



Memory and Self-identity in Ayash Yahyaoui's Lekbeche

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Abstract :

The current research paper deals with the relationship between memory and self-identity in the autobiography of the Algerian writer Ayach Yahyaoui Lekbeche, in which the writer relied on his childhood memories in order to define his identity and the identity of his country Algeria in general and the region in which he spent his childhood known as Alhoudna, which is the area of the historical embrace. Through it, he wanted to portray the historical truth of post-independence Algeria and to define his identity as a member of the then Algerian society. Using Locke's Memory Theory of Personal Identity, throughout this research we will try to study the relationship between memory and identity and how

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Yahyaoui was able to formulate that in a meaningful poetic language.

1. Introduction

Through the present paper as the title suggests, I will attempt to thoroughly examine the relationship between memory and personal identity in the trilogy of the Algerian writer Ayyash Yahyaoui, entitled "Lekbeche". Here I need to clarify that the title of the autobiographical book was inspired from the name Lackbeche which is the name that the author's mother used to use to call him in his childhood. The author notes that many central events in his life had a great impact on his diffraction towards the world of literary writing, which is a diffraction with a psychological nodal significance and has no connection with his cultural achievement and the environment that he took in his hand to the world of thought and literature.

It is worth noting that for centuries, thinkers, psychologists, and sociologists have been debating over the proper definition of personal identity. In his 1690 iconic book *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, John Locke posits that the individual's personal identity extends only so far as his own consciousness. The connection between consciousness and memory in Locke's theory is nowadays known as the "memory theory of personal identity." In present day academia, Locke's memory theory of personal identity is constituting a wide space of debate among modern philosophers and thinkers. In this paper I shall use the Lockean theory to analyse the theme of memory and self identity in Yahyaoui's text.

2. The Lockean Memory Theory of Personal Identity

In the history of the widely debated subject of the self and personal identity, different and sometimes conflicting viewpoints have arisen. Some philosophers posit that the self is simply the mind which thinks; others insist that the self is identifiable with one's

body; while others suggest that to even conjure an idea of the self is an impossibility. In his Essay, Locke maintains that the self is “a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places” and continues to define personal identity simply as “the sameness of a rational being”¹. One can understand then that according to Locke’s viewpoint that as long as one is the same self, the same rational being, one has the same personal identity.

Accordingly, any change in the self reflects a change in personal identity, and any change in personal identity therefore implies that the self has changed. Locke equally adds that one’s personal identity extends only so far as one’s consciousness. He strongly argues that because in order to be a self, one must be a thinking thing, and that because “consciousness always accompanies thinking”², the self with which one personally identifies extends and persists only so far as one’s consciousness. This is the reason why the consciousness Locke refers to can be equated with memory.

This very idea is obvious in Locke’s claim that, “as far as [a] consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person; it is the same self now as it was then; and it is by the same self with this present one that now reflects on it, that that action was done”³. Simply put, if one can remember some experience, Locke’s says that one in fact had that experience. It is by this argument that Locke arrives at the most controversial part of his theory which suggests that the converse of the previous argument is true: if one cannot remember some experience, then one did not have that experience. Memory is therefore, according to Locke, a necessary condition of personal identity. In line with this he further posits that « which, I think, is a thinking intelligent Being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider it self as itself, the same thinking thing in different times and places.⁴

In other words, a person for Locke is ,therefore , the kind of entity that can think self reflectively, and think of itself as persisting over time. In this regard, Locke additionally asserts that persons are agents. For Locke “person” « is a...Forensick Term appropriating Actions and their Merit; and so belongs only to intelligent Agents capable of a Law, and Happiness and Misery ». ⁵

From the foregoing ,one therefore can argue that persons are therefore not just thinking intelligent beings that can reason and reflect, and consider themselves as the same thinking things in different times and places, but also entities that can be held accountable for their actions. It is *because* persons can think of themselves as persisting over time that they can, and do, plan ahead. Moreover Locke elucidates e what makes any person the same person over time. He posits that « ...consciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is that, that makes every one to be, what he calls *self*. ». ⁶

Consequently,one can note that Consciousness ,according to Locke, is what distinguishes selves, andin this regard,he futher explicates,

...in this alone consists *personal Identity*, i.e. the sameness of rational Being: And as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past Action or Thought, so far reaches the Identity of that *Person*; it is the same *self* now it was then; and ‘tis by the same *self* with this present one that now reflects on it, that that Action was done. ⁷

3. Lekbeche :the Interwining of Truth and Fiction

Ayash was born in 1957 in Ain Al-Khadra in M'sila,one of the Eastern wilayas of Algeria. He has worked in the press since the 1990s, before moving to the United Arab Emirates, where he held the post of editor-in-chief of the cultural department of one of the local newspapers, then heritage researcher in many Emirati government bodies. Author of several works of poetry and research in literature and popular culture, he had won several awards, including "El Owais" for creative writing in Dubai in 2015. Among

these publications are "Tâamoul fi wajah Athawra" (1982), "Achek El Ardh wa sounboula" (1986), "Kamar Achay" (2008). The Algerian poet and researcher Ayache Yahiaoui died Monday in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) at the age of 63, reports the Emirati press.

