

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Domination and the creation of Subordinate in Postcolonial Algerian Fiction: A study of the Stairs of Trollar by Samir Kacimi

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Abstract:

Our choice of topic, representing domination and the creation of subordinate in postcolonial Algerian novels, focuses on *stairs of Trollar* by Samir Kacimi as a case study, linked to its nature as belonging to dystopian literature or the literature of corrupt cities, which is a new topic in Algerian literature that needs to be explored. Given the period in which it was written, namely the postcolonial era, this article seeks to analyze the text and trace the representation of hegemony in it, focusing on how power can create a subordinate who exercises power in its place. We argue that the postcolonial Algerian novel is an extension of its colonial predecessor, in which hegemony is represented in a new form and according to new mechanisms.

Keywords: Representation, Domination, Subordinate, Authority, Mechanisms.

Introduction:

Since ancient times, the concept of power or sovereignty has been linked to political and legal thinking, and thus to various state agencies and institutions. Its understandings has been linked to many socio-economic, political, cultural and civilizational factors that have led to the development of Western thought in various fields, giving rise to a new concept of power (LAKWAS,2016). This concept has undergone many transformations. After Gramsci formulated the concept of hegemony, it was updated through other terms such as symbolic power and symbolic violence in Bourdieu's work, or the meaning of power in Michel Foucault's work, and in Edward Said's postcolonial studies, according to Amina Belaala. (2020) On this basis and drawing on a network of procedural concepts and cognitive tools, Pierre Bourdieu attempted to interpret Algerian Eastern society and reveal the

various mechanisms of control, hegemony and symbolic violence. We find the latter “linked to power and the social field, in the sense that the state exercises, through a set of institutions (media, school, art, religion, etc.), symbolic violence against individuals and groups,” (LAKWAS,2016), turning them into marginalized groups living in a state of subordination to authority. Since literature is often considered a mirror reflecting society, we find that Algerian novelists interrogate the essence of this reality and delve deep into it to express current issues.

The novel is a literary genre that is able to encompass the various problems and situations that individuals in societies struggle with, attempting to portray all the diversity of the human experience. (WATT,1997) As a creative form that transcends all religious, cultural and geographical boundaries, it expresses infinite worlds, delves into all human experiences and transcends all boundaries and taboos. It does not recognize preconceived rules and does not conform to inherited static data(DARRAJ,1999). Instead, it draws its themes from reality and invests them in the imaginary.

Our choice of the title “*Representing Domination and the Creation of the Subordinate in Samir Kacimi’s Novel the stairs of Trollar*” is linked to the nature of the themes it addresses, which belong to what is recognized internationally as dystopian or dark urban literature. It delves into a fragmented reality rather than fantasy, in which stability and security are absent and chaos reigns due to the ruling class's domination over the people. For Kacimi, writing is an act of rebellion, rejection, or painful revelation. (MADI,2008)Through his novel, he expressed his rejection of this reality and his defiance of the authority that imposed its domination through various mechanisms at different levels. In doing so, Kacimi portrays a city-state ruled by gods and demigods who controlled the minds of its people, whom he called “the Ghashi”, because of the connotation of this word in the social imagination, for which we found several interpretations in Algerian colloquial and classical dictionaries. Some link it to the verb ‘yaghsha’ (to cover), citing the Qur’anic verse :“So when the night covered him [with darkness]” [Al-An’am 6:76].It means when darkness descends, the Algerian people, or the Ghashi, as Samir Kessimi called them, were struck by something that blinded their eyes and prevented them from seeing the truth about the regime, the authorities and their followers. This darkness soon dissipated with the disappearance of the windows and doors, and the people's vision became clear. The mask fell from the authorities, and they recognized the truth of the corrupt regime. The line between truth and illusion disappeared, and the barriers between the authorities and the people were removed. It was said: “ The darkness is the creation of many, similar to the creation of the Day of Darkness or the Day of Resurrection.” They meant by this “a large number of people without benefit," and they said this to them because they were like those who were overcome by darkness”. (BRASHED,p274,our translation)

