

The aesthetics of the carnivalization of writing in Rachid BOUDJEDRA's *The Répudiation* and *The Macération*

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Abstract

By practicing a subversive aesthetic and a theme of denunciation, Rachid Boudjedra evokes in his novels "religion, sex, and politics," a triangle of the forbidden, in order to break taboos and interpret the contradictions and upheavals in Algerian society. Drawing on psychoanalysis and the practice of carnival writing traits such as genre blending and magnification, he proposes a fragmented universe and considers the novel as an aesthetic entity where the historical and the poetic, the real and the imaginary, the collective and the individual, the burlesque and the carnivalesque, are fused.

Keywords: *sociocriticism, subversion, aesthetics, genre blending, carnival writing.*

L'esthétique de la carnavalisation de l'écriture dans *La Répudiation* et *La Macération* de Rachid BOUDJEDRA

Résumé

En pratiquant une esthétique subversive et une thématique de la dénonciation, Rachid Boudjedra évoque dans ses romans " la religion, le sexe et la politique ", un triangle de l'interdit, pour briser les tabous et interpréter les contradictions et les bouleversements de la société algérienne. S'inspirant de la psychanalyse et de la pratique de l'écriture carnavalesque (mélange et grossissement des genres), il propose un univers fragmenté et considère le roman comme une entité esthétique où se fondent l'historique et le poétique, le réel et l'imaginaire, le collectif et l'individuel, le burlesque et le carnavalesque.

Mots-clés : *sociocritique, subversion, esthétique, mélange des genres, écriture carnavalesque.*

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Introduction

In an article entitled "The Maghrebi Novel in Question by Khair-Eddine, Boudjedra, and Tahar Benjelloun," Jacqueline Arnaud (Arnaud Jacqueline, 1976. pp. 59-68) pointed out that many Maghrebi novels employ a writing strategy of denunciation. Its representatives are primarily poets, and in a single movement, they pulverize fixed forms and taboos. They continue to write in French because it is urgent to speak, applying a violence with which they transgress sexual, religious, and political taboos. They distort the colonizer's language into a rich verbal creation by shattering the narrative form. Their goal is to aid in the destruction of fixed social forms, which they must not give the illusion of being rational and definitive.

These taboo destroyers denounce the old patriarchy still in place and the weight it places on women, particularly, the political recourse to religion, violently attack power, ancestral figures of authority. This is why, according to the author, the deliberate use of delirium and humor allows them all freedoms, but by resorting to great popular mythical figures, they preserve communication with the public and the possibility of one day inventing new forms. For them, poetry is total expression, a revolutionary means of pulverizing in a single movement, fixed forms and taboos. With them, Maghrebi literature is in search of new paths. Their ambition is to destroy old structures, to carry out a work of critical transgression. These taboo-breaking writers, according to the author, result in a surprisingly rich verbal creation.

By subverting language through various narrative techniques and textual strategies, Algerian writer Rachid Boudjedra transgresses patriarchal literary tradition. With a vigorous critique of the archaic structures of Muslim society

and a systematic transgression of sexual, religious, and political taboos, Boudjedra invents new forms of communication, another language, a language other than that of origins. We wonder if the originality of his writing lies in his subversive poetics and his carnivalization of writing?

Rachid Boudjedra's literature is a literature of messages and political words. Boudjedra will work for an exploration of the meaning of history through narrative writing. An excessive, proliferative, and invasive writing, whose language, through the derisory it translates, displaces the purpose of the story, which is no longer in the expression of something, but in the explosion of the text, the saturation of space, the panic of the character, the bewilderment of the reader, the interest of the critic, the aggression can begin. All his novels are dominated by chasms, disasters, the exaltations of historical memory.

In Boudjedra's texts, the novel functions poorly. Literary concerns change, centers of interest are redefined, the novel is no longer attentive to an ideology, in the service of a cause, it is present on the literary scene certainly, but only for itself, it listens to itself, questions its writing, its limits, its future. The novel attempts to surpass itself. The objective of this study is to show how this surpassing is achieved through the subversion and carnivalization of writing, the recourse to the derisory, to farce, to parody, but also through the contestation of the linearity that characterizes the traditional novel. Boudjedrian writing is open to social criticism, the relationship to power, exile, family, sexuality, cultural dissatisfaction, the conflict between high culture and popular culture, the question of origin and identity, the question of the sacred, the East-West dialogue and the inscription in universal culture!

In his novels, Boudjedra rebels against social alienation. His works are at once mythical, poetic, and universal in scope. An author known for his political and social commitment, as evidenced throughout his work, Boudjedra himself expresses his admiration for the authors of the New Novel, to which he breathes new life, reinvesting a way of capturing reality to report on the reality of his time. The social and political aspect is very strongly emphasized by the Algerian author. The parody of investigation in his novels contributes to this aesthetic of reconstruction, in the development of a modernity often linked to the renewal of a national identity. Our research aims to reveal the question of the relationship between subversion and the carnivalization of writing. This question, which touches on aesthetics, ideology, and the carnivalesque. Boudjedra masterfully transforms this painful desire into the seeds of passion and life for a liberation of thought and the open challenge of the prevailing pseudo-values in a society reassured in its convictions and beliefs. Boudjedra's text becomes a true and virulent critique of the regimes in place.