When reading Ayach's autobiography, one might easily observe that the first event that seems to have left a great impact on the psychology of the protagonist of *Lekbeche* was his separation from his family since he was six years old. Where he lived the experience of the internal system in the schools of the children of martyrs in Algeria, then he continued his studies far from the sources of childhood and parents in the secondary and university stages, then media work and then immigration to the Emirates. As for the second event, his uncle Ammar refused to buy him a bicycle, which had a great impact on him.⁸

As for the third event, it is the symbolic siege that he suffered when he descended with his small body the moon of poetry, he was extremely afraid that some of his family would read his poetry during school holidays, which prompted him to write his poetry in letters that others could not understand, consisting of circles, lines, rectangles, squares and points. And his age was not more than 15 years old.

The second part of Ayachi's book directly deals with the stage of his media work and the social and cultural events it contains in the Algerian capital and the city of Oran, and the third part. It deals with the stage of his media work and his cultural preoccupation in the Emirates. The author notes that many central events in his life had a great impact on his diffraction towards the world of literary writing, which is a diffraction with a psychological nodal significance and has nothing to do with his cultural achievement and the environment that he took in his hand to the world of thought and literature

The writer Ayyash Yahyaoui introduces us to the character Lekbeche who lives its dying destiny with the breeze of the Algerian liberation revolution, which fought for the citizen to live a pink world, in which the gentle breeze can achieve the impossible that goes beyond the drama of the past. He envisions a dreaming world, starting from an imagined reality, which is what the liberation revolution built its principles on, as a substitute for the colonialists' suppression of reality usurped by tyranny. In order for the promising generation to live its dignity and practice its rituals to achieve the horizon of expectation, which is the stereotype that Lekbeche 's childhood painted in her unconscious in an imaginative way in line with the stereotype carried by the revolutionaries, whose determination led them to practice the act of imagination; To build a prosperous future for this country; With the arms of their sons in the image of Lekbeche who was a witness and a witness, witnessing the events of the revolution with its innocent childhood, and its witnessed days in its subjective and objective parts.

The reader of *Lekbeche* might observe also that Ayachi succeeded to a great extent to produce a book in which truth and fiction intertwine with an exciting narration, even as if the reader is difficult to know which is closer to describing the facts and events, and which are closer to the narrative narration, which may make it an exciting narrative vision. And I think that no one who reads *Lekbeche* from the first generation after the independence of Algeria would find the largest share of his memory in it, despite the fact that the employed personalities are all real, belonging to the era he went through with his family and friends, and it is not strange for that if he did not find the reader in their names indicates certain connotations; Because they were created to be historical figures, not artistic figures; Including fantasy photography.

4. *Ayach's Self-confession*

Interesting is the idea that the narrator did not choose symbolic characters, as much as he wanted most of his characters from the life of hardship with everything that means originality and

simplicity in his life and his experiences, and with bold frankness even when he employs the character of the “great so-and-so.” The reader may be surprised when he learns that “so-and-so.” Al-Kabeer, from the boy’s family, who decided, according to what his mother once said: “You will go to “ Desire ”where you will continue your studies ... This is how“ so-and-so ”decided, and without embarrassment, the writer explains to us the identity of this prestigious character; To express the significance of the family status that the boy had, to no avail; Which would increase respect for what the writer went through in his life, indifferent to what could could cause him distress, especially since the "great so-and-so" is Colonel Mohamed Saleh Yahyaoui, a member of the Revolution Council during the era of President Houari Boumediene, and the candidate for the presidency of Algeria after the death of Boumediene.⁹

It may be more useful to point out the fuller-semantic benefit that the reader can derive from the lack of loyalty to the “great so-and-so”, which is the exclusion of this position from a prominent figure who disguises his vein by not embracing one of his blood groups, his clan, and the people closest to him, which is the character that She contributed to the kindling of the dream of colonialism, and she was unable to embrace a dream and close its mercy, and to insist on its connection, as if I were in it according to Ibn Al-Mu'taz's opinion: “The fire will eat some of it ... if you do not find what you eat.

It was not reported that the writer was able to be able to depict a situation like this, in a way that could arouse in the recipient a passion worth knowing about the personalities who were considered from the masters of the country. Especially since this "great so-and-so" was one of the most prominent contributors to untwisting the ropes of politics and untangling the threads in the country. The reader may not believe in the truth of what he drew to the character of “so-and-so the great” and his wife, who used to

roar with him and were anxious about him when he was hesitant to visit the house, so what was accused of stealing “the clothes of the spoiled prince Tariq bin Soan the Great, and his friend received him Concerning with sharp anger and excruciating reproach, in front of her was a weak hare trapped with claws and bullets on a bare plateau. Under a barrage of accusations and obscene words, the boy collapsed unconscious ... When he woke up, he found himself in the lower hallway of the villa, with a rope around his neck, with his hands shackled, and the reckless youth was practicing oppression and slapping against him, and he was released that evening.¹⁰

There is no doubt in this that the writer wanted to present the most important influencing events in his life, and if the rest of the events in Lekbeche are a common factor among many of his peers, then what was narrated with “The Great So-and-so” creates a unique semantic value in the march of Algeria. After independence, we only heard about it with the late President Houari Boumediene who refused to link the help of his family to his location, but what happened to the character of Lekbeche with “the great so-and-so” created in the recipient’s consciousness an amazingly unexpected image, while its events mean underestimating the children of the martyrs.