In the novel, many characters live without any genuine desire for change. The only role they play is to perpetuate the regime's dominance, especially the intellectual class, which has remained silent about this situation and has made no effort to change it, content with the name Al-Ghashi as if it were specifically designed to prolong the life of this corrupt state, spontaneously colluding with it without seeking to create an alternative reality. In principle, the intellectual is the conscience of the nation and the creator of social awareness, but in the novel, he belongs to the class of the Ghashi: citizens drawn without heads, whose bellies occupy most of their bodies through a policy of misinformation, deception and lies mastered by a network of followers created and manipulated by the authorities like puppets.

At one point, the city-state wakes up to a strange occurrence: the doors and windows of government buildings, headquarters, and prisons have disappeared. This makes the vision clear to readers, removes the mask from the regime, and exposes the body of power. It reveals the mechanisms of power's domination, its features, and how it creates followers, dissecting the corpse of the political system and authority, producing a narrative that represents the novel with its seven chapters and seven staircases. From this perspective, in this article we attempt to read the novel "*The stairs of Trollar*" by Algerian novelist Samir Kacimi, published by Al-Barzakh Publications (Algeria) and ,Mediterranean (Italy) in 2019, and nominated for the long list of the Arab Booker Prize for Fiction in 2020. Our aim is to trace the representation of domination and to demonstrate how the subordinate is constructed in response to a central problem, namely:

-Where does domination manifest itself and how are its mechanisms embodied in the novel *The Stairs of Trollar*?

This question encompasses three sub-questions:

-How can authority create a subordinate who exercises power on its behalf? What is the nature of this subordinate?

-What types of domination does this subordinate exercise?

-What methods and strategies does authority employ to achieve domination?

Since the discussion of domination and the creation of subordinates in the novel *The Stairs of Trollar* is a discussion of a postcolonial literature. The novel represents an extension of colonial domination that the regime and the authorities revived in the city-state by creating a number of subordinates. Through this representation, the novel has made an artistic and qualitative contribution to Algerian literature in general, and Algerian novels in particular, as Kacimi worked to create a difference and diversity in the form and content of Algerian novel writing. Instead of making the people speak with

their own voices to defend their homeland and get rid of the domination of the state and the corrupt system over them, he made them followers who speak with the voice of authority.

He explores the sociological realities of Algeria through the setting of the “Trollar neighborhood” in Algiers, the place he chose as the setting for the events of the novel. This space reveals as much as they conceal, and make him live in a coherent world with its chaotic characters who climbed the ladder of glory and rose to the ranks of gods and demigods, consecrating colonial hegemony and reviving it in Algiers through a group of followers who carried the banner of loyalty to the authority and the system .

1. The dominant and subordinate debate in the novel's thresholds:

The dynamic of domination and subordination are evident in the novel's title, “*the Stairs of Trollar*,” which the novelist mentions in various narrative passages throughout the novel. For instance, the narrator describes:

“At the same time, exactly sixty kilometers and eight hundred and twenty-five centimeters away, someone parked a Mahindra truck next to some rubbish bins that appeared not to have been emptied for two days, right at the first bend in Duke De Car Street, going up from the Trollar neighborhood towards the government palace.” (KACIMI, 2019, P.35, our translation)

In another passage, the novel states:

“And indeed, exactly nine months later, she too got rid of this burden, when men in black suits and ties placed it at the bottom of the Trollar stairs, wrapped in blue cloth.” (KACIMI, 2019, P.36, our translation)