1- Textual Modernity

Heir to the new literature, contemporary texts refuse to present closure or plausibility, and offer open-ended novels that invite rereading: a trait of revolutionary realism to which Boudjedra's texts subscribe. By participating in modern thought, his texts are no longer bound to any prior authority, be it that of the classical novel or traditional historical discourse. On the contrary, through numerous processes, they continually subvert the foundations of this authority: by doubling the instances of enunciation, which are sometimes written in the feminine, the texts renounce the terror of the unitary discourse where a single voice, generally that of

the father (that of God), is heard; by multiplying stories and integrating History into them, the texts proclaim the plurality of meaning. Modernity can also be read in *The Macération* (Rachid Boudjedra (1984), a total and systematic break with the literature of representation, which invites us to redefine the codes of the novel genre.

Modernity does not come about as a logical, historical operation. Modernity is a chaotic (Chikhi Beida (1996, p. 7)

) and forced intrusion. To be modern, must a work break a certain number of previous literary codes or language conventions? The aesthetic function of animating and dramatizing the narrative and the thematic function of denouncing justice are at the heart of the quest for renewal.

The modernity of the "Boudjedrian" text is manifested in the possibilities granted to its characters to escape. How many times does the reader of *Sunstroke* (Rachid Boudjedra (1972), of *1001 Years of Nostalgia* (Rachid Boudjedra (1979) or of *The Taking of Gibraltar* (Rachid Boudjedra (1987) feel that the characters, particularly in their linguistic, asocial and sexually deviant violence, are inexorably escaping the author's control. This new perception of the character's freedom (Jean Paul Sartre, op. cit., p. 50) presents a vision of literary modernity "The role of the writer, according to Gide, that of "false mediators" consists no longer in imposing his point of view but in raising problems, in worrying the reader and often having the courage to disappoint him" (Mohamed DAOUD, 2006, p. 70)

This quote allows us to situate Boudjedra's texts and those called modern, because they break with other, more conventional forms of writing. Boudjedra transgresses the laws of the text's functioning and translates into a narrative dysfunction that disrupts the story and compromises the activity of

reading. Part of this process of questioning, his novels challenge us because they present something unfinished, deconstructed, and digressive.

In his novels, the novelist evokes such sensitive subjects as religion, history, memory and the place of women. A fundamental characteristic of literary modernity. His works share a modern aesthetic rooted in the preeminence given to language. His novelistic work participates, according to Charles Bonn, in an "androgynous writing" to be considered in a dynamic of "rupture which is that of modernity itself" (TOURE, 2010: p. 174).

2- Poetics of Subversion

According to Touriya Fili-Tullon (2009), the notion of subversion is very present in literary criticism. It represents upheaval, protest, destabilization, indiscipline, mutiny, overthrow, revolution, sedition, and destruction. It is therefore opposed to conformism and moderation. The term subversion also carries connotations of destruction and ruin and is quite clearly political: the "overthrow of the [established] order."

In the literary field, subversion, depending on the form it takes, allows us to distinguish between ironic literature and engaged literature. Literary subversion can take different forms and range from simple ideological contestation represented in the work to aesthetic subversion that affects the writing techniques themselves. "Subversion" refers to both destruction and upheaval¹. To subvert is to turn something upside down; the word retains, alongside its literary meaning, a political and moral meaning, for example in "to subvert received ideas."

¹ See Robert, History of the French Language, article "subvert".

As for Rachid Boudjedra, the subversive writer who stands at the confluence of different literary movements, both Western and Maghreb, without forgetting the inspiration he constantly emphasizes from Arabic literature, his subversion seems to be fueled by a quest for the absolute that takes on different appearances, sometimes existential, sometimes mystical, or "simply" ideological. Subversion, for him, is first of all thematic. It is linked to the transgression of taboos in societies where it still continues to exercise its influence. Sex, religion and politics constitute the sacred triangle that a self-respecting subversive literature is called upon to transgress.

The effects of subversion in Rachid Boudjedra's works are related to the emergence of a variegated or bilingual, sometimes even multilingual, linguistic imagination, made of syntactic and discursive transgressions, phonetic, lexical or graphic creations, mixtures of registers and genres, games of masks or postures, among authors who thus resolutely place themselves in a total contemporaneity.

Boudjedra recreates a multicultural universe where the languages in contact seem to participate in a polyphonic harmony based on the technique of counterpoint: each word in one language seems to call for its equivalent in the other. The impact of bilingualism is therefore evident. What Boudjedra has in common with many French-speaking Arab writers is the reference to local realities in his novels: anthroponyms, toponyms, allusions to current political events, cultural facts, religion, traditions, etc.

The subversive scope of Boudjedra's writing, described as "enigmatic" (Hafid Gafaïti, 1999, pp. 35-77), remains essentially linked to the taboos that the author openly attacks, whether political, religious or sexual. A trinity that continues

to weigh, more than ever, in the Arab-Muslim¹ world. On a generic level, Boudjedra's subversion attacks precisely the foundations of autobiography and history. The studies collected by Hafid Gafaïti give a large place to these two aspects of the work, either jointly or separately². If a literature wants to be subversive, it is precisely because it does not obey either conventional censorship or normative limitations. Seduced by ancient, pre-Islamic or classical³ authors, this author does not fail to cite or evoke them, especially the most subversive of them such as "Bachar Ibn Bourd"⁴ "Abou Nawass"⁵. Boudjedra produced a prolific⁶ body of work and is labeled a "subversive author," but with a more pronounced political nuance. As H. Gafaïti noted in these words:

"Given that, on the one hand, his work already considerably disturbed a readership and a French-speaking press wary of the subversive nature, not only of his writing, but also of his themes and that, on the other hand, his openly anti-fundamentalist positions and his claim to atheism and communism ended up alienating him both Arabic speakers and French speakers and certain factions of power as much as Islamists, Rachid Boudjedra was certainly one of the first men to be brought down by occult organizations allied

¹ Cf. Fatima Mernissi, (1983), *Sex, Ideology and Islam*, [English ed., 1975], Paris, Tierce.

