Algeria. Applying theories that emphasize the educational dimensions of social practice, I have delved into Kateb's performances as dynamic social events. This approach emphasizes that his intellectual pursuit is not driven by sophisticated stylistics but, rather, is firmly rooted in meaningful engagement with the oppressed and marginalized. Examining traditional techniques like storytelling and lyrical songs, I have showcased how they actively engage the audience, encouraging critical thinking. Emphasizing the significance of collective engagement and dialogue in collaborative production, I've positioned Kateb's theatre as a vehicle for postcolonial debates and negotiations, continually questioning the decolonization of history. Kateb follows a Gramscian path, theatricalizing popular culture to reestablish connections with the audience and situating the philosophy of the people at the core of praxis. An organic intellectual is perpetually engaged in connecting people with their heritage, raising a sense of pride in the significance of their cultural identities. His theatre acts as a vehicle for social critique, raising awareness about societal injustices; it challenges stereotypes and questions hegemonic powers, empowering individuals to resist oppressive systems. Kateb's theatre is deeply rooted in the historical and political context of post-colonial Algeria, educating the audience about their history and encouraging reflection on ongoing socio-political challenges.

In addressing the sub-question about the effectiveness of Kateb's theatrical techniques in tackling post-independent Algeria's social, cultural, and political issues, I explored the heteroglossic nature of his performances. Analyzing *Mohamed Pack you Bag* themed on immigration, I illustrated how its ideological and cultural elements educate the audience on diverse ways of navigating the world, offering autonomous

interpretations of their history. Shifting the focus to the Palestinian issue, which shares the same history of subjugation with Algeria, I highlighted how techniques used in *Palestine Betrayed* intersect with Brecht's, asserting Kateb's theatre as compatible with modern theatre objectives and a potent tool for social change, protest, activism, and education. This highlights the ways in which his performances contributed to the collective understanding and discussion of important societal matters such as, neo-colonial hegemony, the misuse of religion as an instrument of power to manipulate people, and the suffocating constraints imposed on personal freedom and societal progress.

Addressing the third research question regarding the contribution of Kateb's popular theatre in founding a culture of theatre, I explored the collaborative essence favoured by Kateb. This highlights the revolutionary objectives of collective creation that challenge traditional theatrical criteria. Core principles such as dialogue, democratic speech, and pedagogy emphasize the historical significance of collaborative theatre in Algeria. The concluding sub-question delved into the resurgence of Kateb's popular theatre as an exemplar for democratic education. Drawing from Freire's pedagogical model, which advocates for the decolonization of the education system, the empowerment of the educated, and the dismantling of binary relationships, this study explored how Kateb's theatrical approach -emphasizing audience participation, dialogue, and collective engagement- could provide a valuable framework for instilling democratic values and principles within educational and social settings. The study draws parallels with Fanon's analysis of the psychological ramifications of colonialism, finding intersections with Freire's insights into how the oppressed perceive themselves. Together, these perspectives highlight the interconnected struggle for both educational and psychological liberation from the legacies of colonial oppression. This research aimed to highlight the enduring relevance of Kateb's theatre and its potential as a pedagogical tool for promoting active citizenship and critical thinking in contemporary contexts.

Drawing from prominent theorists such as Fanon, Gramsci, and Freire, the research explores the postcolonial intellectual's role in organizing social groups and advocating for justice, adhering to the philosophy of praxis aimed at decolonizing history through collective practice. By delving into the pedagogical principles embedded in performances and collaborations, the study reveals Kateb's effective use of diverse theatrical forms to engage the audience. The research focuses on the significance of

national consciousness, new humanism, and the pedagogy of oppression in Kateb's theatre, intersecting with the ideas of Fanon and Freire. It delves into the influence of Freire's theory of critical consciousness and dialogue, emphasizing an egalitarian relationship between actors and spectators—akin to the dialogic dynamic between the educator and the educated proposed by Freire. Kateb's commitment to openness, evident in collaborations with recognized directors, emphasizes dialogue and participation. His contribution to establishing a solid theatre culture in Algeria becomes apparent through his embrace of negotiations, collective creation, and diverse viewpoints—essential steps in the decolonization process. The collaborative nature of production and direction, reflecting a democratic approach, reinforces his impact on Algerian culture and politics. Kateb's theatre emerges as a powerful platform to raise awareness about Algeria's historical and social realities, empowering marginalized groups and challenging oppressive structures. By incorporating elements of praxis, Kateb strives to inspire social action and critical engagement, urging the audience to become active agents in their liberation.