It is clear from the above that the repetition of the title throughout the text by both the narrator and the characters announces the affiliation of the title to the text and the text to the title. We also find that the main title “*The Stairs of Trollar*” consists of two lexical units combined together “stairs”, which is the plural of ladder, made of wood or metal and used to climb to a higher place, and “Trollar” a neighborhood in Algiers named after the French doctor Jean Baptiste Paulin Trolad. The symbolism of the name can be linked to the colonizer, as an allusion to the persistence of French colonial domination. However, the meaning of this abbreviated dual structure is not limited to its superficial structure. Through the word ‘stairs’, we can read the dominant-subordinate dialectic, as “stairs” connect two sides: the upper side and the lower side. Meanwhile, “Trollar” refers us directly to the place where the events of the novel took place, the Trollar neighborhood in Algiers, a public place

through which the author refers to a private place, the government palace. The semantic network of the word 'stairs' refers to ascending and descending, and at the same time carries the meaning of the administrative ladder through which an employee or official ascends from one rank to a higher one. In the novel, the employees' arrival at the highest positions of responsibility and their promotion in the government palace is achieved by climbing the stairs of Trollar.

Samir Kacimi placed the image of the black cat on the cover of the novel to be the first visual encounter between him and his readers. He took it from the following passage in the novel:

"In the month of August of a year no one remembers, this story took place. Most likely, it began at 4:34 a.m. on the 25th of the month, when Jamal Hamidi woke up to the sound of a grey cat meowing, which he later realized was not one of the neighborhood cats."(KACIMI, 2019, P.19, our translation)

The black cat pictured on the cover is indeed present in the novel, expressing the bleakness of Algerian reality. Symbolically the "cat" signifies both familiarity and attachment to a place, since cats are naturally very attached to the place where they live. However, his attachment makes us associate the cat with the people who work in the government palace, the place they have made their own, and which has turned them into gods and demigods, saving them from living like the rest of the people and making them mere followers of authority, or rather, the authority itself.

The image of the black cat carries symbolic violence, referring to a corrupt reality and a tense and tragic space inhabited by a lifeless people called the followers, suffering defeat, social and political injustice, and the tyranny and opportunism of authority imposed by men such as the one depicted by Samir Kacimi on the cover of the novel, climbing the stairs of Trollar to reach the government palace. He made his description resemble that of the black cat, as both are dark. The man's dark clothes bearing the colors of the French flag are the best evidence of the extended and continuing colonial domination thanks to these people, and the unknown fate of his life as he climbs the "Trollar stairs" to either reach the class of the gods or descend to the class of the Gashi. His dark deeds have also made the fate of the Algerian people dark.

Anyone who reflects on the references used by the author at the beginning of his novel will discover that all the events and facts narrated in it are nothing more than a translation, explanation and elaboration of these references. The first reference is from the Algerian writer and historian Ammar Belhassen, who said to his wife in his will before his death: "Fight so that my body and soul may live on in my children, and so that my struggle for life, culture and humanity may continue." This refers to the letter that the palm tree-like man gave to the writer in an envelope bearing more than twenty-seven stamps, which the writer sent to his wife. It was supposed to reach her five years ago, but certain

circumstances caused it to be lost by the postmen each time. The second quote is from Algerian politician Abdelhamid Mehri, in his will, “Do not forget the gift of the martyrs on Independence Day: The best gift we can give to the souls of our martyrs is a celebration in which the people are proud of their past and confident about their future.” If we apply Abdelhamid Mehri's words to the novel, we find that the glorious past of the revolution and the heroism of our ancestors have faded away, and Algeria has become a state without a state. We find a people with no future, controlled by gods and demigods and led into the unknown, for the people—or the Ghashi—are mere followers of authority, unable to change their present.

The authority of revolution has been given to gods and demigods in the third quote I mentioned by Italian philosopher and Marxist activist Antonio Gramsci: “Revolutionaries view history as a product of their spirit, created through a continuous series of violent tensions and attractions with other parties in society—whether positive or negative—which culminate in inevitable revolution.” The gods seized power through revolutionary legitimacy, the dominance of money, and an alliance with yesterday's colonialism. Doors and windows disappeared, and the mask fell from the authority that was mired in corruption to its core. The vision became clear to the people, and the clashes multiplied and reached their peak, leading to the novel and predicting a popular uprising that would overthrow the hegemony of the insignificant man and his follower Jamal Hamidi and others.