² Cf. Hafid Gafaïti (ed.), *Rachid Boudjedra. A Poetics of Subversion*, I. *Autobiography and History*, op. cit.

³ Cf. Habib Salha, *Maghrebian Poetics and Intertextuality*, op. cit., p. 106: the critic notes allusions to Ibn Arabi, Al Jahiz, Abou El Alaa El Maarri, Abou Nawas, Bachar Ibn Burd, Omar El Khayyam, Ghazali, Ibn Rochd (Averroes).

⁴The *Dismantling*, p. 211.

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ A conference held recently in Oran (April 9 and 10, 2005) had precisely as its theme Rachid Boudjedra and the productivity of the text; the proceedings were published under this title by Mohamed Daoud.

openly or indirectly, in an objective manner, to certain fringes of political power." (Gafaïti, 1999: p. 53-55)

Hafid Gafaïti noted that writing is, for Boudjedra, a work of both asceticism and enjoyment. For, according to him, what matters is not to write a story but to write to free oneself, to heal oneself from the ills of existence: erasure of ills by inscribing words; we will have recognized one of the great constants of modern writing. This is also what Naget Khadda notes in his article: "the word is distributed among several characters,"

"[it] spreads in Boudjedra's usual way by suspenders and digressions, by repetitions and displacements, by cores and expansions, in a text which folds, under redundancy, overload and swelling, giving rise to a hypertrophy of rhetoric in relation to the structure." (Gafaïti, 1999, p.55).

Lila Ibrahim Ouali, for her part, pointed out that R. Boudjedra's novelistic creation establishes a literary coherence in the development of an identity and a "personal myth" that are based on a subversive poetics. Working on the French-language texts of R. Boudjedra in a book entitled "Rachid Boudjedra. Poetic Writing and Novelistic Structures," Lila Ibrahim focused on the study of writing and composition processes. She also analyzed the narrative and linguistic components, the games of diegesis that are organized around an individual and collective imagination, the springs of narrativity that give us a reading of the confrontation between a writing self and a self-present in the writing as a character.

The author finally noted that the originality of Boudjerian writing lies above all in its crossbreeding, in the complexity of its resourcing of a cultural, linguistic and literary dynam-

ic. According to the author, the methodological approach privileges the poetic dimension of the work and incidentally addresses sociological and psychological elements when these are arranged in meaningful structures. The initial stage reveals the preponderant role of linguistic and textual interferences in poetic functioning, which require the implementation of strategies of insertion, modification, assembly, accommodation, etc. These strategies allow R. Boudjedra to develop his personal myth on a subversive poetics. The second stage, according to Lila Ibrahim, considers the part of political commitment that underlies the aesthetic concerns of the writer.

The rhetoric of criticism (intertextuality and dialogism) which is based on Boudjedra's archethemes is motivated by R. Boudjedra's desire to tell the adventure of writing and to build a privileged relationship with an implicit reader who will multiply the meanings of his "open work". (Ibrahim: 1998)

In an article entitled "Rachid Boudjedra, a scandalous author?" Kasereka Kavwahirehi made an analysis through which she situated the approach of Mohammed-Salah Zeliche in his work "The writing of Rachid Boudjedra. Poét(h)ique des deux rives" and how he presents as fundamental the initial project of Boudjedra, which is to dismantle the old order, including the literary tradition. Hence the conception of writing that emerges from Boudjedra's work. For someone who has often identified with the mother persecuted and mistreated by an unjust order, writing is above all a weapon to reconquer the lost paradise. A machine for dismantling the bourgeois state and the religious order with a view to establishing a new order that is no longer based on religion, the source of inequalities, injustices, suffering and frustrations, but on the values of a secular humanism.

In Boudjedra's writing, the individual and the collective are deeply intertwined. "The act of creation [...] pleads for a self and bears witness to both society and History." (Kavwahirehi, 2006, p. 112) Mohammed-Salah Zeliche sets out to examine the literary means and resources deployed by Boudjedra to "bring about his ideological program," namely "to dismantle the old oppressive order." (Op.cit., p.115) More specifically, he sets himself the task of analyzing and determining the reasons for borrowing the aesthetics or narrative techniques of L.-F. Céline, C. Simon and G. Garcia-Marquez and to "make their specific mechanisms and functions perceptible" (ibid) in Boudjedra's project. The author thus demonstrates that in Boudjedra and Céline, we find a [same] conception of language and language, a nihilistic vision of the world, an imaginary where memories and resentments simmer, a desire to say that underlies a violent emotion, a temperament that takes after Diogenes, a rebellious nature and a destiny marked by dualist ideology (dominated/ dominated...) (Zeliche, 2006: p. 112)

As in Céline's stories, Boudjedra's narrators "give free rein to irony, black humor, and exasperation and [...] utter a language with an oral/popular character." (*Ibid*) This recognized, if not claimed, Célinean component pushes the subversive violence of Boudjedra's text "to its highest point." It reinforces the dismantling of the traditional order, that of novelistic writing as well as the more general "dismantling of all old attitudes" (Zeliche, 2006: p. 146), sedimented in the language, and highlights the fact that Boudjedra's dismantling is "a matter of style, therefore of hard work aimed at giving depth, breadth, and weight to his arguments – in order to better scandalize." (Zeliche, 2006: p. 117)