The research delved into the exploration of heteroglossia in theatre which benefits from a semiotic/socio-semiotic approach, emphasizing the rich panorama of stage languages, dialects, voices, and cultural and ideological signs that intersected and coexisted on the stage. By embracing heteroglossia, Kateb's theatre encompassed a multiplicity of voices and identities, opening avenues for dialogue, negotiation, and the representation of a range of social and cultural experiences. By examining these theoretical frameworks and their application to Kateb's theatre, the research shed light on the transformative power of theatre as a means to challenge oppressive structures, promote dialogue, and generate new insights. It emphasized the importance of praxis, dialogical engagement, and the exploration of diverse narratives in creating a theatre that not only entertained but also provoked thought and instigated social change.

By highlighting the significance of offering a philosophical framework to understand Kateb's theatre, chapter one provides a philosophical background for Kateb’s theatre within the context of postcolonial discourse. It explores the theories of Fanon, Gramsci, and Freire to situate Kateb Yacine in the history of decolonization. The main argument is that Kateb’s theatre embraces dialogue, ambivalence, and collective creation as tools for decolonization.

Examining Kateb's satirical play *Intelligence Powder*, chapter two assesses the character of J'ha as an echo of the philosopher/intellectual who navigates between the language of the playwright/actors and that of the audience. The main argument is that J'ha's character represents the mindset of decolonized intellectuals who embody different stages of liminality and whose intellect is determined by their social relations and commitment. The play exposes the tensions between religion and Marxist-oriented philosophy.

Chapter three delves into the collaboration between Kateb Yacine and Kadour Naimi in the production of *Mohamed, Pack your Bag*. It explores the principles and conditions of their partnership, drawing attention to the acknowledgment of Naimi's influence and collaborative efforts. The chapter highlights two points of divergence: Naimi's perception of Kateb as unqualified for managing a theatre project and Naimi's idea of involving the audience in the performance. Despite these differences, the main argument asserts that Naimi's influence and conflicting perspectives played a significant role in shaping the production process. It also asserts the recognition that Kateb Yacine, despite Naimi's opposing views, is not only a skilled literary figure but also a proficient theatre practitioner.

Chapter Four examines the significance of heteroglossia in theatre through a socio-semiotic lens, providing an analytical framework for understanding *Mohamed, Pack Your Bag*. It explores the interplay of linguistic diversity and non-linguistic elements within the performance text, revealing embedded cultural and ideological meanings. Through this analysis, *Mohamed, Pack Your Bag* emerges as inherently heteroglossic, showcasing the diversity of its stage signs. Additionally, the chapter extends its examination to explore how various theatrical elements, including language, staging, and symbolism, convey messages about immigration, displacement, and power dynamics. This integration reflects Kateb Yacine's pedagogical and social activism, employing theatre to engage with critical issues and inspire societal change.

Chapter five examines Kateb's engagement with the Palestinian issue and its integration into his theatrical work. It highlights the dialogue between Kateb's aesthetics and those of Bertolt Brecht, showcasing Kateb Yacine's use of traditional and avant-garde techniques to reveal contradictions and create space for collective empowerment. The

main argument is that Kateb's artistic contributions significantly shape modern Algerian theatre and effectively reflect both national and transnational concerns.

This research significantly contributes to the field of postcolonial theatre studies by offering an analysis of Kateb's pedagogical theatre within the context of decolonization. By examining the theoretical framework and exploring the practical implementation of his theatre, my study adds to the existing literature on postcolonial performance, expanding our understanding of the transformative potential of theatre in challenging dominant narratives and promoting cultural revitalization. My research bridges the gap between theoretical concepts and practical application by engaging with a range of theoretical perspectives and demonstrating how these theories manifest in Kateb's theatrical works. By offering an analysis of his plays and their socio-political implications, my study highlights the significance of integrating theory with practice in understanding the transformative power of theatre.

This study places a strong emphasis on the artistic and intellectual contributions of Kateb Yacine, particularly in the context of Algerian theatre and its postcolonial development. By examining the neglected aspects of his collaborations with Kadour Naimi and other talented artists, and by delving into the process of collective creation, this research highlights the often-underappreciated roles played by these theatre makers and their positive influence on the evolution of Algerian theatre. Consequently, it offers novel insights into the historical and artistic significance of Kateb's theatrical work, shedding light on its enduring impact on the practice of theatre.

My exploration of Kateb's pedagogical theatre offers insights into alternative models of education and challenges conventional approaches to pedagogy, cultural transmission, and theatre-making as well. By emphasizing the democratic potential of theatre in galvanizing critical thinking and engaging with social and political issues, my research contributes to discussions on innovative pedagogical methods and their role in empowering individuals and communities. In 1985, Kateb Yacine emphasized the importance of liberating Algeria not only politically, but also culturally—a concept he referred to as “real independence” (Kateb interviewed by Mestiri, 1994, p,148). Through a pedagogical lens, this perspective can be interpreted as a visionary understanding of the significance of cultural autonomy and the preservation of national identity. Kateb

recognized that true liberation necessitated resisting the pervasive influence of French culture before it could irreversibly permeate Algerian society.