Samir Kacimi also used an independent quotation from Algerian writer and novelist Malek Haddad, entitled ‘Doors’: “Don't knock too hard on the door, for I am not here.” Through this quotation, the author reveals the theme of the novel and its central idea, which is the disappearance of windows and doors from the city-state that has come to live in a state of complete nakedness, a deliberate exposure of its political blindness. Through this saying, the author wants to say that he is not present in the novel, and that the events have no connection to him. The ideas presented in the novel do not express his personal thoughts or reflect his point of view, nor do they represent his position on the ruling authority in the country. Through the quotations he uses, the novelist appears to be aware of the details of the novel he is about to write. His use of quotations is not arbitrary, but rather an attempt to escape responsibility for what he has said and written, and to disassociate himself from his writing. The first-person pronoun does not appear in the novel, and the chapter in question is the chapter on reading.

2. Subordinate and exercising authority on behalf of:

The novel addresses the dialectic of domination and subordination between the authorities and the people. There is no authority that does not exercise its domination through various tools and methods, perhaps the most important of which is the creation of subordinates who exercise power

on its behalf. The postcolonial novel required an effective relationship between the colonizer and the colonized based on the principle of submission and then subordination. The novelist, who endured this experience, worked creatively, exploiting the possibilities of narrative to raise the issue of the creation of the subordinate in his novel "*The Stairs of Trollar*".

Today, the term 'dependent' has become synonymous with the term "Third World." From this perspective, colonial policies have colluded to ensure that the subordinate is unable to represent himself and must submit to authority. This contradicts the possibility of the subordinate saying anything real. We find that Gayatri Spivak's research on this subject came in the form of a question: Can the subordinate speak? The problem that Spivak wants to raise is: Are the cultural contexts conducive to the subordinate speaking? Can he speak and make others hear his voice? She examines carefully the difference between "speaking to" and "speaking about." (AZARSHAB&AL-A'RAJI, 2018)

The concept of the subordinate has been employed by Indian subordinate studies groups to include oppressed and culturally, socially and historically marginalized individuals, as well as all individuals who are marginalized or marginalized. (ASHCROFT & al,2010,P.319)

From the above, it can be said that the subordinate is the primary representative of authority, or rather the alternative who exercises authority on its behalf. For this reason, the possibility of him saying anything real is contradictory. The insignificant man, Jamal Hamidi, chose the wheelchair and the half-blind man as his subordinate only because of his ability to spy. "Jamal Hamidi has an auditory memory acquired from eavesdropping on the residents of the dozens of buildings where he worked. He knew in tedious detail everything that happened in the building he was assigned to, but his curiosity soon spread beyond the secrets of his neighbors to the surroundings of his building, including the stones, trees and plants, which made him certain when he heard the cat's voice that it was not one of the cats in his neighborhood, which was located in a rural town..." (KACIMI, 2019, P.20, our translation). It is the oppressive regime that reduces people to the level of animals, giving them no rights, not even the right to life, and their situation worsens every day. When the people have no refuge left but to choose the manner of their death, and when they have received only one gift from their oppressors, which is despair, what do they have left to lose? (SARTRE, 1966)

Jamal Hamidi did not lose anything. Thanks to his empty meditation acquired through his association with those who later became known as intellectuals, and because of his paralysis, he realised something he would not have realised had he not been paralysed and forced to spend a lot of time with himself after work, which, incidentally, was a kind of solitary confinement. Once, before he saw

the whole picture and before he realised the noble message of his profession, he asked why the doorman was forced to stand at the entrance of the building inside a miserable room resembling a box, doing nothing but looking at the faces of those who entered and left. Of course, it was not a matter of examining people's faces, watching them or spying on them that prompted him to ask this question. ask this question of his supervisor, even though standing for eight hours a day at the entrance to the building never bothered him as much as it brought a rare kind of happiness to his heart and a malicious form of varicose veins to his legs. (KACIMI, 2019, P.23, our translation) French hegemony in Algeria imposed a law of free individualism to destroy the structures and movements of Algerian society, but it remains with the petty kings who derive their power only from it, who rule only for it, who are educated only by its culture, and who follow only its customs and dictates. We find Western culture of sex and alcohol invading Eastern Algerian culture and causing a rift in Algerian families. This is what we read in the passage about Jamal Hamidi in the novel: “He bought a fruit tart, two bottles of sparkling water, six bottles of beer and a bottle of cheap wine, which he imported from a neighboring country to celebrate his birthday.”(KACIMI, 2019, P.24, our translation)