By shaking up a literary tradition of writing and by disrupting the order of a literature that is, if not Algerian, at least Arab and Muslim, R. Boudjedra, on various levels, shocks a reader accustomed to tirelessly indulging in the evocation of a pseudo-glorious past. [...] By disrupting a way of speaking, he confronts mental habits that are often installed forever. Mohammed-Salah Zeliche suggests that, in Boudjedra, or, as Guy Scarpetta says: "to pass elsewhere: not in a "beyond" of language [...], but in it and against it, in a strategy of confrontation, cheating and diversion" (Op.cit., p.122). The author also attempts to point out that commitment in literature is only truly realized as "languagement" (Lise Gauvin). As Calle-Gruber said: "The political fight is indeed in language that it is waged, in the work on the letter of signifiers and signifieds. Politics and poetry are linked." (Zeliche, 2006: p. 112)

According to him, the second lesson that can be read through Boudjedra's paradoxical positioning in relation to ancestral heritage as well as Western modernity is this: literature or, better, writing is an experience of rupture. It is, as Guy Scarpetta suggests, "an experience, constantly to be renewed and displaced: an experience of crossing, of the transgression of identities, of the explosion of limits, of being torn away from the earth and myths, of the infinite circulation of nominations" (Scarpetta, 1996). Finally, he also attempts to show how the author has constituted his work as a revolutionary and uncompromising ideological program to dismantle the old order deemed oppressive.

Afifa BERERHI also demonstrated, in her article entitled "Rachid Boudjedra", that the Boudjedra narrative thus undergoes the break and reversal desired by subversive writing. According to her, the effects of break and confinement, of reversal and transformation carried out by a parodic ap-

proach and a derision pushed to the point of absurdity, prevent the novel from constituting itself as such by breaking and entering. According to her study, such a construction was only possible thanks to the narrator who agrees to lose his reason in order to conquer the power of denunciation. "The simulated madness was only an attitude of defense" (Bererhi, 1988), a "mythical illness created from scratch" for the triumph of freedom of expression which allows Rachid, lost in the vertigo of memory, to express his own repudiation of the family and social environment, to express his "bastardy" in order to respond to the initial "Who am I?" She noted, finally, that writing as a scriptural composition ends up erasing the theme. As a result, it serves an aesthetic more than a narrative intention. These observations call for a conclusion on the binary structure of novels: the violence naturally attached to the themes raised but also generated by the writer's scriptural work always finds its counterpart in this same writing.

Under the title "The map and the plan, Ariadne's thread of Michel Butor's *L'Emploi du temps* and Rachid Boudjedra's *Topographie idéale pour une agression caractéristique*", Claire Mazaleyrat pointed out that "Boudjedra transforms his plans into true works of abstract art by achieving, through the amalgamation of sensations and impressions experienced by his character and visual elements perceived by a more objective eye" (Mazaleyrat, 2022), with a mixture of perspectives, a very pictorial approach to the world. Her study showed how he goes beyond a model of reflection largely inspired by the New Novel, by adding a sociological dimension that is more than discreet in Butor. It would therefore seem that the formal influence of the New Novel has allowed Boudjedra here to express a questioning that is

both philosophical and social about the place of man in the universe of signs and in this incomprehensible space. Boudjedra denounces violence, through a subversive, erotic and irreverent style at the risk of shocking, as is the case from the beginning, with *The Répudiation*:

"The Repudiation manifested at the right time, (...) the response to an expectation regarding the French-language literary text: to see it denounce the situation of women and the confinement of the daily life of the young Algerian generation, victims of the sclerotic weight of their fathers. A very complex expectation, since it fears at the same time being fulfilled. For responding to it constitutes, strictly speaking, the major scandal: the highlighting of what, in essence, must remain hidden. It is to violate this decency, this "hishma" which is partly the foundation of Muslim identity, and which prohibits moral undressing, in particular showing this other side of the feminine universe and the intimacy it contains (...). This contradictory expectation will therefore preferentially turn towards texts written in the language of the other, and which their difference therefore places in a situation of marginality. Marginality from which speech is possible, yet necessary, which says what cannot be said within the circle of identity." (Bonn, 1976: p. 175)

"The Repudiation is a story that stems from a fury to speak the forbidden, the shadowy zone where the fundamental contradiction of a society is knotted. This is why the situation of women in a text of fury is also a statement of the confinement of an entire country" (Bonn, 1974).

In *La Répudiation et La Macération*, Boudjedra denounces the abuses of religious men as much as those of politicians, it is much more with the aim of showing the villainy of one and the other, than to defend any ideal! Violence emanates from words but also from novelistic structures, phrasal

compositions and the choice of characters. It is not only the property of a choice of crude, obscene words and execrable or scatological situations. It can also be born from a seemingly sanitized universe that emanates from the mouth of the narrator. The narrator's first act of violence is to always speak against something! Against oblivion or memory, against a cursed reality or forbidden dreams, against excessive lyricism...The interference between reality and the dreamlike, fictional world gradually fades until it disappears completely. Boudjedra delivers memories in bulk, but shows relevance in their choice. In this regard, M'barek Zine El Abidine states that "Traumatized memory restores a fragmented vision of the world. It tirelessly returns to the same events and the same moments." (M'barek: 1994) The diverted voice does not stop its annoying whispering there: it is not enough to denounce but to guillotine; nothing is more effective than ridicule: "In front of us, however, he mocked their ties and their big wool coats that they kept on them, despite the stifling heat of the Algerian summer, to clearly show the village their enrichment, which was absolutely artificial" (M'barek: 1994).