This forward-thinking stance demonstrates Kateb's ability to anticipate the long-term consequences of cultural imperialism. By emphasizing the need to safeguard Algeria's cultural heritage, he displayed a deep understanding of the power dynamics at play in postcolonial societies. His advocacy for cultural resistance and the assertion of Algerian identity showcased his intellectual mastery and positioned him ahead of his time, as he recognized the enduring significance of cultural autonomy in the face of ongoing neocolonial challenges. By examining how Kateb's plays address the socio-cultural problems of his time and reflect the aspirations of the Algerian people, the research highlights the role of theatre in shaping and reflecting national consciousness. The analysis of Kateb's theatrical performances, their techniques, and their socio-political implications open avenues for further research and dialogue. By shedding light on the diversity and complexity of his contributions, my study invites scholars and practitioners to delve deeper into the exploration of postcolonial theatre, collective creation, and the intersections between theatre, history, and politics.

Kateb's theatre was a powerful tool in challenging oppressive systems and structures, including bureaucratic institutions. In 1986, Kateb declares "Algeria has just been born, it is just beginning to breathe, to be independent. If we allow oppression and hypocrisy to take hold now, the Algerians of tomorrow will inherit an Algeria worse than the one we experienced during colonialism. And at that point, it will have been in vain to live or to write" (Kateb interviewed by Gafaïti, 1994, p.148). His vision of Algerian society went beyond political independence, encompassing ideals of social justice, cultural authenticity, and the rejection of oppression. By raising awareness of the potential consequences of complacency and hypocrisy, Kateb aimed to awaken a sense of responsibility and agency among the Algerian people, inspiring them to actively participate in the construction of a just and liberated society.

This vision finds resonance in the political environment of Algeria today. The Hirak movement, which emerged in 2019, can be perceived as an echo of Kateb's advocacy for revolution and democracy. The movement, fuelled by frustration with corruption and a lack of accountability, peacefully mobilized diverse segments of society to demand political change. The Hirak movement exemplified the power of collective

action, peaceful revolution, and community engagement, mirroring the principles of Kateb's pedagogical theatre. Its enduring impact on Algerian society and collective memory is evident in its annual commemoration as a significant national event.

Had Kateb's theatre and its pedagogically oriented foundation been studied and recognized as a cultural and educational institution earlier, movements advocating for new humanism and emancipation would likely have emerged sooner. This research seeks to contribute valuable insights into Kateb's popular theatre, shedding light on the power of theatre to bring about social change, the role of artists in decolonization, and the significance of popular theatre in achieving cultural independence and democratic education. It aims to stimulate further exploration and to highlight the enduring relevance of Kateb's work in the study of postcolonial performance.

While the research has illuminated the transformative nature and impact of Kateb's pedagogical theatre, it is crucial to recognize the limitations of the study. A more extensive analysis of the influence of space, the reception, and audience responses to Kateb's live performances would provide valuable insights into its effectiveness as a pedagogical tool. Retrieving or discovering live performances and additional visual recordings could serve as crucial evidence. Examining audience reactions and interpretations would add insights into the dynamic relationship between the theatre and its spectators, shedding light on the efficacy of Kateb's pedagogical approach. Despite initial plans to travel to Algeria for interviews being disrupted due to the pandemic, future research endeavours should aim to expand the scope of analysis. The unfortunate passing of Hacene Assous in 2021, a significant collaborator with Kateb Yacine, highlights the need of a robust study on the wider influence of Kateb's theatre through audio-visual recordings. I anticipate future collaborative efforts with fellow researchers or scholars who share a keen interest in postcolonial theatre or the works of Kateb Yacine. By collaborating, we can enhance our understanding of the different dimensions of Yacine's contributions. Additionally, an exploration into the intersectionality of gender, ethnicity, and race within the context of Yacine's works holds promise for future research endeavours. Investigating how these intersecting identities are represented, challenged, or reinforced in the plays of Yacine could offer a nuanced examination of the socio-cultural implications of his theatrical oeuvre. I aspire to contribute to these areas in future publications, developing a collaborative approach to understanding the dynamics of postcolonial theatre. Further, a future research avenue could involve exploring how the

pedagogical approaches of postcolonial playwrights, including Kateb Yacine, can be effectively integrated into theatre education curricula. This could include an examination of the impact of incorporating postcolonial perspectives on students' understanding of theatre and cultural history, providing valuable insights for educators and curriculum developers alike.

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