In the city-state, a girl, whether out of love or due to her unstable hormones, allowed the man to rid himself of his burden and carry it for him for a while. In addition, indeed, after exactly nine months, she too was rid of this burden when men in black suits and ties placed it at the bottom of the Trollar stairs, wrapped in blue cloth. (KACIMI, 2019, P.26, our translation)

When we talk about colonial domination, we are talking about the colonial system. It is not a matter of a machine, the system exists and functions, and the hellish cycle of colonialism is a tangible reality, but this reality is embodied in millions of colonists and their children and grandchildren, who were raised by colonialism and thus speak and teach according to the principles of the colonial system. This is because the colonizer is bound by his role and interests, (SARTRE,1966)which he achieves through subordinates such as Jamal Hamidi.

Subordination to the West remains a reality, and French colonialism continues to create followers who extend its influence, ensure its continuity, and resort to it when necessary. When the doors disappeared, “the police began to flee from service on the second day, fearing for their interests, while others did so in order to stay with their families and protect them from the gangs that had appeared on the first day, breaking into houses that had no doors. This was the case with all the houses in the city-state, and even the military barracks were not spared, being looted like banks, shops and government buildings, with only the government palace remaining intact. Some of the newly emerged second-tier gods, those who lacked the power and authority to flee the country and take refuge elsewhere. The gods considered blocking the entrances with whatever they could find or building walls to fill the gaps that had been called doors, but they reconsidered because it was a temporary and

unwise solution that might isolate them from the world and from their masters, the gods who had fled the country.” (KACIMI, 2019, P.78, our translation)

The dominance of colonialism lies in its refusal to grant human rights to people it has subjugated through violence, condemning them to remain in misery and ignorance, that is, in a state of subhumanity. As Marx says: “Racism exists in the facts themselves, in institutions, in the nature of exchanges and production, and in the political and social systems that reinforce each other. As long as the local inhabitant is an inferior human being, the Declaration of Human Rights does not concern him. Conversely, as long as he has no rights, he is left unprotected by the forces of human nature and the harsh laws of economics. Racism exists here, brought about by colonialism and adopted by the colonial machine at every turn, supported by production relations that define two types of individuals: privilege and humanity. For one of these types, humanity is nothing more than the free exercise of their rights, while for the other, the absence of rights is determined by their poverty, chronic hunger, ignorance, and, in short, their inferior humanity.” (SARTRE, 1966, p.42, our translation) We see this racial discrimination in the novel in its division of Algerian society into two classes: the class of gods and the class of the general population, which we mentioned in the previous passages.

The novel depicts the character of ‘the author’ as an intellectual subservient to authority, revealing him to be complicit with this corrupt system and showing no attempt to develop a system of values, customs and social relations. The only effort he makes is to hone his skills of survival and coexistence and ensure the continuity of the authority's dominance and the status quo. The authority also seeks by all means to lure the intellectual into becoming its mouthpiece and ensure that he does not criticize it. It views intellectuals no differently, than it views its subjects, and they must be at the forefront of the subjects with their obedience, submissiveness and submission, without question.

The ‘author’ in the novel is an intellectual who is subservient to the authorities. The nature of society has robbed him of his rights and his role as an intellectual. He has not reflected on his reality, made any attempt to change it, or refused to be a mouthpiece for the authorities. He did not demand the people's right to freedom, justice and dignity, even though in the novel “*The stairs of Trollar*” the citizens' souls exploded with pain and injustice. He is the force that society relies on to take the initiative for reform and demand the rights of the people, but the authorities have turned him into a weapon against the people. He is not concerned with their problems and worries, nor does he demand their stolen rights.