Boudjedra's novels present the reader with an unfinished, digressive, even awkward text in its way of narrating events and, from the outset, unnerving the same reader, accustomed to more narrative stability, to a novelistic well-being, provided by what critics call the conventional novel.

3. Writing: Subjectivity, Pleasure, and Catharsis

Novelist Rachid Boudjedra delivers in one breath a narrative fueled by reality in all its complexity and transformation, presenting itself as a cry of alarm, an urgency to write in order to resist. Through metaphors, allegories, and

symbolization, the narrator-author finds an answer to his inner and painful conflicts, transforming his pain into venting words. Boudjedra's writing constitutes a cathartic (Garcia-Cassado Margarita, 1995, p. 18) outlet through which he unloads his childhood nightmares onto paper and, from a rereading of his subjectivity, creates a transformative writing-reading of Algerian society. Boudjedra draws on psychoanalysis and the writing techniques of the New Novel¹ to revolutionize Algerian society by filtering it through the unconscious via the repressed collective unconscious.

Persecuted by gaping symbolic wounds¹, the main character seems the same, as Boudjedra's work is imbued with a filigree subjectivity that each time reveals a trait of his plural dimension propensity in the narration. Emotionally traumatized by the aggressive social reality, the central character attempts escapes that do not succeed: he takes refuge in delirium, consumes incest. But it is writing - sublimation, which transforms emotional traumas by reconstituting the egotistic integrity of the subject that constitutes a salutary escape and a cathartic purpose. This passionate search for a catharsis, a relief or a salvation for the literary work is also a desire for the dismantling of the author, a powerful will to rebuild himself, a particular aesthetic. Retelling violence, aggression, subversion, provocation is essentially emphasizing that writing is perceived as a catharsis through which the creator frees himself from his anxieties and fantasies, or at least achieves a reduction in suffering: "It is thanks to this charge that we place on the page that we achieve a certain liberation of ourselves" writes Boudjedra. Writing also proceeds from the settling of scores "to render reality harmless" and ward off evil. Boudjedra decided to draw from his ink to

¹ Ibidem.

break this taboo trinity that literature had to make because life for him is not so simple; it does not flow impassively. Today, he returns to quadrupling the prohibitions. Indeed, according to his article entitled "Return to Repudiation", Djamel Ben Yekhlef revealed that it was the ideological and political upheavals that gave the writer the opportunity to vent his heart by referring to Boudjedra's words:

“[...] I practice history in a critical and subversive way. [...] I have tried to show, not as a historian, but on a sensitive and literary level, how history also retains its silences, its falsifications. [...] This is how art is subversive. [...] History invested by literature becomes subversive”. (Boudjedra, p. 87)

After sex, religion, and politics, Boudjedra launches against simplicity. Writing would not be an arrangement of words: the novel is not an act of storytelling. Writing is; pleasure and knowledge. And to do it; one would have to succeed in confusing textuality, poetics, structure, and erudition. So many ingredients that the author seeks to ensure to avoid being "overly understood." So, faced with a surplus of objectivity, it was necessary to bring out the subjectivity that many Algerians lacked. Algerian society was like something frozen, something fabricated once and for all, something that would not be entirely human, with all that humanity can contain of contradictory, pathetic, free, and grandiose! So; it was necessary to create subjectivity. And to write subjectively, one had to put one's own self into it. From subjectivity, one arrives, psychoanalytically, at the central fantasy.

In *The Répudiation*, Boudjedra disrupts our conformism, awakens our latent revolt. He shakes up outdated traditions, outdated conventions and cries out his despair against the narrow religiosity of a blocked society, extremely hypocritical, bourgeois, rapacious, puritanical and self-righteous,

without forgetting a certain regime in whose hands the Revolution would have failed! So, in keeping with the brutality of his temperament, Boudjedra and with a denunciatory, violent and daring word: speaks, invectives, curses, blasphemes, because speaking seems more essential than writing! The novel affirms the need to shake up the order of things, to change the life that leads the small child to dream of imaginary parents who are better, stronger and more beautiful than his real family. As Naget Khadda reminds us: "the sexual constitutes, with the political and the religious, the traditional "forbidden triangle"¹, particularly active in the sociocultural context which serves as a reference for the work" (Khadda, 1987). It is through the problems of the woman and in particular those of her mother that the political-social concerns of the narrator appear in *Filigrée*. Life in the right place is the subject of an article developed by Ali Yédes who refuses to read it as pure fiction and sees it as an autobiographical mirror, a novel which, unlike the others, remains very close to real life:

“To reach the conscience of his people and that of the international community, Boudjedra uses a novelistic form that mixes reality with fiction (...) It is no longer only the artist who speaks here but also the human being and the potential victim.” (Yédes: pp. 139-165)

Boudjedra's thematic and stylistic choices are evident in a bitter sociological critique of denunciation and shocking revelation. Desacralizing religious dogma, perceived as an alienating and castrating system, is a permanent undertaking that Boudjedra undertakes, in our opinion, to raise awareness, reveal and cultivate the freedom of the self, of erased subjectivity and to allow the total affirmation of being. In conjunction with the psychoanalytic, social and polit-

¹Expression used by the author in a conference in Algiers in 1990

ical function of writing, this, imbued with poetry, also serves pleasure: "Writing is an act of self-enjoyment, this is how we can define the relationship between the pencil and the sheet of paper as a sexual relationship of a mental and rational order."