People of lineage, and hurt their feelings even from those closest to them, which was expressed by the author without a mask or adornment: “What happened in the conscience of“ the hug ”and its people collapsed a high dome, and is there any honor after the fall of the dome”¹¹

In the midst of this, we believe that unforeseen events that happened to the character of Lekbeche fall within the context of the biography of the astonishing self-recognition by multiple voices, or as Mikhail Bakhtin expressed a large part of such events in the “Bolivian novel, or something similar to the book“ I am from The Burned Village ”. The recipient can only prove that the image of Lekbeche is real. Rather than the truth itself, and on the other hand it is a dream that fulfilled itself, after daring to paint the wild,

irreversible picture of a child that was angry within her, innocent on the surface, when she was submitting, spontaneously, to the daily events that were hidden for him. Another reality, which later became a wreath of flowers on the crown of his future, kneaded with black flour (“Rutabiya” and Raqda ”)¹²

In spite of the effort he spent, burdened with the cost of toil and suffering, after being kneaded by the circumstances and hardships of time. We may find in this narration what is true of François Mauriac's saying: “Justifying his neglect of writing his memoirs: Isn't the real reason behind my laziness that our novels express the essence of ourselves?” Imagination alone does not lie, for it opens a hidden door to a person's life, from which he enters, safe from all the supervision of his unknown spirit.

In this way, the memory overlaps with the dream in Lekbeche ; That is, the fusion of memory with the patterns it carries that refer to the identity of the self, with the promising dream in the childhood biography with its escaped memories, and then the depiction of reality through memory in its artistic form revives the biography life again through the language that in turn contributes to the formation of the desired image of the writer, and in Presenting the way that made him present this position without that, or in undertaking to show what is useful to his experience that cannot be surpassed, and in this case the language is not “just an external coating of thought, nor is it a simple tool that must, in principle, be subject to complete submission To our control. It is more like a medium in which we dive into and we cannot fully experience it. It is not just a means thanks to which we can describe the world ¹³.

It is undeniable that it is thanks to him that we become able to experience human emotions and enter into human relationships in particular between us. ” No one bids on the poetry of the language in Lekbeche because it is derived from the poetics of the writer by its creative lining up in his poetic product that he was brought up in since his childhood, and it is the language that may help us to

acquire the textual world to reveal what is in it from a fugitive dream that carried an implicit vision, as may This language helps us to know what was expected of him. Because the writer did not mean in Lekbeche the chronicle of his life, as much as he wanted to draw his life as required by the manifestations that could be expected from the perspective of his objective and artistic career; Perhaps this process will turn into a place of value that reflects a meaningful life experience, specifically with regard to - in this respect - the relationship between identity and memory.

Whether it was related to what the situation was in his childhood, or what it is now; Because both of them reinforce the position of the writer who occupied his mind, as a valuable environment, with profound significance in the status of his identity, as in the description of the hug relationship "... and in it there is the city of Messila, the capital of al-Muizz ibn Badis the Fatimid, the birthplace of the poet Ibn Hani, and the critic Ibn Rishiq, author of the famous book " al-Umda "in al-Qayrawani; For his stay in Kairouan a part of his life, and in it there is the fortress of "Bani Hammad", which is what remains of the Hammadid civilization who contributed to the transfer of a bunch of Arab sciences to Sicily, Italy.

In this regard ,it should be stressed that in "El houdna"region there are also the ruins of the city of "Tabna", which is one of the first Arab civilizations Islamism in the Arab Maghreb, which was built by the order of the Caliph Al-Mansur bin Jaafar Omar bin Hafs .. It was famous for its poets, scholars, linguists, its rich gardens, and its well-groomed councils, ... and Ibn Khaldun says about the "Elhoudna "... and the Elhoudna country where It was Tabnah, and there was a headquarters in it and Msila ... and in the middle of the al-Hodna area, the boy was born ”¹⁴ To Lekbeche, the hero of the narrative text.

4. CONCLUSION

Ayach yahyaoui is an Algerian journalist and poet who could use both his experience in journalism and his gift in poetics to write his

autobiography that can be considered as a socio historical account of the post-independence Algerian society. This period that can be considered as one of the most important periods in the Algerian history because it was during that time that Algeria started rebuilding itself after a long period of colonialism. Ayachi as all his generation lived almost in the same social circumstances .This is the reason why, one can consider this biography as a historical key text .The thorough analysis of Ayach's text has demonstrated that he excelled in fusing memory and fiction to produce a simple but meaningful autobiography that historicizes for his generation.Focusing on his native region that is in "El houdna" ,Ayachi could shed light on this part of Algeria that the Algerians themselves might lack information about how life looked like there in the post-independence period.

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