The authorities worked to silence intellectuals, attempting to make them subservient. The man on the balcony was a writer, and their domination of him began by making him renounce his identity

and name and relinquish his writings. Although he did not have, a name that he felt was suitable to put on the cover of any book that could be published. Years ago, when they were about to publish his first book, they chose a name for him that they found by chance in a book they had bought from an antique bookseller. What attracted him to it was something completely different. On that blank page, before he read the name, his eyes fell on a note written in the same pencil, in the same poor handwriting: It seems that this writer learned to write in the toilet. “The note was about Umberto Eco's book Foucault's Pendulum. This sentence was enough for him to decide to sign his first novel with the name of the person who wrote the comment, and so this man was born at the age of 35.”(KACIMI, 2019, P.51, our translation)

The narrator, ‘the writer,’ is portrayed negatively in the novel, and viewed him with contempt and exclusion. Through him, he highlights the voice of the silent intellectual who does not seek to change his reality and does not speak out to defend the causes of his country and his people. He consecrated this silence by resorting to the man with his name to publish his novels under his name. This subordinate was able to create another subordinate who dominated him, and he soon regained his voice and gained control over his stories, publishing a novel under his own name in which he reclaims his identity and frees the man with his name from his subordination. In reality, the writer had dominated him, exercising power over him, silencing him and confiscating his right to expression and his freedom to write. As a result, he resorted to counter-domination in order to restore his self-esteem. However, provided that the intellectual mentions things as they are, with their rhythms, rules, purposes, ambitions, and interests, so that he can free himself from them at the same time, we hardly find in novel “ *The Stairs of Trollar*”, we hardly find the voice of the subordinate alone; rather, it is always accompanied by the voice of the dominant (authority). The subordinate can only speak what the dominant authority dictates, as Jamal Hamidi's voice is accompanied by the voice of the insignificant man, and the voice of the man with a name is accompanied by the voice of the writer. As long as all people enjoy the same rights, the Algerian must be made into an inferior man, a man without status.(KACIMI, 2019, P.35, our translation) He must accept his inferiority and subordination and be content with being dominated, and the subordinate faces the conditions of his subordination due to his long life of polytheism and the prevailing culture. The image of the subordinate is, in fact, nothing more than an image of authority restored according to new mechanisms of domination.

3. Restructuring reactionary domination with new mechanisms:

Domination manifests itself in a set of characteristics shared by a group of people linked by various ties such as common history, religion, language; etc. There is no authority that does not exercise its domination through various tools and methods.

The social arena, with its diverse customs, traditions and histories, is difficult to navigate, especially when it comes to patriarchal authority and its manifestations of hegemony and domination. In this context, the 'insignificant man' represents the model of the dominant father imbued with authority, using his identity and political and paternal authority as justification for dominating his daughter 'Amira'. She attempts to imitate his rituals, doing everything he did, and look out with him every evening from his heavenly balcony, so that she would not forget how small and despicable the world of villains is. Amira was sixteen years old, and for reasons related to her father, she lived a life of forced solitude, entrusting her world to that white building now located high above Hydra, where docile creatures that nod more than they speak are scattered. Thus, the people in her mind were divided into two types of creatures: God blessed the first with the grace of understanding, speech and conversation, so you find them talking, commanding and directing. Moreover, when necessary, they shout, threaten, and curse. These creatures are similar to her, existing only to urinate on the bastards who will later thank them for the blessing of rain. Other creatures are more inclined to foolishness, silence, and muteness, their only task being to receive words and obey orders. (KACIMI, 2019, P.78, our translation) As time passed, she became an elderly woman, slender, with a long face marred by wrinkles, wearing thick black-rimmed glasses, of medium height, dressed in a long grey skirt and a sky-blue silk shirt with buttons and long sleeves. (KACIMI, 2019, P.110, our translation)