Boudjedra's "intellectual" pleasure is evident when he mixes casualness with seriousness, poetic delirium inflating anorexic speech. This futile detail accessing the essential! This dynamic writing, disrupting the traditional codes of narration, is in perpetual semantic gestation. The textual spaces where signs collide and refer to their double opposite open up to plural meaning. The present ambiguity favors the multiplication of interpretative leads and false leads and considerably drowns out authoritarian speech. Rhetorical and structural processes are at work to benefit this staging of writing. Thus, each protocol for reading a work brings into the writing, like a being that freely constructs itself. On its reverse side, this same writing is poetry "erected according to the modes of psalmody." Rachid Boudjedra sees in the sign the compensation for the impossibility of religious faith. He substitutes writing for all essence and sees in it the metaphor of love. The novel is thus also "a grammar of sexuality."

Mohamme-Salah Zeliche (2005) pointed out that writing, because it is a metamorphosis, if not an escape and a search for salvation, because it is a refuge in the mysteries of language, is for the author the opportunity to return to the original place, through which he can dissolve his personal discomfort. The display of sordid dreams, the crude description of menstruation, blood, incestuous facts, etc., all of this shocks the reader. However, the overlapping of themes from one work to another clearly reveals the literary, philosophical and political project, and this through textual violence:

"with a shift towards the fantastic and a rhetoric nourished by intellectual theorizations, around the poles of Marxism and Islam, which make Boudjedra a champion of revolutionary allegory" (Bouraoui, 1985). From these variations and overlapping figures, the Boudjedra myth (Op. cit., p. 10) is born. Instead of being accomplished in its finished form of told stories, the work, therefore, spills out onto itself and Boudjedra's writing becomes a writing which reflects on its own sources of development, on its literariness.

4. Carnavalesque Writing or Writing in Motion

Faced with this invariable theme, there is writing that reflects diversity: grotesque realism and the characters' zaniness, fantastical delusions, inscriptions of the improbable and the fantastic, love and poetry, interplay of styles and constructions develop and renew the expression of the carnivalesque and allow writing in motion to produce the specificity of each work.

Rachid Boudjedra delves back into his novelistic universe, where an individual, intimate story collides with the collective history of Algeria, confronting them in a singular aesthetic that shatters the boundaries between poetry and document, interwoven within an allegorical narrative. This contiguity between blurred memories and the country's blurred history is also the aesthetic identity of this novelistic universe.

Collective history and individual history, intimately linked and mutually determining, impose themselves through their constancy. Society, politics, and culture, considered in relation to the traumas they provoke in the individual, are the subject of a subversive questioning. From this perspective, Boudjedra's work could be summed up as "a single sentence" repeated by different actors. Faced with this

invariable theme, there is the writing that bears witness to diversity: grotesque realism and the craziness of the characters, fantastical delusions, inscriptions of the improbable and the fantastic, love and poetry, interferences of styles and construction games... develop and renew the expression of the carnivalesque and make the writing in movement produce the specificity of Boudjedrian work.

Boudjedra's literature is first and foremost the novel of his scriptural adventure. The violence generated by the writer's scriptural work always finds its counterpart in this same writing and allows us to better grasp the militant aim of the entire work, founded essentially on a desire for the radical transformation of Algeria, both by renouncing theological thought, by reappropriating the secular dimension of Arab civilization, and by "differentiated" integration into the modern world. Thus, it is around the theme of writing that the unity of the work is achieved, even though its protean character is recognized. From one story to the next, the recurring fictional motifs lend themselves to the exploitation of other founding motifs of difference. Overturning the traditional codes of narration, this writing is in perpetual semantic gestation. Faced with this invariable theme, there is the writing that bears witness to diversity: grotesque realism and extravagances of the characters, fantastical delusions, inscriptions of the improbable and the fantastic, love and poetry, interferences of styles and construction games... develop and renew the expression of the carnivalesque and make the writing in movement produce the specificity of his work.

4.1. Carnivalization: A Subversive Means

Carnivalized thought combines polyphony, dialogism, and difference and depicts the deconstruction of meaning through the interplay of signs, for, as Bakhtin emphasizes, "Human nature is dialogical; it has a double meaning, a double way of seeing the world." The subversive infiltration of carnivalesque thought into textual ideology establishes a new meaning, which moves away from the logos to the reciprocal movement of the self-ego. These are the conflicts of otherness that can be read in the verbal fabric in figurative form: "through metaphors, sinedoches, antitheses, and paradoxes, which make language ambiguous. Carnivalized images have a meaning that can be read in two ways, because the discourse is dialogical." (Bakhtin: 1977)

Boudjedrian work is carnivalesque. In his stories, there is subversion; rupture, the reversion of the world. We can first of all find the signs carrying a social ideology in the writing. The revolutionary project inscribed in his work is salient by its ideological reference to communism and is translated by an ostensibly playful writing. The ideological referent becomes a pretext for scriptural elaboration. This writing lends itself to the games of the imagination and its luxuriance gives the story ambiguity and complexity: "Rachid, the narrator evokes in a Kafkaesque story his rage against the political clan and does not fail to recall this pro-communist soothsayer "killed at point-blank range because he was reading Marx." (The Repudiation: p. 123)

“Anxiety gripped me as I climbed the stairs (...) but I was wrong every time and this fueled my hatred of the clan (...) the daily meeting with the secret members broke all my energy and all my desire and left me prey to the most violent despair because I did not understand where they were going with this, nor what

exactly I was being accused of". (The Repudiation: p. 123)