Throughout her life, Amira maintained a certain degree of rebellion, which allowed her to live a life of debauchery befitting any respectable prostitute. Perhaps this was heaven's way of taking revenge on the insignificant man and other gods of the city-state, by granting them eccentric children who did not settle on a specific gender, born male but ending up female, or female but possessing male desires. In addition, if, by some stroke of luck, they settled on a specific gender, they would become so addicted to sex that it became a pathological addiction. (KACIMI, 2019, P.139, our translation) She gave birth to an illegitimate daughter from a man of the common people, and her father forced her to abandon her for fear of losing his position as the chief engineer of the city-state, responsible for creating the followers of the gods and demigods. His domination over Jamal Hamidi and his subjugation to his government apparatus took on a false image of wanting to establish a strong ruler, who would serve the country, but in reality, it was nothing more than a new form of domination and slavery built on the ruins of an old one.

The narrative discourse, which combines fiction, hidden truth and untold history, serves the interests of the insignificant man more than Jamal Hamidi, as it subjects him to racism, justified domination, exploitation and deception using money and power. In order to justify this domination, the novel presents a distorted image of Jamal Hamidi, portraying him as an ugly monster with nothing beautiful

about him except his name and title, and giving him the ability to convince Olga that she is beautiful and a poet. Ugly, deformed creature with nothing beautiful about him except his name and no redeeming qualities except his surname. It gave him the ability to convince Olga that she was beautiful and a talented poet. "In the complete picture that Jamal Hamidi was unable to see, Olga resembled a female rhinoceros, white with a backside the size of a billiard table and huge breasts that hung like bunches of grapes. Her head was large with a broad forehead and small eyes with almost no eyelashes. Her eyebrows were connected, resembling the wings of a bird. Yet despite her ugliness, Olga was more beautiful than those texts she used to whip poetry with.(KACIMI, 2019, P.25, our translation)The people she addresses with her famous sentence: "That day, I had a vague feeling that it would happen." (KACIMI, 2019, P.19, our translation)

Persuasive discourse is a tool of power and a mechanism of domination adopted by the novel's characters, the gods, in order to dominate their subordinates and justify their domination. The discourse of domination was more subtle than it appeared, as the character Olga, or Houria, was afflicted with cultural blindness, in the words of Abdullah Al-Ghazami, and melted into the culture of the other. Evidence of this is her preference for the name Olga over the name Houria, as if she wanted to remain a hostage to Western culture. Houria "was a name that had no meaning for Jamal Hamidi, unlike Olga, which she liked for reasons she never revealed. She agreed without hesitation, she led him to believe that she liked this new name only because, as she saw it, it resembled Russian women in their whiteness and physical strength. She agreed without mentioning anything about her albinism, which had given her this unnatural color. Just as she had not told him about her illness, she saw no need to tell him that Olga was a name that a great writer had once addressed her with. He was the first to discover her talent, which did not actually exist, and the first to introduce her to the world of women when she was twenty years old. He was a writer who understood both writing and women equally well."(KACIMI, 2019, P.26, our translation)

"History has a powerful influence in repeating events. It is nothing but a wheel that turns, and we have no choice but to follow it and revere those who control it, believing in everything they do to us, for our history has always been like this." (EDWARDS, p.259, our translation) In the novel, the author states that there is a history that is not spoken of and facts that are hidden. This is evident in the letter the author sent to his wife, in which he says:"When our son told me that he had history on his timetable this year, I was saddened that his childhood would be wasted on studying history that he would later realize was falsified, tales of legendary heroism, primitive brainwashing devoid of intelligence. Do you think, my love, that fate has made us live in poverty in this rich country? Do you think God is sadistic enough to keep us a backward people all this time? I have never believed that. I am certain that we are the ones who chose our poverty and our immaturity when we sanctified our

history. We are the ones who created our new gods when we deluded ourselves into thinking that our revolution produced only saints and prophets, to whom we gave this country with all its wealth and the bounty of its people. Isn't it strange, my love, that even after all this time of independence, we are still wasting our time trying to figure out who is a “mujahid”, who is an activist, and who is a martyr?”(KACIMI, 2019, P.114-115, our translation)

From the above, it is clear that the authorities found in the revolutionary legacy a mechanism for reactionary domination and a justification for their actions. Likewise, fleeing to the other side perpetuates Western domination and the inferiority of the local community, the same sense inferiority that the writer felt when he visited Marseille. He recalls:“I added in my mind that I came from a place that had lost its geography, a place that is nowhere, where all exists is a sea that we cross on boats unsuitable for the sea. I am from there, where people dream only of here. I cry inside while smiling on the outside. I laugh too, but my laughter is like the barking of a stray dog. I laugh deliberately, not looking at anything in particular. I do not like to be attached to anything. Nothing wants me here. Nothing wants us, even though we want it... There is also nothing that wants us except death.”(KACIMI, 2019, P.91, our translation)

Media institutions played a prominent role in consolidating domination, as evidenced by “the publication of Jamal Hamidi’s autobiography. He was presented “as the right man for the job” for many reasons, the most important of which was that he was the dean of doormen in the country and that he was paralyzed and immobile, a characteristic that made him closer to the people, who needed a man like Jamal Hamidi who resembled them in his disability. However, the biography included his academic career, which took up ten pages of the newspaper's twenty-four pages.”(KACIMI, 2019, P.146, our translation)

Citizens believed what the media said, which was nothing more than a mouthpiece for the authorities. The writer seems aware of these facts, but he remained silent about this situation imposed by the corrupt regime, saying:“It is true that in my years of innocence, I believed everything the handsome man on the news said. You remember him, the man with combed hair, a shaved chin, a wide tie and white teeth. He was not the only one, but they were all similar: the same haircut, the same teeth, and the same tie. He appeared every time to fill our big heads with many things. We used to mock him and laugh at his formal, neat appearance, but in the end, we believed him. His soothing voice made us hallucinate with his words, so that in the end we believed them. We are a great people with a greater history, a great revolution, at least a million and a half martyrs. I believed his nonsense for so long that I saw myself as a superhero and an extraordinary citizen. I think it was a collective addiction.

I was not alone. Only the handsome man on the news knew the truth.”(KACIMI, 2019, P.97, our translation)

The gods dominated the Gashi class, or the people, in all aspects of their lives. The national economy was not spared from their domination, as people had to make do with onions alone due to the high price of tomatoes, which, along with most vegetables, had risen to the rank of fruit, and fruit had risen to the rank of meat. All types of meat had jumped to the rank of gold. Even the people in the city-state did not know what to do with the popular proverbs they had inherited from generation to generation, whose themes were halal livelihood and social status, with all the wisdom required to describe specific situations. In a time when logic was understood, they described those who had no role in life by saying, He is like the greenery on top of food. “But in a time when tomatoes became apples and zucchini became kiwis, they deliberately ignored this proverb, and if it unintentionally came to mind, they pretended ignorance and said it referred to any man in a high position.”(KACIMI, 2019, P.49, our translation)

Conclusion:

One of the most important findings of this study is that postcolonial Algerian fiction is an extension of its colonial predecessor, in which domination takes on a new form and new mechanisms, whereby the authorities create subordinates who exercise power on their behalf and speak with their voice in various social, economic, media and religious institutions. The authorities also exercise their hegemony through various direct and indirect mechanisms and means to achieve their desired goals. Intellectuals speak with the voice of subordinates beholden to the authorities, not with the voice of conscious defenders of their nation's causes. The media becomes the mouthpiece of the authorities, expressing the situation of the people, considering the revolutionary and militant legacy to be a reactionary hegemony built on its ruins, in addition to the money and power that create the first hegemon and the architect who creates the subordinates. Therefore, the novel “ *The Stairs of Trollar*” expressed cultural blindness and the domination of the other through a hidden mechanism, combining the discourse of domination and domination through discourse through the spirit of colonialism that left the homeland but is inevitably present in it through the body of authority.

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