Then this: Myriam, speaking of my grandfather, on my mother's side, said: "Every drunken binge brought you back to your grandfather (the one and only communist in the whole village)." (The Macération: p. 266) "From the beginning and as far back as your memory goes, you had always understood that your mother did not appreciate leaving you to the phantasmagoria of the old man and his tireless indoctrination, which she sensed were irremediably inscribed in the manner of an indelible chiseling that would never cease to mark life". (The Macération: p. 267)

4.2. Carnivalization of Writing: From Aesthetic to Political Engagement

It is also aesthetic engagement that dominates political engagement in Rachid Boudjedra's novels. The author's goal is to create his own language through writing, his narration, and his vision of the world. This is also addressed by Yann Venner in his article entitled "History in Stories. A Reading of Rachid Boudjedra," where he suggests that plausibility is not a fundamental principle for Boudjedra. For him, the writer wishes to destroy the referential illusion to draw attention to the functioning of the text, of writing that will prefer the language of the novel to fiction. Writing then becomes "the unknown that must be confronted and deciphered" (Yann: pp. 17-31), as Abdelkader Khatibi writes, for whom the study of the content of the work must be transcended.

Boudjedra's writing opens up to the forbidden with frankness and audacity. It is a courageous and insolent form adopted by the writer to overcome passivity and modesty.

His novel *Timimoun* is a free form that constitutes a new approach in the novelistic production of this novelist for whom writing has always been a refuge. This writing develops a personal myth. It constantly pours out on itself, reflects on its sources of generation, its literariness. It is a writing of the self. According to the author, in most of Rachid Boudjedra's novels, the text, and from a disturbed and failing memory of the narrators, brings together historical and fictional events from a miniature *The Taking of Gibraltar* (BOU-DJEDRA Rachid, 1969) or a photograph *The Dismantling* (*Idem*), hangs up fragments, gathers by associations and analogies words full of flesh themselves leading to digressions. This generative work thus demonstrates that the text at first glance only refers to itself and that it only intends to stage its own functioning.

A writing that then conditions the reader, "because there is nothing to expect from a passive reader" (Yann: p. 256), writes Rachid Boudjedra. Through his study, Yann Venner noted that through its variations, its evasions, its digressions, its arbitrarily interrupted sentences, its breaks in time, its questioning of the events reported by the characters themselves called into question, through the variation of points of view, through the blurring of transmitters and temporality, through the shifting of narrative voices and the derealization of the story, Rachid Boudjedra, by tipping reality towards fabrication, gives precedence to the poetic over the political. He thinks, finally, that it is by articulating the notion of History with that of stories that novels celebrate the multiplicity and heterogeneity of language games, aesthetic, historical, fictional and other effects.

Breaking with the plausible, with numerous incursions, intrusions, and digressions, Boudjedra's writing offers a fragmented universe where words proliferate. Since *La Ré-*

pudiation, his novelistic work, multiple and unique, has been part of a dynamic historical and rhetorical reinterpretation of Maghrebi reality in general and Algerian reality in particular, using diverse and often disturbing registers, parody, the crudest realism, and hyperbole. The characters in this work regularly evolve in a circular, singular universe where sex and blood, central figures of the Boudjedra myth, are central.

5. Features of Carnival Writing:

5.1. Mixing Genres and Figures of Magnification

Thus freed from the taboos of the social order and delivered to the uncontrolled hyperrealism of the unbridled imagination of the writer Boudjedra, sex is staged. The reign and omnipresence of sex are then proclaimed, without false modesty. The narrator or writer therefore speaks openly about what, usually and out of decency, is kept reserved at the risk of disturbing the order of things and decorum. This is the process of the incorporation of the carnival by the novel where there is a series of binary oppositions that distinguish an official and serious world from an unofficial and carnivalesque world where the reversal of values occurs.

The universe of excess and the monstrous prevents any norm from establishing itself and any form from being fixed. The principles of referentiality and the effect of reality are modulated here by the prism of the carnivalesque, which leads to their deformation: deformation of the character, deformation of the world of the work, and the deformation of language. Indeed, in this universe, the characters undergo the mask of a process that destabilizes identity without destroying it. This is what Mikhail Bakhtin highlights, which, according to him, is the universe that allows us to "mutually

change bodies, to renew ourselves" (Bakhtin, 1979: p. 255). Thus, the images of excessive widening and narrowing here evoke deformation and imply the transgression of fixed bodily limits. Hence the reversal of distinctive characteristics, roles, and the misalignment of figures, calling upon supernatural characters or beings, the invisible world.

One of the most remarkable features of new Maghrebi novel writing is undoubtedly this excessive tendency, as in the New Novel and the postmodern novel, to transgress taboos and prohibitions. Like a textual obsessive, the novelist Rachid Boudjedra violates prohibitions and delights in speaking in a daring writing of sex and in a deliberately shocking language. Thus, the grotesque lower body intervenes in the description of the world of the work through the predominance of the grotesque (ridiculous, bizarre, extravagant ...). It is therefore a reversal of values. This mixture of the fantastic, the extravagant, the excessive and the monstrous that we encounter in Boudjedra's texts exposes us to a problematic of the genre. His texts represent a mixture of genres in that they involve myth, legend, poetry, epic, and tales that abound in these novelistic works. This is proof of a particular writing style, which stands out for its astonishing and delicious aesthetics.

Drawing inspiration from the resources of oral tradition and Arab-Muslim culture, Boudjedra proposes a novelistic writing, one of rupture and transgression. This writing seems to reveal carnivalesque traits through an instinctive presence of magnification figures. These magnification figures, as rhetoric of carnivalesque writing, mark the aesthetic character of Rachid Boudjedra's writing. The use of these figures has a significant value insofar as this multidimensional trait through these forms aims at the objectives of textual modernity. The originality of his creation lies essentially

in the freedom to organize the literary heritage as the author wishes. This, in the concern to innovate and reshape the novelistic genre by destroying traditional generic boundaries. The writing of sexuality or aesthetics of sexuality therefore appears as a strategy, a liberation to raise awareness and stigmatize. Hence the process of "literary carnivalization" of which Bakhtin speaks. Such modern writing appears to be one of the best strategies for understanding and confronting the realities of modern societies.

5.2. Scrambling Techniques

In his doctoral thesis entitled "Francophone Modernity and Postmodernity in Writings of Violence. The Case of Rachid Boudjedra and Sony Labo Tansi," Thierno Dia Toure demonstrated that the narrative challenge of Rachid Boudjedra's novels lies less in illustrating or reproducing the scene of violence than in capturing what constitutes its occurrence/advent. According to him, Rachid Boudjedra seeks to draw from his scenographies the singularity of a literary experience whose radicalism is primarily rooted in a move beyond the narrative schemata, systems, and techniques of the aesthetics of the reception of violent writing and which, not content with addressing iconoclastic and subversive themes, moves toward a stylistic, formal, and structural revolution by considering "humor as a model for modern writing about violence" (Toure, 2010: p. 174). Rachid Boudjedra said that "writing is a blurring of the data of reality (...). Why leave aside fantasies, questions, subjective analyses? The main thing is not to lose the common thread" (p. 174).

Collective history and individual history, intimately linked and determining one another, impose themselves by their constancy. Society, politics, and culture, considered in

relation to the traumas they provoke in the individual, are the object of a questioning carried out in a subversive manner. From this point of view, Boudjedra's work could be summed up in "one and the same sentence" which is repeated with different actors. (...) » He confided, in an interview: Writing is making reality speak through - paradoxically - a major scrambling of the data of reality. Because literature is illusion, it is poetic. And poetics is a scrambling of every moment and of all data » (p. 176) He added: What is fascinating in the work of writing is precisely this scrambling, these techniques of scrambling that we impose on ourselves, that personally I impose on myself in order to - effectively - strip reality; to dig deep, beyond what we call reality, to restore not a reality but a consciousness. A moving, pathetic and passionate consciousness of the world.

For the author, it is a question of a novelistic subjectivity, one that "seeks to transcribe (...), its ambition to take up, through formal invention, the challenge of its responsibility towards the world to which it is attached" (p. 103). According to him, this postmodern orientation, through a massive reevaluation of themes, chronicles and other stories, de-centers its aesthetic challenge towards a work of reconstruction of narratives. However, refuting in its narrative space, any monopolization of form, techniques and structure, it moderates them by various strategies. Among which, the convocation of narrative practices which relate to the rewriting, fragmentation, discontinuity, dissemination, hybridization and heterogeneity of the postmodern novelistic text. Because, ultimately, "the history of all literature is the history of the resumption of forms" (p. 178). In this perspective, the comic of words intervenes as a mediation, in the work of Rachid Boudjedra, of a relationship attraction/rejection of the local language vis-à-vis the French language whose "gib-

berish" (p. 102) reveals through humor a violence exerted on the language. It is modernity that was built on positions of [formal] rupture.

Conclusion

Rachid Boudjedra's novels offer the opportunity for poetic delight and reassure plural reading through the complexity and ambiguity of Boudjedra's style, an alchemist of words, inclined toward a fascinating stylistic aesthetic. The novel, usually an open space conducive to readers' daydreams, is peppered with the author's instructions inviting artistic complicity for a delightful reading experience! The "cursed" authorship is the poetic anchor of the relentless narrator who vainly attempts to paint an elusive "being": the accumulation of adjectives is the prism of a reading of visceral pain that stirs the depths of the subjugated narrator! Boudjedra's style is characterized by a particular blend of intellectualism and impressionism, balanced by a logical analysis pushed to the extreme subtlety and a thorough reproduction of sensory and psychological data, down to the tiniest nuances!

Carnivalization in Boudjedra's texts presents itself in several aspects and rhetorical traits, more precisely the figures of magnification and the mixing of genres. Thus, it emerges from our study that the figures taken into account, which are the grotesque lower body, the universe of excess and the monstrous and the problematic of gender, highlight the carnivalized style in Boudjedra's novels. These characteristic features of carnivalesque writing run through the entire text using a discourse of deformation of reality that produces effects of strangeness and incoherence. Moreover, the ele-

ments of heterogeneity revealed translate a transgression of the boundaries between man and animal, high and low, real and imaginary and give this writing a purely singular originality.

Ultimately, Boudjedra's texts succeed in realizing the novel as an aesthetic entity where the historical and the poetic, the real and the imaginary, the collective and the individual are merged. The writer's originality lies in expressing the intimacy of his being. According to Hafid Gafaiti, literature obeys a double function for him: first, a psychoanalytic exploration and a catharsis which, mediated, lead to an unveiling of personal memory and family past, of social anchoring and to a properly political speech. His work is part of the continuity of an important literary enterprise where writing reveals itself to be simultaneously fascinating and fascinated by itself with texts that are "fertile in linguistic violence, sometimes to the point of blasphemy and triviality" (Gharmadi, 2002: p. 61). Rachid Boudjedra's work is a tangle which, under the cover of the subversive genre, is indeed a mixture of genres where carnivalesque writing holds a central place.

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